



# OCCMA

Oregon City/County  
Management Association

A State Affiliate of ICMA



## Host Committee Report

107TH ICMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Portland, Oregon | October 3-6, 2021





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Many thanks to those who donated time and effort toward the preparation of this report, including OCCMA members, League of Oregon Cities, ICMA, and Summit Public Relations Strategies LLC.

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On October 3-6, 2021, the 107th ICMA Conference was held in Portland, Oregon. The road leading to an in-person conference had various road blocks and detours due to COVID-19, concerns about news reports of uncivil disobedience, and safety for attendees traveling to Portland. In addition, ICMA transitioned to new leadership for conference planning and sponsorships during this time period, creating additional uncertainties over the last two years of planning for the conference. With new leadership came new ideas. Despite an unprecedented array of changes, moving targets and uncertainties about holding a conference during the COVID pandemic, ICMA and the OCCMA Host Committee pulled off a very successful event once a decision was made to go forward with an in-person conference in Portland.

At the ICMA December 2021 Board meeting, ICMA's Director of Conferences and Events, Jeremy Figoten, provided the board with a report on the preliminary results of the 2021 ICMA Annual Conference held in Portland, Oregon. He reported: "Notably, there were zero cases of any attendee testing positive for COVID-19, either during the event or post-conference. The in-person registrations in Portland were 48 percent of those in Nashville (2,664 vs. 5,537); however, when digital conference registrations were factored in, attendance rose to 71 percent compared to Nashville (3,925 vs. 5,537). Post-conference evaluations revealed that, despite all of the obstacles and challenges of planning the event, attendees were overwhelmingly thankful and positive." ICMA did an excellent job in providing a conference with new protocols for vaccinations, testing and verification of health status that lead to a safe and enjoyable experience for conference attendees despite the concerns related to COVID-19.

Overall, it was an exceptional effort by OCCMA, the Host Committee, and the very engaged subcommittee chairs and subcommittee members that worked diligently to pull off a very successful conference under very unusual extenuating circumstances. ICMA planning staff pulled together many critical details to pull



*ICMA's first in-person Annual Conference required masking and proof of vaccination or negative test.*

this conference off in a very short period of time. On behalf of the Host Committee co-chairs, we would like to express our profound thanks and appreciation to the OCCMA Membership, the Washington City/County Management Association, the League of Oregon Cities, and Travel Portland for their financial support that resulted in providing a great experience for attendees. Finally, we appreciate the difficult decisions that ICMA made that lead to an in-person conference being held in Portland. Jeremy Figoten and staff were all rock stars in making this conference a great success despite multiple challenges and threats to this outcome.

This report is prepared to memorialize the activities that occurred from the inception of planning to the conclusion of activities by the Oregon City/County Management Association (OCCMA). This report is also prepared to provide information about the Oregon experience for Host Committees planning future ICMA conferences. Through this period of time, we benefitted greatly from learning the experiences of host committees from the Nashville, Baltimore, San Antonio, Kansas City, and Seattle conferences. We would like to give a shout out, in particular, to the Washington City/County Association which spent part of one day debriefing us following the Seattle conference in 2015.



A uniquely Oregon sculpture was presented to ICMA by OCCMA.

While this report documents OCCMA’s experience, the structure used by each Host Committee can vary substantially depending on whether the state association is leading the planning effort or in cases where the conference is being held in a council/manager city or county, that city or county is taking the lead on planning activities. Furthermore, as ICMA refines the conference planning process, additional roles may be modified in the future.

Overall, this was a great experience for Oregon to assist ICMA in navigating the various roadblocks and detours to hold a successful event during these challenging times. We attempted to honor both the challenges presented and the spirit of support and growth that grew from our collaboration with the gift of artwork we presented, which is pictured on this page. This sculpture reflected the conference’s theme of “Restart” following the cancellation of the 2020 in-person conference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The artist, Mel Stiles, has provided this description of what you see here.

*A nurse tree is a fallen tree that provides nutrients for new sprouting trees. It represents cycle of life and the sprouting of new ideas from the foundation of something that came before it. In this piece, the nurse tree is represented by a salvaged wooden beam from a Portland waterfront building. It’s an actual piece of Portland history. The cracks and dents in the wood show its age and the path it has traveled. The fissures interrupt the block but it still remains intact. As happens in the forests of Oregon, this artwork illustrates the cycle of new life by showing young trees growing from the nurse log while the views of Mount Hood in the background represent the foundation that life is built upon. Portland’s symbolic stag sign also seems to sprout up through the foliage. It’s a hint of the city scape that grew from a timber town. The bike is just a token of who we are and what is important to us.*

Like a nurse log, the annual ICMA conference supports the sprouting of new ideas from the foundation of something that came before it for our profession. The Oregon City/County Management Association was honored to play a supporting role in that endeavor.

This report is respectively submitted by:



**Joseph Gall**  
Former City Manager,  
Sherwood

Chief Utility Relations Officer  
Clean Water Services



**Eileen Stein**  
Former City Manager,  
West Linn

Interim Deputy Director,  
Business and  
Community Services  
Department,  
Clackamas County



**Spencer Nebel**  
City Manager,  
City of Newport

One of the inspirations for the OCCMA Host Committee submitting a proposal in 2012 for the 2021 ICMA Annual Conference was the success the Association had in hosting the 1999 Portland ICMA Annual Conference. A number of OCCMA members were able to provide guidance and insight regarding the hosting of the 1999 Conference which was the best attended conference up to that time. The success in hosting that conference built a solid foundation from which to plan the 2021 conference.

## There were four distinct phases of planning for the 107th Conference.



Participation in the conference occurred both in-person and virtually.

**The first was an informal phase** of learning and keeping the OCCMA membership informed about conference planning. The Association participated in the annual Host Committee meetings held at each of the annual conferences to prepare for the responsibilities in hosting the 2021 conference. A surcharge was put into place to raise funding for the Conference. A chair was designated to head up the future Host Committee activities and this phase extended from 2013 to 2016. OCCMA directly benefitted from the knowledge gained from the Washington City/County Managers Association in hosting the 2015 conference in Seattle.

**The next planning phase was a formative phase** in which OCCMA formalized the Host Committee and appointed permanent members to the Committee, entered into memorandum of authorization giving the Committee latitude to make all substantive decisions regarding the conference including financial authority. This phase of planning occurred in 2017 and 2018.

**The third phase was the conference planning phase.** This phase was initiated at the end of 2018 and continued on with a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning resumed in earnest about four months prior to the start of the 107th Conference.

**The final phase was execution of responsibilities** for the conference itself, then the wrap up of financial commitments and the creation of a final report of our experiences hosting the conference.

The Host Committee greatly benefitted by having a governance structure in place for the Host Committee and preliminary planning done in advance of the pandemic. The OCCMA Board created a Host Committee with specific responsibilities and through a Memorandum of Authorization, gave the Host Committee the authority to take the necessary steps to plan and make financial commitments for this conference. This structure simplified the coordination of the Host Committee activities with the OCCMA Board of Directors, allowing the Board to focus on normal association activities during this planning process. A more detailed timeline of major activities related to OCCMA's hosting of the 107th Conference is as follows:

informal phase

- 2012** OCCMA submits a proposal to ICMA to host the 2021 ICMA Conference.
- 2013** ICMA selects Portland, Oregon as the site for the 107th Annual Conference.
- 2014** OCCMA Board imposes a 15% surcharge on member dues for conference expenses.  
Sherwood City Manager Joseph Gall is designated as Chair of the Host Committee.
- 2016** Joseph Gall, Spencer Nebel (City Manager of Newport) and Christie Wurster (City Manager of Silverton) meet with the Washington City/County Management Association Conference Chair and Vice Chair for a detailed debriefing of the 2015 Seattle ICMA Annual Conference.
- 2017** Eileen Stein, City Manager of West Linn, is designated as a Co-Chair of the Host Committee.

formative phase

- 2018** Spencer Nebel, City Manager of Newport, is designated as the third Co-Chair. OCCMA Board creates a formal Host Committee with designated subcommittees based on the ICMA model for hosting ICMA conferences.  
  
Host Committee members are appointed by the OCCMA President. Total membership on the Host Committee ranged from 35-45 members over the next three years.

planning phase

- First meeting of the full Host Committee is held with subcommittee chairs being appointed by the Host Committee Co-Chairs. Co-Chair Eileen Stein facilitates a visioning session to identify possible elements that can be incorporated as part of the conference.  
  
OCCMA Board approves a Memorandum of Authorization with the Host Committee giving broad financial and operational authorization for planning the conference.
- 2019** Full Host Committee meeting held in July to develop a preliminary list of options to present to ICMA of venues and events for the 2021 Conference.  
  
Former ICMA Director of Conferences and Events, Ross Hoff, retires and Jeremy Figoten is hired by ICMA to fill this position.  
  
A contract for conference support services is entered into with the League of Oregon Cities by the Host Committee.  
  
Host Committee meeting held in November with Jeremy Figoten and ICMA staff at the Oregon Convention Center, the site of the 2021 Conference. Conference events reviewed with ICMA staff.

planning phase

**2020** Separate financial accounts are set up by LOC for the Host Committee activities in accordance with the Memorandum of Authorization. Raised funds are transferred from OCCMA to the Host Committee.

National emergency declared in March due to the COVID -19 Pandemic.

Conference planning activities put on hold. Regular consultation occurs with Jeremy Figoten and the Co-Chairs during this period of time.

ICMA cancels the in-person conference planned for Toronto, and proceeds with the UNITE virtual conference.

A virtual meeting is held with the full Host Committee in October. Subcommittee chairs review the list of potential events in light of the complications that COVID will have on certain activities. A shortened list is provided to ICMA for consideration for the Portland Conference.

The three co-chairs and Jeff Towery are appointed by ICMA to the 2021 ICMA Conference Planning Committee.

Participated in the virtual December ICMA Conference Planning Committee to share preliminary plans for Host Committee activities. Concerns were expressed by several Planning Committee members of safety issues in Portland due to civil unrest and COVID.

**2021** Participated in a second ICMA Conference Planning Committee meeting on March 30. No determination had been made as to whether the conference would be in-person or virtual at this time.

The full Host Committee met virtually in April. The Committee was informed that the ICMA Board of Directors would like to attempt to hold an in-person conference in Portland. ICMA will plan a site visit before making a final determination.

In April, ICMA Executive Director Marc Ott, President-Elect Troy Brown, and Conference Planning Staff Member Judy Day conduct a site visit and meet with Co-Chairs to discuss the conference. They indicate that they would report to the ICMA Board to move forward with an in-person conference.

ICMA BOARD AUTHORIZES AN IN-PERSON CONFERENCE IN PORTLAND.

**June 2021** ICMA assigns staff people to work with each of the subcommittee chairs for final planning for the conference.

A virtual full Host Committee meeting is held in June to prepare for the Conference. Preliminary plan for financial support to ICMA is reviewed by the Host Committee. ICMA proceeds with contracting for various venues for the October Conference.

The State of Oregon relaxes spacing and masking requirements for COVID. This action eases spacing requirements at the convention center greatly facilitating the use of space for the conference.

Participate in a third ICMA Planning Committee meeting on June 30.

execution of responsibilities

- July** ICMA agrees to give OCCMA members who are not ICMA members the ICMA member conference rate.
- OCCMA Board offers a scholarship for OCCMA members to attend the conference.
- Full Host Committee Meeting is held to touch base on remaining planning efforts. The biggest focus was on lining up volunteers for various activities. A final decision on a gift for presentation to ICMA is decided.
- August** Full Host Committee meeting is held to wrap up final details for the conference. Most of the discussion is focused on volunteers and athletic events.
- September Full Host Committee is held to wrap up preconference events. Final decisions made on Voodoo Donuts and other offerings from OCCMA for conference attendees.
- Conference attendee welcome letter is prepared by the co-chairs.
- October** The 107th ICMA Conference is held in Portland, Oregon from October 2-6, 2021. By all accounts, attendees greatly appreciated the ability to get together and enjoyed the stellar work done by ICMA staff, the Conference Planning Committee and the efforts of OCCMA in pulling together a great event in a four-month period.
- November** ICMA submits financial information regarding OCCMA's share of conference costs.
- 2022**
- January** OCCMA reconciles finances for a final report to the Full Host Committee and the co-chairs prepare a final report of Host Committee responsibilities for the conference.
- February** The final meeting of the full Host Committee is held to finalize payment to ICMA and accept the final report of Host Committee Activities.



Following the acceptance of the proposal from OCCMA to host the 2021 Conference, OCCMA took early steps that greatly facilitated hosting efforts for this conference. In 2013, OCCMA Board of Directors implemented a surcharge on dues paid for membership to OCCMA. This proved to be a significant source of funding to help cover the expenses for a small state association to host an international conference. During the informal planning phase, OCCMA designated a host committee chair to keep the obligations of OCCMA in front of the membership and to build the foundation for the significant planning effort that would need to take place as the conference got closer.

The formative planning phase occurred in 2017 and 2018, when the OCCMA Board took a number of steps that greatly facilitated the planning process. They formally created a host committee with the various subcommittees as recommended in the ICMA host committee model that was available at that time. Members were appointed to terms on the Committee that ran through 2021. The membership of the Committee fluctuated, but ranged from 35-45 members of OCCMA and non-members as well. The governance structure ultimately included the designation of three co-chairs to coordinate activities on behalf of the Committee. The co-chairs functioned as an executive committee and maintained regular contact with ICMA, OCCMA, and committee members throughout the rest of the planning period. Each co-chair was assigned as a liaison to one of the subcommittees created to maintain communications through the planning process.

The Committee prepared a Memorandum of Authorization (see website) to clearly outline the authority that the Committee needed regarding fiscal affairs and planning for the conference. This MOA was approved by the OCCMA Board in 2018. This concept was developed after learning from WCMA of time problems and challenges they had between their Host Committee and their Board in getting authorization through the planning process for the 2015 ICMA Annual Conference. The Memorandum of Authorization allowed the Host Committee to take the necessary steps to plan the conference and make the required financial commitments with ICMA and others. The MOA provided for regular reports to the OCCMA Board to keep the Board fully informed as to the steps in the planning process. The MOA was particularly essential given the abbreviated time table that the Host Committee had to finalize arrangements with ICMA.

The Committee also entered into an administrative services agreement (see website) with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) to provide various support through the process. This included administrative functions such as agendas and minutes for Committee meetings, serving as a fiscal agent, and working as a liaison with ICMA for various aspects of the process, particularly during the four-month time period.

The earlier preparation greatly benefitted the planning phase by creating an informed Host Committee which had clear authority to act on behalf of OCCMA. This allowed the Host Committee to be well prepared prior to the pandemic, and allowed the Committee to make the commitments necessary for the conference during the four-month period following ICMA's announcement that an in-person conference would be held in Portland.

## Host Committee Finances

The funding available for the Committee for planning and hosting the conference was \$233,952. The most significant portion of these funds was raised by surcharges and balance transfers from the OCCMA Board to the Host Committee. In addition, the Washington City/County Management Association contributed \$50,000 for the conference. OCCMA did the same for the Seattle conference in 2015. The other major sources of revenue came from the LOC (\$30,000) and Travel Portland (\$10,000). In addition, the Committee had contributions for the Washington/Oregon night that was part of the ICMA Conference in the amount of \$4,500 plus contributions of supplies for the reception. The state reception is something that is held and planned directly by the Committee without direct ICMA involvement.

One significant change implemented by Jeremy Figoten was having ICMA take direct responsibility for sponsorships and contracts that would have originally been the responsibility of the Host Committee for various social and other events that take place during the conference. Previously, the Host Committee would obtain sponsors and enter into contracts separately from ICMA for Host Committee events. This change shifts the burden for direct fundraising and contracting for these sponsorships to ICMA, with the Host Committee supporting this role. In the past, the Host Committee would provide certain sponsorship levels for a contribution to the ICMA Conference which often were far different than the sponsorship packages that ICMA offered to its sponsors. This created equity issues and unnecessary confusion for sponsors by having ICMA sponsorship packages and Host Committee sponsorship packages. Overall, this change greatly simplified the role of the Host Committee in planning for the Conference. The policy also allows ICMA to have consistent sponsorship packages for all aspects of the conference.

As a result, the majority of funding raised by OCCMA was provided to ICMA in the form of financial support for sponsorship of various events such as the opening reception and the Tuesday night social event at Providence Park, and reimbursement of expenses incurred by ICMA for certain Host Committee responsibilities such as the Host Committee booth, VooDoo Donuts, and other similar activities. This eliminated the need for the Host Committee to directly contract for various aspects of the Conference for activities that enhance the experience for those attending the annual conference.



*OCCMA brought in a very popular breaktime offering: VooDoo Donuts.*

# Organizational Structure for the Host Committee

A breakdown of the OCCMA host Committee revenues and expenses is as follows:

## 2021 ICMA Host Committee Revenue and Expense Report

### Revenues

OCCMA surcharge and balance transfers	\$139,452.00
LOC general sponsorship	\$30,000.00
WCMA general sponsorship	\$50,000.00
Travel Portland general sponsorship	\$10,000.00
BerryDunn host reception sponsors	\$2,000.00
Lumen host reception sponsors	\$2,500.00
In addition to cash contributions, the Host Committee received contributions of beer from the Rogue Brewery and Astoria Brewing and wines at wholesale cost from R. Stuart & Co. Winery and Remy Wines for the Washington/Oregon reception.	
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$233,952.00</b>

### Expenses

Host Committee conference expenses <i>(Host committee lounge, VooDoo donuts, and other refreshments)</i>	\$59,986.24
Sunday night opening reception sponsorship	\$47,509.00
Tuesday night reception sponsorship	\$80,000.00
Inspiration event sponsorship	\$1,000.00
5K run	\$4,256.79
Mobile workshop sponsorships	\$6,193.00
Partners Program	\$3,351.00
Washington/Oregon reception	\$15,286.50
Misc. staff and travel expenses	\$7,821.04
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$225,403.53</b>

### Balance

Remaining Host Committee Funds	<b>\$8,548.47</b>
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The following are brief individual reports from the host committee and each of the subcommittees sharing their experiences in planning for the 2021 Annual Conference and outlining what worked, what challenges were encountered, and any recommendations for ICMA and future host committee activities.

## Host Committee

Joe Gall, Eileen Stein, and Spencer Nebel—*Co-chairs*

### What went well

Having three co-chairs was very beneficial for this process which spanned nine years. During this time, two of the co-chairs changed jobs. Fortunately, they remained in the state to continue their responsibilities for the Committee. The co-chairs were in regular communication with each other, the LOC which provided administrative services, served as liaisons to their subcommittees, and worked directly with ICMA through a rather challenging planning period. The Host Committee had strong self-directed subcommittee chairs and members that did an effective job in planning host activities for the conference. The Memorandum of Authorization provided clear authority for the Host Committee to act on behalf of OCCMA. The co-chairs served as the executive committee, coordinated communications with ICMA, prepared agendas and chaired meetings with the full host committee, coordinated administrative support from the League of Oregon Cities, arranged for refreshments and snacks for conference attendees in the host committee lounge, and secured the gift for ICMA.



*OCCMA Co-Chairs and President at opening ceremonies.*

### Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic created exceptional challenges for conference planning as outlined elsewhere in this report. Perceptions of safety in Portland created concerns from some members from outside of Oregon based on news accounts which needed to be addressed. This was the first major conference held at the Oregon Convention Center since the COVID pandemic occurred. (The convention center did an excellent job in getting up to speed to host the conference despite being idle for over a year.) During the pandemic, various safety measures were in constant flux including social spacing, masks, testing, and other measures making planning for certain events subject to regular changes. Another challenge was

staying in close contact with the subcommittees on a basis other than the full Committee meetings. We were fortunate to have strong subcommittee chairs who were able to work with minimal direction.

## Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. Make sure that there is some redundancy built into the leadership of your Committee so that when a key member leaves, someone else can seamlessly step into their place.
2. The co-chairs, subcommittee chairs, and committee members are very busy professionals. It is important to allow adequate lead time and provide for backup if certain tasks do not get accomplished.
3. Appoint co-chairs or a small steering committee after selection of a conference location is made by ICMA. The primary role of this core group is to keep the Association well informed of the upcoming obligations for hosting the conference. Appoint the full Committee three years out to begin the detailed planning efforts.
4. Once the full Host Committee was established, holding two full host committee meetings a year was beneficial to keep everyone up to speed with the planning processes. The subcommittees were able to do most of the direct planning with reports being shared at these full meetings. This kept everyone informed. These notes were included in a status report (we called “the ugly report”) to keep all informed. A link to one of these reports can be found at the end of this document. Once we got in the restart mode, four months prior to the conference, monthly meetings of the full committee membership were very important.
5. If the Committee responsibilities are being handled by a state Association, develop a clear understanding with the Association as to what authority and responsibilities the Committee has in planning the conference and incurring financial commitments relating to hosting activities.



*OCCMA's host committee lounge provided a comfortable networking location.*

## Fundraising Subcommittee

### Pursue Funding for the 2021 ICMA Conference

Steve Powers, City Manager, Salem, *Chair*

#### What went well

The OCCMA Board implementing a surcharge on dues provided a significant source of revenue.



*Fundraising supported several activities, including Tuesday's reception.*

The shift in philosophy by ICMA to handle all sponsorships with the fundraising subcommittee providing support in identifying prospective donors is a great new model being implemented by ICMA. This eliminates confusion and different levels of sponsorship between the Host Committee and ICMA when the Committee had direct sponsors for certain events and ICMA had sponsors for the conference, and differences existed in the benefit packages between what the Committee offered and what ICMA offered. This new philosophy greatly streamlines the fundraising efforts for state associations. Furthermore, with ICMA directly contracting

for the various venues that are identified during consultations between the Committee and ICMA, the burden and the uncertainties for the Committee are greatly reduced.

#### Challenges

The biggest challenge was the level of uncertainty that occurred with the change of philosophy by ICMA as to the role of the Committee in securing donations for the events that have been traditionally sponsored by the Committee. This coupled with the uncertainties due to the pandemic, created some confusion as to what role the Committee had as it related to soliciting direct contributions.

#### Recommendation for Future Host Committees

1. If the Host Committee is funding activities through a state association, consider implementing a surcharge on dues early in this process.
2. With the restructuring, have a clear understanding with ICMA as to the role the subcommittee should be playing regarding fundraising.



Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler welcomes attendees.

## Major Evening Social Events Subcommittee

Martha Bennett, City Manager, Lake Oswego, *Chair*

### What went well

The role of this subcommittee is well-defined by ICMA. The Committee was able to recommend event locations and ICMA reviewed those locations and made the final decisions. ICMA staff was very good about coordinating the pros and cons of each of the venues. There was good collaboration with Travel Portland and coming to a consensus as to the locations for each event. The evening event on Tuesday at Providence Park received rave reviews from participants at the Conference. People liked the space, the areas that ranged with live music to quiet areas for conversation, getting your photos

taken with llamas and having an opportunity to kick a soccer ball around on the field were highlights for participants at the Tuesday evening event. The Washington/Oregon Manager's Reception was a great opportunity for members to celebrate all of the efforts that went into hosting the conference. The subcommittee arranged for some aspects of the opening session, including the welcome from Portland's mayor, the opening prayer, musical acts, and the youth band that performed the national anthem.



The Washington/Oregon manager's reception at Veterans Memorial Coliseum provided the perfect social opportunity, featuring Oregon beer and wine, as well as a delicious meal.



*Tuesday's reception at Providence Park was a great success, with soccer on the field, llamas in the lobby, dancing into the night, and a hosted bar. Several food stations were found throughout the facility.*



## Challenges

There was some confusion and duplication of effort regarding planning for the opening ceremony. This is a challenging time since the opening ceremony must accommodate a keynote speaker, as well as certain procedural issues.

## Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. For the opening ceremony, it may be appropriate that the Committee should only be in charge of identifying an elected official to do the welcoming speech and for the invocation with those people being quickly and completely handed off to ICMA to eliminate confusion.
2. Each conference location has different dynamics, but in non-Council/manager cities, the Committee should be sure they have a member of City staff on the Committee to coordinate various aspects of working in that city, including securing the mayor to make welcoming comments at the opening ceremony.
3. If ICMA is going to hire a live band for the opening ceremony, it may make sense for that same band to do the national anthem, although, the national anthem gave Portland an opportunity to showcase local student talent.
4. Seeking sponsors for the state reception should be done outside of the ICMA Conference Sponsorship process. If we had started earlier, it would have been easy to secure more local sponsors to offset a portion of the expenses for this event. This was also compounded by the short window of time that the Committee had from the time a decision was made to hold an in-person conference.

## Volunteer Coordination/ Support Service Subcommittee

Kelsey Lewis, Grants and Program Manager, City of Wilsonville,  
South Metro Area Regional Transit, *Chair*



*Volunteers in blue t-shirts were stationed throughout the conference and hotels to assist attendees.*

### What went well

Overall, the feedback from volunteers was great. They enjoyed their activities and were thankful for the communications provided to the volunteers. The volunteers were tapped from the OCCMA and Washington Cities listserv, the ICMA student chapter for Portland State University, and NW Women's Leadership Academy. The Volunteer Subcommittee utilized *SignUpGenius* online which was easy to use and was inexpensive at \$15 per month. Once the list was there, making shift changes and other modifications was very easy to do, with changes being communicated via this website. The volunteer shirt was designed in-house from a staffer from the City of Bend. The subcommittee did a great job recruiting and matching volunteers to various assignments throughout the conference. These volunteer efforts included convention center information tables, host

committee lounge, hotel lobby information tables, 5K run, and preparing gift bags for attendees.

The subcommittee developed a volunteer handbook that served as a great resource and is provided in the links at the end of this report.

### Challenges

There was some confusion regarding last minute changes on items like ordering of food. Information resources and technology should be available for volunteers at information desks. The Subcommittee had challenges in getting volunteers at hotel host desks, and for some early morning shifts at the 5K race.

### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. There is not a need for a separate Committee lounge and Host Committee volunteer office. It makes sense to combine these two into one location. The Subcommittee should coordinate with ICMA staff early on to confirm when shifts are needed. Be sure to have great food treats and beverages to keep volunteers fueled up.
2. Directional assistance to events near the conference center is welcomed by participants. Having maps available for information desk volunteers is helpful for people choosing not to use the conference app. The development of a volunteer handbook is very helpful and included several main contacts and cell phone numbers for the Committee co-chairs.
3. Information should be developed for volunteers in hotel lobbies for nearby restaurants, bars, and other activities, and in some cases, the volunteers were not familiar with what was available in the immediate area of that particular hotel property.
4. Get volunteer shirts printed early.

## Partners Program Subcommittee

Ann Ober, City Manager, Milwaukie, *Chair* and Jan Carothers, *Co-chair*

### What went well

The planning for this process during COVID-19 identified events that would provide a tangible community service, actively engage and give partners something worthwhile to do, provide an educational component, be an inspiring creative example of community collaborative programs, and provide a fun way to meet and become friends with other partners and spouses who have much in common. The events included an ivy pull project which was done in collaboration with the Portland Parks Department with volunteers removing invasive species of ivy along trails and hillsides within the park.

The second program that was provided was a children's book bank book-cleaning session. This program was able to be held within the Oregon Convention Center and was done in conjunction with the children's book bank. In addition, Doris Towery volunteered to create a wine-tasting tour of the nearby Yamhill Valley for spouses and partners of the ICMA Board members. The event was enjoyed by all participants.

### Challenges

It was difficult to project how many partners would participate in the ivy pull which required special clothing and equipment preparations. During planning, it was anticipated that 20 volunteers would participate. Portland Parks put together equipment for 20 participants. If the actual number of participants was known, that would have eliminated a fair amount of work for the Parks staff.

For the book-cleaning session, the two young staff members from the book bank, had issues with reliable transportation to deliver the materials for this exercise. An ICMA member was able to "Uber" over to their office and pick up the materials to allow the event to move forward.

### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. It is recommended that an active spouse or partner be a member of this subcommittee to bring their experience with previous partners events.
2. It would have been valuable to have some sort of pre-registration program so the number of partners participating in the events could be known prior to the event.
3. Schedule partner events at different times. The events were offered at the same time, which prevented spouses from participating in both events.
4. The traditional partners program panel discussion was missed this year. This event should be reinstated. This has provided great opportunity for a roundtable discussion for partners.
5. High-quality partner programs are crucial to help connect these essential people to other partners and potential friends at ICMA conferences. This can build a lifetime of friendships for individuals who do not have the same opportunities as the managers in meeting colleagues and professional friends.



Partners adopted a special project of cleaning books that had been donated to the Children's Book Bank.



Doris Towery led a partners group on a tour of vineyards in the nearby Yamhill Valley.

## Inspirational Breakfast Subcommittee

Brian Latta, City Manager, Dallas, *Chair*

### What went well

The Inspirational Breakfast was modified from previous years by eliminating the breakfast and finding an introductory speaker and pre-session musical performers for the final day's keynote address. This allowed the tradition to continue in some form despite COVID-19.

### Challenges

The inspirational speaker was only given seven to ten minutes to speak which is not sufficient time to adequately tell the story of their good work. The topic of the speaker and the focus of the keynote address were not necessarily compatible. There were huge challenges in finding live performers due to COVID-19. Earlier commitments had to be cancelled due to concerns regarding COVID-19.

### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. It is recommended that ICMA resume the separate Inspirational Breakfast event from the keynote address. These have been events that attendees look forward to in order to hear inspiring stories and listen to great music. Trying to combine it at the end of the final keynote address did not achieve the same success as prior years.

*The Inspirational Breakfast included songs by this entertaining trio.*



## Athletic Events Subcommittee

Sara Singer Wilson, SSW Consulting, *Chair*

Cate Schneider, *Planning & Management Analyst*, Multnomah County, *Co-chair*



An estimated 50 runners crossed the 5K finish line.

### What went well

The program offered for Conference attendees included pick-up soccer (self-organized) Yoga with Goats, hiking in Forest Park, and the 5K run/walk. Transportation was arranged by ICMA for the hike, maps were provided by the Committee, and water and snacks were distributed the morning of the event. The Subcommittee's partnership with Foot Traffic was very helpful when managing the 5K event. Foot Traffic advised the Committee on a new race route, ordered, and delivered the race t-shirts and bibs, and loaned the Foot Traffic race arch and race clock timer free of charge. Positive feedback came from the 50 people that participated in the 5K. Yoga with Goats sold out very early after registration was opened.

### Challenges

ICMA did not decide to move forward with the 5K race until August, so the planning timeframe was constrained. The race was held on the same day as the Portland Marathon, which required re-routing of the 5K to avoid conflicts with the marathon route. ICMA was unable to reschedule the 5K so that it was not a conflict with the marathon. Everything was more challenging due to the short planning timeframe.

### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. Start planning early.
2. Identify roles and responsibilities with ICMA.
3. Avoid conflicts with other local races.
4. Partner with local running or walking company or club.
5. Place more wayfinding station volunteers along the course to direct participants. (there were some participants that got confused).
6. Secure adequate volunteers to attend field trips and adequately host events.

## Assistants Exchange Subcommittee

Ben Bryant, Assistant City Manager, Happy Valley, *Chair*

Due to COVID-19 considerations and the need for assistant managers to be passengers in vehicles and have close contact, the exchange was cancelled for the 2021 conference. There were other opportunities for assistants to meet during the conference itself.

## Field Tour Subcommittee

Jeanna Troha, Assistant City Manager, Wilsonville, *Chair*

### What went well

Early in the process, the committee developed criteria to evaluate field tour ideas. The criteria proved to be important as the list of potential field tours was refined. The criteria included: distance (within 20-30 min. bus ride) from convention center, variety of topics including economic development, infrastructure/public works, parks and open space, public/private partnerships, and land use planning. The committee wanted the field tours to appeal to a wide audience and offer different experiences. We received feedback from attendees that they appreciated this focus. We also offered popular field tours more than once, which was also well received. ICMA staff was fantastic. They kept the committee on track for deadlines, offered advice, and did a great job coordinating bus transportation to the tour destinations. The mobile workshops included: Beaverton Central Redevelopment; Vancouver, Washington waterfront; multi-agency drinking water partnerships; and Portland's unique approach to nature preservation.



*Field tours included classroom orientations.*

### Challenges

Finalizing the details of each field tour can be challenging and takes time. Having a committee member assigned as the liaison to each field tour makes a big difference. They are able to coordinate with the field tour speakers on the logistics to ensure a positive experience for attendees. The weather also proved to be a challenge. It rained on the day when two popular tours were offered. While ICMA does a great job of telling conference attendees to be prepared for

all types of weather, inevitably there were attendees that were not prepared for a walking tour in rain. We did not want to cancel the tour so we purchased, at the last minute, rain ponchos for attendees. It was greatly appreciated by everyone. A small detail that made a positive impact.



*Redevelopment projects in Beaverton, like the Arts Center pictured here, were part of the field tour program.*

## Recommendations for Future Host Committee

1. Assign a committee member to each field tour to serve as coordinator. It is also helpful if the coordinator can go on the field tour and provide their cell phone information to ICMA staff in case things come up last minute.
2. Offer a variety of field tours to focus on different topics. Focus on providing 4-5 quality field tours instead of a lot of field tours that are mediocre.
3. Include an indoor component on every field tour in case adjustments need to be made due to weather.
4. Be adaptable.
5. Keep field tour locations within a 20-30-minute bus ride from convention center.
6. Ensure field tours do not start too early and get attendees back to the convention center 4-5:00 pm. We found attendees prefer short field tours that allow them to attend conference sessions and enjoy social events.
7. Offer field tours that highlight unique aspects of your region.

*This food court was also part of Beaverton's redevelopment tour.*





*Self-Guided tours included  
beautiful Multnomah Falls.*

## Tours Subcommittee

Madison Thesing, *Assistant to the City Manager, Lake Oswego, Chair*

### What went well

With the pandemic, the Tours Subcommittee was limited in the types of options that could be put together for attendees to the Conference. The Subcommittee worked with Travel Portland on various options for tours then shared this information on the ICMA Conference website and app. The self-guided tours were easy to compile based on existing options in the Portland/Metro area. These self-guided tours were easy for attendees to fit into their schedules as available, including before and after the Conference.

### Challenges

This was the first year for self-guided tours versus tours organized by the Subcommittee. There were questions as to how attendees of the Conference would become aware of the tours, or where the tours list was going to be marketed. It was not clearly communicated to attendees that local guide lists were available. Better direction and clarity to the Subcommittee on how this information is best shared would be beneficial. It would have been beneficial to have hard copies of the tour options available at the Host Committee booth, in addition to being available on the ICMA app.

### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. Continue with self-guided tour options, but improve the marketing of those options through ICMA.
2. Utilize existing tour options. Think of sharing more than tours by highlighting things to do that are unique to your city, as well as any fun tourist destinations that are well-known.
3. Ask the local destination marketing company for resources and determine what is already being organized as part of the Conference to avoid duplicative efforts.



*COVID-19 concerns meant a change to the typical roster of organized tours. Travel Portland offered attendees a variety of self-guided tours.*

### Promotional Activities/Toronto 2020 Booth Subcommittee

Dan Bartlett, Senior Advisor, OCCMA, *Chair*

#### What went well

ICMA did a virtual welcome as part of the ICMA UNITE Conference with messages from the three co-chairs, and a video from Travel Portland.

#### Challenges

The pandemic resulted in the Toronto in-person Conference being replaced by the Unite Virtual Conference. As a result, the role of the Committee was significantly reduced. Furthermore, with the notification that an in-person conference was moving forward with only four months' notice, the lead time did not permit any late efforts to promote the Conference.

#### Recommendations for Future Host Committees

1. The development of promotional materials and a presence at the preceding conference is an important recruiting tool to maximize attendance and awareness.
2. If time permits, communications ahead of the opening of registration and prior to the expiration of the discounted registration rates by the Host Committee is a good reminder for ICMA members who are undecided about attending the Conference.



*This is the logo for ICMA's 2020 conference, which was virtual only. That format curtailed some of the efforts of our promotional committee.*

The OCCMA took great pride in hosting the 1999 ICMA Conference which set an all-time attendance record for that time. In 2012, when OCCMA President, Jeff Towery, submitted a proposal to host the 2021 Annual Conference in Portland again, OCCMA was excited and willing to take on this prestigious event. Little did we know that the nation would be dealing with a pandemic, and Portland would be dealing with significant challenges drawing national attention leading up to the Conference. That being said, we are all extremely proud of the end result of the 107th ICMA Annual Conference.

As co-chairs, we want to thank the members of the Host Committee and, in particular, the subcommittee chairs that did an outstanding job in planning this event then stepping back and waiting to determine what impact COVID-19 would have on the conference, then on very short notice, fully mobilizing with ICMA staff to pull off a successful conference.

We greatly appreciated the administrative support from the League of Oregon Cities that helped get us to the finish line. We also want to give a shout out to Jeremy Figoten and the ICMA Conference planning staff that really did an amazing job in pulling an event together in a very short timeframe. Despite the challenges of 2021, the OCCMA looks forward to the next time that we can host the ICMA Annual Conference.

One final note of interest. In 2012, OCCMA President, Jeff Towery, submitted the proposal to host this 2021 Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon. It was with great pride that Jeff Towery became the President-elect of ICMA. Now that was long-term planning by Jeff! Thank you and congratulations, Jeff! ICMA will be well-served by your leadership over the next three years.

*ICMA's incoming board, including Oregon's own Jeff Towery (left) introduced as the President-Elect.*



These additional documents can be found at [www.occma.org/ICMA](http://www.occma.org/ICMA) or by clicking on the links below.

- [Volunteer Handbook](#)
- [Host Committee Structure](#)
- [Memorandum of Authorization](#)
- [Ugly Report](#)
- [December 2, 2012, Proposal to Host the 2021 Annual Conference](#)
- [2021 ICMA Restart Conference Program](#)
- [League of Oregon Cities Contract](#)



**OCCMA extends a hearty thanks to all who made this event a great success!**