



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amalia Alarcón de Morris, Bureau Director
1221 SW 4th Avenue, Room 110
Portland, Oregon 97204

Enhancing the quality of Portland's Neighborhoods through community participation

Public Involvement Advisory Council Annual Progress Report May 6, 2014

Contact: Greg Greenway, 503-823-5202
greg.greenway@portlandoregon.gov



Since its creation in 2008, the City of Portland's Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) has advanced in its mission to improve the quality and consistency of public involvement across City government and to encourage clear guidelines for how Portland's City government engages the public on decisions and

outcomes that affect their lives.

PIAC was created in response to the urging of both community members and City bureaus. City Council recognized that "more consistent expectations and coordination across bureaus for public involvement would provide for more efficient use of City resources and increase public awareness and expectations for public involvement processes"¹

By supporting City staff with policies, guidelines and tools for public involvement, PIAC is helping Portland achieve a more representative, responsive and accountable government.

At the end of 2013, PIAC has 24 members and is seeking to add as many as 10 new members in 2014. The broad and diverse membership includes a balance of community members and City bureau representatives.

¹ City Council Resolution 36582. Retrieved from:
<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=48951&a=206837>

PIAC Initiatives

PIAC members continue to affirm their mission to support consistent and high quality public involvement across City bureaus. In 2012, the group adopted a **Strategic Plan** to orient and prioritize its efforts. The Plan identifies four critical elements that should be included in each PIAC initiative: (1) **communicate** proposals clearly to elected officials and City staff, incorporating feedback into PIAC recommendations, (2) **champion** recommended policies and practices for adoption and implementation, (3) support **staff capacity** to carry out public involvement policies and recommendations, and (4) **evaluate** public involvement outcomes to inform future work. In 2013, PIAC applied the work process described in the Strategic Plan to initiatives that are already being implemented, and to efforts currently underway. These include:

Implemented Initiatives (2008-2012)

- City's Public Involvement Principles
- Public Involvement Questions for City Council Items
- City Budget Advisory Committee Guidelines
- Baseline Assessment of Bureau Public Involvement Practices

Current Initiatives (2013)

- Portland's Comprehensive Plan Community Involvement Policies
- Annual State of Public Involvement Report – Baseline Assessment of Bureaus
- Budget Advisory Committee Guidelines – Practical Application

Following is a brief description of each of these initiatives.

City's Public Involvement Principles

As PIAC's first deliverable, in August 2010, City Council adopted public involvement principles developed by the PIAC. The principles represent a road map to guide government officials and staff in establishing consistent, effective, and high-quality public involvement across Portland's City government. They express what the public can expect from City government, while retaining flexibility in the way individual bureaus carry out their work. This document serves as a resource for City staff and a tool for community members to hold the City accountable for effective public involvement.

Public Involvement Questions for City Council Items

In July 2011, PIAC implemented a City Council directive to develop a set of questions to accompany all City Council resolutions, ordinances and reports. The new questions were incorporated into a Financial Impact and Public Involvement Statement (FIPIS). The FIPIS provides City Council members with a synopsis of the public input that was considered in the development of legislation, and it provides the community with greater transparency in a consistent form regarding how the City conducts public involvement. In 2013, PIAC members analyzed the first full year of FIPIS data, and received feedback from City staff and the community on how the form is working.

City Budget Advisory Committees

Over a period of nearly four years, PIAC conducted an in-depth evaluation and review of City bureaus' budget advisory committee (BAC) processes. In fall 2012, City Council adopted a set of guidelines developed by PIAC to establish consistent standards for BAC processes across bureaus, including recommended approaches to community outreach, participation, meeting and presentation materials, website materials, compliance with ADA and Limited English Proficiency regulations, and a proposed Citywide program to raise community capacity to engage in the budget process. In 2013, the focus of this work turned toward evaluation of how the guidelines are working and how PIAC can support staff in implementing them. PIAC also advised the City's budget office on public outreach and engagement for the City's annual budget process.

Baseline Assessment of Bureau Public Involvement Practices

City Council directed the PIAC to conduct an assessment of the public involvement capacity and practices across City bureaus. In 2012, PIAC distributed a survey to bureaus with questions regarding public involvement staffing structure, policies, approaches, challenges and successes. Bureaus were timely in returning their responses, and PIAC members analyzed two sets of data this past year. The results of this analysis, conducted by PIAC's Annual State of Public Involvement Report (ASPIRE) workgroup, are summarized separately at the end of this document (Attachment).

Portland's Comprehensive Plan Community Involvement Goals and Policies

In 2013, several PIAC members completed a year of service on the Policy Expert Group (PEG) to update the community involvement chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Working closely with staff from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, the PEG developed recommended goals and policies for public involvement that are consistent with State law, the City's adopted Public Involvement Principles and the Equity Framework of the Portland Plan. The draft goals and policies emphasize the importance of both ongoing and project-specific efforts to involve the public in planning processes, and call for a committee to review bureaus' public involvement plans.

Next Steps

PIAC's current work plan builds on achievements to date, and addresses opportunities identified in 2013. For example, the Baseline Assessment and Comprehensive Plan groups identified common priorities: promote consistency across bureaus' community involvement programs, and provide staff with a practical guide to effective and equitable engagement. In 2014 PIAC workgroups will concentrate on three major issues:

- **Public Involvement Implementation Manual.** Once City Council adopts a new Comprehensive Plan, bureau staff will be responsible for implementing its policies. This PIAC workgroup will develop a manual of recommended practices to help staff carry out the Comprehensive Plan policies on community involvement. While most of the manual will focus on project-level implementation, it will also offer guidance to bureaus on their strategies for ongoing community involvement. The goal is to develop a document that supports implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, but is also flexible enough to assist bureaus citywide with their community involvement efforts.
- **Budget Advisory Committees.** Following City Council's adoption of BAC guidelines in 2012, the current focus is to understand how these guidelines are applied in practice. This workgroup will reach out to those within the City who staff the BAC's, and will develop a survey to gather information from BAC members. Based on a review of the input from staff and the community, the workgroup will report on current practices across bureaus and will consider ways to promote consistent and effective implementation of the guidelines citywide. It will also consider whether the guidelines adequately respond to the City's Title VI policy, which was adopted after the BAC guidelines.
- **FIPIS.** Similar to the BAC group, this workgroup will assess the use and effectiveness of the current FIPIS form, and will consider any recommended changes to the form based on that assessment and the City's Title VI policy. The group will gather information from bureau staff who have completed the forms, community members who have been engaged in the policy making process, and elected officials who receive the forms. Based on this input and the City's equity policies adopted after the FIPIS form was created, this PIAC workgroup will report on its findings and possibly recommend changes for "FIPIS 2.0."

Beyond participating in these workgroups, PIAC members are welcome to propose work that has value for the City and is timely. This allows the possibility for task forces with limited scopes of work and exploratory committees to consider emerging opportunities. In 2014, PIAC members have expressed an interest in several additional topics:

- Citywide approach to notification
- Citywide process for boards & commissions
- Consultation on Police Bureau's Community Engagement & Outreach plan
- Digital engagement

Conclusion

In recent years, local governments have increasingly found that effective public involvement is essential to achieve and sustain good governance. Because of its commitment and deliberate approach – establishing a City commission, adopting broad principles, assessing current practices, building staff capacity – the City of Portland is in a position of leadership nationwide with respect to institutionalizing legitimate public involvement. In its structure, PIAC itself remains a rare model of community-government partnership to move this important work forward.

PIAC actively works to maintain an inclusive and diverse membership that includes perspectives from neighborhood organizations, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, ethnic minorities, elders, youth, public involvement consultants, and others. This cross-section of the community helps ensure that the recommendations PIAC gives to City Council are strengthened by the many voices that contribute to them.

PIAC Members (2013)

City Staff

Kelly Ball, Office of Management & Finance
Bill Beamer, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (Nov-Dec)
Mike Crebs, Police Bureau
Jaymee Cuti, Housing Bureau (Nov-Dec)
Liam Frost, Housing Bureau (Jan-Oct)
Tim Hall, Water Bureau
Brian Hoop, Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Muna Idow, Office of Equity & Human Rights
Denver Igarta, Bureau of Transportation
Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, Parks & Recreation
Paul Leistner, Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Colleen Poole, Bureau of Development Services
Marty Stockton, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability
Desiree Williams-Rajee, Bureau of Planning & Sustainability (Jan-Oct)

Community

Mohamed Abdiasis, Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
Teresa Baldwin, Urban League
Glenn Bridger, At-large – SW Neighborhood Activist
Kyle Brown, At-large – Public Involvement Consultant
Donita Fry, Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA)
Bill Gentile, Elders in Action
Greg Greenway, At-large – Public Involvement Consultant
Carri Munn, At-large – Public Involvement Consultant
Linda Nettekoven, At-large – SE Neighborhood Activist
Khalid Osman, At-large – Former Youth Planner
Amy Spring, At-large – Educator
Mike Vander Veen, East Portland Action Plan Co-Chair
Christine White, Port of Portland Community Affairs Manager

Dedication

This report is dedicated to the memory of Afifa Ahmed-Shafi, who staffed and supported PIAC since its inception. Afifa brought passion, grace and a keen sense of possibility to PIAC, and its achievements to date are linked closely to her energy and talent. In addition to touching each group member personally, her loss in July 2013 marked a major challenge and transition for PIAC. PIAC members committed themselves to advancing the work during this difficult period, honoring the strong foundation left by Afifa.

Attachment

City of Portland Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) City Bureau Public Involvement Assessment

Introduction

Meaningful community engagement begins with a vigilant commitment to the overarching principle of involvement: **people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them**. The imperative first step in translating this principle to practice is to consider who will be impacted by the decision at hand. As public servants, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the individual and institutional privileges we hold.

To accurately identify impacted communities, it is essential that public servants actively expand our understanding of Portland's many different communities. Ensuring that groups historically excluded based on race, ability, and economic status are included authentically in processes, activities, decisions, and policy making, we must acknowledge previous harm. Only after identifying all impacted communities can a Bureau effectively apply the foundational public involvement practices that lead to quality engagement and solutions that promote the shared benefits of equity. This is the guiding value of this report.

City Council directed PIAC to perform a baseline assessment to understand public involvement throughout the city. In 2012, PIAC collected data on current practices, public involvement competencies, methodologies, and challenges faced by city bureaus. This report summarizes the primary themes and findings from the Public Involvement Baseline Assessment.

Regular public involvement assessment focusing on citywide needs facilitates development of recommendations that drive innovation. The results of the baseline assessment will be used to develop relevant tools and technical assistance to achieve consistent citywide public involvement practices that engage the diversity of Portland communities.

As a key component of the City's public involvement team, PIAC works to develop clear guidelines for how City government can achieve high-quality consistent public involvement to meet legal obligations of Title VI, The Portland Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan.

The Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) was established in 2008 by Portland City Council to institutionalize excellent public involvement. PIAC is committed to helping Portland work smarter by improving the quality and consistency of public involvement. We champion effective involvement practices, build the capacity of bureau staff, and evaluate outcomes.

The Portland Plan identifies community engagement as a key strategy addressing disparities and ensuring equitable distribution of public services throughout the City. The Framework for Equity and 5-year action plan calls on the City to implement recommendations from the Public Involvement Advisory Council and build capacity for people to participate. PIAC's principles and practices directly address Portland Plan goals to improve public involvement through early engagement, accurate representation, and culturally appropriate design. PIAC's commitment to work with all bureaus to implement best practices addresses the Plan's Action Items for leadership training, language and cultural interpretation.

What we learned

The current range of public involvement varies from bureau to bureau and presents the challenge of establishing a citywide foundation for consistent, effective public involvement.

1. Procedures for determining when to involve the public were inconsistent. City bureaus work hard to involve the public in decision-making. However, from a citywide perspective, bureaus lack an objective method to determine how and when public involvement is appropriate. A majority of bureaus rely on internal staff meetings to decide methods of public involvement (66%). The survey also found that a formal assessment process was rare, with only seven of the 18 bureaus (39%) performing a tool-based and consistent process to determine public involvement needs in a project.

The results of the Baseline Assessment report reflect the aggregate of public involvement in the city. Individual bureaus will receive feedback and support on their specific assessments.

2. Consistent implementation of plans across bureaus was a challenge. 13 of 18 respondents developed public involvement plans only sometimes, while 7 bureaus consistently developed public involvement plans. 5 respondents did not use public involvement plans.

3. Engaging historically underrepresented groups remains a huge challenge for bureaus. Despite a variety of efforts to reach underrepresented communities, outcomes have yet to achieve significant improvements in terms of equity. Nearly all bureaus had used multiple strategies, and more than half used at least six strategies, notably working with culturally specific community media, language translation and interpretation, co-hosting with community organizations and designing meetings collaboratively with community organizations. Yet, reports from communities of color continue to report disengagement.

4. Evaluation varied from bureau to bureau and project to project. The assessment revealed that no consistent format exists for evaluating public participation among bureaus. Evaluating public involvement practices was largely limited to bureau staff who develop their own processes for collecting and reviewing responses related to process quality and efficacy.

5. Common challenges constrain the quality and scope of public involvement.

These include:

- Declining budgets for public involvement and communications
- Difficulty acquiring and evaluating accurate data on community needs
- Effectively involving the public in complex, detailed decisions
- Developing and using feedback mechanisms
- Reaching underserved and vulnerable populations
- Recruitment and representation of community members

Report submitted to PIAC by the Annual State of Public Involvement Report and Evaluation (ASPIRE) workgroup, July 2013