

Comprehensive Plan Chapters

Article 1: Citizen Involvement

Public involvement is a required part of land use planning in Oregon. This requirement is one of the things that make Oregon's land use planning program unique. The requirement for public participation is written in the first goal of nineteen in the statewide land use planning system (DLCD Website).

Goal 1 calls for "the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process." It requires each city and county to have a citizen involvement program that addresses:

1. Opportunities for widespread public involvement
2. Effective two-way communication with the public
3. The ability for the public to be involved in all phases of the planning process
4. Making technical information easy to understand
5. Feedback mechanisms for policy-makers to respond to public input, and
6. Adequate financial support for public involvement efforts

The goal also calls for local governments to have a committee for citizen involvement (CCI) to monitor and encourage public participation in planning.

Local Context

The Toledo Planning Commission acts as the CCI in the City of Toledo. Proactive and effective citizen involvement is a cornerstone of planning practice, and focused public engagement is crucial to achieve success in planning initiatives that often impact the entire community. Toledo residents expect the city to maintain transparency, provide access to information, and offer meaningful public participation in the planning process.

Citizen Involvement Goals and Policies

Overarching goal: Provide a citizen involvement program that ensures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process to provide useful guidance to and an understanding of the overall planning process.

The City's Citizen Involvement Program is organized to emphasize the necessity to achieve these four goals:

1. Inclusion
2. Engagement
3. Accessibility
4. Accountability

Inclusion – Goal 1

The City of Toledo works to create an atmosphere that provides for widespread citizen involvement.

Policy 1 – Engagement in all Phases: The City shall involve a cross-section of citizens, citizen organizations and public agencies in all phases of the planning process.

Policy 2 – A designated Committee for Citizen Involvement: The City shall designate the Planning Commission as the recognized citizen involvement committee for the planning process and programs.

Policy 3 – Planning Commission Member Appointment: The City shall select and appoint the Planning Commission members by an open, well-publicized public process.

Policy 4 – Engage Community Organizations and Public Agencies: The City shall prepare and maintain lists of recognized citizen organizations and public agencies and shall forward appropriate notices to those groups who have indicated interest in identified topics or geographic areas.

Policy 5 – Accommodate for Diverse Participation: The City shall utilize community involvement best practices that accommodate for the diverse needs of citizens such as physical ability limitations, language barriers, and time constraints when appropriate and financially reasonable.

Engagement – Goal 2

The City of Toledo maintains a comprehensive citizen involvement program to engage Toledo residents.

Policy 1 Citizen Awareness: Public involvement programs shall be designed and conducted to meet or exceed the legal requirements for each stage of the planning process. The city will partner with the Toledo Library, Fire Department, Police, and others to inform the public about local events.

Policy 2 Public Participation: Public involvement programs shall include opportunities for citizens to participate in the preparation of plans, implementation measures, plan components, plan adoptions, minor changes and major revisions to plans, ordinances, regulations and other implementation measures.

Policy 3: Two-Way Communications: Opportunities shall be provided to develop two-way communications between local officials and citizens. This shall include community surveys, open houses, and an online comment box.

Policy 4 Social Media: The City shall develop and adopt a social media policy that utilizes social media platforms to enhance citizen involvement methods and techniques.

Policy 5 Best Practices Engagement Methods: The City shall utilize community engagement methods, tools, and technologies that are recognized as best practices.

Accessibility – Goal 3

Ensure citizens are provided clear, user-friendly, and appropriate information and opportunities to participate in City planning initiatives, processes, and decision- making.

Policy 1 Informed Citizenry: The City shall take minutes of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Committee readily available for public use at City Hall and on the City website. All plans, studies, records of decisions, maps, and related ordinances will be made available for public use at City Hall. In addition, the city shall continue the monthly newsletter to inform citizens about events, projects and city council discussions. [Replaces 5 c. and 5 d. of existing comp plan]

Policy 2 Formal and Informal Hearings: Times shall be established to allow citizens and public officials to communicate at formal hearings and meetings to discuss planning issues. Informal opportunities for two-way communications shall be encouraged in appropriate settings and at appropriate times for the topics of interest. Information shall be provided to inform citizens about how, when, and where they may participate.

Policy 3 Accessible Information: The City shall A) Make information necessary to reach policy decisions shall be available in a simplified, understandable form. B) Assistance shall be provided to interpret and effectively use technical, and C) Provide information to the public in accessible and easy to understand formats, including multiple languages where appropriate.

Policy 4 Develop Consistent Procedures: The City shall develop and utilize a consistent set of procedures for notifying and soliciting input from the public as appropriate to the scale and type of the proposed action.

Policy 5 Hybrid Meetings: The City shall host public meetings in a hybrid format and when in-person attendance is limited due to an emergency declaration the City shall provide a place for individuals to attend that do not have phone/computer access.

Accountability – Goal 4

Ensure Accountability and clarity in City of Toledo planning processes and decisions.

Policy 1 Rights and Responsibilities: The City shall establish clear rights and responsibilities of applicants, decision-makers, staff, and other participants of planning projects, initiatives, and decision-making processes.

Policy 2 Reporting and Program Evaluation: The Planning Commission and City Manager shall provide periodic reports to the City Council evaluating the process being used for citizen involvement.

Policy 3 Mechanism for feedback: The City shall provide mechanisms for citizens to receive responses or feedback from policy makers. A) Citizens participating or providing comments on planning issues shall be provided with notices of the results of the planning process relating to their submitted comments, B) Rationales used to reach land-use policy decisions shall be available in the form of a written record and kept on file at City Hall, and C) Recommendations

and plans resulting from the citizen involvement program shall be retained and made available for public review.

Policy 4 Adequate Funding: Provide funding for City sponsored citizen involvement programs. Citizen involvement programs shall be funded through the Planning Commission, Community Development and other program funds. Funds shall be provided for public notices, workshops, meetings and other City projects as needed to involve a cross-section of citizens and citizen organizations.

Policy 5 Implementation: Once adopted, the policies stated above shall be recognized as Toledo's Citizen Involvement Program.