

# Sustainability Facts and Resources

Each Comprehensive Plan action area provides opportunities to plan for a sustainable Lake Oswego.



**Healthy Ecosystems:** About 32% of the land area in Lake Oswego is covered by impervious surfaces (surfaces that cannot absorb stormwater). All surface water runoff flows to Oswego Lake, the Willamette River or the Tualatin River through a network of interconnected creeks and storm drains.



**Community Health & Public Safety:** The City owns Historic Luscher Farm, which boasts a 6,000 square foot organic demonstration garden and 185 organic community garden plots that are always in use, with a waiting list of eager community members.



**A Connected Community:** Each year, Americans burn 2.9 billion gallons of fuel without going anywhere. Idling for just 10 seconds wastes more gas than turning off and re-starting your engine.



**Inspiring Spaces & Places:** Abundance of trees and vegetation contribute to Lake Oswego's beauty, sense of place and open space. 44% of Lake Oswego is covered by trees, one of the highest percentages in the region.



**Economic Vitality:** Nearly 48% of the Portland region's greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to come from the consumption of goods and food by residents and businesses. Buying locally supports a healthy environment and strengthens locally owned, independent businesses and jobs.



**Complete Neighborhoods & Housing:** About 27% of the Portland metropolitan region's greenhouse gas emissions come from heating, cooling, and powering residential and commercial buildings and the infrastructure we all depend upon.



**Community Culture:** Lake Oswego residents are well-connected to nature and opportunities to recreate. Nearly 77% of residential properties are located with 1/4 mile of a public park or open space.

## Sustainability Resources

**City of Lake Oswego Sustainability Program**  
<http://www.ci.oswego.or.us/plan/Sustainability/Default.htm>

**Sustainable Clackamas County:**  
<http://www.clackamas.us/sustainability/>

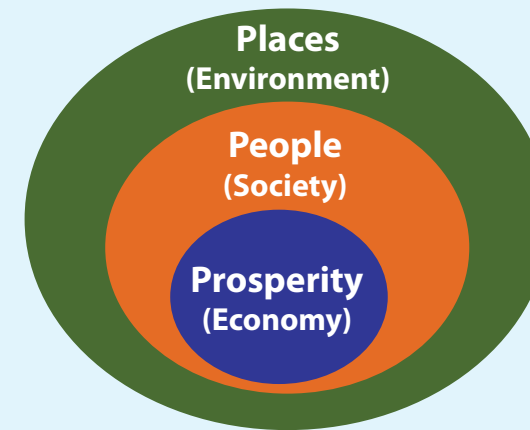
**The Natural Step**  
<http://www.naturalstepusa.org>

**Metro Regional Government**  
<http://www.metro-region.org/>

# Planning for a Sustainable Lake Oswego

## What does it mean?

A sustainable Lake Oswego is a community that meets the vital human needs of the present without compromising our ability to meet future needs. It is about more than green buildings, green streets, and recycling. Planning in a sustainable way means looking at the community as an interrelated system that includes **places** around us (the natural and built environment), **people** that live and work here, and the local **economy** that supports society's needs. Through this process we will aim to create beneficial outcomes for *all* parts of this system.



The diagram above represents the scientific relationship of the system. The environment, or earth, forms the basis for this community system because it provides the air, water and land that we as people depend on to meet our life-sustaining needs. Community prosperity is also dependent upon the services and products the earth provides, from healthy agricultural soils to abundant water and reasonably stable climates.

Current demand for the earth's services (clean air, clean water, food) is increasing, but because of how we're living and an increasing population, its ability to provide those services is decreasing. As a result, we are destroying the system that we, as humans, are completely dependent upon.

Fortunately, it's not too late. The community has the ability to change this. Sustainability is a process of continuous, ongoing improvement, and a realignment of community goals and practices to grow in a more responsible and resilient manner.

## How will we do it?

Planning for a sustainable future means understanding "sustainability" in practical terms. Like many cities, organizations, and businesses, Lake Oswego uses **The Natural Step** (TNS) framework. The Natural Step is based on an international scientific consensus about the conditions needed to sustain life on earth. There are four Sustainability Principles:

1. What we **take** does not build up in and harm nature or people.
2. What we **make** does not build up in and harm nature or people.
3. We **protect** natural systems from degradation.
4. We **support** people to meet their own needs.

## Strategic Questions:

As the community plans for the future, the following questions will help to ensure the decisions we make respond to the community vision and equally consider the **triple-bottom-line** (people, places, and prosperity) of sustainability:



1. **Does the proposal move Lake Oswego toward the community vision?**
2. **Is the proposal consistent with the Sustainability Principles?**
3. **Is the proposal a good financial investment?**
4. **Is the proposal a step on the path toward sustainability?**



# Strategic Questions

To understand potential synergies, barriers, trade-offs, and other constraints or opportunities of a proposal, the following set of questions provides a framework for evaluation.

## 1 Does the proposal move Lake Oswego toward the Community vision?

## 2 Is the proposal consistent with the Sustainability Principles?

### Sustainability Principle 1: What we take does not build up in and harm nature or people

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's dependence on fossil fuels and wasteful use of scarce metals and minerals. Use renewable resources whenever possible.

- Does it reduce or eliminate use of fossil fuels in buildings or from transportation?
- Does it increase efficiency (energy, water, materials), reliability, or connectivity in essential public infrastructure?

### Sustainability Principle 2: What we make does not build up in and harm nature or people

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's dependence upon persistent chemicals and wasteful use of synthetic substances. Use biologically safe products whenever possible.

- Does it encourage use of chemical-free and toxic-free building materials?
- Does it reduce risks to human and environmental health from exposure to toxins?

### Sustainability Principle 3: We protect natural systems from degradation

Reduce and ultimately eliminate our community's contribution to new encroachment upon nature (e.g. land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, ecosystems). Protect natural, life-sustaining ecosystems.

- Does it incorporate designs that respect natural systems such as watersheds and wildlife corridors?
- Does it reflect carrying capacity of natural systems and the community's ability to provide services?

### Sustainability Principle 4: We support people to meet their own needs

Reduce and ultimately eliminate conditions that systematically undermine people's capacity to meet their own needs.

- Does it provide a range of housing choices to meet the diverse needs of the community?
- Does it involve citizens in decision-making in a meaningful way?

## 3 Is the proposal a good financial investment?

- Does it reduce long-term operating and maintenance costs? If so, what is the return on investment?
- What is the level of risk associated with taking the action (or failing to take the action)?
- Will it promote resource sharing between City and another entity or leverage external funds?

## 4 Is the proposal a step on the path toward sustainability?

- Is it a first step in phasing in more sustainable approach?
- Is it flexible and adaptable approach to accommodate future innovation?
- Does it involve a financial investment that locks community into an unsustainable situation for many years?

# Comprehensive Plan Update

As the City and community develop the following key elements of the Comprehensive Plan update, proposed amendments will be filtered through the strategic questions at the left. This process is used to evaluate proposals to determine if they help move the community toward the community vision and sustainability principles. Economic considerations and future flexibility are also included to provide an integrated assessment.

**Draft Community Vision:** Describes in words what the community aspires Lake Oswego to be like in 2035. Structured around seven plan action areas.



Fall-Winter  
2010-2011

**Scenario Options:** Depicts in words and generalized maps different ways that Lake Oswego could implement the vision.



Winter  
2010-2011

**Preferred Scenario:** Community supported option for how Lake Oswego will develop in the future. Integrates elements from the seven action areas and provides the foundation for updating Comprehensive Plan goals and policies.

Summer  
2011

**Comprehensive Plan:** Updated goals and policies for each of the seven action areas provide direction on how to implement the vision and preferred scenario. To be adopted by City Council.

Summer  
2012

**Action Plan:** Specific, measurable steps the community will take to implement the Goals and Policies; includes metrics, indicators, benchmarks, priority level/timeline, responsibility and funding mechanisms for each action. A separate document from the Comprehensive Plan.

Summer  
2013

Apply to Comprehensive Plan

