

# Community Culture



## Community Culture

### Civic Engagement • Historic Preservation • Recreation Library • Arts • Education

#### Vision

Our educational, cultural, recreational, and civic engagement opportunities strengthen the social fabric of the community. Our top-rated schools offer excellent education and reinforce the value of the community as a desirable place to raise a family. Our outstanding library, parks, and community amenities provide a wide range of programs and special events. Public art and historic preservation enrich our cultural identity.

#### Statewide Land Use Planning Goals

The six sections of the Community Culture chapter implement the following Statewide Land Use Planning Goals:

- “Civic Engagement” implements Statewide Planning Goal 1 Citizen Involvement.
- “Historic Preservation” implements Statewide Planning Goal 5, Open Spaces, Historic & Natural Areas (Historic Areas).
- “Recreation” implements Statewide Planning Goal 8 Recreation.
- “Library” implements Statewide Planning Goal 11 Public Facilities and Services.
- There are no corollary Statewide Planning goals for “The Arts” and “Education”.

#### Updates To Lake Oswego 1994 Comprehensive Plan

The six sections of the Community Culture chapter replace the following chapters and sections of the Lake Oswego 1994 Comprehensive Plan:

- “Civic Engagement” replaces Goal 1 Citizen Involvement.
- “Historic Preservation” replaces Goal 5, Section 8 Historic and Cultural Resources.\*
- “Recreation” replaces Goal 8 Parks & Recreation.
- “Library” is newly added to the Comprehensive Plan.
- “Education” replaces that portion of Goal 11, Section 5, pertaining to Schools.
- The 1994 Comprehensive Plan did not contain a section on “The Arts”.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### Background

#### Statewide Planning Goal 1: Citizen Involvement

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

Lake Oswego developed its first Comprehensive Plan during 1974–1978, in response to Oregon’s newly adopted statewide land use planning goals. The planning process involved substantial public participation, research, and review in public meetings and hearings. The City established its first ten neighborhood associations during the same timeframe, and, in 1975, the City Council adopted guidelines for citizen involvement in land use planning and decision-making. Also during this time, the City had seven advisory boards and commissions.



The City Council updated the Citizen Involvement Guidelines\* in 1991, and completed a Comprehensive Plan update 1994. The Citizen Involvement Guidelines were updated again in 2009, prior to the most recent Comprehensive Plan update.

Since the late 1990s, the Planning Commission has served as the Committee for Citizen Involvement, whose purpose is to assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of a citizen involvement program under Statewide Planning Goal 1. The program has been successful in fostering public involvement for land use planning. In 1994, Lake Oswego had 15 active, recognized neighborhood associations and 11 boards and commissions through which citizens could become involved in planning. As of July 2013, Lake Oswego has 22 recognized neighborhood associations.

The City also provides planning assistance to the neighborhood associations. As of 2013, the City Council has adopted eight neighborhood plans, which serve as official elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as special zoning districts and design standards for some neighborhoods. Lake Oswego citizens can also serve on one of the City’s 12 boards and commissions, including the following boards and commissions that have a direct role in advising City Council on and/or implementing Lake Oswego’s land use policies: Development Review Commission, Historic Resources Advisory Board, Natural Resources Advisory Board, Planning Commission, and Sustainability\* Advisory Board.

Lake Oswego uses a variety of techniques to engage a representative cross-section of the community in land use planning and decision-making. These include meeting notices posted in public places and published online and in newspapers, summaries of City documents, flyers,

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brochures, neighborhood newsletters, informational meetings, trainings and presentations, mailings, a staffed Citizen Information Center, the City Council Digest and Dispatch (email updates), Facebook, Twitter, RSS, HelloLO (citywide print newsletter), LO-Down (electronic newsletter), and listserves.

The City of Lake Oswego also uses a broad range of outreach methods to encourage a two-way flow of information between citizens and policy makers. Two-way communication leads to informed decisions, a more engaged citizenry and better public support of policies and programs. These methods include: publicly advertised meetings, statistically valid surveys, public comment periods at meetings, pre-application conferences for land use and development proposals that include representatives of neighborhood associations, neighborhood meetings, focus groups, ad-hoc citizen advisory committees, the City's web-based "Open City Hall", and the Citizen Information Center, among others.

One of Lake Oswego's four sustainability principles is to "Support people to meet their own needs". As stated in the Citizen Involvement Guidelines, the City strives to ensure that all its residents are aware of, understand and have the opportunity to express their opinions regarding planning decisions.

## Summary of Major Issues

The following issues related to Citizen Engagement and Statewide Planning Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement) were identified and addressed through the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update:

- Undertake a community vision process, to inform the Comprehensive Plan update;
- Engage the community through a combination of in-person and online activities, and written communications;
- Reinforce two-way communication between citizens and policy makers, and solicit feedback on the Plan through an open and transparent public process;
- Ensure the Comprehensive Plan continues to meet State requirements for land use document, while updating the document so that it clearly expresses the community vision.

## Goals And Policies

### Goal

Provide accessible, meaningful and transparent public engagement processes that offer a wide range of opportunities for citizens to participate in local land use decision-making.

### Policies

1. Provide citizen involvement opportunities appropriate to the scale of a given planning effort, and ensure those affected by a Plan have opportunities to participate in the planning process.

2. Ensure that information related to land use planning and decision-making is readily accessible to the public and easy to understand.
3. Utilize City boards and commissions, neighborhood associations, and other community groups to ensure a diverse and geographically broad range of citizen input in land use issues.
4. Provide opportunities for citizens to engage in land use planning and decision-making, including opportunities for individual citizens who may not otherwise participate.
5. Ensure direct and ongoing two-way communications between the City and Lake Oswego citizens regarding land use issues.
6. Provide for and encourage the formation of neighborhood organizations, and support their efforts to inform and engage residents in neighborhood and community-wide issues.
7. Maintain a Commission for Citizen Involvement (CCI) to develop, sustain, and promote meaningful citizen engagement in land use planning.
8. Define how the public will be engaged in each phase of the land use planning process at the beginning of the process.
9. Utilize broadly representative, special citizen advisory bodies to provide input on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and other related land use planning matters.
10. Provide adequate resources to support the City's land use related Citizen Involvement Program.
11. Design and implement the Citizen Involvement Program in ways that foster civility and respect for all who participate.

## **Recommended Action Measures**

- A. Periodically evaluate the City's Citizen Involvement Program and make adjustments as needed to improve its effectiveness.
- B. Have the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) report at least annually to the City Council to evaluate the effectiveness of the City's citizen involvement efforts.
- C. Public involvement plans for planning projects shall clearly state the project purpose, process, timeline, how citizens will be involved, and the ways by which citizens will make their recommendations to City decision-makers and receive responses from them, including information on the appeals process.
- D. Identify groups and citizens who may be affected by land use planning issues but who do not typically participate in planning and make efforts to engage them.
- E. Make available copies of all technical information, planning documents and staff reports, through the City Planning Department, the City Library, on the City's website, and other locations, as appropriate.

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- F. 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, meetings, City website, listerves, social media, and new technology.
- G. Provide for recognition of exceptional civic efforts.
- H. Establish citizen advisory committees and ad-hoc committees to advise staff, the Development Review Commission, the Planning Commission, and City Council and other boards and commissions regarding land use issues. These groups can include but are not limited to, natural and historic resources, the arts, public library, traffic management and transportation, and parks and recreation services.
- I. Maintain youth members on City boards and commissions involved in land use planning, and work with the Lake Oswego School District, local private schools, and service groups to encourage youth involvement in land use planning activities.
- J. Ensure that responses to citizen inquiries on land use matters are understandable, welcoming, timely, and include sources of information.
- K. When needed provide translations of information to non-English-speaking members of the community.
- L. Review City land use notification methods periodically to determine if they adequately provide notice to affected citizens.
- M. Provide opportunities for citizens to post information of civic interest in public buildings, as resources permit.
- N. Prepare a citizen involvement report at the end of any major land use planning project as a means of evaluating Citizen Involvement Program effectiveness.
- O. Maintain a list of community organizations to contact and invite to participate in the discussion of land use issues or projects.
- P. Provide workshops on how to prepare testimony for the public hearings process on land use plans and applications.
- Q. Utilize a variety of methods to provide citizens with information about land use issues and to get information from citizens about their policy preferences, which may include but are not limited to the following:

### **Ways to Get Information from the Public**

- Holding widely advertised public hearings in accessible meeting rooms.
- Using statistically valid surveys and, where appropriate, online questionnaires to gather input on land use issues.

- 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 land use planning projects and major developments in the newspaper, on the City website, 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, using visuals where appropriate to communicate complex ideas or plans.
- Producing fliers 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 in electronic and hard copy form.
- 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 to provide timely information on topics of current 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.