



# Background Report: Public Involvement

## Milwaukie Comprehensive Plan Update

### Block 1 Topic Area

Prepared for the  
Comprehensive  
Plan Advisory  
Committee

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### Introduction

Milwaukie is fortunate to have a community that is interested and involved in decision-making for their city. The objective of the Community Involvement chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage and provide opportunities for community members to participate in all phases of the planning process, to keep the public informed, and to open lines of communication for the sharing of questions, problems, and suggestions regarding the Comprehensive Plan and land use regulations.

Several groups were involved in the 1976 and 1988 Comprehensive Plan updates: representatives of each NDA, City Staff, consultants, Technical Advisory Group, and Special Task Forces. During the 1987-1988 Plan update, the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was established. A similar process is being conducted with this Comprehensive Plan update, with the committee now known as the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC). Statewide planning goals, the current Comprehensive Plan, and the goals and action items from the 2016-2017 Community Vision and Action Plan will be evaluated and incorporated as part of this update.

### Planning for Public Involvement

Oregon has a set of 19 Statewide Planning Goals, which serve as the foundation of the state's land use planning program that is implemented at the local level through the Comprehensive Plan. [Statewide Planning Goal 1](#) is called Citizen Involvement. The purpose of this goal is, "To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process." The goal calls for the creation of a citizen involvement program, as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, that clearly describes procedures for how the public can be involved in the land use process. According to the Goal 1 language, this program shall incorporate:

- "Citizen Involvement – to provide widespread citizen involvement."
- "Communication – to assure effective two-way communication with citizens."
- "Citizen influence – to provide the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process."

- “Technical Information – to assure that technical information is available in an understandable form.”
- “Feedback Mechanisms – to assure that citizens will receive a response from policy-makers.”
- “Financial Support – to insure funding for the citizen involvement program.”

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## Public Involvement and Milwaukie’s Comprehensive Plan

During the 1987-1988 Plan update, the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) was established to satisfy the requirements of Statewide Goal 1. The purpose of this group was to ensure adequate community involvement in the City’s planning processes.

Besides the CPRC, the current Comprehensive Plan lists goals, policies, and recommended action measures to meet the standards of Goal 1. These are included in [Chapter 1](#) of the Comprehensive Plan. Chapter 1 objectives are summarized below:

- *Objective 1 – Neighborhood Associations*  
Neighborhood associations will be advisory to the Planning Commission and City Council and will be notified by the City about proposed land use actions and legislative changes. Funding may be requested by neighborhood associations and provided depending on the City budget and City Council approval.
- *Objective 2 – Broad Public Participation*  
A variety of media will be used to openly recruit members for the Planning Commission and citizen advisory committees. A Comprehensive Plan Review Committee (CPRC) will be formed to assist in periodic review of the Plan and Special Task Forces will assist the CPRC.
- *Objective 3 – Communication*  
Planning documents will be available through City offices and public libraries. The public will be informed through timely and adequate public notice of opportunities for involvement and input in land use matters. Notice will be provided through a range of available media and organizations.
- *Objective 4 – Ongoing Citizen Involvement*  
Assure adequate funding in the planning budget for publicity, advertising, staff, graphic materials, or other supplies necessary to support the citizen involvement program. The CPRC shall be responsible for evaluating and providing recommendations for the citizen involvement process as part of each Plan update.

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## Public Involvement and Milwaukie’s Community Vision

In 2016-2017, the City of Milwaukie underwent an extensive public process to craft a [vision and action plan](#). The process resulted in a new vision statement, with action items to achieve stated goals over the next 20 years. The vision, goals, and actions received input from a variety of people and groups. The City received input from the Vision Advisory Committee (VAC), staff, a technical advisory group, town halls, surveys, City Council, Planning Commission, and many more.

The visioning process generated goals and action items that relate to the Comprehensive Plan Community Involvement chapter. Those goals and action items are listed on the following page:

*People 3.2: Update the City's comprehensive city-wide communications strategy to encourage community engagement and employ a variety of methods for exchanging information, from large Town Hall meetings to emerging online tools.*

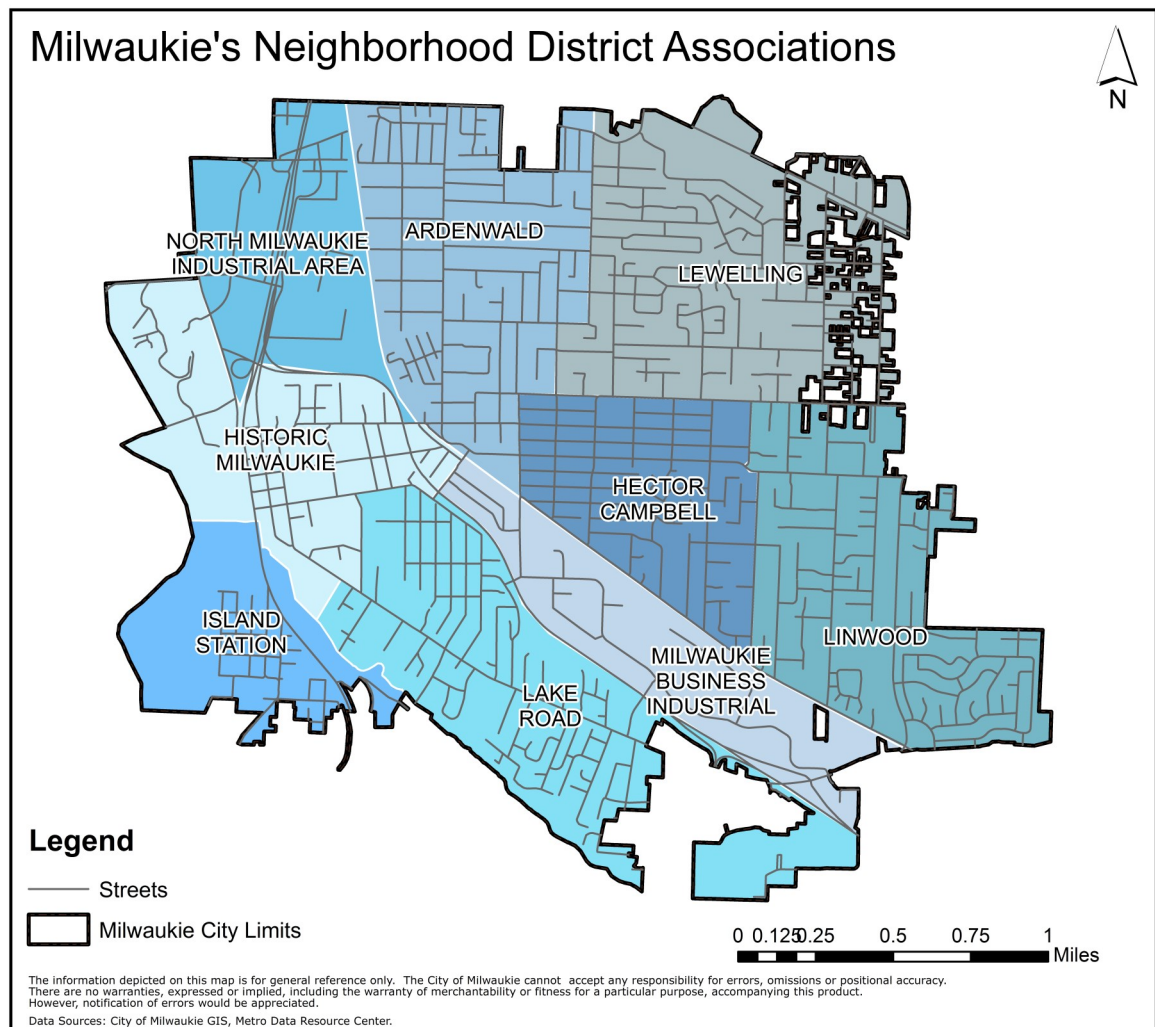
*People 3.6: Increase the number of City informational materials translated into Spanish and other languages.*

## Assets & Trends for Incorporating Public Involvement in Planning

Larger trends relating to public involvement in planning coupled with Milwaukie's strong community culture and willingness of its community members to engage in planning for the future of their city create a range of assets we can draw from when thinking about how we can approach public involvement in the future.

### *Neighborhood District Associations*

The City of Milwaukie supports and assists the Neighborhood District Associations (NDAs). There are 7 NDAs within the City and most have active members that participate in a variety of City committees and advocate for their neighborhoods. The City notifies NDAs about land use proposals that require public notice and have public hearings. NDAs are given referrals ahead of the public notices so that decision makers can consider NDA comments during review of these proposals. NDAs provide insight, not only through these land use proposals, but in general about Milwaukie and growth. In particular, NDA comments were helpful in the City's most recent Vision and Action Plan Update during 2016-2017.



*Milwaukie's 2016-2017 Community Vision and Action Plan*

As part of Milwaukie's visioning and action plan process in 2016-2017, action items and goals were developed regarding how community involvement should change and expand in the future. The NDAs played a major role in the input received for this process and were given multiple opportunities throughout the process to provide ideas and comments. It was greatly appreciated by the community to see the NDAs play a role in this process.

As part of its outreach for the Community Vision, the City held two town halls, an online survey, a [Place It! event](#), and multiple public hearings to give community members a chance to provide their input and ideas into the visioning process. Based on the feedback received through these events, the City was able to create a vision and action plan that reflected what the community felt were needed in the next 20 years. The town halls had over 200 participants, the online survey received over 100 responses, and at least 60 community members enjoyed the Place It! event as an inventive way to get families, children, and community members of all demographic backgrounds thinking about the future of Milwaukie. The momentum of the recent vision process provided great insight into how active and engaged the Milwaukie community has become over recent years.

*Milwaukie's Upward Trend in Community Involvement*

The visioning process provided evidence that a new set of community members were interested in being involved in the City as it continues to grow. During the first town hall event held for the visioning process, when asked how many people present had lived in Milwaukie for 5 years or less, over half of the crowd raised their hands. Recent City committee applications show a trend of residents who are new to the Milwaukie community wanting to be engaged and involved. For the Vision Advisory Committee (VAC), the City received over 50 applicants, 67% of whom had lived in Milwaukie 5 years or less. For the current Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), the City received almost 70 applications. Among those applicants, 46% had lived in Milwaukie for 5 years or less. Not only is Milwaukie growing and seeing more new residents wanting to be involved, but there are large numbers of community members showing their interest in being involved and participating in City events and activities. As the City continues to provide more opportunities for community involvement, it has also learned that traditional forms of engagement are good, but good relationships with partners, going "out of the box" to engage a variety of community members, and putting efforts into creating ample opportunities to provide input is key for the future of community involvement.

*The Idea of Engagement Has Changed*

Traditional community engagement in the past has included events such as, town halls or public hearings. These are events where a community member must come to the City and have time to commit to community engagement. With the 2016-2017 Community Visioning process, the City used more avenues to engage the community that weren't all traditional forms. Online surveys allowed people to comment and participate without needing to be somewhere at a certain time. The Place It! event was tailored to make it easier for families with kids to participate. Translation services were provided to make it easier for non-English speakers to participate. These changes in the way the City engaged with the community are examples of the ways that the City is looking to move forward with future community engagement.

Another engagement tool that the City used during the visioning process was to work with community groups and partners to help spread the word out to the community. The City already has a good relationship with North Clackamas School District and North Clackamas Parks and Recreation Department. These partners helped spread the word through children to inform parents or guardians about upcoming events, surveys, and information about the visioning process. The City also worked with some community organizations who work with Spanish speakers in the

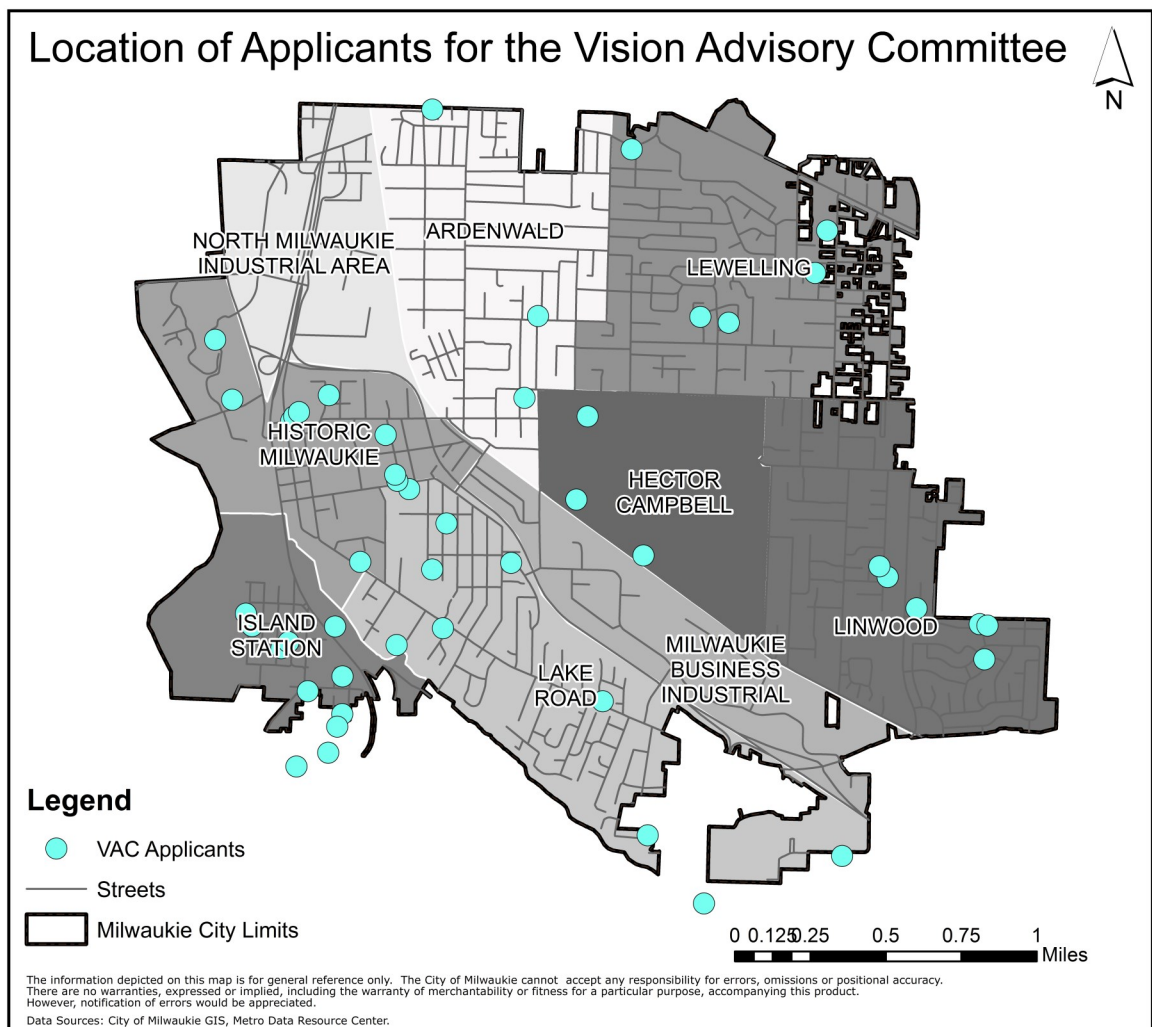
community. They were able to help spread the word to a population that disproportionately aren't engaged in city events, as well as, give guidance on how to best engage with those populations. The City is committed to moving forward and using these other tools for engagement along with more traditional forms.

## Opportunities & Challenges Influencing Public Involvement Planning

### *Lack of Diversity*

While the City is intending to move forward with different engagement tools, there are some challenges associated with those tools. Currently Milwaukie is not very racially diverse. According to the 2010 US Census, 87% of Milwaukie's population is white, 6% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian, 3% African American, and 1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander. A current lack of diversity does not mean that Milwaukie in the future will not be diverse. Planning for the future should also include ways to increase and engage more diverse communities.

Diversity can also be thought of in terms of neighborhood representation in community planning activities. Though there was a good response in terms of the number of applicants for the VAC, there were certain neighborhood areas that had more applicants than others. It is important to ensure that voices from community members in all of Milwaukie's neighborhoods are being heard equally in planning activities.



### *Digital Technology*

The current Comprehensive Plan was last updated in the late 1980s. Technology, especially digital technology, has drastically changed since then. The introduction and widespread use of the Internet has fundamentally changed the way we communicate and conduct business. Today smartphones are a major source of information and communication. These technological innovations can now be used as community engagement tools, but there is still a divide between those that have access to digital technology and not. Smartphones are used more than laptops and computers. While the City has an online presence with a website and access to documents online, should it be required that those documents and websites also be compatible with smartphones? As technology has changed in how the City informs the community, there is now an opportunity to update the Comprehensive Plan to better reflect those changes and think ahead about how technology may change in the future.

### *Critique of Current Comprehensive Plan*

Our current Comprehensive Plan provides a good starting framework for this Comprehensive Plan Update, but improvements can still be made. The Milwaukie Community Vision and Action Plan explicitly states the City should provide a more community-wide public involvement strategy and employ a variety of methods. It also has a goal of being a more diverse and inclusive community. While the current Comprehensive Plan's Chapter 1 on Citizen Involvement has fairly good language about informing the community, there are aspects mentioned in the Vision and Action Plan that can be incorporated as the City looks to update its Comprehensive Plan.

- Chapter 1 – Citizen Involvement

In this chapter we have an opportunity to change the wording of “citizen.” A better term would be “community member”, which represents people in the community whether they are U.S. citizens or not. This ties back to the goal of being an inclusive community mentioned in the Vision and Action Plan.

- Objective 2 – Broad Public Participation

This section of the chapter talks about using a variety of media to openly recruit members for the Planning Commission and citizen advisory committees. This language is good, but could include more information on digital technology as a tool to recruit. There are also more opportunities for community involvement beyond just the Planning Commission and citizen advisory committees. Language could be included to speak to informing the community in regard to larger community involvement events, such as town halls, online surveys, and much more.

- Objective 3 – Communication

This section can also use more language to include digital technology as a way to communicate about planning documents. It could also mention providing notice and information in translated materials and working with groups that deal with populations that are disproportionately active in community engagement.

- Objective 4 – Ongoing Citizen Involvement

The language in this section is important because it talks about adequate funding for involvement. However, language regarding digital technology could be included, as could specifics about funding for translated materials and that the CPAC evaluates and provides recommendations through an equity lens, making sure the City is meeting its goal from the Vision and Action Plan to be an inclusive community.

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## Policy Questions, Observations, and Implications

In determining how the Comprehensive Plan Update can support Milwaukie's Community Vision goals and action items, assets, trends, and challenges; we can consider the following questions and observations:

- With regard to Goal 1's Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI), should the Planning Commission be the official CCI for the City? The CPAC? If not, who?
  - When thinking of the Neighborhood District Associations (NDAs) & Commercial Areas, should the City separate commercial areas from NDAs? The industrial districts and commercial districts lack formal representation that is comparable to that of the NDAs. If yes, should the City make them their own District Associations?
  - With regard to using diverse engagement tools, should the City create a policy to engage diverse communities? What would this policy language look like? Should the City increase the amount of City materials and documents that it translates? Should youth engagement have a specific policy?
  - In terms of communication for public involvement, should digital technology be called out specifically in the Comprehensive Plan for communication of information and to create broad public participation? Should a requirement for smartphone (mobile device) compatible information be a policy to help ensure accessibility of information by those who use a smartphone as their primary internet access device?
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