

Chapter 2 – Public Participation and Plan Adoption

“Tell me and I’ll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I’ll understand.” – Native American Proverb

Using the view that “Public involvement is essential for building communities” and “to create a unified vision, public input should be sought at all levels of planning and development”, public participation was very prominent throughout the planning process and was used as the foundation on which this plan was created¹. There were various stages in which the public had an opportunity to provide input. These opportunities are described in the following sections.

Quest for 2022 Website

At the onset of the planning process, a website designed specifically for the comprehensive plan was made available. The purpose of this website was to define for the public the purpose of planning and related concepts. It also provided an online presence for community members to participate in the planning process. Instructions on how to take the community survey and participate in community discussion meetings are examples of information that was provided on the website. When the draft comprehensive plan was in the public comment review period, the website also provided links to each chapter of the plan.

Project Kick-off Meeting

To begin the comprehensive planning process a project kick-off meeting was held on October 25, 2011 at 6:00 PM. This event was well attended and represented many diverse groups in the community. They included government officials, businesses, school officials, and other individuals who had an interest in Osceola’s future. At the meeting, discussion focused on potential issues or concerns in the community.



Figure 2-1: Project Kick-off Meeting at Clarke High School.

At the meeting those in attendance learned what a comprehensive plan is and its role in guiding development, how the new Smart Planning Legislation affects comprehensive plans, and what future public input opportunities there would be for the community. In order to identify different topics and aspects that are of importance to the people of Osceola, a mind mapping exercise was conducted. The results from the exercise were incorporated into the community survey that was conducted three months later. In the Appendix is a list of the comments and input that was provided at the meeting.

Community Survey

In order to collect crucial public opinion regarding general opinions and conditions of Osceola, a community survey was administered. The survey asked respondents to rate Osceola in 10 distinct categories. The results of this survey are incorporated throughout this plan and have been included in applicable sections. The Appendix contains a description of the information collected in the survey, as well as, copy of the survey that was used.

The survey was available in January and February of 2012 and was distributed throughout the community in paper and electronic form. The paper survey was five pages in length and was distributed to several locations around the community. Places where the copies of the surveys were located are included in the Appendix.

The results of the survey are located in the chapter that directly corresponds with each survey question. For example, the question “What type(s) of economic development do you think Osceola should encourage?” fits within the Economic Development section of this plan (Chapter 4) and thus the results of the aforementioned question are included with that chapter. The results from questions in the survey about demographics and questions about the ranking of the most important aspects of Osceola are also in the Appendix.

Shortly after the survey concluded, the results were analyzed in order to be included in public discussion meetings.

Public Discussion Meetings

Between February 21, 2012 and June 4, 2012 six public discussion meetings were held in order to facilitate and

document the public’s opinion. Each meeting included two distinct parts, the first portion of the meeting was to identify what the vision for the community should be for that particular subject, and the second segment, which was the main focus of the meeting, was to promote public discussion of that night’s meeting topic.

At each meeting, a sign-in sheet was distributed to document meeting attendance. To promote discussion, a list of questions was given to each person. The objective of the meeting was not to ask every question on the list, but rather to discuss important community issues with meeting attendees. Discussion of topics not identified in the handout was encouraged.

Each meeting was based upon a specific plan element and the conclusions from the meetings are included with the corresponding plan chapter.

Additional Public Input

Despite the efforts of the city and the SICOG planning consultants, the amount of public input captured during the initial public participation process from the Hispanic community was minimal at best. According to the 2010 census, **17.6% of the community is Hispanic**, which represents a growing segment of the population. Without adequate input from this portion of the community, this plan would not be able to benefit from the different viewpoints offered within the Osceola community and would therefore not benefit the city as a whole.

Several attempts were made to gather Hispanic input. A Hispanic only meeting was held in August of 2012 where attendees were asked a series of questions to encourage input

and discussion. The topics of discussion focused on the experiences and viewpoints of the Hispanic population living and/or working in Osceola. The information gained from this meeting has been incorporated into the various chapters within this plan and a summary of what was discussed is included in Chapter 6.

During the months of August and September of 2012, at least one SICOG planning consultant was present at several events sponsored by the Osceola Chamber/Main Street organization. These included several Thursday Night in the Park events and the Latino Festival. Attending these events served as an opportunity to garner additional public input and to raise awareness of the comprehensive plan. As with other forms of public input, information gained from these events were included in the most appropriate planning chapter.

Draft Comprehensive Plan

The SICOG planning consultants met with the Osceola Planning & Zoning Commission on February 13, 2013 to review the initial portion of the comprehensive plan. The purpose of this meeting was to examine several of the comprehensive plan chapters and gather feedback on the content and formatting. Comments were recorded and incorporated into the plan.

The SICOG planning consultants again met with the Osceola Planning & Zoning Commission on February 20, 2013 to review the second half of comprehensive plan. Planning & Zoning Commission members provided their input and opinions regarding the plan, which were noted and incorporated.

