

Oakland Comprehensive Plan  
Survey & Public Input Committee

12.19.2017

4pm

Attendees: Robert Nutting, Gary Bowman, Shawn Marquis, Chuck Sweigart, Cindy Reese, Mary-Anne LaMarre, Donna Griffin

Facilitator: Garvan Donegan, CMGC

**Agenda:**

1. Brief overview
2. Survey methods and design
3. Review of Town of Oakland's 1996 Comprehensive Plan Survey
4. Scan case models of other CompPlan surveys
5. Prepare to categorize survey questions
6. Identify target audience and sample size
7. Plan cover letter to accompany survey
8. Discuss project timeline
9. Establish next steps

**1. Overview**

The goal of this sub-committee is focused, simple, and important, as it is required by the State. After completion of the survey, Garvan hopes that the sub-committee becomes involved in ancillary public input projects.

**2. Methods and Design**

Objectives:

- To frame what the town wants
- To generate buy-in and get the Plan passed
- To consider how the Plan will impact residents
- To be used as a guiding tool to gauge priorities, temper, and areas of buy-in
- To provide a chance to build a Master Plan to help Town of Oakland prepare for its future.

Appearance:

Goal length is 4 pages, double-sided.

A two-stage model was suggested, whereby a survey-taker would have the option to answer further questions, though questions arose whether this format would affect the accuracy of the response count.

Delivery:

The survey will be available online and in hard-copy. The online and paper versions will be identical.

Each resident will be mailed a flyer directing them to the online survey and providing a unique code to ensure that each resident completes the survey just once.

A hard-copy of the survey will be mailed upon request. In addition, the sub-committee hopes to provide copies of the survey in public places (e.g. soup kitchen, library) to ensure a wide and inclusive distribution.

A coordinated PR effort will market the whole CompPlan and point to the survey. Marketing will be extensive, but must not complicate efforts to drive traffic to the survey. A variety of marketing strategies will be utilized: old media, new media, and face-to-face interactions

The ideal response rate is 20-25%.

#### Incentive:

Sub-committee will design an incentive for residents to complete the survey. Ideas include \$100 heating oil, and a \$100 gift card to an Oakland restaurant.

#### Budget:

The ideal online survey platform will be one that is free and allows for the online version to mirror the paper version. SurveyMonkey is free for surveys with 10 or fewer questions; a longer survey will require a \$30/month fee.

CMGC staff and any interested sub-committee members will work on the survey behind-the-scenes, and Town Office staff will assist in delivery tasks (e.g. filling envelopes). Volunteers will be asked to help enter the paper survey data into a database, and to help residents complete the survey.

CMGC staff is reviewing potential funding opportunities as part of its due diligence.

### **3. Town of Oakland 1996 CompPlan Survey**

A lot of good work went into the survey, and sparked important conversations about FirstPark and lake quality.

It contained 24 questions and achieved a response rate of 11.9%.

It will be interesting to use a few of the same questions and compare responses. Potential questions to copy are those related to funding, capital improvements, downtown, and land use.

The "Community" section will be teased out further in the 2018 survey and will include the opportunities identified in the SWOT analysis.

### **4. Case Models**

The list of surveys e-mailed by Garvan represent a wide range of format, style, and length.

Popular choices include Lyman and Wells, although neither are perfect.

### **5. Categories of Questions**

Categories help focus the design of the survey, facilitate public discussion, and provide an easy flow for the survey-taker. A possible order of categories is: community priorities; growth and development; (x) topic; demographics (members suggested that survey shouldn't ask for information that can be easily obtained through Census or other sources); comments and questions.

## **6. Target Audience**

Survey should be written at a 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.

Many residents may not understand what a CompPlan is; therefore, we must think about how to talk about the Plan and survey in a public forum.

Age of audience – consider offering survey to residents who are 16 or older, as done by the Town of Washington.

## **7. Cover Letter**

A short-form letter that includes language from the sub-committee's elevator pitch and talking points, as well as the steering committee's position statement.

Will use bullet points and plain language (like Town of Washington's cover letter), including Oakland-specific context.

## **8. Project Timeline**

January 30 – sub-committee will meet to review the draft survey and cover letter

February 6 – the finalized survey and cover letter will be presented to the entire CompPlan committee, and sub-committee will recommend a delivery date.

There are two proposed delivery timelines. When comparing these timelines, consider: ease of reaching all stakeholders (including seasonal residents); other plans/votes open to the public; amount of time that survey is live; time allotted to educate public; and time to incorporate feedback into Plan.

Timeline 1: Public forum in April. Release survey in April, live until mid-May. Make survey available at May 1<sup>st</sup> town meeting.

Timeline 2: Educate in April/May (weekday), reconvene around OakFest (June) and throw a big release party (weekend barbecue at the gazebo).

NOTE: public forum will be interactive (i.e. small focus groups) and will provide food.

## **9. Next Steps:**

- Garvan will provide a digitized version of the Town of Oakland's 1996 CompPlan survey to Mary-Anne.
- Mary-Anne will input the 1996 survey questions into a SurveyMonkey, which will be e-mailed to all sub-committee members. Members will provide comments on each question, and indicate whether a question should be included in the new survey.

- Sub-committee members will review the case model surveys, paying close attention to content, format, delivery, and ease. Good examples of surveys should take no longer than 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Garvan will cross-reference the case model surveys (particularly Washington) to identify which received the highest response rates.
- Garvan will prepare talking points (i.e. an elevator pitch), referencing the language on the cards used during municipal voting.
- Garvan will draft a cover letter for the sub-committee to revise.
- A small group of sub-committee members and CMGC staff will create a draft survey for the whole sub-committee to edit during the January 30<sup>th</sup> subcommittee meeting.

DRAFT