

Orange County Citizen Participation Guide



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Orange County

Citizen Participation Guide

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How You Can Participate in Your Local Government



Volunteer

Attend Board Meetings

Seek Elective Office

Join a Neighborhood Association

Submit Concerns

Participate in Public Meetings

As a citizen, you can take an active role in shaping Orange County Government's policies, programs, and decisions.

Participating in government can be as simple as voting at each election. But, you can go a step further in the day-to-day process of your local government.

You can volunteer for one of the many Orange County Advisory Boards that make recommendations to the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and County departments. For more information about getting involved with an advisory board, visit, www.ocfl.net/OpenGovernment/GetInvolved.aspx.



You can help influence decisions when it comes to the adoption of a new ordinance, the annual budget, or the location of a new park by attending Orange County Advisory Board Meetings and/or County BCC Meetings. Use the Orange County Calendar to find out when and where these meetings take place. To view the calendar online, www.ocfl.net/Home/CountyCalendar.aspx.

You can be an active member of a neighborhood association or help form one in your neighborhood. The Neighborhood Services Division can assist you with neighborhood issues or forming a voluntary neighborhood organization.



Neighborhood organizations are a great vehicle to communicate neighborhood concerns to your elected officials. For more information about helping your neighborhood, visit, www.ocfl.net/Neighborhoods.

You can seek elective office. For more information about seeking an elective office, visit www.ocfelections.com.

You can participate in public meetings such as community meetings, land-use/zoning hearings, focus groups, and community visioning sessions. Check out the County Calendar or download the free OCFL News app for information on upcoming public meetings.



You can submit concerns such as code violations, pet violations, infrastructure malfunctions, road issues (pot holes), and street sign or traffic signal damage or malfunctions. Report these issues to Orange County 311

by either: calling 3-1-1 (407-836-3111), online at www.ocfl.net/Home/311/HelpInfo.aspx, or you can download the free 311 app to your smartphone.

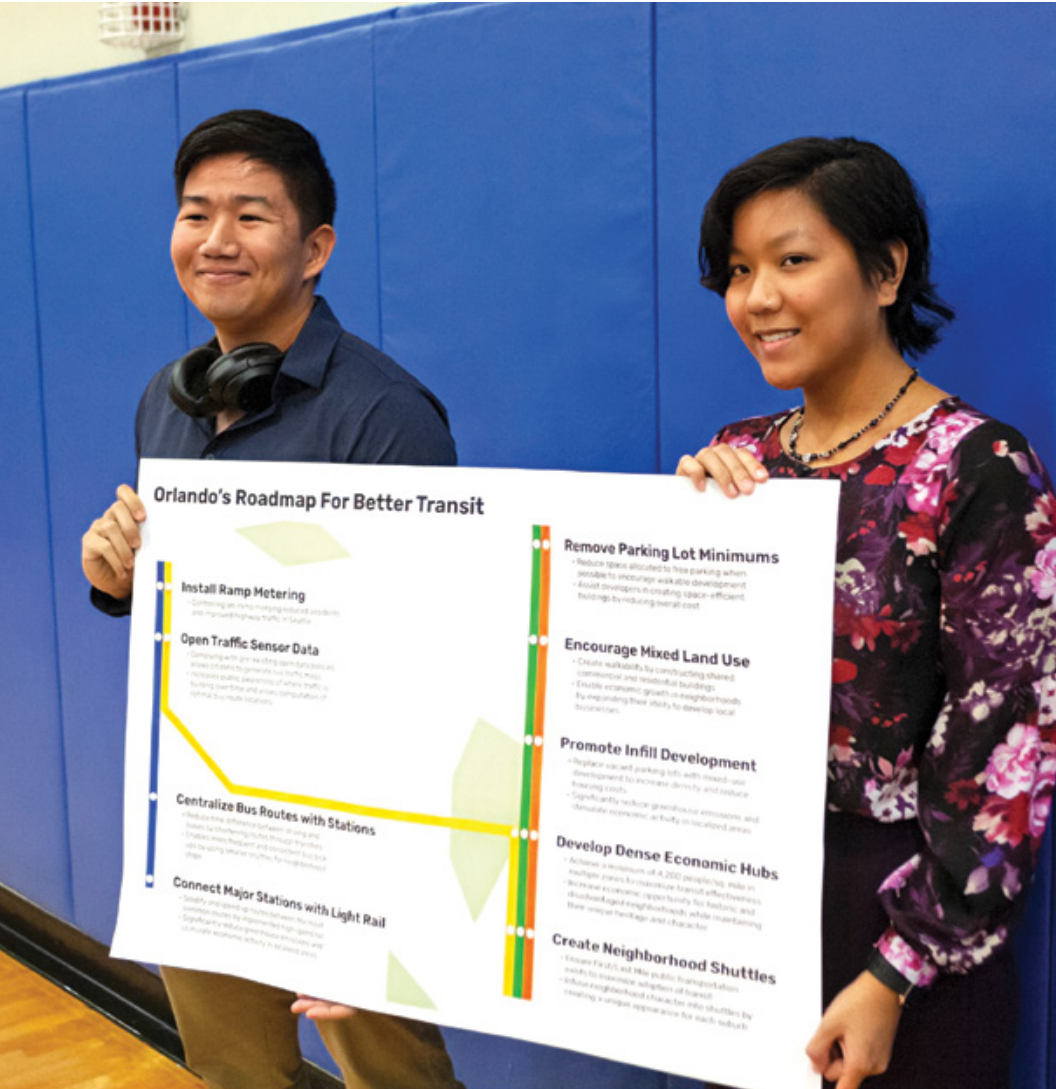
One of the greatest challenges for community leaders can be finding a balance between the interests of the community, as a whole, and those who have a special stake in a particular issue. Citizens can help strike a balance by looking for solutions that work for the entire community, not just a small group.

Although participating does not always mean prevailing, it does make government a partnership effort. When citizens are actively involved in their government, decisions better reflect the will of the people.

Want to get involved in an issue or project?

- 1) **Know what service or department your interest falls under.** A basic understanding of who provides specific service can help. A little homework can determine where to start.
- 2) **Visit the Orange County Government website at www.ocfl.net** or download any of the free Orange County Government's Smartphone apps.

Plenty of Opportunity Participating in the Planning Process



Aside from participation at the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) level, there are two principal processes in which County residents can directly take part in decisions and policy-making regarding land-use and growth-management issues.

Citizens can be involved when matters are reviewed by the County Planning and Zoning Commission as well as during the land-use hearings examiner process. These offer ample opportunities to welcome public comments and other input before recommendations and decisions are made.

How can I find out about land-use development applications and decisions?

There are a number of ways to find out about development proposals in your neighborhood or elsewhere in the County. These include:

Information Signs

Signs are posted at certain project sites, informing the public of proposed land-use actions and providing basic project information and phone numbers.

Public Meetings

Certain projects include an informational public meeting. Meeting notices are mailed to impacted properties and surrounding neighborhood organizations.

Planning and Development

Visit www.ocfl.net/PlanningDevelopment.aspx to learn more about comprehensive planning, development review, permitting, environmental and special area planning.



the Land Use Code (LUC) or ask the planner of the day general development-related questions. The Planning, Permitting, and Zoning Divisions' Services hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

If you have questions about land development, please contact 407-836-3111.



Can I comment on a project?

We encourage and welcome comments from the community. When submitting comments, keep the following in mind:

Comments should be in writing (letter or e-mail) addressed to the Planning Division or your Commissioner, and should contain your full name and address.

While an individual can submit a comment anonymously, we encourage citizens to include their name and contact information in the event that additional information is needed.

Comments are also accepted during the BCC Meeting.





Will my comments at an Orange County Board of County Commission Meeting or at a Land-Use Hearing make a difference?

All comments are read and carefully considered before a decision is issued. Comments help ensure that the best decision is reached.

While there are no “rules” for structuring your comments, you may want to consider the following:

- Comments or suggestions made early in the decision process are generally more effective.
- Each application type (conditional use permit, design review, etc.) has criteria that must be met in order to be approved. Therefore, if an individual objects to a proposal, it is helpful that the person include where the objection remains, and why it is believed that an application does not meet criteria (if that is the case).

For more information, call Orange County
Neighborhood Services Division at 407-836-3111.

