Agenda

Public Participation Task Force Work Session

May 8, 2014
11AM - 1 PM
Madison Avenue Meeting Room
500 SW Madison Avenue (across from City Hall)

* Start Times are only estimates

*Start Time	Agenda Item	Lead	Est. Time	Action Needed
11:00	1. Check in, introductions, ground rules	Kent	2	Information
11:02	2. Review today's agenda: changes or additions	All	2	Decisions?
11:04	3. Review/approve 4/24/2014 meeting draft minutes	All	2	Decision
11:06	4. Continue revising draft recommendations document for May 23 final to staff for inclusion in 6/2/2014 City Council meeting packet	Brenda, Rocio, Emily. Annette	54	Information/ discussion/ decisions
12:00	5. Community member comments or suggestions/dialog regarding 4/17/14 draft document	Kent	10	
12:11	6. Continue work on draft document	All	34	Information/ discussion/ decisions
12:45	7. Timeline, responsibilities and roles for PPTF and others for critical path from April 29 to Dec. 31 2014	Richard/ Kent/ Penny	10	Information/ discussion/ decisions?
12:55	8. Checkout: Time used well? Everyone prepared? Everyone heard? Meeting process okay? What can be done better? Next meeting agenda items?	Kent/All	5	Dialog; decisions

CITY OF CORVALLIS
Public Participation Task Force Minutes
April 24, 2014 - DRAFT

Members Present:	Kent Daniels, Chair; Annette Mills, Vice Chair; Richard Hervey; Penny York; Rocio Munoz; Brenda VanDevelder; Emily Bowling; Lee Eckroth; Becki Goslow
Members Absent:	George Brown
Staff:	Terry Nix, Scribe
Visitors:	Stephen Friedt, Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit Chair

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
1. Check in, introductions, ground rules		
2. Review today's agenda: changes or additions	• Is there money in the budget to cover all or part of the cost for one or more TF members to attend the Neighborhoods Conference in Eugene on May 21 through May 24?	• Kent will get an estimate on what is left in the budget after all expenses.
3. Review / approve 4/10/2104 meeting draft minutes		• Motion by Annette, seconded by Brenda, to approve the minutes; motion passed unanimously.
4. Continue discussion: Plans for April 28th public meeting	• The Draft Recommendations document (Attachment A) has been sent to all B&Cs and everyone has received a follow-up phone call. • TF members will be recorders for the small group discussions; the notes need to be turned around very quickly. • Cost analysis and implications will be	• Annette and Kent will get copies of the document and the chart to have available at the public meeting. • Annette and Emily will provide the document, agenda, and guidelines to the facilitators. • Kent and Brenda will be at the Library meeting room at 5:00; TF members and

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
	addressed as part of the final recommendation. • Decisions are still to be made about how input and information received will be referenced or attached to the recommendation. • Following the public meeting, the TF will have about three weeks to finalize the recommendation to the City Council. The recommendation needs to be in Council packets on May 24th. • The TF reviewed, revised, and finalized the public meeting agenda. • Richard and Penny commented that this is a quality draft recommendation and body of work of which the TF can be proud.	facilitators are asked to arrive by 5:45. • Rocio and her co-worker will provide translation services. Rocio will translate the chart document to have available at the meeting. • Lee and Rocio will pickup refreshments. • Emily will create a check-in list and sign-in sheet. • Kent will bring nametags and pens. • TF members will turn around the small group discussion notes within 24 hours, if possible. • The TF will meet on May 1 to review the input, determine modifications, and finalize the recommendation as a group.
5. Public comments, suggestions, ideas	• There were none.	
6. Timeline, responsibilities and roles for PPTF and others for critical path from April 29 to Dec 31, 2014	• Once the recommendation is presented, unless the City Council requests additional work, the PPTF has completed its charge. • The group should have at least one meeting to debrief on the process. This could be an informal event organized by the members.	

Agenda Item	***Key Discussion Points***	***Action or Information Only***
7. Check-out: Time well used? Everyone prepared? Everyone heard? Meeting process okay? What can be done better? Next meeting agenda items?		• The next meeting is scheduled for May 1, 11:00 a.m., Madison Avenue Meeting Room. The focus of the meeting will be to finalize the recommendation to the City Council.
8. Adjournment	• The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 pm	

Respectfully submitted: Kent Daniels, Chair

Next Meeting: May 1, 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—access and opportunities
Neighborhood Associations

WORKING DRAFT RESPONSE TO CHARGE

April 17, 2014

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TASK FORCE

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

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1. **Neighborhood Connections Process**
2. **Neighborhood Groups Survey Results**
3. **Benefits document (Lake Oswego)**
4. **Research Process**
5. **Discussion point minutes example**

I. DEFINITIONS

Advisory Board—A standing committee of community residents, appointed by the Mayor, to provide advice and information to the City Council on a specific topic of city relevance

Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board (CIDAB)—A potential advisory board, recommended in response to City Council Charges 1b, 1c, 1d, 7, and 8. Would include functions of current Committee for Citizen Involvement and Martin Luther King Jr. Commission, in addition to responsibilities to work with neighborhoods and other duties.

Commission—A standing committee to which the City Council has delegated decision-making authority, such as the Planning Commission and Historic Resources Commission.

Department Advisory Committee—An ongoing administrative or technical committee appointed by City department directors (with Mayor and Council approval) to work with city staff on matters involving specialized expertise.

Task Force—A committee formed to achieve a particular goal with a specific charge, usually serving for a limited time. Established by City Council resolution, usually appointed by the Mayor.

Registered Neighborhood Group (RNG)—an organized group of neighbors, including but not limited to neighborhood associations, that shares interest in their neighborhood's quality of life. RNGs would be officially registered with the City, meets certain minimum requirements for recognition, and be eligible to apply for benefits the City offers only to RNGs, such as meeting space.

II. CITY COUNCIL'S GOAL AND CHARGE TO THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TASK FORCE (PPTF)

GOAL: *"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."*

CHARGE TO TASK FORCE:

"Issues to be studied and deliberated:

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, we refer to the impact on effectiveness and efficiency according to the definition provided by City Council:

- '**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.

From the outset, our focus has remained resolutely on our charge, on the formal channels of engaging community members early in the decision-making process, and on strengthening the existing board and commission system. We endeavored to provide alternative options to strengthen public participation in eight specific areas. <u>For the most part, this draft document will address each area sequentially by number.</u>

The Public Participation Task Force is comprised of eight community members, two city council members, and one staff representative from the City. We want to emphasize our respect for all the community volunteers currently serving on City boards and commissions, and our appreciation for the importance of the work they do. We believe our recommendations can both heighten and support that work and enhance community members' involvement in city planning and decision-making processes.

Additionally, 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.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Corvallis 2020 vision document 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."

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.

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. The expertise and work of community groups often serve as a catalyst for innovative city programs and improved services.

To address the language both in our Corvallis vision document and in Charge 5 from the City Council, we recommend that the City adopt the following Guiding Principles and display them on the City website and other appropriate documents.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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.

IV. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The task force was charged by the City Council with reviewing existing citizen advisory boards and commissions to address portions of the charge related to their number and scope. This element of work for the PPTF was the most challenging, as we acknowledge the contributions and expertise provided by community volunteers currently serving.

Corvallis has benefited immeasurably over the years from the involvement of its citizens in public decision-making. Task forces have worked with city staff, consultants, the general public, and multiple City Councils to tackle difficult issues and help build support for solutions that benefit the entire community, such as the Riverfront Task Force, the Combined Sewer Overflow Project, and the Corvallis Forest Stewardship Plan. Boards and commissions composed of dedicated volunteers do much of the heavy lifting and detail work in their roles to advise the Council about developments in and support for a wide range of City services and functions.

In a comparative review of other Oregon cities, we noted that a larger city (Bend) operates with only 13 advisory boards and commissions and a smaller city (Ashland) operates with 15. Corvallis currently supports 23 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 their issue area would be more comprehensively addressed if united in a more broadly defined advisory board. At the same time, however, we remain very supportive of the Corvallis 2020 Vision statement that "boards, commissions and task forces are the primary working groups that evaluate, draft and recommend plans and legislation to the city council."

Charge 1a: *"Identify areas of duplication between existing boards and commissions."*
Although there are some areas of overlap, we did not identify any significant duplication of responsibilities in the current board and commission system. Therefore we offer no recommendation in that regard.

Charge 1b: *"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."*
Recommendation: We identified 13 boards or commissions (listed below) where the scope is specialized or technical enough that some may benefit by either changing them to Departmental Advisory Committees (see p. ??) or by incorporation into another committee or community organization to increase the <u>effectiveness</u> and <u>efficiency</u> in the board and commission system. The chart on p. ? indicates possible options, including no changes.

- Airport Commission
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission
- Board of Appeals
- Capital Improvement Program Commission
- Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit
- Commission for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Commission on Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry
- Committee for Citizen Involvement
- Community Police Review Board
- Downtown Commission
- Downtown Parking Commission
- Public Art Selection Commission
- Watershed Management Advisory Commission

Charge 1c: *"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."*

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

- Community Involvement and Diversity
- Public safety
- Transportation systems planning and decisions
- Water systems planning and decisions

See further discussion at Recommendation B, below.

Charge 1d: *"Suggest how to combine, divide, or otherwise reorganize these groups so that they are as effective and efficient as possible."*

Recommendation A: After reviewing current board and commission activities and charges, we recommend that the following advisory board interest areas could more effectively provide comprehensive input to City Council with a change of scope, organization, or responsibilities. Committees are listed in alphabetical order.

- **Airport Commission.** 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 Commission.

- **Arts and Culture Commission.** This committee is charged with advising City Council on all matters relating to arts and culture. 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, and to some extent Visit Corvallis. We also recommend merging the Public Art Selection Commission with this body, and using a subcommittee process to add persons for art selection work.

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission.** This committee has very effectively advocated for bike and pedestrian interests in Corvallis for many years. In other communities (example: Ashland, OR), a Transportation Advisory Board comprehensively addresses multi-modal transportation issues and we believe this model is one to be explored in Corvallis**Budget Commission.** This committee includes City Council and community members and is currently limited to reviewing the proposed annual budget. Using examples from the City of Eugene and others, we recommend expanding the scope to study financial issues facing the City and develop recommendations for the Council; review fund forecasts; have community members work with staff and council on the budget before formal unveiling in February; have subcommittees hold public meetings in the early fall to obtain community member input and suggestions for the next year's budget., perhaps done collaboratively with the Capital Improvement Program.

- **Capital Improvement Program Commission**. Change scope to that of a Departmental Advisory Committee. Change the membership so that the body is made up entirely of representatives from other boards and commissions, including Planning, Budget, Transportation, Water, and PNARB.

- **Citizens Advisory Commission on Transit.** This committee serves to provide input on the City's public transportation system. Greater efficiencies could be achieved through a more comprehensive approach to multi-modal transportation through the formation of a Transportation Advisory Board.

- **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, meetings 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 Diversity Advisory Board (see page 17) and sunsetting the current CCI.

- **Commission for Martin Luther King Jr.** was established in 1987 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 Dr. King and the holiday in his honor. We do believe there is a significantly greater opportunity to advise Council on inclusion and diversity issues that align with fostering awareness of the principles and practices championed by Dr. King. We believe this expanded scope of work could be accomplished by incorporating this committee in a newly formed Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board. If the current commission continues to stand alone, we support expanding its scope to include all areas related to diversity and inclusion.

- **Commission on Civic Beautification and Urban Forestry** focuses primarily on street trees and beautification projects with the City. This active committee would be more efficient and cost-effective as a Departmental Advisory Committee.

- **Community Police Review Board** is a narrowly focused committee dealing specifically with community member 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 board or including its responsibilities with the establishment of a Public Safety Advisory Board.

- **Downtown Commission** was created in 2008 to develop a strategic plan and to implement an urban renewal program which was subsequently not supported by voters. The charge is to support a vibrant hub of business and cultural activity through streetscape projects, redevelopment projects and public parking. Options include maintaining this commission and incorporating the Downtown Parking Commission as a sub-committee or including the Downtown Commission as part of the Economic Development Commission's responsibility.

- **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 merging it with the Downtown Commission and ceasing to list it as a separate board. This committee could also be included as part of the recommended Transportation Advisory Board.

- **Economic Development Commission** is charged to develop and recommend economic development policy and strategy for the City to implement. The current strategic plan does not include the economic development activities of the airport or downtown core, or other economic development interests in Corvallis. We have included the option of moving the airport- related matters to this committee or

moving the economic development activities of the Downtown Commission to the charge of this committee.

- **Historic Resources Commission** and **Planning Commission** are both quasi-judicial commissions. We recommend increased collaborative work with periodic work sessions with each other for goal and Comprehensive Plan 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 ceasing to list it as a separate board.
- **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 a more comprehensive Arts and Culture Advisory Board. A sub-committee would be formed to carry out the duties of public art selection.
- **Watershed Management Advisory Commission** is focused primarily on the forest and streams the Rock Creek Watershed, a drinking water resource for the City. This is a technical committee and may be more cost effective either as a Department Advisory Committee or as part of a more broadly scoped Water Systems Advisory Board.

Recommendation B: To address gaps in the current City board and commission system, we recommend four new advisory boards (in prioritized order) to increase effectiveness of community member input and decision making.

- Diversity and Citizen Involvement Advisory Board
  - Details provided later in this document at Charge 7 (page 17).
- 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 Advisory Board
  - 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 Advisory Board
  - 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 table on the following page provides alternative options to create more comprehensively charged advisory boards.

- The three committees on the far left are the three City Council standing committees. (See recommendation under Charge 2b, below.)
- All current advisory boards and commissions are listed in the column on the right side of the page
- A change of scope or a new advisory board is indicated in **BOLD**.
- We assume that Departmental Advisory CommitteesACs are not included on the boards and commissions list and will be more cost-effective than currently organized.

	Option A		Option B		No changes
	Total 15, ***net change -7***		Total 14, ***net -8***		Total advisory boards and commissions: 22
Human Services Comm.	**Arts & Culture Advisory Board** (merge Public Art Selection) **Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board** (expand scope, sunset Committee for Citizen Involvement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission) **Civic Beautification & Urban Forestry Department Advisory Committee** Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Advisory Board Parks, Natural Areas & Recreation Advisory Board Police Review Commission		**Arts and Culture Advisory Board** (merge Public Art selection) **Community Involvement and Diversity Advisory Board** (expand scope, sunset Committee for Citizen Involvement and Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission) **Civic Beautification & Urban Forestry Department Advisory Committee** Corvallis-Benton County Public Library Advisory Board Parks, Natural Areas & Recreation Advisory Board Police Review Commission		Arts & Culture CBUF CCI MLK Library Police Review PNAR Public Art Selection
Urban Services Comm.	Appeals Commission (Board of Appeals) Historic Resources Commission Housing & Community Development Advisory Board **Planning Commission** (+ Land Development Hearings Board) **Transportation Advisory Board** (includes Bicycle & Pedestrian, Citizen Advisory Commission on Transit) **Water Systems Advisory Board** (Watershed Management Advisory Commission)		Appeals Commission **Capital Improvements Program Department Advisory Committee** Historic Resources Commission Housing& Community Development Advisory Board **Planning Commission** (merge Land Development Hearings) **Transportation Advisory Board** (Bicycle & Pedestrian, Citizen Advisory Commission on Transit) Watershed Management Department Advisory **Water Systems Advisory Board**		Appeals Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Improvements Program Downtown Parking Housing and Community Development Historic Resources Land Development Hearings Planning Commission Transit
ASC	Airport Advisory Board Budget Commission **Capital Improvements Program Department Advisory Committee**		**Airport Dept . Adv. Committee** Budget Commission **Downtown Advisory Board** (merge Downtown Parking)		Airport Budget Downtown Economic Development Watershed Management

	Economic Develop Advisory Bd. (merge with Downtown Comm.)		**Economic Development Advisory Board** (merge Airport-related work)		

Charge 2a: *« What criteria should the City Council use to determine if a new board or commission should be created ? »*
Recommendation : Limit the formation of new advisory boards and commissions.
Before a new advisory board is formed, it is important to determine if an alternative solution is viable, such as broadening the scope of an existing advisory board or commission or creating a task force or department advisory committee. 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. In some cities, if a new committee is formed, another is sunsetted.

Charge 2b: *"Consider how best to define and evaluate effective board and commission operations and outcomes."*
Recommendation: Establish a formal, annual reporting relationship to City Council standing committees.
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, reviewing progress on annual work plan and goals.

Charge 2c: *"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."*
Recommendation: Provide orientation for all new advisory board and commission members to create more effective committees.
Members of advisory boards and commissions are well-informed and typically passionate about the volunteer work they do. As part of the new member orientation process, each appointee should be given an overall review of how the City, the relevant department, and the advisory board/commission operate and relate to each other. Orientation should also note the advisory nature of the work and the fact that 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.

Charge 2d: *"What criteria should the Council use to make significant changes in one or more boards or commissions?"*
Recommendation: Use consistent annual reporting from all advisory boards and commissions to determine if revisions are appropriate.
Once established, advisory boards and commissions are made up of volunteers who commit time and expertise to the work of the committee. The use of annual work plans and an annual review with a City Council standing committee will provide a framework for reviewing possible revisions or changes.

Charge 2e: *"Consider revising the process and/or developing criteria to guide Council decisions about ending boards and commissions."*
Recommendation: Revise the sunset policy.

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**.** Information gathered through that review, including the original charge or ordinance that established the board or commission, should be what informs the start of the process of ending or sunsetting a board or commission.

Charge 2f: *"How should the effectiveness of staff support be evaluated?"*
Recommendation: Evaluate the effectiveness of staff support as part of the annual review of the advisory board or commission.
Staff liaison and support play a critical role for advisory boards and commissions to meet goals or work plans, and that role should be clearly articulated to incoming committee members. The staff liaison should: provide accurate and relevant information for the work of the committee; provide logistical support including meeting space and meeting recorder; assist with annual reporting of activities, or other support that is required.

Charge 3: *The relationships between individual boards and commissions and the related operating department vary greatly. What should the relationships be?*
The related purposes of these recommendations are to:

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

Recommendation A: Implement consistent practices for all advisory boards and commissions including staff attendance, recorder, and style of minutes to improve efficiencies.

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. Avoid verbatim minutes. Minutes should be taken in a consistent format, including key discussion point minutes for Advisory Boards and Task Forces *(guidelines in addendum)* and detailed minutes for Commissions as required by statute.

Recommendation B1: Adopt a policy to use consistent titles of 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; a limited number of committees have decision-making authority. Consistency will not only help everyone understand the distinction between the types of committees, but also indicate to the majority of existing committees the advisory nature of their work. This policy will create effectiveness in the system, which will both support city operating departments and guide City Council in the naming of committees.

Recommendation B2 : We recommend four distinct types of committees.
Any of these committees may consider forming sub-committees. Other work groups or committees may be formed by the Mayor or city staff for a 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 such ongoing committees.

1. Advisory Board
   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 recommending individuals to fill vacancies, for confirmation by the City Council.

2. Commission
   A standing committee to which the City Council has delegated decision making authority. The Mayor is responsible for appointing individuals to fill vacancies on the Budget Commission and the Appeals Board. The City Council makes appointments to the Planning Commission and Historic Resources Commission.

3. Task Force
   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, issue, 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 usually responsible for appointing individuals to serve on Task Forces.

4. Department Advisory
   These ongoing committees are administrative or technical in nature and allow for efficient use of community member expertise and staff time. 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.

Recommendation C : Conduct an annual meeting for all advisory boards and commissions.
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 and City Council, reduces silos, encourages dialogue, and fosters collaboration among advisory boards and commissions.

Charge 4: *"What should the role of the City Council liaison be?"*
Recommendation: 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 of advisory board and commission goal setting and review, and reporting to Standing Committees, the City Council liaison position may in some cases no longer be required.

Charge 5: **See section on Access and Opportunity, p. ?**

Charge 6a: *"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."*
Charge 6b: *"Identify ways to maximize the use of citizen volunteers."*

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

Recommendation: Providing enhanced outreach (see section on Access and Opportunity) and orientation activities (already recommended) will maximize the effective participation of community member volunteers.

Recommendation: Expanding board member qualifications to include the option of one non-resident expert as a non-voting member will help maximize the use of community volunteers with special expertise. (Current qualifications limit membership to those living, working, or owning a business within the city or in some cases inside the Urban Growth Boundary.)

Charge 7: *"Is the current configuration of [the Committee for Citizen Involvement] the most effective means of addressing the Oregon Land Use System Goal One? If not, how might this goal be better met?"*
Recommendation: <u>We recommend an immediate sunsetting of the CCI and the formation of a new Community Involvement and Diversity Board (CIDAB).</u>

The current configuration of the Committee for Citizen Involvement limits the work of the committee to addressing the Oregon Land Use System Goal One. The new CIDAB would have a broader scope and responsibilities, including:

- Implementation or further work on PPTF recommendations, as recommended by the City Council,

- Diversity and other issues currently addressed by the MLK Commission,

- Access to city government, including community member primer on public participation, testimony, and the land use planning process,
- Development of board and commission trainings and orientation recommendations,
- Outreach to and liaison with Registered Neighborhood Groups
- Ongoing responsibility for the review and improvement of the Board and Commission system and other public participation practices
- Using a subcommittee, work with members of the Planning Commission and the Historic Resources Commission regarding changes and improvements to address the Land Use Goal 1.

Charge 8: **See section on Neighborhoods, page ??**

V. ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Charge 5: *"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?"*

Recommendation: Adopt the Guiding Principles outlined in Section I.

Publish on the city web site and implement the following practices to ensure outreach and authentic engagement of community members, elected and appointed city leadership, and city staff.

We believe that this recommendation is a formalization of what City Council and staff have been attempting to do. It provides a standard to point to when we don't meet our expectations of ourselves. Our intentions are 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.

Collaborative Democracy Recommendations:

1. Create community-friendly atmosphere at all public meetings.

   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.

2. Create a welcoming environment for public testimony.

   When the need arises to limit testimony, employ methods that are predictable and discreet. 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 discreet manner.

3. Establish protocol for multiple persons who are representing an organization to make a presentation longer than the time allowed for an individual.

   Groups should make arrangements in advance with staff and the Mayor or Chair, which set the time allowed an other agreements.

4. Have agendas and other relevant documents available for the public at meetings.

   Documents should include those being discussed. "Meetings" include those of the City Council, Advisory Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, and Departmental Advisory Committees.

Diversity Recommendations:

1. Use the term "community member" instead of "citizen" whenever possible, in all City documents and references.

2. Identify and reach out to diverse sectors of the community.

   Take steps to make meetings linguistically and culturally appropriate.

   - 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).
   - Consider holding some City Council meetings at other locations periodically.
   - Be proactive in seeking feedback from underrepresented groups.

Charge 5b: *"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."*

Openness and Access Recommendations:

1. Increase access to elected officials and city staff.

   - 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.
   - Consider real-time on-line access to city meetings. (Review OSU's New Media Communications Department)
   - Consider alternate locations for forums, special outreach meetings, and government corner.

2. Increase access to city government information.

a. 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.
- Have Boards and Commissions and Volunteer Opportunities be a first-page header.
- 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

b. Utilize available traditional and social media outlets.

c. .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.

3. Increase transparency of the appointment process.

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

- On City website, provide online applications for specific vacancies and steps on how to become involved.
- 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

Inclusiveness Recommendation: Involve broad representation of community members in the decision-making process.

- Identify the obstacles 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 or Eugene- appoint special committees at beginning of process to help gather public opinion.

Accountability Recommendation: 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.

VI. NEIGHBORHOODS

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."

Charge 8: *"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."*

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 allow community members to solve problems without government involvement, direct neighbors to City government measures already in place to help solve problems, empower neighbors to work with the City to establish improved outcomes, and utilize the substantial expertise of many residents.

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 do the budgets 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's leadership.

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

Focus

Our focus has been on what the City can do to foster and support neighborhood connections that allow neighborhood groups to:

1) <u>Sustain themselves continuously</u>,
2) <u>Connect neighbors to neighbors</u>, and

3) Partner with each other and the City in meeting the needs of their communities and those of the larger City community.

Our hope is that implementation of these recommendations will subsequently lead to greater incentive for neighborhood participation and the eventual expansion of neighborhood groups to include city-wide coverage.

I. Sustaining Active Neighborhoods

Our interviews of leaders and active members of Corvallis neighborhood associations, as well as city staff and community and neighborhood leaders in other cities, revealed 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

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.

Primary recommendations:

1) Free meeting space

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 Grant Program ($25,000 to $50,000)

Re-establish and fund the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant 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, proactively increase the livability of both their neighborhood and the community, 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).

a) Suggested grant categories are small capital projects, neighborhood signs, safety and emergency preparedness, neighborhood art and mural projects, neighborhood sustainability, RNG leadership and capacity building, community building, and street tree planting and other neighborhood beautification projects.

b) 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.

c) 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. The "Community Leadership 101" training could 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.

c) We suggest looking at offering webinar options for these trainings to increase accessibility to the trainings.

4) Neighborhood engagement pathways
   a) Not surprisingly, the neighborhood leader survey revealed that different neighborhoods and different community members have diverse interests and needs. For instance, neighborhoods closer to OSU shared different concerns and interests than those farther away. 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. Examples are: social event planning, Neighborhood Watch/safety, emergency/disaster response planning, land use, neighborhood art and beautification projects, sustainability promotion (e.g. recycling block captains), neighbor exchanges, promotion of voter education and engagement in local elections. These, as well as others, may help attract diverse membership and produce more robust activity.

   b) 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.

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)

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 (if free space is not available), 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.

Secondary recommendations:

1) RNG manual

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. 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.

a) Suggested topics for inclusion in an RNG manual include: overview of the RNG system, neighborhood leadership, running effective meetings (priority setting, agenda creation, facilitation tips, and decision making strategies), neighborhood communication tools and resources, neighborhood engagement pathways, strategies for recruitment of new membership, neighborhood programs and services, special events and fundraising, neighborhood sustainability, and neighborhood land use. The RNG manual should be a physical manifestation of topics covered in the "Community Leadership 101" and "Public Participation 101" trainings.

b) 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.

c) The Eugene Neighborhood Handbook used during neighborhood trainings is another strong example. See example from Eugene here: https://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=102.

2) "Benefits of being an RNG" resource document

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 sus-

tain 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.

3) Resource library

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.

II. Connecting Neighbors to Neighbors

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, 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).

<u>Electronic connections recommendations</u>

1) Listservs or distribution lists

We recommend that the CIDAB provide RNGs and other community groups with information about how to create online groups and email distribution lists.

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.

2) Software or social networking sites

We recommend that the CIDAB make available information about a range of possible options for software, 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/

III. Partnering With Each Other And The City

Successful and effective RNGs that contribute to enhanced neighborhood livability and community satisfaction depend on 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 the 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.

Recommendations:

1) City staff support
   a) Budget adequate for city staff to support recommendations, including being available to answer questions of and provide timely support to CIDAB and RNGs and to attend RNG meetings as requested.
   b) City staff will provide support in defining boundaries of RNGs and in creation of bylaws for new RNGs.

2) RNG leadership meetings

   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 could attend if requested. ***Fifty-eight percent of our survey respondents were interested in these meetings (Appendix II).***

3) Annual RNG recognition process

c) We recommend that CIDAB, City staff, and current neighborhood association members develop an annual RNG recognition process to determine which neighborhood groups qualify to be Registered Neighborhood Groups and thus 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 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. CIDAB and staff will use this 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 listed below. We recommend that they be refined by CIDAB with outreach to and engagement with existing neighborhood groups.

i. 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.

ii. Activity: 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. RNGs should 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.

iii. Communication: Have a communication system in place that allows members to communicate with each other, with RNG leadership, and with potential members. An online, interactive mechanism of communication allows for participation among members who cannot attend meetings.

iv. Elections & Bylaws: New RNGs need to establish bylaws and should hold elections at least every 2 years to give the opportunity for new leadership; this helps to promote diverse, new community leadership

v. Annual Report: RNGs should submit a short 1–2 page annual report of activity to CIDAB.

vi. Land use recognition: To be eligible to participate in the enhanced Land Use processes (see #8, below), RNGs need to have at least two people who have completed the City's land use training as well as leadership who have completed the City's Public Participation 101 training.

4) City Councilor communication

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

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

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.

7) City website resources for RNGs

b) 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.

c) CIDAB should work with staff to 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 use 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.

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.

8) Land Development Code and Land Use Regulations

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 support 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

- 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 a neighborhood to become knowledgeable about the proposed plan.

We therefore recommend that:

a) Annual trainings be offered for RNG leaders in land use process and land development code, "Land Development Code 101," with focus on qualifying for participating in a pre-application process.

b) CIDAB and staff work together with the Planning Commission to change the land-use development process so as 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 (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.

Appendix I

Overview of Neighborhood Connections Process

This appendix details the process we followed in order to create our recommendations and report.

- Website review and phone interviews to glean best practices and ideas around public participation practices, board and commissions, and neighborhood associations with the following cities: Eugene, Bellingham, West Linn, Salem, Bend, Albany, Lake Oswego, Pasadena, Springfield, Ashland,
    - Phone interview with Justin Finestone, Communications Director with the City of Bend
    - Phone interview with Robyn Christie, City Recorder with the City of Bend (former City Recorder in Lake Oswego)

- Phone calls to all current Corvallis Neighborhood Association leaders that we were able to locate contact information for. Below are the questions that were asked. We found 4 active homeowner's associations, 12 active neighborhood associations, 5 inactive neighborhood associations, and 7 that we could not contact due to lack of activity or accurate contact information.
    - Is your neighborhood association active?
    - How often do you meet?
    - How do you announce/advertise your meetings?
    - What would you like from the City in terms of support?
    - What types of activities do you have?
    - How do you recruit new members?
    - Do you have bylaws?
    - When is the last time you had an election?
    - Do you have a treasurer?
    - Other comments or feedback

- Survey to current board and commission members. 93 total responses were received.

- January 13, 2014 public meeting to obtain feedback from current board and commission members and neighborhood association leaders on strengthening the system, building community, and enhancing communication.
    - Because not all neighborhood association leaders have or check email, all current neighborhood association leaders we had contact information for were called and personally invited to the January 13, 2014 public meeting.

- Survey to current Neighborhood Association leaders and active members on the topics of communication with each other and the city, resources that would be most helpful, and types of activities and issues the groups are interested in (See Appendix II). 135 total responses were received.

- Eugene site visit on January 28, 2014 with Neighborhood Program staff and neighborhood association leaders.

- Attending the February 5, 2014 Corvallis Neighborhood Summit to provide an update about the PPTF's work and encourage attendees to provide feedback via the neighborhood association survey and through testimony at PPTF meetings.

Appendix II: Neighborhood Groups Survey Results

What are the benefits of becoming a City-recognized neighborhood association?

Neighborhood associations are one of the officially recognized channels for citizen participation in Lake Oswego. These volunteer organizations bring neighbors together to improve the livability of Lake Oswego's neighborhoods. Neighborhood members elect boards to represent their views before the Planning Commission, City Council and other public bodies and to maintain ongoing communications with City government.

Why organize a Neighborhood Association?

City-recognized Neighborhood Associations receive these support services and benefits from the City:

- Receives information from the City on all issues (transportation, development, etc.) that may occur in the neighborhood.
- Land use appeal fees may be waived upon request to the City Manager.
- Can be selected to develop a neighborhood plan with assistance from the City Planning Department.
- Eligible to apply for Neighborhood Enhancement Grants, to accomplish activities or projects not funded under other City programs.
- Neighborhood becomes part of the City network of 22 recognized neighborhood associations that work together to create the type of community it wants.
- Recognized associations may testify at public hearings with additional time limits not given to individuals.
- The City can help with mailings to inform your members about upcoming meetings. The City will provide printing and mailing services for two mailings (postcards or newsletters) each year for recognized associations.
- Up to two members of neighborhood association boards are invited to attend pre-application conferences to review potential development projects in your neighborhood (a brief training session is required in order to attend).
- Eligible to have meetings and events covered under the Neighborhood Coalition of Oswego, Inc. liability insurance at no cost to the association. A simple application must be completed and approved for meetings and events to be covered by the insurance policy.
- Neighborhood associations can receive a free drop box for neighborhood cleanup efforts, through the City's franchise agreement with Allied Waste.
- Opportunity to participate in monthly meetings at City Hall with all neighborhood association chairs (held on Saturday mornings; the City manager leads the meetings and the Mayor attends every other month).

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 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 community member 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