# Online Testimony for Budget Committee Meetings

The Budget Committee encourages citizens to learn about proposed changes to the budget and to provide input. Citizen comment is taken at both the beginning and end of the meeting. Attending the meetings and providing direct input is very useful to the process. If you are not able to attend a meeting, an online opportunity is available here through Open City Hall for each meeting.  Meetings are at 6:00 p.m. at Lake Oswego City Hall (380 A Avenue).  The Committee is scheduled to meet and adopt the budget on May 9.

The Open City Hall (Peak Democracy links below) contain summary information for past meetings, links to the budget materials and meeting information on the City Website for review.

**May 9 meeting (final meeting):**

- Online information and comments: http://www.peakdemocracy.com/1288
- The next agenda includes - Public Comment, LORA Budget, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – Prioritize Funded Projects, Final deliberations and recommendations and adjournment of the Committee.

**May 2 meeting:**

- Online comments and information: http://www.peakdemocracy.com/1281
- The comments in a PDF report (that any person can also print from Open City hall if desired).

**April 25 meeting:**

- Online comments and information: http://www.peakdemocracy.com/1218
- The comments in a PDF report (that any person can also print from Open City Hall if desired).

**Summary Information -  Budget and Service Changes**

The below summery information can be found in the Introduction materials on Open City Hall and more detail, information on the City Budget and links to the Budget Committee go to the City Budget website.

Here is general information about the Proposed Budget (Updated May 3, 2013)

The budget reflects the Council's direction to first invest in core local government services and second, prioritize funding for services that make Lake Oswego cherished and unique. While the Proposed Budget is balanced per state law, there is an operating deficit in the general fund. There are a number of factors that put pressure on the City's ability to fund services and achieve long term financial stability: unfunded capital facility needs, rising benefit costs and salary adjustments, continued slow population growth, and modest General Fund revenue growth.

On April 25 the Budget Committee was presented budget "Decision Packages". These are changes in the budget beyond the 3.4 FTE reduction in vacant positions. The decision packages include with general notes of redistribution or reduction of services. For full information please review the decision packages. (FTE = Full Time Equivalent employee):

Reductions (positions are currently filled and indicate a layoff, unless otherwise noted):

- 1 FTE Economic Development. Economic development efforts would be both reduced and redistribute to other staff. Remaining FTE in Economic and Capital Development would primarily be focused on Redevelopment Efforts in Urban Renewal Districts. (Passed May 2, however $30,000 was left in the budget for Chamber of Commerce marketing).
- 2 FTE Parks & Recreation. Senior Parks Utility Worker (vacant with a retirement), redistribute work. Recreation Program Supervisor at the Adult Community Center, would both redistribute the work to other people in the same classification and there would be some service impacts. (Passed May 2)
- 3 FTE Planning & Building, Long Range Planning. Two planner positions and a planning manager position. The Planning & Building Director would work with remaining staff to determine focus or work and what would no longer occur. (Passed May 2)
- 1 FTE City Manager's Office, Public Affairs. Public Affairs Manager. Some duties would be redistributed within the City Manager's Office and redistributed to departments. Some service reductions may occur. Responsibilities for reduction or redistribution are: Media Contact/Public Relations, Website Management, Legislative Advocacy/Intergovernmental Affairs, and Special Projects. (Passed May 2)
- 1.2 FTE City Manager's Office, Sustainability Program. Sustainability Planner and Intern. Program would continue to be coordinated out of the City Manager's Office, including support for the Sustainability Advisory Board, but there would be reductions on the service. (Did not pass May 9, not included in the budget proposal).

Increases in services:

- Right of way tree and vegetation maintenance, Public Works, Operation contract for services, $50,000. Better care for invasives and trees (such as ivy and dead limbs) in public areas that are currently neglected.
- Technical assistance to reevaluate Sensitive Lands, $80,000. Hire an expert in environmental protection to assist the City's natural resource planner to reevaluate the lands currently mapped and in preparation of materials for presentation of program alternatives to Metro, one time consultant expenditure. (Passed May 2)
- Increase in funds for Street Maintenance through things such as not reducing property taxes, implement decision packages, reduce other services and dedicate funding to streets, or reprioritize street projects. (Passed May 9 - Funds from General Fund services cut above, moved to Street Maintenance).

The decision packages are consistent with the City Council's direction to focus on core services and they include service reductions that help to address the financial challenges ahead. The savings could help address the General Fund’s operating deficit, give more money to core services such as street maintenance, or dedicate funds towards capital equipment and facilities. The potential reductions in personnel, along with the net 3.4 vacant positions eliminated in the Proposed Budget, would also enable the City to begin to manage ongoing increases in salaries and benefits.

At each Budget Committee meeting, a member can add an item for discussion (generally a cut and add to services/budget) to what is called the "puts and takes" list. After the April 25 meeting, the list included:

- A citizen request to purchase the Halinan Woods property for a cost of $750,000 to the City.
- Installing field turf to the infield at East Waluga Park for a cost of $90,000 to the City.

- Providing $150,000 to the Lake Oswego School District for covering the operating costs of the district's swimming pool.
- Implementing a one-time utility rebate to the City's utility customers for a total impact to the Wastewater Fund of $1.3 million.
- Applying a vacancy rate to the City's personnel services budget. (Passed May 2)
- Additional support to the Meals on Wheels program to offset the funding effects from the Federal Budget Sequestration ($6,000) (Passed May 9)
- Increasing franchise fees as a source of funding for street maintenance ($1,000,000)
- Citizen request to support the purchase of playground equipment at Westridge Elementary School, ($15,000)
- A cost of service study for contracting fire and rescue services to Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue.

The Budget was approved and will go to the City Council for adoption on June 4.

Update on Property Tax Discussion

Out of concern for the rising costs of living for residents, the Council directed that the Proposed Budget include a reduction in the City's property tax rate to counter the anticipated automatic increase of 2.9% in assessed value. The reduction results in approximately $800,000 in property tax revenue loss to the General Fund. An average home in Lake Oswego with a $330,000 assessed value will save $50 on their annual property taxes to the City. May 3 Update - At the first Budget Committee Meeting, leaving Property Taxes intact and allowing the automatic increase to occur was added back for consideration due to the need to dip into reserves to pay for current services with the reduction and the long term impact on revenues. At the May 2 meeting, the Committee voted to continue the current tax rate (and therefore not reduce taxes or revenue).

**Supporting Documents**

Online comments for April 25
Online comments for May 2

**Web Links**

Puts and Takes List (items to cut or add in the budget)May 2 meeting information an online testimony April 25 meeting information and online testimony

**Directions**

Lake Oswego, OR
See map: Google Maps

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http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/publicaffairs/online-testimony-budget-committee-meetings