

From draft report from Public Involvement Task Force

Spring 2003 – Spring 2004

Governance as Partnership

The City of Portland's elected officials, public sector management and staff must join with citizens to create a partnership in which the public has a real voice in setting the course of the community. Effective involvement of the public is essential to achieve and sustain this partnership. The following principles will provide the foundation for this partnership.

Proposed Principles of public involvement:

1. **A culture of listening, hearing, and acting on public input:** Public input must be integral to the development and implementation of public policies, public works projects, public services, and other city government actions.
2. **A collaborative, consensus-seeking, community-based approach:** City government/community partnerships should consistently pursue collaborative, consensus-seeking, community-based approaches between all stakeholders when identifying policy priorities, and when creating, developing or implementing public policies, public works projects, public services, and other city government actions.
3. **Ongoing communication and dialogue:** City decision-makers and staff should establish clear, understandable, and ongoing communication and dialogue with the public and with formal groups in the community.
4. **Transparency of governance and processes:** The public policy decision-making process should be accessible, open, honest, and understandable. Public participants should receive the information they need to participate effectively.
5. **Inclusiveness:** "Community" in Portland is made up of a rich diversity of groups and interests. City elected officials and city bureaus staff should identify, reach out to, and involve the full range of community groups and interests in public dialogue and decision-making processes.
6. **Diversity and accessibility:** Culturally appropriate and effective strategies and techniques should be used to reach out to and involve constituencies traditionally under-represented in the community—for example, people of color, immigrants and refugees, youth, people with low incomes, seniors, and people with disabilities.

7. **The neighborhood system:** Portland's nationally-recognized formal neighborhood and business association system is the cornerstone of public involvement and the primary channel for citizen input and involvement in our city.
8. **Early involvement:** The public should be involved early when a policy and project is being shaped—not after many important decisions have already been made and little realistic flexibility remains.
9. **Effective and flexible process design and implementation:** Public involvement processes and techniques should be well-designed, appropriately fit the scope, character, and impact of the policy or project, and be able to adapt to changing needs and issues as a process moves forward.
10. **Building capacity within City government:** City elected officials, decision-makers, and staff must have the skills and will to support and achieve effective public involvement as set out in these principles.
11. **Coordination and consistency:** City bureaus should coordinate their public outreach and involvement resources and activities to make the best use of city resources and public time and efforts.
12. **Evaluation:** Mechanisms must be in place to allow ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of how well city elected officials, decision-makers, and staff follow these principles when developing and implementing public policies, projects, and services, and the effectiveness of individual public involvement processes.
13. **Accountability:** City elected officials, decision-makers and staff must be accountable for following these governance and public involvement principles.

For more information:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=29118>

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