

Goal 1 Citizen Involvement

□ Goal 1: Citizen Involvement

BACKGROUND

Statewide Planning Goal 1: Citizen Involvement

“To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.”

The Comprehensive Plan represents the interests of all the citizens of Lake Oswego. The City is fortunate to have an active citizenry which cares about the community enough to become involved in all aspects of the planning process. The original Comprehensive Plan was developed over a four year period with substantial citizen involvement, extensive research and thorough review and hearing by public officials. The City’s Citizen Involvement Program established nine citizen task forces to study issues and recommend policies for the Plan. A neighborhood association program was established as part of the process and 10 neighborhood associations were formed over that time period. Goals and policies were adopted in July of 1978. Acknowledgment by the Land Conservation and Development Commission occurred in 1984. At that time, seven boards and commissions also existed as advisory bodies to the City Council.

The first update of the Plan occurred in 1993. The Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (LOCPRC) was created to review policy recommendations and to oversee the process. The LOCPRC reviewed new background information or changes in community preferences to see whether any policy changes needed to be made. A citizen involvement program was developed to ensure maximum participation in this process.

In 1993, Lake Oswego had 15 active, recognized neighborhood associations. In addition, 11 boards and commissions provide additional opportunities for citizen involvement in the planning process. Since 1984, the City has added an Arts Commission, East End Development Committee, Historic Review Board and a Natural Resources Commission to advise City Council on a variety of issues.

Summary of Major Issues

The following issues were identified and addressed through the 1993 update of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Rearranging the Plan so that it is easier to use;
- Reinforcing the concepts of “two-way communication” between citizens and policy makers and “receiving feedback from policy makers”;

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- Increasing compliance with Goal 1 by requiring Commission for Citizen Involvement members to be selected based on a wide variety of interests and geographic areas;
- Stating a need to make a resource commitment to citizen involvement; and,
- Introducing the concept of gearing the level of citizen involvement to the level of a planning effort.

GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES

GOAL

The City shall:

- a. Create opportunities for every interested citizen to be involved in all phases of the planning process to ensure that their concerns are heard;
- b. Encourage broadly based public participation including all geographic areas and diverse interests; and,
- c. Ensure regular and ongoing two-way communication between citizens and City elected and appointed officials.

POLICIES

1. Provide opportunities for citizen participation in preparing and revising local land use plans and ordinances.
2. Provide citizen involvement opportunities that are appropriate to the scale of a given planning effort. Large area plans, affecting a large portion of community residents and groups require citizen involvement opportunities of a broader scope than that required for more limited land use decisions.

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3. Provide for and encourage formation of neighborhood organizations. These organizations, when recognized under the criteria outlined in the Citizen Involvement Guidelines, may:
 - a. Recommend neighborhood boundaries.
 - b. Make policy and implementation recommendations on issues affecting its neighborhood.
 - c. Engage in planning activities for its neighborhood and participate in community-wide planning issues.
4. Encourage citizens to participate through their neighborhood without excluding participation as individuals or through other groups.
5. Seek citizen input through service organizations, interest groups and individuals, as well as through neighborhood associations.
6. Establish and maintain a Commission for Citizen Involvement (CCI) to assist City Council in developing and maintaining a program to promote and enhance Citizen Involvement in land use planning and periodically evaluate that program. The CCI shall be broadly representative of geographic areas and interests, and members shall be selected by an open, well publicized process.
7. Clearly state the mechanism through which citizens will receive a response from City policy-makers, at the outset of the citizen involvement program.
8. Actively implement these Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and the Citizen Involvement Guidelines through the provision of adequate human, financial and informational resources.
9. Ensure that technical information necessary to make policy decisions is readily available in a simplified, understandable form.
10. Provide opportunities for citizens to be involved in the planning process, including data collection, plan preparation, adoption, implementation, evaluation and revision.
11. Appoint special purpose advisory bodies to aid in the development and implementation of detailed programs to carry out Comprehensive Plan elements.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES

- i. Make available copies of all technical information, planning documents and staff reports, through the City Planning Department, the City Library, on a public access computer bulletin board and other locations, as appropriate.
- ii. Keep the public informed of opportunities for involvement in land use planning using a range of available media including newspaper notices, mailings, the City newsletter, television and meetings.
- iii. Provide for recognition of exceptional civic efforts.
- iv. Encourage student involvement in City government through working with the School District in developing curriculum.
- v. Provide opportunities for citizens to post information of civic interest in public buildings, as resources permit.
- vi. Utilize a variety of methods to provide citizens with information about land use issues and to get information from citizens about their policy preferences including:

WAYS TO GET INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC:

- Holding widely advertised public hearings in accessible meeting rooms.
- Using statistically valid surveys.
- Providing a “public comment” period at all public meetings to allow citizens to speak on topics not already specified in the agenda.
- Publicizing comments, ideas and recommendations obtained at community meetings and through the planning process.
- Holding meetings prior to the development of land use plans to solicit community preferences.

WAYS TO GIVE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC:

- Posting notices about important meetings or events in the newspaper, on a public access computer bulletin board, in conspicuous places where people frequent; such as supermarkets, post offices, library, City Hall, etc., and at affected properties.
- Producing summaries of important documents that are long or complex.

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- Producing flyers or booklets describing hearing processes, such as how to provide testimony, the Oregon comprehensive land use planning system, etc.
 - Making the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Development Code and other planning documents readily available.
 - Maintaining a City newsletter.
 - Using neighborhood newsletters as a vehicle to get information out.
 - Providing a Speakers Bureau consisting of planners, local officials or others willing to speak to neighborhood associations, civic clubs and classes about planning issues and other City issues.
 - Holding community meetings on topics of current interest in proximity to the topic of interest.
 - Holding informational meetings in advance of public hearings to enable affected persons to understand proposals and to prepare for testimony.
 - Utilizing existing communication vehicles (such as water bill mailings) to inform residents of issues.
 - Providing realtors and welcoming organizations with information on how to get involved in order to inform new residents.
- vii. Establish citizen advisory boards and ad-hoc committees to advise staff, the Development Review Commission, the Planning Commission, and City Council and other boards and commissions regarding City services and issues. These groups could include but would not be limited to, natural and historic resources, the arts, public library, traffic management and transportation, and parks and recreation services.

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