

State of Oregon
STAR Award for Citizen Involvement
Awarded for Excellence in Land Use Public Involvement
NOMINATION FORM

Date June 25, 2009

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Name of project being nominated: Newberg's Future

NOTE: Responses should not exceed five pages.

Please describe the work of the nominee(s) and challenges and opportunities they encountered regarding public outreach while engaged on this project or program:

Starting in 2004, Newberg realized that its comprehensive plan, developed in the 1980's, no longer was the appropriate tool to decide the future of the community. The UGB was filling up. The community no longer had a forward looking policy for growth and development. Key questions needed answered, including:

- How should Newberg provide for its future land needs, including needs for housing, commercial and industrial development, institutional development, and recreation?
- Should Newberg expand the Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Reserve areas? If so, where?
- Should we change growth patterns inside the UGB? If so, how?

The answers to such questions would affect the community for the next 30 years, and would touch the lives of everyone living or working in the community now and into the future. We knew we would need an extensive process that didn't just tap "the regulars," but would really get the average, stay-at-home citizens to open up and tell us what they wanted Newberg to be.

Describe the public engagement methods that were used in this effort, how they evolved, how they were implemented and how results were used.

With such a large issue, Newberg could not use just one method to reach all its citizens. Newberg chose to use a variety of methods, including the following:

- 2 Community Nights
- 21 editions of News of Newberg's Future Newsletter
- 20 meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Newberg's Future
- About 20 Neighborhood meetings in each area proposed for a change
- Speakers at civic clubs and events
- Booths at community events
- Public Questionnaires
- Website updates
- 15 Public Hearings
- Regular articles in the *Newberg Graphic*

The following highlights the first three activities.

Community Night. A unique and effective citizen involvement tool Newberg used was Community Night. Newberg held two Community Night events during the process: October 18, 2005 and October 17, 2006.

Community Night is a unique and effective alternative to the traditional open house or public workshop process. The problem with traditional open houses is attendance: we've all been to too

many of these sessions where the paid consultants outnumber the public. Newberg definitely wanted to avoid this trap and find some way to get average citizens out of their houses and into the conversation.

Community Night was invented as a way to “cross-pollinate” citizen interest in community matters. Newberg asked all the public agencies in the Newberg area to hold whatever public workshops they were planning on having that year *on the same night and at the same place!* The idea was that someone who might come out to hear a presentation on the Newberg-Dundee bypass would, while they are there, attend a workshop about an affordable housing plan. Another citizen might be interested in a presentation on Newberg School District’s new “small schools”, and while there drop by a booth to get information on Newberg’s Urban Growth Boundary expansion. Instead of having a small forum with just planners, the Newberg Planning Division was able to recruit all of the following agencies to participate:

- Newberg School District
- City of Dundee
- Chehalem Parks and Recreation District
- Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Yamhill County Commissioners
- Yamhill County Sheriff
- Yamhill Basin Council
- Newberg Public Works Department
- Newberg Fire Department
- Newberg Police Department
- Newberg Public Library

Each of the agencies had a booth at community night. Each of the community night events was held at the newly remodeled Newberg High School. This allowed the public to visit their new community facility.

Another basic goal of Community Night was to be efficient with limited resources. Instead of having every agency send a mailer to each resident, we were able to develop one combined flyer. Each agency that had regular newsletters or other correspondence was able to advertise the event using the flyer, allowing land use planning issues to be advertised to every parent of a school child, every utility bill customer, every Chamber of Commerce member, and every citizen on any agency’s e-mail list at a very limited cost! We shared meeting space, set up and clean up efforts, refreshments, and audio-visual resources. We even were able to provide child care. The net cost, including time costs, for each agency was far less than having scattered workshops individually.

Also, community night made very effective use of another extremely valuable resource: the citizens’ time. We created a “one-stop shop” for the citizens so they could get information on many different things happening in the community, give feedback, then have other evenings free for other activities.

The public was invited to visit each booth and talk with staff and elected officials. In addition, two workshops were held each half-hour from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The public could choose which workshop to attend, or simply visit the booths. In 2006 we added a candidates' forum, which added interest and attendance to the event, and allowed prospective candidates for office to see what was happening in the area.

The Newberg Planning Division was the primary organizer of the event. We were able to hold several workshops and have several displays on topics such as:

- Plans for urban growth boundary and urban reserve area expansion
- Ways to promote affordable housing
- The Sportsman Airpark land use plan, including residential and industrial development that takes advantage of the airpark.
- A bicycle and pedestrian trail plan.
- Neighborhood meetings for rezoning two areas in the UGB to accommodate compact growth

You can count the success by the numbers. Each year we **had 200 to 300 people attend**, a far cry from the small room where staff and consultants outnumber the public!

News of Newberg's Future. Throughout the process, we sent a newsletter at important milestone. We sent 21 editions of *News of Newberg's Future*. Each time any person showed up at a meeting or commented on a survey form, we added their name to our mailing list. We sent the newsletter out both by mail and electronically. This now goes to about 300 interested citizens.

Ad Hoc Committee on Newberg's Future. Getting input from a wide variety of citizens is critical. Equally critical is distilling the various input into one coherent vision for the future. This was the task of the Ad Hoc Committee on Newberg's Future. This was a citizen committee, appointed by the Newberg City Council, and specifically charged with answering those tough questions of whether Newberg should grow, by how much, where, and how. The committee was comprised of eleven citizens, including rural property owners, business persons, educators, developers, and regular citizens. The committee held 20 meetings over a year and a half. It developed a questionnaire, which was sent in the utility bill to all of Newberg. The committee held two well advertised and attended open houses, where 100 to 200 people attended. At the end of the process, the committee produced a report to the City Council that included:

- An overall vision statement for what Newberg should be in the future.
- Recommended population growth for the next 35 years.
- Recommended areas for expanding the UGB and urban reserve.
- Areas to consider rezoning within the UGB for other uses.
- Recommendations to change development standards and implement a 27% increase in density to promote compact urban form.
- Recommendations to promote affordable housing in Newberg.

- Recommended methods to promote economic development and business growth.

The Committee presented its report to the Newberg City Council. It was unanimously accepted, which was a significant testament to the Committee's diligent work in listening to the community and distilling their feedback into a coherent recommendation.

Describe how public input and engagement in this effort has affected the land use process.

Since the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, Newberg has diligently pursued implementing the committee's recommendations. Newberg has completed several zone changes, a 200-acre UGB amendment, a 1,665 acre Urban Reserve area amendment, an affordable housing action plan, and code amendments to implement the recommended development patterns, all following these citizen recommendations. As strong evidence of the effectiveness of the public outreach, Newberg completed a hearing on a 200-acre UGB amendment *with not one citizen testifying in opposition!* We are doing what the community has asked us to do; we know what they want because we engaged them in the process!

Describe how the public engagement activities in this project support the spirit and legal requirements of Goal 1. (Goal 1, Citizen Involvement: "To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.")

The Newberg's Future process went far beyond the minimums required to meet legal requirements. Many citizens attended over 30 events! Some just attended one. I remember talking to one couple who showed up one of the Ad Hoc Committee's event. They had heard about the event from several sources, and wanted to find out what was going on. They shared how they had moved to Oregon a few years ago, and were struck by how beautiful the area was, and how well we had done in making livable cities and keeping beautiful, productive rural areas. They did not miss the sprawl and sameness of their old state at all. Even though this couple attended only one event and had no special interest, their thoughts and contributions were important factors in shaping land use plans that will guide Newberg for years to come. This is what Goal 1 is all about.

Please provide the names and contact information for two references who participated in the citizen engagement process.

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