Summary of Problems, Issues and Solutions

<u>Accountability and Transparency Workgroup</u>

Charge: Develop public involvement efforts that are more transparent and ensure accountability; expectations for public, bureaus, staff; access to quality project information, how decisions are made, who is making them, how the public participates.

Below is a summary of comments received to date broken down into problem, issue and solution statements. Source of ideas lists what constituency/summary document the idea originated from along with known examples of good models. This is meant to help each workgroup begin discussion and prioritization on the broad range of ideas. Not prioritized in any order.

Problem Statement	Issue	Suggested Solution/Remedy	Source of Ideas
Can't figure out what the PI process is, which staff are working on projects and where project fits in bureau structure.	Provide overview of PI/decision-making process, organizational charts, bureau staff lists, project managers and PI coordinator contact info so the public understands process and can maintain contact throughout the lifecycle of a project.	• Require bureaus to post on web project PI process overview and updates, organizational structure chart and list of bureau staff with contact info, primarily project managers or decision-maker, and PI staff. • Also have this info available through City/County Information and Referral.	PI consultants mtg. NW/SW mtg. City staff mtg. Business mtg. Feb. 25 public forum
Rigid PI guidelines or standards will limit flexibility and creativity of bureaus to respond to unique changes in program.	Bureaus would face challenge of balancing the need for meeting adopted expectations with balancing need for flexibility to meet unique constituent, geographic, time constraints, financial and mandated changes during a PI process.	Any system of accountability needs to take into account unexpected circumstances, changes in project program, or needed flexibility to respond to unique constituent (etc.) demands.	City staff mtg. Random comments PI consultants mtg. Spring questionaire
Lack of clarity when is the decision made and it's a done deal.	Provide clarity on who is final decision-maker, the timeline for when the decision is made, and communicate back to the stakeholders and public that the public involvement process is over.	• Clarify up-front in original notices who is final decision maker, expected timeline for a final decision. • Provide follow-through notification to stakeholders and public that decision has been made and original public involvement process is complete.	City staff mtg. Random comments
Don't know what triggers the need for a project to	If we are to expect certain types of projects to meet established citywide guidelines or	• Develop easy to understand criteria for determining which projects will require	City staff mtg.

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meet PI guidelines or standards.	standards we need to have easy to understand criteria for staff to determine what triggers developing a PI plan.	establishing a plan to meet adopted guidelines or standards. • Post them on the web or make accessible to public.	
People without computers and who cannot get to downtown offices need access to documents.	Provide hard copy of large reports and documents in accessible public locations in outer neighborhoods.	Work with Multnomah County Libraries to provide shelf space for hard copies of current project reports, research, etc.	NW/SW mtg. Feb. 25 public forum BOP Healthly Streams good model.
Public needs to be able to get overview of a bureau's projects.	Provide web access to overview of bureau current project action lists, timelines for decision making, budgets.	Require each bureau to have a central location listing all their current projects, whether they are in planning, budgeting, or implementation phase. List timelines for decision-making, who makes decision, when can public comment be made.	NW/SW mtg. Portlandmaps/CIP good model for this.
Don't know what guidelines or standards City bureaus and public are expected to follow.	Provide web access to Council approved document to improve transparency of City PI processes.	Post approved recommendations, guidelines, standards, best practices, policies on one central location on the web.	2-25-03 public forum Auditor's web site implementing this.
Often don't hear back from City after public provides input on project.	Need to close feedback loop to acknowledge bureau has received public comment, and let participant know how that comment will be used, why or why not used. Share follow-up with the public.	Require sending email/mail notices after public comment periods with thank you note and: • Description of how comment will be utilized • Who will be making decision • What is the decision making timeline • Where to access final report that says why or why not public input was utilized	PI consultants mtg. City staff mtg. Business mtg. 3-03 questionaire
Staff in one bureau does not know what another bureau public involvement efforts are underway. Lost opportunities to coordinate.	Provide better internal networking for staff to be aware of opportunities to coordinate, partner on PI projects.	• Create intranet site for staff listing current/ongoing outreach efforts with contact info. • Maintain ongoing Citywide Public Involvement Network staff meetings to allow for project updates and brainstorming opportunities to collaborate.	Random comment

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No system of accountability in place. Who do public and businesses hold accountable?	• Create enforceable accountability measures for bureau directors and project managers to follow PI guidelines, standards, best practices. • Evaluate performance with questions rating: "Keeping citizens informed about key decisions" or "Understanding the views of people in your neighborhood"	• Require written evaluations of PI processes to be incorporated into Auditor's annual Service Efforts and Accomplishments Survey on meeting PI benchmarks. • Incorporate PI performance into bureau directors, project managers, and PI staff yearly evaluations. • Require bureau directors to report annually to Council on their bureaus' PI performance.	PI consultants mtg. East/CNN mtg. Business mtg. Spring questionaire Random comments See Port of Portland guidelines Matt Emlen sample from office of Sustainable Dev.
Real decision-makers don't show up at bureau PI events.	Project managers and higher-ups who make decisions need to be accessible to the public to give the public involvement process legitimacy in the eyes of some who doubt their comments will be heard otherwise.	• Ideally, schedule project managers to attend key outreach events or at least one event, before final decision, where decision-maker will be in attendance. • Provide contact information for project managers, commissioner liaisons, boards or commission chairs for public to have direct access to decision makers.	Business mtg. City staff mtg.
Don't know where to go to get started with City public involvement efforts.	Public needs a single point of access to city for information on project timelines, geographical area impacted, when and how public can provide input, etc.	• Create public involvement and/or public information coordinator roles for city to triage inquiries and make referrals to appropriate bureaus. • Explore improvements to City information and referral system to assist with triaging inquiries on public involvement.	Business mtg. See NY City I&R computerized system
Members of Neighborhood and Business Associations never hear from their representatives on advisory committees.	Need accountability measures to hold neighborhood and business representatives accountable who don't report back to their respective organizations after they sit on advisory committees, boards, commissions, etc.	ONI Guidelines need to require neighborhood and business association representatives on advisory committees, task forces, boards and commissions to report back to their respective organizations.	Business mtg.
City Council does not hear neutral or minority report	To make a decision based on balanced fact-finding Council needs to hear neutral	• Require bureaus to report to Council minority reports of opposing viewpoints	Business mtg.

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viewpoints at bureau presentations.	testimony and minority report of opposing viewpoints and conflicts identified by public.	or conflicts identified in public comments. • Fund independent neutral parties to write community/business report on key projects or support neighborhood and business associations to evaluate proposals and present findings alongside bureau. • Require report on potential loss of business profit due to impact of major capital projects.	
City not providing access to quality information for public to understand how issues will impact their lives.	Provide good, high quality and accessible information to the community to allow for the public to understand technical issues, how issues will impact their personal lives an be informed participants.	• Provide scenarios or alternative modeling that suggest how a project may impact individuals and businesses, i.e. utility bill increases, impacts on traffic, business profit, etc. • Require summaries written/reviewed by PI staff/consultants to accompany technical reports.	Youth mtg. APANO/Latino mtg. Inner SE Mtg. North mtg. City staff mtg. Feb. 25 public forum
The public often does not hear back from bureaus how public input was used or what was final decision.	Need to close the loop and improve communication between City bureaus and the public regarding: • Following up with disgruntled participants • Getting back to participants about what decision was, how it was made, by whom, etc.	Maintain stakeholder lists with contact info in order to respond with: • Thank you note for participating • Bureau contact info • Evaluation form, comment card • Reminder of next steps, timeline for decision-making, who makes decision	Youth mtg. City staff mtg. African-American mtg. Feb. 25 public forum
Staff do not respond to emails, phone calls in timely manner or never call back.	Public deserves some kind of response to inquiries to staff in a timely manner, even if it is to say you don't have an answer or can not get an answer or can't respond due to other priorities.	• Establish commitment to respond to public inquiries within a certain time period. • Establish employee penalties for failing to respond/incentives for fast respons rates.	North PDX mtg.
Public doesn't know when a public involvement effort is effective or not.	Provide opportunity for public to evaluate their participation in a bureau project. Provide standard evaluation and measurement tools that will assist public in measuring	• Provide standard evaluation/feedback form after all public involvement efforts. • Require all bureaus to complete evaluation reports of major public	Youth mtg. PI consultants mtg. African-American mtg.

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	individual bureau's public involvement efforts against established benchmarks or standards.	involvement processes. • Have Auditor's office/Progress Board maintain quantifiable benchmarks on public involvement measurements. Include in annual report to Council.	NW/SW mtg.
Seems like bureaus or Council are hiding something, have secret agendas. Public suspects foregone conclusions.	Public expect debate and engagement when they are invited to participate. Be clear when there are "strategic management agendas", federal or state mandates, funding time limits – when City must construct or move forward on project. Be clear what decisions are open to change. Come clean with info.	To the best extent possible, list possible constraints on project –mandates, time constraints, agendas - up front and publicize in notices. When changes happen in lifecycle of project publicize reasons.	PI consultants mtg. African-American mtg. Inner SE mtg. Random comments
Participants on advisory committees, etc. are unclear what their role is and extent of decision-making authority.	Be clear on parameters for engaging the public. What is role of public and what power do they have over decision making, if any. Is it advisory or participatory in final decision-making? If participatory, how deeply is public involved in decision-making?	At beginning of project clarify role of public participants as either limited to advisory or participatory in decision. • If advisory, list who are public advising, who will make decision? • If participatory, list extent public is involved? When are public decision time points? What are they deciding on?	PI consultants mtg. African-American mtg. APANO/Latino mtg. Random comments
What do staff or consultants do when asked to implement an unethical practice?	Public involvement consultants and City staff are sometimes asked to do unethical things that defy best practices, values endorsed by IAP2, International Association for Public Participation.	Create criteria and procedures based on IAP2 principles, best practices for PI consultants and City staff to safely report unethical practices to the Ombudsman Office.	PI consultants mtg.
Bureaus have no incentive to provide quality public process.	Create financial incentives/penalties for bureaus that exceed/miss benchmarks for public involvement standards.	• At a minimum, acknowledge exemplary public involvement practices by bureaus. • Provide extra funding for bureau that exceed PI best practices. Perhaps fund from fine on bureaus that fail to meet minimal standards.	African-American mtg.
Council only wants to hear supportive staff comments at beginning. Media leaves before opponents	Eliminate biases perceived by public that supportive staff reports before Council carry more weight than public comment. Balance presentations of proponents and opposition	• Require leapfrog of pro and con public comment to eliminate bias in one sides viewpoints being heard upfront before comment period over.	African-American mtg. Feb. 25 public forum

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from public get to speak.	public comment.	• Require time limits on staff reports before Council or allow opponents equal time.	
Advisory Committees for bureaus and big projects have become bureau support groups. Don't represent pro and con viewpoints.	Public perceives many Citizen Advisory Committees have minimal authority and effectiveness. To be legitimate need both pro and con viewpoints represented. Have lost focus on purpose to identify issues from various constituency perspectives, challenge bureau practices when needed, and develop recommendations	• Provide clearly defined job descriptions and expectations for Bureau Advisory Committees and project Citizen Advisory Committees. • Provide grievance process through Ombudsman Office for public whistleblowers.	NW/SW mtg.
Public can never get time to speak to Commissioners.	Providing "Open Door" time with Mayor and Commissioner sends a message that City Hall is accessible to all.	Reinstate "Open Door" program for Mayor and City Commissioners. Set aside 2 hours a week where anyone can sign-up to speak with an elected official for up to 15 minutes.	Inner SE mtg. Mayor Katz used to do this.
Five to 12 neighborhood association board members can not adequately represent everyone in an area.	Neighborhood Associations need delegation of representative roles for their leadership so there is clear deliniation of who is responsible for representing the board on what issues: i.e. liquor license review, land use reviews, board and commission reps, etc. • *See Summary of Principles which lists numerous Neighborhood Assoc. related issues.*	• Clarify the Neighborhood Association system was set up to be an opportunity for participatory democracy. • Clarify in bylaws ongoing standing committees and responsibilities to report back to neighborhood association and limitations on representative roles.	Inner SE mtg.
Can even elected officials in Council represent all 500,000+ residents adequately?	Concern raised the at-large Commissioner form of government does not provide enough representation for localized neighborhood concerns.	Support proposals for District Representation which would elect Commissioners by district lowering the ratio of how many residents they represent and, in theory, making them more accessible to voters.	Inner SE mtg. Robert Ball initiative in 2002.
Bureaus are able to spend money on major projects without/with minimal public involvement.	The release of funding for major projects should be contingent on meeting very specific public involvement requirements. Model is federal Ryan White Act funding for AIDS work that must go through local Regional Planning Councils. Council has diverse	• Before releasing funds for (what types of projects) City bureaus must meet public involvement requirements including support from (public councils). • *This could fall under multiple workgroups.*	Inner SE Mtg. Federal Ryan White funding requires citizen planning to release funds

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	representation, which would be needed for neighborhood associations.		
Few opportunities exist early on for assessing what the public's priorities are.	Value pro-active public involvement efforts vs. limiting public to a role of typically reacting. Provide ongoing needs assessment that engages public and neighborhood associations.	• Re-institute Neighborhood Needs Assessment program that engages public early on in identifying what the City's funding and capital improvement priorities should be.	APANO/Latino mtg North PDX mtg. Inner SE mtg. City staff mtg. Spring questionaire
No one is in charge of enforcing bureau meet expectations for public involvement.	Need public involvement coordinator who continually identifies and provides training for best practices, is able to enforce or hold bureaus accountable for meeting expectations.	Create public involvement coordinator role with responsibilities to: • Continually identify best practices • Train staff in best practices • Able to enforce implementation of PI guidelines, standards, etc.	East/CNN mtg.
Founders disease or staying around too long stifles new leadership in neighborhood associations.	Neighborhood leaders, like in any organization, find they are stuck and don't think the organization can survive without them stifling the ability of emerging new leadership to establish themselves.	Require term limits on Neighborhood Association officer or board positions.	City staff mtg.
Why have guidelines or standards?	Purpose of guidelines or standards would be to ensure consistent implementation of PI processes that live up to the principles adopted by Council. Also provide a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of current best practices.		Random comment
Don't understand City budget nor how it is determined.	Providing an overview of how the budget is decided upon and how it is organized is a major component of a transparent City government.	• Provide on the web and in paper an overview of the City budgeting process and how the budget is organized. • Breakdown City budget by neighborhood boundaries so people know where resources are spent.	Random comment
Not recognizing when public involvement is done well.	Success breeds success. Successful modeling of public involvement needs to be acknowledged and rewarded.	• Create awards category for PI process as part of Spirit of Portland awards. • Provide incentives/merit pay raises for exceeding public involvement benchmarks or raising the level of public	East/CNN mtg. Random comments

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		participation in decision-making.	