

Office of Neighborhood Involvement

The following questions were asked during the bureau's budget work session. Responses are included in the attached packet.

1. Please provide options for future of EPAP.
2. Please provide detail on Resolutions NW contract, what does the City get?

Office of Neighborhood Involvement – Budget Work Session Follow-up

April 9, 2014

East Portland Action Plan - Question: Please provide options for future of EPAP.

Original purpose of EPAP:

- EPAP’s original purpose was to provide “leadership and guidance to public agencies and other entities on how to strategically address community-identified issues and allocate resources to improve livability” in East Portland. “

East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) Implementation Group is providing significant value and still has important work to do. EPAP, currently, is one of the best examples in Portland of broad and empowered community involvement in local decision making, effective community advocacy, and leverages significant community energy and resources to meet the needs of the community. The EPAP Implementation Group is an independent, community-led organization. Any plan for the group’s future work to implement the EPAP must be developed collaboratively between the City of Portland and the group members. ONI recognizes that EPAP’s work does not fit into the traditional model for one-time funding with a short term start and end date. EPAP should be funded with one-time funding in FY 14-15 but in future years should be considered for on-going dollars. ONI currently is engaged in a discussion with EPAP members and staff in the Mayor’s Office to develop a shared agreement and plan for the future of EPAP. The process will review the findings and recommendations of the City Auditor’s more limited review of EPAP activities and effectiveness (expected release in late April 2014). The process also will review the original EPAP action items and establish an overall assessment of: which actions have been completed; which are short-term actions and how long it would take to complete them all; which are long-term actions that will take a number of years to complete; and which actions, if any, may not be appropriate to continue pursuing. This information will lead to the development of a clearer timeframe for EPAP’s future work. The process also will explore the opportunity to initiate a community-led process to revise and update the EPAP goals and action items based on the ongoing and evolving community needs and opportunities in East Portland and the expanded number of jurisdictions and entities involved in EPAP’s work.

It is also relevant to note that the economic circumstances since the beginning of EPAP’s work and resulting City bureau budget cuts have impeded the ability of city bureaus to fulfill their commitments to help implement a number of the EPAP action items. It is important for ONI to work with EPAP members and other stakeholders to develop a shared agreement on the best way to move forward to meet the significant and unique needs of East Portland. The EPAP process has built valuable relationships and capacity in the community to take action and we need to preserve and build on this valuable capacity. The evaluation and planning process under way will allow stakeholders and results to inform the recommended future of EPAP.

Resolutions NW – Mediation and Facilitation Services – Question: Please provide detail on Resolutions NW contract, what does the City get?

The City of Portland has contracted with Resolutions Northwest (RNW) since 2003 to provide community mediation services. The mediation services focus on resolving neighbor-to-neighbor, neighbor-to-business and other neighbor or neighborhood association related interpersonal conflicts. In 2005, the services were broadened to include group facilitation for communities in conflict and increased some focus in this area due to program demands in 2008. The facilitation services are limited to cases that are related to ONI's programs and services such as facilitation of good neighbor agreements or issues of conflict connected to neighborhood associations and other partner organizations. The goals of both services are to facilitate direct communication and problem solving to resolve conflict at the lowest level. RNW manages over 300 mediation cases and over 20 facilitation cases annually. A critical component of the program is a volunteer training and coordination component that both builds conflict resolution capacity in the community and leverages the funding to provide services using volunteer hours. This provides a pool of potential volunteers that have been able to support large community meetings and other City needs, sometimes at very short notice and at very low or no additional cost. Unfortunately, repeated years of reductions both due to program reductions (elimination of County funding and discontinuation of Community Residential Siting Program) as well as City budget cuts have resulted in reductions in case capacity and in the number of volunteers that can be trained and supported annually.

The \$20,000 requested for RNW's Mediation and Facilitation program would allow for the facilitation position to increase from 0.5 FTE to 0.75 FTE to better meet the demand for facilitation services. We expect this to allow for an increase of approximately 10-12 facilitation cases per year. It also could allow for up to a 30% increase of dedicated staffing for front desk coverage to 33 hours per week. This change would relieve Mediation staff from having to provide that coverage and refocus on outreach plans to engage underserved communities.