

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

**CITY OF MEDFORD
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT**

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PREPARED BY

**CITY OF MEDFORD PLANNING DEPARTMENT
200 SOUTH IVY STREET
MEDFORD, OREGON 97501
(plnmed@ci.medford.or.us)**

JAMES E. HUBER, AICP, PLANNING DIRECTOR

**COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING DIVISION
BIANCA PETROU, AICP, ASSISTANT PLANNING DIRECTOR
JOHN ADAM, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER
JOE SLAUGHTER, AICP, PLANNER IV
CARLA ANGELI PALADINO, PLANNER III
PRALINE MCCORMACK, PLANNER II
CHRIS OLIVIER, GIS COORDINATOR
AARON HARRIS, PLANNER II**

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

TERMS USED 1

HISTORY OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM 1

GOAL 2

POLICIES 3

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES 3

 Participant Responsibilities 3

 A. Mayor and City Council 3

 B. Planning Commission/Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) 4

 C. City staff 4

 D. Stakeholder Committees 6

 E. Neighborhood Associations and Community Coalitions 6

 F. General Public 6

 G. Regional, State, & Federal Agencies 7

 Methods of Informing Participants 7

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN MEDFORD

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Citizen Involvement Element is to provide a framework for how the City of Medford ensures participation in the planning process as related to Statewide Planning Goal 1. It is important for the citizens of the community to understand the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan (the City's guiding document) and how they can influence and provide input to the decision makers responsible for the Plan's implementation and updates over time. Citizen involvement goes beyond the planning process and includes how the City engages, communicates, and educates its citizens on all municipal matters.

Citizens are encouraged to participate in all levels of the planning process and city governance. City elected officials, commission/committee members, and staff strive to engage citizens in this ongoing process. This citizen involvement element was last updated in the late 1980s. Since then the City has improved and expanded its outreach to the community and resolves to find innovative ways to continue that pattern into the future.

TERMS USED

Comprehensive Plan: "A generalized, coordinated land use map and policy statement of the governing body of a local government that interrelates all functional and natural systems and activities relating to the use of lands, including but not limited to sewer and water systems, transportation systems, educational facilities, recreational facilities and natural resources, and air and water quality management programs. 'Comprehensive' means all-inclusive, both in terms of the geographic area covered and [the] functional and natural activities and systems occurring in the area covered by the plan. 'General nature' means a summary of policies and proposals in broad categories and does not necessarily indicate specific locations of an area, activity, or use. A plan is 'coordinated' when the needs of all levels of governments, semipublic and private agencies, and the citizens of Oregon have been considered and accommodated as much as possible. 'Land' includes water, both surface and subsurface, and the air." (Oregon Revised Statute 197.015)

Planning Process: The aim of Statewide Planning Goal 2: Land Use Planning is to "establish a land use planning process and policy framework as a basis for all decision and actions related to use of land and to assure an adequate factual base for such decisions and actions." The planning process in Goal 2 outlines the following sections: Preparation of Plans and Implementation Measures, Regional, State, and Federal Plan Conformance, Plan Content, Filing of Plans, and Major Revisions and Minor Changes in the Plan and Implementation Measures.

HISTORY OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Citizen involvement has long been an important part of the planning process in Medford. When development of the first Comprehensive Plan was initiated in 1971, the Planning Commission and City Council were closely involved in the data-gathering process. In October 1974, a Comprehensive Plan Citizens' Committee was formed to evaluate the assembled information and to formulate a statement of goals and policies and a plan map.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

Following completion of the Committee's draft goals and policies and plan map, four public hearings were held before the Planning Commission and two before the City Council. During the hearing process, the Committee again conferred with public agencies, special districts, neighborhood organizations, and private citizens. All comments were considered by the Citizens' Committee and Planning Commission, and changes were made in the plan to accommodate the needs of those giving input where such changes would not adversely affect the intent of the plan.

Soon after the formation of the state level Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC), whose mandate was to evaluate local citizens' involvement programs, the existing Medford citizen involvement program was documented and presented to this group for evaluation and comment. With no apparent conflicts, the citizen involvement program was adopted by the City Council as a part of the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted on October 16, 1975.

With the adoption of Medford's Comprehensive Plan – which roughly coincided with the availability of the first draft of the *Oregon Land Use Handbook* – the tasks of establishing new directions and expanded responsibilities for the Citizens' Committee began. What followed was the creation of the Citizens' Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) whose objective was to identify and project the community's goals and needs into all phases of the planning process and to educate the citizenry on available community assets, resource limitations, and process constraints. Membership on CPAC was on a participatory basis and the right to vote on the committee was based on attending three meetings in a four-month period. In order to retain voting status, a member needed to attend three regular or subcommittee meetings within a five-month period. A chairperson, vice chairperson, and recording secretary, were elected for a one-year term who helped guide the committee. CPAC was further divided into four subcommittees representing major subject areas of community concern. The subject areas were housing, current issues, regional issues, and Comprehensive Plan updates. Over time new committees and commissions outside of CPAC were created that reviewed these specialized topics, groups such as the Housing and Community Development Commission and Parking Commission, changing the role and need for the CPAC. CPAC formally met until March 2013.

The City recognizes the importance of this first citizen committee and continues to foster citizen engagement and involvement in the planning process and city governance through the other established committees and commissions.

GOAL

Statewide Planning Goal 1: Maintain a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

City of Medford Strategic Plan 2014-2019:

Objective: *Provide adequate opportunities for public input.*

Action: *Provide and promote various methods of communication to enhance opportunities for citizen education and interaction.*

The City understands that citizen involvement is an on-going process rather than a one-time project. The methods used to outreach, communicate, and interact with the citizens will evolve

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

especially as technology changes over time. A variety of techniques will be used to provide opportunities for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process and City governance. The City will provide for a consistent and responsible citizen-involvement program to serve all its citizens.

POLICIES

The City of Medford shall ensure that all participants are informed and respectful of their duties to further citizen involvement.

The City of Medford shall provide the most efficient and effective means to informing citizens about the planning process.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Participant Responsibilities

The Mayor, City Council, City staff, Planning Commission, Site Plan and Architectural Commission, Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission, other City committees and boards, and the general public all have a voice in shaping the community through the comprehensive planning process. In order to effectively involve the citizens, it is important for all participants to understand and implement the following responsibilities:

A. Mayor and City Council

The Mayor and City Council are the citizens' elected leaders responsible for setting community goals and policy through comprehensive plan amendments, budgets, and related resolutions and ordinances. The Mayor and City Council will:

1. Adhere and require adherence to the Citizen Involvement Element.
2. Provide for and consider citizen input prior to making decisions. Make decisions that benefit the community as a whole.
3. Hold public hearings and follow adopted hearing procedures.
4. Follow the criteria and adopt findings of fact that explain the rationale used to reach land use decisions.
5. Provide for televised meetings both live and recorded to the public.
6. Improve communication with the media and outside organizations through the Communication Outreach Plan.¹
7. Meet with the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) at least annually to evaluate the Citizen Involvement program. Recommend changes as needed.

¹ The Communication Outreach Plan was approved by City Council through Resolution No. 2014-73.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

8. Encourage the use of stakeholder committees. Appoint and define responsibilities of committee members.
9. Encourage the use of subcommittees when appropriate.
10. Build relationships with community leaders and get buy-in to help with outreach and planning.²
11. Recruit a cross section of the population to volunteer on committees and commissions. Outreach to minority groups to participate.²
12. Promote and foster the creation of Neighborhood Associations and Community Coalitions.

B. Planning Commission/Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI)

The Planning Commission makes final decisions on land use matters and makes recommendations to the City Council on code amendments and other policy decisions that affect the City. The Planning Commission also serves as the Committee for Citizen Involvement. The Planning Commission will:

1. Adhere to A1–A4 above.
2. Report to the City Council on projects that are potentially controversial or have city-wide significance.
3. As the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI),
 - i. Develop and assist in implementing, evaluating, and suggesting new strategies for the City’s citizen involvement program.
 - ii. Provide an opportunity during the Planning Commission meetings for citizens to address the Commission on citizen-involvement-related matters.
 - iii. Discuss strategies at Planning Commission meetings that may assist with increasing public involvement and participation.
 - iv. Evaluate the citizen involvement program at least annually with City staff to offer corrections or changes.
 - v. Present the annual program evaluation to the City Council and make the report available to the local media and other interested parties.

C. City staff

City staff will:

1. Post agendas and meeting minutes on the City website.

² “Public Engagement with Diverse Communities in Medford”, Roanel Herrera and Gerardo Sandoval, PhD. 2013, University of Oregon and City of Medford Sustainable City Year Initiative program.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

2. Assist the CCI with preparing an annual evaluation report of the citizen-involvement program.
3. Advertise and promote openings on various committees and commissions related to planning and community issues.
4. Develop bilingual materials whenever possible.²
5. Involve the public early in the process on legislative projects using stakeholder committees and open houses that have community-wide impact.
6. Develop and maintain contact with interested citizens and groups.
7. Develop a protocol for the selection of members on stakeholder committees.
8. Use technology (such as on-line forums and websites) to engage citizens in the planning process and city governance.
9. Disseminate information through various formats (newsletters, public forums, surveys, websites etc.) for early-and-often citizen participation in the development of plans and policies. Seek buy-in early in the proposal.
10. Teach citizens how they can get involved in the process.
11. Identify key locations in the community (library, County Courthouse, City Hall, etc.) to post information regarding projects.
12. Identify locations in the community other than City Hall to hold meetings or open houses that are comfortable and familiar to people.²
13. Allocate adequate City staff time to assist and meet with citizens to explain projects and proposals.
14. Identify and allocate funding through the budget process specifically for citizen involvement activities.
15. Avoid using jargon in written and oral communication with the public. Explain complex issues in simple and understandable terms.
16. Make follow up calls to people who have agreed to attend a public engagement event.²
17. Offer tangible incentives or rewards for participants.²
18. Use organizational networks so participants are invited by people they know and trust.²
19. Be the point of contact for federal, state, regional and county agencies.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

20. Send notification to Associations and Coalitions of issues that pertain to a specific neighborhood or area of the City.

D. Stakeholder Committees

These committees should:

1. Provide recommendations to staff and the review bodies regarding issues that have citywide impact.
2. Represent diverse interests, expertise, and knowledge of the topic being considered.
3. Have assigned staff to assist with answering questions, providing information, and gathering feedback.
4. Have a defined goal from the elected officials and a set timeframe in which to provide a recommendation and final report.

E. Neighborhood Associations and Community Coalitions

1. Be citizen powered and represented.
2. Be accountable to the people they represent in the neighborhood.
3. Notify citizens of pertinent information and seek input to form recommendations.
4. Formulate both the majority and minority view points of the citizens and provide both to the City.
5. Provide reports outlining goals, objectives, and successes to the City Council at a study session.
6. Abide by public meetings law.
7. Satisfy the organizational requirements established by the City (per Chapter 2.466 and as amended).

F. General Public

The public is responsible to:

1. Stay informed of the planning process and issues related to city governance. Ask questions of staff and local leaders to better understand the topics under review.
2. Participate in all forms of the planning process.
3. Attend public meetings and forums to obtain information, listen to other points of view, and to express their thoughts on the subject matter.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

G. Regional, State, and Federal Agencies

1. These agencies should adhere to the Citizen Involvement Element for projects affecting the City.

Methods of Informing Participants:

1. City staff will continue to send public notice beyond the 100 foot notice area required by State Statute.
2. The City will continue to require neighborhood meetings for planned unit developments and consider extension of this requirement to other land use actions.
3. Post notice on properties describing the proposal under review, the hearing date and time, and City contact information.
4. For quasi-judicial hearings, staff reports will be made available to commissions and the public seven days in advance of the public hearing in accordance with State Statute.
5. Mail out informational letters to affected property owners in advance of mailing the legal notice to inform and educate them about projects.
6. Use display advertisements in addition to legal advertisements in the newspaper to inform citizens of projects with city-wide implications.
7. Seek innovative and technological advancements in public outreach and community building that informs and involves the public on planning matters and city government in general.
8. Describe how citizens who participated in the planning process will receive a response from policy makers. Provide the written record of decision and conclusions.
9. Provide citizens with links to the City website to access final decisions, signed ordinances and resolutions, minutes, and videos of the hearings.
10. Update and post the “What’s Happening in My Neighborhood” application table to inform citizens of planning applications in process.