CITY OF CORVALLIS
Public Participation Task Force Minutes
April 10, 2014

Members Present:	Kent Daniels, Chair; Annette Mills, Vice Chair; Richard Hervey; Lee Eckroth; Brenda VanDevelder; Emily Bowling; George Brown; Becki Goslow
Members Absent:	Penny York; Rocio Munoz; Mary Beth Altmann Hughes
Staff:	Claire Pate, Scribe
Visitors:	Susan Christie, Stewart Wershow

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
1. Check in, introductions, ground rules (Chair)		
2. Review Agenda (Chair)	• No changes	
3. Review/Approve 3/27/14 Meeting Minutes (All)		• Minutes approved with one correction: page 3, 2nd par., change Eckhart to Eckroth
4. Continue discussion: plans for April 28 public meeting	• Objective: affirm all of the community participation and good works already occurring. Emphasize research and contacts (including with other cities) that have been made already in formulating decisions. • There will be a mix of recommendations and suggestions that will be sent on to City Council (CC)	• Still need 10 more community volunteers to help facilitate. PPTF members will be recorders. • Kent will ensure the new draft gets sent out by April 21, to all stakeholders, w/ cover memo explaining process to date.

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
	• Important to state that recommendations are not set in stone. Feedback will be taken into consideration. • To handle questions, there should be a large group Q&A session before breaking into smaller groups.	
5. Review of feedback and comments received on the preliminary draft recs document sent out 4/4/14; review of recs and plans to reformat/revise into a draft doc for distribution prior to the April 28 meeting	• Brenda sent out updated Document dated April 10 "Draft Recommendations" (**Attachment A)** • Neighborhood Connections section sent out by Emily (dated April 4) (**Attachment B).** Suggested changes: use some bulleted items where possible, though narrative is good; include reference to using "webinars" whether in this section or in the CIDAB section; make a reference to how recs have been prioritized. • Boards and Commissions section discussion. Suggested changes: stay away from using the term "narrow" when not specifically quoting the CC charge; put the "charge" language up front; make chart less confusing; decide where CIP should end up, and add a section in narrative about CIP; include some narrative about the three	• Send all "wordsmithing" and typo corrections to Kent so he can send them to the volunteer editor.

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
	CC standing committees. • Guiding Principles section: suggestion that more than one example/idea be suggested so it is understood there are optional ways of resolving an identified issue. • Other key discussion areas: Reconsider CIDAB – does it have too large a charge for one committee of its size? Downtown Parking and Downtown Commission recommendations need to be analyzed.	
6. Public comments, suggestions, ideas	• **Susan Christie**, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC): submitted written comments (**Attachment C).** Combining BPAC with other committees would bog down their work. She encouraged PPTF to reconsider this recommendation that BPAC and other groups be combined into a Transportation Advisory Board. She also suggested that instead of combining B&Cs into larger committees, consider having liaisons from B&C's to other B&C's that have shared interests. Meeting together in a	

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
	large committee is a waste of everyone's time. • **Stewart Wershow** – shared his concern that working documents are not being made available on the website in a timely manner so people can give feedback. He understands that this is because PPTF is underfunded.	
7. Timeline, responsibilities and roles for PPTF and others for critical path from May 5 to Dec 31, 2014.	• No discussion held	
8. Checkout: Was time used efficiently? Was everyone prepared? Everyone heard? Meeting process okay? Can we do better? Agenda for next meeting?		• Next meeting will be held at Parks and Recreation meeting room, April 17, 2014. Agenda will focus on B&C recommendations, and Guiding Principles.
9. Adjournment	• The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm	

Respectfully submitted: Kent Daniels, Chair

Next Meeting: April 17, 2014

City of Corvallis Public Participation Task Force

DRAFT Recommendations

Compiled recommendations from three sub-committees:
Boards and Commissions organization and structure
Guiding principles for public participation
Neighborhood Associations

WORKING DRAFT RESPONSE TO CHARGE

April 10, 2014

City Council's goal and the charge of the Public Participation Task Force

The City Council's goal statement, provided to the Public Participation Task Force (PPTF), states that: *"By December 2014, the Council will revise its processes and structures in to a more effective and efficient citizen engagement program to develop diverse future leaders, enhance communication between citizen ns and the Council, help connect citizens to each other to strengthen community and neighborhoods, and utilize the expertise of citizen volunteers in solving community problems."*

<u>Issues to be studied and deliberated:</u>

1. Number and scope of boards and commissions
   a. Identify areas of duplication between existing boards and commissions.
   b. Identify boards and commissions whose areas of study are so small or narrow that they could be incorporated into another related group or community organization.
   c. Identify significant areas of City Council responsibility where the Council doesn't receive systemic citizen advice. Include gaps in the board and commission system that would benefit from a change in the scope of a current group or the formation of a new group.
   d. Suggest how to combine, divide or otherwise reorganize these groups so that they are as effective and efficient as possible.

2. The formation, evaluation, revision and sunset process
   a. What criteria should the City Council use to determine if a new board or commission should be created?
   b. Consider how best to define and evaluate effective board and commission operations and outcomes.
   c. Consider how to balance the roles of boards and commissions as well-informed and neutral advisors to the Council as opposed to advocates for a particular point of view.
   d. What criteria should the Council use to make significant changes in one or more boards or commissions?
   e. Consider revising the process and/or developing criteria to guide Council decisions about ending boards and commissions.
   f. How should the effectiveness of staff support be evaluated?

3. Relationship with City operating departments
   a. The relationships between individual boards and commissions and the related operating department vary greatly. What should the relationships be?

4. Council liaison role
   a. What should the role of the City Council liaison be?

5. Opportunities to advise the City Council
   a. Is access available to all citizens to give thoughtful input and advice to the City Council through the board and commission system? If not, are there ways to improve the board and commission system for better access?
   b. Is there adequate access to citizens to advise the Council through means other than the board and commission system? If not, suggest methods of improvement.
6. Cost factors
   a. It is important to ensure that decisions are timely; citizens feel that their efforts are meaningful, and city resources are used well. Identify ways to streamline or reduce the use of staff support.
   b. Identify ways to maximize the use of citizen volunteers.
7. Committee for Citizen Involvement
   a. Is the current configuration of this group the most effective means of addressing the Oregon Land Use System Goal One? If not, how might this goal be better met?
8. Neighborhood associations
   a. Neighborhood associations provide opportunities to build community and address issues that affect residents of particular geographical areas of the city. Does the City's public participation system adequately encourage neighborhood engagement and neighborliness? If not, identify methods for improvement.

Throughout our recommendations, references will are made to the impact on effectiveness and efficiency according to the definition provided by City Council. These terms are defined as follows: 'Effectiveness' means improved communication between residents and appointees with the Council and staff in ways that result in better, more informed decision making. 'Efficiency' means purposeful and limited use of city resources, including staff time, volunteer time and other direct costs. We recognize the City Council's priority of creating a sustainable budget and note that City Council must prioritize recommendations and the use of resources for public participation effectiveness.

Our focus remained resolutely on our charge and on the formal channels of engaging community members early in the decision making process and to strengthen the existing board and commission system. We endeavored to provide alternative options to strengthen public participation in eight specific areas. This draft document will address each area sequentially by number. (i.e. charge 1. through 8.)

The Public Participation Task Force is comprised of eight community members, two city council members, and one staff representative from the City. We recognize that all currently serving board and commission members are committed to the work of their committee and respect and appreciate the work done by each of these groups.

I. Boards and Commissions organization and structure

The task force reviewed existing Advisory Boards and Commissions to address portions of the charge related to the number and scope of boards and commissions. This element of work for the PPTF was the most challenging as we acknowledge the contributions and expertise provided by citizen volunteers currently serving.

In a comparative review of other Oregon cities, we noted a larger city (Bend) operates with only thirteen advisory boards and commissions and a smaller city (Ashland) operates with fifteen. Corvallis currently supports twenty three advisory boards and commissions. In general, we believe broader categories are more desirable for efficient operations.

We have endeavored to provide alternative pathways to greater effectiveness and efficiency. We encourage existing boards and commissions to review annual goals and the current level of public engagement with their committee to determine if the issue area would be more comprehensively addressed if united in a more broadly defined advisory board.

Recommendation 1 (charge 1. a – d)

We identified ten boards or commissions (listed below) where the scope is narrow enough that some may benefit by incorporation into another citizen committee or community organization to increase the efficiency in the board and commission system.

- Airport Commission
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission
- Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit
- Commission for Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Commission on Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry
- Committee for Citizen Involvement
- Downtown Commission
- Downtown Parking Commission
- Public Art Selection Commission
- Watershed Management Advisory Commission

We identified four significant areas of City Council responsibility where the Council doesn't receive systemic citizen advice. We believe new advisory boards would increase effectiveness of the city by addressing the gaps in the following areas:

- Diversity and Citizen Involvement
- Public Safety
- Transportation systems planning and decisions
- Water systems planning and decisions

a. Combine, divide or otherwise reorganize the narrowly focused committees so that they are as effective and efficient as possible.

Upon review of current activities and their charge, we suggest that the following advisory board interest areas could be better served with a change of scope. Committees are listed in alphabetical order.

- **Airport Advisory Board.** After review of current activities, we note that there are two distinct areas of oversight including highly technical aviation input and economic development activity reports. A change from advisory board to Department Advisory Committee would create efficiencies for public works and economic development activities could be transitioned to the Economic Development Advisory Board. (Current estimated staff cost $5,380)

- **Arts and Culture Advisory Board.** This board is charged with advising City Council on all matters relating to arts and culture. Additionally, we recommend strengthening the formal communications related to city funded arts and culture related entities with annual reporting to this committee. City supported arts organizations include The Majestic Theater and The Arts Center. (Current estimated staff cost $3,143)

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and the Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit** could potentially join to form a more comprehensively charged advisory board for multi-modal transportation issues. (Current estimated annual staff cost for Bike/Ped $11,930; for Transit, $7,090)

- **Budget Commission.** This committee includes City Council and community members and is currently limited to reviewing the proposed annual budget. We recommend expanding the scope to study financial issues facing the City and develop recommendations for the Council; review fund forecasts; have citizen members work with staff and council on the budget before formal unveiling in February. Subcommittees may hold public meetings in the early fall to obtain community member input and suggestions for the next year budget. (current estimated staff cost varies between $3,000 - $8,000 + $2,000 for budget meeting preparation and $250 per meeting for a recorder)

- **Committee for Citizen Involvement** was established as means of addressing the Oregon Land Use System Goal One. We noted that there appears to be no activity in this committee since December 2012 and prior to that time, meeting were held on a quarterly basis. Limited to educating community members about land use planning is an important piece of engaging the community and we believe additional resources can be generated and supported by incorporating the CCI charge

in the newly formed Community Involvement and Inclusion Advisory Board. (estimated costs $8,000, quarterly meetings)

- **Commission for Martin Luther King Jr.** was established to create a community celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. and to 'advise Council on matters pertaining to the holiday.' We value the work of Mr. King and the holiday in his honor and we believe there is a significantly greater opportunity to advise Council on inclusion and diversity issues in addition to fostering awareness of the principles and practices championed by Martin Luther King Jr. We believe this work can be accomplished by incorporating this committee in the newly formed Community Involvement and Inclusion Advisory Board.

- **Commission on Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry** is a committee whose focus is on beautification projects with the City. This active committee would potentially be more cost effective as a Departmental Advisory Committee. (estimated costs $5,366)

- **Community Police Review Board** is a narrowly focused committee dealing specifically with citizen complaints. We have identified an opportunity for greater public participation in all matters related to public safety and recommend further research on increasing the scope of this committee through the establishment of a Public Safety Advisory Board.

- **Downtown Commission** was created in 2008 primarily to implement an urban renewal project which was not supported by voters. Their charge is to support a vibrant hub of business and cultural activity through streetscape projects, redevelopment projects and public parking. (current estimated costs $13,000 + $100 per monthly meeting for a recorder)

- **Downtown Parking Commission** is narrowly focused on downtown parking and promoting multi-modal transportation. Two members of the Downtown Commission serve on this committee which is, in effect a sub-committee of the Downtown Commission. We recommend the codification of that fact and cease to list as a separate board. (current estimated staff costs for Downtown Parking, $3,300 + $100 per monthly meeting for a recorder)

- **Economic Development Commission** is charged to develop and recommend economic development policy and strategy for the City and to implement. The current strategic plan is narrowly focused and does not include the economic development activities of the airport or downtown core. We have included options that move these areas of interest.

- **Historic Resources Commission and Planning Commission** is a quasi-judicial committee. We recommend increased collaborative work with periodic work sessions with each other for goal development, and with the recommended new Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board regarding Land Use Goal 1 requirements, issues and improvements.

- **Land Development Hearings Board** is currently, in effect, a sub-committee of the Planning Commission. We recommend the codification of that fact and cease to list as a separate board. (Current estimated costs $3,000 + $200 for recorder)

- **Public Art Selection Commission** provides expertise in the review and approval of public art installations. One member of the Arts and Culture Commission serves on this commission. We recommend that this committee be transitioned to the broadly scoped Arts and Culture Advisory Board and a sub-committee formed to carry out the duties of public art selection. (Current estimated cost $1,844)

- **Watershed Management Advisory Commission** is narrowly focused on the Rock Creek Watershed, a drinking water resource for the City. This is a technical committee and may be more cost effective as a Department Advisory Committee or as part of a more broadly scoped Water Systems Advisory Board. (current estimated costs: $7,490)

We recommend four new advisory boards (in prioritized order) to increase effectiveness of citizen input and decision making.

- Diversity and Citizen Involvement Advisory Board
    - Details provided later in this document in Recommendation 7.
- Transportation Advisory Board
    - Corvallis transportation planning (public transit, vehicle, bikes, pedestrian)
    - Accessibility and sustainability in transportation
    - Coordination with regional transportation planning
    - Transportation master plan, parking plan, CIP transportation projects
- Water systems planning and decisions
    - Water quality, waste water and storm water management
    - Land management/natural features
    - Plans, CIP, reviews: Building maintenance plan, Storm water master plan, Wastewater utility master plan
    - Public Works CIP projects for buildings, water, land (excludes transportation)
- Public Safety
    - Emergency preparedness (w/Neighborhood associations)
    - Fire Dept. CIP projects, Police Dept. COP projects, Fire Department strategic MP

We acknowledge that City Council must prioritize recommendations and the use of resources for public participation effectiveness. The key below provides a reference to in-

dicate existing, revised, or new advisory boards or commissions. Department Advisory Committees are also noted and our assumptions are that DACs will be more cost-effective than Advisory Boards and Commissions.

◦ Existing, no change ↓ **Revised, incorporates more than one existing, net decrease**
↑ **New, net increase** √ New, incorporates one existing, no net change

	Option A		**Option B**		**No changes**
	Total 16, ***net change -6***		Total 17, ***net -5***		Total 22
Human Services Comm.	↓ **Arts & Culture Advisory Board** (merge Public Art Selection) ↓ **Citizen Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Board** (expand scope and merge Committee for Citizen Involvement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission) ◦ Civic Beautification & Urban Forestry Dept. Advisory ◦ Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Advisory Board ◦ Parks, Natural Areas & Recreation Advisory Board ◦ Police Review Commission Study **Public Safety Advisory Board**		↓ **Arts and Culture Advisory Board** (+Public Art selection) ↓**Citizen Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Board** (expand scope and merge Committee for Citizen Involvement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission) ◦ Civic Beautification & Urban Forestry Dept. Advisory ◦Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Advisory Board ◦Parks, Natural Areas & Recreation Advisory Board ◦Police Review Commission Study **Public Safety Advisory Board**		◦ Arts & Culture ◦ CBUF ◦ CCI ◦ MLK ◦ Library ◦ Police Review ◦ PNAR ◦ Public Art Selection
Urban Services Comm.	◦ Appeals Commission (Board of Appeals) ◦ Historic Resources Commission ◦ Housing & Comm. Dev. Advisory Board ↓ **Planning Commission** (+ Land Development Hearings Board) ↓ **Transportation Advisory Board** (9 members, merge Bicycle & Pedestrian, Citizen Advisory Commission on Transit, Downtown Parking) √ **Water Systems Advisory Board** (merge Watershed Management Advisory Commission)		◦ Appeals Commission ◦ CIP Department Advisory Committee ◦ Historic Resources Commission ◦ Housing& Community Development Advisory Board ↓ **Planning Commission** (merge Land Development Hearings) ↓ **Transportation Advisory Board** (merge Bike and Peds and Transit Advisory Boards) ◦ Watershed Management Department Advisory Committee √ **Water Systems Advisory Board**		◦ Appeals Commission ◦ Bike & Peds ◦ Capital Improvements Program ◦ Downtown Parking ◦ Housing, Community Dev. ◦ Historic Resources ◦ Land Development Hearings ◦ Planning Commission ◦ Transit
ASC	◦ Airport Advisory Board (econ. Dev.tasks assigned to Econ. Dev. AB)) ◦ Budget Commission ◦Capital Improvements Program Dept. Advisory ↓ **Economic Develop Advisory Board** (merge Downtown Comm.)		◦ Airport Dept. Advisory ◦ Budget Commission ↓ **Downtown AB** (+Downtown Parking) ◦Capital Improvements Program Dept. Advisory ◦ Economic Development Advisory Board		◦ Airport ◦ Budget ◦ Downtown ◦ Economic Dev. ◦ Watershed Management

<u>Recommendation 2</u> (charge 2. a- f) for the formation, evaluation, revision and sunset process.

a. <u>Limit the formation of new advisory boards and commissions.</u>

Based on our review of comparable cities and the existing number of advisory boards and commissions in Corvallis, we recommend the increased use of task forces which can be more focused and easier to sunset. Before a new advisory board is formed, it is important to determine if an alternative solution is viable including broadening the scope of an existing advisory board or commission or creating a task force or department advisory committee.

b. <u>Establish a formal, annual reporting relationship to City Council standing committees.</u>

Require that all advisory boards and commissions develop annual goals and work plans. Create an annual review and report process with their related City Council standing committees. To measure effectiveness, utilize the annual work plan and goals accomplished of related advisory boards and commissions.

c. <u>Provide orientation for all new advisory board and commission members to create more effective committees.</u>

Members of advisory boards and commissions are well-informed and typically passionate about the work of the committee. As part of the new member orientation process, all appointees should understand the advisory nature of the work and that in some cases, City Council must weigh multiple factors in determining to accept or reject committee recommendations. It is also recommended that committee chairs and vice chairs receive training relating to running efficient meetings, public meeting laws, and understanding the scope of the work of the committee.

d. **<u>Use consistent annual reporting from all advisory boards and commissions to determine if revisions are appropriate.</u>**

Once established, advisory boards and commissions are populated with volunteers who commit time and expertise to the work of the committee. The use of annual work plans and an annual review with a standing committee will provide a framework for reviewing possible revision of the committee.

e. **<u>Revise the sunset policy.</u>**

It is the City Council's responsibility to decide if an existing advisory board or commission should continue its work. Each advisory board and commission will be reviewed annually as part of the reporting process to the City Council standing committee**.**

f. **<u>Implement consistent practices for all advisory boards and commissions including staff attendance, recorder, and style of minutes to improve efficiencies.</u>**

1. Assign one staff liaison and recorder to attend each Advisory Board, Commission, and Task Force meeting. Being responsive to cost concerns, department directors exercise judgment on +1 staff attendance.

2. We recommend avoiding verbatim minutes. Minutes should be taken in a consistent format including:

    a. key discussion point minutes for Advisory Boards and Task Forces, *(guidelines in addendum)*

    b. detailed minutes for Commissions as required by statute.

g. Evaluate the effectiveness of staff support as part of the annual review of the advisory board or commission.

The staff liaison plays a critical support role for advisory boards and commissions and their role should be clearly articulated to incoming committee members. The staff liaison role will be as follows: to provide accurate and relevant information for the work of the committee, to provide logistical support including meeting space, meeting recorder, assistance with annual reporting of activities, or other support that is required for individual committees.

Recommendation 3 (charge 3.) for defining the relationships between advisory boards and commissions, City Council, and city operating departments.

The purpose of this recommendation is to make decision making in the City more effective; and to build a web of strong interrelationships of committees which can address City planning with efficient use of city resources. The intent of this recommendation is **to better coordinate the working plans and activities of committees with annual goals and priorities of City Council** and to **increase adequate and early input** by affected stakeholders in all major planning areas.

a. **Adopt a policy to use consistent titles of citizen committees.**

One of our first areas of agreement (also confirmed in our interviews with Department Directors) was the importance of the consistent use of language in describing committees. Consistency is especially important as most are advisory only; there are a limited number of committees with decision making authority. Consistency will help everyone understand the distinction between the types of committees and indicates to the majority of existing committees the advisory nature of their work. This policy will create effectiveness in the system which will support city operating departments and will also guide City Council in the naming of committees.

Four distinct types of committees are recommended which would require the renaming of most existing committees. Any of these committees may consider forming subcommittees. Other work groups or committees may be formed by the Mayor or city staff for particular reason. Department Directors would continue the practice of bringing together small work or technical groups with particular areas of knowledge to advise them on particular or technical issues. The City Manager is responsible for ensuring that the

Mayor and City Councilors are aware of the formation, purpose, duration and membership of these ongoing committees.

1. **<u>Advisory Board</u>**
   This type of standing committee is established by City Council resolution and serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council and staff. The City Council resolution identifies the charge. The Mayor is responsible for appointing individuals to fill vacancies.

2. **<u>Commission</u>**
   A standing committee to which the City Council has delegated decision making authority. The Mayor is responsible for appointing individuals to fill vacancies. For the Planning Commission and Historic Resources Commission, the appointment is made by City Council.

3. **<u>Task Force</u>**
   This committee is formed to achieve a particular goal with a specific charge, and is generally active for a limited time. The City Council resolution identifies the term of the committee, the task to be completed, the timeline for completion of the project and other direction as the City Council deems appropriate. The City Council should consider forming a Task Force to address a major initiative or significant policy change if an existing Commission or Advisory Board does not exist to address that area or does not have the ability to address the topic by itself. The Mayor is responsible for appointing individuals to serve.

4. **<u>Department Advisory Committee</u>**
   Department Advisory Committees are administrative or technical in nature and allow for efficient use of citizen expertise. These ongoing committees are appointed by department directors with the approval of the Mayor and City Council. They advise department staff and provide agility in responding to community issues.

b. <u>Conduct an annual meeting for all advisory boards and commissions.</u>

1. In our research of other communities we learned that some host an annual meeting with all boards and the City council and one assigns the city attorney's office to visit each board or commission once per year. Our recommendation of an annual meeting provides all committees an opportunity to hear the same message from the Mayor, to reduce silos, encourage dialogue, and foster cooperation among advisory boards and commissions.

<u>Recommendation 4:</u> (charge 4) define the role of the City Council liaison

In researching the liaison role, we noted that one community is in the process of ending the Council liaison duties due to the challenge of keeping up with the meetings of their fifteen advisory boards and commissions. We recognize a similar challenge in Corvallis to an even greater degree. With the formalization advisory board and commission goal setting, review, and reporting to Standing Committees, the City Council liaison position may no longer be required.

II. Guiding Principles for Public Engagement

<u>Recommendation 5</u>: (charge 5. a – b) to improve access for community members to give thoughtful input to City Council

The Corvallis 2020 vision statement includes the following as a statement about our community. "In 2020, Corvallis will employ local benchmarks to measure progress in areas including housing, economic vitality, educational quality, environmental quality, and overall quality of life; citizens will actively participate in public policy and decision making; and we will be a community that honors diversity."

We believe that this recommendation is a formalization of what City Council and staff have been attempting to do. Providing a standard to point to when we don't meet our expectations of ourselves. Our intention with this recommendation is to ensure that all interests are represented in the decision-making process and to genuinely engage diverse community members at an early stage in the process.

Members of Advisory Boards, Commissions, and Task Forces provide an invaluable service to our city. These groups advise the City Council on a wide variety of subjects. The expertise and work of citizen groups often serve as a catalyst for innovative city programs and improved services.

Serving on an Advisory Board, Commission or Task Force can be a rewarding experience for community service-minded residents. It is a productive way to participate in the functioning of local government and assists City Council members in understanding the values of their constituents. The role of these committees is to provide input to city staff and advice and recommendations City Council.

a. **<u>Adopt the following five Guiding Principles and publish on the City website.</u>**

1. **Collaborative Democracy** - Enhance and support community-driven democracy in city government. Ensure that all participants listen and attempt to understand different viewpoints.
2. **Diversity** – Seek input from all viewpoints, backgrounds, and philosophies. Treat each person with dignity, fairness, and respect.
3. **Openness and Access** - Promote fair, open and respectful processes that allow all who are interested or affected to have an equal opportunity to participate.

4. **Inclusiveness** - Create a variety of ways for community members to participate and influence decisions.
5. **Accountability** - Use decision-making processes that are transparent and that create decisions that can be tracked with clearly defined responsibilities.

PRINCIPIOS FUNDAMENTALES

1. **Trabajo colaborativo en la Democracia** – mejorar y apoyar una democracia gubernamental dirigida por la comunidad. Asegurarse todos los participantes escuchen e intenten comprender diferentes puntos de vista.
2. **Diversidad** – solicitar opiniones desde todas las perspectivas, orígenes y filosofías. Tratar a cada persona con dignidad, igualdad y respeto.
3. **Transparencia** - Promover procesos justos, abiertos y respetuosos que permiten a aquellos interesados o afectados a tener una oportunidad para participar.
4. **Integración –** Crear una variedad de maneras para que miembros de la comunidad participen e influyan las decisiones.
5. **Obligación** – Usar procesos para hacer decisiones responsables y que sean transparentes.

b. <u>Implement Guiding Principle practices to ensure outreach and authentic engagement of community members, elected and appointed city leadership, and city staff.</u>

1. **<u>Collaborative Democracy</u>**
    a. **<u>Create a community-friendly atmosphere at all public meetings</u>**
        i. Demonstrate that those giving public testimony are being listened to.
            - Make eye contact, ask a question, alert public that an electronic device may be used to capture testimony for future reference.
        ii. Create a welcoming environment for public testimony.
            - When the need arises to limit testimony, employ methods that are predictable and discrete. The City of Pasadena has a podium with three built in lights: green, yellow, and red. It is observable by the council and the speaker in a discrete manner;
        iii. Establish protocol for multiple persons who are representing an organization to make a presentation longer than the allowed time. Group should make arrangements in advance.
            - Time should not exceed 10 minutes or at Mayor's discretion.
        iv. Have agendas and other relevant documents available for the public at meetings.

2. **Diversity**
    a. **Identify and reach out to diverse sectors of the community.**
        i. Take steps to make meetings linguistically and culturally appropriate (e.g., have public meetings at schools).
            - Create a mechanism within city government to provide translation/interpretation services at public meetings when there is a topic of interest or services are requested.
            - Establish a resource service for child care at major meetings (e.g., partner with a non-profit or social service agency that provides such services).
        ii. Increase access and sensitivity to meeting location.
        iii. Be proactive in seeking feedback from underrepresented groups.

3. **Openness and access**
    a. **Increase access to elected officials and city staff.**
        i. Create reasonable ways for community members to communicate with elected and appointed city leadership and city staff. Provide phone numbers and email addresses that will ensure a response.
            - Include a link on the "Mayor and City Council" web page for each councilor to specify what means of contact are available and which for will elicit a response.
        ii. Consider real-time on-line access to city meetings.
            - Review OSU's New Media Communications Department
        iii. Consider alternate locations for forums, special outreach meetings, and government corner.

    b. **Increase access to city government information.**
        i. Improve City website user-friendliness
            - Make the links on the home page more visible and easier to see/understand for the multiple modes of engagement by community member.
            - Review path to finding archives, specifically the method of searching and retrieving documents. Example: City of Eugene website.
            - Include a list of acronyms used throughout the website.
            - Research software with appropriate design
        ii. Utilize available traditional and social media outlets.
        iii. Set standards for city government and advisory boards and commissions to publicize and market their meetings and events, and vacancies to ensure the information is reaching the community.
            - Continue and expand Government Corner at library lobby every Saturday; continue sending into the newspaper's

F.Y.I.; attend community groups that traditionally have not interacted with city government.

- Provide Guidelines to advisory boards and commission for consistent communication and outreach to community members.

c. **<u>Increase transparency of the appointment process.</u>**

i. Improve awareness of vacancies on advisory boards and commission and increase the transparency of the appointment process.

- Provide online applications and steps on how to become involved on City website.
- Actively seek nominees from varied age groups, socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.
- Seek input from current Commission and Advisory Board chair for potential nominees to fill vacancy.
- Broadly disseminate Advisory Board and Commission vacancy announcements to community groups and organizations, on the City's website, and via media outlets.
- Establish a Mayoral Advisory Group to meet quarterly for review of vacancies and interested volunteers for Advisory Boards and Commissions.
- For examples visit City of Eugene website: eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=86

4. <u>Inclusiveness</u>

a. **<u>Involve broad representation of community members in the decision-making process.</u>**

- Learn what the obstacles are to having representation on advisory boards and commissions that matches demographics of the city.
- Engage community members early in the planning and budgeting process [Planning: look at Lake Oswego requirements - pre-application conferences with neighbors; Budgeting: look at Pasadena - appoint special committees at beginning of process to help gather public opinion].

5. **<u>Accountability</u>**

Align the work plans of Boards and Commissions with City Council standing committees to improve connectivity with long range planning and the decision making process in all areas.

<u>Recommendation 6</u> (charge 6. a-b) to streamline or reduce the use of staff support and maximize the use of community member volunteers.

a. Streamlining boards and commissions and their support structure as recommended will reduce costs in meaningful ways. Additionally, the use of task forces and other committees will increase use of community.

b. Providing enhanced outreach and orientation activities will maximize the effective participation of community member volunteers.

c. Expand qualifications to include the option of one non-resident expert as a non-voting member.
    - Currently anyone living or working within the city or in some cases inside the Urban Growth Boundary is eligible to apply for a vacancy. The Mayor conducts a brief interview, staff provides input and often talks with the nominee to review roles and responsibilities of serving on the committee and the nomination is approved by a vote of the City Council.

Recommendation 7 Committee for Citizen Involvement

a. **We recommend an immediate sunsetting of the CCI and the formation of a new Community Involvement and Diversity Board.**

The current configuration of the Committee for Citizen Involvement limits the work of the committee to address the Oregon Land Use System Goal One and would be strengthened with a broader scope and monthly meetings. Issue areas may include:

- Implementation or further work on PPTF recommendations, as recommended by the City Council
- Diversity, access including community member primer on public participation, testimony, and the land use planning process.
- Develop board and commission trainings and orientation
- Outreach for Registered Neighborhood Groups
- Utilize a subcommittee to work with members of the Planning Commission and the Historic Resources Commission regarding changes and improvements to address the Land Use Goal 1, Citizen involvement.

<u>Recommendation 8</u> (charge 8. a) **opportunities to build community, address issues that affect residents of particular geographical areas of the city, encourage neighborhood engagement and neighborliness**

Our observation is that community members, connected to each other and the City, contribute to the quality of life of residents, to the City and to the quality and effectiveness of community planning. Better connections among neighbors allows community members to solve problems without government involvement, directs neighbors to City government measures already in place to solve their problems, empowers neighbors to work with the City to establish improved measures, and utilizes the substantial expertize of many neighbors.

Most cities in the Northwest that we studied fostered creation of formal neighborhood associations and neighborhood watch groups as a means to encourage continuity and effectiveness of community engagement with local government. In most cities, neighborhood associations are an outgrowth of Oregon's land use legislation, which has as its first goal, citizen engagement. The effectiveness of formal neighborhood associations varies from City to City, as does the budget dedicated to their support. In Corvallis, as in many Oregon cities, the level of community engagement via neighborhood associations rises and falls with specific neighborhood issues or problems, the level of residents' interest, or the quality of the association.

We note that in addition to these City sponsored groups, that there are other groupings of neighbors that have interests in supporting and being supported by the City, such as home owner associations and neighbors organizing through the county to respond to emergencies.

Our focus has been on what the City can do to support neighborhood connections that allow neighborhood groups to 1) <u>sustain themselves continuously</u>, 2) <u>connect neighbors to neighbors</u>, and 3) <u>partner with each other and the City in meeting the needs of their communities and those of the larger City community</u>.

Before elaborating on these goals and the recommendations which derive from them, we would like to introduce a new term and the rationale for its use, **Registered Neighborhood Group (RNG)**. As noted above there exists a range of organizations of neighbors with different specific focus and a shared interest in enhancing the quality of life in their neighborhoods. For the City to expend greater resources to support those organizations, the City needs to know that those organizations have community support and have ongoing viability. We envision certain minimum requirements on membership, training and participation to qualify as Registered Neighborhood Groups and receive certain of the benefits noted in the following recommendations.

We recommend putting in place a set of policies and practices that support ongoing neighborhood connections and provide adequate incentives and resources for RNGs to be more effective and thrive. The goal and stipulation for these practices are that RNGs will

engage in continuous service to their neighborhoods and continuous work to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Key practices are:

1) Free meeting space
    a) Provide RNGs with free meeting space at as many community locations as possible such as the Tunison Community Room, Osborn Aquatic Center, Chintimini Senior Center, Madison Avenue Meeting Room, and Corvallis-Benton County Library or have the City coordinate space with other local entities such as the 509J Corvallis School District or Linn Benton Community College. We have heard continuously that lack of adequate meeting space is a barrier for neighborhood groups. There are currently several neighborhood groups that have no access to free meeting space. Free meeting space was the most popularly requested resource in our survey of current neighborhood leaders (Appendix II).
2) Annual trainings and orientations for RNG leaders and community members
    a) Offer voluntary, interactive "Public Participation 101" orientations and trainings for neighborhood leaders and interested community members on an regular basis. We recommend that this occurs collaboratively between CIDAB and City staff, possibly facilitated by a third party with experience in community leadership training such as Leadership Corvallis. We have heard testimony and feedback which suggests that part of the frustration of advocating for neighborhood needs at the City level arises from community members not understanding the laws, policies, and practices within which the City operates. Many cities we investigated offer trainings for their neighborhood leaders (Bellingham, Eugene, West Linn, Lake Oswego, and others). We propose assigning the CIDAB the task of reviewing and customizing one of those to match Corvallis practices and conduct yearly trainings for RNG leaders and other community members in the city civic process. These training days could also include information on effective communication, facilitation, running a meeting, City resources, and other topics requested by RNG leaders to assist in the development of community leaders. This idea received very positive response from current neighborhood association leadership (Appendix II).
    b) Public Participation 101 should cover topics similar to what is included in Lake Oswego's Citizen Involvement Guidelines. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/webpage/11841/citizen_involvement_guidelines_final_04-06-04.pdf.
3) Neighborhood Empowerment Program ($25,000 to $50,000)
    a) Re-establish and fund the Neighborhood Empowerment Program for neighborhood improvement grants for RNGs to be administered by the new Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board (CIDAB). Neighborhood Empowerment grants are one way in which the City can empower RNGs to take on projects outside of land use and proactively increase the livability of their neighborhood and further partnerships between the City of Corvallis and its neighborhoods. To be effective, the

amount of an individual grant needs to be large enough to spur interest and the number of grants available need to make it plausible for an RNG to receive funding. Survey feedback from current Corvallis neighborhood leaders shows that there is strong interest in reviving this type of program (Appendix II).

i) Suggested grant categories are small capital projects, neighborhood signs, emergency preparedness, neighborhood sustainability, RNG leadership and capacity building, community building, and street tree planting.

ii) Lake Oswego has a similar program called the "Neighborhood Enhancement Program" and materials that may be helpful in refining this program including a program guide and application form. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/planning/neighborhood-enhancement-program.

iii) Previous materials from Corvallis' Neighborhood Empowerment Grant program should be consulted in re-launching this program.

4) "Benefits of being an RNG" resource document
   a) Create a resource or statement that lists the benefits of being a city recognized RNG. In all the Cities we contacted, there is recognition that to sustain an active RNG takes time and energy from the RNG leaders. Having a document that points to and reminds RNG members of the value in participating will help them sustain their interest and help them entice new leaders. This resource will need to be updated annually to reflect the current resources available to RNGs. We see this as another CIDAB function. See Appendix III for example from Lake Oswego.
5) Small RNG budget ($5,000–$10,000)
   a) Create a small budget for or a reimbursement process to cover incidental costs the active RNGs will incur such as providing dumpsters for neighborhood clean-ups, paying for meeting space rentals, rental of street barricades for block parties, and printing meeting flyers. We recommend a modest budget be provided for all RNGs and be based on the size or number of households within the RNGs boundaries. If free meeting space cannot be offered or identified, we recommend that each RNG be allocated a budget that covers the expenses of renting meeting space.

We recommend putting in place a set of policies and practices that support ongoing neighborhood connections and provide adequate incentives and resources for RNGs to be more effective and thrive. The goal and stipulation for these practices are that RNGs will engage in continuous service to their neighborhoods and continuous work to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

Key practices are:

1) Free meeting space
   a) Provide RNGs with free meeting space at as many community locations as possible such as the Tunison Community Room, Osborn Aquatic Center,

Chintimini Senior Center, Madison Avenue Meeting Room, and Corvallis-Benton County Library or have the City coordinate space with other local entities such as the 509J Corvallis School District or Linn Benton Community College. We have heard continuously that lack of adequate meeting space is a barrier for neighborhood groups. There are currently several neighborhood groups that have no access to free meeting space. Free meeting space was the most popularly requested resource in our survey of current neighborhood leaders (Appendix II).

2) Annual trainings and orientations for RNG leaders and community members
   a) Offer voluntary, interactive "Public Participation 101" orientations and trainings for neighborhood leaders and interested community members on an regular basis. We recommend that this occurs collaboratively between CIDAB and City staff, possibly facilitated by a third party with experience in community leadership training such as Leadership Corvallis. We have heard testimony and feedback which suggests that part of the frustration of advocating for neighborhood needs at the City level arises from community members not understanding the laws, policies, and practices within which the City operates. Many cities we investigated offer trainings for their neighborhood leaders (Bellingham, Eugene, West Linn, Lake Oswego, and others). We propose assigning the CIDAB the task of reviewing and customizing one of those to match Corvallis practices and conduct yearly trainings for RNG leaders and other community members in the city civic process. These training days could also include information on effective communication, facilitation, running a meeting, City resources, and other topics requested by RNG leaders to assist in the development of community leaders. This idea received very positive response from current neighborhood association leadership (Appendix II).
   b) Public Participation 101 should cover topics similar to what is included in Lake Oswego's Citizen Involvement Guidelines. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/webpage/11841/citizen_involvement_guidelines_final_04-06-04.pdf.
3) Neighborhood Empowerment Program ($25,000 to $50,000)
   a) Re-establish and fund the Neighborhood Empowerment Program for neighborhood improvement grants for RNGs to be administered by the new Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board (CIDAB). Neighborhood Empowerment grants are one way in which the City can empower RNGs to take on projects outside of land use and proactively increase the livability of their neighborhood and further partnerships between the City of Corvallis and its neighborhoods. To be effective, the amount of an individual grant needs to be large enough to spur interest and the number of grants available need to make it plausible for an RNG to receive funding. Survey feedback from current Corvallis neighborhood leaders shows that there is strong interest in reviving this type of program (Appendix II).
      i) Suggested grant categories are small capital projects, neighborhood signs, emergency preparedness, neighborhood sus-

tainability, RNG leadership and capacity building, community building, and street tree planting.

ii) Lake Oswego has a similar program called the "Neighborhood Enhancement Program" and materials that may be helpful in refining this program including a program guide and application form. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/planning/neighborhood-enhancement-program.

iii) Previous materials from Corvallis' Neighborhood Empowerment Grant program should be consulted in re-launching this program.

4) "Benefits of being an RNG" resource document
   a) Create a resource or statement that lists the benefits of being a city recognized RNG. In all the Cities we contacted, there is recognition that to sustain an active RNG takes time and energy from the RNG leaders. Having a document that points to and reminds RNG members of the value in participating will help them sustain their interest and help them entice new leaders. This resource will need to be updated annually to reflect the current resources available to RNGs. We see this as another CIDAB function. See Appendix III for example from Lake Oswego.
5) Small RNG budget ($5,000–$10,000)
   a) Create a small budget for or a reimbursement process to cover incidental costs the active RNGs will incur such as providing dumpsters for neighborhood clean-ups, paying for meeting space rentals, rental of street barricades for block parties, and printing meeting flyers. We recommend a modest budget be provided for all RNGs and be based on the size or number of households within the RNGs boundaries. If free meeting space cannot be offered or identified, we recommend that each RNG be allocated a budget that covers the expenses of renting meeting space.

Research Process

In reviewing survey responses, researching other community's practices and hearing from the Mayor, City Manager, and Department Directors, we have identified attributes of an effective and efficient system to provide input to the City from citizen Advisory Boards and Commissions including:

- Organizational structure of advisory boards and commissions that emphasizes broadly scoped committees which leads to greater efficiency;
- Consistent communication channels and annual goal setting and review process for all advisory boards and commissions to improve effectiveness;
- Consistent support for practices among all advisory boards and commissions including note taking, budget, staff support, orientations for new appointees, and training for chair and vice chairs to improve efficiency.

1. Survey feedback from current members of boards and commissions

   a. Process and organization

   b. Communication

   40% of committee members reported that their board or commission does not have strategies for collecting citizen input and 51% are unsure if their Council liaison communicates regularly with city Council. Many respondents reported interest in an annual gathering of board and commission members to reduce silos and increase collaborative work and knowledge of each other's work.

2. Feedback from Mayor, City Manager, Department Directors

The Task Force met with and received feedback and ideas from the Mayor and the three Department Directors who provide support to most of the city's advisory boards and commissions. The City Manager also provided the PPTF with information provided in a written response to the task force.

3. Public meetings

Two general public meetings were held in the Public Library large meeting room using a "world cafe'" process designed to elicit feedback and input. The first was held in January and was attended by approximately 75 community members. The second meeting was held April 28, at which specific Task Force draft recommendations were presented and discussed.

4. Information sharing with existing advisory boards and commissions

Initial draft recommendations were sent to existing advisory boards and commissions prior to the second public meeting for review and feedback prior to the final draft of the recommendations.

Inputs in our research included:

- Interviews with and written comments from the Mayor, City Manager, and Department Directors

- Review of best practices and interviews with representatives in other communities including Albany, Ashland, Bend, Eugene, Hillsboro, Lake Oswego, Springfield, Bellingham, WA, Ithaca, NY, and Pasadena, CA.
- Meeting with Eugene "Neighborhood Services" city staff and Neighborhood Association leaders
- Public testimony including input at regular meetings and e-mail
- Survey of currently serving Board and Commission members
- Survey of currently active Neighborhood Association members
- Public meeting in January, 2014 soliciting input on the current organization of advisory boards and commissions and ideas to improve channels of communication in the public process

Community member volunteers:
Kent Daniels, Chair
Annette Mills, Vice Chair
Emily Bowling
George Brown
Lee Eckroth
Becki Goslow
Rocio Munoz
Brenda VanDevelder

City Council volunteers:
Councilor Penny York
Councilor Richard Hervey

Staff volunteer:
Mary Beth Altmann-Hughes

Neighborhood Connections Report and Recommendations

DRAFT: April 4, 2014

Introduction

Our observation is that community members, connected to each other and the City, contribute to the quality of life of residents, to the City and to the quality and effectiveness of community planning. Better connections among neighbors allows community members to solve problems without government involvement, directs neighbors to City government measures already in place to solve their problems, empowers neighbors to work with the City to establish improved measures, and utilizes the substantial expertize of many neighbors.

Most cities in the Northwest that we studied fostered creation of formal neighborhood associations and neighborhood watch groups as a means to encourage continuity and effectiveness of community engagement with local government. In most cities, neighborhood associations are an outgrowth of Oregon's land use legislation, which has as its first goal, citizen engagement. The effectiveness of formal neighborhood associations varies from City to City, as does the budget dedicated to their support. In Corvallis, as in many Oregon cities, the level of community engagement via neighborhood associations rises and falls with specific neighborhood issues or problems, the level of residents' interest, or the quality of the association.

We note that in addition to these City sponsored groups, that there are other groupings of neighbors that have interests in supporting and being supported by the City, such as home owner associations and neighbors organizing through the county to respond to emergencies.

Our focus has been on what the City can do to support neighborhood connections that allow neighborhood groups to 1) <u>sustain themselves continuously</u>, 2) <u>connect neighbors to neighbors</u>, and 3) <u>partner with each other and the City in meeting the needs of their communities and those of the larger City community</u>.

Before elaborating on these goals and the recommendations which derive from them, we would like to introduce a new term and the rationale for its use, **Registered Neighborhood Group (RNG)**. As noted above there exists a range of organizations of neighbors with different specific focus and a shared interest in enhancing the quality of life in their neighborhoods. For the City to expend greater resources to support those organizations, the City needs to know that those organizations have community support and have ongoing viability. We envision certain minimum requirements on membership, training and participation to qualify as Registered Neighborhood Groups and receive certain of the benefits noted in the following recommendations.

These recommendations serve to address charge 8a of the PPTF and the overall City Council goal statement: Charge #8a: "Neighborhood associations - Neighborhood associations provide opportunities to build community and address issues that affect residents of particular geographical areas of the city. Does the City's public participation system adequately encourage neighborhood engagement and neighborliness? If not, identify methods for improvement." Our hope is that implementation of these recommendations will subsequently lead to greater incentive for neighborhood participation and the eventual expansion of RNGs to include city-wide coverage.

City Council Goal Statement: "By December 2014, the Council will revise its processes and structures into a more effective and efficient citizen engagement program to develop diverse future leaders, enhance communication between citizens and the Council, help connect citizens to each other to strengthen

community and neighborhoods, and utilize the expertise of citizen volunteers in solving community problems."

Sustaining Active Neighborhoods Recommendations

Our interviews of leaders and active members of Corvallis neighborhood associations, as well as city staff and community leaders in other cities, emphasized the often cyclical nature of active participation in neighborhood associations. In most cases, involvement rises and falls is response to proposed development in the neighborhood. Only a small portion of the membership stays active in the absence of land use, traffic, road infrastructure, crime, or code enforcement concerns.

In neighborhood organizations that stay active over time, we noted other attributes that provide value to the community and the City, such as:

- Broader and deeper connections between neighbors contributes to the quality of life in the neighborhood beyond land use and traffic concerns
- Neighbors working with each other to prepare for disaster, emergency, and inclement weather response
- Enhanced communication on issues impacting City neighborhoods
- Engagement with the City on a wider range of topics
- A larger pool of potential community leaders and volunteers
- Greater understanding of City processes

We recommend putting in place a set of policies and practices that support ongoing neighborhood connections and provide adequate incentives and resources for RNGs to be more effective and thrive. The goal and stipulation for these practices are that RNGs will engage in continuous service to their neighborhoods and continuous work to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods.

<u>Key practices are</u>:

1) Free meeting space
    a) Provide RNGs with free meeting space at as many community locations as possible such as the Tunison Community Room, Osborn Aquatic Center, Chintimini Senior Center, Madison Avenue Meeting Room, and Corvallis-Benton County Library or have the City coordinate space with other local entities such as the 509J Corvallis School District or Linn Benton Community College. We have heard continuously that lack of adequate meeting space is a barrier for neighborhood groups. There are currently several neighborhood groups that have no access to free meeting space. Free meeting space was the most popularly requested resource in our survey of current neighborhood leaders (Appendix II).
2) Neighborhood Empowerment Program ($25,000 to $50,000)
    a) Re-establish and fund the Neighborhood Empowerment Program for neighborhood improvement grants for RNGs to be administered by the new Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board (CIDAB). Neighborhood Empowerment grants are one way in which the City can empower RNGs to take on projects outside of land use and proactively increase the livability of their neighborhood and further partnerships between the City of Corvallis and its neighborhoods. To be effective, the amount of an individual grant needs to be large enough to spur interest and the number of grants available need to make it plausible for an RNG to receive funding. Survey feedback from current Corvallis neighborhood leaders shows that there is strong interest in reviving this type of program (Appendix II).
        i) Suggested grant categories are small capital projects, neighborhood signs, emergency preparedness, neighborhood sustainability, RNG leadership and capacity

DRAFT

building, community building, and street tree planting.

ii) Lake Oswego has a similar program called the "Neighborhood Enhancement Program" and materials that may be helpful in refining this program including a program guide and application form. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/planning/neighborhood-enhancement-program.

iii) Previous materials from Corvallis' Neighborhood Empowerment Grant program should be consulted in re-launching this program.

3) Annual trainings and orientations for RNG leaders and community members
   a) Offer voluntary, interactive "Public Participation 101," "Land Development Code 101," and "Community Leadership 101" orientations and trainings for neighborhood leaders and interested community members on a regular basis. We recommend that this occurs collaboratively between CIDAB and City staff, possibly facilitated by a third party with experience in community leadership training such as Leadership Corvallis. We have heard testimony and feedback which suggests that part of the frustration of advocating for neighborhood needs at the City level arises from community members not understanding the laws, policies, and practices within which the City operates. Many cities we investigated offer trainings for their neighborhood leaders (Bellingham, Eugene, West Linn, Lake Oswego, and others). We propose assigning the CIDAB the task of reviewing and customizing one of those to match Corvallis practices and conduct yearly trainings for RNG leaders and other community members in the city civic process. These training days could also include information on effective communication, facilitation, running a meeting, City resources, and other topics requested by RNG leaders to assist in the development of community leaders. This idea received very positive response from current neighborhood association leadership (Appendix II).
   b) Public Participation 101 should cover topics similar to what is included in Lake Oswego's Citizen Involvement Guidelines. See: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/webpage/11841/citizen_involvement_guidelines_final_04-06-04.pdf.
4) Neighborhood engagement pathways
   a) Work with Police Department and Neighborhood Watch programs to promote new Neighborhood Watch programs and to have willing Neighborhood Watch leaders convey their contact information to their RNGs. Neighborhood Watch can be one way to be involved in a RNG.
   b) Not surprisingly, the neighborhood leader survey revealed that different neighborhoods and different community members have diverse interests and needs (neighborhoods closer to OSU shared different concerns and interests than those farther away from OSU). We recommend that the City and CIDAB provide resources to RNGs so that they are equipped to provide multiple avenues of engagement for their members such as social event planning, Neighborhood Watch/safety, emergency/disaster response planning, land use, neighborhood beautification projects, sustainability promotion (e.g. recycling block captains), neighbor exchanges, promotion of voter education and engagement in local elections, and others in order to attract diverse membership and have more robust activity. (move this section?)
   c) In order to allow for a higher level of accessibility, we recommend that neighborhood groups find ways to allow residents to participate online or electronically in meetings and providing feedback on neighborhood issues.
5) Small RNG budget ($5,000–$10,000)
   a) Create a small budget for or a reimbursement process to cover incidental costs the active RNGs will incur such as providing dumpsters for neighborhood clean-ups, paying for meeting

DRAFT

space rentals, rental of street barricades for block parties, and printing meeting flyers. We recommend a modest budget be provided for all RNGs and be based on the size or number of households within the RNGs boundaries. If free meeting space cannot be offered or identified, we recommend that each RNG be allocated a budget that covers the expenses of renting meeting space.

Associated Recommendations:

6) RNG manual
    a) Develop and encourage RNGs to actively use an RNG policy manual and resource guide such as the one that exists in Lake Oswego and Eugene (list the sections and chapters needed). CIDAB can lead in the creation of this resource. We recommend that CIDAB and City staff look for opportunities to have shared resource materials with Commissions and Advisory Boards wherever possible.
        i) The Lake Oswego Neighborhood Association Resource Guide may be a helpful example. See example from Lake Oswego here: http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/webpage/11856/na_resource_guidebook.pdf
7) "Benefits of being an RNG" resource document
    a) Create a resource or statement that lists the benefits of being a city recognized RNG. In all the Cities we contacted, there is recognition that to sustain an active RNG takes time and energy from the RNG leaders. Having a document that points to and reminds RNG members of the value in participating will help them sustain their interest and help them entice new leaders. This resource will need to be updated annually to reflect the current resources available to RNGs. We see this as another CIDAB function. See Appendix III for example from Lake Oswego.
8) Resource library
    a) Start building an online library of relevant support information or resources for the functioning and improvement of RNGs and public or community involvement and participation. This will be updated regularly based on suggestions from RNGs and CIDAB. We recommend exploring having a few shelves in the Corvallis-Benton Public Library reserved for print materials serving this purpose as well.

Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors Recommendations

Many of the practices suggested to sustain active neighborhoods also contribute to relationships between neighbors. In our research, we also heard from neighborhoods in which residents contribute to each other's lives on a weekly basis. In these neighborhoods, the key element appears to be easy communication links between neighbors along with a neighborhood history of helpfulness and community building. Neighbors connected to neighbors solve problems without government involvement, direct neighbors to City government measures already in place to solve their problems, and empower neighbors to work with the City to establish improved measures.

In smaller neighborhoods, the link can be as simple as physical proximity. In larger ones, use of electronic connections may be required. In Corvallis, one neighborhood has a long a successful use of a moderated Google group to communicate; others use email distributions. The Tunison neighborhood is piloting use of NextDoor.com, software to promote neighborhood participation and communication. We believe the key to success is to have a tool that is easy to support, a means of sustainable support, and ease of use (both ongoing and in the initial discovery and sign up).

DRAFT

It is critical that RNGs and neighbors have mechanisms that allow them to communicate effectively with each other. There are free resources available for creating listservs and distribution lists such as Google groups. We also recommend that information about how to create online groups and email distribution lists should be provided to RNGs and other community groups.

Further, we recommend that the City make available information about a range of possible options, so that existing neighborhoods can experiment with the available options and their associated functionalities and features. Longer term we recommend that CIDAB look at the a variety of software options to identify an option that best meets the needs of the Corvallis RNGs and make a recommendation that provides for RNG private use and provides for frequent, ongoing communications between neighbors and their city councilors. Options based on our initial research include:

- I-Neighbors: https://www.i-neighbors.org/howitworks.php
    - http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2004/ineighbors.html
- Next Door: https://nextdoor.com/
- Granicus: http://www.granicus.com/solutions/citizen-participation/

Partner With Each Other And The City Recommendations

Communication among RNGs and with City Recommendations

Successful and effective RNGs that contribute to enhanced neighborhood livability and community satisfaction are dependent upon positive, mutually beneficial relationships among the RNGs and between RNGs and the city. Our survey responses and interviews provide ample feedback from current community members that they would like additional support from the City and improved communication with City Council but want to ensure that RNGs are led by community leaders and function autonomously. This promotes efficient use of City resources and strengthens diverse community leadership and self-reliance. By increasing the number of community members and volunteers who are active in neighborhood groups, an increased and more diverse pool of potential volunteers and future community leaders will be created.

1) City staff support
    a) Budget for city staff to be available to answer questions of and provide timely support to RNGs and for city staff and city councilors to attend RNG meetings as requested. There will need to be additional staff FTE considerations in implementing many of the recommendations included here.
2) RNG leadership meetings
    a) Hold public, quarterly (or biannually) RNG leader roundtable meetings. These meetings will serve as a forum for neighborhood leaders to share ideas, discuss best practices, and collaborate on projects or initiatives. We encourage this forum to also be utilized to for RNG leaders and active members to share successes and accomplishments as well as challenges. City staff and elected officials will attend as requested. 58% of our survey respondents are interested in these meetings (Appendix II).
3) Annual RNG recognition process
    a) We recommend that CIDAB develop an annual RNG recognition process with current neighborhood association members and that City staff run the annual RNG recognition process to determine which neighborhood groups qualify to be Registered Neighborhood Groups and are thus qualified to receive the associated benefits. Neighborhood groups will be contacted by City staff or CIDAB and required to submit a short annual report and updated contact information. Information about the recognition process should be available on the City website. Newly formed RNGs would have one year to meet the

DRAFT

qualifications and have a one year grace period during start up. We also recommend that RNGs experiencing leadership transition be given more leeway and outreach support from City in training new leadership.

b) City staff will provide support in defining boundaries of RNG and in creation of bylaws for new RNGs.
c) City will use this annual recognition process to create an annually updated map of RNGs and contact information (name, phone number, email address).
d) Suggested qualifications for RNG status are below. We recommend that they be refined by CIDAB with outreach to and engagement with existing neighborhood groups.
    i) General recognition – to be eligible for general City benefits:
        1) Size: Establish a flexible number of minimum and maximum households that could be incorporated into a single RNG. We heard reports from other Cities that the ideal maximum size for an RNG was an area which could be contacted by hand delivered flyer; the number of ideal households will vary with geography. Given the council and staff time that we are recommending the City provide, we believe that a lower limit on population is also appropriate.
        2) Activity: Host a minimum number of meetings, social events, and community improvement projects annually attended by a set minimum percentage of membership or number of residents. Similarly, if the City is to devote City resources to support RNGs, the City should have assurances that the RNGs are active and representative of their neighborhood.
        3) Communication Plan: Have a system in place that allows members to communicate with each other, with RNG leadership, and with potential members. An online, interactive mechanism of communication is encouraged to allow for participation among members who cannot attend meetings.
        4) Elections & Bylaws: Hold elections at least every 2 years to give the opportunity for new leadership; this helps to promote diverse, new community leadership. New RNGs need to establish bylaws.
        5) Annual Report: Submit a short 1–2 page annual report of activity.
    ii) Land use recognition - to be eligible to participate in the enhanced Land Use processes:
        1) Two people who have completed the City's land use training
        2) Leadership who have completed the City's Public Participation 101 training

4) City Councilor liaisons
    a) Assign a city councilor liaison to each RNG for contact and communication. We recommend that this be the City Council for the Ward in which the RNG resides. Ideally each councilor would join the communications network for the RNGs in their ward, so as to convey City information pertinent to the neighborhood to it and to monitor topics that the City may want to become proactive about.
5) RNG updates to City Council
    a) Start inviting individual RNGs to provide annual updates on activity at City Council meetings. This will ideally include an overview of RNG activity and photographs demonstrating activity and/or areas of concern in the community that RNG leaders want to make City Council aware of.
6) Position vacancy circulation
    a) Circulate all advisory board and commission vacancies or other volunteer opportunities to RNGs. RNGs comprise membership that may be ideal for various community leadership and volunteer positions.

DRAFT

7) City website resources for RNGs
    a) The City website should feature RNG information more prominently to connect community members to RNGs and provide links to RNG website, contact information, listserv sign-up information, etc. should be provided via the City website.
    b) Develop a web page on the City Web site that provides the following resources for RNGs:
        i) An interactive map to connect individuals to their RNG
        ii) Updated brochure on how to form an RNG with the City's assistance
        iii) A listing of free website platforms that RNGs could us to build a simple website or web presence to communicate with membership about meeting times and locations, past meeting agendas and minutes, board membership and contact information, and other general information about the neighborhood.
        iv) A brochure on how to, with the City's assistance, make their neighborhoods more beautiful (In English and Spanish – examples are available). See example from Salem, Oregon: http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/NeighborhoodEnhancementDivision/neighbor/Documents/beautify.pdf.
        v) A safety brochure, with phone numbers (in English and Spanish). See example from Salem, Oregon: http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/NeighborhoodEnhancementDivision/neighbor/Documents/safetybrochure.pdf.
        vi) A flyer on ways to a better neighborhood (In English and Spanish – examples are available). See example from Salem, Oregon: http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/NeighborhoodEnhancementDivision/neighbor/Documents/75%20ways.pdf
        vii) A who do you call list. See example from Salem, Oregon: http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/NeighborhoodEnhancementDivision/neighbor/Documents/Who%20to%20Call.pdf.
        viii) List of local city and community spaces available for RNG meetings. RNGs should be encouraged to contact local churches, faith-based organizations, and community-oriented businesses.
        ix) A guide to City departments and services. See example from Salem, Oregon: http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/NeighborhoodEnhancementDivision/neighbor/Documents/GuideAug2010.pdf
        x) Links to relevant Benton County, 509J Corvallis School District, and OSU resources and services
        xi) A link to the City's Land Use education guide
        xii) Templates for meeting agendas and minutes, bylaws, etc.
        xiii) Marketing and outreach strategy suggestions for member recruitment

Examples of the content portion for many of these items are available. We expect that much of the work of pulling these together would be done by CIDAB.

<u>Land Development Code and Land Use Recommendations</u>

Historically, Corvallis neighborhood associations are most active in response to proposed development in their neighborhoods. Often their involvement in land use issues comes late in the process, after the staff recommendation goes to the Planning Commission or the Historic Resources Commission. We recommend changes that will educate neighborhood leaders on land use law and provide for their earlier entrance into the process, with the expected benefits of:

- More relaxed communications between City staff, neighborhood representatives, and the developer

DRAFT

- Fewer requests that are outside what is possible without Comprehensive Plan or Land Development Code changes
- Better informed requests for land development code changes
- Design accommodations by the developer, where possible, occurring early so as to minimize cost impacts
- Adequate time for the neighborhood to become knowledgeable about the proposed plan

Toward this end we recommend**:**

1) Land use process amendments
    a) Offer annual trainings for RNG leaders in land use process and land development code, with focus on qualifying for participating in a pre-application process.
    b) Change the land-use development process to require developers to hold pre-development, pre-application meeting with RNGs prior to any applications for minor or major development proposals occurring within a RNG and have meetings facilitated by city staff (done in Lake Oswego, Eugene, Bend, and other cities). This will only be effective in a framework in which involved RNG members have been trained in land use and land development code as required to maintain land use RNG recognition. *(Should a city staff member be involved to ensure information about the process and Land Development Code is accurate?)*

DRAFT

TO: Public Participation Task Force (PPTF)
FROM: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC)
RE: Eliminating Three Existing Commissions and Forming a Transportation Advisory Board
DATE: April 2014

Although members of BPAC understand the concept of creating a more integrated vision for transportation in Corvallis, we do not feel that the elimination of three existing commissions with three diverse perspectives and tasks and the formation of a single Transportation Advisory Board to attempt to fill the roles performed by the current commissions is an appropriate or effective way to accomplish an integrated vision. In particular, we feel strongly that the elimination of BPAC would be a huge step backwards for a city that has traditionally taken visionary action on behalf of bicyclists and pedestrians.

To speak more specifically about the continuing and necessary role of BPAC: our monthly meetings always have full agendas, and recent subcommittee work has produced, and is producing, cutting-edge recommendations for updating and improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within Corvallis. We are justifiably proud to promote and enhance our transportation system for these unique road users, and we are proud to participate in shaping bicycle and pedestrian policy in a city ranked at the Gold Level for bicycle-friendliness by the League of American Bicyclists, and which has been acknowledged by the US Census Bureau as the #1 bicycle commuter city and #2 pedestrian commuter city in the entire nation.

However, it is the opinion of the commission that Corvallis as a whole has lost its momentum and vision with regard to bike, pedestrian, and land use issues. If anything, city government, much of the business community, and Public Works management seems to be retreating to the mid-twentieth century "car culture" mentality rather than pushing forward to set goals and create models for how we need to live in the 21st century. We might even be in danger of losing our gold level League of American Bicyclists rating, at a time when other communities, including Eugene and Portland, have become inspired and are working to do better. We need BPAC's voice at the City level to ensure that Corvallis not only maintains our reputation as a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly city, but also advances transportation projects that enhance livability, safety, and access for all road users. And when more people can walk and bike, there is less need to devote precious land and resources to increasing space for cars.

Combining the Downtown Parking Commission, BPAC, and the Citizen Advisory Committee on Transit into one Transportation Advisory Board is bad for Corvallis bicyclists and pedestrians, who will lose an essential voice in City government. As both a large and growing share of our transportation system, and as traditionally taking second place to motorized traffic, bicyclists and pedestrians must retain a strong, clear, and independent voice in city government.

For these reasons, BPAC as a body strongly urges the PPTF to withdraw its recommendation that the Commission be eliminated, and in addition to reconsider the elimination of the Downtown Parking Commission and Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit and their combination into a single Transportation Advisory Board.