

Old Town Neighborhood Association



Neighborhood Plan 1998

A COOPERATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN
THE OLD TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND
THE CITY OF LAKE OSWEGO



Old Town Neighborhood Plan

1998



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Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Introduction and Intent

Neighborhood Planning Program:

In 1993, the City Council adopted a Neighborhood Planning Program to provide neighborhoods in Lake Oswego an opportunity to develop a vision and corresponding goals and policies relating to land use, building and site design and capital expenditures. The Neighborhood Planning Program was designed to go beyond the general guidance provided by the Comprehensive Plan goals and policies, in order to address more localized and specific neighborhood needs.

Background and Process:

The Old Town Neighborhood Association has had goals and policies since 1982, when the City adopted the "Design District" zoning for the area. It was realized that as the neighborhood transitioned from a medium density, primarily single family area to higher density with a broader range of allowed housing choices, that existing lower density uses would need protections. These safeguards included, at the time, review by the Development Review Commission (DRC) of all exterior modifications needing a building permit, additional setbacks for new structures when abutting lower density uses and encouraging good architectural design and site planning.

Since 1982, these policies have been periodically updated. Changes made in 1996 focused on recognizing how the neighborhood had evolved over the past fourteen years and addressed residents' concerns about the time and expense involved in processing simple additions and remodels of existing homes. Changes were made limiting review by DRC to new structures, rather than all exterior modifications. At that time, it was also recognized that simply encouraging "good architectural design" was not adequate to ensure that new development would be compatible with the design and scale of the existing neighborhood character.

The Neighborhood Association Board responded to this concern by appointing a seven-member Design Subcommittee to develop draft design standards for general neighborhood association review. This group began by identifying several housing architectural styles in the neighborhood that it felt provided the "village" atmosphere that it desired to preserve. City staff worked with the neighborhood to come up with three "Old Town Styles" which new buildings could "borrow" from to create desirable new residential design. Since the neighborhood contains one of the highest concentrations of pre-1900 buildings in the City, the scale and style of these structures was a primary

consideration. The purpose of the resulting standards is to "develop a cohesive and orderly relationship between existing and proposed buildings in the Old Town Neighborhood by providing visual connections defined by the predominant architectural characteristics of the Old Town Styles. Copying the existing building styles is not the intention of these guidelines. While a new development may have a distinctive identity, its overall effect should support and reinforce the Old Town Styles."

Other changes adopted in 1997 included allowing the City Manager to request an advisory opinion from the OTNA Board, allowing a reduction to the front yard setback along Durham

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Introduction and Intent

Street to support the overall intent of making Durham the neighborhood's primary "walking street," limiting the amount of impervious surface allowed on a lot, reducing the allowed height of structures under certain conditions and requiring application of the Design Standards for new development or expansion of structures by more than 50% floor area.

The Neighborhood met at three general meetings to discuss the proposed Design Standards and other Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code and Development Code and Standards changes. The Board and/or Design Committee met 10-12 times to discuss the proposed changes. The membership voted to support the proposed amendments with several minor changes.

Old Town Plan Organization

The Old Town Plan contains several sections:

- Background/Perspective. The Background/Perspective illustrates the overall vision the neighborhood sees for itself.
- Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies. The goals and policies correspond to and develop the vision outlined in the Perspective. These have been adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Goals are stated in the broadest terms, usually a broad description of what the neighborhood is striving for. Policies state the neighborhood's strategies for specific issue areas or groups of issues, such as neighborhood character, street character and land use. Policies are more specific than Goals, but not so specific as to be decision making criteria (which are contained in the Zoning Code, Development Code or Design Standards).
- Applicable Zoning Code Sections. The Zoning Code sections include those that apply specifically to the DD Zone, which includes all of the Old Town Neighborhood.
- Applicable Development Code Sections. The Development Code sections include those that apply specifically to the DD Zone.
- Development Standard 24, Old Town Development Standard. This Development Standard outlines neighborhood architectural styles to be used as guides for new development to provide more cohesive and orderly relationships between existing and proposed buildings in Old Town.
- Development Standard 18, Access. This Standard was amended to add the DD zone to the list of zones for which the required amount of lot frontage on a public street may be 17 feet.

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Background/Perspective

The Old Town Neighborhood lies between State Street, the Willamette River, Oswego Creek and Leonard Street. Although geographically one of the City's smallest neighborhoods, it is the location of the original town of Oswego, and is the oldest portion of the City. Old Town

contains several different types of land uses, including George Rogers Park, multi-family and single family dwellings and an array of shopping provided by two nearby shopping centers, within an area of less than 40 acres. Platted in 1851 by Albert Durham, the streets carry the names of people associated with the early iron industry such as Ladd, Leonard and Wilbur, as well as early settlers, such as Albert Durham, who founded the community.

George Rogers Park is located in the southern portion of the neighborhood. This area was the original site of the iron smelting business which operated in the community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A portion of the company's large basalt chimney still stands in the park. Several small dwellings from this era also remain, constructed by the Oregon Iron and Steel Company for its employees. The Odd Fellows Hall at Durham and Church streets also dates back to this early period.

Maintaining the neighborhood's character has been a concern of residents, particularly over the past 20 years. As the area's zoning allows for approximately 20 units per acre, single family homes have gradually been replaced by apartments, duplexes and other types of more dense housing. Often new structures and remodeling have not been compatible in scale, form and massing to the existing housing stock. This has lead the neighborhood to develop Comprehensive Plan policies and design and zoning standards to ensure that the neighborhood's transition to higher density occurs in such a way that the desirable "village" appearance is preserved.

The mix of uses in and near the neighborhood, its proximity to good transit service on State Street and its location near George Rogers Park, make Old Town an attractive place to live. Although residents view these facilities and uses as valuable assets, they at times result in conflicts with residential uses in the neighborhood, primarily with regard to traffic and parking.

Old Town would like to retain its generally narrow streets and few remaining alleys to discourage auto through-traffic and provide opportunities for alternate access to garages. The neighborhood would also like to encourage the use of Durham Street as a walking street by connecting sidewalks, restricting truck usage and maintaining appropriate lighting.

The Old Town of the future will likely posses a higher level of activity due to the increased usage of commercial outlets, a gradual move to higher density and increased park usage. The favorable elements outlined in the preceding paragraph will be integrated to ensure increased walking, rather than driving, within the neighborhood; ensure new structures that complement the existing neighborhood fabric; protect lower density developments from more intense adjacent uses; and minimize the visual impact of garages.

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

GOALS:

1. Assure that single family homes are protected during the area's transition to higher density residential use;
2. Facilitate good architectural design and site planning which maintains residential choices of unit size, cost and other amenities and supports the economic feasibility of new construction and development;
3. Assure protection and compatibility of all land uses, including commercial, residential, park, open space and historic sites.
4. Assure that adequate methods in addition to present city ordinances are available to carry out the design policies for Old Town's particular needs, and;
5. Designate the Old Town Neighborhood as a "Design District" on the Comprehensive Plan Map and guide its development in accord with the following policies:

POLICIES:

1. Designate Old Town as a "Design District" and guide its development in accord with the policies in this chapter.
2. Boundary

The boundaries of the District shall be as shown on the official Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan map (PA 5-84-151). When considering Comprehensive Plan Map amendments, existing neighborhood character shall be preserved as much as possible. (See Map - Figure 1)

3. Residential Land Use

Generally, and in accordance with the policies of this plan, Old Town shall become higher density land use. However, existing neighborhood character shall be preserved as much as possible.

a. Single-Family Housing

Single-family housing, while not exclusive of other types of housing, shall have priority. Therefore, single family housing shall be preserved and steps taken to preserve its amenities and value.

Where higher density land use is developed, special attention should be given to insuring that it will not adversely affect neighboring single family development.

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Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

Single-family homes and new development shall be protected from the deteriorating effects of adjacent land uses, including in particular the commercial areas, and any open space areas which may be established. Particular attention shall be given to the effects of traffic, parking, noise, glare, air pollution and appearance of structures.

New single-family construction shall be permitted on the existing platted 5,000 square foot lots.



The Mediterranean style George and Lottie Rogers House (1929), is a focal point in the Old Town Neighborhood. George Rogers owned and operated a grocery store on State Street for over 20 years and served on the City Council for many years. In 1961, the City named a 27 acre park, also located in the neighborhood, after him.

b. Multi-Family Residential

Multi-family use shall be permitted when it can be clearly demonstrated that other Old Town policies are being met by the proposal.

Duplexes shall be permitted on the existing platted 5,000 square foot lots. Innovative design shall be encouraged to create duplexes which are compatible and harmonious with adjacent land uses.

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures



Several medium density multi-family developments exist in the neighborhood and blend well due to adequate setbacks, mature landscaping and compatible scale.

c. Residential Design Policy

New residential construction

As noted under the Design Policy for multi-family dwellings, and every permit, shall be subject to

Care should be taken to preserve the special character, including



A newer duplex in Old Town was sensitively designed for compatibility with other vernacular style structures in the neighborhood. Recessed garages, narrow setbacks and a sidewalk, create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere along Durham Street, Old Town's primary "walking street."

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Goals, Policies and Recommended Action

Measures

4. Commercial Land Uses

The boundary between R-0 and EC designated and shall be shown on the official Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan Map.

- a. Any development in the adjacent EC zone shall provide a landscaped buffer to function as a visual and physical barrier between dissimilar uses in the EC and DD zones.
- b. Traffic shall be routed away from residential properties. This may be accomplished by such methods as careful location of access points, traffic routing within the development, and relations of that routing to neighboring residential uses and streets and installation of any required capital improvements such as left turn lanes. Traffic studies maybe required to determine impacts.
- c. Replacement of non-conforming uses with permitted residential uses is strongly encouraged.

5. Streets

Through-traffic and circulation will be minimized, and the use of Wilbur Street as the principal access to the neighborhood, will be encouraged.

a. State Street

Provisions shall be made to make entering and exiting Old Town onto State Street as safe as possible.



A combination of landscaping, sidewalks, a wider curb lane and smaller building setbacks, enhance the atmosphere and usability of State Street for pedestrians and bicyclists.

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Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

b. State Street/McVey/Green Street

This intersection shall be improved to increase safety of turning movements and pedestrian safety on State Street to and from George Rogers Park, as well as to provide access to George Rogers Park for vehicles traveling southbound on State Street.



Alleys provide an opportunity to put garages to the rear of homes, allowing the more "social" aspects of the home to front the street. This fits well with Old Town residents' desire to encourage walking by making the streetscape more comfortable for pedestrians. Alley-accessed garages relieve the street from being dominated by garage doors and cramped by curb cuts, which can reduce opportunities for on-street parking.

c. Ladd Street

The use of the north side of Ladd Street as a parking area for George Rogers Park should be discouraged, or steps taken to eliminate the inconvenience and disturbance to residences on Ladd Street.

d. Durham Street

The City shall encourage Durham Street to become a safe and pleasant walking street within the neighborhood through the addition of connected, handicapped access sidewalks, restrictions on truck usage, storm drainage improvements as necessary and appropriate lighting.

6. Historic Sites

Protect the historical or architectural integrity of the Peg Tree (Douglas Fir), Odd Fellows Hall and George Rogers' home, as Local Historic Landmarks.

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Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

7. George Rogers Park

Use of the park facilities should not interfere with normal residential uses in the adjacent neighborhood. Design or expansion of the park, which is a City facility serving all City residents, should be carried out with attention to the Old Town area, especially with regard to traffic, visual appearance, parking, noise, glare and behavior of park users. Green Street should be recognized as the primary auto access to George Rogers Park and steps should be taken to encourage auto access on Green Street.



The chimney stack in George Rogers Park is all that remains of the iron smelter built in 1865. The furnace produced the first pig iron west of the Rocky Mountains. The chimney is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

8. Development Review

Consideration shall be given to the relationships between new construction and adjacent land uses as well as to how the proposed development incorporates the desirable "small village" or "historic town" appearance of Old Town as illustrated in its pitched roofs, wood and masonry construction materials, and building proportions and massing typical of the Vernacular, Craftsman and Cape Cod styles.

9. Parcel Size

Residential single family construction is to be permitted on lots or parcels of 5,000 square feet or more. The Development Review process should take account of the unusually small area of the lots in providing variances which may be requested for new single family uses. 12/28/82

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Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

Duplexes are to be permitted on lots or parcels of 5,000 square feet or more. Except for structures which have been determined by the State or the National Register of Historic Places as being of historic significance, multi-family construction is to be permitted on lots or parcels of a minimum of 15,000 square feet, which would allow seven units. Smaller parcels should be used for duplex or single family. The parcels should be shaped to minimize the number and length of property interfaces between adjacent uses to assure buffering landscaping can be installed.

Historic structures may be converted to residential use. No minimum parcel size shall apply, but the project shall demonstrate compliance with all other applicable zoning requirements and development standards. (PA 1-87-450, 7/9/87)



The Odd Fellows Hall on Durham Street is an example of successful redevelopment of a historic resource within Old Town. Vacant for many years, the structure (on right) was remodeled to accommodate several housing units. The new structure (on left) also contains housing, and was designed to be compatible with the Odd Fellows Hall. This adaptive reuse is nothing new for a structure which has been a fraternal hall, a doctors office, a drugstore and a community theatre.

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures

10. Willamette River Greenway Access

Encourage the use of Furnace and Leonard Streets as pedestrian and bicycle connections to the existing Greenway trail. This policy is not intended to supersede or weaken Goal 15 (Willamette River Greenway) Policy 8 or Goal 15 RAM iii, which call for acquisition and development of continuous public access along the Greenway, including the Greenway area from Roehr Park to George Rogers Park in Old Town. This policy is intended to protect the privacy and security of existing single-family waterfront residences until such time as the Greenway pathway may be acquired through development to higher density/intensity uses, voluntary donation or purchase.



Pedestrian access to the Willamette River is available through George Rogers Park in Old Town. A pathway from Oswego Creek, south, to Old River Road, also provides a visual connection to the river.

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General Commentary on Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures:

According to the Adopted Lake Oswego Comprehensive Plan, Goals, Policies and Recommended action Measures each have a different

purpose in terms of describing policy direction. Old Town members and City staff need to keep in mind the purposes of various types of statements while developing the Old Town Neighborhood Plan language. In a nutshell, Goals are to be in the broadest terms, usually a broad description of what the neighborhood is striving for. Policies are more specific, but not so specific as to be like decision making criteria (which would belong in an ordinance or standard). Recommended action measures are simply "good ideas" and are not obligatory. The following is excerpted from the Plan:

Goal:

Definition - A general Statement indicating a desired end, or the direction the City will follow to achieve that end.

Obligation. The City cannot take action which violates a goal statement unless:

1. Action is being taken which clearly supports another goal.
2. There are findings indicating the goal is being supported takes precedence (in the particular case) over another (goal).

Policy:

Definition - A statement identifying Lake Oswego's position and a definitive course of action. Policies are more specific than goals. They often identify the City's position in regard to implementing goals. However, they are not the only actions the City can take to accomplish goals.

Obligation - The City must follow relevant policy statements when amending the Comprehensive Plan, or developing other plans ordinances which affect land use such as public facility plans, and zoning and development standards or show cause why the Comprehensive Plan should be amended consistent with the Statewide Land Use Goals. However, in the instance where specific plan policies appear to be conflicting, the City shall seek solutions which maximize each applicable policy objective within the overall context of the Comprehensive Plan and Statewide Goals. As part of this balancing and weighing process, the City shall consider whether the policy contains mandatory language (e. g., shall, require) or more discretionary language (e.g., may, encourage).

Recommended Action Measures:

Definition - A statement which outlines a specific City project or standard, which if executed, would implement goals and policies.

Old Town Neighborhood Plan

General Commentary on Goals, Policies and Recommended Action Measures:

Obligation: Completion of projects, adoption of standards, or the creation of certain relationships or agreements with other jurisdictions and agencies, will depend on a number of factors such as citizen priorities, finances, staff availability etc.

The City should periodically review recommended action measures to determine which are a priority to be accomplished in view of current circumstances, community needs and the City's goal and policy obligations.

These statements are suggestions to future City decision-makers as ways to implement the goals and policies. The listing of recommended action measures in the plan does not obligate the City to accomplish them. Neither do recorded action measures impose obligations on applicants who request amendments or changes to the Comprehensive Plan.