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RE: Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 1: Contemporary Applicability of Public Involvement Committee Program

Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 1—Citizen Involvement—established one of the most robust public participation mandates in the United States. Adopted in 1974 and effective January 1, 1975, Goal 1 requires every city and county to maintain a Citizen Involvement Program (CIP) that ensures meaningful public participation in all phases of land use planning. A key component of this requirement is the establishment of a Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) or equivalent body to oversee and evaluate public engagement efforts.

Although Goal 1 envisions a standing committee dedicated to public involvement, most jurisdictions today rely on specific engagement processes or default to their Planning Commissions to fulfill this role. This white paper examines the origins of Goal 1, the statutory and administrative expectations for CICs, and the practical realities of how jurisdictions implement the requirement.

Introduction

Oregon's land use planning system is widely recognized for its comprehensive, statewide approach to managing growth, conserving natural resources, and ensuring public participation. Goal 1 is foundational to this system, reflecting the principle that planning decisions must be informed by the people they affect.

Goal 1 states that citizens must have “the opportunity to be involved in all phases of the planning process,” and that each jurisdiction must adopt a program that provides:

- Widespread public involvement
- Effective two-way communication
- Opportunities for involvement in all planning phases
- Accessible technical information

- Mechanisms for public feedback
- A formally recognized committee for citizen involvement

Historical Background

Oregon's modern land use system emerged from two landmark legislative actions:

- Senate Bill 10 (1969) – Required cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plans.
- Senate Bill 100 (1973) – Created the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) and directed it to adopt statewide planning goals, including one on citizen involvement.

Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 1—Citizen Involvement—established one of the most robust public participation mandates in the United States. Adopted in 1974 and effective January 1, 1975, Goal 1 requires every city and county to maintain a Citizen Involvement Program (CIP) that ensures meaningful public participation in all phases of land use planning. A key component of this requirement is the establishment of a Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) or equivalent body to oversee and evaluate public engagement efforts.

Although Goal 1 envisions a standing committee dedicated to public involvement, **most jurisdictions today rely on project-specific engagement processes or default to their Planning Commissions to fulfill this role as Benton County chose to do.** This is the prerogative of the elected officials. Goal 1 further states [that citizens must have] “the opportunity to be involved in all phases of the planning process,” and that each jurisdiction must adopt a program that provides:

- Widespread public involvement
- Effective two-way communication
- Opportunities for involvement in all planning phases
- Accessible technical information
- Mechanisms for public feedback
- A formally recognized committee for citizen involvement

These requirements have the force of law, as all statewide planning goals are mandatory for local governments. Despite the clear intent of Goal 1, implementation varies widely. While most jurisdictions do not maintain a separate CIC, Public involvement is often event-based rather than programmatic. Engagement typically occurs during

- Comprehensive plan updates
- Transportation system plans

- Major zoning or policy revisions

Evaluation of public involvement programs is inconsistent. Many jurisdictions do not conduct regular assessments of their engagement strategies, despite Goal 1's emphasis on feedback and continuous improvement. Some factors that contribute to the widespread use of Planning Commissions or ad-hoc committees instead of dedicated CICs include

- Resource constraints
- Perceived redundancy
- Evolving engagement practices such as modern engagement emphasize, e.g., digital outreach, surveys, and targeted stakeholder engagement, which has sole reliance on standing committees.
- Lack of enforcement – LCDC rarely challenges jurisdictions' use of Planning Commissions as CICs.

Goal 1 Today

Benton County sits on the current State Goal 1 Committee. At last year's workshop #1, the following issues were discussed as priorities for Goal 1 reform.

Theme	Number of participants marking this as a priority	% of participants perceiving this to have very high impact	% of participants marking this as 'very high interest'	Cost
Provide state-level support through funding	10	62.5	56.3	
Simplify communication & use plain language	8	62.5	56.3	
Simplify administrative rules and align engagement rules	7	56.3	50	
Balance flexibility and procedural simplicity	6	43.8	37.5	
Performance measurement and accountability	6	43.8	37.5	
Digital infrastructure and innovation	6	50	37.5	
Build trust and relationships	6	62.5	43.8	
Integrate community-based organizations and co-design approaches	5	37.5	37.5	
Initiate a full Goal amendment	4	43.8	50	
Accessibility, equity, and infrastructure for engagement	4	56.3	37.5	
Improve consistency	3	64.3	50	
Early and ongoing engagement	2	75	50	
Reform Goal amendment process	1	33.3	33.3	
Conflict resolution and mediation	1	26.7	26.7	
Increase scope of outreach	1	62.5	53.3	
Training	1	31.3	25	
Address rural-urban participation gaps	1	33.3	26.7	

Legend:

Prioritization	>2/3 of respondents marked this as a priority	1/3 to 2/3 or participants marked this a priority	<1/3 of participants marked this a priority
Impact	>2/3 of respondents marked this 'very high impact'	1/3 to 2/3 or participants marked this 'very high impact'	<1/3 of participants marked this 'very high impact'
Interest	>2/3 of respondents marked this 'very high interest'	1/3 to 2/3 or participants marked this 'very high interest'	<1/3 of participants marked this very high interest'

Sources

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development – Goal 1: Citizen Involvement pages.uoregon.edu
University of Oregon – Goal 1 and Its Six Components 1000 Friends of Oregon – Public Participation (Re)visions