



Inspiring Spaces and Places

Draft Background Paper

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Vision for Inspiring Spaces and Places

Our architecture and natural setting inspire people to live here. Development respects the physical environment and meets the highest quality of community design to preserve and foster the distinctive character and beauty of this special place.

Existing Goals

There are two goals in Goal 2 “Land Use Planning” of the Lake Oswego’s 1994 Comprehensive Plan. Only one of those goals will be addressed in the Inspiring Spaces and Places Action Area.

Land Use: Community Design and Aesthetics

The City shall maintain and enhance the appearance and design quality of Lake Oswego.

The second goal regarding Land Use Policies and Regulations will be addressed towards the end of 2012. Additionally, all of Goal 14-Urbanization was originally under this action area, but the majority of this topic was moved to Community Health and Public Safety at the request of the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee.

Introduction The Inspiring Spaces and Places Action Area will set the direction for where and how growth is accommodated and ensures that new development continues to build upon Lake Oswego’s unique character. Lake Oswego is a largely developed, or built-out community. There are just a few large, vacant tracts of developable land remaining. Since regional and state regulations require the City to permit and plan for needed growth, the impacts of small land divisions and infill development in established neighborhoods have been increasingly important. In the current Comprehensive Plan Update, the community is considering where growth should be encouraged, how benefits to existing neighborhoods can be maximized and negative effects avoided or mitigated, which tools are best suited for these challenges, and how land use planning can otherwise contribute to Lake Oswego’s vision of a sustainable community.

What We’ve Heard

The 2010 We Love Lake Oswego community survey which received 823 responses provided the following information:

- 87% of the respondents agreed with the following statement:
“Our built environment and natural setting inspire people to live here. The City is a regional leader, making conscientious decisions that protect our quality of life and unique place in the region.

Development respects the physical environment and meets the highest quality of community design to maintain the distinctive character and beauty of this special place”

- 69% said they choose Lake Oswego for its “small town feel” and 65% for its “scenic beauty.”
- 70% said that “connections to the lake, river, and hiking trails” is the most important aspect of the City’s public spaces that should be maintained and improved.

At the October 2010 workshop citizens indicated that streetscapes (paving, benches, plants, etc.) and architectural quality are important ways to improve public spaces; provide a sense of privacy, comfort; and to develop a unique sense of place.

People, Places and Prosperity

As the City develops key elements of the Comprehensive Plan update, sustainability – defined for Lake Oswego as meeting the vital human needs of the present without compromising our ability to meet future needs – is an important consideration. Strategic questions will aid in the decision-making framework moving forward. 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 prosperity (of the local economy) that supports society’s needs. As an example, land use planning supports a sustainable Lake Oswego in the following ways:

People: *Land use planning plays a critical role in creating an identity and Lake Oswego has a unique identity which fosters a sense of community and a sense of place.*

Places: *Effective land use planning supports great places to live, work and play such as the 20-minute neighborhood concept.*

Prosperity: *Land use planning helps to secure a community’s future by ensuring coordinated development.*

2035 Vision Design Types

The Comprehensive Plan process looks to address the issue of where best to accommodate new growth over the next 20 years. The 2035 Vision Plan map is the beginning of a community discussion about where growth and development should occur. The first phase of the *We Love Lake Oswego* process included extensive public outreach guided by the 15-member Citizen Advisory Committee. Through this process, the City developed a Community Vision that expresses what the community wants to be in 2035. The vision is supported by a preferred land use scenario (2035 Vision Map) that describes how and where the community should grow in the next 25 years. Residents indicated that they would like to protect the single-family residential character of the established neighborhoods and focus growth in areas that are already zoned to accommodate more growth. The preferred scenario includes several development design types which build upon the types of uses already allowed there today, but also offer the opportunity to increase the ability for more people to meet their daily needs within their own neighborhood or nearby while maintaining the Lake Oswego small-town character with high design standards. These design types include employment centers, town centers, neighborhood villages and community hubs.

Employment Center

The primary focus of the designated employment centers is to provide land for employment uses including office, industrial, research, and education. Examples of employment centers include Kruse Way, SW

Employment District and Marylhurst. These areas should include higher intensity employment uses in the city and have supporting commercial, retail and residential uses. These areas should be easily accessible and well-served by a variety of transit options.

Town Center

The primary focus of designated Town Centers is to provide areas for retail/commercial uses with a mix of residential development at a greater density and intensity. Examples of town centers include Downtown and Lake Village. Town centers have a strong sense of community with robust cultural opportunities in the form of libraries, theaters, and public art and are well served by transit. Walkability and access to services promotes the 20 minute neighborhood concept.

Neighborhood Village

Neighborhood Villages are areas which allow for a mix of retail, services, and other employment but with less intensity than town centers and employment centers. Examples of Neighborhood Villages include areas in Mountain Park, West Lake Grove and Palisades that are already designated as neighborhood commercial. Neighborhood villages serve as vibrant centers of retail residential, and community activity. Medium density residential uses may be located within these areas. A range of services are provide to meet the daily needs of area residents and promote a walkable 20 minute neighborhood. There are local community gathering spots that may include parks, plazas and paths.

Community Hub

Community Hubs are small-scale gathering places that allow for occasional or temporary limited commercial or community activities, which support the surrounding neighborhoods. Examples of hubs include Lake Ridge High School, Westridge Elementary School and Westlake Village. Hubs are centered around parks, schools, and other public places. Amenities may include small scale farmer's markets, community gardens, neighborhood gatherings or coffee carts.

Background

State and Regional Planning Context

With approximately 36,500 residents, Lake Oswego is a mature, inner suburb in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. There are approximately 2.2 million residents in the greater metropolitan area. Both the Portland metropolitan region and the State of Oregon have longstanding, comprehensive land use planning programs to promote efficient use of developable land. In recent decades, the region has become nationally known for its compact urban form, integrated land use and transportation planning and other leading planning practices. Within the region, Lake Oswego has a reputation for its exceptionally high quality of life. Effective planning in Lake Oswego must balance the desires of local residents to preserve Lake Oswego's existing character with regional and statewide land use regulations with which local jurisdictions must comply.

Goal 2 of Oregon's statewide planning goals calls for coordinated land use planning. This goal requires local jurisdictions to adopt comprehensive plans which are based on factual information. Plans must be generally consistent with the statewide planning goals and other applicable state, regional, and federal requirements.

Local governments' ordinances and land use decisions must, in turn, be based on state-approved comprehensive plans. Goal 2 also contains procedures for review and amendment of local comprehensive plans.

Metro, the regional government for the Oregon side of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area, manages the region's urban growth and maintains compliance with the statewide planning system by administering an urban growth boundary around the metropolitan region beyond which urban services are not extended. To accommodate projected population growth within the urban growth boundary, Metro adopted the 2040 Growth Concept in 1995 based on broad public input. This concept to "grow up and not out" envisioned higher-density, mixed-use development in designated centers, main streets, station communities, and corridors and preservation of farmland outside the boundary.

To implement the 2040 Growth Concept, Metro adopted the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan in 1996. The Functional Plan established specific requirements on housing, commercial development, and other areas of importance for the regional growth management strategy. Local jurisdictions are required to ensure their comprehensive plans and development codes are consistent with the regional Functional Plan. Functional Plan requirements which affect land use planning in Lake Oswego include:

- Title 1: Requirements for Housing and Employment Accommodation
- Title 2: Regional Parking Policy
- Title 3: Water Quality, Flood Management and Fish and Wildlife Conservation
- Title 4: Industrial and Other Employment Areas
- Title 6: Central City, Regional Centers, Town Centers, and Station Communities
- Title 7: Affordable Housing
- Title 8: Compliance Procedures
- Title 9: Performance Measures
- Title 12: Protection of Residential Neighborhoods
- Title 13: Nature in Neighborhoods

Two primary impacts of Metro's 2040 Growth Concept and Urban Growth Management Functional Plan on land use planning in Lake Oswego are:

- More intensive land uses in the city's two primary commercial areas (downtown Lake Oswego and the Lake Grove commercial area), both of which are designated "Town Centers" by Metro. In the 2040 Growth Concept, "Town Centers" are described as compact, well-connected community hubs providing essential services for residents within a two- or three-mile radius.
- Increased infill and redevelopment in established residential neighborhoods.

Existing Conditions

The recently updated draft Housing Needs Analysis and associated Buildable Lands Inventory confirms that Lake Oswego is a mostly developed community, with few large, undeveloped parcels within the city or in areas subject to annexation to the city. However, Lake Oswego still has many developed residential lots which are larger than twice the minimum lot sizes of their zones, and therefore potentially dividable. Many other properties were developed with modest buildings when local land values were much lower, and face redevelopment pressure as land values have increased. Therefore, the development of Lake Oswego

continues, though mostly in the form of redevelopment and infill in established neighborhoods and in relatively small land divisions. Land-use planning in Lake Oswego is now largely focused on managing the impacts of redevelopment and infill development in established neighborhoods.

This trend is evident in the neighborhood planning program adopted by the City in 1993. Neighborhood plans outline a land-use planning vision for defined neighborhood areas, and provide policy bases for code standards and legislative decisions such as comprehensive plan and zoning map amendments. Adopted neighborhood plans have focused on preserving desirable aspects of established neighborhood character. The following neighborhood plans have been adopted by the City Council and incorporated into the comprehensive plan since its last major update in 1994:

- First Addition Neighborhood Plan (1996)
- Lake Grove Neighborhood Plan (1998)
- Old Town Neighborhood Plan (1998)
- Glenmorrie Neighborhood Plan (2000)
- Lake Forest Neighborhood Plan (2002)
- Waluga Neighborhood Plan (2002)
- Evergreen Neighborhood Plan (2005)
- Palisades Neighborhood Plan (2008)

Some residential areas, such as Forest Highlands and Lake Forest, are designated in the current Comprehensive Plan Map for somewhat higher residential densities than characterize those neighborhoods now. Development proposals which approach planned densities often generate controversy, as many neighbors prefer these areas to retain a low-density character. Some have suggested “downzoning” certain neighborhoods for lower density, which, under the Functional Plan, may require the City to plan for higher densities elsewhere. Meanwhile, the City has the opportunity to absorb some growth through redevelopment of the Foothills industrial area, as well as through continuing redevelopment of the downtown and Lake Grove commercial areas which are designed to be compact with a mix of uses that are accessible by pedestrians.

Community Development Code

The City’s land-use planning program is also implemented by the Community Development Code (LOC Chapter 50), which must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and which provides specific standards for development applications. Since the 1994 Comprehensive Plan update, changes to the Community Development Code have also tended to focus on managing and minimizing impacts of redevelopment and infill development in established neighborhoods.

Community Development Code Reorganization Project

The last time the Community Development Code (CDC) was reorganized was in early 2000. In the summer of 2010, the City completed an audit of the CDC and related codes to identify problems with the organization, readability, and usability and to define an approach for creating a more user-friendly code. The final recommendation of the audit was endorsed by the City Council and involves a two-phase approach to overhaul the codes.

Phase 1: The CDC and other development-related chapters will be reviewed for practical changes to improve clarity, organization, and user-friendliness, setting the stage for future amendments. Phase 1 was completed in early 2012.

Phase 2: Addresses four substantive issues identified by Community Development Code (CDC) audit in 2010 and a reorganization of the CDC completed earlier this year. The four issues to be addressed are the consolidation of commercial districts; use table reform; consolidation/reduction of alternatives, adjustments, and variance options; and rewriting the non-conforming use section.

Concurrent to the Phase 2 of the CDC reorganization the City is identifying code barriers to mixed-use development. Because these project components are interrelated, set to be completed within the same timeframe, and involve the formation of an advisory committee with the same makeup of stakeholders, it makes sense to coordinate the work on these projects and consolidate them into one package of code amendments.

Sources

Draft Lake Oswego Housing Needs Analysis, City of Lake Oswego, 2011

Community Vision and Values Survey, 2010

Community Development Code

Metro 2040 Growth Concept

Neighborhood Plans

Lake Grove Village Center Plan

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