GOAL 1: CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Goal: To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

Each citizen involvement program must include the following six components:

1. Citizen Involvement – to provide for widespread citizen involvement;

2. Communication – to assure effective two-way communication with citizens;

3. Citizen influence – to provide the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process;

4. Technical Information – to assure that technical information is available in an understandable form;

5. Feedback Mechanism – to assure that citizens will receive a response from policymakers; and

6. Financial Support – to assure funding for the citizens involvement program.

Gilliam County established a County Planning Commission on February 3, 1960. Early in the county planning program it was determined that citizen participation was an essential aspect of developing a comprehensive plan. In February, 1970 the County Court appointed the first of what would be nine citizen’s advisory committees to assist the Planning Commission in development of a planning program for the county. The Citizen Involvement Program was formalized in 1975 as an initial step in construction of a Comprehensive Plan to meet statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. The citizen advisory committees participated in all phases of drafting the 1981 Comprehensive Plan.

It is important to continue to provide for and foster greater communication between the County and citizens. Community Planning Advisory Committees (CPACs) can assist in this effort. CPACs may be appointed by the Board of Commissioners if there is a substantial show of interest by citizens living in a specific geographic area or who participate in a common type of land use activity, such as the agricultural community. The role of the CPACs should be twofold. First, the CPACs should provide comments to County decision-makers on major development applications that may have an impact on the local area, and provide input on changes to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance they feel should be made for their area. Second, and equally important, the CPACs should act as a conduit between the County and citizens in the area by disseminating information on planning and proposed development activities to the local community.
The boundary or extent of the area that any CPAC covers will be determined by the Board of Commissioners, but normally will be based on zone boundaries. Membership, structure and specific responsibilities of the CPACs will be outlined in separate by-laws.

Individual citizens are given the opportunity to review land use applications and participate in the planning process in accordance with statutory requirements. Notice of administrative decisions and public hearings are mailed to surrounding property owners as required by the applicable ORS. Notice of public hearings is also published in the local newspaper.

FINDINGS:

1. Participation in public affairs in sparsely populated Gilliam County is as widespread as can be expected, and the establishment of a formal organization for citizen participation, separate from the existing officially constituted councils, boards and commissions would not significantly increase opportunities for participation in community affairs or service to the public.

2. The County Planning commission was originally designated and approved as the County Committee for Citizen Involvement and has continued to fulfill that role.

POLICIES:

1. It shall be the policy of Gilliam County to hold all meetings pertaining to and discussions of land use development issues in advertised public sessions. Except in those instances of order, citizens of the county attending any meeting of a county planning commission shall have all rights of access to agenda and supporting materials and to discussion of issues as if they were members of the commission.

2. As required by the applicable Oregon Revised Statute (ORS), the County shall adopt procedures for the conduct of public hearings in land use matters.

3. The County shall strive to maximize citizen involvement during the review and amendment of the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances.

4. The County Planning Commission shall act as the Committee for Citizen Involvement. Planning Commission members shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners after an open application process, and shall represent different geographic areas as well as different areas of interest to the greatest extent possible.

5. The Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners should strive to hold informational meetings or public hearings in various locations throughout the County as part of any major revision of the Comprehensive Plan or Zoning Ordinance.
6. The County shall provide maximum opportunity for citizen participation in the land use permitting process.

7. The County will notify surrounding and nearby property owners and other persons or agencies that might be affected by proposed and tentatively approved land use actions, as required by state statute.

8. Notice of public hearings should be published in The Times Journal and any local newspaper where a land use is proposed when the application is likely to generate public interest or concern.

9. The Board of Commissioners shall consider the appointment of Community Planning Advisory Committees representing the various geographic communities and interests to disseminate information on planning and development proposals to the local community and to provide input and recommendations on proposed land use activities in their areas of interest, if requested by such groups.

10. Proposals for uses that may impact the surrounding area should be considered at a public hearing so that those who may be affected have the opportunity to express their concerns.

11. Information on planning processes, procedures and requirements should be readily available to the public.

12. A copy of the current County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance should be posted on the County website and be placed in the Gilliam County library and other places where it will be available to the public.

13. Alternative means should be used whenever possible to educate and keep the community informed on planning matters. Such means may include community forums, newspaper articles, maintenance of a County website, or newsletters or tax statements.
Findings in Support of Gilliam County’s Comprehensive Plan Goal 1: Citizen Involvement

1. Gilliam County has a program that ensures the opportunity for county citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process because the Gilliam County Court established a County Planning Commission on February 3, 1960.

2. In February, 1970 the County Court appointed the first of what would be nine citizen’s advisory committees to assist the Planning Commission in development of a planning program for the county. The Citizen Involvement Program was formalized in 1975 as an initial step in construction of a Comprehensive Plan to meet statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. The citizen advisory committee participated in all phases of drafting the 2010 Comprehensive Plan update.

3. The County Planning Commission acts as the Committee for Citizen Involvement. Planning Commission members are appointed by the Board of Commissioners after an open application process, and represents different geographic areas as well as different areas of interest to the greatest extent possible.

4. Gilliam County has adopted procedures for the conduct of public hearings in land use matters.