

CHAPTER TWO: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ELEMENT

2.1 OVERVIEW

Engaging the public early and often in the decision-making process is critical to the success of any planning effort, especially in relation to land use and transportation issues. In addition, numerous state and federal laws, as well as local policies, require public review and feedback at critical points in public policy development. For example, the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 underscores the need for public involvement, calling on planning agencies to provide the public, affected public and private agencies, and other interested parties “with a reasonable opportunity to comment” on plans and programs.

2.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 1 charges the governing body with preparing and adopting a comprehensive program for public involvement that clearly defines the procedures by which the general public can become involved in the planning process:

Goal 1 Citizen Involvement: To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process. (Department of Land Conservation and Development, adopted 1974, amended 1988)

The City of Beaverton’s commitment to ensure an optimum level of public participation is reflected in its public involvement goals:

City Council Goal: Enhance citizen involvement and participation.

Comprehensive Plan Public Involvement Goal: The Planning Commission, Council, and other decision making bodies shall use their best efforts to involve the public in the planning process.

In response to these goals, the City has developed a Public Involvement program aimed at expanding opportunities for public involvement throughout the planning process.

2.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

In order to encourage public participation it is critical that issues important to different groups be identified and addressed early in the planning process. The need for and desirable level of public participation should be determined in the early stages of any planning activity.

Public participation provides information and assistance to staff and policy makers in dealing with issues of interest to the public. When the community and its decision makers work from a common base of information, an active, rather than reactive program can

evolve. Such a program will provide information more suitable to the public's needs.

2.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- A. To involve a cross section of the community in the community planning process.
- B. To ensure effective two-way communication between the City and the public.
- C. To provide an opportunity for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process (e.g., scoping, analysis, plan preparation, adoption, implementation, and monitoring).
- D. To ensure that technical information is presented in an understandable form.
- E. To ensure that the public will receive a response from policy-makers.
- F. To ensure appropriate funding for the public involvement program.

2.4 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2.4.1 CITY-WIDE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OUTREACH MECHANISMS

Several existing mechanisms ensure city-wide public involvement in Beaverton's planning process. The City's primary outreach mechanisms are through:

- A. The Committee for Citizen Involvement, an advisory committee to the City Council;
- B. The Neighborhood Program Office;
- C. The Neighborhood Association Committees;
- D. Specific committees and special interest groups;
- E. *Your City*, a newsletter published six times per year, subject to continued funding, that is designed to keep the public informed and invite participation;
- F. Periodic news releases in area newspapers;
- G. Contact with the local media;
- H. The City's public internet web site;
- I. Public workshops and focus groups; and

J. Public hearings.

Each public involvement opportunity is tailored to meet the needs and conditions of the outreach effort, and techniques are often combined.

2.4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN CITY DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

The City's formal decision making processes include several opportunities for public involvement. The public is invited to present their views at the various City board and committee meetings, including but not limited to City Council, Planning Commission, Traffic Commission and Board of Design Review. Public notices, complete with the hearing date, time, location, and hearing body, are mailed out at least twenty (20) calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing. Notices of public hearings are primarily published in the advertisement section of *The Valley Times*. On occasion, public hearing notices are published in *The Oregonian*. Notices are also posted on the City's web site.

Final agendas are posted at least seven calendar days in advance of the meeting at City Hall, located at 4755 S.W. Griffith Drive and the Beaverton Library at 12375 SW Fifth Street. Agendas and meeting notices are available upon request from the City. Documents containing the proposals to be considered at the public hearings are available at the Public Counter of the Community Development Department at least seven (7) calendar days in advance of the hearing, at least twenty (20) calendar days for Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

The public is encouraged to provide staff with written comments or copies of presentations, particularly if the statement is too long to be orally presented in its entirety at a meeting. Individuals unable to attend meetings can submit concerns and ideas in writing to the Community Development Department office prior to the close of the public comment period. Copies of all materials submitted prior to distribution to the appropriate decision making body are included in documentation provided for the deliberation on the matter.

All meetings are held in locations accessible to persons with disabilities. Listening devices or other auxiliary aids, sign language interpreters for people with hearing impairments, and readers for people with visual impairments are provided if requested at least three working days (72 hours) prior to the meeting.

The City may also conduct public meetings, workshops, and focus groups on particular issues to solicit input and involvement in various planning issues. Adopted plans are also available to the public for review at the Community Development Department and the Beaverton Library, and are posted on the City's internet web site. Copies may be acquired for the cost of duplication at the Community Development Department.

2.4.3 CITY-SPONSORED PUBLIC GROUPS

2.4.3.1. Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI)

Council Resolution 2058 (1978) established the CCI, defining its responsibilities as an advisory committee to the City Council. The *Beaverton Code* specifies membership of the CCI as five at-large members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council and one member from each recognized Neighborhood Association Committee. The CCI's role is to assure that the community has a continuous opportunity to exchange ideas and information with the City, and to monitor and evaluate City programs as specified in the *Beaverton Code, 1982*, as amended (BC 2.03.050 through 2.03.054).

The Citizen Involvement Program, adopted by Resolution 2229 (1980), established a formalized public participation program for the CCI and provided a method by which the committee and other members of the community could communicate their opinions, inquiries, or complaints about City departments, committees, or the Council.

The program also provides for a newsletter and calendar of City meetings, information flyers, community meetings, and funding for these activities as well as staff support and public hearing notices. The City is committed to providing financial support for public outreach and public participation processes. Staff and resource needs are determined during work program development for each plan, program, and project. In addition, the City's Neighborhood Program Office staff are available to coordinate outreach and work with City departments to realize the full potential of each public participation effort.

2.4.3.2 Neighborhood Association Committees (NACs)

The *Beaverton Code* identifies the procedures by which residents can form Neighborhood Association Committees, add or delete areas of acknowledged NACs and provides a process for termination of NAC Recognition and NAC Grievances (BC 9.06.010 through 9.06.040) Boundaries of the NACs are shown on maps available at City Hall or on the City's website.

NACs provide a forum to identify, discuss, and offer solutions to neighborhood concerns such as traffic, safety, land use, and economic development. Supported by the Neighborhood Program Office, Beaverton's NACs are organized by volunteers, meet regularly, and participate in the public comment process. Monthly agendas and minutes are mailed to active participants. Neighborhood and city-wide issues are usually the main agenda topics.

2.4.3.3. The *Beaverton Code* (Section 2.03.002 – 2.03.300) identifies other City Boards, Commissions and Committees created by ordinance. Additional committees or review commissions may be established to address special projects, such as the Code Review Advisory Committee. These committees provide input to staff as they develop specific proposals, such as amendments to the Development Code.

2.4.4. Citizen’s Participation Organizations (CPOs)

Washington County CPOs bordering the City limits are also involved in City planning issues through their newsletters and processes. Each CPO’s newsletter details issues of county, city, and region-wide interest to its readers. Public hearing notices and articles of interest concerning Beaverton issues are often included in the CPO newsletters.

2.4.5 PUBLICATIONS AND MAIL NOTIFICATION

“Your City” newsletter is distributed city-wide. It provides information on current issues to the residents of Beaverton. Published approximately six times per year, subject to available funding, “Your City” includes notification of regularly scheduled Board, Commission, Advisory Committee and Neighborhood Association Committee meetings and hearings, articles of interest to residents, and educational opportunities relating to planning and other community issues. Specific mailings, public notices, flyers, surveys and questionnaires, as well as the City’s web site, cable broadcasts and other media, are used by the City to obtain input and provide information.

2.5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Many City planning processes incorporate specific public involvement procedures, which are identified in Chapter I of this Plan and in the City of Beaverton Development Code.

In addition to the City’s public participation processes, Metro requires transportation plans and programs to conform with its adopted Local Public Involvement Policy. This policy defines procedures and includes a certification process for projects proposed for federal funding through Metro.

Early public participation is critical to identifying needs and issues, evaluating alternatives, and developing, implementing, and evaluating projects. Opportunities for public involvement are available during preparation and review phases of City plans. Comments received during plan preparation and review are also made part of the public record. At public hearings, comments are recorded and responses are noted. Public participation opportunities and public notice requirements for city plan and code revisions and updates are specified in the respective plan or code.