The CPO Program

The CPO Program was established by the Washington County Board of Commissioners and is one of several mechanisms for the County to achieve the Oregon Statewide Planning Program’s Goal 1-Citizen Involvement.

Citizen Involvement
Engaging in the civic life of your community is a way to promote what you value as quality of life. Among many reasons to participate in the CPO are to learn about specific issues, meet neighbors, learn about the community and explore volunteer opportunities. Your CPO is a resource for community members to stay informed about matters of local and countywide interest, find help to resolve a situation, and become more involved and influential in the community. With the support of the CPO Program, CPOs conduct public meetings and events where all are welcome.

Our Vision
Individuals and their Washington County communities will be meaningfully engaged in collaborative, dynamic processes of open and responsive government.

Our Mission
The Mission of Citizen Participation Organizations in Washington County is to encourage and empower public involvement.
Citizen Participation Organizations (CPOs)

The CPO is a place for community members to come together to learn about issues and take action, either within or outside of the CPO structure, interacting with decision-makers to try to influence policy.

Decision makers weigh what they hear from the CPO along with input received from many other sources when making decisions about proposed ordinances, code changes and projects. Building strong working relationships with staff and elected officials can help CPOs become more effective in achieving some of the changes that they desire.

Since Washington County formally recognizes CPOs as groups, CPO leaders are provided additional time to speak on behalf of their CPOs when presenting oral testimony at public hearings on ordinances before the Board of County Commissioners. Authorized CPO representatives are also provided additional time when addressing the Planning Commission.

CPOs are your way to:
- Discuss issues in a comfortable forum.
- Get unbiased information.
- Find neighbors who will listen to your concerns and work with you to find solutions.

Washington County government departments and elected officials, and some other government agencies, look to the CPOs as a place to provide information, gather input, consult the public, and assess the level of interest or concern about particular issues. Agendas are set by the leaders (Steering Committee members) of the CPO based upon input from meeting participants, requests from local government staff and elected officials, community leaders, emerging or ongoing issues impacting the CPO area. There are times when CPO members and representatives work more directly with agency staff in providing input to shape alternatives that are developed.

Our Values
Community, Improvement
Inclusiveness
Civility, Respect
Education, Learning
Information, Transparency, Process
Diversity, Equity, Compassion

Working with Private Individuals and Organizations

CPOs are encouraged to engage constructively with nonprofits, community-based organizations, and businesses. This helps promote involvement and brings people’s ideas, abilities and passion to make a difference in the community into the CPO Program. Here, they can access trainings and have what is hoped to be valuable experiences through participation. These activities need to be conducted in the same inclusive, unbiased fashion as all other CPO activities.
Who belongs to the CPOs and CCI? What do they do? What are the benefits?

Participating in your CPO and civic life can be exhilarating, fun, challenging and sometimes frustrating. Changing policy can be a slow process and frequently involves compromise. Satisfaction can come from small as well as large successes, from feeling like you were heard, to getting to know the public safety officers who serve the area and addressing safety issues. You can affect change in your neighborhood related to a proposed development, get speed bumps on a busy street, and advocate for filling sidewalk gaps or improving a dangerous intersection. You can learn where to turn to resolve neighborhood disputes and suggest approaches to citizen involvement for different types of projects. You can, with patience and commitment, impact policy and code through long-term planning and the ordinance process.

Anyone who lives, owns property, or owns a business within the CPO boundary is eligible to be a CPO member. Active members attend meetings, participate in discussions, and vote according to voting eligibility requirements set forth in each CPO’s bylaws.

Members are encouraged to reach out to others in the community to let them know about the CPO and how they can get involved. Ask neighbors to subscribe to the newsletter and invite them to attend meetings. People who subscribe to the newsletter but do not attend meetings may be involved through opportunities that they learn of in the newsletter. Community members can build on their involvement through exchanging information and ideas, especially to bring in the views and voices of people who cannot attend evening meetings.

Anyone is welcome to come to their CPO and raise an issue or concern. Contact the Chair ahead of time to let them know about the issue you would like to bring to the CPO. The Chair may suggest you bring it up during the “Announcements” or “Open Forum” section of the meeting agenda, or offer to have the topic be addressed on a future agenda.

All CPO meetings are public meetings so you can attend any CPO meeting that interests you, although you can only be a voting member of the CPO where you meet membership requirements described earlier.

Our mission is to provide excellent and cost effective services that support healthy, peaceful, safe and sustainable communities; and encourage meaningful participation in community activities and County governance.

~ Washington County Strategic Plan 2020
A CPO provides an important vehicle for voices and viewpoints to be heard from all sides of an issue. It also gives community members the opportunity to take formal positions that are reasoned and informed.

CPO Responsibilities and Scope of Activities
CPOs advise and consult with the County Board of Commissioners on matters affecting the livability of the community. Such matters include, but are not limited to, planning, housing, parks, open space and recreation, human resource delivery systems, traffic and transportation systems, water and sewage disposal systems and other matters affecting the livability of the community.

CPOs are to be informed and familiar with the views and opinions of the people of the community and be able to give an accurate presentation of those views.

Each CPO is responsible for keeping the Board of Commissioners informed of changes in its bylaws, its Officers and Steering Committee members (or CPO Board), and the name and address of its representative for receipt of notices and other communications.

CPOs serve as a vehicle for communication between governments and community members, and they provide a known meeting place.

CPOs respond to notices, agendas and minutes, and land use matters of every description. Comments by CPOs on any matter of County government will be recognized, received and reviewed by the Board of Commissioners.

CPOs are to take full and efficient advantage of budgeted staff assistance.