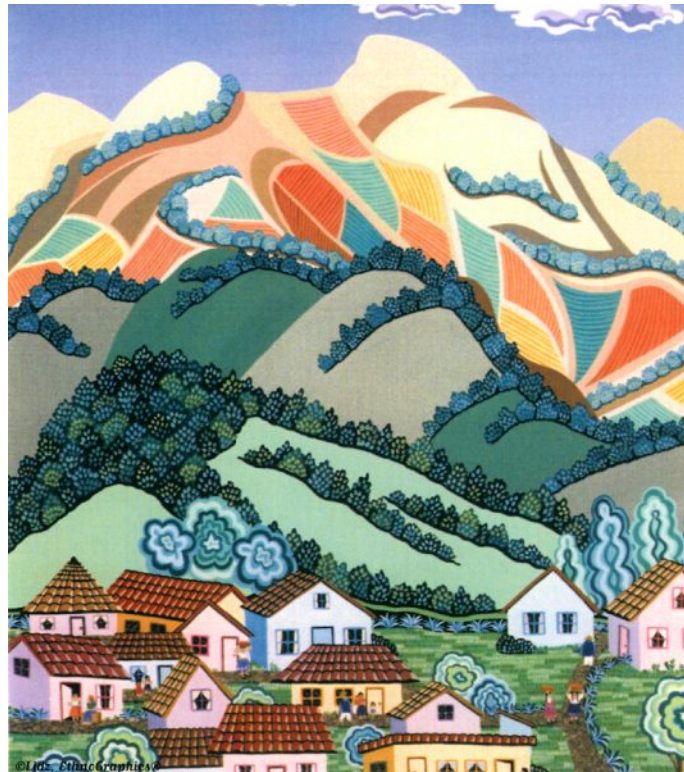


Neighborhood Planning Kit



City of Lake Oswego
Planning Division
December 1, 2004



Preface

The intent of the Neighborhood Planning Kit is to provide a clear and easy-to-follow guide for Lake Oswego Neighborhoods as they work with City staff to prepare their Neighborhood Plan. The recommended approach is not a rigid formula, but a suggested methodology based on the experiences of previous neighborhoods that can be adapted to meet the needs of your neighborhood association. We encourage neighborhoods to bring their own creativity to the process.

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Introduction: The Neighborhood Planning Program

Background

The City of Lake Oswego recognizes that different areas of the City have their own identity and character that residents want to preserve. As a result, a neighborhood planning program was developed to assist neighborhoods in the promotion compatible land use patterns and resolving other broad issues so that as change occurs, livability will be enhanced. Since the Neighborhood Planning program was approved by City Council in 1993, six neighborhoods have developed plans that have been approved by the City Council. This document was developed with assistance from those involved in the creation of those plans. It applies lessons learned to help incoming associations as they begin the planning process.

What is a Neighborhood Plan?

A neighborhood plan is a document that describes a detailed vision for the future of a neighborhood.

An effective neighborhood plan will create detailed goals and strategies for reaching that vision. Ideally, neighborhood plans are created by the people who live, work and play in that neighborhood. Approval of a neighborhood plan requires careful review and acceptance by a majority of members (or a representational selection of neighbors) of a neighborhood and also by Planning Commission and the City Council. In that way, it is a commitment by all those involved to work toward the vision it embodies.

As part of City Policy

With adoption, the goals and policies of the neighborhood plan will become part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan is the guiding land use document for the City. It contains goals and policies that the community has agreed express a direction for the City into the future. A neighborhood plan is more specific than most chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, but as part of the Comprehensive Plan, it must reinforce and comply with other Comprehensive Plan policies. In addition, because a neighborhood plan is intended to comprehensively address land



use policy issues in the neighborhood, and the neighborhood is part of the City as a whole, there are no parts of either the City's Comprehensive Plan or the neighborhood plan that can be considered separately from the other parts. All Plan goals and policies are intended to be supportive of one another.

Neighborhood goals and policies that become part of the Comprehensive Plan will provide guidance for the development of new regulations that will be binding on future development in the neighborhood. Incorporation of new regulations into the City code, however, will usually require a separate action of the City Council. For a better understanding of the City's Comprehensive Plan and its relationship to the City Code and Community Development Code refer to Exhibit A entitled "About the Comprehensive Plan" or talk to someone in the Planning Department.

As the neighborhood plan must relate to the City's Comprehensive Plan, so too the Comprehensive Plan must relate and be compatible with Metro's 2040 Plan and with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. Exhibit B explains the regulatory framework in which your neighborhood plan will operate.

The Neighborhood Plan and the Comprehensive Plan

There are distinctions in approach, perspective and scope between a Comprehensive Plan and a neighborhood plan. A neighborhood plan deals with an area that has detailed and specific needs within the overarching policies of a Comprehensive Plan. Since a neighborhood plan focuses on a much smaller geographic area, more groups including property and business owners, civic organizations, schools and residents can be directly involved in the planning process.



Table 1: Comparison between a Neighborhood Plan and a Comprehensive Plan

	The Comprehensive Plan	A Neighborhood Plan
Geography	The City	One neighborhood
Who creates it?	The City, with input from all citizens.	All those who live, work and play in the neighborhood.
What is it?	A document that describes a vision for the City and which will guide land use decisions.	Same
What is included?	Streets and traffic, parking, housing, community character, natural resources, public facilities, utilities, and services.	Same

The Purpose of a Neighborhood Plan

1. A Neighborhood Plan can provide guidance on matters of land use, building and site design and capital expenditures for public facilities and projects within a neighborhood.
2. The Plan can provide neighbors and the City with valuable information about the neighborhood's needs, priorities and proposed projects.
3. The Plan can be used by neighborhood associations to determine if development proposals and land use changes are in accordance with the neighborhood's vision for its future.
4. Projects and programs identified in the Plan can be submitted to the City Council for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan.
5. A Neighborhood Plan can provide an important communication link between citizens and city government by engaging citizens in local government planning and decision-making as it affects the development of their neighborhood.
6. Neighbors, elected officials and staff can use it as a framework to guide their efforts and track progress.
7. It can also be an informational tool providing guidance to those deciding whether or not they want to live or invest in the neighborhood.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

Before developing a plan, it is helpful to identify the roles for all parties involved in the process, including neighborhood planning



committee members, the committee chair, staff in the Long Range Planning Division, and other neighborhood residents. The City suggests the following as a framework to clarify roles and responsibilities:

Role of Neighborhood Residents

1. Ask the Neighborhood Association to approve the creation of a Neighborhood Association Planning (NAP) committee.
2. Make sure that various neighborhood interests are represented including: property owners, renters, business owners, seniors, youth.
3. Agree to allow the Neighborhood Association Planning Committee (NAP) to create a plan based upon resident input.
4. Review and comment on the Neighborhood Plan document as it is made available.
5. Let the NAP Committee know they are on the right track by attending meetings to provide input and vote on the plan.
6. Develop goals and policies to address identified problems in conjunction with City staff.
7. Advocate for the adoption of the neighborhood plan before the Planning Commission and City Council. The NAP Committee members will need to ask these public bodies to adopt their neighborhood plans.
8. Monitor the adopted plan and make sure that if the neighborhood has proposed particular actions, these are carried out.
9. Inform new neighborhood and local business association members about the plan and encourage them to use it as a guide to development in the neighborhood.

City Responsibilities

1. Provide a planner from the Long Range Planning Division to provide technical assistance in the development of the neighborhood plan.
2. Provide assistance with mailers and fliers to inform citizens of the planning process.



3. After Council approval of the plan, use it, as intended, to guide growth in the community.

Role of the Staff Planner

1. Provide the necessary technical information needed to complete the plan.
2. Value everyone's contribution even if you disagree. Guide discussion to allow equitable participation.
3. Provide information and resources to the committee about the neighborhood planning process and city policies.
4. Act as a liaison between City departments and the neighborhood association during the planning and implementation process, including providing copies of the draft plan to representatives of various City departments for review and comment.
5. Develop a work program with the neighborhood planning committee identifying major tasks, projects milestones, neighborhood input points and establishing deadlines.
6. Assist the neighborhood in identifying assets and opportunities.
7. Assist in the development of goals, policies, neighborhood recommendations and action charts.
8. Format and create the final planning document in a consistent format.
9. Assist the neighborhood association planning committee with gaining City Council acceptance of its plan.
10. Assist with plan implementation.



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Getting Started

Is your Neighborhood Ready?

The first step in creating a neighborhood plan is determining if your neighborhood is ready. A self-assessment will help determine whether enough participation and commitment exists within the neighborhood association to begin this process. With adequate commitment and participation, the plan will best represent the needs of the entire neighborhood, thereby, streamlining the process. An honest self-assessment will reduce time delays and allow participants to create a plan that reflects everyone's needs.

The following checklist can be helpful in determining the readiness of your neighborhood association to develop a neighborhood plan.

- Is there consensus within your organization about why a neighborhood plan is needed?
- Are there enthusiastic members willing to create a Neighborhood Association Planning (NAP) Committee? Do they represent a broad range of interests in the neighborhood?
- Are the members of that committee ready to make a commitment to at least six months of possibly bi-monthly meetings?
- Does your Neighborhood Association conduct regular meetings to encourage feedback from, not only residents, but also businesses within the neighborhood boundaries?
- Are the members of the organization ready to work with staff to create a plan?

Creating Enthusiasm

Participation is critical to the success of your neighborhood plan. It is important to encourage interest in the process and involve stakeholders from your neighborhood. Educating residents about their role in the plan can occur in several ways.



Here are some ideas:

1. Assign block captains to speak with neighbors in a certain radius about the plan process and how they can get involved.
2. Ask the neighborhood planner to speak at a general neighborhood or board meeting about the process.
3. Work with the Neighborhood Planner to contact the media to advertise your NAP plan process.
4. Include updates of the neighborhood planning process in the Association's newsletter.
5. Post the announcement on your neighborhood web page.
6. Ask your neighborhood school to include an article in their school newsletter, which is sent home with all students.
7. Ask local news media to do a neighborhood story.
8. Create a survey or other tool to collect ideas and information from neighbors who cannot attend a meeting or workshop.



Face-to-face contact is the single most effective outreach strategy

The Neighborhood Association Planning Committee

A neighborhood association planning committee or NAP should be formed to guide the process, encourage broad participation from residents and interpret neighborhood input. This could consist of 5-9 members of the Neighborhood Association. The primary role of the planning committee is to guide the development of the plan and facilitate wide participation in the process.

Role of Planning Committee Members

1. Show respect for members: value everyone's contribution even if you disagree. Make it acceptable to differ with the group. Avoid interrupting and allow others to speak and give their opinions.
2. Come prepared: read minutes, reports, and other documents in advance. Be ready to contribute your ideas and research. Be



ready to share the results of the assignment from the last meeting.

3. Arrange and organize, in coordination with City staff, regular meetings of the planning committee.
4. Co-sponsor, with the City, general meetings designed to disseminate information and to review and discuss major elements of the proposed neighborhood plan.
5. Obtain the approval and support of the neighborhood association for the proposed neighborhood plan.
6. Assist the City in the development and review of final recommendations for the Lake Oswego Planning Commission and City Council.

Role of the Planning Committee Chair

1. Encourage balanced participation by making sure everyone has a chance to speak or discuss the topic at hand. Avoid letting a few people dominate the meetings.
2. Deal with conflict in a timely manner. Don't let hard feelings simmer. Listen for an opportunity to clarify information. If things get hot, call a time out.
3. Value everyone's contribution even if you disagree. Make it acceptable to differ with the group. Guide discussions to allow equitable participation.

Suggestion The following suggestions may help in making the committee experience a fulfilling one for everyone involved.

1. The Selection Process

Approach potential committee members from a broad representation of the neighborhood's civic, business and neighbor groups. The committee should reflect the diversity of the neighborhood. Encourage a balance of community members who represent a broad distribution within your neighborhood.

2. Explain the Commitment

When issuing the invitation, be specific about the time commitment and workload expected. Tell people how often you plan to meet. You want people to see the process through to the end.



3. Establish Ground Rules

Develop and agree upon a set of procedures. This important initial first step not only builds trust but also sets the expectations for the group. It will set the tone for decision-making, record keeping and overall participation.

Ground rules attempt to make each committee member's contribution valuable and, at the same time, move the group toward its goal. Ground rules must be simple, friendly and brief. It is best to create your own ground rules at an early meeting of the group, but samples can also be requested from Planning staff.

4. Set Schedule

Establish a consistent meeting time and place in the beginning to avoid any confusion later. Meetings should be accessible to all members of the committee (i.e. location within walking distance or on a bus route).

5. Keep Good Records

Appoint a dependable record keeper to keep accurate records of attendance, decisions and discussions.

6. Choose a Leader

Pick someone to chair the committee. Pick someone who can demonstrate appropriate leadership skills and can keep the committee on task.

7. Agree on How to Make Decisions

Decide whether to use a consensus or voting method. When it is time to make decisions, abide by ground rules and the decision making process.

Representing Your Neighborhood

These three ideas will help you create a plan that represents all the different people in your neighborhood.

Never forget, just as the Comprehensive Plan represents the City, the Neighborhood Plan you create will represent your neighborhood and everyone who lives and works there. For that reason it is important that everyone have a voice in the process. Keep this in mind every step of the way. During meetings, occasionally ask yourself, "who isn't represented here that should be" and then seek input from those people. This way you can feel confident that your process will represent the whole community.



Another important thing to remember that planning committee members represent more than just themselves at the table developing this plan. Try not to let your own ideas dominate the process.

Accept conflict as part of the process. Sometimes conflict can tell you something very important about the work you are doing. It might mean that there is an area of disagreement that needs to be worked through. If it is not addressed right away, it could fester and eventually erode the process. When conflict arises, don't shy away, instead explore the conflict and identify its source. What exactly is the disagreement about? Are there areas where you can find agreement? How can you reach a mutually acceptable solution? If you can't reach consensus, your plan can include a statement that says, "As of the printing of the plan there were differing opinions in the neighborhood around that issue." For more information on dealing with conflict, look at the recommended book list in Appendix A or contact someone at the Planning Department for help.

Setting Goals

Just like in any big project, the first step is to set goals and create a work plan. Before the planning committee meets, make sure the neighborhood association has discussed the goals for the process. What are the anticipated outcomes? It is always good to define this before you get started.

Then it is up to the planning committee to create a schedule and work plan. Plan in advance when to conduct neighborhood-wide meetings for the purpose of critique and comment. Allow plenty of time to accept input and incorporate it into the plan, and then return to review changes with the group. Making sure everyone has a chance to comment might require more time than you'd expect. Allow space for delays and unplanned circumstances. It is better to factor more time into your schedule rather than less. You should plan on nine months to a year for production of a neighborhood plan.



3

The Work of Developing a Plan

The Community Assessment

After you have developed your goals for the planning process and discussed a schedule for the effort, it is time to begin collecting information. A community assessment will help you gather the information that will become the basis for your plan. The assessment will tell you about what the people in your neighborhood think about the area; its strengths, the impediments to positive change.

Opinions on how to collect this type of information vary. Be creative when formulating a plan for collecting information, because what works for other neighborhoods or communities might not always work for yours. Decide, based on your knowledge of the neighborhood what the most effective strategy will be.

Suggested Methods

Asset Mapping involves documenting the tangible and intangible resources of a community, viewing it as a place with assets to be preserved and enhanced, not deficits to be remedied. The concept is that a planning or community development effort which begins by focusing on the negative aspects of a community or only on what's missing will never get past those understandings of itself to make positive change. Instead, ABCD encourages neighborhoods to conduct an assessment of the community's strengths. The approach instructs groups to look at the resources offered by individuals, associations and institutions in the neighborhood. Before looking outside for resources, look internally at the talents, strengths and untapped energy of the people in your community. An asset map might become a list of the assets in the neighborhood, or maybe a directory of people with a listing of the talents they can contribute to the planning process.

The asset-mapping concept can go beyond people to become a map of the physical features that make your community a special place. You can ask your neighbors to complete a survey, or maybe share a story to document this information, or ask them to draw their own map of the neighborhood recognizing the physical features that they think define the neighborhood. You might be surprised what you learn about your neighbors and your neighborhood based on what stands out for them. A revealing

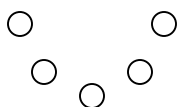
John P. Kretzmann & John L. McKnight of Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research are credited with developing Asset-Based Community Development or ABCD.



question to ask is how people travel through the neighborhood. What are the common walking or biking routes? Which way do kids travel to get to school? Ask neighbors to put this on their map and then compare the different maps. Use this opportunity to create as complete a picture as possible of your neighborhood.

This method can be an engaging way to encourage participation in your initial community enhancement efforts because the activities can be used to get residents to think of the neighborhood in new and fun ways.

A **Needs Assessment** is a more traditional way to collect information for your planning process. Asking residents for input on a variety of topics which effect the neighborhood can provide a good opportunity for discussion. This approach can occur in a meeting. Arrange the seating so everyone is in a circle. Ask each person to identify one issue or opportunity in the neighborhood. You can choose to go through the circle as many times as you have time for. After everyone has had the chance to contribute, go back and see if the concerns can be grouped or categorized into topics. Then go back through each issue and list the potential consequences of not addressing the problem. Expect some disagreement, and allow time for discussion. Most of the time these differences can be worked out, it just might take extra time. Provide a safe environment where differences of opinion are allowed so that everyone feels their contribution is valued, and seek to identify, even in the most heated debate, the areas of common understanding and agreement.



A half circle is a great arrangement for meetings. It allows everyone to see each other, and supports the feeling of common purpose.

Issues to think about: This is not an exhaustive list, but it may provide a good start for your brainstorming activity.

1. Traffic Management~ Where do conflicts arise and between which users?
2. Public Facilities and Service (Lighting, sidewalks and paths, crosswalks, handicap access, etc.)
3. Land Use~ Is it balanced?
4. Housing~ Do you like the range of housing opportunities?
5. Natural Resources and Environmental Protection~ Are existing regulations adequate?
6. Community Appearance and Aesthetics
7. Historic Preservation
8. Cultural Resources
9. Public Safety
10. Open Space and Recreational opportunities
11. Activities for youth
12. Business and Economic Development
13. Noise



Working
with
BIG
groups

If the group at your meeting is large (over 20 people), congratulations! Breaking into smaller groups might make it easier to have a discussion with so many people. For instance, you can ask each small group to brainstorm issues and opportunities and then select an individual to share those back with the larger group. Exhibit C provides another sample brainstorming activity that might help assure good participation at your meeting. Many neighborhoods in Lake Oswego have used surveys to collect information for their plans. Your neighborhood planner can help develop an effective survey.

Another type of analysis is the **SWOT** analysis. This type of analysis focuses on the **strengths** (beautiful old trees, active citizens, good schools) and **weaknesses** (inadequate park space, inappropriate zoning, crime or blight) in your neighborhood. It also examines the forces and events from outside the neighborhood that impinge upon it. These represent the **opportunities** (new grant opportunities, a new business) and **threats** to its future success (a planned freeway expansion, a polluting power plant). The method is comprehensive and assures a healthy balance of negative and positive discussion during this early phase of plan development. It is also an option that uses elements of both the asset-map and needs analysis. SWOT analyses are used to evaluate the performance of all kinds of organizations including businesses; you may have encountered one in other areas of your life. In a business or a neighborhood setting, strengths and weaknesses are considered internal to the organization. These are the things that make your community unique and great and also what keep it from reaching it's potential. Opportunities and threats are the external elements that will affect your organization or community. Ask residents to brainstorm items for each of the four categories, or use the sample brainstorming activity described in Exhibit C. To adapt that activity for a SWOT analysis, have one group brainstorm general ideas about the neighborhood and ask the second group to categorize the list into S's, W's, O's or T's.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPRTUNITIES	THREATS
<i>List items here...</i>	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.



Collecting information

We have discussed community meetings as a good way to collect information from members of the neighborhood. You might find that you don't reach everyone in a big meeting, however. Some people don't feel comfortable speaking in a large forum, others won't be available during your planned meeting or won't have the proper transportation. Another way to collect information is through small **open houses** or with a **community survey**.

Open houses can be held in a neighbor's living room, or another easy to reach, informal location. Members of your committee could each host one for people in their area, or you might identify a block captain to take responsibility to talking to everyone on their block.

Surveys are not as personal, but allow people time to think about the questions and return them on their own schedule. The more personal interaction during survey distribution and retrieval, the better, however. You will receive far more surveys if you deliver them in person and commit to returning for them later. Preparing a good survey can take some time and effort. Avoid questions that lead the recipient toward a particular answer. Your planner can work with you to craft a successful survey.

Make sure to keep a mailing list of all the people who participate in this community assessment process. You'll want to know how to contact people to invite them to additional meetings. You might even set a date for your second community-wide workshop (about two months later) so that you can announce it while you are making contact with your neighbors.



Another fun project: Involve youth in your planning process!

You might choose to invite the young residents from the community to attend the community-wide meeting and have a board member lead them through a process in a separate room. With kids, asset mapping works well. Ask them to draw a map of the neighborhood as it is now, noting important land marks and how they travel to get places. Or, ask them to draw the community that they envision in the future. Ask them what things they would like to see happen in the neighborhood. Another method would be to visit the local schools to conduct a similar process. Their drawings and ideas will be a great addition to your plan. Provide disposable cameras for older children and teens and ask them to take photographs of the things they like in their neighborhood and things that they would like to see change. You might be surprised by what they find!



Synthesizing Information

Once you have collected information through the community analysis you will, undoubtedly, be excited to start the process of writing your plan. However, an important step remains, and that is the review of existing policies so that you understand the City-wide goals, policies and regulations surrounding your identified issues. Without a clear understanding of what exists, you won't be able to develop the neighborhood specific objectives that will comprise your plan. Your neighborhood planner will be an important resource for this effort. They can provide guidance for navigating existing regulations, policies and plans.

Studying existing City codes and regulations will help you know where to start

Next, ask your neighborhood planner to identify the sections of the Comprehensive Plan, the Community Development Code and/or the City Code that relate to the subject areas identified in your community assessment. If the subject involves other municipalities, or governmental organizations ask your planner to identify other codes or plans that might apply. Then, assign a committee member to read the information provided for each subject area. Ask questions of the planner and make sure you understand how the City or other organizations approach this issue. Then you will be ready to write your plan.



4 The Nuts and Bolts

Plan Organization

A neighborhood plan will consist of several parts, including an introduction, a vision statement, background and/or history, a glossary and subject area chapters which each include goals, policies and neighborhood priorities.

Here are the five main parts of the plan:

I. The Introduction section explains the planning process that produced the plan. This section will mention all the people who have participated, list all the meetings that occurred and describe the role this neighborhood plan will have in the context of other plans in Lake Oswego. It will explain the layout of the document and any other information that will help readers navigate the plan.

II. The Vision Statement illustrates the overall vision the neighborhood sees for itself. Everything else in the plan will expand upon and develop this vision. A neighborhood may want the vision statement to reflect key trends and neighborhood values. Sometimes called the Perspective or Character Statement, it could also contain a description of the neighborhood's topography and the features it would like to preserve or change. The vision may develop a probable or preferred scenario for the future; it may even be a narrative that explains how the neighborhood will look in 20 years. The vision should be comprehensive. It should include the neighborhood's vision for the location of land uses, natural features to preserve, views on environmental quality, design quality, landscaping, the supply of open space, etc. More information about this important section of the plan is provided in the next section of the Planning Kit.

III. The History/Background provides an opportunity to go into more detail about the history of neighborhood and how it has developed over time. If you have produced a comprehensive historical assessment during the planning process, you may want to include this in your plan. It is also a great place to talk about current land uses in the neighborhood and provide information about the people who live in your community using census information. A map is a useful addition to the background section, to help readers understand the context for the rest of the plan.



Include a description of the neighborhood's boundaries. Information about where to find data for demographic analysis, historical research and maps is provided in an upcoming section.

IV. Subject Areas are the meat of your plan. This is where you present the information collected during the community assessment. It is suggested that you organize these chapters using the same format as the City's Comprehensive Plan and Oregon's statewide planning goals. This is described in detail in the next couple of pages. Your subject chapters will each have three sections:

Goals are general statements indicating a desired end. They will begin to outline how the neighborhood hopes to achieve the neighborhood's vision. Goals will be recommended for adoption as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Keep in mind, therefore, that your plan does not need to restate goals that are already a part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Instead your aim should be to tailor those goals by making them specific to your neighborhood and your vision for its future. Similarly, your goals cannot contradict goals in the Comprehensive Plan. The two documents must work together.

Subject Area Chapters will include a list of Goals, Policies and Neighborhood Priorities.

Policies state the neighborhood's strategies for achieving its goals. Policies are more specific than goals. They are statements identifying Lake Oswego's position and a suggested course of action.

Neighborhood Priorities suggest the projects, programs and regulatory measures that will carry out the Neighborhood Plan's Policies. They should be assigned a time frame and possible leader(s) to carry them out. This leader listing is an expression of interest and support with the understanding that circumstances may affect the implementation leader's ability to take action. They're suggestions to existing or future City decision-makers or neighborhood association leaders of the ways to implement the plan's goals and policies. They could also be a recommendation to another jurisdiction such as the County or a school or water district. However, they will remain recommendations until the implementation phase of your plan where the association will work with City policy makers to pursue some of these neighborhood priorities.

V. A Glossary of terms at the end of your plan can help explain the less commonly used terms that you might learn during the process of creating a plan. In the past, plan authors have put an asterisk (*) after any word that is defined in the glossary.



Plan Format

The issue areas or groups of issues identified in the Community Assessment will provide an outline the plan. Your plan might develop chapters around these: one for transportation, one for land use, one for natural resources, for example.

Each chapter will discuss the goals related to that item, the policies for achieving them and then the neighborhood's priorities for implementation. Your chapters or subject areas may also have subcategories. For instance you may wish to discuss housing as a subcategory of land use. A sample table of contents follows on the next page.



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The Vision Statement

Your vision statement is one of the most important parts of your plan because it states the hopes for your neighborhood's growth over the long term. The plan is actually just an implementation tool for reaching the goals presented in your vision statement.

The development of a vision statement is a good place to start the planning process because it gets participants thinking on a very broad level about the neighborhood and what they want to achieve with this process. Make your vision statement comprehensive, easy to understand and succinct. Good vision statements often use a strong flagship idea that bridges the key issues. Try to create an image for your readers of everything you want your neighborhood to be. Identifying the important words and ideas that express your vision will help convey your message to readers clearly. Keep it simple, and don't be concerned if the vision changes during the planning process as different people become involved—to achieve buy-in from everyone, you might have to remain flexible for a while.

Writing your Neighborhood Vision Statement

One way to develop a vision statement is to use the information collected during your community assessment. Have the planning committee identify the words (preferably the adjectives) most used by residents to describe the strengths of the neighborhood. Write them all down on a piece of paper. Also collect the words used to describe what the neighborhood wants to become in the future. Write these in a separate column. Next, see if you can categorize the words into groups based on common theme or meanings. Think of an image or statement that summarizes the ideas contained in each category. Use these, and see if you can create a sentence that incorporates those ideas and encompasses a basic vision that you think everyone would agree with. You can write more to elaborate on the basic point made in that first, powerful sentence until you have a short paragraph that can serve as a vision statement. Bring the statement back to the larger group at the next community-wide meeting and ask for input. Make edits until you have unanimous support for the statement.

Now you have a powerful idea that you can come back to if the process starts to get off track!



History and Background—Finding Information

Knowing where you want to go requires also understanding where you are at. You might find it useful to collect demographic and other data to help you understand more about your neighborhood. Staff from the Planning Department can help you find information, but there are other helpful sources that you may wish to consult on your own.

History:

Lake Oswego Library Oswego Heritage Council
<http://home.europa.com/~heritage/index2.html>

Demographics:

(Population, Race, Ethnicity, Age, Etc.):
2000 U.S. Census <http://www.census.gov>

Crime Statistics:

City of Lake Oswego Police Department

Maps:

City of Lake Oswego (talk to your neighborhood planner)
Portland Maps <http://www.portlandmaps.com>
METRO <http://www.metro-region.org/pssp.cfm?ProgServID=7>

Transportation Information:

City of Lake Oswego Engineering – Traffic counts available on-line at <http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/engineer/trans.htm>

Accident information can be obtained from the Police Department.

Goals, Policies and Neighborhood Priorities

The following are more ideas and suggestions for choosing and writing the goals and policies in your plan:

Goals

Once you have reviewed the Statewide Planning Goals, and the Comprehensive plan goals, you are ready to craft the **goals** of your neighborhood plan. There is no reason to repeat a goal already stated in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this effort is to make a plan that is unique to your community. Instead, use this opportunity to put into a few sentences the main goals for your neighborhood related to this subject. Try if you can, to relate them



back to your vision statement, and make them unique to your neighborhood.

Policies The City must follow relevant **policy** statements when amending the Comprehensive Plan. Policy statements are also reviewed when developing other plans or ordinances that affect land use such as public facility plans or zoning and development standards. All changes must show cause why the Comprehensive Plan should be amended consistent with the Statewide Land Use Goals.

The policies in your plan do not need to restate existing regulatory policies contained in the Comprehensive plan or items included in the City Code. They should be based on existing policies, but should contain specific language that tailors them to your unique situation. Remember, the City Council can't adopt your plan if it's goals and policies are in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. If your planning process leads you to believe that a policy or goal in the City's Comprehensive Plan needs to be significantly changed or eliminated, you can list the action you want to see happen to address that change as a neighborhood priority. The policy section is not the appropriate place to create new policies or significantly change existing City policies.

Priorities The **neighborhood priorities** outline the specific project, policy or procedure, which, if executed, would implement your neighborhood's goals and policies. They could be recommended changes to the Community Development Code (land use related) or City Code (non-land use) to implement policy changes or to develop design guidelines that provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate methods and types of development. They may require inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan and City Budget process to ensure that any action items of a capital or program nature are implemented. Priorities should be specific, realistic, result-oriented and measurable. You might want to layout the steps for implementing that action measure as well. The more specific you can be, the easier it will be to implement your plan and to evaluate your progress over time, even with changes in staff or your community leadership. Your action measures should state clearly who is responsible for implementing that item—very often that will be a group of people and/or organizations.



? Questions to ask when crafting Neighborhood Priorities:

1. The responsible party for the implementing the priority, City or Neighborhood?
2. What kind of change does it require?
 - Change to existing City Policy
 - City Code (non land use related)?
 - Community Development Code (land use)?
 - Is the change neighborhood-specific or will it be city-wide?
 - Change to existing City procedure (always city-wide)
 - Physical or planning project (almost exclusively neighborhood-specific)
 - New project for Capital Improvement Program (CIP)—City responsibility
 - Neighborhood Enhancement Grant—partnership between City and Neighborhood
 - Engineering or Maintenance on-going work—City
 - Long Range Planning on-going work—City



More things to think about when writing and prioritizing your priorities:

Is it easy to understand?

You want your project to be clear so that when someone else reads it, they know immediately what is being said and comprehensive enough so others know what might be expected of them.

Is it achievable?

Your projects should be realistic, even if they require several years to implement or a substantial public financial commitment.

Do people care about it?

Will you be successful gathering support for this project from people who have not been involved in the planning process?

Is there support outside your neighborhood that might provide leverage?

The more support, the better. Think about other individuals or organizations that would be interested in seeing this project happen (examples: local watershed, trails or parks groups, land trusts, scouts, local clubs, faith organizations, local businesses).

Is this a

- long term (10-20 years)
- medium term (3-10 years) or
- short term (0-3 years) project?

(You might want to have a balance of all three in your plan)

Will it require a major public investment?

You might want to have a variety of projects in your plan, some which require a large public investment, and others with little or none so you can see positive change right away. Quick wins will help to energize others in your neighborhood to get involved.



5 The Neighborhood Plan Approval Process

Neighborhood Approval

After you have a complete draft of the plan it is time for neighborhood review. You'll want to hold another neighborhood-wide meeting. Making copies of the plan available to neighbors before the meeting might help to expedite the process. Prior to the final meeting, you may want to provide an alternative way for neighbors to comment on the plan (write in comments or email comments). This is another way to facilitate participation because not everyone will feel comfortable speaking aloud at a meeting with their neighbors.

If you have been careful to solicit input along the way from everyone in the neighborhood, final edits may go smoothly. However, new ideas and old arguments might come out at the final review meeting. Always fall back on your process. Remind people of the opportunities they have had to be involved, share information about the time and effort that has gone into the production of the plan and relay how you came to decisions on difficult issues. If your process was solid and decisions were made in a fair and diplomatic way, it will help strengthen the plan in the end. However, you can also let them know about future opportunities to comment on the plan at Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

Schedule a second community-wide meeting and announce that date at the end of the community meeting. This will be a final opportunity for input after the formal city review has occurred and a chance to go over the final plan before submitting to the City Council.



City Department Recommendations

It is a good idea to include staff from the Long Range Planning Division in your plan development process. The neighborhood planner can help to assure that the staff from various departments are invited to comment along the way. However, after the plan has the stamp of approval of your neighborhood, it is time for final review by the City. Your neighborhood planner will escort the plan through this process and help to explain any recommended revisions. You should expect at least six weeks for City review.

Planning Commission and City Council Approval

Your plan will be reviewed at a Planning Commission meeting where a recommendation about its approval will be made to City Council. If revisions are requested, it may have to return to a subsequent meeting. Since these meetings are public, they are noticed and open to the entire City. There will be time for public comment and your planning committee may want to be present to answer questions and offer comment. Scheduling a Planning Commission and a City Council hearing date may require six to eight weeks advance notice.



6

Implementing and Updating Your Plan

Prioritizing

Your neighborhood plan is a guideline for the future, but reaching it may require multiple actions today. After you have completed your plan, it is suggested that you create an implementation strategy that outlines how you see your plan implemented over time. The development of a “Top Ten” list of neighborhood priorities from the plan, will be the main portion of your implementation strategy and will provide guidance for your association and for the City as to which projects should receive attention first. Your implementation strategy should be revisited approximately every two years to keep it up to date.

Prioritizing does not mean removing priorities from your plan; it is simply a strategy for achieving results consistently and in a realistic manner over time. Your plan was written for the next several years, and it will take some time to implement all of it.

One way to prioritize your neighborhood priorities to identify the top ten is to conduct a voting exercise at a community-wide meeting. Use small dot stickers available at an office supply store for the activity. Give every participant certain number of dots (10 is a good number if you hope to identify a top ten). You can even choose to provide different colors with different meanings. You could provide 10 green dots and five red dots, allowing participants to vote for the 10 most important projects to them (green) and also the five they are least interested in (red). Or have two levels of interest, providing 5 green dots each worth two points and 5 orange dots worth one point each. Allow participants to put as many votes as they wish on any one item. This way, if they really like a particular project they can put multiple green dots on it. There are a multitude of variations you can play with this activity, choose the one which works best for your group. Some groups have associated the dots with a dollar value and asked participants to allocate the “money” they are give between the various projects. Activities like this can make this sometimes difficult task a little more fun.

A survey could be another way to vote if you think participation would be low at a public meeting. You could provide a list of all the



neighborhood priorities from the plan and ask residents to prioritize the items.

Think about creating a mix of project types in your priority list: long term and short term, policy and projects, high budget and lower budget. The ideal situation is to have a mix of different types of projects. If your action measures are all long term or are all expensive physical improvement projects, you may not see the quick action on your plan that you'd hoped for.

Monitoring Implementation

A plan is a living document, implementing it will require the cooperation of City staff, elected officials, commission members and you. It may be a good idea to keep the planning committee together after the plan is complete to monitor progress on plan implementation, even if those meetings are less frequent. It is very important to identify a neighborhood association member who will serve as a liaison for each of your priority projects. Even if the project, program or policy change is something the City needs to do, it will help to have a community member who can communicate directly with staff about the project and then report back to the group regularly about it's progress. Don't get frustrated if it takes longer than you had expected to see the projects, programs or policies from your plan implemented. Very often, projects are more complicated to implement than originally anticipated. However, if you stay involved, you can remain an important player in finding ways to circumvent roadblocks.

Updating the Plan

Just as with the Comprehensive Plan, it is important for neighborhood plans to be responsive to changing conditions and circumstances. Because the Neighborhood Plan is part of the citywide Comprehensive Plan, its update is required as part of a periodic review of the City's Comprehensive Plan to address changes and unanticipated circumstances which occur over time.

Just as with the review of your first draft, a community-wide meeting should be organized to collect ideas about what portions of the plan require changes. Start with the vision statement making sure that it has not substantially changed and then go from there, reviewing your goals and policies and adding/changing neighborhood priorities as required. Just as before, participation by



a wide representation of the community will be essential during your plan update.

Conclusion

Neighborhood planning is a powerful way to participate in the growth and preservation of your community. It can also be a fun way to meet your neighbors and learn from their varied perspectives. Enjoy yourself and happy planning!



Exhibit A: About the Comprehensive Plan

(from the Introduction to the City of Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan)

Land use planning involves the consideration and balancing of many different factors and issues to make the best decisions for the community both for the short and long term. The goals and policies of Lake Oswego's Comprehensive Plan are intended to guide the community in making these decisions. The Plan is intended for use by all those who have concerns with the City's land use planning process including; local officials, persons with development interests, state, regional and federal agencies, neighborhood and community groups, and citizens of all interests.

The Plan is mandated by the state to be in conformance with 15 Oregon Statewide Planning Goals. Once acknowledged by the state's Land Conservation and Development Commission as meeting this test, it is the controlling document for land use within the City. Land development and related activities, including the City's development ordinances, must be consistent with Plan goals and policies. There are two parts to the Comprehensive Plan* -the text, which includes goals and policies and the Comprehensive Plan Maps. The goals, policies and maps are regulatory and intended to guide land use decisions. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, shows the distribution of existing and future land uses. Other Plan Maps include the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Map, Urban Services Boundary Map, Public Facilities Plan, etc. In addition to the Comprehensive Plan Maps, other maps are included in the Plan for informational purposes only.

Change is an inherent part of any community and it is necessary for the Plan to be responsive to changing conditions. Thus, it needs to be updated periodically. In fact, state law requires jurisdictions to periodically review plans. It is anticipated that the Plan will be periodically updated every five to seven years to comply with State requirements, deal with changed circumstances and address changing community values and needs.

It is essential to recognize that the Plan is "comprehensive." There are no parts which can be considered separately from other parts. Plan goals and policies are intended to be supportive of one another. However, when using the plan to make decisions if conflicts arise between goals and policies, the City has an obligation to make findings which indicate why the goal or policy being supported takes precedence over other goals found to be in conflict. This involves a decision-making process on the part of the City which balances and weighs the applicability and merits of the Plan's many goals and policies against one another.



The Comprehensive Plan occupies the center stage for directing Lake Oswego's future, but other planning activities and documents are also important. Other plans such as the Park and Recreation Master Plan, Pathway Plan, the various public facility plans, and the Capital Improvement Plan are important to consider when making land use decisions. However, any portion of these plans and any related action dealing with land use must be consistent with the policy direction of the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, it is the obligation of the City to coordinate other public actions with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Development Code are intended to mutually support one another. The Plan does not contain specific standards for development. Instead it provides the policy basis for specific standards and procedures of the Zoning and Development Code which are used to review new development and modifications to existing development. The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to reflect the organization of the Statewide Planning Goals which apply to Lake Oswego. There are thirteen chapters in the plan as follows:

- Goal 1: Citizen Involvement
- Goal 2: Land Use Planning
- Goal 5: Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Resources,
and Natural Areas
- Goal 6: Air, Water, and Land Resources Quality
- Goal 7: Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and
Hazards
- Goal 8: Recreational Needs
- Goal 9: Economic Development
- Goal 10: Housing
- Goal 11: Public Facilities and Services
- Goal 12: Transportation
- Goal 13: Energy Conservation
- Goal 14: Urbanization
- Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway

Statewide Planning Goal 3: Agricultural Lands, and Goal 4: Forest Lands, are not part of the Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan because the City and its Urban Services Boundary (USB) are within the Portland Metropolitan Area Urban Growth Boundary. There are no lands designated for agriculture or forest uses within the City.



Exhibit C: Brainstorming Activity

Supplies

- Poster Paper (5 each group, plus 5-10 more)
- Big Colored Markers (3-5)
- Medium sized black markers (for each participant)
- Medium sized post-it notes (5-10 for each participant)

Description:

This activity is ideal for groups of 20 or more. It uses brainstorming to collect ideas and then provides a process for organizing them into categories/themes.

Directions:

Part One. Break participants into roughly equal sized groups. If you can, provide one facilitator to each group. The facilitator will share the purpose of the exercise and encourage participants to share anything that comes to mind. There are no “bad” ideas. Also, this is not the time to comment on other people’s ideas; that will come later. If you can’t provide a facilitator, ask the group to identify their own, but be explicit about the rules—all ideas are accepted, no criticism.

Version 1—Ask participants to write ideas on a sticky note. One idea per note. Give them 7 min. or so. Then ask them to stick the notes onto whatever surface you have chosen to receive them (a wall or other vertical surface). If you are worried about damage or if the notes won’t stick, tape up a large piece of paper before you begin. This version is better if you are short on time and allows freedom for participants to share ideas in a fairly anonymous fashion.

Version 2—In version two, ideas will be collected verbally and written on notes by a scribe. Ideally this is a separate person from the facilitator. If it is a member of the group, make sure they are aware that they can share their ideas too. This version is preferred if there are issues that should be discussed. This version will take more time and might not encourage participation from more shy people.

Part Two. Ask participants to create categories for the ideas on the wall. Give them about 5-10 minutes to move the sticky notes around until, as a group, they have created groupings. They can create as many or as few categories as is required. Ask them to move stickies onto a piece of poster paper for each category and to label the category. Before the end of the activity, ask for a volunteer to report back to the larger group.

Break. Give everyone a short break while the organizers collect the sheets and display them at the front of the room. Put like categories together.

Part Three. Ask everyone to reconvene and report, one group a time, back to the everyone. Ask them to briefly share (5 min) the ideas expressed in each category and to explain why they decided on those categories. Every subsequent group that reports should add to what they have heard before rather than repeating ideas that have already been shared.



Conclusion:

This activity is a great way to encourage the participation of everyone in a large group yet still come away with a set of concrete ideas at the end. Before you let everyone go, make sure to thank them for their participation, let them know what you plan to do with their ideas, if and when they will have an opportunity to review what was collected and inform them about their next chance to participate.



Book List

		Available at:	
TITLE	AUTHOR	LIBRARY	FOR SALE
Books about Neighborhood Planning:			
Neighborhood Planning	Bernie Jones	N/A	www.planning.org/bookservice
A fantastic introduction for community members who want to create a neighborhood plan and for the planners who work with them. This easy to understand and well organized book takes readers step by step through the planning process. Non-technical language and examples illustrate the books main points.			
Community Planning	Barbara Becker/Eric Damian Kelly	Multnomah Co.	www.planning.org/bookservice
This book provides an in depth introduction to the comprehensive plan and the work involved to create one. Ideal for anyone trying to better understand the purpose of comprehensive planning.			
Land Use Planning in Oregon: A No-Nonsense Handbook in Plain English	Mitch Rhose	Oregon City and Multnomah Co.	www.amazon.com
A comprehensive overview of planning in Oregon and a practical look into the permit process.			
Planning to Stay	William Morrish	Multnomah Co.	www.powells.com
Great book. Practical and useful lessons based on real world examples of working with community members to produce a community vision. Fun pictures make the book a joy to read.			
Books about collaboration and community organizing:			
Collaborative Leadership	David D. Chrislip	N/A	www.planning.org/bookservice
A study of collaborative projects in six American cities examines the community problem-solving methods that lead to their success. This book is about how governments can collaborate with their citizens and the benefits that this type of effort can create.			
Saving the Neighborhood	Peggy Robin	Lake Oswego	www.powells.com
Written by a community leader who has lead many successful efforts to stop and shape development in her community, this is a how-to-guide for staying involved and being heard in the development process.			
Books about facilitation and running successful meetings:			
How to Make Meetings Work	Michael Doyle and David Straus	West Linn	www.powells.com
If you have ever attending a meeting that was boring, went too long, lacked an agenda or lead to more conflict than it addressed, than this is the book for you. A helpful guide for running better meetings in any environment.			
Meeting of the Minds	Daniel Iacofano	N/A	www.migcom.com
A fantastic book for anyone who wants to improve their ability to facilitate exciting and dynamic meetings. The author uses illustrations and examples to make this an easy to understand and fun book to read. I highly recommend this book. You'll never run a boring meeting again!			
The Facilitator Excellence Handbook	Fran Rees	Lake Oswego	www.powells.com
A basic introduction to the art of conducting well-run meetings and organizing groups.			



