

## **DRAFT**

### **Foothills District Framework Plan**

Public Involvement Strategy

October 28, 2010

#### **Introduction and Background**

The Foothills District Predevelopment Agreement calls for the development and implementation of a public involvement strategy that supports District planning efforts and results in a meaningful and effective public process. As part of its responsibilities under the Predevelopment Agreement with the City of Lake Oswego, Williams/Dame and White (“WDW”) has spoken with numerous stakeholders to explore their ideas and issues related to the District and identify ways that the project team can most effectively engage concerned citizens in the Foothills process.

This Public Involvement Strategy provides a road-map for the project team and community members to follow as the planning process unfolds. This strategy is guided by a few key principles that the WDW team has found to be effective in past efforts. These principles include:

- *Honesty and Transparency* – In order to build trust between the various parties involved in this process, team members and participants should bring their issues, ideas, and motivations to the table honestly and openly. When it is unclear, participants should make clear when they are representing a personal view and when they are representing an organization’s view.
- *Consistent Communication* – The Project Team must endeavor to maintain a consistent level of communication with the community across a number of channels – individual communication, community newsletters, local and regional newspapers and news outlets, project website, emails, and public meetings. The team should be bold in promoting project information across numerous platforms.
- *Good Listening* – The Project Team must actively listen to community stakeholders, and reflect what is being heard in project work products. Community members should be able to recognize the effect of their feedback in what they see back from the Project Team.
- *Timely Sharing of Information* – Consistent with the axiom “Bad news does not get better with time,” the Project Team will work to provide information in a timely basis to the community, even if that information is inconsistent with, or does not support, the intended direction of the project.
- *Keep an Open Mind* – The project team and public participants should be encouraged to keep an open mind to the ideas, comments, and concerns that are heard throughout the process, and to actively seek to understand alternate viewpoints.
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Building on these principles, the Public Involvement Strategy lays out recommendations in a few key areas:

1. Public Communications
2. Citizens Advisory Committee process
3. Community Meetings and Public Events

Each of these areas is described in greater detail below.

## **1. Public Communications**

A key element to the effectiveness and ultimate success of the public outreach effort for Foothills is the establishment of consistent communications with the Lake Oswego community throughout the planning process. This communication must take a number of different forms in order to reach the greatest number of citizens and to ensure that the Project Team receives feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders. To effectively pursue this strategy, the following elements will be implemented as part of the Foothills planning process.

**a. Project Contact List** – WDW will establish and maintain a Project Contact List. This list will be used to provide project communication, include meeting notifications, e-newsletter distribution, and prompts to visit the project website to view updated information. This list will be updated constantly throughout the process with new contact information provided at public meetings, through phone conversations, or by email/website. A project email address has been established – [info@wdwlo.com](mailto:info@wdwlo.com) – to receive contact information and provide as a general link between the public and the Project Team.

**b. Stakeholder Interviews** – WDW has undertaken a number of stakeholder interviews to date, focused primarily on CAC members and other opinion leaders in the community. These interviews are crucial in helping the Project Team understand issues of concern in greater detail than can be provided in a public setting. While more of these interviews occur at the front of the process rather than the end, WDW will continue to hold one-on-one discussions with community stakeholders as the project progresses when there is a need to explore an issue more deeply or new stakeholders become engaged in the process. Information from these interviews is shared in a general way with the public so as to encourage candid discussion in the interview.

**c. Community Newsletters** – The Project Team will produce articles for community newsletters in order to provide general information on project issues and project progress to the broader Lake Oswego community. The primary platform for this effort will be the *Hello LO* newsletter, which is published monthly by the City and distributed to all City residents. In addition to *Hello LO*, there may be other local newsletters (e.g., neighborhood association, downtown business association/Chamber of Commerce, etc.) that would serve as effective channels for communication. In addition to providing articles for these newsletters, WDW will also provide calendar notices and/or ads for public events in order to generate interest and increase event attendance.

**d. News Outlets** – The Project Team will work strategically with Lake Oswego and Portland area news outlets to provide updated project information and to ensure that the process is being accurately portrayed. Where necessary (e.g., when press coverage is desired or in response to information in the press), press releases or media alerts will be generated and distributed. The primary focus of any kind of media outreach will likely center on the *Lake Oswego Review*, but depending on the issue, other outlets may also become interested or engaged, including:

- *The Oregonian*
- *Portland Business Journal*
- *Daily Journal of Commerce*

- Monthly magazines (e.g., *Portland Monthly*)
- Local Bloggers
- Local TV News Stations
- Local Radio

**e. Project Website** – The Project Team and City have established a project website for Foothills at [www.lakeoswegobusiness.com](http://www.lakeoswegobusiness.com) (follow the “Foothills” tab). The website will serve not only as a way to disseminate the latest information on the project, but also as a repository for project information, including all of the information distributed at CAC or other public meetings. Over the course of the project, the Project Team will work with the City to keep the website up to date with the latest information, and will work to broadly disseminate the web address to interested stakeholders so that they can keep abreast of the latest information and developments in Foothills.

**f. Emails and Electronic Communication** – Utilizing the contact list described in 1(a) above, the Project Team will utilize emails or e-newsletters to quickly communicate project information to interested stakeholders. It is likely that this will be the most common day-to-day communication with involved stakeholders. The intent of this communication will not be to replace the other channels, but to provide the recipients with quick links or reminders of upcoming events. Some examples of how this method will be utilized include:

- Meeting Notifications/Reminders
- Website Information Update
- Newsletter Article Distribution
- Immediate Response Communication (e.g., Corrections to media accounts, response to misinformation/rumors, etc.)

**g. Public Events** – While the public events are described in more detail in Section 3 below, it is also worth noting that these events are another way to establish an effective communication channel between the community and the Project Team, as well as between the variety of community stakeholders. Notification for these events will be provided across a number of platforms, including community newsletters, local media, the project website, and email communications.

## **2. Citizens Advisory Committee Process**

A key element to the success of the Foothills planning process will be the establishment of an effective Citizens Advisory Committee (“CAC”) for the project. As part of the Predevelopment Agreement between the City and WDW, the City established the composition of the CAC, and has subsequently appointed members to the CAC.

The primary charge of the CAC is to advise the Project Team on the Foothills District Framework Plan, and to ensure that the final Framework Plan product is grounded in Lake Oswego values. The CAC process provides an opportunity to explore project and neighborhood related issues in greater depth than is possible in larger public settings, and the makeup of the CAC ensures that a broad range of voices are heard and balanced in the process.

There are a few key principles that the Project Team will pursue in order to ensure that the CAC process is effective. These principles include:

**a. CAC Role** – The CAC’s primary role is to provide guidance to the Project Team and ensure that the work products are grounded in Lake Oswego values. This outcome is not a given. The CAC’s issues and ideas should be heard and incorporated throughout the process. In support of this principle, the Project Team will work closely with the CAC to provide the CAC with key project information, reflect CAC ideas and concerns in the work products, and provide opportunities for CAC members to take an ownership role in the project (e.g, actively participating in public events, presentations to neighborhood groups, etc.). The ultimate goal is for the CAC to support and defend the final product as its own work.

**b. Timely Distribution of Material** – The Project Team will work to get information to the CAC in as timely a fashion as possible. Ideally, the CAC would have at least a week to review background information for upcoming meetings. There will be times, however, where the Project Team will be generating materials right up to the meeting time. In these cases, the information will be provided at the meeting, with the understanding that the CAC may need to digest the material before being asked to provide meaningful feedback to the Project Team.

**c. CAC as a Conduit** – Many CAC members represent larger organizations – neighborhood or business associations, property owners/businesses, or advocacy organizations. The CAC provides a primary conduit to these organizations through which information can be exchanged. CAC members will be expected to help facilitate this exchange, and the Project Team will work to ensure that adequate time for the CAC member to communicate with their organization is built into the planning schedule.

**d. Achieving Consensus** – WDW has found that working on a consensus-driven model ensures that all voices are heard in a process. To that end, the CAC will be asked to find those areas where they can generally agree and move on to the next set of issues that needs to be tackled. Where possible, it is hoped that up-or-down votes can be avoided by ensuring that the CAC’s concerns or ideas are reflected in work products.

**e. CAC Voice** – The CAC is an important voice in the process, but its voice should only be expressed in a public way after the CAC has established consensus on a particular issue. CAC members will be free, outside of the CAC process, to voice their own personal or organizational opinions, but they should make it clear that they are doing so as individuals and not representing the CAC’s position on the matter.

### **3. Community Meetings and Public Events**

Beyond the more detailed CAC process and the communications strategies outlined above, there will be opportunities throughout the planning process to communicate more broadly with the public through community meetings and public events. These forums are designed to provide a forum for community stakeholders that don’t have the time or ability to be involved in the project in a more intensive way, but who still have ideas and issues to offer to the Project Team and CAC for their consideration and incorporation in the planning process. There are a few types of events that the Project Team will pursue as part of the Foothills Process:

**a. Community Meetings** – In support of the communications strategy and the CAC members’ responsibility to act as a conduit of information to their respective organizations, the Project Team will provide project updates at community meetings. Organizations that the Project Team would anticipate presenting to include:

- Neighborhood Associations
- Downtown Business Association
- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Club
- Local Interest Organizations (e.g., Friends of Tryon Creek; Lake Oswego Sustainability Committee, etc.)

**b. Public Workshops** – As part of the earlier phases of the project, where proposals are still fluid and issues remain to be identified and fleshed out, the Project Team will hold 1-2 Public Workshops to invite the broader public to share their issues and ideas for the project. These forums will typically include more structured activities for workshop participants that are aimed at getting feedback on specific issues.

**c. Public Open Houses** – Later in the project, as proposals and recommendations are brought into sharper focus, 1-2 Public Open Houses will be held to share progress to date and receive public feedback on ideas. One open house will definitely be held to share the draft recommendations of the Framework Plan, and another is possible around the time that a preferred planning concept is ready to be selected. A typical Open House format will walk participants, on their own timeline, through the key information that the Project Team needs feedback on, with Project Team and CAC members helping to staff information stations and help participants with their understanding of the material.