

Oak Lodge residents: Report is starting point for conversations

Oak Lodge Governance Project
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Governance project members: Metro-funded study provides factual, credible data to analyze and discuss

The Oak Lodge Governance Project Steering Committee is pleased to announce that with the release of the newly completed ECONorthwest report, Oak Lodge residents have access to more current, factual and credible data to analyze and discuss the future governance and taxation options in their unincorporated community of Clackamas County.

This comes from a newly released analysis commissioned by the OLGP Steering Committee and produced by ECONorthwest with Tiberius Solutions, Morgan CPS Group, and 3J Consulting. The entire Phase 1 [study evaluating governance options](#) is now publicly available. At noon on Oct. 9, OLGP members will be sharing and discussing the results of the report publicly for the first time. While focused on the residents of the Oak Lodge area, all are welcomed to join.

Last November, Metro Regional Government awarded OLGP a \$100,000 grant to fund this initial research study, which evaluates governance options for the Oak Lodge community and analyzes the financial implications of the three options considered: remaining an unincorporated community in Clackamas County, annexing into the city of Milwaukie, or incorporating into a new city.

Early on, OLGP steering committee members and community leaders, along with the consultant team, determined parameters for the study area and the specific scenarios. These boundaries were intentionally set to ensure that Oak Lodge community members have useful data to begin community conversations grounded in financial reality about the future of our unincorporated community. This is because past efforts toward governance of the Oak Grove and Jennings Lodge communities made it

clear that people want to know what a change in governance might cost and what the pros and cons of such a possible change could be.

It is important to note that this report is seen as a starting point to inform and spark the community conversations that will help us collectively determine our area's future — whether staying the same, annexing or incorporating into a new city. And that different parts of the community may want different things.



PHOTO COURTESY: TRIMET - Susan Zoccola's sculpture appears at the end of the Orange Line light rail in Oak Grove.

The goal of this report — to provide valid information to address those community desires for accurate and credible information — has been met. All three scenarios are shown to be economically viable, reasonable and practical, and the various pros and cons of each scenario are clearly articulated and compared. As in any governance structure, any potential tax rate is partly determined by two factors, the number of public services provided and residents' desired level of service for those public services.

Community values must be the essential driver for any change in governance, not economics. The values voiced by hundreds of community members during the two phases of the McLoughlin Area Plan and throughout the past decade at community meetings are clear and consistent: increase convenience, resilience, and economic vibrancy within Oak Lodge for all members of the community; sustain, enhance and preserve our natural resources for the benefit of generations to come; and commit to the equitable involvement of all area residents, of all income levels, abilities and ages.

While this report will answer many questions, it is sure to create new ones. It is essential to understand that this research study is the beginning of an ongoing community-driven project to explore the potential benefits, consequences, and ramifications of a possible change in governance for this urban area with unmet needs due to its current rural form of government.

OLGP is a voluntary community effort without involvement of elected officials, county or city personnel. This project exists to explore the questions, not to promote or campaign for a given outcome. In time, with robust community participation and engagement, and with additional phases of research, the community can work together to determine the best path (or paths) forward.

Register for the info session at us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcuuqrTgoHN1IJRAIXIMOxYtITo

to discuss the results of the report. The waiting room opens at 11:45 a.m. and the session ends promptly at 1 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there, and to continue providing accurate, factual information to help the

residents of this area forge a future that will benefit all members of the community.

Visit our website at oaklodgegovernanceproject.org to learn more about the project and check out the previous information sessions. And sign up on our email list for updates at

mailchi.mp/826dfe8140f6/sign-up-for-olgp-emails!

If you have suggestions for future sessions, or would like to be notified of upcoming OLGP events, please reach us at

oaklodgegovernance@gmail.com. Follow us on Facebook at Oak Lodge Governance Project, Instagram: [oaklodgeproject](https://www.instagram.com/oaklodgeproject) or Twitter: [@OakLodgeGP](https://twitter.com/OakLodgeGP).

Oak Lodge Governance Project Steering Committee members include Mitra Anoushiravani, Nathan Breitenfeldt, Valerie Chapman, Jane Civiletti, Tom Civiletti, Joseph Edge, Nathan Ember, Eleanore Hunter, Chips Janger and Cole Merkel

<https://pamplinmedia.com/cr/28-opinion/523401-418227-oak-lodge-residents-report-is-starting-point-for-conversations>