1000 friends of Oregon

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (RE)VISIONS:

Recommendations for a More Equitable and Inclusive Land Use Planning Goal 1

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Introduction

Public involvement is well established in Oregon's values: Oregon's comprehensive land use planning system is evidence of that. With the passage of Senate Bill 10 in 1969 and Senate Bill 100 in 1973, the Oregon Legislature established the state's land use planning program and its policy framework. As a result, a new state commission was created: the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). The Legislature directed LCDC to adopt "goals" to implement SB 100, including one on "citizen involvement."[1] LCDC engaged in an extensive public involvement process and adopted 19 goals to steward Oregon's land and communities — and the first goal is intentionally "Citizen Involvement."

Oregon's priorities were laid out plainly through these state policies — Oregonians should be invited into land use planning at every level, with the information and methods for their voices to be heard. Goal 1 was groundbreaking when it was adopted, but has not been updated since. As a result, local implementation of Goal 1 has grown stale and rote, and over the years has not kept up with best practices in planning to be truly inclusive of diverse voices, offer equitable engagement opportunities, and be welcoming and accessible.

Many factors have contributed to the current state of Goal 1. Traditional mechanisms for public processes are often daunting and intimidating, and therefore exclusive, resulting in a lack of equitable representation and diversity in those who participate. Gaps exist among different local communities in their knowledge of land use decision-making and awareness of how to participate. Local jurisdictions implement Goal 1 inconsistently across Oregon. As a 2018 study on public participation in local meetings across the US demonstrates, the overwhelming majority of attendees are "older, male, longtime residents, voters in local elections, and homeowners." Obvious barriers to public participation exist; therefore public involvement mechanisms must change statewide to ensure the resilience of Oregon's local communities.

The widespread energy for public involvement that fueled SB 100 and the 19 statewide Goals into fruition in the first place is still active, but not because of Goal 1.

Goal 1 increasingly has lost substantive meaning in many cities and counties across Oregon. Why did that happen and how can we change that?

The Importance of Goal 1 — Strong Communities

The strength of Oregon's public involvement program will shape Oregon's communities for decades to come. Communities that are active in governance are resilient and show long-term benefits, including:

- Group cohesiveness
- Community understanding and ownership of projects
- Adaptability

Political scholars define community as "a group of people who share a common physical environment, resources, and services, as well as risks and threats."[2] The ability for a community to be "connected," "adaptable," and "resourceful" is a function of "community resilience."[3] A community-driven plan helps develop that greater sense of cohesiveness and that is especially powerful when a community is faced with challenges, such as climate change or economic insecurity.

Investment in long-term equitable community engagement yields both long-term and short-term outcomes. Well-designed civic engagement processes are inclusive, accessible, and promote community connectedness.

Roadmap of Report

This report starts by describing "Goal 1: Citizen Involvement" and addressing current shortcomings that hinder widespread and meaningful participation.

Next, the report delves into the history of public participation to answer the question, Why does public participation matter? We investigate the equitable access issues inherent to public participation.

Then, we turn to solutions, and offer 10 implementable practices for local governing bodies to use during public participation processes. These derive from scholarly research, community-based narratives, expert opinions, and current shifts in the planning field.

We conclude by exploring potential textual revisions and regulatory solutions to be implemented by the LCDC.

PART ONE

Oregon's Land Use System and Goal 1

Oregon's land use planning system plays a foundational role in why Oregon has productive farm and forest lands, diverse housing in every community, a variety of public spaces, healthy natural resources, land for economic development, accessible recreational sites, and beloved, walkable neighborhoods.

The legislature passed Senate Bill 100 (SB 100) in 1973, under the leadership of Governor Tom McCall. SB 100 established a state-level program, implemented primarily at the local level, that intentionally manages Oregon's land by limiting urban sprawl, preserving Oregon's valuable forests and farmland, ensuring livable communities, protecting natural resources, and planning for economic growth. The Legislature created the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) — a seven-member body appointed by the governor with varied expertise and backgrounds — and the state agency it oversees, the Department of Land

Conservation & Development (DLCD). The Legislature directed LCDC to adopt "goals" to implement SB 100 and address Oregon's top land-use priorities.

LCDC first introduced 10 Goals. Through a robust public involvement initiative that included over 10,000 Oregonians, 100,000 pamphlets, and 100 meetings, the public expressed that those 10 Goals did not go far enough and the LCDC listened. Thereafter, Goals 11–19 were created. These include urbanization, transportation, public facilities, the Willamette Greenway, and the four coastal-related Goals. The collective aim of the Goals is a statewide program that is both a structure and a set of values. Widespread public participation is and has always been paramount to Oregon's land use system.

The Commission ensures the integrity of Oregon's land use system by adopting administrative rules, amending the Goals on occasion, adopting key guidelines for local land use implementation, and generally keeping local governments accountable. Land use planning in Oregon is not intended to be advisory, but rather, it is an "integrated hierarchy of legally binding Goals, plans, and regulations."[4]

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF OREGON'S LAND USE PLANNING SYSTEM

Oregon's land use system is part of a greater history in Oregon. The physical context and ownership patterns of Oregon's land originate largely from white settlers who displaced the Indigenous peoples living in the region, often through violence, coercion, and broken treaties.[5] Oregon's land use system cannot be separated from this history.

"How do people think that the state of Oregon got here? How did these counties get here? How did all of these cities get here? Under what legal authority? Under what basis do they exist?"[6]
— Bud Lane, Tribal Council Vice Chairman, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

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Throughout the 20th century, land use, real estate, and financing policies continued to target Black and Indigenous populations and people of color. Many land use decisions in Oregon's history came at the expense of one or more of these communities. For example, the construction of Interstate 5 and Memorial Coliseum bulldozed through the heart of the Black community in Portland's Albina neighborhood in the early 1960s.[7]

In 1941 federal anti-Japanese law forcibly interned thousands of Japanese-American individuals, most of whom contributed to Oregon's agriculture in the Hood River Valley.[8] Congress enacted the "Chinese Exclusion Act," prohibiting the immigration of all Chinese laborers; it was not repealed until the mid-20th century.[9] In addition, federal, state, and local laws and practices constructed prohibitions and other hurdles to Black and Indigenous people and other people of color from ordinary economic and social opportunities, such as buying a house, attending public schools, marriage, and certain employment. The visible and invisible impacts of these harms continue to deeply affect communities of color and shape the way Oregon looks today.

Therefore, state and local efforts to conduct meaningful, widespread public participation must be cognizant of the impacts that historical and continuing discrimination have on Black, Indigenous, and people of color populations.

Achieving Goal 1's aspiration to ensure that communities have a say in local land use decisions must account for the history of racism entrenched in the fabric of Oregon and the United States. While Goal 1's priorities should be retained, the mechanisms of public input must be reconsidered and revamped.

Otherwise, any attempts at public involvement will continue to perpetuate historical inequities and tokenize marginalized groups in the process.

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GOAL 1 — CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Goal 1 reflects the importance Oregonians place in participating in community decision-making, but it needs to be modernized to live up to its potential. The Goal's stated purpose is "to develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process." Goal 1 specifies six principles that local governments should incorporate into their local public involvement processes:

- Widespread citizen involvement
- Effective two-way communication
- Citizen influence
- Understandable technical information
- Strong feedback mechanisms
- Adequate financial support[10]

As with all the Goals, implementation of Goal 1 is monitored and enforced through the LCDC, DLCD, and the Land Use Board of Appeals. Additionally, LCDC has a statutorily required advisory committee — the Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC). The CIAC is intended to "reflect the geographic, demographic and socioeconomic diversity of the state," and advises LCDC and local governments on inclusive public involvement practices, but has no decision-making authority.

Administrative Rules

The 19 land use Goals are administrative rules adopted by the LCDC, and therefore have legal authority. The Goals were written with broad, general language so they would

be adaptable to political, social, and other changes in the decades to come. Unless a statute is directly applicable to certain land use decisions, administrative rules are the primary mechanism by which LCDC interprets and carries out the legislature's statutory direction.[11] LCDC has adopted additional administrative rules for most of the statewide land use goals to add specificity. However, the Commission has not adopted additional rules for Goal 1.

Goal Amendments

Amendments to land use goals alter the actual text of the Goal; therefore a Goal amendment can simply add clarity, or it can revise the intent of the Goal itself.[12] The process of amending a land use Goal is longer and more resource-intensive than adopting an administrative rule to interpret a Goal. Thus, LCDC has rarely undertaken a Goal amendment process. LCDC has amended Goal 1 once, in 1988.[13]

THE SHORTCOMINGS OF GOAL 1

Goal 1 was ground-breaking when LCDC adopted it; however, the Goal has failed to keep up with inclusive engagement practices and new technologies. Goal 1 opened the doors to public participation in land use planning, but now it must be updated — through a Goal amendment and/or additional rules, to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and update methodologies. Goal 1 must be a reflection of the changing communities it is meant to serve and to allow ALL community voices to participate in planning their communities.

This list briefly describes how Goal 1, today, falls short in its attempt to inspire widespread and meaningful public outreach and involvement:

Use of Exclusive Language

It starts with the title of the Goal — "Citizen Involvement." The title excludes noncitizens who live, work, learn, and play in our communities. It excludes documented and undocumented immigrants. This fails to recognize that everyone living in Oregon is a member of the community and cares about, and should have a voice in, the livability of Oregon. Our notion of citizenship should be informed by the

concept of "social citizenship" — a framework under which citizenship goes beyond a piece of paper but entails full access to civic life.

General language allows weak implementation

LCDC wrote Goal 1 to be flexible, to account for differences of size and demographics of Oregon's counties and cities. However, it is this flexibility that sometimes leads to ambiguity, inconsistency across jurisdictions, and a lack of accountability when conducting public outreach processes.

For example, Goal 1 sets out this benchmark for local governments to follow: "Adequate human, financial, and informational resources shall be allocated for the citizen involvement program." However, the word "adequate" lacks specificity. Because LCDC has not adopted implementing rules for Goal 1, there is no standard element that would enable either DLCD or local residents to determine if a city or county is complying with Goal 1. This lack of implementation standards has led to inconsistency among Oregon's counties and cities.

Does Not Address Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Who has access to civic engagement? Who is being represented most in local governments throughout Oregon? How are the racist and exclusionary land use and public engagement processes of the past recognized and addressed in local government land use decision-making proceedings today?

Goal 1 does not contain the words such as equity, inclusion, or accessibility anywhere, and thus fails to provide guidance for all levels of government in incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion in land use decision-making processes.

Lack of Meaningful Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) Requirement

Goal 1 requires that every county and city in Oregon create a Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC). CICs act as important local advisory committees, to oversee and advise on public engagement processes. Goal 1 also provides that a local government may request permission for its Planning

Commission to act as the CIC instead. However, these are two different functions. The role of a Planning Commission is to offer technical and informed planning expertise to elected officials and oversee the planning activities of the city or county. Citizen Involvement Committees, on the other hand, are responsible for developing and evaluating plans for public involvement. Today, most local governments use their planning commission as their CIC.

When a Planning Commission assumes the roles and responsibility of a CIC, this presents various problems:

- Planning Commissions play a different role in land use decision-making processes.
- There may be an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Planning Commissions often hold hearings on land use decisions, which can be time consuming and controversial at times. Therefore, if the same public officials also have the responsibility to review their own public involvement, this could pose a conflict of interest.
- Planning commissions often have a full set of responsibilities, and little capacity to conduct and update an in-depth overview of the local government's public involvement efforts.
- Many planning commissioners are technical experts in land use planning, but do not have extensive experience or training in community involvement.
- Planning commissions are not always representative of Oregon's diverse populations.

No Targeted Outreach Requirement

Goal 1 does not require specific outreach to marginalized populations. LCDC has not revised Goal 1 or adopted rules that take into account the inequitable and diverse circumstances of many community members.

Inadequate Statewide Notice Regulations.

Today's statutory minimum notice requirements for local land use applications do not meet minimum community engagement standards, or even the current Goal 1. Current statewide rules require that municipalities notify via mail only property owners (not renters) — obviously ignoring key stakeholders and community members.

- Within UGBs: property owners within 100 feet of property. The average city block in downtown Portland is 200 feet.
- Outside UGBs: property owners within 500–750 feet of property.
- Cities and counties who follow only the statutory minimum notice requirements might thus miss the renter living next door while notifying the landowner who lives in another state.

PART TWO
Why does public engagement matter?

Oregon's environmental, demographic, and economic makeup is changing. For state, regional, and local governing bodies to adapt to the changing needs of the communities they serve, robust public engagement processes are necessary. Engaging the public should not be a "box-checking" activity for local governments. To ensure the integrity of Oregon's land use system, local government outreach efforts must be both broad and deep, transparent, and multifaceted.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THEORY

In the early- to mid-20th century, transportation and land use planning in the United States was guided by a top-down approach. The lack of diverse voices within the institutional hierarchies of government has led to poor planning practices that deeply affect marginalized communities, and the community as a whole. In the latter half of the 20th century, the public involvement paradigm shifted. Governing bodies recognized the value of public input and implemented structures to encourage individuals to participate, including community-based, bottom-up approaches to public input. Goal 1 recognizes that it takes sustained intentional efforts from local governments to ensure that all communities are heard. Many planning theories demonstrate the pivotal role that public input has in urban and regional planning.

FOUR URBAN PLANNING THEORIES

Blueprint Planning
A top-down urban planning approach that asserts that the built environment of the city should be decided and implemented by planning experts. There is no public participation. This theory of planning dominated global architecture and city planning efforts since the Renaissance.

Rational Process Approach
This process of planning introduced statistical and survey data to best inform land use and urban planning decisions. It undermined blueprint planning by establishing a rational process of creating and implementing a plan by starting with the "definition of problems" and ending with implementation and monitoring of the plan. The public did not take part in the planning process.

Participatory Planning
This bottom-up planning approach attempts to decentralize the planning process by creating methods of participation, such as citizen advisory committees, public hearings, and testimony. This fosters collaboration between community members and government.

Advocacy Planning
This theory strategically addresses the unique and specific barriers that marginalized populations experience, including BIPOC, the disability community, queer communities, rural/ farmers, undocumented folks, economically disadvantaged, and more.

The two theories that resonate most with Goal 1 are participatory and advocacy planning. Participatory Planning stresses the decentralization of planning by including voices from the community. However, to work it requires that every individual have equal access to the modes of public participation, but we know that is not the status on the ground.
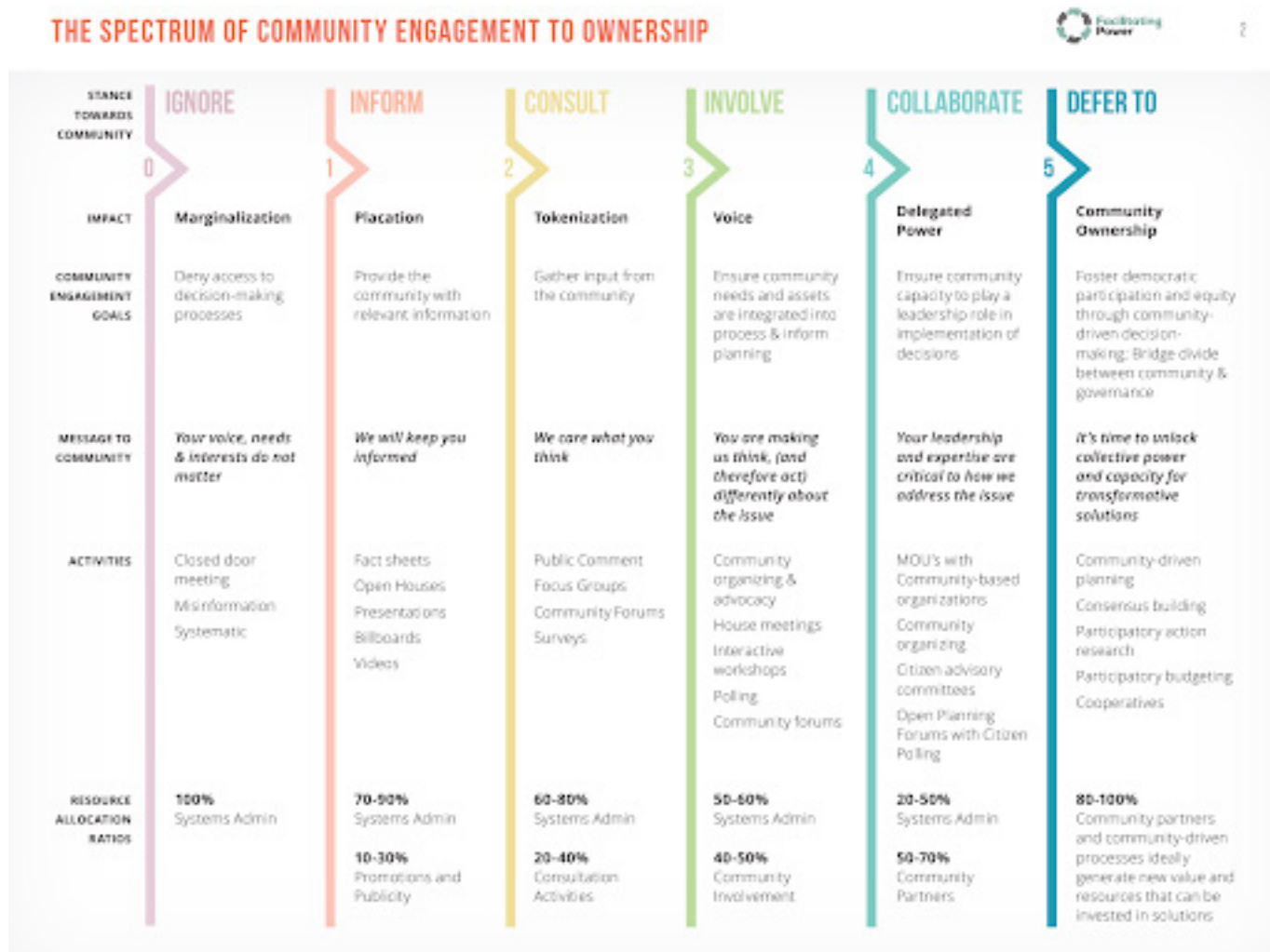
Advocacy Planning takes a more equitable lens by recognizing the particular inequalities and historic injustices that exist. It concludes that an inclusive space in local community government is not possible without first addressing the historic and present disadvantages that marginalized communities face.

THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A popular model developed and used by planners and social theorists is the Spectrum of Community Engagement. Other popular versions of this model include Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation."

From "Marginalization" to "Community Ownership," the "Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership" identifies the most common public participation methods used by organizations and municipalities. Most local governments and organizations are at the "Consult" and "Involve" stages of this spectrum. Governmental bodies should use this chart as a tool to set goals, evaluate progress, and have real conversations about what action steps they should take.

From left to right, this chart illustrates bridging the gap between the community and governance by fostering community empowerment and ownership. For example, when "community engagement" looks like only surveys and one-time mail notices, there is no possibility for ownership or even collaboration.

THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP

Facilitating Power

STANCE TOWARDS COMMUNITY	IGNORE 0	INFORM 1	CONSULT 2	INVOLVE 3	COLLABORATE 4	DEFER TO 5
IMPACT	Marginalization	Placation	Tokenization	Voice	Delegated Power	Community Ownership
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS	Deny access to decision-making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process & inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions	Foster democratic participation and equity through community-driven decision-making; Bridge divide between community & governance
MESSAGE TO COMMUNITY	*Your voice, needs & interests do not matter*	*We will keep you informed*	*We care what you think*	*You are making us think, (and therefore act) differently about the issue*	*Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue*	*It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions*
ACTIVITIES	Closed door meeting Misinformation Systematic	Fact sheets Open Houses Presentations Billboards Videos	Public Comment Focus Groups Community Forums Surveys	Community organizing & advocacy House meetings Interactive workshops Polling Community forums	MOU's with Community-based organizations Community organizing Citizen advisory committees Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling	Community-driven planning Consensus building Participatory action research Participatory budgeting Cooperatives
RESOURCE ALLOCATION RATIOS	100% Systems Admin	70-90% Systems Admin 10-30% Promotions and Publicity	60-80% Systems Admin 20-40% Consultation Activities	50-60% Systems Admin 40-50% Community Involvement	20-50% Systems Admin 50-70% Community Partners	80-100% Community partners and community-driven processes ideally generate new value and resources that can be invested in solutions

The public should be involved at every stage of the planning process to best ensure that communities have a legitimate decision-making role in local projects. When the words community engagement are not backed up by efficacious actions, the whole process is nebulous and discourages further involvement.

Spectrums such as this are never perfect because they tend to reduce nuanced and complex social relationships to scalable linear categories. And, every public participation initiative is different and will require different mechanisms. However, this chart can help governments and planners contextualize and self-evaluate their public participation mechanisms.

ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY BARRIERS

Traditional methods of participation — including "notice and comment" and formal in-person testimony — are intimidating and exclusionary for many. This often results in most public input coming from community members in a position of privilege — that is, they have the time, means, and knowledge to participate.

However, for those who experience barriers to public participation, accessibility is a major factor as to why local governments are not getting widespread input. The below chart details frequent deterrents to public participation. These disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, disabled populations, rural communities, queer individuals, those of low-income, and those who are undocumented.

BARRIERS TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PART 1

WHAT are the barriers to public participation?	WHO is most affected?	WHY is this a problem?
Time Constraints *Many have busy lives making it difficult to pay attention to local policy changes, or even if following them, may not be able to attend the (often one) hearing that is held.*	Low-income people, those with disabilities or illness, parents, and caretakers. Childcare is expensive and not easily coordinated.	Those facing financial insecurity and/or time constraints, especially with multiple jobs, have extraordinary constraints that hinder public participation in many forms.
Language Barriers *The communication barrier that nonnative English speakers experience.*	Spanish speakers and immigrants from non–English speaking countries. 15.5% of Oregonians are nonnative English speakers. The majority of that population's first language is Spanish. Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian are the most commonly spoken non-English languages in the state, and 172,000 Oregonians speak a total of 123 other languages.	A high level of English comprehension is expected in most government meetings. Technical vocabulary knowledge is an unfair requirement and excludes many Oregonians. Translation services are inconsistent and often difficult to obtain.
Intimidating Public Participation Processes *Traditional participation structures are often discouraging because of their complexity, technicality, and public speaking requirements.*	Undocumented, BIPOC, and low-income communities.	Government buildings can be intimidating for BIPOC and undocumented individuals, especially with law enforcement presence. This often deters public participation. Lack of accessible language and transparent communication will lead to isolation and misunderstanding among participants, therefore discouraging further engagement.

BARRIERS TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PART 2

Fear of Retaliation *Fearing pushback in one's personal life from those who disagree with one's political position or express hostility towards one's identity.*	Rural communities, BIPOC, renters, undocumented individuals, and LGBTQ+ communities.	Many local governments require a name and address to testify. In many communities, especially rural or small, there is no practical anonymity, especially if governments require a name and address to participate. Participation can be a real danger for many vulnerable community members. Threats from groups and individuals who express animosity towards one's identity or position puts vulnerable communities at risk.
Geographic Barriers Long distances and lack of transportation to the public hearing location is a hindrance to public participation.	Low-income and rural communities, older persons, those with physical disabilities.	Lack of transportation and long distances to travel for a meeting dissuade community members who face financial insecurity, have transportation barriers, or have time constraints. Individuals must pay the cost of transportation (bus ticket, parking, gas).
Mistrust Between Communities and Government Historic injustices have created a lack of trust between local government and marginalized groups. Other groups might hold a distrust of government for a variety of reasons.	Historically and currently underserved communities: BIPOC, immigrants and refugees, undocumented individuals, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, those of low income, and farmworkers.	Historically, marginalized groups have been tokenized, placated, and ignored during public participation processes. Many planning decisions have been adverse to historically marginalized groups.
Digital Divide A lot of attention has been given to the possibility that technology can help overcome some of the barriers mentioned above. However, there is a gap between those who benefit from access to digital technologies versus those who do not. This includes access to the internet and other technologies. The digital divide can also refer to the gap in digital literacy (i.e., typing skills, knowledge of digital platforms).	Rural communities and those of low income.	Not all Oregonians have access to the internet: 87% of Oregonians have access to the internet; that number shrinks to 77% for just BIPOC communities. Consistent internet access is difficult to obtain for a variety of reasons: high cost, remoteness, housing instability, and more can impact access. The digital divide was heightened during the pandemic when businesses, schools, and governments relied on the internet.

10 BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

This section synthesizes the best practices local governments and urban planners are using across the country to conduct community outreach and overcome ingrained (visible or invisible) barriers to civic engagement.

1. Start Community Outreach Early

Start with a purpose statement. Effective community outreach begins with developing a clear statement of purpose before initiating a public engagement effort, and staying accountable to that mission. The purpose statement should answer at least these questions: What issues does this project address? What long-term and broad outcome is desired? What responsibility does the agency have? What are the consequences of doing nothing?

Create public involvement objectives that address the following questions: How much influence will the public have in developing planning concepts? What is the goal for community input? How do we ensure broad and inclusive public engagement? How will this input be incorporated into decision-making?
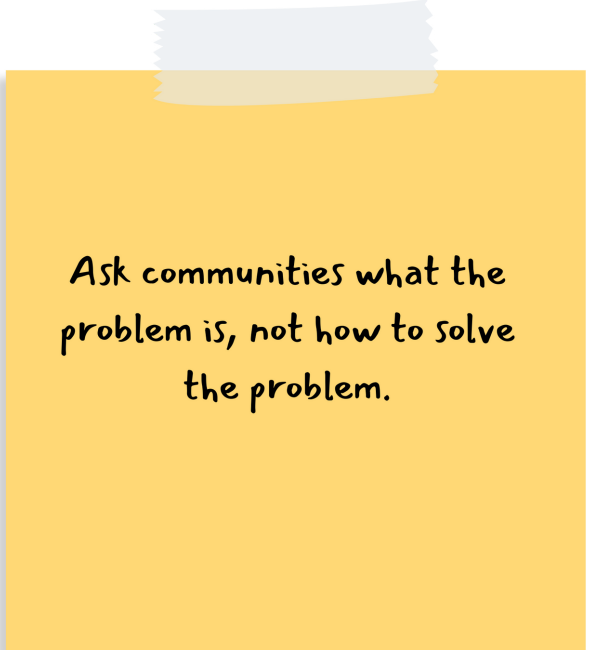
Ask, "Who should collaborate on this project?" When defining the key stakeholders in a project, think about the limitations and inherent biases of the stakeholder approach. Not every group will participate in every project. However, outreach should include a focus on underserved communities. Move away from the traditional stakeholder approach that passively prioritizes people who own homes or businesses, which skews towards white, educated, English speakers.

Then kick off public engagement early. A common mistake in public involvement is that leaders and local staff begin the process too late. This often leads to surface-level community engagement. Hasty public outreach initiatives can also validate self-serving input from the community, rather than fostering diverse voices and thorough collaboration that will lead to accountability and efficacious policy changes.

- Too often, community outreach starts once the problem has already been identified, and sometimes solutions have been drafted. Community outreach will not be authentic if the terms and outcomes are predetermined by the governing body. That leaves no room for active collaboration or community empowerment.

- When community outreach is an afterthought or a check mark, there is little time to backtrack in the planning process. Decision makers are already looking for answers with assumptions about the problem.

- Hasty public outreach efforts most likely result in surveys, minimum notification, and public comments that do not provide meaningful conversations, feedback, and modification opportunities to a public project. This turns community outreach into tokenization and placation.

Ask communities what the problem is, not how to solve the problem.

2. Inform Communities

Many community members do not participate in government decision-making because accessible resources about how to participate are not provided. State and local governments should invest in community-based education about how local residents, workers, and businesses can get involved with the local government's activities and decisions. This will create a pathway for more active participation among community members later.

Methods for Information Sharing
- In-person connections: canvassing, happy hour events
- Pamphlets, signage, and notice in libraries and community centers
- Big public displays: billboards, signage, sidewalk art, murals
- In-person and virtual presentations in a variety of locations
- Digital advertisements and social media
- Information in many languages
- Relationship building activities that bring community and electeds together, like park cleanups, etc.

Action Steps
- Use public community spaces for education events. Use welcoming and inclusive spaces where people of all identities can feel safe and comfortable.
- Use creative and experiential ways to connect people to the issue. Community-based organizations are working to help people understand the value of public participation, and to mobilize community members.
- Meet communities where they are. Be aware of the barriers to community engagement. Education takes many different forms, so use a variety of different methods to ensure everyone can be reached. Provide materials in different languages. Also provide opportunities to engage at a variety of times.
- Compensate community-based organizations to do outreach and education specifically targeted for marginalized and under-resourced communities with whom they work. (See Section 4.)

3. Earn Trust from Communities

The relationship between many communities and the government is fragile. Historical injustices continue to impact communities. Decision-making bodies that continue to tokenize populations by using "community outreach" as a check mark to meet the minimum public involvement requirements are failing the communities they are intended to serve.

Importance of Uncomfortable Conversations
Portland, OR

Public engagement initiatives can bring up unspoken, uncomfortable issues of race. Sometimes it results in local communities not always giving planners the answers and responses that are expected. Such was true during a public meeting in 2011 that started seemingly simple: the construction of a bike lane on North Williams Avenue in Portland. However, the meeting provided a "raw and emotional exchange" about the profound effects of gentrification. This high-traffic bike area happened to go through the heart of the Black community in Portland: the lower Albina district.
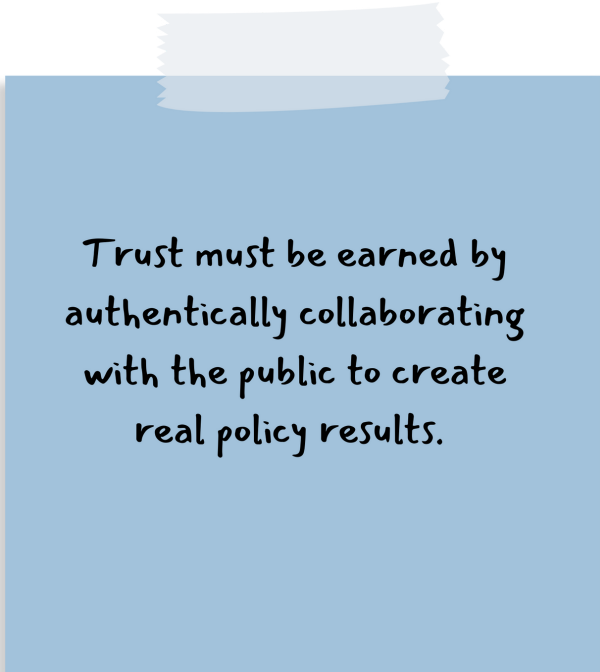
This experience was a wake-up call for Portland planners to overhaul their outreach process with intention and consideration about the unique communities they are serving. It highlights that key questions must always be asked: Who is this development serving? What history must be taken into consideration?

Action Steps

- Draft deliberate and specific expectations for the community engagement process, communicate those expectations to participants at the start, and ask participants to provide any needed modifications. Be clear about how participants' input will be taken into account in crafting public policy, and then follow through on it.
- Show your work. Give specific details as to how and why the public's input did or did not impact the decision-making process or outcome. Honesty is key in public engagement efforts.
- Do not group communities together as a monolith. Terms like BIPOC and EJ community tend to generalize

experiences — notice trends but do not assume that the answer is the same for every member of a group.
- Listen to trusted resources and voices in diverse communities and show that they have been heard. Learning about the nuances of dynamic communities will enhance any collaborative efforts made by local governments. Demonstrating how the local government has heard the input will build trust and a reciprocal relationship.
- Be willing to change course. Local governments must be willing to change how, and over what time line, they thought a process would roll out, if that is what they hear from communities.

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- Be willing to change course. Local governments must be willing to change how, and over what time line, they thought a process would roll out, if that is what they hear from communities.

4. Compensate CBOs for Community Outreach

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are trusted messengers to diverse communities in Oregon. As the name suggests, community-based organizations form to address pressing needs of a marginalized community, such as the Black or disabled communities. CBOs have more access to tools and community members than the local government ever will. Compensating CBOs to do community outreach work and act as resources is the best way to access under-represented communities. Some CBOs in Oregon include:
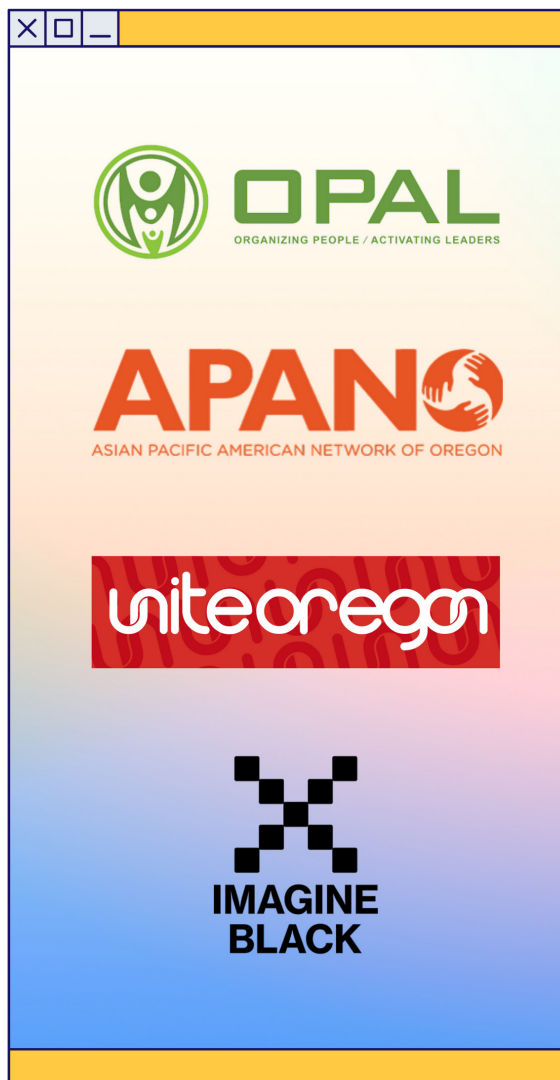
Large-Scale 2020 Transportation Measure Pays CBOs for Help with Outreach
Portland Metro Area, OR

Increasingly, local governments recognize the importance of compensating Community-based organizations (CBOs) to conduct community outreach initiatives. In 2020, Metro's proposed multibillion-dollar project called Get Moving 2020 underwent an extensive 18-month public involvement process. Metro built a 30-member task force made up of 1/3 elected officials, 1/3 business/transportation experts, and 1/3 community members. Public involvement on a project as big as this measure needed time and resources; Metro recognized its limitations as a governmental organization. To bring light to marginalized and diverse voices, they consulted with four CBOs for community organizing, education, and involvement efforts. Metro was able to identify the specific priorities of diverse community members whose voices might not have been included otherwise. For example, one identified priority was free transit for high school students in the Metro region. Too often, community voices are diluted through the traditional public processes, but CBOs offer a line of direct communication to the needs of the communities they serve.

Action Steps
- Start with grasstops. Grasstops are trained and respected leaders in grassroots movements. These individuals have access to larger networks of community members.
- Be mindful of the capacity of these organizations. Compensation is necessary to grow capacity for a community organizing project.
- Empower the CBOs to define the scope. The organization must be given the opportunity to guide and shape the project's conversation.
- Be open to constructive criticism and changes to the plan.
- Start consulting with CBOs early. Consulting with CBOs too late in an outreach process indicates a lack of authentic interest in their input, and might come too late to make changes.

5. Collect Quantitative and Qualitative Data

When assessing the public's needs, quantitative and qualitative data play roles. **Quantitative data** measures trends with a numerical or objective value. **Qualitative data** is observed data that characterizes something subjectively. Both are valuable during public input processes, but quantitative data is too often prioritized and therefore nuance and context can be missed.

Quantitative data, such as statistics and social indicators, highlight larger-scale patterns in communities.

Social indicators capture social phenomena to inform policy decisions. One well-known social indicator used in policy is the "poverty line."[16] When understood and used properly, social statistical indicators can be used "as mechanisms for change...indicators reflect values, identify priorities, and inform collective action."[17]

Statistical data gives broad and general information about communities, but should not be the only source of context when conducting public involvement.

Qualitative Data often takes the form of personal narrative.

Storytelling can fill in the gaps of what statistical data might not be able to show: What is the actual lived experience of individuals in this neighborhood? What barriers do certain communities face?

The nuances of the lived experiences of community members must be acknowledged during public input processes. Planners sometimes impose their assumptions and expert biases when starting a plan. When storytelling is prioritized, assumptions fall to the background.

Centering Marginalized Voices through the Latino Civic Participation Project *Eugene, OR*

Traditional methods of participation have been inaccessible to historically underserved communities time and time again, so the Latino Civic Participation Project (LCPP) conducted targeted community outreach to the Latinx community. By seeking to empower low-income marginalized Latinx, the LCPP went to community hubs in Eugene and used a "participation-by-play" method. Participation-by-play used hundreds of recycled dioramas to redesign a map of their neighborhood. This input was used to define the specific and unique needs of the Latinx community. Participate-by-play was a conversation starter that allowed individuals to voice their personal concerns and tell their stories of lived experience as Latinx individuals in Lane County. For example, a young participant redesigned a diorama into a soccer field to express his desire for more outdoor spaces and activities.[18] This project shows the importance of holding space for personal narrative for those who have been excluded from the conversation historically. The LCPP showed that public input does not always look like official testimony, online anonymous surveys, and demographic analysis.

Action Steps
- **Use both.** Local governments should pair quantitative and qualitative data together to best inform planning decisions. For example, demographic statistics will provide a big picture and personal testimony will help personalize this data.
- **Listen.** Reflect upon the community's personal stories and implement actual changes in planning or explain how the information was considered if not directly reflected.

6. Go to Their Table

A common metaphor in community outreach is "the table" — meaning the place where conversations are had and decisions are made. This framework asks important questions: Who is usually invited to the table? Who has the most influence? Who has the loudest voice? Where this metaphor falls short is the expectation that community members must go to government, which can be intimidating and inaccessible.

This metaphor reveals a problem of how public participation is thought about: individuals must go to government. Instead, the government should sit at THEIR tables.

The "table" metaphor obviously poses the question of location. Community outreach must be held in public and communal spaces.

Community space examples:
- Libraries
- Places of Worship
- Schools
- Farmers Markets
- Community Centers
- Local Events
- Parks
- Cultural Events
- Senior Centers
- YMCA, YWCA, etc.

Provide in-person and virtual ways to participate. The 2021 Oregon Legislature passed HB-2560, "Equitable Access to Civic Engagement," which ensures that individuals will be able to attend hearings and provide valuable input remotely, such as from their homes.

Local governments have many online tools and resources available by which to engage residents in various parts of planning. Some of the most popular among the planning field include:

- **Slido:** presentation engagement platform for feedback from audience
- **Poll Everywhere:** audience response system
- **Social Pinpoint:** participatory decision-making tool
- **Zoom:** online virtual meetings
- **Mural:** virtual whiteboard
- **Peachjar:** digital fliers to ensure parents of students hear about community outreach
- **Mentimeter:** interactive presentation software for real-time feedback
- **Miro:** virtual whiteboard
- **Map App:** custom website to centrally locate important maps for Portland public processes
- **Figma:** collaborative design software

Action Steps
- **Choose locations that are easily accessible to diverse populations.** When doing community outreach that targets a specific demographic, identify the culturally significant hubs. For example, if a large percentage of the targeted community is faith-based, planners should go to places of worship and religiously affiliated events. Ensure locations are accessible to all abilities.
- **Host service-based activities.** Food distribution events, tree planting, and community gardening are all examples of community-based activities that can be meeting spaces.
- **Provide synchronous and asynchronous digital participation methods.**

7. Communicate Actively and Inclusively to Participants

Governments and planning experts often use technical language in public outreach efforts, which can create communication gaps. A document filled with acronyms and technical language can be isolating for participants and turn away entire groups of people from participating.

Local governments can communicate more effectively by using simple language and connecting communities to the issue by relating it to the values people care about most. One cost-effective way to ensure clearer language in public planning documents is to have staff from departments outside the planning department review the materials. Asking a few community members to review drafts would also be very helpful.

Community engagement means consistent, two-way communication between participants and the government. Goal 1 appropriately requires "feedback mechanisms" to ensure that "citizens will receive a response from policy makers." Feedback loops, if open and honest, build trust between communities and government. Without a clear and direct response from public officials and planners, participants will rightfully feel their input is undervalued. Therefore, ways to provide public input and the resulting decisions should be well publicized and accessible.

Action Steps

- **Write in simple language.** Find the delicate balance between simplifying the information without skipping over key concepts. Explain the project in a straightforward manner without patronizing the participants.
  - Avoid technical planning terms.
  - When providing long documents, use five or fewer bullet points to communicate the main points.
  - Avoid acronyms.
- **Answer the "why should you care?" question.** Tie the planning decision at hand to people's lives and their community. Be culturally sensitive. One awkwardly worded question or comment can turn someone away immediately. Have multiple people review questions and comments before publishing them.
- **Use an experienced discussion facilitator** for public forums and workshops, who is familiar with DEI principles, to create an equitable discussion "table." Facilitate meeting conversations to ensure all voices are heard, not just the loudest.

These recommendations are not exhaustive of all communication techniques. The statewide Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC)'s Putting the People in Planning provides in-depth information about communication techniques during public involvement.
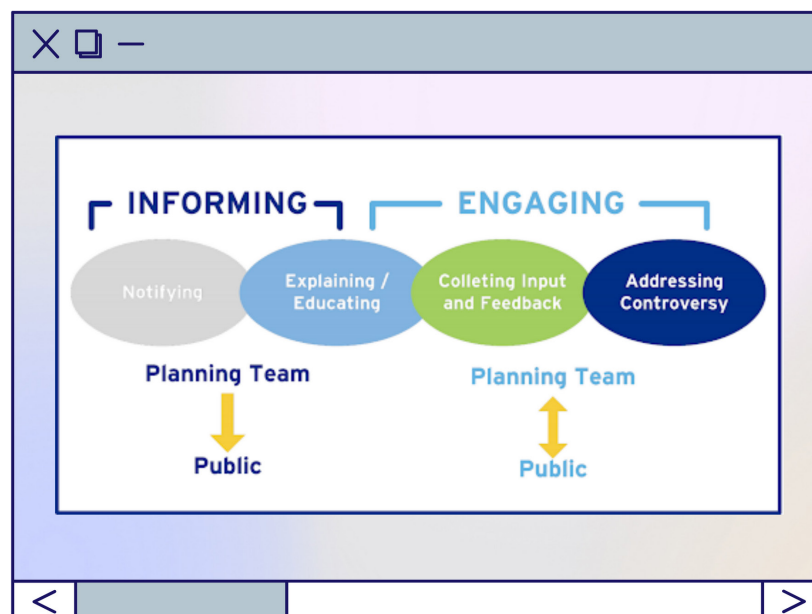
8. Provide Translation and Interpretation Services

Language barriers are prominent accessibility and equity issues within our communities. For the 15.5% of Oregon's population who are nonnative English speakers, civically engaging in traditional ways is simply not an option. For the deaf community, hiring interpreters for live meetings is increasingly important during this pandemic, because reading lips cannot be done with face masks. Without offering these critical services, these populations cannot participate without extreme difficulty. This presents a serious accessibility issue for many Oregonians.

Public Participation in the Face of Disaster
Talent, OR

The devastating 2020 forest fires hit Talent, a town of about 7,000 in the Rogue Valley, hard. The Almeda fire destroyed 2,800 homes and buildings and displaced hundreds of families and businesses. Talent's local government took immediate action to support their community members, rebuild housing, and recover economically from this disaster. The City Council started a public engagement initiative and hired a Spanish translator. Not only does Talent provide live translation at all meetings, but Spanish-speaking community members are able to testify in their native language. The urgency of the situation called attention to language barriers Oregonians face in civic engagement processes. Other Oregon counties and cities should follow this example and offer basic translation services to provide access to some of the most vulnerable populations.

Action Steps

- Hire a permanent translator. For example, making the same in-person Spanish translator a permanent part of meetings will improve the relationship between the Spanish-speaking communities and government.
- Aim for strong content comprehension, not just superficial understanding. This means translators and interpreters must be immersed in the content, so contextual information does not get lost in translation.

Live translation is best paired with imagery and visual cues. Smaller communities can pool resources with other agencies to hire quality translators and interpreters.

- Offer translation tools for online information. When sending emails, posting to social media, or publishing written communication, provide multilinguistic options.
- Use written and nonverbal communication during meetings alongside live verbal translation. Sometimes direct translation can impede the effectiveness of a presentation or meeting. In addition to verbal communication during meetings, use imagery, infographics, and nonverbal interactive slides, which have the ability to surpass linguistic boundaries.

Planners should evaluate potential language barriers at the start of public participation efforts. In addition to English, the most common languages spoken in Oregon are Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, and German.

9. Use Creative and Interactive Problem Solving

Planners can reach a greater audience by embracing creative ways of public interaction, in addition to traditional public participation methods. For example, almost anyone can participate when art is the means to participate. Interactive problem solving allows for out-of-the-box public input.

Taking Urban Design Into Their Own Hands
Cleveland, OH

The Making Our Own Space (MOOS) project conducts youth-centered workshops to design everyday urban architecture. These hands-on workshops embrace the creative side to planning. Through small-scale architectural design and construction, youth in the Cleveland community actively participated in their built environment. MOOS embodies the vision of community ownership. Not only was this a successful educational endeavor, but this resulted in actual implementable solutions in the Cleveland community. Planners have the unique opportunity to inspire community-based action and ownership, which can be as simple as a swing set or bus bench constructed and designed by community members.

Action Steps
- **Use creativity in public engagement efforts.** Think outside the box for public engagement; creativity has the capacity to access another part of the brain. This can yield more nuanced and unexpected solutions.
- **Advertise public projects with art**. People respond to art. Creativity attracts diverse and proactive engagement.

10. Debrief and Assess Community Outreach Efforts Thoroughly

Check in during and after the public involvement process. After the community engagement is completed, hold a debrief process to discuss what worked and what didn't, and what changes need to be made to improve future public input processes.

Discuss these questions:
- Did the comments reflect a variety of needs and interests? Why or why not?
- How many different opportunities to provide input were there? Were those opportunities considerate of people's time?
- Was everyone heard from? Whom did we hear from? Did we hear from perspectives we did not expect?
- How were often excluded groups included?
- What accommodations did we provide? Which did we miss out on?
- What recommendations did we use from the public and which did we not?
- What new strategies can we consider for the future?
- How will we provide information back to participants about how their input was used?

Action Steps
- Track the public input process as it is happening. Statistics like public meeting attendance and website hits will help inform how many people are being reached and some understanding of who they are. Data is needed to assess performance.
- Create evaluation forms for community members to complete.
- Create open discussion and reflection on the question, What can we do better next time?
- Request the LCDC Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC) for feedback on community engagement efforts. As an advisory committee, the CIAC is a valuable resource for local governments that request feedback on public involvement plans.

PART THREE

Action Steps to Revamp Goal 1

Goal 1's purpose to ensure meaningful and intentional public involvement in all aspects of land use decision-making was and still is groundbreaking. However, it needs to be updated to ensure all voices have meaningful and accessible opportunities to be heard. To meet the needs of the next 50 years, it is time to revise Goal 1.

"To develop a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process."[19]

Goal 1 specifies six principles that local governments should incorporate:

- Widespread citizen involvement
- Effective two-way communication
- Citizen influence
- Understandable technical information
- Strong feedback mechanisms
- Adequate financial support

Goal 1's six guiding principles broadly speak to the values of public involvement. To ensure that cities and counties achieve these, they must conduct adequate public outreach and be both held accountable and adequately supported in their Goal 1 efforts.

This means structural and textual changes to Goal 1 and increased funding to ensure local governments have the resources to equitably include all voices.

Below is a list of actions that LCDC should take, through revisions to Goal 1 and/or through adoption of Goal 1 administrative rules:

1. Change the name of Goal 1 from "Citizen Involvement" to "Public Involvement."

2. Clearly define public involvement terms and processes. Terms such as widespread, feedback mechanism, and technical information must be defined in Goal 1.

3. Require all cities and counties to create a community-led process outside of the planning commission to periodically review and update the public involvement process.

4. Increase the minimum requirements for mailed notice, and other notice, of local land use applications. Currently, only property owners are required to receive mailed notice of land use proceedings, thereby excluding renters. Also, notice must expand beyond mail.

5. Increase funding for local governments to invest in community-based organizations (CBOs) for education and outreach initiatives.

6. Provide in-depth and consistent equity & diversity education for planners, agencies, local elected policy makers, and local governments. This includes requiring continuously updated training for local citizen involvement committees and planning commissions on best practices for community outreach.

7. Require local governments to start their outreach process before any decision-making process. This begins with writing the public involvement objectives and ensuring accessible ways to participate.

8. Provide readily accessible quantitative and qualitative information necessary for the public to engage in land use processes and decisions.

9. Require local governments to design and achieve targeted outreach that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. Require local governments to craft outreach plans specific to communities that are not usually represented in land use decision-making processes. This might include outreach plans specific to BIPOC, youth, LGBTQ+, those with disabilities, older persons, and nonnative English speakers.

10. Fund local governments to hire translators and interpreters for local government hearings, public forums, and other public involvement events.

11. Require public participation to occur in multiple, diverse, and accessible locations.

12. Require local governments to complete a debrief process after every public involvement project.

CONCLUSION

Oregon must recommit to equitable, inspirational, inclusive public involvement through a revised Goal 1. Land use planning, at every level, must begin and end with the people that it serves for the longevity and enrichment of Oregon's communities. Investing in public participation will be investing in durable and long-standing communities in Oregon. Community-driven planning can be a daunting task, but it is well worth it. It will take strategic and robust short- and long-term efforts at all levels of the political landscape — state and local government institutions, grassroots organizations, and individuals.

ACRONYMS

DLCD	Department of Land Conservation and Development
LCDC	Land Conservation and Development Commission
CIAC	Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee
CIC	Citizen Involvement Committee
SB/HB	Senate Bill/House Bill
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rules
ORS	Oregon Revised Statutes
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
EJ	Environmental Justice

RESOURCES

Goal 1 and Land Use
- Read Goal 1.
- Learn the in-depth timeline and history of Oregon's land use program.
- The full text of 1973's Senate Bill 100.
- Watch or read the oral history of white settlers' broken treaties with Oregon's native population.

Public Involvement Theory
- Read about Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation.
- Read more about the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership from Facilitating Power.
- Learn about the Strong Towns Movement's approach to public involvement.
- The Journal of Deliberative Democracy explores more of a political theoretical side of public involvement.

Racial Equity in Planning
- Listen to the interview with a North Carolina town's planning director and her ideas about racial equity and justice.
- Read the American Planning Association's informational DEI report, "More and Better: Increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Planning."
- Explore the variety of resources available at the Racial Equity Alliance website.
- "Smart Growth and Equity: Improving racial equity, economic inclusion, and restorative justice through smart growth" offers resources and discussion facilitating tools for talking about DEI during the planning process.

Public Involvement Practices
- Oregon's statewide CIAC put together a document of very specific and applicable best practices in "Putting the People in Planning."
- Another CIAC resource is the Public Involvement Checklist.
- Public engagement during COVID-19 guidelines: "Low Contact Community Engagement."

INTERVIEWS

- Craig Beebe, Metro 6/24/21
- Chris Smith 6/24/21, 7/9/21
- Peggy Lynch, League of Women Voters of Oregon 7/7/21
- Tara Sulzen-O'Brien 7/7/21
- Aaron Ray 7/8/21
- Karen Swirsky 7/9/21
- Gerard Sandoval 7/12/21
- Aimee Okotie-Oyekan 7/13/21
- Samuel Diaz 7/16/21
- Eric Richardson 7/19/21
- Vivian Satterfield, Verde 7/21/21
- Sadie Carney & Kirstin Greene, DLCD 7/21/21
- Andrew Parish 7/23/21
- Michelle Glass, Rogue Action Center 8/12/21

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