

# **Communications Workgroup**

## **Public Involvement Task Force**

For December 17, 2003 meeting

- *Changes from October 22, 2003 task force meeting incorporated with underlines and strike-thru notations. Only change recorded are adding three concepts at end of document proposed at the October meeting. Language drafted by Brian Hoop.*

## **DRAFT List of Priority Recommendations**

This is a draft of themes developed at the August thru October meetings of the Communication Workgroup. The group will still need to meet one more time to prioritize, set timelines, and discuss who implements.

The recommendations are listed under four categories relating to improving City communication efforts:

- Improving internal City coordination of communication efforts
- Utilizing Web technology tools
- Utilizing Community Outreach Opportunities
- Diversity and inclusion in communication strategies

## **Summary list of recommendations**

- Create position of Public Information Coordinator
- Support network of City public involvement and public information staff
- Create internal citywide web-based database for list management and web-based interest list sign-ups for stakeholders.
- Require web pages for project public involvement processes
- Support ongoing development of web-based calendar of public involvement events
- Set policy accomodating for digital divide. Not everyone has email.
- Better utilize existing community resources for project outreach.
- Better utilize Portland Cable Access calendar
- Better coordinate diverse stakeholder contacts and relation-building efforts w/community organizations.
- Require ADA accessibility for all City public involvement events.
- Expand language translation and interpretation accessibility of City information.

## **Additions at Nov. 19 Task Force meeting**

These ideas were not produced by the Communications committee but advocated for at the task force meeting. They will need more discussion and research.

- Create citywide newsletter for distribution of public info involvement opportunities
- Better utilize Portland Cable Access for city hearings, public involvement events, etc.
- Produce design standards for print and web material accessibility

## 4<sup>th</sup> item???? Improving internal City coordination of communication efforts

### Create position of Public Information Coordinator

- Action:** Create Public Information Coordinator (PIO) role. Primary role would be to coordinate inter-bureau development of citywide communication and media strategy. This would not take the place of existing internal bureau resources but fill in long identified gaps in coordinating public information needs. Job responsibilities might include:
- ❑ Facilitate development of annual citywide media workplan/strategy.
  - ❑ Coordinate media contact list management for all staff.
  - ❑ Initiate and build relationships with key media in community.
  - ❑ Initiate and build relationships with targeted media in communities of color, neighborhoods, business, youth and seniors, etc.
  - ❑ Coordinate earned media work, distribution of PSA announcements, follow-ups with media, and provide media technical assistance for smaller bureaus that do not have an in-house PIO.
  - ❑ Facilitate inter-bureau dialogue for framing citywide issues and projects.
  - ❑ Coordinate public education on key Citywide policy issues and projects, i.e. updates throughout lifecycle of major projects, how they are moving forward, what step they are in development.
  - ❑ Facilitate bringing public information officers together for networking, training, and looking for opportunities for inter-bureau cooperation.
- Problem:** City does not have a coordinated citywide communication and media strategy for public information. City has not had a system for coordinating messages on key citywide issues. This has led to confusion and missed opportunities to better educate the public and business community on City policy and project priorities, for example.
- Issue:** City staff who provide public information services have repeatedly identified the need for a public information coordinator who can facilitate various bureaus to work together to create a citywide strategy for message development and education about City

accomplishments. Ultimately this would also result in cost savings from coordinating roles that are now duplicated by numerous people such as list management and initiating relationships with media contacts.

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

### **Support network of City public involvement and public information staff**

**Action:** Institutionalize ongoing network of citywide public involvement and public information staff for the purpose of coordinating efforts with a citywide focus. Staff would meet on a regular basis for:

- Peer sharing and training on best practices.
- Providing overviews and updates on current PI efforts.
- Looking for opportunities to collaborate and share resources on public information or involvement processes, possibly saving money.
- Brainstorm technical issues like development and improvements for the web-based calendar, river renaissance booths at Rose Festival, etc.
- Perhaps develop an intra-net web site for PI staff with one page summaries on PI projects with overviews and FAQ's.

**Problem:** City staff are often not familiar with other bureau policy or project developments that are underway. Leads to missed opportunities for collaborating on outreach efforts and possible cost savings. Lack of ongoing structure makes it difficult to quickly pull staff together when a common code or technical issue could use dialogue between staff.

**Issue:** There has been an informal network of staff who've met on and off over the years. However, without a formal structure and dedicated staff support the group comes and goes. Such a network could lead to good internal City communication so staff know what co-workers' projects are and can be community ambassadors to answer questions or refer people to the right contact. Staff have repeatedly identified the value of a such a network, most recently in the Administrative Services Review (ASR).

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

# Utilizing Web technology tools

## **Create internal citywide web-based database for list management and web-based interest list sign-ups for stakeholders**

**Action:** Develop citywide web-based database that all staff can access to provide updated contact info, committee/topic interests, and list management for each record. Create list management coordination staff role. Yet it's decentralized so that any authorized staff person could update information. This would allow for one-time updating of contact info for business and neighborhood associations, community organizations, etc. that all staff can utilize. Metro has model to duplicate. PI Coordinator staff role.

Secondly, integrate automatic stakeholder list sign-up functions into web-based database. Allow individuals to filter topics and projects they wish to receive emails or snail-mail notices. User could choose interests via bureau, project, geographic region, etc. Also provide web-based archives of bureau email notices. Require notices to include contact info for how to get more information or how to sign up for project/bureau mailing lists.

**Problem:** Individuals are receiving duplicate, outdated, and deceased persons mailings. City is not maintaining up to date stakeholder lists for organizational leadership and contact information. Creates inefficiencies in printing and distribution costs.

Secondly, interested stakeholders have few web-based options to pick and choose which bureau, project, and geographical regions they can filter for receiving email notices from the City. Leads to email overload.

**Issue:** Improve maintenance of bureau databases to remove duplicates, delete people who are deceased or moved away, etc. Significant savings in postage, mailing, staff entering duplicate/bad data. City is potentially wasting significant resources in printing and distribution as well as inefficient use of staff resources from multiple staff maintaining similar contacts on numerous databases.

Few bureaus have filtered email lists that allow the user to choose what bureau, project, or geographic region they want to receive information about. For example, ONI notification is not filtered so

individuals get 5+ emails a day, some they may not be interested in.

**Priority level:**

**Timeline:**

**Implementor:**

### **Require web pages for project public involvement processes**

**Action:** Require all projects with public involvement to include a web page outlining process issues such as how to provide public comment either through a comment form or email link to staff; timeline before a decision is made; who to contact if you want to get involved; who is making the decision; schedule of forums, hearings, public events; sign-up for email notifications; map showing geographical impact area for major projects; links to portlandmaps.com; costs; construction timelines; etc.

Train city staff how to utilize Portlandonline.com for creating content and how to use new widgets for polling, surveys, etc. Make sure electronic document archives are accessible to those with slow computers, have links to Adobe download for Adobe Reader. Coordinate with other governments when their projects may impact City residents.

**Problem:** Public has a difficult time finding quick answers about key projects on our City web site. And once someone gets to a site there are few opportunities to interact such as through use of polls and surveys. Project information may be on a bureau web site but it may be missing key info such as staff contact, schedule of events, etc. Maps showing geographical impact of a project should be available.

**Issue:** Project web sites typically do not do a very good job of integrating the numerous public involvement activities associated with a project. City should be able to provide answers on the web to the items listed in the action steps above.

**Priority:**

**Timeline:**

**Implementor:**

### **Support ongoing development of web-based calendar of public involvement events**

**Action:** Each bureau posts notices to centralized web-based calendar listing all Council hearings, open houses, forums, neighborhood association meetings, etc. (Brian has developed long list of needed functions.)

- Needs to have search functions listed under “issues” to make effective.
- Need to have links to project info for more info, when public can provide input, how, when are decisions going to be made, who is making decision.
- Notify media on a monthly or weekly basis of calendar updates.

**Problem:** Public does not have a centralized location to find out all the city sponsored hearings, workshops, meetings, projects, etc.

**Issue:** A centralized web calendar would provide public with one-stop searching for events by geography, topic/project name, bureau, etc. Provide web links where people can go to get more info on project.

**Priority:**

**Timeline:**

**Implementor:**

**Set policy accomodating for digital divide. Not everyone has email.**

**Action:** Create criteria for which types of projects and notices require snail mail to be used or at least to supplement email. Require all list databases to split email and snail mail address so some are not left out of being notified.

**Problem:** Not everybody has email and still need snail mail notices.

**Issue:** Put into place assurances that those without email are not left behind as digital divide grows.

**Priority:**

**Timeline:**

**Implementor:**

# Utilizing Community Communication Opportunities

## **Better utilize existing community resources for project outreach**

**Action:** Provide better city project visibility in the community by coordinating a City presence at community street fairs and festivals. For example, make sure there is a City booth that multiple bureaus could utilize for marketing projects that are unique to that geographic area. Build schedule of street fairs in winter/early spring and share with staff. Requires Public Involvement Coordinator staff role. Ideally, create paid internship or temporary staffing roles for college students to assist with. Coordinate developing City kiosks and wall displays to be located at community centers, shopping malls, libraries, etc.

**Problem:** City does not have an adequate presence at community street fairs and festivals where we could reach new constituencies not traditionally involved with City planning.

**Issue:** City needs to increase visibility of City projects by reaching out to the community instead of requiring the public to always come to City organized events. Staff are frequently contacted by community event organizers to ask if we want to table. This would go a long way towards building goodwill and relationships with community organizations.

Priority:

Timeline:

Implementor:

## **Better utilize Portland Cable Access calendar and create City cable show**

**Action:** List all public involvement meetings going into new web calendar to be listed on Portland Cable Access. Develop a cable access talk show or informational meeting on City issues and/or Neighborhood Associations.

**Problem:** Not utilizing cable access except for Council meetings.

**Issue:** Portland Cable Access has expressed interest in providing more coverage of City public involvement efforts on their programming.

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

## **Diversity and inclusion in communication strategies**

### **Better coordinate diverse stakeholder contacts and relation-building efforts w/community organizations**

**Action:** Coordinate bureau efforts to build relationships with diverse community organizations, media, ethnic minority faith organizations and chambers of commerce, etc. Maintain database of diverse community organizations, media and stakeholder lists for all City PI staff and project managers including lists. (Could be accessible through web-based database proposal.) Identify and maintain lists of community meeting spaces in locations that are accessible and trusted by diverse constituency groups. Assist with linking City staff with community leaders when appropriate for specific issues or projects. Provide GIS analysis of neighborhood demographics to assist bureaus with identifying what geographic-based projects may need to meet special needs. Build media relations and encourage bureaus to place ad copy in Skanner, Asian Reporter, Observer, Hispanic News, etc.

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

**Problem:** City is not adequately reaching people of color 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.

**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:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

## **Require ADA accessibility for all City public involvement events**

**Action:** Require all public involvement events to be ADA accessible. At a minimum events need to be wheelchair accessible and near public transit lines. Require notices for public involvement events to list contact info to request special assistance within a minimum of seven days and list that event is wheelchair accessible.

**Problem:** People with disabilities or language special needs may often give up on accessing City public involvement processes if City bureaus do not market their events as accessible. There could also be liability issues if events are not accessible and special needs assistance is not provided.

**Issue:** It is likely required by law for government agencies to ensure all public events are ADA accessible. In addition the City may be required to provide for special needs assistance, such as language interpretation, when requested. Need to research what those requirements are. Many bureaus have long since stopped listing special needs contact info.

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

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

**Action:** Expand capacity of City bureaus to overcome language barriers for the City's rapidly diversifying non-English speaking population. Work with City bureaus to encourage provision of key documents in multiple languages and interpretation of key public involvement events.

Develop and maintain flexible service contractor lists for translation and interpretation services. Expand awareness of the Information and Referral Line's access to AT&T language interpretation service

that could be utilized for all City customer service desks. Require bureaus to have at least one bureau overview web page and how to reach the bureau in multiple languages including Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Build partnerships with area colleges for paid internships with foreign language students to assist with interpretation and translation needs. Purchase multi-person radio transmitter for large group language interpretation needs.

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

**Problem:** People for whom English is a second language are not able to participate in City public involvement efforts. Many City bureaus are not committing adequate resources to provide language interpretation and translation.

**Issue:** The City's non-English speaking and English as a second language populations are rapidly growing. City leaders are insisting bureaus reach diverse constituency interests in public involvement efforts.

**Priority:**

**Timeline:**

**Implementor:**

## **Additions from November 19, 2003 Task Force meeting**

<h3><b>Create citywide newsletter for distribution of public info involvement opportunities</b></h3>
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**Action:** Produce citywide newsletter listing City public information, public involvement opportunities, Council updates, and neighborhood and business association meetings and updates. Would provide a comprehensive summary of city projects, issues, events, and contact info.

Currently City bureaus and neighborhood offices have autonomous organizational structures for conveying important information to their constituent stakeholders. This would not be about taking over responsibility for developing messages for bureaus or neighborhood groups, but coordinating distribution of public information.

Would be in newsprint format that all residences and businesses would receive through the mail on a regularly scheduled basis.

Much more research is needed although initial thinking would be to mail out a newsprint format via saturation carrier route on a monthly or bi-monthly schedule. Web format could be more realistic option.

**Problem:** This would respond to citizen complaints that communications about City projects and priorities are uncoordinated, at times overwhelmed with City junk mail/email and sometimes minimal notice from the City.

There is an inequitable balance of resources for communication between revenue producing and general fund bureaus. Such a project would have a significant fiscal impact and would either require new resources or redistribution of existing resources.

Equally important, the neighborhood systems' communication resources are minimal due to flat budget growth for communications since the early 90's. Many City staff assume the neighborhood system is equipped to convey information to their membership when in fact there are minimal print media resources for that purpose.

**Issues:** The Communications committee considered this idea but chose not to forward it as a recommendation primarily due to costs, concerns that it would not meet the needs of bureau for quality control and timeliness. Idea was also considered as part of the City's Administrative Services Review effort to look for budget cost savings. Much of current City communications effort is focused on utilizing web technologies more effectively.

Developing a citywide newsletter has both strong proponents and detractors in City management and within the neighborhood system. Task Force members who advocated for the concept included business association, low-income, youth and neighborhood leaders.

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

**Better utilize Portland Cable Access for city hearings, public involvement events, etc.**

**Action:** Better coordinate City public involvement presence on Cable Access. Portland Cable Access (new name is Portland

Community Media) is aggressively preparing to cover/produce more City public policy and neighborhood association programming. This might include:

- PCA filming meetings, hearings, forums
- Producing one-time programs on specific hot topics
- Producing public education workshops, i.e. natureescaping
- Providing 80+hot spots throughout City where live feeds can be fed to PCA facilities
- Producing ongoing talk show format

**Problem:** Missed opportunity to utilize a community resource that does reach thousands of Portlanders. Portland Cable Access is a City funded resource that some Councilors feel is being underutilized by the city for public involvement.

**Issue:** Portland Cable Access has expressed interest in providing more coverage of City public involvement efforts on their programming. Indeed, they are exploring a neighborhood communications strategy that would fit very well with the above stated actions. Business Association leaders felt this was an important resource.

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**

<b>Produce design standards for print and web material accessibility</b>
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**Action:** Develop design and accessibility standards for print and web communication formats. Primary goal would be to encourage visual identity these are City of Portland projects, criteria for listing who, what, where, when, why, contact information, and meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

**Problem:**

**Issue:**

**Priority:**  
**Timeline:**  
**Implementor:**