

## Community Culture Action Area The Arts

### Existing Comprehensive Plan Goal

Currently, there is not an arts and culture goal included in the existing comprehensive plan. However, Lake Oswego has significant arts and culture resources that must be reflected in the Plan update to support the 2035 vision.

### People, Places and Prosperity

Arts resources are essential to ensuring a sustainable Lake Oswego in the following ways:

- **People:** The arts support creative expression for residents of all ages and foster educational opportunities and community engagement.
- **Places:** The arts help create a strong sense of identity and civic pride. The arts help define our city's character. Lake Oswego has earned an outstanding reputation for its unique arts programming, and has received prestigious awards and national media attention.
- **Prosperity:** The arts serve as a local and regional economic attractor. Residents and visitors alike are shown to spend more money in downtown business districts that are culturally enriching. Public Art installations, festivals, performances, classes, markets, galleries, and studios all contribute to a unique sense of place and a diverse and resilient economic base. Art exhibits and cultural activities are identified as essential ingredients to attracting Tourism dollars. The Arts mean "business," and make a vital contribution to the local economy.

### Background

Among cities of its size in the tri-county area, Lake Oswego offers the most comprehensive arts and culture resources to its residents and visitors. In Clackamas County, where cultural tourism is a key economic driver, Lake Oswego is cited for its early leadership in recognizing the impact of arts on the city's local economy through support of a diverse array of arts magnet attractions:

- The downtown Gallery Without Walls, Lake Oswego's signature public art program, began in 2002 and today includes 30 rotating sculptures and 30 sculptures in the permanent collection. In 2010, approximately 620 people participated in tours of the downtown art sculptures. The program grows in strength and reputation year over year.
- The Lakewood Theater Company began in 1952 and now produces over 10 shows per year with an annual audience of over 40,000. It is the oldest continually operating nonprofit theater company in the Portland area.
- The Lakewood Center for the Arts also houses a children's theater, arts pre-school, dance studios and more. Each year 100,000 people visit the Center to participate in arts activities.
- The Lake Oswego Festival of the Arts attracts 25,000 visitors each June and will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> year in 2013, the longest-tenured and best-known arts festival on the west coast. The Festival is produced by the Lakewood Center with community partners and includes visual arts, a juried exhibit, and performance stage.

The City's commitment to art as a civic service and amenity is based in the understanding that Lake Oswego residents highly value access to art and culture in their daily lives, and take pride in the city's arts support because it enhances Lake Oswego's unique livability. These values are demonstrated by the following:

- In 2011 the Arts Council launched a Neighborhood Public Art Program, and partnerships are being formed to develop gateways in different parts of the community. The first project under development is a Totem II sculpture in front of the Jean Road Fire Station. Other areas for art identified in the Public Art Master Plan in Lake Oswego include:

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- Lake Grove Village Center
- Meadows Road
- Foothills Redevelopment Area
- Gateways to Lake Oswego
- Lake Oswego's Parks and Recreation Department produces concerts in the parks throughout the summer, attracting thousands of community members.
- The City's Parks and Recreation Department also offers art, music, drama and dance classes for youth and adults, and presents cultural activities including summer movies in the parks, concerts, performances, dances and more.
- The City has acquired 200 pieces of public art for its permanent collection. The artwork is on view in *City Hall, the WEB building and the Library*. *The Gallery Without Walls outdoor sculpture program displays Public Art throughout the downtown business district and is a popular aspect of city life.*

There are compelling and ample reasons to include arts and culture as a goal in the Comprehensive Plan update. Lake Oswego is exceptionally well-positioned to leverage the City's arts investment. Establishing focused objectives and policies now will help realize sustained economic benefit and continued regional leadership.

### **What We've Heard**

According to the survey conducted in 2010 to help develop Lake Oswego's 2035 Vision, respondents stated that concerts (75%), theater (54%), and public art (50%) were the three arts and culture activities that people would most like to enjoy or see available in Lake Oswego in 25 years.

At the Oct 12, 2010 workshop we heard that people would enjoy or continue to enjoy public art walking tours; downtown public art; interactive art and sculptures; and exploring opportunities for public/private partnerships to help fund public art.

### **Policy Questions Considered at November 3 Summit**

1. Lake Oswego's arts and culture opportunities are currently concentrated in the downtown area, including the Lakewood Center for the Arts, the Gallery Without Walls, and the City's visual art collection at City Hall, the Library and ACC. The Arts Council has also drawn up a new Public Art Master Plan that envisions public art to be integrated into the neighborhoods and city gateways.
  - Looking at the 2035 Vision Map, where and how should arts and cultural opportunities be focused or integrated into the community over the next 25 years?
2. The City's primary involvement in arts and culture today is through programming public concerts, movies and special events, and supporting the Arts Council of Lake Oswego and public art program.
  - Over the next 25 years, how should the City support a thriving arts and culture scene in Lake Oswego?

### **Summit Themes Based on Citizen Comment**

- Spatial Distribution: Respondents stated that art is too clustered downtown and should be spread more evenly across the city. Some spoke to showcasing art at the city's "gateways" while others did not want art in their neighborhood.
- New Locations: Kruse Way and Lake Grove were highlighted as being art-deficient while Downtown was consistently pointed to as a place with too much public art. There were mixed thoughts on art in the Lakewood Center, but respondents generally supported it.

- Support Current Art Programs: Respondents supported the variety of programs and events in the City, including the Festival of the Arts, Gallery Without Walls, and concerts.
- Costs: Respondents concerned that budgeting for the arts isn't a top priority and that the City has enough public art.

## **DRAFT goals and Policies for Planning Commission Hearing on February 27, 2012**

### **THE ARTS**

#### **Goal:**

The City will enhance and celebrate its commitment to the fine and performing arts by providing access to the arts throughout the city and by promoting and acknowledging art for the economic and cultural value it adds to the city.

#### **Policies:**

1. Foster the arts in our community by increasing access to the arts in neighborhoods, improving access to spaces for artists and providing a forum for social interaction through public art installations to strengthen a sense of place while celebrating the distinct and unique neighborhoods in the community.
2. Build upon the arts and culture infrastructure, to encourage arts -related businesses and strong arts tourism.
3. Add interest and vitality to the pedestrian experience, as well as increase economic development opportunities in the employment centers, town centers, neighborhood villages, and hubs by enhancing the streetscape, gathering places, and civic spaces through the thoughtful selection and placement of public art.

#### **Sources**

*What makes Lakewood Center for the Arts run?* Lakewood Center for the Arts.  
*Parks Plan 2025 Existing Conditions Summary Report.* 2011.  
*Public Art Master Plan.* Arts Council of Lake Oswego. 2010.  
Arts Council of Lake Oswego overview document.