

# Committee for Community Involvement

## Work Item Tracker

November 2022

### Current Items

Date	Item	Assigned	Update
October 2022	CCI work plan	CCI	To be developed
October 2022	Collective discussion on the purpose of CCI	CCI	To be discussed at a future CCI meeting
October 2022	Annual report	CCI	To be drafted
August 2022	Prioritizing CPO code enforcement complaints	CCI	Code Enforcement provided background information on their process, which was sent to CCI in September. CCI still wants to take it to the BCC. Chris suggested adding to the annual report for the BCC. A CCI task force to be set up to work on this.
August 2022	Educate the community about CPOs	Rick, Bill, Martin	Rick will work with Martin and Bill on ways to do this.
May 2022	Monitoring land use applications for inactive CPOs	CCI, Bill, Brent	A CCI task force comprised of interested members will develop a set of preferred inactive areas to be monitored by active CPOs and reach out to inactive CPOs and some active CPOs
April 2022	Webcam for community meetings	PGA	OWL webcam is recommended; PGA to survey community groups to gauge interest in and Wi-Fi capabilities for conducting hybrid meetings. CCI will review survey before it is sent out.

# Committee for Community Involvement

## Work Item Tracker

November 2022

### Completed/Archived Items

<b>Date</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Assigned</b>	<b>Update</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>
October 2022	I-205 Tolling and engaging the community	CCI	Discussed; the decision to toll has already been made.	October 2022
September 2022	Bill Flood's research on the county's community engagement program	CCI	Bill Flood provided his email address for members to share feedback.	September 2022
July 2022	Learn when Coalition of Communities of Color is planning to meet with CPOs/Hamlets and send update to community leaders.	PGA	If CPOs would like to reach out to the CC directly, they can.	August 2022
July 2022	Close CCI recruitment on 7/31 and interview applicants at next CCI meeting.	PGA	Karen Bjorklund was recommended by CCI and approved by the BCC.	August 2022
July 2022	Add action item section on agenda ahead of public comment	PGA	Added to agenda	August 2022

TO: Clackamas County Committee for Community Involvement

8 November 2022

FROM: Bruce Bartlett

[Bonnyslopemayor@gmail.com](mailto:Bonnyslopemayor@gmail.com)

503-706-6389

RE: Evolving County-Level Public Participation Systems Presentation

Greetings fellow CCI people.

Thank you for inviting me to visit your Clackamas County Committee for Community Involvement. A special thanks to Bill Flood for arranging to have a very engaging interview with me then introducing me to Chris Lyons. I am sharing my own thoughts with you as an involved individual, but I recently was elected Chair of the Washington County CCI after years of dodging the duty but staying connected since its inception in the 1980s.

As I have prepared to visit with you, I was surprised to learn how similar our county's public participation programs and situations are. Your CCI Action Item Log reads much like ours: code enforcement complaints; Educate: What is the CPO, what does it do, and why should you be involved?; accommodating inactive CPOs; how to manage hybrid meetings; how to engage communities of color; recruiting CCI leadership. Check! This makes some sense given the length of time our two groups have been in existence responding to Goal 1 on participation in land use, and how much the world around us has changed but the programs have not. Now that first era is ending and we in both counties are working to evolve new systems of public participation that will serve us better in the future.

For a little perspective on me, there were 50,000 people in Washington County when I was born in Forest Grove in 1951 and now there are over 600,000 in the same shrinking county. I wrote my first pro-Oregon land use goals letter to the Oregonian in 1983. I did graphic layout for the [Portland Metropolitan Area Local Government Boundary Commission](#) which infused me with the expectation that the boundaries of urban land development in Oregon were going to be logical and that urbanization would follow the noble practices assumed by the Goals. Or not. I was inducted into CPO 1 leadership as Vice Chair in 1999 with (Maj Col) "just call me John" Leeper as Chair. We had completely opposite life experiences but met at the intersection of Common Good and Common Sense. He went on to become an interim county commissioner. I am dodging that too...

As I was writing my thoughts to share with you, I found myself frequently referencing the *Community Participation in Washington County Transition Planning Process* published in 2016 and facilitated by Solid Ground Consulting. The Transition Plan is surprisingly no longer on the county website but is provided in the PDF with the *Evolving County-Level Public Participation Systems* presentation paper. I strongly encourage interested readers to examine this extensive report. I suspect you will recognize your county's situation in much of the document as I still see much of mine.

The OSU Extension Service is an under-recognized organizational partner that I feel is the answer to many of the overarching challenges facing us. Extension has much to contribute in helping us create community resilience. In pursuit of true community resilience, I am convinced that advocating Extension as a component of public participation would bring people together in friendly ways that civic involvement in land use could never hope to. The 4-H program offers civic leadership training and projects which dovetail perfectly into the mission of our CPO programs. The Master Gardeners, OSU Small Farms, Master Food Preservers, Master Woodlanders, nutrition programs, Outdoor School and more are just what we need our communities to be involved in to enhance the Common Good. I would be glad to visit your CCI again to discuss the value of Extension and how it could be integrated into the new public participation systems we are creating.

The economic policies in the [County 2000 Strategic Plan](#) have served Washington County well in constructing a robust and transparent organizational structure and budgeting process. We did not adhere to the County 2000 Strategic Plan's stated assumptions that incorporated cities would be the providers of all urban services, nor was the updated [County 2020 Strategic Plan](#) approved. Thus, the huge Unincorporated Urban Area (UUA of over 200,000 residents) of Washington County has come to rely on a constellation of Service Districts (SD). Over time the original small service systems merged, creating Clean Water Services, Tualatin Valley Water District, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue, and the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation Districts that serve us today.

Now, as new county [urban reserve lands](#) are brought into the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), they are being annexed into cities which do all the planning and development application approval as well as provision of services within the context of the ubiquitous SDs. This leaves Wash Co with a diminishing need to do much long-range community planning, which means there are decreasing opportunities for public participation in land use planning.

Ironically, it is the experience of many [Community Participation Organization](#) (CPO) leaders that there is very little that residents can do to shape their communities by responding to development applications. If our [Community Development Code](#) (CDC) allows a type of development at the time a development application is submitted, the county has a legal obligation to approve it. There is simply no standing for residents to demand changes. So, only by changing the CDC, can residents achieve some modicum of control over how communities are developed. As the CPO leadership group, the [Committee for Community Involvement](#) (CCI) members will attest, changing the CDC is the quintessential long game, and appealing land use decisions to the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) is an even longer game.

Washington County's approach to providing for public participation in response to Oregon's Land Use Goal 1 has been unique since its inception. Most jurisdictions use different and often less robust systems. We are currently engaged in the [CPO Re-Envisioning Process](#) of our community engagement systems, with the intent to invigorate the public's interest in the participation system.

Washington County convened a rigorous *Community Participation in Washington County Transition Planning Process* in 2016 facilitated by Solid Ground Consulting. ("The Transition Plan" is no longer on the county website but is provided with this paper). I strongly encourage interested readers to examine the extensive report. Stakeholder insights from the Transition Plan:

Between April and June, 2015, Joe Hertzberg and Holly Van Houten of Solid Ground Consulting interviewed 20 key stakeholders. Major findings were:

- Community participation can serve multiple purposes. It is important to clarify which of these the County is interested in for this project.

- Virtually all public-sector community engagement efforts struggle to attract broad participation, not just CPO program and not just in Washington County.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the current CPO system are widely recognized.
- Cities, urban unincorporated communities, and rural areas pose different challenges. One size will not fit all.
- Large and growing segments of the population are underrepresented, including communities of color, young people, new residents including immigrants, and the business community.
- Some respondents question how much the County values community participation.
- Everyone recognizes the importance of “21st Century” digital tools, but cautioned that these tools do not replace one-on-one relationships or face-to-face meetings.
- Community education and training are invaluable to build awareness of basic concepts of local government, to build skills in leadership and effectiveness, and to provide balanced, thoughtful input into decision making.
- Some stakeholders strongly feel that CPOs must continue to be staffed by professionals who are not County employees. Others made equally strong arguments for County staffing.

Researchers from Portland State University – Meg Merrick, Andree Tremoulet, and Tina Dippert – identified best and promising practices from around the nation which might be helpful in creating a new community participation program for Washington County. Their report, [“Promising Practices for Long-Term Community Engagement,”](#) was released in August 2015. Although numerous promising approaches were profiled in the PSU report, the researchers were not able to point to the “‘perfect model’ for Washington County’s community participation program.” Their report helped frame a series of choices to be made in designing a program.

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The Transition Plan found our system would benefit from encouraging participation from diverse community members by:

- Identifying equity-centered options for how individual CPOs should be structured
- Providing in-depth civic and leadership training
- Assessing CPO boundaries with respect to demographics to ensure a sense of place
- Addressing language elements, and other supporting essentials
- Engaging with the county’s Boards and Commissions in a second phase
- Convening the multitude of agencies and groups providing services to residents as the third phase, thus significantly expanding what residents are offered to participate in.

## Component Pieces of the CPO/CCI program

The Wash Co CCI analyzed the component pieces of the current CPO/CCI system at our January 18, 2022, meeting to ensure the re-envisioned program includes them all in the most effective way. They are:

- A communication mechanism for the county to communicate information to all residents, businesses, civic organizations, volunteer groups, city neighborhood associations, etc.
- A process for public participation in land use and transportation matters:
  - Policy development
  - Long-range planning, especially for transportation
  - Involvement in the creation of ordinances
  - Implementation of development codes
- A two-way communication between county departments/leaders and the residents
  - CPO meetings
  - Surveys of statistical significance
  - Town halls, listening sessions, forums
- A two-way communication mechanism between CPO leaders and CPO members,
  - Welcoming new members
  - Providing local geographic-related information on development applications
  - How to successfully navigate the county and Service District processes,
- A structure for Neighbor-to Neighbor connection to address local area concerns
  - Homeowner Associations (Wash Co does not have neighborhood associations)
  - Census-Designated Areas, etc.
  - School attendance areas, especially elementary school areas

According to the [2020 census](#), of 600,000 residents, there are 383,000 registered voters in Washington County out of 465,000 people over 18 years old. Community Engagement (CE) estimates that there are 6,000 people subscribing to the CPO newsletters which is 1.6% of registered voters. Approximately half of the recipients open these newsletters which means only 0.8% of registered voters read them. CE also sends out over 5600 emails for the Committee for Community Involvement (CCI) of which less than half are opened. Only an occasional guest joins the monthly CCI meeting.

A reasonably generous estimate is there are 200 people who are active in the CPO/CCI program (Bruce Bartlett's estimate). This is only 0.05% of registered voters in the county participating in the CPO/CCI system. (That's five hundredths of one percent). Washington County's Boards & Commissions typically have around 15 members. There are 32 B&C's so there are about 480 county positions for people to participate in advising Washington county, including the Planning Commission.

All combined (CPO + B&C = 700 rounded up), there are county positions for 0.18% of the registered voters to participate in county gov't. (approx. two tenths of 1%). As all the SDs offer a variety of master plan, policy, functional and budgeting advisory committees, if those people are included, an estimated total of 1,000 positions are available for public participation in the UUA governing bodies of Washington County. (0.26%).

## The “What” and the “Who” of Public Participation

I have volunteered in the Wash Co CPO/CCI program for over 20 years. In my experience, one’s initial participation in land use matters is an inherently "oppositional" activity; really no one gets actively involved in the CPO system who is not opposed to some aspect of the use of land around them. The few who become leaders tend to be interested in some aspect of land use and pursue that interest. I am a case in point and appreciate my fellow “land use geeks” in the CCI very much.

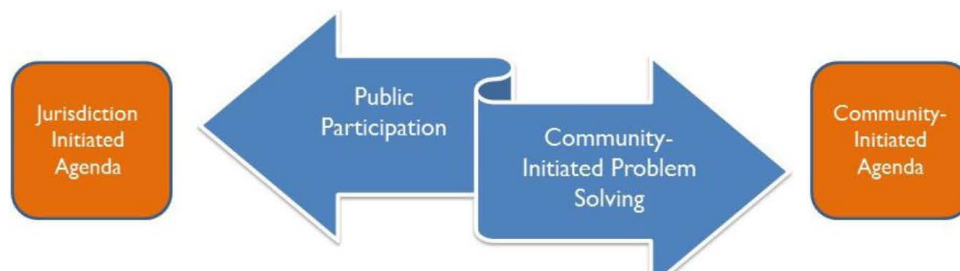
For the entire existence of the CPO, the focus of the volunteer leaders has been on "what" gets done with nary a concern about "who" it was that did it. We are grateful if anyone steps forward since very few of any demographic have chosen to contribute.

Without meaningful activities for people to participate in (the "what"), we may never even achieve 1% of county residents (the "who") becoming involved in a public participation system focusing on land use and quality-of-life issues. This small percentage has an outsize impact because “the world is run by those who show up.”

The Wash Co [Office of Equity, Inclusion and Community Engagement](#) (OEICE) is leading the *CPO Re-Envisioning Process*. They are now focused, for all intents and purposes, on the “who” aspect of public participation through engaging the community. Laudably to this end, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), with their counsel, recently passed an [anti-hate resolution](#), crafted a [land acknowledgement](#) and created the [Advisory Council on Racial Equity](#) (ACRE).

In addition however, I feel we need an equal emphasis on the “what” aspect of public participation to create what may be the most important aspect of all this effort: creating **Community Resilience**. Land use plays a large role in this, but it is not the only domain to be considered in broad-based deeply effective future programs.

From the Transition Report page 5: “At one end of the spectrum, community participation programs offer means for people to receive information about public issues and to consult with their government about plans, policies, and actions. At the other end of the spectrum, the focus is on building social capital and developing community resources: opportunities for community members to identify problems, deliberate about solutions, marshal resources, and organize for action. CPOs have addressed both jurisdiction-initiated issues and community-initiated problem solving.”



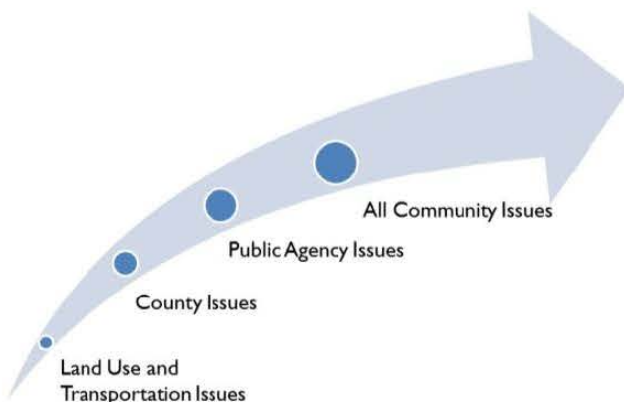
### Suggestions of importance to Jurisdictions

- Offering clear and useful ways and activities for people to engage and participate that appeal to the entire community,
- Publicize CPO successes and our “hidden gem” of a system
- Promote participation in the county’s Boards & Commissions,
- Promote participation in the advisory committees of the service districts,
- Parts of the CPO system may benefit from changing their designation as a volunteer-led committee to an appointed committee, in the same category as the county’s existing Boards and Commissions.

### Suggestions of importance to communities

- Create geographically smaller and more meaningful boundaries, e.g., CPO 4 was split into CPO 4M (Metzger), CPO 4B (Bull Mountain), and CPO 4K (King City) as model for future CPO boundary decisions
  - The CCI consensus is that CPO boundaries must be rooted in physical places since a geographical sense of place is a strong human need to belong
- Employing equity-centered system structures for leadership, bylaws, meeting formats etc.
- Making the process of testifying at BCC hearings crystal clear,
- Providing language access for non-English speakers,
- Using plain language for communicating technical topics,
- A structure which enhances community safety and beauty
  - Promote the CERT program and other emergency preparedness activities
  - Promote the SOLV program
- Provision of community support like space for children to engage with each other at in-person meetings.
- Ensure that rural and disadvantaged residents have access to broadband internet services

The purpose of participation programs also drives the types of topics addressed through the program.



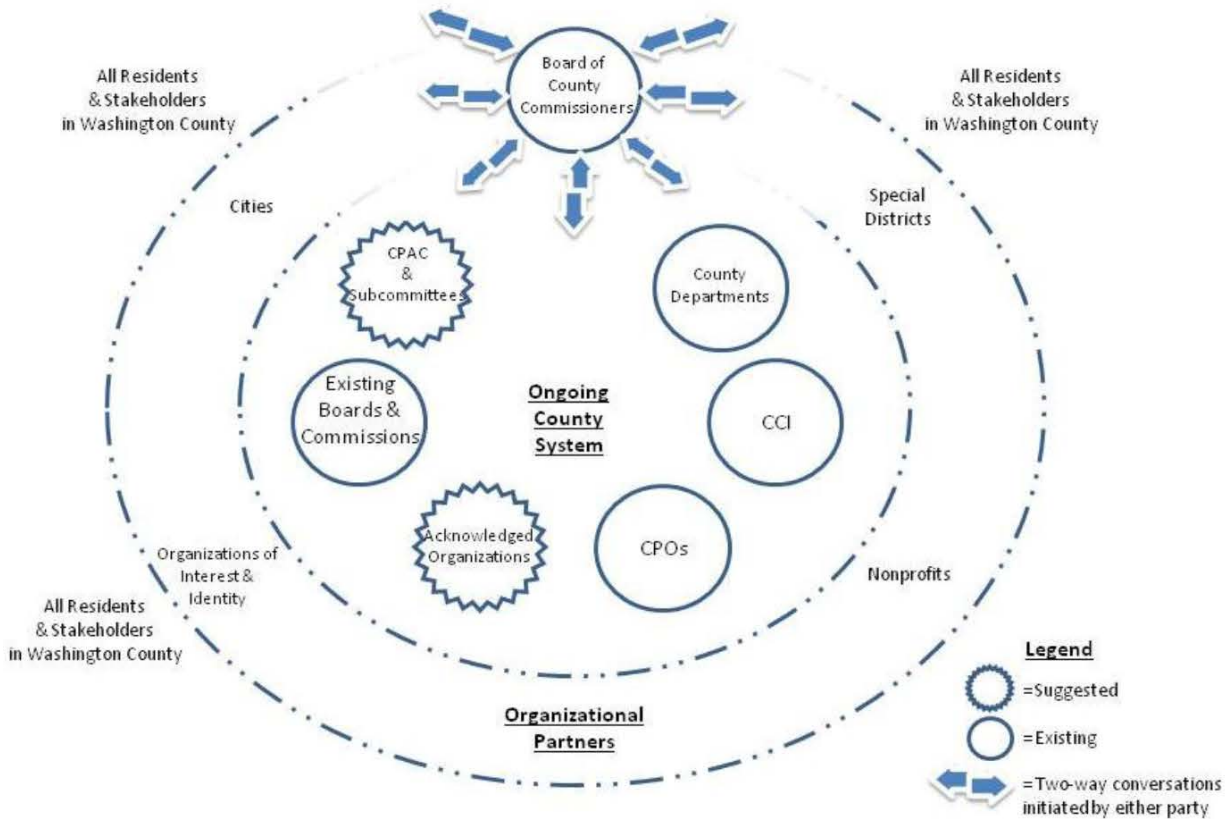
These range from land use and transportation issues (where the CPO program traditionally focused) to all issues under the purview of the County, issues under the purview of other public agencies, or all community issues, such as livability (now considered by some CPOs while others remain focused on land use and transportation issues).

The number of people participating in some aspect of the Common Good goes up as you broaden to include schools/PTOs, civic groups, benevolent organizations, locally active churches.



The following diagram from the Transition Report, page 9, shows the scope of what could be truly county-wide community participation.

## Ongoing Community Participation in Washington County



There is a wealth of skills, talents and knowledge in the various communities waiting to be collectively advanced for the benefit of all residents. The various interest communities are highly siloed, focused on their needs and missions, not so much on collaboration. Having allowed the mammoth unincorporated urban areas to be created, even in the face of Oregon's land use Goals prescribing the opposite, Washington County, and Clackamas County, both have unique challenges facing us. I see the CPO Re-visions as an opportunity to create an inter-connected web of groups supporting each other in pursuit of resilient communities.

Depicting these communities is difficult, but recently the [Watershed Navigator](#), a web app was created jointly by [Clean Water Services](#) and the [Tualatin Soil & Water Conservation District](#), was introduced. It is a marvelous tool for documenting inter-relatedness and providing focused information in an easy-to-find manner. I find it a perfect model for depicting the full extent of our potential for public participation by bringing visibility of natural allies to light.

You will notice how many of the Watershed Navigator information and service links lead to [Oregon State Extension Service offerings](#). Clackamas County is fortunate that there is a tax base funding the [Clackamas County Extension and 4-H Service District](#). Your [4-H program](#) consists of 150 clubs, each leveraging many volunteer (read: public participation) hours.

The Extension Service is an under-recognized organizational partner that I feel is the answer to many of the overarching challenges facing us. Extension has much to contribute in helping us create community resilience. In pursuit of true community resilience, I am convinced that advocating Extension as a component of public participation would bring people together in friendly ways that civic involvement in land use could never hope to. The 4-H program offers civic leadership training and projects which dovetail perfectly into the mission of our CPO programs. The Master Gardeners, OSU Small Farms, Master Food Preservers, Master Woodlanders, nutrition programs, Outdoor School and more are just what we need our communities to be involved in to enhance the Common Good with Common Sense.

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## Reference Documents and Links

### CPO Re-Envisioning Process

[www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/news/cpo-re-envisioning-process](http://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/news/cpo-re-envisioning-process)

### PSU Study in Support of the CPO Transition Plan: Seeking Solutions to Long-Term Public Engagement in Rapidly Diversifying Communities: A Case Study in Washington County, Oregon

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1140&context=metropolitanstudies>

### Wash Co Comprehensive Framework Plan – 2019 Update

[https://washcomultimedia.s3.amazonaws.com/CMSBigFiles/Comprehensive+Plan/CFP\\_Nov2019.pdf](https://washcomultimedia.s3.amazonaws.com/CMSBigFiles/Comprehensive+Plan/CFP_Nov2019.pdf)

- Page 36 – Citizen Involvement
- Appendix B – R&O 80-108: Community Planning Organizations
- Appendix C – R7O 86-58: Citizen Participation in Washington County, Oregon
  - Attachment 1, page 197 describes OSU Extension Service role and value

### Community Development Code (CDC), Planning Participants

[http://library.municode.com/or/washington\\_county/codes/community\\_development\\_code?nodeId=ARTIINGEPR\\_107PLPA](http://library.municode.com/or/washington_county/codes/community_development_code?nodeId=ARTIINGEPR_107PLPA)

- Section 107-6, CCI definition & functions
- Section 107-7, CPO definition & functions

### Wash Co – County 2020 Strategic Plan - DRAFT

[www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/documents/county-strategic-plan/download?inline](http://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/documents/county-strategic-plan/download?inline)

### Wash Co – County 2000 Strategic Plan

[www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/documents/county-2000-strategic-plan/download?inline](http://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/cao/documents/county-2000-strategic-plan/download?inline)



# **Community Participation in Washington County Transition Planning Process**

## **Final Report to the Board of County Commissioners**



**Joe Hertzberg  
Holly Van Houten**

***January 6, 2016***

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## I. Executive Summary

In the fall of 2014, the Oregon State University Extension Service decided that it would no longer administer Washington County's community participation program, effective by mid-2016. The Board of County Commissioners appointed a 13-member Transition Planning Team to “explore a broad range of public participation models and strategies” and to “develop options for Board consideration so that a transition can be implemented in early 2016.” The Transition Team was appointed in the spring of 2015 and includes a broad spectrum of viewpoints. See Attachment 1 for a roster of members.

The County engaged Solid Ground Consulting to facilitate the process and to submit a report to the Board upon completion. This report summarizes the work of the Transition Team, including its deliberations, suggestions to the Board, options for the Board to consider, and issues to be addressed in a future implementation phase.

All opinions are those of Solid Ground consultants Joe Hertzberg and Holly Van Houten. Transition Team members have reviewed and discussed drafts of this report. Their feedback has been incorporated, but they have not formally adopted it. Transition Team members were invited to provide their individual perspectives. For those who chose to, their commentaries are included in Section XIII. The Transition Team was supported by County staff members Philip Bransford, Mike Dahlstrom, Sia Lindstrom, and Janet Wells-Berg.

### **Aspirational Vision adopted by the Transition Team**

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*Washington County provides opportunities for all residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to meaningfully engage in collaborative, dynamic processes of open and responsive government. People from all walks of life have direct access to information and services, have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, and lend their knowledge, perspective, and creativity to building community resiliency and solving community problems. County officials value their input and take it into account in decision-making. The County partners with other jurisdictions and community-based organizations. Members of the public have opportunities for civic education and leadership training.*

### **Underlying Philosophy adopted by the Transition Team**

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- 1. Active engagement is the engine of democracy. Everyone should have the opportunity to speak up and help shape decisions that affect their lives.*
- 2. Broad participation of diverse community members leads to better decisions and more effective solutions to problems. Community members offer important perspectives, good ideas, and expertise in matters that affect their lives.*
- 3. Public officials demonstrate that they appreciate community participation through a welcoming, receptive attitude, real two-way dialogue, and clear explanations of how community input helps to shape their decision-making.*
- 4. Trust develops when people feel that their government is transparent, cares, listens, and responds to them. This leads people to volunteer their time, to vote, and to support efforts initiated by the County.*
- 5. Participation strengthens the sense of community. People who choose to live here share the responsibility to use their knowledge, skills, and experience to help make the community better. This applies to everyone, not just “citizens.”*
- 6. Community education and awareness help people to participate effectively and articulate sound, informed opinions.*





## Major Suggestions of the Transition Team

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The overall goal is to create a dynamic, integrated, inclusive community participation system in which the key elements interact across formal and informal boundaries.

Specific suggestions are detailed in Section XII. These can be summarized under a few headings:

### A. Retain basic elements of the current system: CPOs and CCI.

- ◆ Discontinue use of the word “citizen” in all community participation program references including renaming the “Community Participation Organizations” (CPOs) and “Committee for Community Involvement” (CCI).
- ◆ Retain the current geography-based CPO system, potentially with some modifications, along with the CCI as a “roll-up” structure.
- ◆ Provide for the acknowledgement of existing and newly formed organizations representing smaller areas. (Begin by reviewing current code provisions.)

### B. Create a Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC), including one or more population-specific subcommittees focused on diversity, youth, and/or business.

### C. Establish standards and practices to acknowledge existing and newly formed organizations representing communities of interest and identity. Specify what rights and responsibilities ensue from acknowledgement. Determine how best to ensure that the County’s system is integrated, rather than two parallel systems.

### D. Work with other jurisdictions and CPOs to create an integrated system.

- ◆ Negotiate with each city to determine how its residents will be engaged in countywide issues.
- ◆ Build on Boundary Change Task Force guidelines to make CPO boundaries more meaningful.
- ◆ Negotiate with each special service district to agree on the most effective and efficient forms of collaboration for stakeholder engagement.
- ◆ Strengthen partnerships with cities and special districts to achieve efficiencies and synergies. Look for opportunities to build a more integrated, seamless system of community participation across all jurisdictions in Washington County.
- ◆ Collaborate with cities and special districts to create comprehensive education and training opportunities.

### E. Create a kit of digital tools available to all elements of the program.

### F. Determine the best staffing model.

- ◆ Identify tasks that should be assigned to County staff, those that should be contracted to external parties, and those that could be provided equally well by either.
- ◆ Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to help determine what roles are most cost-effectively provided by the County and which by outside contracting.
- ◆ Consider issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify potential contractors.

### G. Consider alternative models to provide Information, Referral, and Troubleshooting services.



## II. Background

In Phase 1 of the project, prior to the first meeting of the Transition Team, Solid Ground Consulting gathered insights and perspectives from key stakeholders while researchers from Portland State University explored best and promising practices from around the country. The results were shared with the Board at a work session on June 23, 2015. The Board responded with an explicit charge to the Transition Team.

### Stakeholder Insights

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Between April and June, 2015, Joe Hertzberg and Holly Van Houten of Solid Ground Consulting interviewed 20 key stakeholders. Their summary report to the Board is included as Attachment 2. Major findings were:

- Community participation can serve multiple purposes. It is important to clarify which of these the County is interested in for this project.
- Virtually all public-sector community engagement efforts struggle to attract broad participation, not just CPO program and not just in Washington County.
- The strengths and weaknesses of the current CPO system are widely recognized.
- Cities, urban unincorporated communities, and rural areas pose different challenges. One size will not fit all.
- Large and growing segments of the population are underrepresented, including communities of color, young people, new residents including immigrants, and the business community.
- Some respondents question how much the County values community participation.
- Everyone recognizes the importance of “21st Century” digital tools, but cautioned that these tools do not replace one-on-one relationships or face-to-face meetings.
- Community education and training are invaluable to build awareness of basic concepts of local government, to build skills in leadership and effectiveness, and to provide balanced, thoughtful input into decision making.
- Some stakeholders strongly feel that CPOs must continue to be staffed by professionals who are not County employees. Others made equally strong arguments for County staffing.

### Best Practices Research

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Researchers from Portland State University – Meg Merrick, Andree Tremoulet, and Tina Dippert – identified best and promising practices from around the nation which might be helpful in creating a new community participation program for Washington County. Their report, “Promising Practices for Long-Term Community Engagement,” was released in August 2015. A summary was presented to the Board on June 23 and findings discussed with the Transition Team at its July and August meetings. A copy of the report is available online at: <http://www.co.washington.or.us/CPO/upload/Promising-Practices-Report-8-11-2015.pdf>

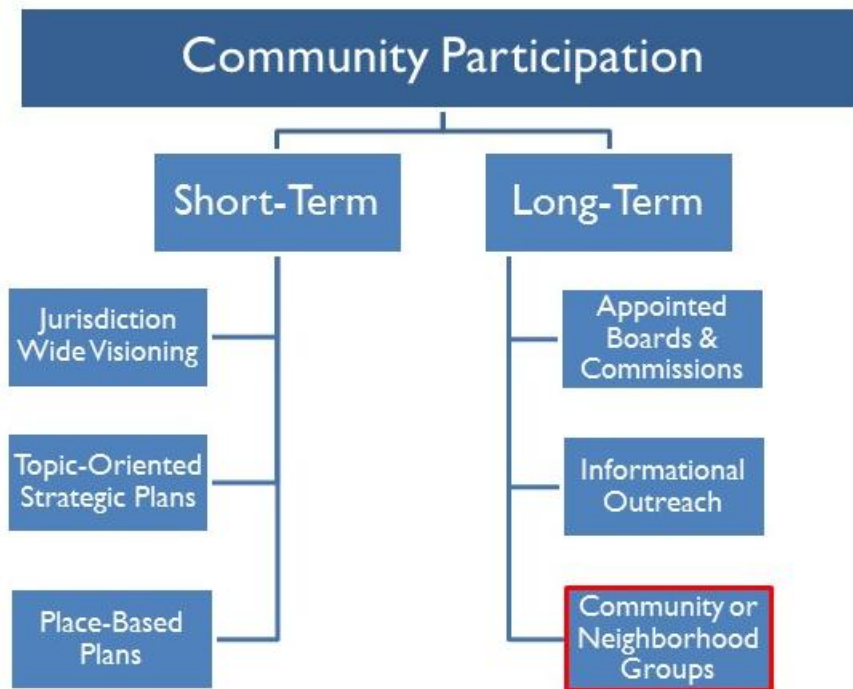
Although numerous promising approaches were profiled in the PSU report, the researchers were not able to point to the “perfect model” for Washington County’s community participation program.” Their report helped frame a series of choices to be made in designing a program. These framing questions contributed to the charge from the Board and helped frame the Transition Team process.





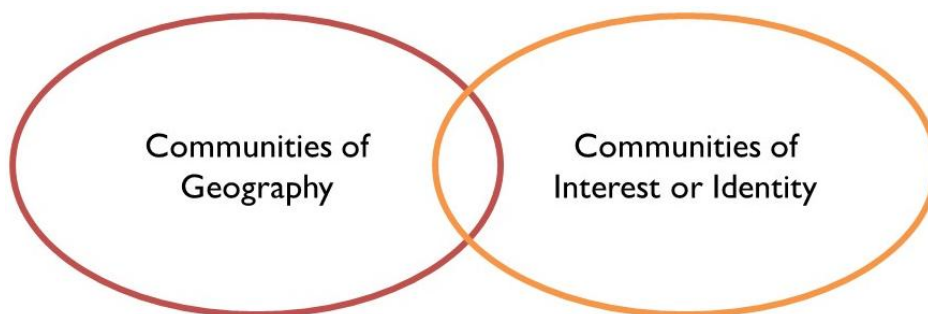
## Ongoing Community Participation

The PSU report and transition planning process focused on one aspect of the broader practice of community participation: long-term programs and structures that facilitate dialogue and collaboration among local government and communities on a broad range of issues. The following figure situates these ongoing programs within the context of community participation efforts. The Transition Team’s focus was largely within the box outlined in red.



## Communities of Geography, Interest, and Identity

The PSU research also pointed to the importance of building a community participation program around the needs of the specific constituencies, or types of communities, it serves. In looking at a structure for long-term community engagement, there is an opportunity to look at populations not fully involved currently, such as youth, younger households, communities of color, new residents, rural populations, and small businesses. These may be considered communities of identity or interest.



## Purpose of Participation

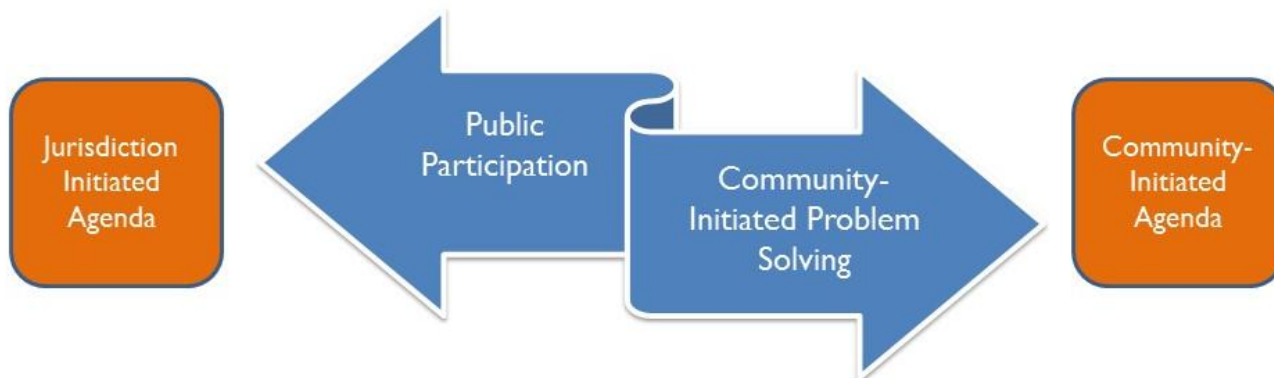
PSU pointed out that the purpose assigned to a community participation program serves as a driving force, influencing program structure, activities, communication tools, and staff support. Program purpose also drives the types of topics addressed through the program. These range from land use and transportation issues (where the CPO program traditionally focused) to all issues under the purview of the County, issues under the purview of other public agencies, or all community issues, such as livability (now considered by some CPOs while others remain focused on land use and transportation issues).



This range of concerns was reflected at the Transition Team’s community event on December 1. A word cloud summarizing the input received at that time is included in Attachment 4.

## Who Initiates the Agenda?

The report also examined programs on a spectrum based on who initiates or sets the agenda. At one end of the spectrum, community participation programs offer means for people to receive information about public issues and to consult with their government about plans, policies, and actions. At the other end of the spectrum, the focus is on building social capital and developing community resources: opportunities for community members to identify problems, deliberate about solutions, marshal resources, and organize for action. CPOs have addressed both jurisdiction-initiated issues and community-initiated problem solving.



## Board’s Charge to the Transition Team

A work session was held with the Board on June 23 to present the highlights of the stakeholder interviews and the best practices research. During this presentation, the consulting team offered the framing choices listed above. The Board then adopted this charge to the Transition Planning Team:

- Address the full spectrum of the County’s ongoing community participation efforts, not limited to the CPO system.
- Community participation is not limited to issues raised by the County. Consider how the program might facilitate discussion and problem-solving regarding concerns initiated by the community in addition to issues of land use, transportation, and other County matters.



- Because the concerns of community members do not neatly align with the division of responsibilities among the County and other jurisdictions community participation should allow for a full range of issues, with a clear disclaimer when issues beyond the County’s domain are broached.
- In addition to communities of geography, recognize that many residents identify with other kinds of communities of interest and identity.
- Explore opportunities to partner with other jurisdictions to coordinate efforts and pool resources.
- Work on a timeline that leads to implementation of the transition in early 2016.

The Board was also clear that while they welcomed recommendations, they were looking to the Transition Team primarily for options.

### **Transition Team Process**

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The Transition Team met seven times between July and December 2015. All meetings were open to the public. Once it identified its preliminary directions, an online survey along with an open house event helped to gather feedback from the public for review by the Transition Team. The online survey drew more than 550 respondents and the public event was attended by 25+ community members.

## **III. Guiding Vision and Philosophy of Community Participation**

Transition Team members started by sharing their most basic conceptions of community participation. Over several meetings, the Team crafted three statements that form the foundation of its suggested program design. The Aspirational Vision and Underlying Philosophy have appeared above in the Executive Summary.

### **Aspirational Vision**

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Washington County provides opportunities for all residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to meaningfully engage in collaborative, dynamic processes of open and responsive government. People from all walks of life have direct access to information and services, have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, and lend their knowledge, perspective, and creativity to building community resiliency and solving community problems. County officials value their input and take it into account in decision-making. The County partners with other jurisdictions and community-based organizations. Members of the public have opportunities for civic education and leadership training.

### **Underlying Philosophy**

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1. Active engagement is the engine of democracy. Everyone should have the opportunity to speak up and help shape decisions that affect their lives.
2. Broad participation of diverse community members leads to better decisions and more effective solutions to problems. Community members offer important perspectives, good ideas, and expertise in matters that affect their lives.
3. Public officials demonstrate that they appreciate community participation through a welcoming, receptive attitude, real two-way dialogue, and clear explanations of how community input helps to shape their decision-making.



4. Trust develops when people feel that their government is transparent, cares, listens, and responds to them. This leads people to volunteer their time, to vote, and to support efforts initiated by the County.
5. Participation strengthens the sense of community. People who choose to live here share the responsibility to use their knowledge, skills, and experience to help make the community better. This applies to everyone, not just “citizens.”
6. Community education and awareness help people to participate effectively and articulate sound, informed opinions.

## **Building Blocks of a Community Participation Program**

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1. Maintain engagement vehicles based on geography.
  - ◆ Geographic boundaries should be small enough to reflect a real sense of community.<sup>1</sup>
  - ◆ Geographic associations should roll up into a larger structure.<sup>2</sup>
  - ◆ Land use is an important place-based topic and will always be a core component of a geography-based program. [Oregon State Land Use Planning Goal 1 \(Citizen Participation\)](#) requirements must be met.
  - ◆ Topics that focus on shared interests to help unite residents and support positive interactions (e.g., quality of life, disaster preparedness) should also be included.
2. Add engagement vehicles based on communities of interest and identity.
3. Provide opportunities to address issues that are relevant across the county (e.g., juvenile justice, public health).
4. Look for opportunities to partner across jurisdictions. Don't duplicate community engagement programs of cities.
5. Do not place unreasonable expectations of workload or skillsets on volunteers.
6. Include strong civic education and leadership training components.
7. Provide a variety of mechanisms to engage with government and with one another that go beyond face-to-face meetings.<sup>3</sup>
8. Provide a common point of entry / ombudsman / information and referral to help people navigate County government.
9. Actively reach out and market the program to encourage greater participation.

Three of these building blocks were tested in the online survey: 1) reducing the geographic size of public participation groups, 2) providing a coordinating or advisory committee, and 3) providing online tools for community-building. All received positive responses ranging from 69 to 86 percent support.

## **A Word about Words**

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Early on, the Transition Team discussed the use of the term “Citizen,” which is part of the County’s current program. For many people, including some Transition Team members, “citizen” evokes the highest level of “civic engagement” and “civic responsibility.” However, the Transition Team recognized that “citizen” also refers to one’s immigration status and may imply that only citizens of the United States may participate in the life of the community.



Consequently, the Transition Team agreed not to use the term “citizen.” Instead, “community” or “public” was paired with “engagement,” “participation,” and “involvement.” When participants at the December 1 community event were asked about their preferences, the terms “community engagement” and “community participation” were most favored. As a placeholder in this report, we have consistently adopted the term “community participation,” although this preference was not universally shared by Team members.

Transition Team members felt that two common abbreviations – CCI and CPO – should be retained but the names changed to Committee for Community Involvement (CCI) and Community Participation Organization (CPO). (Note that CCI is the one exception in this report to consistently using the phrase “community participation.” This is because the current CCI specifically requested that its name be retained.)

## IV. Program Structure

### Preliminary Note on Empowered Individuals

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The Transition Team fully recognizes that the individual is the basic unit of democracy. Every person has the right to go directly to elected and appointed officials to make their views known. The purpose of any meaningful community participation program is to enhance the individual’s opportunities to engage, not to limit them in any way.

### Program “Architecture”

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The Transition Team reviewed several graphic depictions of the “architecture” of community participation to help visualize how the program would work. While they never settled on a perfect representation, the most recent version appears on the next page. It shows the elements to be retained, those to be added, and how the parts of a dynamic and interactive system work together to offer multiple opportunities for individuals and groups to engage with their elected and appointed officials, and with one another. At one point, the Transition Team considered the image of a fish bowl, with the elements swimming around and interacting with one another in the transparent fluid of democracy.

### Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC)

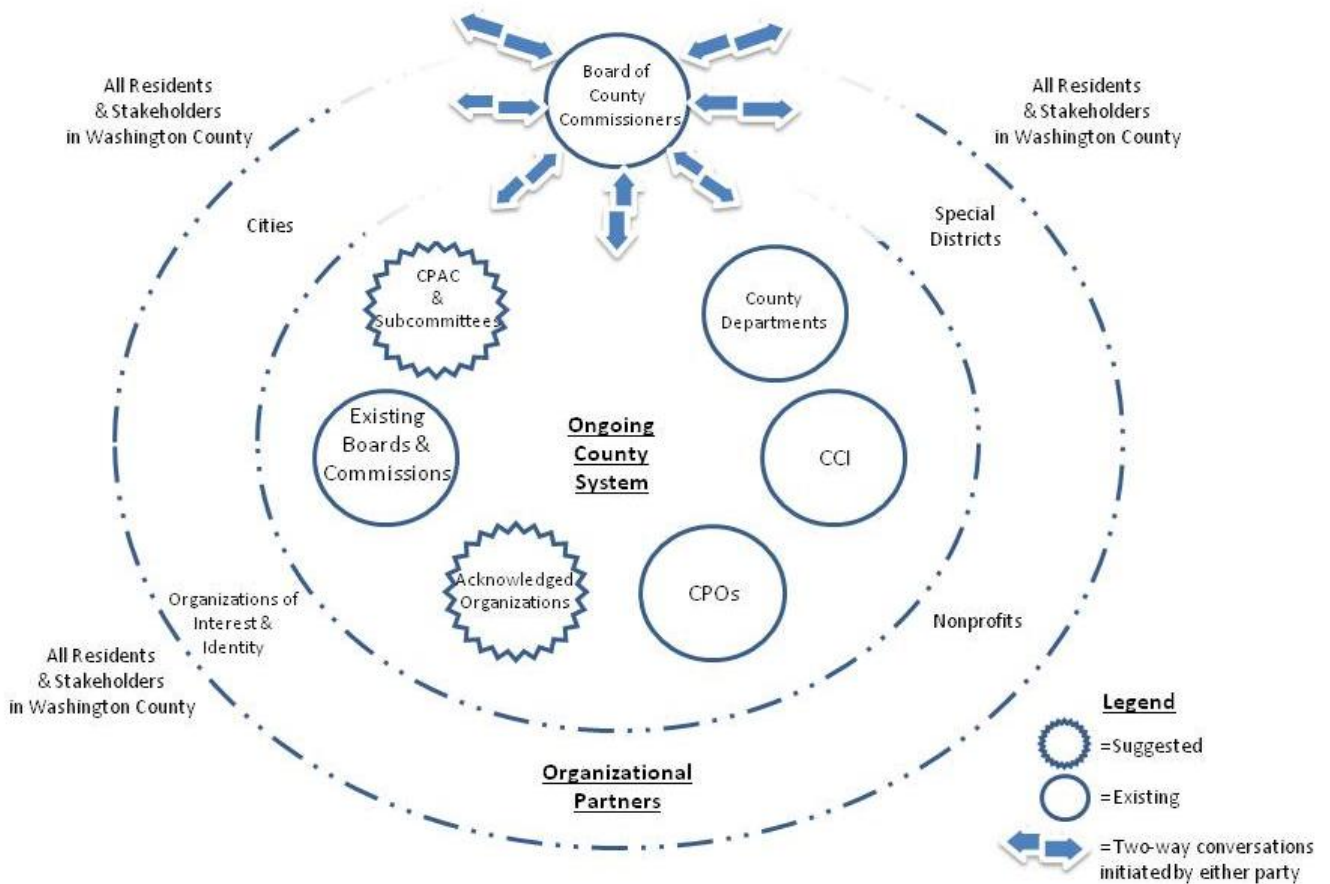
The Transition Team suggested a need to create a new advisory commission reporting directly to the Board to focus on the entire Washington County community participation program. The role of the new Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC) would be to provide oversight, accountability, policy direction, and program design. The CPAC would also be expected to assist County departments and other Board-appointed boards and commissions in their own community participation efforts. Members would be appointed by the Board, with some seats reserved for individuals nominated by the CCI.

This proposed new commission is seen as a tool for broadening and deepening community participation. Members representing diverse community perspectives will ensure accountability and help strengthen engagement across the full range of County activities.





## Ongoing Community Participation in Washington County



Dec. 2015 Version 4.0

### CPAC Compared with CCI

The Transition Team suggests retaining the existing CCI – keeping its abbreviation but replacing “Citizen” with “Community” – with a composition and role different from the CPAC. In full awareness of the potential for duplication, the Transition Team had several discussions about the need for both. They concluded that the CCI and CPAC are distinct and complementary.

- Members of the CPAC would be nominated by the Board, while the CCI would continue to be selected by community-based organizations as a “roll up” structure. (Note that the Transition Team did not resolve the question of whether the CCI should continue to represent only the CPO system or whether it should also include leadership of organizations representing communities of interest and identity.)
- CPAC and CCI should have a co-equal relationship. Neither should play a filtering role for the other. Both would enjoy two-way communication with Commissioners.
- CPAC’s primary roles are to advise on policy and program design, oversee outreach efforts, and monitor success against long-term goals. CCI is involved in implementation and leadership within the network of community-based organizations. The two should work together in a dynamic, and responsive manner to ensure that they coordinate – but not duplicate – their efforts.



## Population-Specific Subcommittees

Stakeholders and Transition Team members recognize the need to engage historically-underrepresented communities in Washington County. The Transition Team suggests that one most effective way to provide for this goal structurally is to create subcommittees of the CPAC to ensure that community interests and needs are heard and addressed, to help advise the County and its boards and commissions on how to best engage these populations, and to help recruit community members to participate fully. Suggested subcommittees include Diversity, Youth, and Business. Some or all subcommittee members would be appointed by the Board, with further details of how to create these subcommittees and what staffing they require an early task of the CPAC.

## Comparing Program Elements and their Purposes/Functions

Element	Purpose/Function
Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC) ( <i>new</i> )	Appointed by Commissioners (with some spots reserved for members nominated by the CCI). Provide advice to the Board, department staff, and other Advisory Boards regarding policy, design, and oversight of the County's community participation efforts, including marketing and outreach.
Population-Specific Advisory Subcommittees ( <i>new</i> )	Subcommittees of the CPAC. Some or all members might be appointed by Commissioners. Provide advice to the Board, department staff, other advisory boards, and community organizations about outreach and ways to fully integrate voices of historically underrepresented communities. Diversity, youth, and business are the most frequently mentioned underrepresented populations.
Committee for Community Involvement ( <i>expanded role for current Committee for Citizen Involvement</i> )	Composed of volunteer representatives chosen by CPOs (and perhaps identity- and interest-based groups). Work with the Board, department staff, advisory boards, and community organizations. Ensure two-way flow of communication between the County and community-based groups. Help implement and coordinate community participation activities, including marketing and outreach. (As noted above, the CCI might continue to represent only the CPO system or it might include a broader spectrum of community leadership.)
Community Participation Organizations ( <i>current Citizen Participation Organizations</i> )	Provide a venue for participation for communities of geography on topics including land use, transportation, and livability and help support community-based initiatives. Needs and structures differ from area to area, especially between rural and urban unincorporated areas.
Geographic-based groups ( <i>new</i> )	Opportunity for community-initiated groups in smaller geographic areas to be acknowledged as part of the system.
Identity-based groups ( <i>new</i> )	Opportunity for existing and newly-created groups focused on communities of identity and/or interest to be acknowledged as part of the system.
Advisory Boards and Commissions ( <i>existing</i> )	Appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, existing advisory boards and commissions will have two-way access to the expertise and advice of newly-created CPAC and its population-specific subcommittees to help strengthen their community participation efforts.
Cities and Special Districts ( <i>to be negotiated</i> )	See Section VI for a discussion of how the County's community participation program works closely with cities and special districts located within the



Element	Purpose/Function
	County. Because each jurisdiction has autonomous authority over its own community participation program, it is appropriate to negotiate a unique arrangement with each one. The basic goal of the partnership would to provide an efficient and integrated system that offers access to all relevant public jurisdictions.

## V. Engaging Communities of Interest and Identity

One of the most important changes suggested by the Transition Team is to expand the County’s community participation program to recognize that the sense of community for many people is related to non-geographic dimensions of identity and/or interest. Examples include communities of color, faith-based organizations, bicycle activists, small businesses, farmers, etc. In some cases, existing organizations might want to associate with the County’s community participation system; in other instances, groups might come together specifically for this purpose.

Many of these communities have been underrepresented in the past (and often under-engaged). It will be important not only to welcome their participation, but also to practice “assertive engagement” with them. Best practices in this regard are enumerated in Attachment 3.

An important implementation step is to establish a process and standards to acknowledge existing or new groups as part of the County system and to specify the rights and responsibilities that would be entailed. (Although existing code provisions allow recognition by the County, the process hasn’t been used, and these provisions should be re-visited.) Rights and responsibilities might include listing on a County website, additional time to testify at hearings, County staff support, and/or access to County-provided digital communications tools. Transition Team members want to be very clear that nothing in the acknowledgement process would preclude or limit individual or collective rights to engage with the County directly.

The Transition Team was very clear that its intention is to create a dynamic and comprehensive system of community participation, and not simply to add one more layer. It did not get into all of the details of how an integrated system would function. The Transition Team suggests that new Population-Specific Advisory Subcommittees of the CPAC provide guidance and perspective to the Board, County staff, other advisory boards, and community-based groups. The Transition Team did not conclude whether organizations representing communities of interest and identity should also be represented on the CCI.

## VI. Engaging Communities of Geography

Maintaining a strong, ongoing program based on geography is a high priority. The current CPO program has a long history in Washington County, and today many committed volunteers work together on behalf of their communities.





This system should be broadened and strengthened by addressing its well-recognized weaknesses, including:

- Many boundaries combine populations that do not have significant common bonds.
- Participation is often sparse except when local controversies arise. Some areas are inactive.
- Lack of coordinated marketing has led to few residents or businesses being aware of the program.
- Participants lack the diversity of the general populace.
- Participation depends on a basic understanding of how government works and how to participate effectively.
- Participation currently requires attending meetings, without the benefit of 21<sup>st</sup> century tools for communication and decision-making.

The Transition Team wants CPOs to continue to address place-based issues – including, but not limited to, land use and transportation – and continue to help the County meet its Goal 1 requirements. As entities of the County charged with providing advice to the Board they will continue to be subject to the requirements of Oregon’s open meeting and public records requirements.

Livability issues are also within the purview of CPOs. Many Transition Team members feel that broadening the topics addressed by CPOs would help broaden participation. Transition Team members appointed to represent underrepresented communities indicated that many of their constituents have issues they want to see addressed locally. CPOs were also encouraged to work on topics that promote positive feelings of connection – community projects like libraries, gardens, emergency preparedness, or community events.

### **Smaller Geographies, Rolling up to Larger Areas**

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The PSU report indicated that a best practice for organizing geographically is to make boundaries small enough to reflect a real sense of community and to feel welcoming to individuals from historically underrepresented populations. CPO 4K – King City and its vicinity - was repeatedly cited as a successful example because its smaller area contributes to attracting larger numbers to regularly attend meetings and identify shared concerns.

The Transition Team considered creating a structure that “rolled up” from smaller neighborhood-level groups to a district or regional level and then to a countywide organization (the CCI). Team members felt that while this kind of structure might help welcome more people, it would place too much burden on volunteers to attend multiple meetings at multiple levels. Smaller groups could not be supported through the current array of staffing.

The Transition Team suggests that the system should provide opportunities for existing or newly-created community groups representing areas smaller than CPOs. For example, these might be homeowners associations. Virtual groups might also form using tools accessible through the Internet.

### **One Countywide Engagement Program**

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Some Team members articulated a vision of moving away from a County-centric program toward a model that serves all of Washington County regardless of residence or jurisdiction. This approach was envisioned as



similar to cooperative efforts underway for emergency management where the County, cities, and special districts would create a single, seamless engagement program. Most people do not understand or care about the differences among jurisdictions or know how to effectively engage in government decision-making. Creating a seamless, cooperative, countywide engagement program was seen as the most empowering approach. While the Transition Team recognized this as a long-term vision, it is not feasible to fully consider at this time. It is important for the County and its partners to look for opportunities to build a more integrated, seamless system of community participation across all jurisdictions in Washington County.

## What Happens in Cities?

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The Transition Team wrestled with how the County's program should operate within cities. Points raised in discussions included:

- Cities have their own Goal 1 requirements for land use and transportation projects, their own mechanisms for meeting these requirements, and, for some, their own programs for ongoing community participation.
- CPOs representing unincorporated areas close to city boundaries are free to participate in city deliberations on issues that impact their members, but in practice their ability to participate in city deliberations varies considerably. There is a clearly room for better two-way communication between cities and residents of nearby unincorporated areas.
- While it is appropriate to expect cities to reach out and engage CPOs outside of their boundaries when relevant projects or issues arise, it is rarely reasonable to expect regular staff attendance at CPO meetings.
- Given the pattern and pace of development in Washington County, some areas have become patchworks of cities and urban unincorporated areas. Plans, issues, and impacts cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Residents find it difficult to know where to go to access information or get issues resolved.
- City residents are also county residents and should have equal opportunity to participate in county issues.
- The County's program should not duplicate existing city programs.
- The CPO system should be available to cities that choose to opt in.
- Ideally a single point of entry would allow a person to access whatever jurisdiction is responsible for an issue of concern, whether it is the County, a city, or a special district.

The Team adopted this statement regarding the working relationship with cities:

*Because of the varying types of community engagement programs at each city, it is critical to collaborate with each to take full advantage of, and not duplicate, existing systems. For smaller cities it may work well to have a County-organized group act as their community engagement organization.*

*For cities that have existing participation processes, the best approach for enabling effective community participation is to connect people to those programs. Issues of countywide importance could be provided through the existing city-led processes based on cooperative agreements between the County and those cities.*

The approach that seems to be favored by the Transition Team is to maintain a countywide system of CPOs with an agreement between the County and each city ensuring that residents have access to the full range of community participation opportunities within its city limits.



## Special Districts

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Many special districts (including school districts) currently use CPOs as one avenue of outreach. In this way CPOs can serve as a “one stop shop” for jurisdictions that want to engage with residents in a particular area, allowing interested residents to learn about a variety of projects and topics without having to attend numerous meetings. At the same time, districts have many other tools of engagement that could be of value to the County. The Team adopted a statement regarding the working relationship with special districts:

*Because of the varying types of community engagement programs at each special service district, it is critical to partner with each to take full advantage of, and not duplicate, existing systems.*

*Issues of countywide significance could be provided through existing special service district processes based on cooperative agreements between the County and those service districts.*

## Boundaries

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It is beyond the scope of the Team to discuss CPO boundaries. Nonetheless, the topic came up repeatedly. The Team agreed that it is desirable for boundaries to reflect a real sense of community and that some current CPO boundaries do not. This question should be on some entity’s agenda in the future. At that time – building on the recommendations of the CPO Boundary Change Task Force in 2012 – several options and principles might be considered:

- Tie CPO boundaries – or smaller geographies within CPOs – to community boundaries established by others, such as community plan areas or school attendance areas.
- Tie CPO boundaries to County Commission districts to strengthen ties between CPOs and their commissioners.
- Distinguish rural from urban unincorporated areas in establishing CPOs. Issues, conditions, attitudes, and distances are different. Team members diverge in their perception of the importance of these differences.

## VII. Education and Training

Education and training are critical components of effective engagement:

- General public: Many residents would benefit from “Local Government 101” describing which jurisdictions provide which services, explaining the role of the people in the decision-making process, and suggesting how people can get involved and be effective. This might be especially valuable for immigrant communities who come from cultures where it is often risky to speak out and prudent to avoid active engagement.
- People who are already active: Specific training in topics of interest like Land Use, Transportation, Human Services, and Equity.
- People in leadership positions: Leadership tools and tips: Examples of topics include running effective meetings, active listening, leadership styles, how to testify, and public meetings.

The County already provides training and materials in English and Spanish in a number of areas, including Land Use, Building Services, and Development Review. OSU Extension has also been actively engaged in training for CPO leaders, including Basics of Community Leadership and the CPO Handbook. Cities and special districts also provide training and this area offers perfect opportunities for collaboration.



Marketing and outreach also include elements of education and training, and the Transition Team focused on the need to expand outreach to help the public to become more aware of current community participation efforts, including the CPO program. Reaching out to different segments of Washington County's population will require greater focus and new approaches.

## **VIII. Toolkit for Communication, Collaboration, Meetings, and Decision-Making**

No electronic tool can ever replace the face-to-face meeting. But no tool is right for every job, and every tool is more effective when it is in a full array that allows the right tool to be used for the right job. The Team agreed that the best way to provide each group in the system with the tools they need is to create a toolbox that could be accessed by all levels of the program.

In responses to the online survey, respondents were asked how they prefer to hear from the County. The most popular choices were online mechanisms such as email newsletter, websites, and online surveys, followed closely by printed newsletters. The next most popular were face-to-face mechanisms and last were traditional media such as newspapers, radio or television. (It was pointed out, however, that these were the results of an online survey, so of course respondents are comfortable with online tools.)

### **What's in the Toolkit?**

#### ***Traditional Tools***

- Open houses, town halls, panel discussions, presentations, neighborhood coffees, community meetings, and other face-to-face community events convened by the County
- Presentations to community groups, organizations, and associations upon request
- Translation and interpretation
- Participation at community gathering places and events such as parks, schools, and fairs
- Flyers, newsletters, brochures, information sheets, and project overviews
- Printed surveys, intercept surveys, and statistically valid random-sample surveys
- Keypad polling (also evolving to use mobile devices)
- Community Access Cable Television

#### ***Online, Internet, and Web-Based Tools***

- Websites
- E-subscriptions
- Email and e-newsletters
- Online surveys and opinion polls
- Social media
- Online videos



Electronic tools are evolving rapidly. This is both exciting and challenging. For use at the County, tools must be compatible with County's systems and would be used by many staff in different divisions and departments as part of the full range of the County's engagement efforts. This is challenging. Special districts also use a variety of tools, but it is even more challenging to consider integration across jurisdictions and platforms.

Possible new tools being reviewed now include:

- Ability to specify different geographic areas (such as defined neighborhoods, service districts, and other types of boundaries)
- Maps with opportunities to pinpoint an area and identify an issue or aspiration
- Ability for interactive dialogue among community members and with County officials
- Generation of community-initiated issues and topics
- Integration of native language translation (versus Google Translate where intended meanings and nuances can be off target)
- Survey and visual preference options
- Integration with additional types of social media

## IX. Information, Referral, and Troubleshooting

Effective participation begins with access to accurate and timely information. The Team agreed that one of the "building blocks" of a community participation program is, "Provide a common point of entry / ombudsman / information and referral to help people navigate County government."

Unfortunately, the Team did not have the time to address this element in depth, though the topic came up repeatedly. When it did come up, three alternatives clearly emerged. Because people who need information often have no idea which unit of government is responsible for the issue at hand, all of these models would be strengthened by close collaboration between Washington County and other jurisdictions.

1. **Single point of contact:** Create a centralized Information & Referral function to connect an inquirer with the appropriate staff person. This system is only as good as its centralized data base and the information and training available to the person taking the initial contact. Note that this approach is staff intensive. The joint City of Portland / Multnomah County Information & Referral has a staff of six who answer phones and provide reception at major facilities.
2. **"No wrong door:"** Assure that staff throughout the organization are trained and oriented to assist inquirers to identify appropriate staff. It would be most powerful if this crossed jurisdictions. In the assertive version of this model, the staff member remains involved with the caller until a successful hand-off is made.
3. **Ombudsperson:** A designated staff person advocates to get answers to questions and resolutions to problems. In the strict interpretation of the role, the ombudsperson has the authority to investigate, report, and address complaints. Convenience and responsiveness are essential.



## X. Staffing

### Staffing Functions

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The Transition Team identified a number of staffing functions required for a successful community participation program. They also noted that their vision of an expanded program – including a Community Participation Advisory Commission, population-specific subcommittees, expanded online tools and resources, community-initiated interest groups, and increased education and training opportunities – might require expanded staffing. The current program relies heavily on volunteers to do marketing and outreach; this too might benefit from more staffing, particularly reaching out in culturally relevant and appropriate ways.

Staff support functions include:

- Program Management:
  - ◆ Lead program within County
  - ◆ Track metrics; report to the Board on program accomplishments
  - ◆ Provide point of contact for public complaints (“lightning rod”)
  - ◆ Provide point of contact for community leaders
  - ◆ Track program budget
  - ◆ Manage recruitment/ appointment process for Board-appointed positions
  - ◆ Liaison with cities and special districts
- Program Administration:
  - ◆ Maintain contact lists
  - ◆ Maintain public records
  - ◆ Maintain financial records
  - ◆ Handle meeting arrangements and logistics
  - ◆ Track performance of contractors
- Technical and volunteer support:
  - ◆ Support and coach volunteer leaders
  - ◆ Train leaders and volunteers
  - ◆ Identify emerging issues of potential interest
- Marketing and outreach
  - ◆ Develop plans for outreach and marketing
  - ◆ Implement outreach and marketing
  - ◆ Maintain website
  - ◆ Maintain electronic communication tools
  - ◆ Produce print and online newsletters



## Who Should Staff the Program?

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Many people have strong opinions – in both directions – about whether the program should be supported by County staff or outside contractors. This is especially true for the existing components (CPOs and CCI). In the PSU report (pages 40-43) and discussions of the Transition Team, a number of strengths were cited for County staffing, though some evoked disagreement:

- Accountability; requires commissioners to take ownership
- Continuity, long-term stability
- People have direct access to their government
- Closer ties and better integration with programs and projects
- County might pay more attention if the system is staffed by County employees

Strengths were also cited for external staffing, and again some of these evoked disagreement:

- Independent, neutral, impartial, unbiased
- Certain specialized skills or expertise, such as outreach to specific populations
- Demonstrated effectiveness through the decades
- Fixed cost

A number of organizations were suggested as potential program contractors. None of them were contacted to assess their level of interest or capability. Transition Team members suggested that a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or Request for Proposals (RFP) process be used to identify prospective contractors.

- Portland State University (mentioned most frequently by far)
- Pacific University
- Community-based organizations such as Centro Cultural, Center for Intercultural Organizing, and Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
- Vision Action Network (VAN)
- Rural Development Initiative
- Oregon Humanities
- New nonprofit organization modeled on VAN
- Private consulting firm

The Transition Team's discussion suggests that the best answer to the staffing question is likely to be "some of both." Based on the arguments summarized above, some functions may be more appropriate for County staff and others may lend themselves to contracting out to one or more outside parties. (Note, however, that CCI representatives informed the Transition Team that the CCI supports contracting with an outside party.)

Cost is clearly one consideration and there has been no comparative analysis. The Transition Team strongly suggested that a cost-benefit study compare the cost-effectiveness of County staffing with contracting. This should be done with reference to the success indicators discussed in the next segment of this report.





## XI. Defining Success for Community Engagement

The Transition Team discussed outcomes and metrics of success for the County's community participation program, stressing the importance of a regular program to track metrics, assess effectiveness, and ensure program accountability. Accountability would apply equally to both County staff and any outside contractors used to carry out the program.

### Outcomes

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- Anyone who wants can easily become aware of issues that might be of interest to them.
- Anyone interested in an issue can easily obtain information and learn how to become involved.
- Public officials welcome public input and use it to craft better decisions.
- Individuals and groups have opportunities to proactively raise their own issues of concern.
- There is a strong sense of two-way connection between the people and their government.
- People have a strong sense of community.
- The community is stronger and more resilient.

### Metrics of Success

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1. Number of participants in various engagement activities, including attendance at public events, testimony at Board of County Commissioner meetings, written communication, and online input such as surveys.
2. Similarity between demographics of the population and demographics of the engaged community.
3. Satisfaction of engaged community members, including trust in public officials.
4. Satisfaction of unengaged community members, including trust in public officials.
5. Demonstrated impact of public involvement on the opinions of decision-makers
6. Demonstrated understanding among the public about the actions taken by decision-makers.
7. Positive outcomes of community-initiated efforts.
8. Increased voter turnout.
9. Public support of County actions including ballot measures.

The goal of measuring success is to ensure a positive return on Washington County's investment in ongoing community participation. The Community Participation Advisory Commission should report annually to the Board of County Commissioners, and everyone in the system should be committed to continuous improvement.





## XII. Suggestions and Options

### These suggestions to the Board arose in the Transition Team process:

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1. Retain the current geography-based CPO system. Allow for the acknowledgement of existing and newly formed organizations representing smaller areas.
2. Retain the CCI and expand its responsibilities to include coordination and implementation of marketing and outreach and two-way communication between CPOs and the Board.
3. Establish standards and practices to acknowledge existing and newly formed organizations representing communities of interest and identity. Specify rights and responsibilities that come with acknowledgement.
4. Discontinue the use of the word “citizen” in reference to all elements of this program. Rename “Community Participation Organizations” (CPOs) and “Committee for Community Involvement” (CCI).
5. Create a Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC) with one or more population-specific subcommittees focused on diversity, youth, and/or business.
6. Negotiate with each city to determine how its residents will be included. This may range from County participation in the city’s existing system to the city’s participation in the CPO system, with a spectrum of possibilities in between.
7. Negotiate with each special service district to agree on the most effective and efficient forms of collaboration.
8. Collaborate with cities and special districts to create comprehensive education and training opportunities.
9. Strive to create a dynamic system that integrates the diverse components and activities described above and encourages interaction and synergy across lines of geography, jurisdiction, interest, and identity.
10. Create a kit of digital tools available to all elements of the program.

### These options for Board consideration arose in the Transition Team process:

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#### Staffing

- Identify which elements of the expanded community participation system receive staffing support.
- Identify tasks that could be assigned to County staff, those that could be assigned to external contractors, and those that could be assigned to either.
- Conduct an RFP or RFQ process to identify potentially interested external contractors.
- Conduct an analysis to compare the cost-effectiveness of County staffing with outside contracting.



## Information, Referral, and Troubleshooting

- Single point of contact
- “No wrong door”
- Ombudsperson

## These issues remain to address in an implementation planning phase in 2016:

- Recognizing that all of these suggestions cannot be instituted at once, how should the different elements of the new approach be sequenced?
- How should members of the CPAC be appointed? The Transition Team leans toward appointment by the Board, including some designated by the CCI for board appointment.
- Decide whether the CCI should include representatives of organizations from communities of identity and interest along with CPOs? If so, how would they be selected?
- Determine how to staff the new system.
- Determine which digital tools and upgrades are most effective.
- Develop a budget for the new program.
- Develop standards and practices for inclusion of community-initiated groups representing communities of geography, identity, and interest. These would include rights, responsibilities, and acknowledgement.
- Initiate negotiations leading to agreements with cities.
- Initiate negotiations leading to agreements with special districts.
- Develop stronger partnerships with cities and special districts to achieve efficiencies and synergies.
- Building on the work of the CPO Boundary Change Task Force, refine guidelines for CPO boundaries where rural geographies are largely kept as they are, urban unincorporated geographies are potentially divided into smaller CPOs, and city geographies are treated according to negotiated agreements with city governments. <http://www.co.washington.or.us/CPO/cpo-boundary-change.cfm>



### **XIII. Commentary of Transition Team Members**

After reviewing two drafts of this report, members of the Transition Team were invited to submit their own individual comments. The comments of those who chose to submit are reproduced verbatim below. They have been formatted to match the style of this report, but no other changes have been made. Note that four members chose to submit a “combined report of common beliefs as well as individual comments.”

#### **Eduardo Corona**

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I am both delighted and thankful for the opportunity to participate in this project. It was a very inspiring learning experience to witness the genuine commitment of the whole transition team, including the Washington County staff, the volunteers and Solid Ground Consulting Company, to reset and update the CCI and CPO programs.

I would like to summarize my learning experience with the proposal of the following main activities. Those mentioned goals are meant to straighten the community engagement within the government activities and maybe even beyond the cited programs.

First of all, CCI and CPO programs would need to be re-branded in order to become more attractive to a broader and a more diverse community. We all know the importance of community engagement and participation with the Washington County government administration, however not everybody within the community shares that vision of civic engagement. Therefore I think it is necessary to perform a demography study, in order to identify the community segments we want to reach. Then develop an outreach campaign sensitive to those community segments.

Once community engagement with the program is straightened, we would want to create an efficient retention strategy, to keep participants interested and boosting word of mouth promotion. It is very important to have an infrastructure in place to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for attendants to different events organized.

I believe these two main goals would be achieved by mixing the labor and activities of staff and outside contractor services.

Washington County staff has better and bigger access to government infrastructure and resources to manage the programs; setting the goals, supervising and tracking contractors' achievements, and finally they should be involved within the program logistics.

Outside contractors have the specialized and technical knowledge to plan and to perform all those activities, which needed to reach the Washington County goals for these programs.

While county staff selection should be done according to the Washington County employment policies, my only suggestion to the selection process for the potential contractor is to carefully analyze the outreach strategy and outcomes among the broader community in Washington County.



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**Liz Newton**

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I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important process. Meaningful community engagement is essential for solving problems and building healthy communities. Members of the transition team participated thoughtfully and willingly shared their diverse perspectives throughout the process. The group was not in unanimous agreement on all points so I take this opportunity to emphasize aspects of the report I find most important.

Meaningful community engagement in Washington County is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners. For that reason alone, I believe it's critical that county staff direct and manage the community engagement program from the County Administrative Office. County staff is better positioned to advise the Board on program structure, connect the activities of the CPAC with the goals of the Board, ensure adequate resources (including contractors) are available, monitor the effectiveness of the program and serve the needed ombudsman role. County staff is also in the most advantageous position to facilitate partnerships with cities and special districts because of their ongoing working relationships.

The creation of a Community Participation Advisory Commission (CPAC) seems essential to the future success of broadening community participation. Members representing diverse community perspectives and appointed by the Board of Commissioners are key to creating strong accountability. The primary role of the CPAC will be to advise on policy and program design, provide oversight of outreach efforts and monitor the program's success against long-term goals. Targeting outcomes that community engagement is collaborative, dynamic and open, requires a nimble and responsive process. The role of the Committee for Community Involvement then is to coordinate the implementation of participation activities including education and outreach.

As noted in the report, cities, urban unincorporated areas and rural communities pose different challenges. The report highlights the role the current CPO program serves in meeting the county's LCDC Goal #1 requirements. Cities also have the same Goal #1 requirements with individual programs in place to comply. Community issues based on geography are broader than compliance with Goal #1 however; and cities are most effective addressing those issues with one, coordinated community engagement program managed and implemented by the individual city, not as part of the county-based CPO program. Collaboration between the county and the cities is key to ensuring community members understand the most effective ways to help shape decisions that affect their lives. Where there are areas of unincorporated islands within a city, the city has a responsibility to provide opportunities for those residents and businesses to provide meaningful input on issues that affect their lives even though they are not constituents. The same holds true for areas adjacent to cities.

In the end, a successful community participation program will be flexible enough to facilitate discussion and problem-solving on issues and concerns raised by the community and to encourage constituents to provide input and feedback to county decision-makers about plans, policies and actions before final action is taken.



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## **Pablo Nieves-Valenzuela**

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I am pleased that this report provides the Washington County Board of Commissioners with a set of options related to the structure of a new community-participation program, and frames important questions that still need to be answered. The Transition Team is suggesting that communities of interest and identity be included in the architecture and fabric of the program – this will be essential to increasing participation throughout the county from groups that have traditionally not been active in the CPO system, such as millennials, and the growing Hispanic/Latino population. Recognizing the importance of CPO's as public vehicles for localized discussions regarding land use planning, it is also imperative that neighborhood groups within the purview of the new program have leeway to be active in other areas of public policy, such as public safety, and/or public education as well. The freedom to engage any and all local concerns is necessary for involving underrepresented communities in the new community participation program.

Millennial and Hispanic/Latino members of the Washington County community have not been very active in the current CPO program, but there are structural reasons why getting involved may have been difficult, and the new program should be designed to promote their integration into public discussions. One important way to increase participation will be by creating smaller CPO districts in areas where younger age groups are concentrated, which could be accomplished in part through negotiations with cities, as well as special districts. Large CPO districts likely make it difficult for college and university students, and the Hispanic/Latino community, to attend meetings. Within smaller CPO groups, the issues discussed would have a more representative view of the concerns of the geographic area, which in itself will motivate members of diverse communities to attend meetings.

How this program is staffed is a fundamental factor, not only in creating the architecture of the program, but also in widening participation throughout the county. The task of marketing the program to different communities needs to be a staffed function, and a cost-benefit analysis would help determine whether this should be performed by a county, or a contracted employee. Marketing the program to a wide range of diverse communities will be difficult and take a great deal of time, so it cannot possibly be left to community members to do the job on their own. To be successful in engaging diverse communities in the county, such as millennials and Hispanics/Latinos, staff in charge of marketing must be trained to reach out to these communities in culturally relevant and appropriate ways.



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## Victoria Saager

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I broadly support the draft final report. My greatest concerns are addressed in section VI, most specifically the “One Countywide Engagement Program” and “What Happens in Cities?”

The statement that the one countywide engagement program “is not feasible to seriously consider at this time” is disappointing. I would prefer to see a strong recommendation that exploration of this opportunity be identified as a high priority during the implementation phase.

My strong opinion about the one countywide engagement program is based in my concern about what happens in cities, for all the reasons listed in that section. Ditto special service districts.

I also feel strongly about section IX and suggest that the stated building block be modified to, “Provide a common point of entry / ombudsman / information and referral to help people navigate government” (delete “County”). The resonant statement for me is that, “people who need information often have no idea which unit of government is responsible for the issue at hand”. This section refers to the need for adequate staffing and “close collaboration between Washington County and other jurisdictions.” If we accomplish nothing else, this “single point of contact” / “no wrong door” seems to me the most important service to be provided by a countywide community participation program.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my personal perspectives.



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## Sheri Wantland

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Serving on the CPO Transition Team has been a high point in my career, and it is a privilege to live and work in Washington County where public participation (P2) is a given. My career has been dedicated to authentic stakeholder engagement, and I am a longtime leader in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), the leading resource for P2 training and professional development. P2 can be a messy business that takes courage and commitment, and it demands time, money, specialized skills, and ever-evolving tools and techniques. Nevertheless, it is worth it all for better decisions and stewardship of public resources, and also to build community cohesion and resiliency.

The CPO Transition Team, County staff and Solid Ground Consulting— with excellent input from CPO/CCI leaders— articulated a clear path forward for the CPO program and laid the foundation for a more robust community engagement program. My final comments begin with what we learned from the community online survey and open house, and end with suggestions.

1. Digital engagement is efficient, effective and desired by many, as proven by the survey.
2. Despite expert planning and execution, the public open house attracted very few which suggests it's time to use other face-to-face techniques—and there are many to try.
3. An improved County website and digital tools would make it easy to access community engagement efforts, support volunteer recruitment, publicize events, and foil critics.
4. Assuming the cost benefit analysis requested by the Team is done to clarify CPO program staffing, staff should also draft a budget to upgrade the County website.
5. Convenience and responsiveness are essential for successful community relations, which is why I strongly advocate for a County ombudsperson.
6. The primary role of the recommended new Community Engagement Advisory Group is oversight of County advisory groups to ensure they are meeting stakeholder needs.
7. Encourage more County staff to attend IAP2 trainings and conferences to become more adept in P2 best practices.
8. Re-engage CPO Transition Team members to help refine and implement the next steps.





## Common Commentary from Bruce Bartlett, Jim Long, Mary Manseau, and Kathy Stallkamp

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### We support the following comments in common between us:

- The current CPO system works well. The geographic structure supports community concerns, including advice to the BCC, with a primary focus on land use issues. The current CPO staff has been a valuable resource providing education and support to CPO leaders and the community.
- The geographic group (CPO) should include a CPO leadership group (currently named the CCI) to advise the BCC and address county wide issues which impact multiple CPOs. We feel the mission statement “*To encourage and empower public involvement*” is valuable.
- We believe the geographic structure should retain the CPO acronym; we support changing the name to *Community Participation Organization*.
- The size of CPOs must be addressed as some are too large to currently function effectively. Population should be a consideration in determining which CPO boundaries are too large.
- Marketing by Washington County would greatly benefit the CPO program. In such a rapidly growing county, much more needs to be done to inform the public about the role the CPO fulfills in a community.
- All CPO’s bylaws should be revised using a single template for uniform structure and functionality. Each CPO can adapt those by-laws to meet their needs by an addendum/appendix to the template.
- There should be a single geographical community involvement program in any area, with the county and cities working together to coordinate efforts, so community members have a single place to go to regardless of an issue being connected to a city, county, metro, state, special service district, or other allied group.
- The creation of a (CIAB) *Community Involvement Advisory Board* would be beneficial to address the following issues: recruiting under-represented communities; marketing the program; creating educational materials and programs for the entire Public Involvement program; evaluating the effectiveness of Public Involvement programs; full support of the Public Involvement program IT infrastructure; advice on content; and ensuring compliance of laws relating to Public Involvement. To minimize confusion between the role of the CIAB and the CPOs and CCI, we recommend this CIAB instead be named PIAB (Public Involvement Advisory Board) or PIAC (Public Involvement Advisory Council).
- Public Involvement opportunities should make substantial use of social media and other internet options including ideas such as Metro’s “Opt In” program.
- The county web site/interface should be enhanced by: adding information on all of the existing appointed advisory boards and allied community groups; making it simpler to navigate; offering educational opportunities for people; and providing a means to derive meaningfully input on issues.
- Once a desired Public Involvement program is defined, analysis should occur to identify the financial impact of in-house county support versus an outside source like Portland State or Pacific University.
- An evaluation should be conducted to determine the viability and willingness of an external contractor to oversee the county community engagement program. A Request-For-Proposal may be appropriate.





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**Bruce Bartlett**

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I am confident the revised program will be even more successful than before. In addition to the “Common Commentary” points provided by myself, Jim Long, Kathy Stallkamp and Mary Manseau, I summarize the program options for the Board to consider.

1. Maintain program as-is, just replacing support staff and chartering the program to maintain primary focus on county land use issues.
2. Enhance program to focus on all of the county’s services and programs, chartering the program to place human services and law enforcement issues on the same level as land use issues.
3. Transform program to: employ the features of Option #2; integrate all volunteer programs sponsored by the county (appointed boards/commissions along with the un-appointed volunteer CPO positions) into the program, answering the question: *What is relationship between County Board-appointed citizen advisory committees and the CPOs?*; connect with the public involvement activities of special service districts and other municipalities/agencies in the county.
4. Radically transform the program employing the features of Option #3, plus any or all of the following features:
  - a. Make the program an active effort to train people for collective Emergency Preparedness working with emergency service providers.
  - b. Integrate the program with the volunteer work of parents with school-age children (PTO/PTA). These parents are organized and devoted, and are among the most potent forces working for the good of communities. This would provide an ideal forum to educate children on their civic infrastructure and begin their involvement at an early age.
  - c. Include the work of the Vision Action Network to gather allied groups together as part of the program. By this, the work of faith-based groups, identity groups and interest groups (“allies”) would be shared throughout the program, leveraging the investment made to date in the VAN.
  - d. Use food as a social organizing tool to provide a compelling motivation for people to join the program and work together. Promoting “urban agriculture” can create an inter-connected web of interests that is vastly more powerful than simply focusing on county issues. The resulting unified group would provide a base from which to easily create interest groups who would focus on important issues. In my experience, land use issues divide people and engender discord, but food unites people and creates common unity (community).

Regarding the CPO boundaries, I suggest a composite approach of using Commissioner districts at the highest level devolving to school attendance boundaries at the lowest level. Elementary/Middle school boundaries make a logical and synergistic alternative. These boundaries already exist and would provide a strong sense of place.



## Jim Long

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Suggested Creative Umbrella Name: (Public Involvement) PI/PIE PI

In the past two years, CPOs countywide approved its mission: to encourage and empower “Public involvement.” A strong public involvement program is good for public safety, public health, public affairs, public relations, public utilities, and especially consumers.

Washington County has had a nationally unique Community Planning Organization program for over forty years, since the early 1970s in part because Oregon is the first state with statewide land use planning. And, it is also unique because it was administered Oregon State University, a land-grant academic institution and it was originally focused solely on land use. The OSU Extension Service has been very credible, knowledgeable and helpful to citizens in developing community plans. The original fourteen CPOs included: Cedar Hills/Cedar Mill; Raleigh Hills/Garden Home; Tigard/Metzger/Bull Mountain; Sherwood/Tualatin; Cooper Mountain/Aloha; Somerset/Rock Creek; North Plains; Hillsboro; Laurel/Blooming; Gaston/Cherry Grove; Verboort/Roy; and Banks/Timber/Gales Creek.

People engage in public involvement in many ways outside of the CPO program, from the required paying of taxes, to registering to vote, voting, taking surveys, volunteering in various ways, letters to the Editors, serving on advisory committees, providing testimony, blogs, emails, marches, appeals, donations, civil disobedience, sit-ins, protests, etc. Will the proposed CIAB be fostering various forms of Public Involvement?

Personally, my biggest disappointment was during August 2014 and the enactment of the biggest tax breaks in Oregon history. The County’s official citizen participation program, the CPO program, was not invited, or provided information about the corporate tax break. Because the CPO program was not invited, none of the CPOs testified at the Public Hearing on the Strategic Investment Program. Elected Officials at all levels of government should be more welcoming and receptive to Public Involvement.

We’ve heard many volunteers say they don’t want the County Administrative Office to run the CPO program for a variety of reasons.

There are not many options in Transition Planning Team Report. One of the design options I want considered is one that increases/perhaps doubles the CPOs budget that would be needed to support more, smaller CPOs and improved marketing. So basically, I’m in favor of an R.F.P. with an increased budget as another option.

To keep citizens involved of the process, we (the TPT or CCI) should help with development of the Request For Proposals and future agreements.

Because of its importance, and to be welcoming of citizen input, schedule two public hearings, night and day on the future of the Public Involvement program.



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## Mary Manseau

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I am opposed to including representation of identity and interest based groups in CCI. Too often the issues to be addressed will not be aligned. Identity and interest based groups are best served in the CPO/CCI program as they are now--as CPO guests or with a member acting as a bridge between the identify and interest group and the CPO. This is already done with BTA, Oregon Walks, Safe Routes to Schools, THPRD advisory groups and other groups, with the leadership of each group coordinating with the CPOs or CCI or vice versa when issues intersect.

One continuing concern I have is with the naming of the different components of the program--the CPO, the CCI and the CIAB (CPAC in the newest draft). The names are all too similar as they all include the term Community. Even those of us with close ties to the program may have difficulty keeping the abbreviations and roles straight.

Suggestions for naming:

If we were to use the term Public Involvement to describe the broad program that includes both the geographic communities and communities of identity and interest, instead of the Community Participation Advisory Commission, we would have the Public Involvement Advisory Commission.

Additionally, the role of the CCI will be clarified by calling CCI the "CPO Coordinating Committee". Yes, we would change from CCI to CCC, a change not supported by the CCI membership, but I believe the clarity provided by the name change outweighs the negatives.



## **Kathy Stallkamp**

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I believe the size of a geographic group is a key component to the success of a community involvement program. As the chair of CPO 4K, the smallest CPO, I strongly support geographic groups with smaller boundaries than exists within the current CPO program. CPO 4K functions as a community group of several neighborhoods. Our members live within King City's boundaries, unincorporated areas, the urban reserve and outside the UGB. Members live in urban settings as well as rural settings. While our living conditions and boundaries vary, we all face similar community interests and issues – we use the same roads, shop at the same stores, and transportation and development changes impact everyone in a similar fashion.

I feel it important to mention CPO 4K has other advantages that make it an effective CPO. CPO 4K is part of a small city and has a positive relationship with city staff and council members. The King City Chief of Police has been a long standing member of the CPO Executive Committee and past council members were regular CPO meeting attendees. The city and CPO work together to educate residents, resolve problems and obtain input.

One of my biggest concerns with the Transition Planning Team report is the idea of cities and the county each having their own community involvement program. I believe it would be ideal to have a single community involvement program for county residents. Existing city programs could be folded into the current CPO program structure so that the programs continue to benefit the city but leaders are offered the opportunity to participate in the CCI and receive CPO program resources. If a city chooses to have a community involvement program, it's important that they include unincorporated residents nearby and surrounded by their city. Utilizing a city's comprehensive planning area as the basis for a geographical group would avoid excluding residents from discussions pertinent to their community and interests.



## Attachment I: Transition Planning Team Roster

<b>CCI Nominees</b>	Bruce Bartlett	CPO 1
	Jim Long	CPO 4M
	Kathy Stallkamp	CPO 4K
<b>At-Large: Under-Represented</b>	Eduardo Corona	
	Pablo Nieves-Valenzuela	
<b>Practitioner</b>	Sheri Wantland	Clean Water Services
<b>City/Special District</b>	Liz Newton	City of Tigard
	Corinne Weiss	City of Hillsboro
	Bob Wayt	Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District
<b>County Staff</b>	Victoria Saager	Washington County, Land Use & Transportation
	Bill Steele	Washington County, Sheriff's Office
<b>At-Large: General</b>	Mary Manseau	
	Luis Nava	



## Attachment 2: Stakeholder Interviews and Insights

TO: Washington County Board of Commissioners  
 FROM: Joe Hertzberg and Holly Van Houten  
 DATE: June 23, 2015  
 SUBJECT: Stakeholder perspectives on Community Participation Transition Planning

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We conducted in-person interviews with 20 stakeholders identified by the CAO's office to represent a broad range of perspectives. A list appears at the end of this summary. We also met with Washington County Managers as a group. Following are the most important themes and insights we gleaned from these conversations.

***Community participation can serve multiple purposes. It is important to clarify which of these the County is interested in for this project.***

- Public Participation: Disseminate information on issues of importance, gather input from residents on those issues, and provide a forum for discussion and problem-solving.
- Community-Building: Cultivate authentic relationships with all segments of the community, based on mutual trust and respect. Make the County's presence felt.
- Civic Education and Leadership Development: Educate residents about Washington County government and offer training in effective participation and leadership.

***Virtually all public-sector community engagement efforts struggle to attract broad participation, not just CPOs and not just Washington County.***

- It is a huge challenge to attract a representative cross-section of the public.
- Attendance is often driven by hot topics and is difficult to sustain interest over time.
- A regular meeting schedule and format does not fit into the busy lifestyles of many people.
- Associations are often dominated by a few individuals.

***The strengths and weaknesses of the current CPO system are widely recognized.***

- The system provides a venue for a small group of dedicated residents to engage with the County, especially with regard to place-based issues.
- Discussions are often spirited, and can sometimes help forge compromises or resolve issues.
- The CPO model is better suited to geographically focused issues than to county-wide issues.
- Most residents do not clearly distinguish the County's responsibilities from those of other units of government. CPOs can provide a forum for issues beyond the County's domain.
- CPOs have been a training ground for community leaders, including some elected officials.
- Long-time CPO members expressed a desire to build more productive relationships with Commissioners and County staff. Many stakeholders who have not been active in the CPOs system consider it to be "a tool for the few" that has taken a lot of the County's attention.



- CPOs depend on intensive staff support. CPO leaders put in countless hours and could use additional support, such as marketing, training, and clerical assistance.

**Cities, urban unincorporated communities, and rural areas pose different challenges. One size will not fit all.**

- CPOs are especially active in urban unincorporated areas working to address place-based issues. Residents of these areas have few other civic opportunities to come together.
- City managers and some CPO members felt it confusing and duplicative to have CPOs within cities.
- Engagement is especially challenging in rural areas due to distance and limited access to electronic communications.

**Large and growing segments of the population are underrepresented, including communities of color, young people, and the business community.**

- Many respondents stressed the importance of building long-term, personal relationships of mutual trust and respect, especially in communities that have not been involved historically. This requires going to them and understanding their hopes, needs, and concerns.
- An advisory council like Beaverton’s Diversity Advisory Board could help the County reach out to underrepresented communities. This might also apply to the business community.
- The County could partner with community-based organizations to help build connections in their communities. Again, this might also apply to the business community.

**Some respondents question how much the County values community participation.**

- A number of people with different perspectives doubted the commitment of Commissioners to listen to voices from the community.
- Beaverton was cited as a jurisdiction that has achieved some success through demonstrated commitment of leadership and resources.

**Everyone recognizes the importance of “21st Century” digital tools, but cautioned that these tools do not replace one-on-one relationships or face-to-face meetings**

- Some stakeholders commended the County for its efforts in this area. They pointed out room to improve in making communications more attractive and engaging.
- The universe of possibilities is ever-expanding, and numerous examples were offered.

**Community education and training are invaluable, both to build awareness of basic concepts of local government and to build skills in leadership and effectiveness.**

- This is relevant in different ways for those who are least informed and involved – including immigrants from countries with political cultures very different from ours – all the way to those who are most involved and seek to be as effective as they can be.

**Some stakeholders strongly feel that CPOs must continue to be staffed by professionals who are not County employees. Others made equally strong arguments for County staffing.**





**Stakeholders Interviewed**

Shahriar Ahmed	Bilal Mosque
Don Bohn	Washington County, Assistant CAO
Virginia Bruce	CPO member
Melissa DeLyser	Washington County Land Use & Transportation
Matthew Eagan	Calvary Lutheran Church
Paolo Esteban	Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
Stan Houseman	Committee for Citizen’s Involvement and CPO member
Kayse Jama	Center for Intercultural Organizing
Kathie Koellmann	Committee for Citizen’s Involvement and CPO member
Mee Seon Kwon	Center for Intercultural Organizing
Mary Manseau	CPO member
Rob Massar	Washington County, Assistant CAO
Carolyn McCormick	Washington County Visitors Association
Maria Rubio	Centro Cultural
Dan Schauer	OSU Extension (CPO Outreach Coordinator)
Beth St. Amand	OSU Extension (CPO Outreach Coordinator)
Stephen Roberts	Washington County Land Use & Transportation
Andrew Singelakis	Washington County Land Use & Transportation
Pam Treece	Westside Economic Alliance
Maureen Wheeler	Beaverton School District

Washington County City and Special District Managers



## Attachment 3: Recommendations for Assertive Engagement

It is well known that public participation has become more challenging across the country in the past two decades. A set of best practices has emerged that apply to all civic involvement, and particularly to traditionally underrepresented communities, including ethnic minorities, young people, rural residents, and small business. These have been cited in our national research and in interviews with Transition Team members and Washington County stakeholders. They fit nicely under a rubric used in human services: “assertive engagement.”

- Seek to form real relationships.
- “Go to them” and “speak their language.”
  - ◆ Connect at times, in places, in languages, and in styles that are familiar and comfortable to the specific community.
  - ◆ Identify issues of concern to the specific group, and address those issues.
  - ◆ Identify venues where they congregate, and strive to become a welcome guest.
  - ◆ Ask specific questions that stimulate dialogue, rather than either broad, abstract questions or “yes or no” questions that don’t invite conversation.
- Identify natural networks and community leaders.
- Ask for advice, endorsement, and assistance from credible individuals and organizations in the community.
- Some populations have had negative experiences of engagement with government. This is notable in some refugee communities, but it is also true of many people born in the USA. It is often best to approach them through trusted intermediaries in comfortable settings.
- Be especially mindful to focus on issues they care about. Eventually, it is important to show them how government is relevant to their lives, but it is best to start where they are.
- Encourage people to tell their stories, and join them in discovering how their stories connect with issues of common concern.
- Recognize we all share most of the same aspirations (safety, livability, better lives for our children) and problems (congestion, pollution). Don’t focus exclusively on differences. Keep in mind that we all choose to live, work, and play in Washington County.
- Understand the history of institutional prejudice. Acknowledge the experience of marginalization and oppression of many groups. Recognize that all of us have unconscious biases and that we are all ignorant of different cultures. Don’t generalize from experiences with *any* culture; each is unique.
- Translating materials is not enough. Content and tone of materials must also be tailored to the audience.
- Create advisory group(s) to focus on the special concerns, needs, and assets of different types of communities (e.g., ethnic diversity, generational cohorts, small business).

Collaborate with other jurisdictions that have built relationships with specific communities.



## **Attachment 4: Summary of Community Input, December 2015**

The CPO Transition Planning Team is charged with developing several options for consideration by the Board of Commissioners so that a transition of the county's community involvement program can be implemented in early 2016. As part of its process, the Team sought community input about possible alternatives they were considering. The community input will help Team members refine the recommendations they will forward to the Board of Commissioners.

The Team sought community input via two mechanisms – an online survey and a five-hour community event. In addition, community members were able to submit written input throughout the year-long process via an email link from the County website or submission directly to staff.

The survey was completed by more than 550 respondents. An estimated 25 people also participated in the community event. About a dozen others submitted written feedback throughout the year-long process.

Feedback from survey respondents and community event participants is summarized below. Written feedback received throughout the process may be found in the appendix.

### **Keeping In Touch**

Respondents were asked how they prefer to hear from their county government. The most popular choices were online mechanisms such as email newsletters, websites, and online surveys, followed closely by newsletters delivered by the US Postal Service. The next most popular were face-to-face mechanisms such as town halls, CPO meetings, and info booths at farmers' markets. The least popular were traditional media such as newspapers, radio/TV, or TVCTV.

### **Preferred Engagement Mechanisms**

When asked how they preferred to give input on decisions that affect them, the most popular response was surveys or polls followed by submission of written/mailed comments. Some said they would prefer to contact their local elected representative or provide comment at town halls or community meetings like CPOs or NACs. The least favorite mechanisms were public hearings and social media.

### **Community Involvement**

Over 60% of respondents indicated they were rarely or never involved in their CPOs. Another quarter said they were not often involved in their CPO. Only one in six said they were frequently or very often involved with their CPOs. In contrast, almost two-thirds said they were very or somewhat involved in community issues that affect their neighborhoods.

### **“Building Block” Strategies Proposed by Transition Team**

Support for four “building block” strategies was tested via the survey and keypad polling exercise. All four strategies received support from a majority of respondents. Online tools were the most popular, followed by a coordinating/advisory committee recognized by the Board. The final two strategies – online community-building and size of geographic boundaries – received a lower level of support.





# Committee for Community Involvement Meeting Minutes - *DRAFT*

## October 18, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Time: 6 - 8 p.m.

**CCI Attendees:** Jerry Anderson, Karen Bjorklund, Rick Cook, Bill Merchant, Richard Nepon, Brent Parries, Gordon Slatford, Barbara Smolak

**County Attendees:** Stacy Davenport, Chris Lyons

1. Approval of September's meeting minutes
  - Rick Cook moved to approve minutes, Jerry Anderson seconded, all in favor
2. Old business and review of past action items
  - Code Enforcement – would like to add CPOs as first priority for complaints after life, safety and health. A task force will be set up to work on this.
  - Monitoring land use applications for inactive CPOs – discussed how a CCI task force would help. Bill Merchant and Brent Parries will be part of the task force. The task force will reach out to inactive CPOs.
  - Web Cameras – PGA recommend the OWL web camera. PGA will ask CPOs/Hamlets how they hold their meetings – in person, online, hybrid via a survey that will go out after the CPO audit.
  - Educate communities about CPOs, also working with inactive CPOs. Rick Cook, Bill Merchant, Martin Myers met and Rick Cook gave an overview of what they discussed.
  - Those that met with Bill Flood privately gave an update
3. Annual Report – There is not a deadline to present the annual report to the BCC at this time. CCI will make a work plan to write the annual report.
4. I-205 Tolling and engaging the community – Gordon discussed that the decision is already made
5. Review new action items and November meeting agenda build
  - Collective discussion on the purpose of CCI
  - Work plan for the future – possibly for FY 24/25
  - CCI will review survey being sent to CPOs/Hamlets regarding technology needs
  - Work with staff on agenda
  - If anyone has contact information on inactive CPOs, send your contact information to Brent Parries
6. Public comment - none

Meeting adjourned 8 p.m.