

# **Diversity and Accessibility Workgroup**

## **Public Involvement Task Force**

For December 17, 2003 mtg.

- *Suggested changes from Anne O'Malley incorporated with underlines and strike-thru notations.*
- *Delegation of tasks to future committees and timelines –listed after each recommendation-proposed by Brian Hoop but open to change.*

## **DRAFT List of Priority Recommendations**

This is a draft of themes developed at the August thru November meetings of the Diversity and Accessibility Workgroup. The group will still need to finalize prioritization, set timelines, and discuss who implements.

### **Summary list of recommendations**

1. Establish a stable funding mechanism for citywide public involvement infrastructure.
2. Initiate popular education and training on how City processes work and advocacy skills for diverse constituencies.
3. Work with Purchasing Bureau to eliminate barriers for Minority, Women and Emerging Small Businesses to access Professional Technical and Expert contracts for public involvement and information services.
4. Establish a standing City advisory committee to advise bureaus and hold City accountable to citywide public involvement principles and guidelines.
5. Develop staff education and training program on culturally appropriate public involvement skills and use of popular education training models.
6. Expand language translation and interpretation accessibility of City information.
7. Expand efforts to make all public involvement events accessible to people with disabilities, seniors, families with children and other constituency groups.
8. Better coordinate diverse stakeholder contacts and relation-building efforts with community organizations and media.
9. Coordinate efforts to diversify public involvement efforts with Office of Affirmative Action's Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee.

## **Establish a stable funding mechanism for citywide public involvement infrastructure**

**Action:** Establish a stable funding mechanism for public involvement processes for both citywide infrastructure needs and to hold bureaus accountable to adequately fund project specific public involvement processes. A common funding model would help with funding proposed public involvement coordinator, public information coordinator, public involvement advisory committee, research and fiscal analysis of task force recommendations, implementation costs for citywide public involvement efforts to build capacity on web tools, diversity best practices, staff and public leadership skills trainings, citywide outreach newsletter, tabling at community street festivals, etc.

Two possible models include:

### **Administrative overhead funding model**

Numerous administrative functions in the City are funded through this model in which each bureau follows a funding formula, such as a percentage of budget, that is dedicated to providing specific common administrative functions.

### **Percentage of project budget for public involvement**

To ensure public involvement is adequately funded require bureaus to dedicate a percentage of project budgets for public involvement processes. This would include major policy, planning, and capital projects as are outlined in the process design proposal for which types of projects should be required to have a public involvement plan.

**Problems:** Currently the City has no common expectations or criteria for funding levels for public involvement processes of key city policy, planning, and capital improvement projects. Basic infrastructure needs like facilitating staff networking, problem-solving, training, database management, responding to public complaints, etc. are never addressed in a coordinated effort since no bureau is clearly designated to take lead responsibility.

In particular, the diversity committee finds the City of Portland has historically not provided adequate funding for public involvement efforts targeting culturally specific communities. In addition, emerging web-based technologies and the centralization of Information Technology support at the city lends itself to strategic

coordination of how to use web-based and database management tools that better serve the public at large.

**Issues:** The Administrative Service Review (ASR) was a systematic review of citywide administrative functions several years ago to look for cost saving opportunities. Public Involvement was identified as an administrative support function. Therefore, common public involvement functions as identified above should be funded by the overhead model.

**Prioritization:** Highest priority #1

**Timeline:** 1-2 years planning to implement in 2006-07 FY (July 1, 2007) or earlier if possible

**Implementation:** \_\_\_ Continuing PI advisory group and PI staff networking group

## **Initiate popular education and training on how City processes work and advocacy skills for diverse constituencies**

**Action steps:** Provide a leadership-training program open to the public on basic City processes and advocacy skills so that individuals can be informed and effective advocates for the diverse range of communities engaged with City public involvement efforts. Would incorporate culturally appropriate training models such as use of popular education to help non-English speaking individuals comprehend issues.

Similar to needs of neighborhood associations, diverse community organizations need training on how the city operates and leadership development. This might include understanding City decision-making processes and leadership skills such as: parliamentary procedures, organizational development, conflict resolution, how to research an issue, public speaking, basic land use concepts, etc.

### **Objectives:**

- 1. Partnerships between culturally-specific community-based organizations and existing neighborhood coalition offices.**
- 2. Partnerships between City of Portland and other local government agencies faced with similar needs to reach diverse constituency groups.**

3. **Provide culturally-specific leadership training opportunities, utilizing popular education models when appropriate.**
4. **Support capacity building of culturally-specific organizations to develop leadership skills and organizational capacity to provide outreach services to City bureaus.**

Develop contractual program to provide ongoing funding to culturally appropriate organizations serving African-American, Latino, American Indian, Asian American, and immigrant/refugee communities. Potentially also support culturally appropriate skills training for youth, people with low-incomes in City public involvement processes. Would help build capacity of city to provide outreach services to diverse constituencies traditionally not engaged with City public involvement efforts. Fulfill a role similar to ONI funded neighborhood coalition offices and Elders in Action for seniors, BHCD funded Target Areas for people with low-incomes and State funded Watershed Councils for environmental issues.

Align this effort with the existing neighborhood association and coalition structure so as not to create a parallel structure. To that end leaders of color advocating for this proposal are very interested in this being integrated with functions provided through the existing neighborhood offices while recognizing the unique differences and challenges of building the capacity of culturally specific constituencies to engage with City public involvement processes.

In addition, partner with Multnomah County Health Department Capacitation Center, which provides popular education as a tool for effectively engaging diverse communities. In the long-term we could partner with Metro, County, Tri-Met, and the Port of Portland which all have similar expectations to engage diverse populations. Coordinate with existing trainings provided through neighborhood association system.

**Problem:**

Many individuals from diverse constituency groups are generally unaware of how to work with the City's processes and how to advocate for their issues. The City is not connecting with diverse community organizations and leaders who assist with access to their constituencies. The Office of Neighborhood Involvement and most City bureaus have had minimal success in engaging diverse constituencies traditionally not engaged in City public involvement efforts. Indeed, the Metropolitan Human Rights Center has been defunded, once a key resource in the City's ability to build relationships with diverse community leadership and organizations.

**Issues:** Elected officials and bureau management have consistently identified lack of diverse participation in public involvement efforts as a significant shortcoming of City bureau public involvement programs. Partnering with community organizations of color to help build the capacity of their constituencies to get involved with City public involvement efforts will go a long way towards reaching the diverse participation that City Council and bureaus have committed to in principle. This is an opportunity to partner with existing trusted and respected community organizations who want to partner with the City to provide public involvement services and expand engagement of diverse constituencies in City public involvement efforts.

No different than neighborhood association leadership, skills building trainings have been identified as a high priority with community leaders of color engaged with this task force. Any such effort will need to be developed in coordination with leadership training efforts within the neighborhood association system. But due to budget limitations ONI and most neighborhood coalitions have not had the staff capacity to fulfill even basic contractual obligations to provide leadership trainings and board orientations for the neighborhood associations.

**Prioritization:** High priority #2  
**Timeline:** 3+ years  
**Implementor:** PI advisory group, Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee.

**Work with Purchasing Bureau to eliminate barriers for Minority, Women and Emerging Small Businesses to access Professional Technical and Expert contracts for public involvement and information services**

**Action Steps:** Work with Purchasing Bureau and Risk Management to eliminate barriers for Minority, Women and Emerging Small Businesses (M, W, ESB) to access Professional, Technical and Expert (PTE) contracting opportunities for public involvement and information (PI/PI) services. The Bureau of Purchasing has already initiated several efforts that will expand their capacity to diversify contracting opportunities under the PTE category which public involvement and public information services falls under.

Suggested action steps:

- Encourage bureaus to develop smaller scale PI/PI contracting opportunities targeted to culturally specific constituency stakeholder groups.
- Encourage bureaus to require large-scale contractors for PI/PI services to utilize M, W, ESB sub-contractors.
- Encourage contracting opportunities which promote RFP and RFSS partnerships between larger-scale contractors and M, W, ESB contractors that have unique skills to reach targeted audiences.
- Increase points in the RFP process for evidence of cultural competency experience and skills of staff in firms, i.e. experience working with diverse communities, training in culturally appropriate outreach skills, bi-lingual staff, etc.
- Lower liability requirements for PI/PI service contracts due to the nature of public involvement work being fairly low risk.
- Rotate utilization of M, W, ESB firms for ONI flexible services contract for PI/PI pre-qualified firms.
- Develop Request For Standard Services (RFSS) that pre-qualifies PI/PI firms based on their ability to work in culturally specific constituency groups, i.e. communities of color, low-income, etc.
- Reduce paperwork necessary to qualify for PTE contracts. Many small firms do not have the staff capacity to respond to RFP's, RFQ's, and especially RFSS's if there is not clear indication they have a likelihood of receiving City business.

**Problem:**

Numerous minority, women and emerging small business owners have identified barriers in the City's complex contracting procedures that limit their ability to successfully compete for bureau contracts to provide public involvement and public information services. Concerns include:

- The Request For Proposals contracting process to submit proposals is too complex and time consuming for small firms and community-based firms, many of which simply don't bother applying.
- General liability and other insurance requirements are too high for many small firms that cannot afford the \$2 million in required coverage, especially with an RFSS where there is no guarantee you'll receive any business.
- Bureaus provide few small scale contracts for targeted outreach with diverse community stakeholder groups that might be more appropriate for M,W, ESB firms.
- The ONI flexible service contract for PI/PI services does not have any accountability measures to require bureaus to utilize M, W, ESB firms on the pre-qualified list.

**Prioritization:**

High priority #3

**Timeline:**

1-2+ years

**Implementor:**

PI staff networking group, Purchasing Bureau, Governor's MWESB Task Force.

## **Establish a standing City advisory committee to advise bureaus and hold City accountable to citywide public involvement principles and guidelines**

**Action:** Establish a standing City advisory committee that would act as an ongoing body to review and advocate for implementation of the public involvement principles and requirements in City government. Suggest that it be composed of both citizens and City staff to best facilitate problem-solving efforts.

The committee would have a charge to:

- ❑ Track implementation of the public involvement principles and implementation of Public Involvement Task Force recommendations so they don't get lost and keep them in the public eye.
- ❑ Review bureau public involvement policy and plans, shine light on and recommend where improvements should be made.
- ❑ Devise a method of measurement of minority involvement that would provide a baseline and then a quarterly or yearly report on progress. If it cannot be measured, it will not improve.
- ❑ Provide institutional role for advocates of minority constituencies to have a voice to hold the City accountable for reaching diverse constituency stakeholder groups with culturally appropriate techniques.
- ❑ Produce an annual report reviewing City efforts to support quality public involvement processes and provide recommendations for improvements to those processes.
- ❑ Work closely with Auditors Office and Ombudsman Office on developing procedures for responding to complaints and recommendations for corrective actions.

In addition, the group would advise the City on a number of related tasks including improvements to:

- ❑ Develop culturally appropriate public involvement techniques for engaging Portland's increasingly diverse population and constituencies that have not traditionally been engaged with City public involvement efforts. Look at popular education models, how to support other community organizations to work with the City, and efforts by neighborhood association system to diversify membership and leadership.
- ❑ Provide education and training needs to build the capacity of neighborhood association leadership, and other interested community-based organizations to be better informed advocates for the constituencies with whom they work.
- ❑ Improve public information and communication needed in utilizing interactive web technologies, use of surveys, email lists, improving newsletters/communication efforts for neighborhood associations.

**Problems:** Currently City public involvement process has no formal organized oversight nor advocacy role for citizens. Advocates of minority constituencies lack any institutional structure to hold the City accountable to reach out to diverse constituencies using culturally appropriate techniques.

**Issues:** Many other policy areas have boards or commissions in City government that focus public and government attention and provide a vehicle to review and comment on related city government activities. Both Metro and Multnomah County have citizen involvement committees that have similar roles.

The Auditor's Office and ONI have explored incorporating public involvement questions in the City's annual survey of community satisfaction. However, minus established guidelines there are no benchmarks from which they can evaluate progress on improving public involvement efforts. Such an advisory group would assist with this effort.

**Prioritization:** High priority #4

**Timeline:** 6 months

**Implementor:** ONI, work with City/County Advisory Committee on Disabilities on diversity issues

**Develop staff education and training program on culturally appropriate public involvement skills and use of popular education training models**

**Action Steps:** Develop an ongoing skills training program for staff that includes training on culturally specific skills for effectively engaging communities of color, immigrants and refugees, low-income renters, youth, etc.

This would involve developing several integrated components:

**Partnerships with diverse community-based organizations**

Contract with community-based organizations and trainers to provide culturally appropriate skills trainings such as how to use popular education as a model for engaging non-English speaking populations, understanding the City's diversifying demographics, group format and communication styles in different cultures, etc.



### **Partnerships with other governmental agencies**

Research collaborative efforts with the following institutions and community efforts such as:

- Collaborate with Multnomah County Health Department Capacitation Center, which already helps the County reach out to diverse constituencies using popular education. Consider a collaborative staff training program with Metro, Tri-Met and county governments for cost efficiencies and capitalize on cross-government networking and relationship building.

### **Peer-to-peer training**

Effective and cost-saving model would incorporate utilizing peer-to-peer staff led trainings or brown-bag sessions for sharing skills. Utilize Citywide Public Involvement Network, currently an informal network of PI staff that infrequently meets, as an organizational structure for bringing staff together.

**Problem:** Both staff with a public involvement role and concerned citizens have identified a need for ongoing training and sharing of ideas in current best-practices. Many staff, including project managers and other staff whose roles are not primarily oriented towards public involvement, may have had minimal experience with the culturally appropriate skills needed to respond to Portland's increasingly diverse communities.

**Issue:** The practice of public involvement is a constantly evolving and dynamic profession. Resources are often limited within individual bureaus to pay for ongoing or advanced training for public involvement staff. There are cost savings if trainings or networking opportunities are organized across the entire city and/or even with other government agencies.

In addition, elected officials and bureau management have consistently identified lack of diverse participation in public involvement efforts as a problem. Several community organizations of color have advocated they should be utilized and funded to help provide trainings on culturally appropriate skill sets such as how to use popular education in reaching diverse constituency groups.

**Prioritization:** Medium priority #5  
**Timeline:** 3+ years  
**Implementor:** PI staff networking group, Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee (CDDCC)

## **Expand language translation and interpretation accessibility of City information**

**Action steps:** Require bureaus to commit a specific percentage of bureau and project budgets for accommodating special needs requests for language interpretation and translation.

### **Language translation and interpretation services**

Expand capacity of City bureaus to overcome language barriers for the City's rapidly diversifying non-English speaking population. Provide interpretation services both when requested and proactively at key project and decision-making meetings, especially a site specific project in neighborhoods with high concentration of non-English speaking and/or ESL individuals.

- ❑ Purchase for common use multi-person radio transmitter for interpretation at large group events.
- ❑ Require notice on all public involvement marketing that interpretation services and/or special needs shall be accommodated with 48 hours advance notice.
- ❑ Encourage bureaus to proactively provide interpretation at key events for site-specific projects in language diverse neighborhoods.
- ❑ Create Request For Standard Services flexible service contracting agreement for interpretation and translation services that makes it easier for City bureaus to provide these services. Ensure criteria for accuracy, foreign fonts, and prioritize ESB certification.
- ❑ Identify opportunities to utilize volunteers and/or paid-internship interpreters with area college language programs.
- ❑ Require every bureau to have at least one web page with an overview of mission and organizational structure and programs in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
- ❑ Expand utilization of the Information and Referral Line's access to AT&T language interpretation service that could be utilized for all City customer service desks.
- ❑ Develop a common City contract to provide real-time telephone interpretation services (such as AT&T service) and train front desk staff people throughout City how to quickly identify language, put individual on hold and connect with the service. Market that this multilingual service is available.
- ❑ Work with City bureaus to encourage provision of key regulatory documents in Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
- ❑ Provide notice on City web pages that web-based language translators are often inaccurate. Or possibly remove translators until accuracy is improved.

- Have centralized City web pages listing citywide resources and documents that are translated into multiple languages.

**Problem:** People for whom English is a second language are not able to participate in City public involvement efforts. People for whom English is a second language are unable to access information and referral services, City web sites and project literature. Many City bureaus are not committing adequate resources to provide language interpretation and translation services.

**Issue:** The City's population of people for whom English is a second language or do not speak English is rapidly growing. City leaders are insisting bureaus reach diverse constituency interests in public involvement efforts. Some bureaus already must meet certain regulatory requirements to have materials translated in multiple languages. At a minimum publicity materials need to inform the public that special needs can be accommodated with 48 hours notice. In some cases it is already the law.

Secondly, accommodating special language needs will make the City much more accessible in the eyes of people for whom English is a second language or who do not speak English. Making our public involvement processes accessible will go a long way towards reaching the diverse participation that City Council and bureaus have committed to in principle.

**Priority:** Medium priority #6  
**Timeline:** Includes easy 6 month projects, but mostly 3+ year projects  
**Implementor:** PI staff networking group, Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee

**Expand efforts to make all public involvement events accessible to people with disabilities, seniors, families with children and other constituency groups**

**Action steps:** Require bureaus to commit a specific percentage of bureau and project budgets for accommodating special needs requests, ADA accessibility and childcare at key events. Work closely with the City/County Advisory Committee on Disabilities in order to determine how to make events accessible and then to make certain that they were accessible.

**ADA accessibility for people with disabilities**

- Require all meeting locations for City public involvement events to be ADA accessible, i.e. wheelchair accessible.

- Attempt to ensure meeting locations are accessible by public transportation, disabled parking is designated and entrances from sidewalks and parking area are well lighted.
- Require notice on all public involvement marketing that events are wheelchair accessible and that special needs shall be accommodated with 48 hours advance notice.
- Require listing of City TTY number(s), 503-823-6868, on all public involvement event notices and all City documents.
- Develop a centralized contact list of individuals who wish to receive regulatory or bill notices in Braille.
- Require all City bureaus to post an accessibility policy statement on their bureau web pages, particularly stating our responsibility to ensure all documents, especially PDF's, on the web are accessible to people with vision disabilities.
- Have central City web page listing resources and documents that are accessible to people with vision disabilities (Braille).

### **Childcare**

- Develop contractual relationship with Just Kids Childcare in Portland Building for ongoing childcare services for Council and Commission meetings, and key project events downtown.
- Create Request For Standard Services flexible service contracting agreement for childcare services that makes it easier for City bureaus to provide these services.
- Coordinate the acquisition and maintenance of child care supply boxes for each bureau for use at events, with books, toys, games, etc. that can easily be made available at events.
- Continue to work with Risk Management on minimizing liability issues with childcare services.
- Have page listing resources for people with low-incomes, i.e., water bill assistance, home buying & weatherization programs.
- Identify and maintain lists of community meeting spaces that are ADA accessible to people with disabilities, where space would be appropriate for childcare, and that are community gathering places utilized by communities of color and immigrant/refugee communities.

### **Problem:**

People with disabilities, or limited transportation and/or childcare options are limited in their ability to participate in City public involvement efforts. Even worse, people with special needs often simply give up on even trying to engage in civic issues after an initial negative experience where their disability or lack of childcare was not accommodated. Many City bureaus are not committing adequate resources to ensure their public involvement efforts are made accessible to people with special needs. In addition, accommodating special needs for people with disabilities is federal and state law.

**Issues:** Numerous people have commented that the City, and many government agencies in general, have simply gotten lazy with accommodating special needs for people with disabilities. Indeed, State of Oregon Open Meetings and Public Records law mandates all meetings need to be accessible to people with disabilities and that a good faith effort be made to provide ASL interpretation services with 48 hours notice, for example. Many government agencies are still not aware of the comprehensive accessibility requirements in the federal American Disabilities Act. Both the ADA/Information Technology Center and CCACD could help agencies become more familiar with THE LAW in order to avoid future lawsuits.

Secondly, accommodating special needs for disabilities, transportation access and childcare at key public involvement events will make the City much more accessible in the eyes of people with disabilities, seniors and people with low-incomes. Making our public involvement processes accessible will go a long way towards reaching the diverse participation that City Council and bureaus have committed to in principle.

**Prioritization:** Medium priority #7  
**Timeline:** Includes easy 6 month projects, but mostly 3+ year projects  
**Implementor:** PI staff networking group, Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee, City/County Advisory Committee on Disabilities

## **Better coordinate diverse stakeholder contacts and relation-building efforts with community organizations and media**

**Action steps:** **Relationship Building**  
Assist bureau efforts to build relationships when appropriate for specific issues or projects with diverse media, community, ethnic minority faith organizations and chambers of commerce. Maintain contact list of diverse community organizations, media and stakeholder lists for all City PI staff and project managers. ONI has already initiated compiling a list of nearly 600 community organizations of color, low-income, youth, senior, immigrant and refugee, and gay, lesbian, bi and trans groups. Post on City intranet or could be accessible through web-based database proposal. Provide GIS analysis of neighborhood demographics to assist bureaus with identifying what geographic-based projects may need to utilize culturally appropriate outreach strategies.

## **Media**

Provide media notice, both earned and paid, in a wide variety of community and neighborhood newspapers read by a broad sampling of Portland demographic groups including youth, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and seniors. Build media relations and encourage bureaus to place ad copy in Skanner, Asian Reporter, Portland Observer, Hispanic News, etc. At a minimum require all press releases to be sent to common list of diverse media.

This would be a critical project for both the Public Information and Public Involvement positions.

**Problem:** City is not adequately reaching people of color and other diverse constituencies through institutions they trust and relate to. Many community constituencies are not familiar with how to access City bureaucracy. People do not see City notices in a diverse range of media. Mainstream newspapers do not reach people of color, youth, etc. Daily Journal of Commerce not sufficient for official notice.

**Issue:** Bureau staff need to develop ongoing relationships with diverse community organizations, media, and leadership. City needs to diversify its base of community contacts that can be readily accessible when a bureau needs to reach out to a specific community.

**Priority:** Lower priority #8

**Timeline:** Ongoing, ONI already initiated building database

**Implementor:** PI staff networking group, Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee

## **Coordinate efforts to diversify public involvement efforts with Office of Affirmative Action's Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee**

**Action Steps:** Coordinate efforts to improve public involvement efforts with the City of Portland Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee (CDDCC), led by the Office of Affirmative Action. Many of the ideas listed in this section are in the committee's adopted work plan or Diversity Development Strategic Initiative. This was developed in the fall of 2002.

Organize citywide Public Involvement Advisory Committee for advising City bureaus on developing and implementing citywide

and bureau diversity work plans related to public involvement. This would be coordinated by the proposed public involvement position.

Below are some of the ideas from the CDDCC Diversity Development Strategic Initiative:

- Assess bureau public involvement policies for ensuring public involvement strategies are accessible to diverse constituencies, e.g. meeting spaces are accessible to people with disabilities, allocation of resources for translation or interpretation when appropriate, building diverse stakeholder lists, etc.
- Encourage bureaus to publicize bureau diversity goals and/or principles in bureau newsletters and brochures, post on the web, provide copies to staff with frequent access to the public.
- Seek customer/stakeholder/citizen feedback on bureau diversity and affirmative action efforts. Utilize Bureau Advisory Committees if in existence.
- Include commitment to culturally competent community relations in bureau mission statements.
- Require new staff orientations to include overview of bureau public involvement policies, guidelines, practices to emphasize bureau expectations for working with diverse constituencies.
- Work on diverse representation on City Boards and Commissions. Develop recruitment strategy for diverse representation on citywide committees. Review recruitment practices for biases in outreach efforts with diverse constituencies. Set bureau goals for recruiting individuals for these committees representing diverse range of community demographics. Collect and track data on representation and involvement of diverse constituencies on these committees and other public involvement efforts.

**Problem:** The City lacks any coordinated effort to improve public involvement efforts to reach diverse constituency efforts. While there have been some successes these have been isolated. The City is missing opportunities to share resources and coordinate efforts that we believe would lead to more effective engagement of Portland's rapidly diversifying populations. Public involvement staff need to coordinate with the Office of Affirmative Action's CDDCC Diversity Development Strategic Initiative and City/County Advisory Committee on Disabilities (CCACD) on accessibility/adaptability issues. This Council adopted work plan and bureau adopted work plans can provide a template from which to evaluate the City's commitment and progress on diversifying participation in PI efforts.

**Prioritization:** Lowest priority #9

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Implementor:** Coordination of communication between PI advisory group, PI staff networking group, and Citywide Diversity Development Coordinating Committee