

## Chapter 2: Community Involvement

### What is this chapter about?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City's intent to:

- Provide a wide range of opportunities for involvement in land use decisions.
- Foster ongoing positive relationships between communities and the City in support of positive land use decision outcomes.
- Recognize that the City has a responsibility to plan for the needs of and engage with under-served and under-represented communities to achieve greater equity.
- Expand opportunities for meaningful community engagement in land use decisions, from issue identification and project scoping through implementation.
- Require transparent, well-designed, thoughtful public processes for land use decisions.
- Increase the community's meaningful participation in land use decisions.
- Promote thoughtful consideration of and responses to public comment on land use decisions

### Why is this important?

The results are better — more durable, equitable and accountable — when a wide and diverse range of Portlanders are involved in the scoping, development and implementation of plans and investment projects. Collaborative partnerships and inclusive community participation in land use decision making are essential to creating and sustaining a prosperous, healthy, equitable and resilient Portland.

As the city grows, diversifies, and works to advance equity, it is essential that all community members' needs and concerns are considered. Particular efforts must be made to improve services for people of color, immigrants and refugee communities, people with disabilities, renters, low-income Portlanders, older adults, youth, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

It is the City's responsibility to promote deep and inclusive community involvement in land use decisions.

# Table of Contents

## Goals

Goal 2.A	Community involvement as a partnership
Goal 2.B	Social justice and equity
Goal 2.C	Value community wisdom and participation
Goal 2.D	Transparency and accountability
Goal 2.E	Meaningful participation
Goal 2.F	Accessible and effective participation
Goal 2.G	Strong civic infrastructure

## Policies

### Partners in decision making

Policy 2.1	Partnerships and coordination
Policy 2.2	Broaden partnerships

### Invest in education and training

Policy 2.3	Community capacity building
Policy 2.4	Land use literacy
Policy 2.5	Agency capacity building

### Community assessment

Policy 2.6	Channels of communication
Policy 2.7	Community data collection
Policy 2.8	Community analysis

### Transparency and accountability

Policy 2.9	Roles and responsibilities
Policy 2.10	Project scope
Policy 2.11	Community influence
Policy 2.12	Documentation and feedback

### Community involvement program

Policy 2.13	Community Involvement Program Manual
Policy 2.14	Community Involvement Committee
Policy 2.15	Program evaluation
Policy 2.16	Shared engagement methods

**Process design and evaluation**

- Policy 2.17 Representation
- Policy 2.18 Early involvement
- Policy 2.19 Verifying data
- Policy 2.20 Demographics
- Policy 2.21 Historical understanding
- Policy 2.22 Project-specific needs
- Policy 2.23 Culturally-appropriate processes
- Policy 2.24 Innovative engagement methods
- Policy 2.25 Inclusive participation beyond Portland residents
- Policy 2.26 Accessibility
- Policy 2.27 Participation monitoring
- Policy 2.28 Adaptability
- Policy 2.29 Process evaluation

**Information design and development**

- Policy 2.30 Accommodation
- Policy 2.31 Notification
- Policy 2.32 Information for effective participation
- Policy 2.33 Limited English proficiency (LEP)

### Goals

#### **Goal 2.A: Community involvement as a partnership**

The City of Portland government works together as a genuine partner with Portland communities. The City promotes, builds, and maintains relationships and communicates with individuals, communities, businesses, organizations, institutions, and other governments to ensure meaningful community involvement in land use decisions.

#### **Goal 2.B: Social justice and equity**

The City of Portland seeks social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all community members, recognizing a special responsibility to identify, orient, and involve under-served and under-represented communities in land use planning. The City actively works to improve its land use-related decisions to achieve more equitable distribution of burdens and benefits.

#### **Goal 2.C: Value community wisdom and participation**

Portland values and encourages community and civic participation. The City seeks and considers community wisdom, and integrates it with sound technical analysis, to strengthen land use decisions.

#### **Goal 2.D: Transparency and accountability**

City planning, policy, investment, and development decision-making processes are clear, open, and documented. Through these processes a diverse range of community interests are heard and balanced. The City makes it clear to the community who is responsible for making decisions, and how community input is taken into account.

#### **Goal 2.E: Meaningful participation**

Community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in and influence all stages of planning and decision-making. Public processes engage the full diversity of affected community members, including under-served and under-represented individuals and communities.

#### **Goal 2.F: Accessible and effective participation**

City planning, policy, investment, and development decision-making processes are designed to be accessible and effective. The City draws from acknowledged best practices and uses a wide variety of tools to promote inclusive, collaborative, and robust community involvement.

#### **Goal 2.G: Strong civic infrastructure**

Civic institutions, organizations, and processes encourage active and meaningful community involvement and strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to participate in planning processes and civic life.

## Policies

Ongoing community involvement practices, procedures and programs are a necessary foundation for project-specific community involvement efforts. Many of the policies in this chapter are intended to build on community wisdom, expand community knowledge, and improve City staff capacity to work effectively with an increasingly diverse and growing Portland population.

### Partners in decision making

Portland benefits when community members are meaningfully involved in land use decisions. By building and maintaining partnerships with individuals and a wide range of formal and informal organizations that represent a variety of interests, the City of Portland government will have a better understanding of various communities' diverse needs and concerns. These policies support building and maintaining strong and supportive relationships with an increasingly diverse and growing Portland population.

**Policy 2.1 Partnerships and coordination.** Maintain partnerships and coordinate land use engagement with:

**2.1.a.** Individual community members.

**2.1.b.** Communities of color and other under-served and under-represented communities.

**2.1.c.** Neighborhood and business associations as local experts and channels for place-based projects.

**2.1.d.** Businesses, unions, employees, and related organizations that reflect Portland's diversity as the center of regional activity.

**2.1.e.** Interest and affinity organizations and groups.

**2.1.f.** Institutions, governments, and tribal sovereign nations.

**Policy 2.2 Broaden partnerships.** Work with neighborhood and business associations to increase diversity and to help them reflect the diversity of the people and institutions they serve.

### Invest in education and training

Both the community and City of Portland representatives must have the capacity to work together as effective partners. Ongoing investment in education and training leads to better informed community members who then have increased capacity to participate effectively. Community involvement-focused professional development training helps improve City staff's ability to work with and learn from community members. These policies support both community and agency capacity building.

- Policy 2.3**     **Community capacity building.** Enhance the ability of community members, particularly those in under-served and/or under-represented groups, to develop the relationships, knowledge, and skills to effectively participate in land use planning processes.
- Policy 2.4**     **Land use literacy.** Provide training and educational opportunities to build the public's understanding of land use, transportation, housing, and related topics and increase capacity for meaningful participation in land use planning processes.
- Policy 2.5**     **Agency capacity building.** Increase City staff's capacity, tools, and skills to design and implement processes that engage a broad diversity of affected and interested communities, including under-served and under-represented communities, in meaningful and appropriate ways.

### Community assessment

City staff must build and maintain their understanding of community demographics, trends and needs. Community members should have opportunities to share how conditions and needs affect quality. The following policies support effective two-way communication between City government and communities and encourage community-level data gathering and information sharing in land use planning processes.

- Policy 2.6**     **Channels of communication.** Maintain channels of communication among City Council, the Planning and Sustainability Commission, project advisory committees, City staff, and community members.
- Policy 2.7**     **Community data collection.** Provide meaningful opportunities for individuals and communities to be involved in inventorying, mapping, data analysis, and the development of alternatives, as appropriate to the land use decision.
- Policy 2.8**     **Community analysis.** Evaluate data, including community verified data and information to understand the needs, priorities, and trends and historical context affecting different communities in Portland.

## Transparency and accountability

The City is committed to improving transparency in community involvement processes tied to land use decisions. When community members have a better understanding of a process, they are better able to participate effectively. Improved transparency and communication allows the City to better understand community opinions and needs.

The following policies articulate how and when land use decisions are made; the community's role in land use decision-making processes; and what the community can expect from the City of Portland.

**Policy 2.9 Roles and responsibilities.** Establish clear roles, rights, and responsibilities for participants and decision-makers in land use processes. Address roles of City of Portland bureaus, elected officials, and participants, including community leadership, business, organizations, and individuals.

**Policy 2.10 Project scope.** Establish clear expectations about land use project sponsorship, purpose, design, and how decision-makers will use the process results.

**Policy 2.11 Community influence.** At each stage of the process, identify which elements of a land use process can be influenced or changed through community involvement. Clarify the extent to which those elements can be influenced or changed.

**Policy 2.12 Documentation and feedback.** Provide clear documentation for the rationale supporting decisions in land use planning processes. Communicate to participants about the issues raised in the community involvement process, how public input affected outcomes, and the rationale used to make decisions.

## Community involvement program

Much has changed in Portland in the 35 years since the adoption of the 1980 Comprehensive Plan. Much more will likely change between the adoption of this plan and the next one. The following policies challenge City staff to assess current practices and develop new tools through ongoing process evaluation and improvement, and direct the City to develop, maintain and update a manual that details current best practices for community involvement.

**Policy 2.13 Community Involvement Program Manual.** Create, maintain, and actively implement a community involvement program manual that details how to conduct community involvement for land use projects and decisions.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

---

- Policy 2.14 Community Involvement Committee.** The Community Involvement Committee, a subcommittee of the Planning and Sustainability Commission, will evaluate and provide feedback to City staff on community involvement processes for individual land use and infrastructure decisions, before, during, and at the conclusion of these processes.
- Policy 2.15 Program evaluation.** Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the community involvement program and recommend and advocate for program and policy improvements. The Community Involvement Committee will advise City staff regarding this evaluation.
- Policy 2.16 Shared engagement methods.** Coordinate and share methods, tools, and technologies that lead to successful engagement practices with both government and community partners.

### Process design and evaluation

The policies in this section guide the design of project-specific community involvement processes.

These policies will help ensure that community involvement processes for land use projects fit the scope, character and impact of land use projects. The policies also promote full representation in land use planning processes and actively involve under-served and under-represented communities. Representation can help ensure that City decisions do not further reinforce the disadvantaged position of under-served and under-presented groups, and do not narrowly benefit privileged groups.

- Policy 2.17 Representation.** Facilitate participation of a cross-section of the full diversity of affected Portlanders during land use planning processes. This diversity includes individuals, stakeholders, and communities represented by race, color, national origin, English proficiency, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and source of income.
- Policy 2.18 Early involvement.** Improve opportunities for interested and affected community members to participate early in land use processes, including, identifying and prioritizing issues, needs, and opportunities; participating in process design; and recommending and prioritizing projects and/or other types of implementation.
- Policy 2.19 Verifying data.** Use data, including community verified data, to guide land use planning and priority setting and to shape community involvement and decision-making processes.
- Policy 2.20 Demographics.** Identify the demographics of potentially affected communities when initiating a land use project.

- Policy 2.21** **Historical understanding.** To better understand concerns and conditions when initiating a project, research the history, culture, past plans, and other needs of the affected community, particularly under-represented and under-served groups, and persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- Policy 2.22** **Project-specific needs.** Customize community involvement processes to meet the needs of those potentially affected by the land use project. Use community involvement techniques that fit the scope, character, and potential impact of the land use decision under consideration.
- Policy 2.23** **Culturally-appropriate processes.** Consult with communities to design culturally appropriate processes to meet the needs of those affected by a land use project. Evaluate, use, and document creative and culturally appropriate methods, tools, and technologies to inform and engage people from under-served and under-represented groups about land use projects.
- Policy 2.24** **Innovative engagement methods.** Develop and document innovative methods, tools, and technologies for community involvement processes for land use projects.
- Policy 2.25** **Inclusive participation beyond Portland residents.** Design public processes for land use projects to engage affected and interested people who may not live in Portland such as, property owners, employees, employers, and students, among others, as appropriate and practicable.
- Policy 2.26** **Accessibility.** Ensure that community involvement processes for land use projects are broadly accessible in terms of location, time, and language, and that they support the engagement of individuals with a variety of abilities and limitations on participation.
- Policy 2.27** **Participation monitoring.** Evaluate and document participant demographics throughout land use processes to assess whether participation reflects the demographics of affected communities, and adapt involvement practices and activities accordingly to increase effectiveness at reaching targeted audiences.
- Policy 2.28** **Adaptability.** Adapt community involvement processes for land use projects as appropriate to flexibly respond to changes in the scope and priority of the issues, needs, and other factors that may affect the process.
- Policy 2.29** **Process evaluation.** Evaluate each community involvement process for land use projects from both the City staff and participants' perspective and consider feedback and lessons learned to enhance future involvement efforts.

### Information design and notification

These policies will help improve notification procedures for land use projects and the community's access to process and technical information related to land use projects. The City of Portland's Civil Rights Title VI Plan requires that information shall be available to the public, with assistance provided as requested to interpret and effectively use technical information. Additionally, the City of Portland must ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals have meaningful access to City land use-related activities.

- Policy 2.30 Accommodation.** Ensure accommodations to let individuals with disabilities participate in land use decisions, consistent with federal regulations.
- Policy 2.31 Notification.** Notify affected and interested community members and groups about land use and infrastructure projects with enough lead time to enable effective participation. As practicable and appropriate, consider notification to both property owners and renters.
- Policy 2.32 Information for effective participation.** Provide community members with clear and easy to access information about land use and infrastructure projects in multiple formats.
- Policy 2.33 Limited English Proficiency (LEP).** Ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals are provided meaningful access to information about land use projects, consistent with federal regulations.