COMMUNITY CONNECT
Community and Government Working Together

REVISED MENU OF OPTIONS

(DRAFT 7/17/07)

The Menu of Options will be used to guide the development of draft recommendations during the two upcoming Recommendation Development retreats.

What will we be doing with the Menu at the Retreats?
- 1st Retreat (7/21): At the 1st Retreat we will prioritize the objectives and strategies under each goal area to create a short list of priorities. As you'll see, the objectives and strategies are broad in nature. Once objectives and strategies are determined, we'll talk about how best to accomplish them, drawing from the list of tactics that are included under each strategy in the Menu.

- 2nd Retreat (8/4): At the 2nd Retreat we will consider potential structures from a separate Structures Menu to support the priorities identified at the 1st Retreat. Then we will start working to craft draft recommendations along with questions or alternatives for the community to respond to during the outreach process.

How was the Menu developed? All of the ideas in the Menu are based directly on the data that was gathered from 19 different sources and coded by the DAWG process, as well as proposals from related efforts such as BIP #9. Some ideas have been reworded from the original source for clarity, and many have been grouped and consolidated to avoid multiple repetitions of the same idea.

How is the Menu organized? The Menu is organized by the three broad goal areas (denoted by roman numerals) that were developed at the June 2007 workgroup meeting. Within each goal area, there are objectives (denoted by capital letters). Within each objective, there are strategies (denoted by numbers), and within each strategy there are ideas for potential tactics (denoted by lower case letters). Objectives and strategies are listed in no particular order – prioritizing them will be the task at the 1st Retreat. The tactics represent a starting point list, based on the ideas gathered during the research. Additional ideas for tactics may emerge during the Recommendation Development process.

What's missing? This Menu does not include suggestions for broad structural changes or for resources or staffing strategies to support the goals and objectives. Those ideas are listed in a separate Structures Menu and Implementation Mechanisms Menu. The Structures Menu will used as the starting point for discussion at the 2nd Retreat. The Implementation Mechanisms Menu will be considered as we develop an implementation plan in the Fall.

What do the italics mean? Some strategies and tactics relate to more than one objective. Strategies and tactics in italics have already been listed in the Menu under another objective.

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I.　　GOAL 1: ENGAGE THE FULL DIVERSITY OF OUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE A:　INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS[1]

Strategies:

(1) Develop and fund targeted outreach strategies to engage members of under-represented groups

   (a) Reach out to people in the places where they naturally gather: community based organizations, service providers, churches, cultural organizations and schools

   (b) Use existing networks – engage people through organizations they trust and through trusted leaders

   (c) Use culturally appropriate methods of communication – e.g. word of mouth, community radio, methods that will work for people who are illiterate or can't read English

   (d) Engage the community around activities that meet a community need. (For many communities, their basic survival needs need to be addressed before they can engage; for other communities, engaging them in meeting an immediate need is the best way to get them involved.)

   (e) Do outreach to individuals directly, not just through organizations – (e.g. as one survey respondent put it, "Create a direct personal communication link with every individual, and not only with groups and organizations. Some groups and organizations could practice intimidation, oppression, exclusion, and preferences that will exclude a major portion of community members from participating. This is of major importance if we look to serve the interests of all refugees and immigrants.")

(2) Develop and fund effective outreach strategies to reach the general public

   (a) Provide Neighborhood Associations and other community organizations with funding and technical support to broaden their outreach strategies

   (b) Use creative marketing techniques (e.g. stuffers in phone bills, phone calls, radio and newspaper spots, list serves, mass media – all in multiple languages)

   (c) Do outreach with and through community organizations, businesses, churches, schools, and business associations

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[1] "Under-represented groups" refers to individuals and organizations who are less likely to get involved in mainstream forums for civic participation and who have been historically under-represented in those forums. This includes (but is not limited to) people of color, immigrants, low-income and homeless residents, youth, persons with disabilities, seniors, and renters.

(d) Customize messages to different parts of the community

(e) Conduct one-on-one outreach -- through personal conversations with neighbors, regular door to door community outreach

(f) Use new technology for outreach such as the creation of web pages and listserves

(g) Create a Marketing Campaign that benefits the entire neighborhood system

(h) Promote outreach year-round, not just during hot issues

(i) Use/ teach best practices for outreach and surveying (e.g. USAID)

(j) Create a city-wide culture/ campaign that asks every citizen to be involved in some way in the community

(k) Track improvement in involvement related to outreach

(l) Develop Neighborhood Association Welcome Packets that clarify how the system/ meetings work and offer options for participating

(3) Recognize that people define their "community" in various ways and support people to get involved in their community, however it is defined

(a) Support community engagement that is identity-based, place-based, issue-based etc.

(b) Support the development of affinity groups (not necessarily just for under-represented groups)

(c) Provide funding, support, and formal status for community organizations that are non place-based [See Structures Menu for more on this idea]

OBJECTIVE B: CREATE MEANINGFUL AND REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

(1) Make community meetings and events more welcoming and accessible to under-represented groups

(a) Address lack of physical access to meeting and seating options experienced by disability community

(b) Host meetings in ways that make under-represented communities feel comfortable

(c) Hold meetings in places of worship, community centers, even the homes of families

(d) Use facilitators/ leaders who come from same community/ have experienced similar issues

(e) Make meetings more safe and culturally sensitive (e.g. use a trained facilitator to create a safe environment when dealing with sensitive topics)

(f) Encourage and make space for under-represented groups to actively share their own unique ways of community-building and decision-making (ways of relating, bonding, building consensus)

(2) Make participation easier by addressing common barriers to participation

(a) Schedule meetings and events at times that work for people (suggestions included: hold meetings at various times of the week, hold fewer meetings, hold evening meetings in the schools, hold weekend meetings, daytime meetings for seniors reluctant to come out after dark)

(b) Hold meetings and events in locations that are easily accessible and comfortable/ familiar

(c) Provide child care

(d) Provide food

(e) Provide translators for meetings

(f) Offer bus fare, parking, etc.

(g) Provide adequate notification in advance of meetings (e.g. notification of meeting dates; make agendas available at least three days in advance, etc.)

(h) Work with County and non-profit sector to help people who are struggling to survive to still be able to find a way to participate in their government and community

(3) Make community meetings and events more enjoyable, effective, and rewarding

(a) Make meetings/ opportunities for participation more fun (e.g. celebrations and social events can attract members)

(b) Make meetings more relevant and less boring (e.g. focus on issues that are closer to home and/or people's personal interests)

(c) Make meetings more organized and focused (e.g. have clear priorities/ discussion topics to engage more people)

(d) Offer different types and sizes of meetings

(e) Provide hourly breaks

(f) Provide opportunities for participants to talk to one another informally before, after, and during meeting breaks

(g) Frame issues and facilitate meetings to make them as constructive and effective as possible (e.g. facilitate meetings in a respectful way to avoid turning situations into full blown conflicts when there are other answers)

(h) Make more time at meetings for open door discussions and face to face relationship-building (versus adherence to an issue-based agenda)

(4) Promote an inclusive decision-making and leadership structure for all community groups that are part of the city's involvement system

(a) Replace or supplement Roberts Rules of Order with better, more user friendly options

(b) Institute formal election of leadership (e.g. for Neighborhood Associations)

(c) Open votes at meetings to those not on the board (or use straw votes prior to board voting)

(d) Encourage term limits (e.g. for Neighborhood Associations)

(e) Engage key stakeholders in decisions about the type of meeting/ event and agenda

(f) Have meeting results and minutes available for the public shortly after the meeting, with ways to modify them If necessary

(g) Use small group discussions in large meetings to give everyone the opportunity to express themselves and be heard

(h) Elect Neighborhood Association Chairs (and perhaps all board members) through the official County election process in the same way that party precinct people are elected

(5) Recognize and reward the contributions of leaders and participants

(a) Provide incentives and rewards for participation (e.g. raffle prizes, tax breaks to residents who volunteer, an awards system similar to the Phi Theta Kappa model)

(b) Recognize and publicize the contributions of committed community volunteers

(c) Recognize the legitimacy of those who participate (e.g. Neighborhood Associations should be viewed as vehicles for participation, not representation, and should be valued as such; Clarify that neighborhood participation is strictly voluntary with no mandate to speak for the community)

(d) Hold exit interviews with all departing neighborhood association board members

(6) Develop strategies to engage people who don't come to meetings

(a) Hold focus groups

(b) Create more opportunities for people to do work and see results, rather than attend meetings

(c) Institute a vote by mail option

(d) Make a point of communicating with the under-represented, even if they don't participate

(e) Create Neighborhood Service Centers to involve those who are not currently involved in the neighborhood system [see Structures Menu for more on Neighborhood Service Centers]

(f) Create a calendar or menu of all the options for community involvement beyond the neighborhood meeting – events, gathering places, interest groups, clean ups, etc.

OBJECTIVE C: BUILD COMMUNITY MEMBERS' LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC SKILLS

Strategies:

(1) Provide leadership training for community members and organizations, with a particular focus on under-represented groups

(a) Provide leadership training to members of under-represented groups (don't just focus on the small number who have already been identified as leaders)

(b) Continue/ expand ONI's leadership training for communities of color

(c) Provide education on current issues and politics – educate residents to engage in political deliberation

(d) Adequately fund and expand resident education and training in City processes and advocacy skills – Example: Community University: year-round trainings for residents and community leaders. Subject matter includes neighborhood leadership, governance on the City and community level, communication and organizing skills, "maximizing diversity", building and retaining leadership, recruiting new members, parliamentary procedures

(e) Use a variety of education and training models to meet the needs of diverse communities (e.g. popular education model for immigrant communities)

(f) Actively mobilize youth leadership in community organizations

(2) Provide education and capacity building for community members and organizations

(a) Educate people about how the current system of involvement works/ how the city works

(b) Provide education to the general public to increase their understanding of under-represented groups (e.g. immigrant/ refugee groups, homeless etc.)

(c) Provide training in cultural competency to support increased diversity in community organizations and leadership

(d) Train NA board members about their roles and responsibilities

(e) Involve the media to increase awareness, knowledge, and support for issues and organizations (e.g. cable access, You Tube, etc.)

[See Goal 2 for more ideas on capacity building]

(3) Build a general culture of civic responsibility and community involvement

(a) Encourage people to give back to their communities (e.g. create improved community service opportunities for youth, homeless, and low-income folks)

(b) Help people that live very close together to act neighborly with each other (e.g. Encourage communities to consciously develop ways to welcome and incorporate new members into their communities so that people can get to know their neighbors)

(c) Teach young people the value of civic participation and community involvement (e.g. work with students in schools, getting them involved in community affairs early through community-based service learning etc.; organize a program for students to be interns in community organizations and participate in Council activities; educate kids from preschool on re: effective ways to engage with government and give opportunities)

(d) Create a core of civic journalists to add content to local sites

OBJECTIVE D: BUILD COMMUNITY MEMBERS' POWER AND VOICE

Strategies:

(1) Identify spokespeople and "influentials" who can represent the interests of specific communities with the City and broader community

(a) Ensure the perspective of underrepresented groups is represented in the decision making process by recruiting leaders from within these groups to serve on City boards and commissions.

(b) Identify area experts with diverse backgrounds to assist bureaus/ offer public input; and to serve on advisory groups

(c) Utilize representatives/ liaisons/ ombudsmen from the community to bring ideas and concerns to officials ("many members in the Slavic community tend to be passive and do not like to draw attention to themselves due to fear of retribution in home country")

(d) Use representatives as proxies for the entire community (but avoid tokenism, where an individual is asked to speak for an entire complex and diverse community)

(2) Use community organizing techniques to create an independent voice and power for the community (especially for under-represented groups)

(a) Convene citywide "Community Congress" to identify citywide priorities and policy proposals [see details under Goal 3, Objective D]

(b) Organize neighborhood celebration and events and accountability sessions (which hold public officials accountable) which showcase the voices and culture of those on the down side of power (get help from Oregon Action, ACORN, and the Latino Network)

(c) Return ONI to its ONA roots by recommitting itself to the neighborhoods through grassroots organizing and empowerment. This will help the city to understand where local priorities lie, incorporate new voices in civic discussion, and develop leadership to effectively advocate for an inclusive agenda of neighborhood concerns

(d) Support organizing efforts for children and youth (Suggestions include: Community support for children to organize and advocate for themselves; Develop programs and support for immigrant and refugee youth— e.g. building youth leadership and participation in the Children's Bill of Rights and Youth Commission, educating youth about their rights; Hold a monthly youth forum that includes state, county and local officials to spearhead collaborative efforts in helping to engage high school students.)

(e) Support efforts to organize regionally and across sectors when big issues arise

(3) Broaden the leadership of Neighborhood Associations and other community organizations to give voice to the full diversity of the community

(a) Institute more proportional representation in communities (Suggestions: Have board membership for Neighborhood Associations or other citizen boards be filled according to the proportion of select groups in a given neighborhood or City boundary; Create a quota system so that boards would include at least the same percentage of low-income, people of color, immigrant, renters, and women as are in the neighborhood; Require a homeless person to sit on each neighborhood group; Give renters a greater voice in the current NA system.)

(b) Recruit more diverse leaders to become active in NAs and on NA boards – (e.g. partner with principals to identify youth for NA boards; provide adequate support to promote meaningful involvement and leadership development for under-represented groups in the neighborhood system)

(c) Improve diversity by providing leadership training for people of color; retain people of color by training others on cultural competence

(d) Organize Black and Brown caucuses within neighborhood associations, to develop strategies and voice frustrations in a safe environment

II.   GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CAPACITY

OBJECTIVE A: FOSTER SOCIAL TIES AND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Strategies:

(1) Build relationships among community residents

(a) Organize community gatherings: Social events and fun community building activities – e.g. block parties, neighborhood and multi-cultural fairs and festivals (create targeted grant fund to support logistical and marketing costs for such events.)

(b) Organize Welcome Wagons: New residents receive a Welcome Kit informing them who their new neighbors are and their contact information, and what their neighborhood association is called. Additionally, new residents receive a follow up phone call or personal visit from a NA representative.

(c) Build face to face relationships: Promote one-on-one dialogues and relationships among residents to foster understanding of one another's cultures and backgrounds

(2) Build a sense of community identity, a "sense of place" for each neighborhood

(a) Publicize neighborhood identities (e.g. Street cap signs identifying neighborhood association) and identify unique neighborhood assets that create a "sense of place" for each neighborhood

(b) Preserve neighborhoods and prevent displacement of residents and businesses

(c) Align boundaries used by governments with neighborhood boundaries so there is a more cohesive sense of identity and greater meaning to neighborhood boundaries

(d) Break neighborhoods down into smaller units (e.g. blocks) so that most people have a connection to their neighborhood. Encourage neighbors on each block to get to know each other and form loose knit groups for mutual support and representation at other levels within the neighborhood associations

(e) Utilize the media to increase awareness of community issues and organizations (e.g. cable access, You Tube, etc.)

(3) Create public spaces that promote community interactions

(a) Create more facilities that provide a focus for the neighborhood and a place where neighbors can gather informally, such as markets, gardens, community centers, parks, park benches, and health centers

(b) Promote the use of public spaces (community centers, schools) to provide a space where the community can gather formally for meetings and events (these need to be available to the community, affordable, and open on weekends, evenings)

(c) Keep these needs in mind when designing new buildings, town centers, etc. so the built environment fosters these larger goals – make sure they're in the land use code

(4) Foster connections between different stakeholder groups within the community

(a) Promote (and support with funding) outreach and collaboration between Neighborhood Associations and under-represented groups and community organizations

(b) Promote formal partnerships and mutual support between different groups (e.g. provide small grants to partnerships rather than individual organizations)

(c) Create a Neighborhood Alliance model with a variety of stakeholders (neighborhood association, library, business, social service, planner, Neighborhood Emergency Team, police/fire, etc.) gathering quarterly to share information and identify opportunities to collaborate

(d) Include non-profits, school PTAs, business people, and all the other special interest groups into neighborhood associations through committees on various topics. If necessary combine several neighborhoods together to have these committees achieve a critical mass.

(5) Support communication and information sharing within the community

(a) Require that the first page people see on the new free wireless network is civic information related to where they are accessing the internet, as well as their "home" neighborhood: "Here's what's happening in your neighborhood" "Here's what's happening in the neighborhood where you are connecting."

(b) Provide resources and technical support to enable Neighborhood Associations (and other community organizations) to create list-serves, send out e-newsletters, etc.

(c) Enable Neighborhood Associations to post their meeting minutes on the City's web site

(d) Provide resources and technical support to enable all Neighborhood Associations to create and maintain their own websites

(e) Provide enough funding for neighborhood and regional newsletters (e.g. SW News) to go out monthly to each neighborhood resident

(f) Market Neighborhood Associations and other organizations, events, etc. as appropriate to build the identity, support, and credibility needed to expand

OBJECTIVE B: BUILD NETWORKS ACROSS COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Strategies:

(1) Support better communication and information sharing among communities and organizations across the city

(a) Promote citywide communication among neighborhood organizations – e.g. citywide newsletter, cable access, training sessions, resource library, e-mail

(b) Encourage more cross Neighborhood Association and District Coalition activity directed toward education, information, and mutual assistance

(c) Develop a small business electronic web-based portal that is easy to use and accessible to any business with computer access. Provide a blog type feature where business owners can talk to one another for advice and about issues that affect them

(d) *Enable neighborhood associations to post their meeting minutes on the City's web site*

(e) Create a central website to post NA newsletters and calendars, host websites for NAs and maintain sites. All NAs should have web pages linked to each other.

(f) Create a sister NA program so that NAs develop an understanding of issues in other parts of the City (could be extended to include neighborhoods outside Portland)

(g) Provide adequate on-going support for the expansion of the eVolvement program citywide (e.g. Back Fence)

(h) More effective use of websites: eVolvement, ILoveLents.com (free blogging site), Commissioner Adams' site; neighborhood association websites that allow for exchange of issues; websites that allow for dialogue, links to other groups

(2) Foster coordination and collaboration among residents from different neighborhoods and communities

(a) Sponsor events that mix leaders from different areas –e.g. create all-city brainstorming sessions for neighborhood leaders

(b) Organize a periodic Neighborhood Congress, perhaps annual, that would bring neighborhood representatives together to discuss common concerns, and maybe to exercise some decision-making or formal input authority (e.g. a body that would meet regularly and act like the General Assembly of the UN)

(c) Organize a Portland Cultural Congress to engage under-represented groups

(d) Create and fund multicultural community centers where multiethnic groups could have office spaces and a large meeting place to gather and organize. It could also include a City office that could provide an orientation to City resources and also be used to educate the broader community about new residents.

(e) Promote the role of community spokespeople and "influentials" as "bridge people" between organizations

(3) Promote dialogue on controversial and divisive issues

(a) Foster "tough" open conversations about racism and other prejudices

(b) Hold listening sessions on controversial issues

(c) Provide mediators between civic groups, police, the business community, and the poor/homeless

(d) Provide increased support for conflict resolution within the neighborhood involvement system

(4) Build better coordination between community organizations and business associations

(a) Ensure the opportunity for small business participation at neighborhood association meetings, neighborhood coalition activities, community task forces, etc by coordinating programs, workshops and events that promote interaction, consensus and partnerships (e.g. joint trainings on recruiting and retaining volunteers, electronic communications, communicating with members, event planning, understanding land use, etc.)

(b) Better align Neighborhood Associations and Business District Associations (e.g. redraw neighborhood boundaries to reflect natural affinities)

OBJECTIVE C: PROMOTE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND DECISION-MAKING TO IDENTIFY ISSUES, DEVELOP A SHARED VISION AND CREATE ACTION PLANS

Strategies:

(1) Bring together community residents and/or stakeholder groups to build shared understanding of one another's values, hopes, and interests

(a) Convene study circles or workshops to promote community dialogue

(b) Promote community dialogues to address conflicts among residents (e.g. racism, diversity issues, etc.)

(c) Reinvent the terms of neighborhood dialogue to go beyond crime and land use to broader issues of community building

(d) Provide additional staff support to neighborhoods experiencing a high degree of development pressure or other major changes to keep neighbors informed, manage conflict if it arises, and allow the community to take advantage of opportunities that arise

(2) Inventory community's assets and needs

(a) Conduct community asset mapping to identify assets and resources that can be mobilized and leveraged to build community and solve problems

(b) Provide community members with handheld digital survey devices like they gave to people in Des Moines, IA. The devices allow, people trained in its usage to survey their neighborhood and record information on litter, nuisances and such

(3) Create democratic decision-making mechanisms to determine community priorities

(a) Use community organizing strategies to engage residents in identifying issues, defining problems, and developing strategies

(b) Create a vote by mail system for neighborhood association issues

(c) Provide training for Neighborhood Associations in becoming more "democratic" institutions

(d) Give more weight to perspectives of residents with seniority

(**4) Develop community action plans**

(a) The City's investment in a "neighborhood system" should yield organized NAs in every neighborhood having a neighborhood-level vision, a set of priorities, a strategy for action, and a commitment to involving all citizens in framing their goals.

(b) Create neighborhood plans for all neighborhoods and update them every ten years. Tie the plan action items to the city budget and capital improvements. (e.g. The City should create a process that requires neighborhoods to create their own viable and enforceable neighborhood plans in partnership with the community. These plans should incorporate land use, transportation, ecosystems, and historical preservation that meet intergovernmental requirements)

OBJECTIVE D: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY'S CAPACITY TO TAKE ACTION TO ADDRESS ITS NEEDS

Strategies:

(1) Promote mutual support among residents to assist one another in addressing their needs

(a) Support (recognize/ replicate) immigrant and refugee communities' mutual assistance associations which transcend geographical boundaries

(b) Use asset mapping to facilitate residents sharing and bartering their skills and resources with one another (e.g. time dollar/ skills bank programs)

(2) Strengthen the capacity of community organizations through sharing of ideas and best practices

(a) Create a Neighborhood Association think-tank to share good ideas, successes

(b) Create an e-mail newsgroup/ list serve to share ideas; create centralized website to share needs, resources

(c) Encourage successful Neighborhood Associations to mentor others, and reward them for doing so (e.g *Sister NA program*)

(d) Document successes and failures to enable other organizations to replicate successes and avoid repeating mistakes or doing what has already been done before

(3) Provide resources to community groups for their projects and action plans

(a) Develop a Community Building Small Grant Program for neighborhood place-making activities. Fund projects related to beautification, capital improvements, establishing a sense of place

(b) Increase funding and small grants to neighborhood organizations and community groups [See also "Structures Menu" for a list of ideas for specific funding levels and mechanisms]

(c) Fund pilot projects to show what a few resources can do

(d) Provide more resources for under-performing Neighborhood Associations

(4) Provide training and technical assistance

(a) Create mechanisms to ensure that all NAs have access to the tools to move their priorities forward. NAs need to be encouraged and supported to solve their own problems

(b) Create a civic institute to teach techniques for problem solving and civic engagement -- e.g. Organize an annual Neighborhood Symposium: workshops, speakers, activities and exhibitors that provide participants opportunities to learn about services, resources and ideas for improving and maintaining their neighborhoods

(c) Provide technical assistance on land-use, neighborhood data, tech support for newsletters, templates, websites, and history/archival of info

(d) Provide grant writing assistance to Neighborhood Associations and District Coalitions

(e) Providing training on how to set up websites, e-mail alerts, list serves, etc.

(f) Provide training on how the city services system works

(g) Establish a committee of Neighborhood Association advisors

(h) Provide training for Neighborhood Associations in becoming more "democratic" institutions

(i) Improve working relationships between Neighborhood Associations and their respective District Coalitions

(j) Raise funds (ONI) to set up and evaluate some best practices pilot programs that could help inform the work of community groups across the City (potentially implemented in partnership with immigrant groups, APNBA, etc.)

(5) Foster collaboration between community organizations and government service providers

(a) Improve connections with city services – e.g. The Des Moines Neighborhood Service Teams (NSTs) comprised of a police sergeant and a zoning & housing inspector are assigned to one or two neighborhoods, and are required to attend neighborhood association meetings. NSTs act as a primary point of contact for people in their neighborhoods to help solve problems. Each team also has assigned contacts in other bureaus.

(b) Build Neighborhood Association and community organizations' relationships with other government entities such as the County, city bureaus, and schools

(c) Improve community's connection with police (suggestions: Expand North Portland's the Back Fence, which allows residents to communicate with a local community police officer; Pay for policemen to attend NA meetings; Have them available at appropriate times)

(d) Retask some bureau employees to directly interact with Neighborhood Associations (e.g. Police's Neighborhood Response Teams)

OBJECTIVE E: ENSURE THAT COMMUNITY TAKES ACTION AND IS ABLE TO SUCCEED

Strategies:

(1) Increase accountability of Neighborhood Associations (and other community groups receiving city funding) to demonstrate effectiveness

(a) Base Neighborhood Association performance measures on action, not just attendance

(b) Tie funding to performance – e.g. in Des Moines, IA only neighborhood associations which demonstrate that they're organized (through regular meetings and minutes)

qualify for neighborhood revitalization funds. This gives neighborhoods an incentive to organize while providing the City with a credible information source

(c) Establish some standards for what neighborhood associations are tasked to accomplish (establish what it means to represent a neighborhood, give people tools to help them reach the standard) [Note: what this looks like will depend on Structures discussion – e.g. are NA's representative or participatory?]

(d) Make NA leaders responsible for submitting "well-reasoned" information to City decision-makers

(e) Track volunteer hours, demonstrate effectiveness

(2) Increase accountability of City (especially city service system) to respond to community groups' problem-solving requests

(a) Enable citizens to track requests to the City (similar to TRACS building permits system) – e.g. Des Moines, IA has an innovative "Handheld Digital Survey Devices program that allows interested residents to walk their neighborhoods and report instances of littering, nuisances, and other issues (excluding private properties). Issues are automatically fed into the service request system so residents can track them. Most requests involve other jurisdictions, and the City passes requests on. Requests that the City can't address in a timely manner may get scheduled into the capital budget, in which case residents are informed when work is completed

(b) Increase accessibility to all services: housing, transportation, safety, small business assistance, licensing. Include language access and cultural competency

[See related ideas under Goal 3]

III. GOAL 3: INCREASE COMMUNITY IMPACT ON PUBLIC DECISIONS

OBJECTIVE A: SOLICIT COMMUNITY INPUT ON ALL KEY PUBLIC DECISIONS

Strategies:

1. Utilize guidelines in BIP#9 Public Involvement Toolkit for identifying the appropriate level of input (i.e. inform, consult, involve, collaborate, or decide) **that should be sought based on the nature of the decision[2]**

2. Amend city charter to include a "bill of rights" section that presents the principles of community engagement, establishes a community governance structure for Portland, and describes the general roles of community members, city staff, and elected officials in that culture.

3. Create Public Involvement guidelines and policies

(a) Have the city council adopt principles of community governance by ordinance to set the standard for all city bureaus and staff

(b) Develop processes and guidelines by which bureaus should design, direct, implement, provide feedback and evaluate public involvement processes for individual projects

(c) Establish a standing Public Involvement Advisory Commission to advise bureaus and hold the City accountable to adopted public involvement principles and guidelines. Create a Public Involvement position to adequately staff the Commission, among other duties

(d) Require written Public Involvement plans for certain types of major capital, policy and planning projects

(e) Utilize participatory budgeting (e.g. Have a broad and widely open budget process so citizens can be meaningfully involved in how the City spends its $2,000,000,000.+)

(f) Encourage residents to advocate for similar involvement systems (e.g. Public Involvement Advisory Commission etc.) across jurisdictions (e.g. County, Metro, school districts, etc.)

(g) Require every city bureau to develop an overall community engagement strategy that fits the type of work done by the agency

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[2] BIP #9 created a Public Involvement Toolkit that lays out a step by step process for engaging key stakeholders before a decision-making process is developed to determine the level and nature of public involvement that is appropriate for that decision. It also includes a matrix of potential public involvement tools that are appropriate for each level of involvement. ONI is in the process of hiring a staff person to coordinate implementation of BIP#9's recommendations, support the creation of a citizen's public involvement standards commission, and to work internally with city staff to create a consistent public involvement process.

(h) Create standard "mechanisms" for neighborhoods to be able to influence government – "designated ways" to advocate the neighborhood perspective

(i) Create a communication system that clearly articulates the process for the public to communicate their needs to government, facilitates access to information and makes the decision-making process more transparent, including posting key docs online, org charts with city contact info by project and updates on the process

4. Make sure that requests for input are genuine – only ask for input when it will be used

(a) Determine if public input is needed or wanted before soliciting it (i.e. "Avoid the 'charade' of public consultation when input is not needed or will be ignored")

(b) Be clear about what government wants from public committees, what issues have a choice, not a set policy. Ask for input when truly desired.

(c) Demonstrate that information being collected will be valued or used

(d) Listen to and fund the voices of people from underrepresented communities. Let those speaking feel like they're heard. Government needs to demonstrate that they want to hear from underrepresented groups

OBJECTIVE B: COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY ABOUT DECISIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE INPUT

Strategies:

(1) Make general information about government bureaus and services accessible and transparent

(a) Implement improvements to Portland Online – e.g. organize information by subject area as well as by bureau or jurisdiction, make the website more interactive, include blogs for each city official, create a personal accounts feature allowing users to request automatic updates on specific issues

(b) Create list serves for those interested in keeping up-to-date on different departments and issues. Create a place where the responses can be seen and feedback obtained.

(c) Create an online version of Information and Referral so residents can e-mail in questions/ requests and receive responses by e-mail

(d) Enable citizens to track requests to the City (e.g. Charlotte, N.C. has a 3-1-1 phone/internet system that allows residents to request government information and to make requests; system allows requests to be tracked. See also Des Moines, IA Handheld Digit Survey Devices example above.)

(e) Guarantee ready access to the information and resources needed to support business in their relationships with City government

(f) Provide ways for the public to connect to bureaus and improve two-way communication – such as Bureau of Planning's liaison program

(g) Provide more multilingual reference materials, and an outreach campaign to make immigrants and refugees aware of multilingual material that is available

(h) Provide user-friendly telephone based information systems that don't send callers into automated message limbo and that enable callers to speak to a human being easily

(i) Formalize and standardize public records rules that allow the public easy and reliable access to public documents across all city agencies

(j) Have a coordinated and seamless online process. Allow non-city staff to access PortlandOnline to make changes – neighborhood groups need to be able to post documents, notices, forums and blogs and not rely on staff

(k) Clarify the roles of NAs, ONI, coalitions, other groups and City personnel for citizens

(2) Make information about City's goals and plans accessible and transparent

(a) Refine and implement the biennial budget outreach process as the first early involvement step that gives the public information about the bureaus' upcoming projects

(b) Develop a more user-friendly system for providing public access to complex policy, planning and capital project related documentation

(c) Share information with neighborhoods about the City's plans – e.g. In Charlotte, NC, consistent goals for each neighborhood are clearly articulated, informing residents and government what government agencies are responsible and what residents can do to contribute to the goals

(d) Consult with the Small Business Advisory Council prior to making any decisions which may affect small business job creation, job retention or job expansion

(e) Develop a coordinated City-wide focus/ plan that facilitates a consistent approach to neighborhood issues

(3) Make information about government decisions accessible and transparent

(a) Rebroadcast local government proceedings or summaries on public access TV or radio stations

(b) E mail City Council decisions which have policy impacts to each Coalition Office and let them forward to the neighborhood officers or websites. Same of new administrative rules or State mandates which may impact our quality of life

(c) Develop clear criteria for putting items on the City Council's consent agenda – both routine and "emergency" ordinances – and provide a summary statement backup information available to the public

(d) Provide full, timely, and easily accessible public disclosure of resource allocation decisions - in budgets, in procurements, and in expenditure programs

(4) Publicize widely all opportunities for public input and involvement

(a) Develop a citywide Public Involvement calendar

(b) Arrange, coordinate, and advertise meetings through a citywide newsletter or calendar

(c) Develop and maintain a cross referenced multi-modal information system (e.g. clearinghouse) listing timely notices from all agencies / entities seeking citizen involvement from community groups. Develop two way communication so that neighborhoods can set or influence agency agendas and time lines; not merely respond

(d) Use billboards and TV

(5) Use an "early warning system" to keep stakeholders in the loop before the decision-making process begins

(a) Get public input before the decision-making or planning process begins -- e.g. The "Early Notification System" (ENS) in Los Angeles was created to seek feedback from neighborhood councils early in the City's decision-making process

(b) Give communities an opportunity to mediate between conflicting interests before the official decision gets made – e.g. Neighborhood Associations in Gresham get early notice of land use activities and this enables them to work out differences before going to council, which expedites the review process by avoiding delays, appeals, remands, or denials. They often work out Good Neighbor Agreements with developers. (Embed Good Neighbor Agreements within the city system so they have the force of law behind them and can't be discounted/ ignored once they have been signed.)

(c) Change notification period on land use reviews. Twenty-eight days is too short for neighborhood associations that meet monthly.

(6) Clearly explain all the choices in a decision

(a) Provide residents and stakeholder groups with a clear analysis of how a policy or decision might impact them

(b) Use visual simulations of different options on the web site (stories and pictures)

(c) Help people on all sides understand the big picture implications of possible paths

(7) Provide training on City processes and support residents in navigating the system in order to get their input heard

    (a) Initiate popular education and training on how City processes work and advocacy skills for diverse constituencies (includes partnerships with culturally-specific organizations, neighborhood offices, other agencies)

    (b) Create a strong office of ombudsmanship at the policymaking levels to receive concerns, advocate for their solutions, and provide consistent continuous follow-up

    [See also Goal 1: Leadership Training and Goal 2: Capacity Building]

(8) Use new technology to support effective two-way communication between government and the community

    (a) Support and fund 24/7 Town Hall, eVolvement through Portland Online, youth sponsored ideas (developed by Children's Bill of Rights team), 311 – as means to get information and as a potential mechanism for communicating ideas to elected officials

    [See also Strategy 1 in this section for additional options and examples]

OBJECTIVE C: PROMOTE INPUT MECHANISMS THAT ARE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

Strategies:

(1) Use a diverse range of mechanisms for input (not a one-size-fits-all)

    (a) Draw from list of tools in the BIP #9 Public Involvement Toolkit – use different tools as appropriate for different kinds of decisions and offer residents a range of different ways to provide input on each decision

    (b) Explore how to use information technology more creatively and effectively to facilitate public information and involvement (while also addressing the digital divide)

    (c) Provide alternatives to public hearings

    (d) Tailor public involvement approaches for each community (work through their leadership and organizations and ask how they want to engage)

(2) Come to where the community is

    (a) Hold town hall style meetings in the community

    (b) Hold Council and other Commission meetings in the community

(c) Regular city meetings held at public places like coffee shops, community organizations

(3) Provide opportunities for direct, face-to-face interaction between community members and decision-makers

(a) Promote frequent visits by officials to organizations, church groups, and PTA and neighborhood meetings

(b) Create a community room at City Hall for citizens to hold meet and greets

(c) Schedule regular "summit" or "roundtable" meetings with NA/ community leaders [annually or quarterly]

(d) Allow all average citizens personal involvement and easy access to their political leaders

(4) Use surveys, focus groups, and interviews to gather input from the entire community

(a) Poll under-represented populations rather than listening exclusively to their leaders (or self-proclaimed representatives)

(b) Seek public input through neighborhood kiosks, surveys, etc.

(c) Make decisions based on quality market research, not just talking to a few people

(d) Conduct frequent surveys (in-person and by e-mail) and focus groups to collect citizen and stakeholder input throughout the decision making process

(e) Use the internet and social networking sites as a method for soliciting input from interest groups

(5) Make participation more accessible for under-represented groups/ address barriers to participation

(a) Make all public involvement events accessible to people with disabilities and seniors (including providing room for mobility devices in the meetings, audio descriptions for the blind, sign language interpreters, specially formatted written materials available in advance.) Require Americans w Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility for all City public involvement events

(b) Provide translation/ intermediaries for immigrant and refugee populations. Require bureaus to commit a specific percentage of bureau and project budgets for accommodating special needs requests for language interpretation and translation

(c) Improve accessibility of childcare services at key public involvement events to expand participation of families with children in City public involvement processes

(6) Make participation more convenient and logistically feasible

  (a) Alternate locations and times of city board and commission meetings to allow maximum participation from the community

  (b) Make public testimony more efficient – people can't wait

  (c) Provide a way to testify before City Council without having to take time off from work and travel to City Hall.

(7) Improve Advisory Committees

  (a) Review the composition, role and effectiveness of City boards and commissions and citizen advisory committees.

  (b) Establish an effective Bureau Advisory Committee system that is involved in meaningful organizational changes, rather than after the fact notice. To maintain authority, BAC chairs could report directly to the Mayor without the presence of staff.

  (c) Improve selection of Bureau Advisory Committees to make them more representative of the broader community. (Suggestions: Community groups should select their representatives to city commissions and advisory committees, not the bureau staff; Go to District coalitions for citizen representatives for City Boards/ Commissions and Bureau Advisory Committees.)

(8) Create mechanisms for individuals to provide direct input to public officials

  (a) Provide comment cards/ talk boxes around town for people to record their opinions/suggestions; create an online suggestion box

  (b) Promote easy access by phone to decision-makers

  (c) Promote online conversations with City officials

  (d) Establish a public input hotline

  (e) Create a neighborhood petitioning process

(9) Use impact assessments to analyze potential effect of public decisions on the community

  (a) Develop a Community Impact Inventory tool to be used by community members as a framework for dialogue with the city and project developers (ONI BAC 07-08)

  (b) Create a requirement that for any public works project that is going to affect and impact the health and well being of nearby business units, that there is a jobs impact study as part of the project development, approval and permitting process including a

line item in the project development budget for business assistance and disruption mitigation

(10) Use participatory budgeting processes

OBJECTIVE D: SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PROACTIVELY IDENTIFY ISSUES AND DIALOGUE WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Strategies:

(1) Convene citywide "Community Congress" to identify citywide priorities and policy proposals

(a) Organize a periodic Neighborhood/ Community Congress that would bring neighborhood representatives together to discuss common concerns and develop a shared policy agenda -- (e.g. Lake Oswego Neighborhood Action Coalition, an organization composed of representatives of Lake Oswego's Neighborhoods, serves as a forum to discuss and represent the common interests of the community)

(b) Organize a Peoples' Congress with slots for NAs, business, churches, ethnic groups – people would apply for them and be selected. They would meet quarterly, form opinions and give direction to government

(c) Create a Community Vision Council that allows visionPDX to become a living project and continues regardless of the administration in City Hall

(d) Hold an annual summit of neighborhood and community groups focused on City policy issues

(2) Use community organizing techniques to develop the voice and power of community groups on policy issues

(a) *Support efforts to organize regionally and across sectors when big issues arise*

(b) Address the disparity between people with and without power so that all feel welcomed and valued

[See also Goal 1, Objective D]

(3) Promote ongoing dialogue and collaboration between community and decision-makers to set priorities/ Ensure a greater role for the community in setting the priorities for city government activities

(a) Hold quarterly meetings between neighborhood associations, community organizations, government agencies and non-profits to help form consensus on the direction to move the city

    (b) Develop a Citizen Advisory Committee for each Council member to help guide him or her on upcoming votes

    (c) Create neighborhood liaisons (or community watch dogs) to advocate for community interests on an ongoing basis

(4) Refer to community action plans to guide City decision-making

    (a) Develop a new, reliable construct for citizens and the City to prioritize decisions/ resources – e.g. via a Comprehensive Plan update or a strategic planning process, including capital systems

    (b) Solicit action plans from the neighborhoods and use them; Raise government officials' awareness of prior plans

    (c) Conduct a neighborhood needs process for each neighborhood

(5) Work to develop an understanding of community issues and concerns on an ongoing basis

    (a) Hold neighborhood summits several months before elections so neighborhood leaders can meet the candidates and neighborhoods can inform candidates about significant issues.

    (b) Require City officials/bureau staff to come to community meetings; restructure city job for after hours

    (c) Increase understanding by City Council members and their staff of the needs of small business owners to be successful, contributing members of society

    (d) Proactively get out and engage with the community rather than asking the community to self-select in order to engage with city government

    (e) Use the expertise of the coalitions and neighborhood associations to shape understanding of key issues, policies, outreach and action items within the city and system

    (f) Have the Mayor randomly pick a Portlander a week to have coffee or lunch with to understand what issues affect the average voter.

OBJECTIVE E: INCORPORATE COMMUNITY INPUT INTO DECISIONS IN MEANINGFUL WAYS

Strategies:

(1) Make advisory committees more effective/ meaningful

(a) Make sure Advisory Committees have specific outcomes/ tasks/ timelines to ensure success, and adequate staff support. Need focused charge, an important purpose, defined tasks, and an end date

(b) *Establish an effective bureau advisory committee system that is involved in meaningful organizational changes, rather than after the fact notice. To maintain authority, BAC chairs could report directly to the Mayor without the presence of staff*

(c) Honor recommendations of committees; listen; act upon feedback

(d) Determine current accountability of members of boards/ commissions – develop mechanisms for auditing participation

(2) Make decision-making more responsive and accountable to community input and priorities

(a) Require government agencies to provide written rationale for any proposed action taken over the objections of the community (model: New Orleans)

(b) Use a performance-based approach tailored to each neighborhood's goals (e.g. The City of Des Moines uses "Citizen Initiated Performance Assessment" which focuses City performance on issues important to each neighborhood, and allows the City to apply its limited resources to areas most in need. At the same time, each neighborhood performance measure can be tied to a citywide goal)

(c) Increase reliance on input and expertise from coalitions and Neighborhood Associations, respond to their ideas and suggestions, and follow through on written as well as verbal commitment

(d) Prioritize testimony from neighborhood associations and community organizations; Respect neighborhood visions/opinions when making decisions.

(e) Prioritize concerns of underrepresented groups

(f) Prioritize livability over business/development interests

(3) Close the loop -- Communicate with the community about their input

(a) Provide correspondence back to the community that concerns have been registered and heard

(b) Double-check with the community by articulating what government thinks they heard

(c) Circle back to community to explain the decision that was made, the rationale for the decision, and how input was used

(4) Continue to involve the community in the implementation phase

(5) Educate the community to understand that even if the community's input is included in the decision-making process, most decisions require a compromise between competing interests

   (a) Recognize that while communities should have a role in decision-making, ultimately they elect people to make the final decisions for them. On controversial issues, no amount of community discourse will generate a consensus

   (b) Accept that City regulations and neighborhoods will be in conflict sometimes. Know when to stop dialogue

   (c) Keep the public's expectations realistic

OBJECTIVE F: CHANGE THE CULTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SO THAT IT IS WILLING AND ABLE TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY MORE EFFECTIVELY

Strategies:
(1) Foster an internal culture that supports the principles of community governance

   (a) Change City culture so citizens are seen as assets/ valued at a gut level

   (b) Highlight the successes of public involvement: Publicize successes of decision-making which included underrepresented groups; add a section to Portland Online reporting public involvement successes

   (c) Require City staff to return phone calls.

   (d) Respect/ honor public's time

   (e) Staff and commission members need to be neutral, knowledgeable, and responsive

   (f) Emphasize the equal responsibility of community members and government to communicate and work with each other

   (g) Develop a campaign to get the powers that be to agree to give up some power to the less powerful. A study coupled with media work can put the pressure on

   (h) Amend the City Charter to support public involvement principles found in the PITF Report of 2005. *Include a "bill of rights" section that presents the principles of community engagement, establishes a community governance structure for Portland, and describes the general roles of community members, city staff, and elected officials in that culture*

(2) Hire and elect people who are committed to community governance

   (a) Base hiring and performance review on public involvement ethic Include community engagement elements in job descriptions of city staff (especially bureau directors) and in formal job performance reviews

(b) Reduce the political resistance of municipal leaders to the empowerment of neighborhoods

(c) Cultivate elected leaders who are friendly to the neighborhood system, community organizing, and locally based decision-making

(3) Diversify City government with people who reflect the diversity of the community

(a) Actively recruit minorities to be in positions of power (i.e. head of City bureaus)

(b) Hire immigrants at all levels of local and regional government (this includes leadership development, not just entry-level and administrative positions)

(c) Elect City Council members who represent the broader community (e.g. create a quota system so that City Council would include at least the same percentage of low-income, people of color, immigrant, renters, women, etc. as are in the community)

(4) Create formal representation mechanisms for different communities in City Hall

(a) Promote more representation of immigrants and refugees in government and decision-making processes, so that immigrants and refugee communities are heard. An office of immigrant and refugee affairs that has multi-ethnic staff inside City Hall could be a model. Also, include immigrants and refugees in the Human Rights Commission the City is in the process of developing

(b) Provide formal mechanisms for neighborhoods/public to influence government –e.g. a City Hall liaison for each neighborhood

(5) Make public services more coordinated and easier to access

(a) Address the disconnect between neighborhoods and schools and the City/ County split that makes it difficult to ensure that basic needs are met while staying focused on larger policy issues affecting a neighborhood

(b) Improve coordination in the way the City interfaces with other bodies like the County and Schools: all the pieces are disconnected in terms of how people who are accessing services experience it, which makes it confusing and hard to access

(c) Improve coordination among City departments, particularly those with overlapping responsibilities, such as those that deal with nuisance control

(d) Create PDC Neighborhood Improvement Offices

(6) Increase the cultural competency of City employees and public service staff

(a) Require mandatory cultural competency education for the police force and other bureaus, across the board

(b) Develop staff education and training programs on best practices and culturally appropriate public involvement skills

(7) Increase the competence and willingness of elected officials to engage the public

(a) Provide adequate training and technical assistance to help city staff have the skills to better engage the community

[See also Tactics under Strategy 2 in this section]

(8) Have the city council adopt principles of community governance by ordinance to set the standard for all city bureaus and staff

(9) Encourage community members to run for elected office