



Achievement in Community Engagement

2022 ACE Award Application

Application Deadline: By 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Eligibility: Submissions must address excellence in engaging the community in land use planning efforts (“project”). Individuals, community organizations, and government entities are welcome to submit applications. The person(s) completing the application do not necessarily have to be directly involved in the project, but they must submit the application package as a co-applicant with a cover letter signed by the applicant and the project lead. Projects must have completed *at least* one phase of public outreach in the period January 2021-March 2022, which ideally has been assessed and evaluated.

Deadline: Applications are due to DLCD (attn: Sadie Carney) by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 30, 2022. If you have questions, please contact Sadie Carney, 503-383-6648, sadie.carney@dlcd.oregon.gov; or Ingrid Caudel, 971-701-1133, ingrid.caudel@dlcd.oregon.gov.

Award Notification: Awardees will be notified by summer 2022.

APPLICATION

Name of Project: Our Salem project

Project Initiation Date: September 2018 Project End Date: 2022 (in adoption process now)

Applicant Name: Eunice Kim Phone: 503-540-2308

Applicant email: ekim@cityofsalem.net

Affiliation: City of Salem

Project Lead Name: Eunice Kim Phone: 503-540-2308

Project Sponsor: City of Salem, Planning Division, Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie, Planning Administrator

Project Sponsor email: LManderson@cityofsalem.net

Project Sponsor Address: 555 Liberty Street SE, Suite 305

City: Salem Zip: 97301

Instructions

You must use this 2022 application and address all sections and related award criteria. Where a particular criterion is not relevant, be sure to say so and provide a brief explanation for the lack of relevance.

Be sure to refer to the CIAC Review Sheet

(https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/About/Documents/CIAC_ACE_Review_Sheet.docx) to help guide your answers.

Applications are limited to 10 typed pages (not including this cover page) and we encourage electronically submitted applications. Supporting materials may be included in your application package, but you are encouraged to furnish links to such materials wherever feasible (social media pages, press releases, etc.).

Project Description

In 2018, the City embarked on a multi-year project called Our Salem to update Salem's Comprehensive Plan as well as associated maps and zoning code. The project stems from the community's desire to develop a vision for growth, as identified in the [City's Strategic Plan in 2017](#). The [existing Comprehensive Plan](#) has not been holistically updated in decades and does not reflect the community's vision for the future.

[The Our Salem project](#) has provided the community with an opportunity to shape how it wants to grow and develop in decades to come. Given the rare and significant nature of the project, equitable public engagement has been critical in each phase, as the community has worked together to develop an updated draft Comprehensive Plan and proposed Comprehensive Plan Map, zoning map, and zoning code changes. The project is currently going through the adoption process.

Public Engagement and ACE Goals

Overview

Staff has engaged the community throughout the Our Salem project, with extensive outreach occurring between the fall of 2019 and winter of 2021. The community has provided input in a variety of ways, including in-person and virtual meetings, surveys, interactive maps, public workshops, property owner meetings, community events, and stakeholder interviews. Staff has hosted or attended roughly 260 in-person and virtual meetings and events and engaged with more than 80 community groups throughout the Our Salem project. Ten surveys and three interactive maps allowed the public to provide feedback on a variety of topics, including growth scenarios, Comprehensive Plan policies, and changes to land use designations and zoning. Social and traditional media also helped to increase awareness of the project and publicize opportunities for engagement. Staff used email and direct mail to update interested parties, property owners, and tenants on the project and provide opportunities to contact staff with questions or concerns.

All of this engagement has been conducted to foster meaningful involvement from all segments of the community, particularly those that have historically been left out of City projects. Specifically, staff has expanded opportunities for communities of color and other underrepresented groups to participate in and provide input in the Our Salem project. This outreach was initially informed by a demographic analysis and staff knowledge of the community broadly, but it became more focused, more tailored, and more effective as staff began partnering with and learning from community organizations.

Early engagement and evaluation

During the first phase of the Our Salem project, the City, working with a consultant team, examined the existing conditions of Salem and how it could grow under different scenarios. Much of this early work focused on technical analysis, but nevertheless, staff began community outreach to raise awareness of the project and solicit input. Specifically, staff formed an advisory committee, held public workshops, and developed and administered community-wide surveys. The advisory committee went beyond typical stakeholders to include representatives from an environmental advocacy group and a cultural organization. Materials were also translated into Spanish, and staff gave presentations at a variety of community group meetings.

However, over time, staff realized that despite all good intentions, the totality of people participating in the project was not representative of the community. Roughly a quarter of Salem residents, for example, identified as Hispanic or Latino, but this group was underrepresented in initial outreach efforts. This meant staff was not effectively reaching this community. This trend was evident at public workshops and in the results of surveys, which included demographic questions to help staff evaluate who was being reached. Also largely missing from the conversation were youth, people with disabilities, and many of Salem's communities

of color.

Tailoring engagement and building partnerships

Staff reevaluated its public engagement work after the first phase of the project and decided it was time to pivot. The City was about to launch a community-wide visioning process that would inform all of the comprehensive planning work – and mapping and code work – ahead, and the City needed to use its limited resources and capacity effectively. While citywide surveys and workshops would continue, these kinds of one-size-fits-all methods could no longer be the primary means of engagement. A singular advisory committee would not continue. Instead, staff decided to be more intentional in developing relationships with a broader variety of groups across Salem. In particular, staff wanted to focus on engaging groups that represented or served traditionally marginalized communities.

To do this, staff began talking with City colleagues and community partners to better understand what groups serve Salem’s diverse community. Then one by one, staff met with leaders of each of the groups. They included organizations that serve or represent the Marshallese, Micronesian Islander, black or African American, Tribal governments, and Hispanic and Latino communities as well as those that worked with lower-income residents, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and refugees. This was in addition to civic groups, business organizations, neighborhood groups, builders and developers, transportation advocacy groups, and City boards and commissions. Many of the groups helped connect staff to additional organizations in the community, so outreach snowballed, and the City continued making new connections.

It was through these conversations that staff not only began learning about varying needs and priorities in the community but started building partnerships that would be critical to conducting effective engagement going forward. Through these early conversations, staff learned more about how to best engage different groups throughout Salem – the time, place, forum, and type of engagement. This allowed staff to develop and tailor engagement efforts to meet the specific needs of each community group. Staff enhanced its citywide outreach strategies to center community groups and their specific needs in its engagement plans going forward.

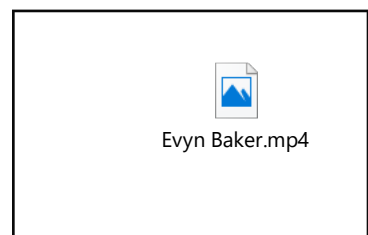
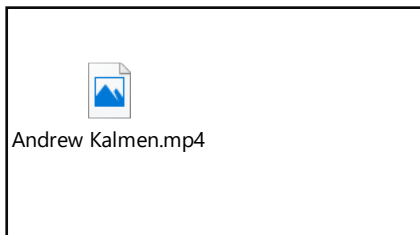
In many cases, staff partnered with cultural community organizations to co-host meetings (both in person and virtually during the pandemic), or staff was invited to participate in organizations’ events. This helped staff remove barriers to participation by meeting people where they were and to build trust with traditionally marginalized groups. For example, staff partnered with the Enlace Cross-Cultural Community Development Project to co-host a public workshop that was held in Spanish and included a cultural performance and “Dia de los Muertos” altar exhibit. Families attended with their children, enjoyed music and refreshments, and provided input on their priorities for future growth in Salem. Staff designed the entire event in collaboration with Enlace’s founder Amador Aguilar. Here’s a short video of the event:



Another example of a successful partnership with a community group was engagement with the Pacific Islander Club at McKay High School. Staff met with the club’s advisor to discuss how to best engage students in the club, and together, we designed an outreach activity that focused on learning more about the needs of their community. Staff then attended two of the club’s regular meetings to hear the perspectives of Pacific Islander youth and solicit their input for the Our Salem project. Subsequently, staff was invited to the club’s Family Night, which was held in collaboration with the North High School Islander Club. This provided staff with an opportunity to get feedback from parents in addition to the students. The Salem-Keizer School District assisted in translating outreach material into Marshallese and Chuukese to ensure that information was accessible.

Staff engaged youth in a variety of other ways. For example, staff worked with the Activities Director at South Salem High School to develop an interactive class where students could first learn about the planning field broadly and then get into the details of the Our Salem project. Students then used school laptops to provide direct input on where they wanted to see different land uses in Salem in the future. During the pandemic, staff worked with the City’s Youth Outreach and Education Coordinator to design virtual events tailored to youth. For example, staff put on a series of online youth forums for those ages 14 to 22. The forums included interactive polling that could be done by computer or phone. Raffle prizes were also offered as an incentive and fun ending to the forums.

Here are some short video clips from youth and young adults who participated in the Our Salem project and their reflections on their experiences:



The youth forums are just one example of how staff continued to tailor its outreach to community groups during the pandemic when engagement switched to the virtual world. Working with community leaders, staff held virtual events, meetings, and forums to ensure engagement did not come to a stop. For example, staff learned from the Micronesian Islander Community (MIC) executive director that the Micronesian community in Salem preferred online engagement to take the form of Facebook Live events as opposed to Zoom meetings or workshops. Based on that input, MIC hosted and moderated Facebook Live events that focused on the Our Salem project. It was through these forums that staff was able to continue including the perspectives of Salem’s Micronesian community.

In addition to tailored outreach, staff developed broad virtual outreach opportunities to engage the general public and more traditional partners as well. Staff attended virtual meetings with neighborhood associations, developers, business organizations, and other groups. The City hosted a series of weekly virtual public forums focused on various policy areas; attendees were able to do live polling via their computers and phones. Online surveys and interactive maps in both English and Spanish also allowed the broader community to continue to shape the project.

Throughout the Our Salem project, accessible communication was key to the City’s equitable outreach. Many presentations, surveys, and materials were translated into Spanish, including the [draft Comprehensive Plan](#) itself, given the large segment of the population that speaks Spanish. Spanish translators attended events and meetings that were organized with community groups serving Salem’s Spanish-speaking population. Staff also created videos in Spanish and promoted the Our Salem project on the City’s Spanish Facebook page. As mentioned earlier, staff translated materials into other languages – such as Marshallese and Chuukese – for outreach events with different communities of color in Salem. American Sign Language translators attended

meetings with people with speech or hearing impairment. These and other strategies helped the City remove language barriers to participation.

In addition, partnering with community groups enabled the City to not only engage people who may have never participated in planning projects in the past, but it also helped the City do so efficiently. Specifically, community groups helped spread the word about different Our Salem engagement opportunities, events, and meetings to the people they represent and/or serve. This enhanced the City's reach without straining staff's limited resources.

A summary of the City's public engagement activities can be found on the project website here: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/meetingdocs/spc-staff-report-attachment-1-our-salem-outreach-summary.pdf>

Additional examples of outreach can be found below and on the [project website](#)

- [Video promotion](#) for youth forums
- [Interactive proposed zoning map](#) with roughly 1500 comments
- Policy meeting packets [in English](#) and [Spanish](#)

Project Outcomes

The Our Salem project is currently in the adoption process, with public hearings scheduled this spring. So far in the project, the City Council has accepted the Our Salem Vision, which is the foundation of the proposed updates to the Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Plan Map, zoning map, and zoning code. Accepted in March 2021, the Our Salem Vision is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Throughout the Our Salem project, staff have circled back to community groups and the Salem community broadly to share updates on where the project is and how previous input has been used. This has helped staff continue to strengthen relationships with community members and better understand the priorities, concerns, and needs of different community groups. It has also enabled staff to incorporate the perspectives and priorities of the broader Salem community into the updated Comprehensive Plan (e.g., proposed goals and policies) as well as the proposed changes to the zoning map and zoning code.

Internally, staff working on the Our Salem project have shared engagement strategies, tools, and partnerships with other City staff to help inform their outreach work on other projects. This has included sharing new community partners and making introductions. Specifically, staff working on Salem's Climate Action Plan, Library Strategic Plan, and Economic Development Strategy have engaged many of the community partners involved in the Our Salem project. The Climate Action Plan task force, for instance, included a representative of Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS), who worked extensively with staff on the Our Salem project. Staff in other departments have also started tailoring their outreach to specific community groups and partnering with them. For example, Climate Action Plan project staff attended a cross-cultural event co-hosted by Enlace, following the success of a similar Our Salem event.

Staff also plans to share its engagement strategies with planners across the country at the 2022 National Planning Conference. Staff will be putting on a session in San Diego with planners in Eugene, focused on equitable engagement. Many of the strategies, tools, and lessons learned from the Our Salem project will be included in the session.

Assessment/Evaluation

As mentioned earlier, staff evaluated its outreach strategy after the first phase of the Our Salem project and determined an advisory committee, citywide meetings, and surveys were not enough. With limited capacity,

staff shifted strategies, as it turned to the visioning phase of the project. Staff began consulting community leaders and organizations to design outreach efforts that were tailored to the specific needs and desires of different groups, particularly those that have traditionally been left out of planning and other City projects. Staff also continued citywide outreach efforts. This combination of old and new strategies helped ensure the perspectives and voices of Salem's diverse community were included in the Our Salem project.

Lessons Learned

Staff members have learned a great deal from their engagement efforts and hope to use their experiences to continue improving outreach in the future. One major lesson learned was the importance of building and maintaining community relationships. Staff would not have been able to engage Salem's wide breadth of community groups without taking the time to meet new people, build trust, and develop new relationships. It was through this work and new partnerships that staff learned how to best engage different communities, including those that staff have not traditionally been reached.

This work, however, takes significant time and staff capacity. Building relationships while also educating community groups about planning does not happen in one meeting or conversation. In future projects, it will be important to build this time into a project – particularly if there are new groups to engage – prior to a project kicking off. Developing new relationships while pushing forward a project is challenging in terms of staff capacity. In Salem, the challenge will be to continue maintaining the relationships that have been built during the Our Salem project. Staff, as mentioned earlier, has shared its relationships with other departments, which will help continue to build these relationships on a broader citywide level.

Another major takeaway is that there is no one-size-fits-all engagement plan; flexibility and adaptability is key. In particular, the ability to adapt to different and changing needs and circumstances is critical. Staff was only able to tailor its outreach to the specific needs of community groups by being flexible and not sticking to a single format or meeting in a box. Meeting people where they were and considering their cultural and social norms allowed more people to participate and to feel comfortable sharing their perspectives. In addition, when the pandemic hit, staff was forced to evaluate and rethink its approach to transition to all-digital engagement. Adapting to conduct effective and equitable engagement in the virtual world yielded positive results, while continuing to meet the needs of the project. Staff needed to be willing to try new strategies. For example, staff utilized real-time digital polling software for the first time during this project. It proved to be a useful tool for digital engagement, which was then shared with another department for use during outreach for the City's Climate Action Plan.

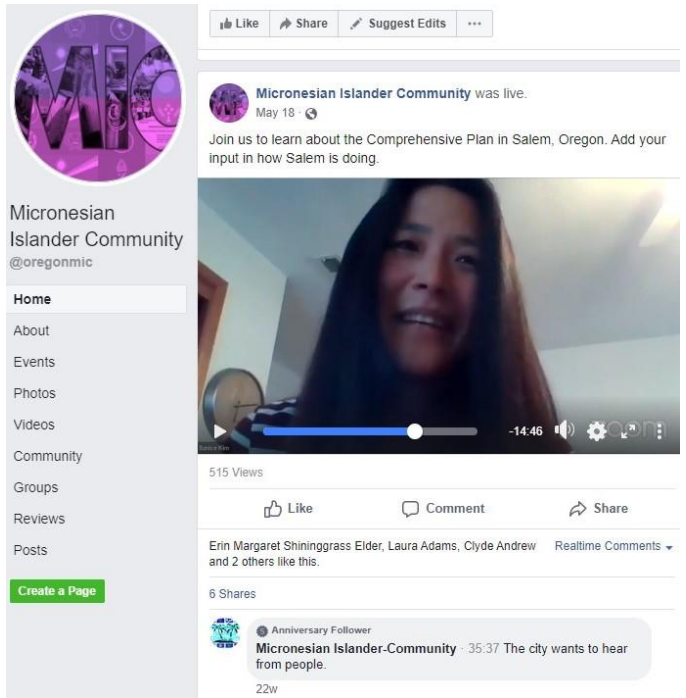
In addition, the Our Salem project taught staff that there are numerous perspectives and community groups that have long been missing in planning and other City projects, and there are, of course, likely still others that staff have not included. Connecting with so many new groups in the community underscored the need to continue expanding opportunities for more groups to participate in planning decisions. In the future, staff can do a better job tracking demographic data for those providing input and identifying additional groups with unique perspectives that could be missing. This could include, for example, intentionally conducting outreach with renters in addition to continuing to reach out to communities of color, tribes, people living with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Expanding outreach opportunities also includes compensating historically underserved participants, which not only reduces barriers to participate but acknowledges their contributions. Based on the Our Salem project experience, staff has sought approval to build in funding for just this purpose in future long-range planning projects. This will help to ensure that the City continues to expand opportunities for engagement.

EXAMPES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR OUR SALEM

South Salem High School class



Facebook Live event with Micronesian Islander Community



Family Fest booth



Business community workshop



Public workshop



Virtual public meeting



What other questions and comments do you have?



Flyer for virtual youth forums

JOIN US IN APRIL

GEN Z FORUM
Live Polls
 APRIL (24-26-29)
 FOR HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE-AGED ONLY
 VIRTUAL EVENT
YOUR VOICE YOUR CITY

JOIN US FOR A 1-HOUR FORUM FULL OF POLLS AND Q&A TIME WITH CITY OF SALEM LONG RANGE PLANNERS.

TELL US WHAT SPECIFIC IDEAS YOU HAVE TO HELP SHAPE YOUR TOWN.

FOR AGES 14-22 YRS & LIVE IN SALEM, OR

SELECT 1 OF 3 DATES/TIMES.

EVERYONE IS ENTERED INTO A RAFFLE! .

***WAIVER REQUIRED FOR ALL TO SIGN UP, GO HERE: WWW.CITYOFSALEM.NET/OUR-SALEM**

HAVE YOUR VOICE COUNT IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SALEM.

1-HOUR VIRTUAL EVENT ON AIRMEET / APRIL 2021
 SAT(24)11AM * MON(26)7PM * THUR(29)3:30PM

 A grid of 15 small images. The top row shows a person in a blue hoodie, the 'OUR SALEM' logo, a woman's face, and a building. The middle row shows a house, a woman in a 'SALEM' hoodie, a building, and a man in a 'SALEM' hoodie. The bottom row shows a woman in a 'SALEM' hoodie, a person in a blue hoodie, the 'OUR SALEM' logo, and a man in a 'SALEM' hoodie.