

Clackamas County Committee for Community Involvement (CCI) 2024 Accomplishments and 2025 Action Plan

Introduction

The State of Oregon requires the county to have an officially recognized advisory board, the CCI, to assist with State Goal 1 directives. These directives are aimed at ensuring the opportunity for community members to be involved in all phases of a governing body's land-use planning processes.

The county has gone beyond just creating a CCI, adopting a community participation policy in 1973 and establishing community planning organizations (CPOs) in unincorporated areas to directly facilitate community involvement and feedback. Since part of the CCI's job is to evaluate the process being used for public involvement, the CCI pays a great deal of attention to what CPOs need in order to involve their communities in the county's land-use process. And while the CCI does not represent CPOs, we are committed to effective public involvement as the cornerstone of how the county engages the communities it serves.

Overview of 2024 CCI Accomplishments

In 2024, the CCI accomplished the following initiatives:

1. Developing the first ever CCI listening session and follow-up survey with CPOs, and analyzing the themes in their feedback.
2. Identifying preservation of neighborhood livability as a major underlying issue in CPO feedback, and developing initial steps toward addressing those concerns.
3. Analyzing and discussing code enforcement concerns from CPOs with the Department of Transportation and Development.
4. Planning the 2025 Community Leaders meeting for CPO representatives, County Commissioners and staff, built around a two-way communication format to address CPO feedback.
5. Providing the process, procedure and forum for CPOs to biennially elect a CPO representative and alternate for the Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C4).
6. Recruiting, interviewing and orienting four new CCI members (out of a total of nine members).
7. Providing in-depth analysis and recommendations to the Park Advisory Board on public involvement in naming and renaming county facilities.
8. Pursuing the need for CPO spending/reimbursement analysis, which the county's Public & Government Affairs department (PGA) used to develop a system providing CPOs with more benefit from CPO-budgeted funds.
9. Providing feedback to PGA on communication outreach to CPOs and the public for specific projects.
10. Continuing discussion and action on CCI-PGA partnership projects that support CPO needs, such as the CPO webpage, CPO marketing materials, and the CPO-Hamlet Handbook.

Trends and Feedback That has Shaped 2025 CCI Planning

2024 Listening Session and Survey Feedback

Nearly all 26 active CPOs engaged in either the 2024 listening session or survey. Three themes emerged from the listening session and survey, and are addressed in our 2025 action plan:

1. Improve communication between the CPOs and the Board of County Commissioners.
2. Establish meaningful relationships between the CPOs and the county.
3. Help CPOs to be heard by the county.

From the listening session and survey, we also learned that neighborhood livability is the most pressing issue facing communities in unincorporated areas, with code enforcement also as a top concern. CPO members felt

their concerns were not addressed adequately, and expected better coordination between the county's code enforcement staff and the Sheriff's Office.

A CCI meeting with Department of Transportation and Development (DTD) leadership and code enforcement staff focused on establishing a more productive and meaningful communication pathway between CPOs and code enforcement staff. We were heartened to learn that code enforcement staff has followed up, implementing proactive measures to improve communications with CPOs. There is more work to be done, but we are encouraged by the current efforts underway.

Decline in Number of Active CPOs

CPOs represent the county's unincorporated areas, and provide insight into these communities' opportunities and challenges. But over the years, the number of active CPOs has dropped from 40 to 26 CPOs, leaving 35 percent of unincorporated residents underrepresented in land use and planning issues.

In 2023, the CCI directly contacted active CPOs to find out which ones would be willing to receive feedback or land use applications on behalf of unrepresented areas, and made appropriate arrangements with the Planning Department to make that happen. That effort continued in 2024. However, the goal behind most CCI-PGA partnership projects remains encouraging people in areas with inactive CPOs to start them up again, as well as supporting active CPOs so they continue.

2025 CCI Action Plan

1. Carry through with the plans for a Community Leaders meeting that provides a two-way communication forum between community leaders and the Board of County Commissioners.
2. Hold two listening sessions with CPOs, the first virtual session scheduled for the evening of April 15 to learn what is working; what would make it better for CPOs; and what else the county could do to make CPOs and community members feel heard.
3. Revise the CPO Handbook, inviting public comment to ensure it is a clear and useful tool for CPOs and county staff based on fair and understandable procedures and requirements.
4. Based on an annual report from PGA about the public involvement program, provide the Board of County Commissioners with an evaluation of how well the county public involvement program achieves the goals and policies in Clackamas County Comprehensive Plan Chapter 2 on public involvement; the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation standards; any applicable county community engagement standards; and the requirements of State Goal 1.
5. Support Code Enforcement and CPO efforts to improve the relationships between them and work most effectively on behalf of unincorporated communities.
6. Pursue establishing a Clackamas County definition for neighborhood livability, and a possible partnership with DTD on this initiative.
7. Continue partnership projects with PGA that support active CPOs in representing and involving their communities; and encourage those in unincorporated areas without active CPOs to start them up again.
8. Address other issues that emerge during the year and are germane to the CCI's focus.