

# Planning for a Sustainable Lake Oswego

## What does it mean?

A sustainable Lake Oswego is a community that meets the vital human needs of the present without compromising our ability to meet future needs. It is about more than green buildings, green streets, and recycling. Planning in a sustainable way means looking at the community as an interrelated system that includes **places** around us (the natural and built environment), **people** that live and work here, and the local **economy** that supports society's needs. The health of the community and these elements depend on one another; none can be considered apart from the others.



The environment, or earth, forms the basis for this community system because it provides the air, water and land that we as people depend on to meet our life-sustaining needs. Community prosperity is also dependent upon the services and products the earth provides, from healthy agricultural soils to abundant water and reasonably stable climates.

Current demand for the earth's services (clean air, clean water, food) is increasing, but because of how we're living and an increasing population, its ability to provide those services is decreasing. As a result, we are destroying the system that we, as humans, are completely dependent upon.

Fortunately, it's not too late. The community has the ability to change this. Sustainability is a process of continuous, ongoing improvement, and a realignment of community goals and practices to grow in a more responsible and resilient manner.

## How will we do it?

The City of Lake Oswego used **The Natural Step** (TNS) sustainability framework as the basis for the 2007 City of Lake Oswego Sustainability Plan for City operations and will use TNS to inform the Comprehensive Plan update. Based on international scientific consensus on the conditions needed to sustain life on earth, The Natural Step Four System Conditions provide science-based direction on how Lake Oswego can move forward in a sustainable way, and inform the following four **Sustainability Principles**:

1. What we **take** can be restored.
2. What we **make** does not build up in and harm nature.
3. We **protect** natural systems from degradation.
4. We **support** people to meet their own needs.

## Strategic Questions:

As the community plans for the future, the following questions will help to ensure the decisions we make respond to the Community Vision and the triple-bottom-line (people, places, and prosperity) of sustainability:

1. **Does the proposal move Lake Oswego toward the Community Vision?**
2. **Is the proposal consistent with the Sustainability Principles?**
3. **Is the proposal a good financial investment?**
4. **Does the proposal provide a stepping stone toward the Vision and sustainability?**



# Decision-Making Filter

To understand potential synergies, barriers, trade-offs, and other constraints or opportunities of a proposal, a detailed set of questions provide the underlying analysis used with the filter. The following is a general description of the key elements of the decision-making filter with some examples of questions to be considered.

## 1 Does the proposal move Lake Oswego toward the Community Vision?

## 2 Is the proposal consistent with the Sustainability Principles?

### Sustainability Principle 1: What we take can be restored

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's dependence on fossil fuels and wasteful use of scarce metals and minerals. Use renewable resources whenever possible.

- Help the community reduce or eliminate use of fossil fuels in buildings or from transportation, such as safe, convenient options to driving alone and access to an electrified transportation infrastructure?
- Support local economic development, markets for locally manufactured goods and services, or encourage businesses with sustainable practices?
- Increase efficiency (energy, water, materials), reliability, or connectivity in essential public infrastructure?

### Sustainability Principle 2: What we make does not build up in and harm nature or people

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's dependence upon persistent chemicals and wasteful use of synthetic substances. Use biologically safe products whenever possible.

- Encourage use of chemical-free and toxic-free building materials?
- Establish standards that minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides?
- Reduce risks to human and environmental health from exposure to toxins?

### Sustainability Principle 3: We protect natural systems from degradation

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's contribution to new encroachment upon nature (e.g. land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, ecosystems). Protect natural, life-sustaining ecosystems.

- Encourage infill and redevelopment using low impact development practices?
- Incorporate design and development patterns that respect natural systems such as watersheds and wildlife corridors?
- Support growth management policies linked to carrying capacity of natural systems and the community's ability to provide services?

### Sustainability Principle 4: We support people to meet their own needs

Reduce and ultimately eliminate conditions that systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their own needs.

- Provide a range of housing choices to meet the diverse needs of the community?
- Increase people's sense of community and foster connections to become resilient and self-reliant?
- Involve citizens in decision-making in a meaningful way?

## 3 Is the proposal a good financial investment?

- Does it reduce long-term operating and maintenance costs? If so, what is the return on investment?
- Have non-market costs, or externalities, been considered in the financial assessment?
- What is the level of risk associated with taking the action (or failing to take the action)?
- Will it promote resource sharing between City and another entity or leverage external funds?

## 4 Does the proposal provide a stepping stone toward the Vision and sustainability?

- Is it a first step in phasing in more sustainable approach?
- Is it flexible and adaptable approach to accommodate future innovation?
- Does it involve a financial investment that locks community into an unsustainable situation for many years?

# Comprehensive Plan Update

As the City and community develop the following key elements of the Comprehensive Plan update, proposals will be filtered through the decision-making filter at the left. The filter is used to evaluate proposals to determine if they help move the community toward the Community Vision and sustainability principles. Economic considerations and future flexibility are also included in the filter to provide a complete assessment.

