



Oregon

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To: Land Conservation and Development Commission

From: Sadie Carney, Communications Manager and Policy Analyst
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Subject: **Agenda Item 5, July 26-28, 2023, LCDC Meeting**

2023 Achievement in Community Engagement Awards

I. Agenda Item Summary

The commission-appointed Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee (CIAC or committee) annually receives and evaluates applications for recognition with an Achievement in Community Engagement (ACE) Award. Projects selected for recognition are presented to the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) at a regular commission meeting.

Purpose. To celebrate and recognize projects that have demonstrated exemplary community engagement efforts.

Objective. Commission recognizes projects selected for 2023 ACE Awards.

II. Background

Each year, Oregon's CIAC reviews applications for the ACE Awards. Local governments, special districts, and community organizations are all welcome to apply.

In establishing Oregon's land use planning program, the Oregon legislature recognized that effective community engagement is key to the successful implementation of community planning. It is no accident that the Statewide Planning Goal 1 requires local agencies to meaningfully engage community members in the land use planning process. Under Goal 1, governmental agencies are required to:

- Provide for widespread community engagement in all phases of the planning process,

- Provide for two-way communication between members of the public and decision-makers as plans are prepared, ensuring that responses to public inquiries and input are provided;
- Make technical information available and understandable.

The ACE Award recognizes land use planning projects that support and expand the idea of what it means to pursue "best practices" in community engagement.

For further information about this report, please contact Sadie Carney, Communications Manager and Policy Analyst at 503-383-6648 or sadie.carney@dlcd.oregon.gov.

III. 2023 ACE Awards

The 2023 ACE Awards reflect an evolution of process for the CIAC. Thanks to a broad and inclusive outreach process for the award application process, for the first time, ACE Award applications were received from community-based organizations, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations, in addition to both small and large local governments. The ACE Award Application criteria established in a new, online application process are a reflection of the best practices established in the CIAC's "[Putting the People In Planning](#)" guide for local practitioners.

[Applications for the 2023 ACE Awards](#) (posted to the DLCD website as part of the June 30, 2023 CIAC meeting materials) were accepted from April 3 to June 5, 2023. A total of nine complete applications were received. CIAC members individually evaluated and applications and discussed the evaluations to determine which projects to select at their June 30, 2023 meeting. One project was selected for the highest level of recognition, and two additional projects were selected for an honorable mention.

All applications received, many of which will not be officially recognized in this process, are worthy of praise. Every 2023 submission is an example of land use planning work that advances equity through community engagement in their respective communities. Each submission breaks new ground, establishes local best practices, and illustrates a deep commitment to community capacity building, engaging diverse communities and coordinating work at a local level in ways that build community trust and foster long-term relationships. In many cases, it was noted in the application that the project described set new standards for local community engagement.

1. 2023 ACE Award Winners

Most Outstanding Project: American Indian and Alaska Native Engagement in Springfield, Oregon

The City of Springfield and Willamalane Park and Recreation District received guidance from local Indigenous Planning Consultant, Stephanie Tabibian (Shoshone-Paiute Tribes) to facilitate a process that simultaneously informed Springfield's Goal 5 natural

resource planning work, Willamalane's update to its Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, and took the first steps toward establishing ongoing, trusting relationships and continued dialogue with American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) community members.

The planning effort and community dialogue will have direct impacts on analyses of appropriate natural resource protections for where Springfield expanded its urban growth boundary as acknowledged by the commission in 2019, an area which overlaps with land actively managed by Willamalane. These areas are some of the most naturally pristine areas in Springfield, and on traditional Kalapuya ilihi (Kalapuya homeland.) This unique engagement effort sought specifically to think beyond project-specific agendas by focusing on bigger-picture and deeper relationships to first understand the lived experience of AI/AN residents in the community and understand how public policies, planning processes, public spaces, natural areas, and City and District programming and communication support or diminish AI/AN participation or representation. In the long-term, the project partners hope to create a framework for future engagement that will ensure Native histories and currently lived experiences are incorporated in all planning efforts and beyond.

This inter-agency partnership focused on understanding and honoring past and current connections to the land, underlying values, and the cultural significance of both land and water. With assistance from their indigenous consultant, the project team developed culturally appropriate ways of asking AI/AN community members about their values, interest, perceptions, and experiences.

Local elders from the AI/AN community led small, round-table discussions. All participants received compensation for their time. The dialogue around land management and community elevated traditional land stewardship knowledge and the strength, vibrancy, and resilience of the Kalapuya community. The City of Springfield is using the resulting report to inform current planning efforts, and future decisions and priorities for programs. Willamalane is doing the same and is also considering ways to inform capital projects and other land management projects. Willamalane's DEI supervisor converted the findings into an action plan focused on stewardship of Kalapuya land and has hired indigenous consultants to support implementation of the work, and the City of Springfield has recently added new cultural programming as a result.

The CIAC selected this project for highest recognition in response to the transformative and pioneering nature of the effort.

Honorable Mention: Deschutes County 2040

Deschutes County is conducting an almost two-year process to update the County's Comprehensive Plan. The diverse audience for this work, in combination with the nature of the work itself, resulted in Deschutes County engaging more than 20 community-

based and community-serving organizations, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, youth audiences, and service providers for low income, homeless, and veteran communities in this phase of outreach and planning. Deschutes County piloted a compensation model that included gift cards available through a raffle in addition to providing food, beverages, and prizes at events.

The project team took deliberate measures to “meet communities where they are,” hosting meetings on farms and ranches, in grocery store parking lots, community halls, parks district offices, fire halls, in private homes, and online. County staff toured the county for eight months, holding small scale “meeting-in-a-box” (an innovation that is unique to this project effort), and larger scale open houses. Engagement goals for the project demonstrate a sincere interest in and focus on hearing from diverse voices and reaching all communities and residents. The county used a consultant to analyze and identify priority populations and staff members adjusted their approach to include more casual interactions with certain groups, lowering barriers and increasing engagement.

This project is ongoing, and additional outreach efforts will be informed by and build upon the success of this first phase of outreach. Project staff are conducting multiple reviews of engagement phases through this project, with the aim of continually improving and furthering engagement goals for the project.

CIAC members selected this project for recognition due to the exemplary use of traditional and innovative outreach methods. “Every planning project should be conducted to this standard,” commented one member.

Honorable Mention: Multnomah County Libraries: Albina and North Portland Libraries

LEVER Architecture, along with more than 30 community organizations, representing the Black community, Latinx community, Indigenous community, Immigrant and refugee community, disability and accessibility focused community, early learning/youth teens, family health, women’s shelters, and incarcerated community led engagement for a community-based design project for two branch renovations for the Multnomah County library system. The aim was to create buildings that were created by and for the community, to strengthen the Albina community, recognize and celebrate culture, reflect a community-driven process, create flexible and safe gathering spaces, and connect with nature.

The project team began community engagement very early in the process, focusing on easy-to-understand information, and honoring both the history of the area and community, and the assets already present. The voices of non-dominant communities were consistently sought and elevated to result in spaces that can be more supportive for everyone. Community voice informed all phases of the project design timeline and is reflected in each project milestone. Weekly community engagement summary meetings

were held with Multnomah County Libraries to brief them on takeaways and determine strategies for future engagement.

The project team and client participated in a two-day ‘Critical Race Spatial Praxis in Design’ workshop with Dr. Amara H. Pérez before starting the community engagement process. Dr. Pérez consulted with the project team during the engagement process as well, to provide expertise and feedback on engagement strategy. The team also worked with Ericka Warren at Try Excellence LLC, a community engagement and public meeting facilitator. Working with DEI partners that community members already trusted helped forge relationships and make stronger community connections.

The team employed creative, innovative, and hands-on outreach methods throughout the process. Community priorities and feedback were integrated into Design Principles, which served as touchstone when making design decisions. Participants of focus groups and student design cohorts received financial compensation for their participation.

CIAC members were especially impressed by the placemaking aspects of this work and the community driven design that will result from these efforts.

2. Additional 2023 ACE Award Applicants

Applications for the CIAC’s ACE Awards reflect Oregon’s deep commitment to community engagement and are a testament to the dedication to this mission by planning staff, local governments, communities, and consultants. The project applications listed below include the balance of 2023 applications.

- Tribal Transportation Plan Update for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group/Braided Ricer Campaign supporting education and community engagement around a Superfund site
- Housing Needs Analysis for the City of Enterprise, Oregon
- Kiwanda Corridor Project in Tillamook County, supporting community development, transportation planning, and community livability
- Long Range Planning and Community Engagement for Middle Housing Development and the Major Streets Transportation Improvement Program for Washington County
- Gresham Middle Housing Project

IV. Conclusion

Commissioners are welcome to congratulate ACE award winners and pose questions or engage in discussion with attending ACE award winners. Staff and CIAC members are open to discussion on process improvements for future ACE awards.