Public Involvement Manual
January 2009

PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

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Public Involvement Procedures

Portland's parks and recreational facilities are provided for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone who lives, works or plays in our city. Portland has long held the belief that an informed and engaged community is a key asset that sets us above other cities. The commitment and passion that Portlanders feel for their home is evident in the numerous examples of community engagement that have served to enhance the beauty and livability of our city and hold us, the bureaucrats and politicians, accountable to a higher standard.

Public involvement is a term that encompasses everything from public information to partnerships and collaboration. The development of a Public Involvement Plan is a collaborative process that uses the best thinking of project managers, public involvement staff, and key stakeholders to create a tool that maximizes each party's interests and skills to create the best possible outcome. Every person working on a project or policy within the bureau is responsible for achieving excellent standards in public involvement.

Public involvement activities offer us the opportunity to develop and enhance relationships with the community that will serve our organization for years to come. Through collaboration and partnership, we learn to work with and trust each other. An effectively implemented Public Involvement Plan will strengthen our policies, projects, and programs.

This document defines a process for collaborative development of public involvement plans and describes key elements that plans should include.

Outcomes for Effective Public Involvement
Portland Parks & Recreation will:

- Develop a strong and supportive partnership with the community.
- Build investment and participation of the community in our programs and activities.
- Improve our ability to identify and respond to differing community needs for information and engagement.
- Recognize the desire of the community to be **authentically*** engaged in processes that respect their commitment to their city.
- Develop the community's capacity to engage in strategic decision making regarding use and prioritization of PP&R facilities.
- Build the leadership of a wide variety of community stakeholders through intentional leadership identification and development (volunteers become team leaders, parks advocates, friends groups; team leaders are invited to join committees (PACs); committee members are invited to join boards).

* Authentic engagement is engagement in which people can see that their participation has substantially contributed to the outcome of the effort. The outcome reflects a response to the input (does not mean you do what they say).

Development of the Public Involvement Plan

The first task of the Project Manager is to produce the project summary. This document should provide the necessary information to begin development of the Public Involvement Plan. In addition to developing the project summary, the Project Manager should also perform an assessment of the project or initiative that includes the following:

- An environmental scan for related mandates, plans, and other directives that may have bearing on the project,
- An initial stakeholder assessment, including consideration of whether this project may disproportionately affect a particular community or traditionally underrepresented community,
- A review of the goals and purposes of public involvement for the project, and
- An evaluation of resources available for the public engagement component of the project.

At the time that a project, policy or program is ready to move forward, the Project Manager will bring together a team including PI staff, a community stakeholder, and themselves. Using the assessment tool from Bureau Innovation Project (BIP) #9, this team will work together to determine the best process, including tools and strategies to achieve the best outcome for both the bureau and the community to be impacted.

Public Involvement staff can assist with the process by researching community demographics, contacting neighborhood associations, coalition offices, schools, and community groups to learn more about the community and how it would like to be engaged. Early contact with neighborhood associations and coalitions, friends groups, community-based organizations, businesses associations, housing groups or user groups can inform what will work best for the project and the community. This collaboration results in a draft plan that outlines the basic process, discusses public information and involvement strategies, and suggests potential meeting dates/venues. An initial list of stakeholders is also developed through these conversations. The draft plan is further refined with input from the PP&R staff and design consultants working on the project. Once finalized, the Public Involvement Plan is posted on the project website and shared with involved people and organizations.

It is important to note that that the public involvement process may evolve throughout the life of a project. *The plan is intended as a guide, but is often modified along the way*. There may be need for additional meetings, for example, or a teacher interested in hands-on involvement for their students. Planning for the artwork of a project could lead to a neighborhood tile-making day, or surveys could be distributed at a community fair that hadn't been anticipated. It is important that the plans are flexible enough to take advantage of opportunities.

Responsibilities and Process

PP&R staff has a collective responsibility to ensure a successful public involvement process for each project. Specific responsibilities for development and implementation of public involvement plans are described below.

Division Manager – The manager of the division responsible for the project initiates the planning process by defining the project scope and assigning project management.

Public Involvement Staff – Working with the project manager, the project team, and the community, the Public Involvement Coordinator is ultimately responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the public involvement plan.

Project Manager – For purposes of this policy, the term "Project Manager" refers to the person within PP&R who has been assigned the lead responsibility for a planning initiative, policy development or capital project. For planning projects, a Senior Planner will take the place of a Project Manager.

The Project Manager is responsible for scheduling the initial meeting with the Public Involvement staff, for working collaboratively on all aspects of the public involvement plan's development and implementation, and for assuring that adequate resources and information are available for its accomplishment.

Project Team – The Project Team has responsibilities throughout the life of the project. The team is responsible for providing key information and input during development of the public involvement plan. Appropriate members of the Project Team (e.g., building directors, park district supervisors, and others who come in contact with the public as part of their jobs) assist the Project Manager and Public Involvement staff in the implementation, ongoing refinement, and evaluation of the plan.

Steps for Developing Public Involvement Plans

All plans will include a project description that defines the project purpose and scope, goals, products, project management contacts, and schedule. The Public Involvement Plan will be uniquely tailored to the project. The nature of the project and the anticipated level of public interest are primary considerations in determining the full scope of the plan. However, the following **key elements** should always be addressed.

I. **Defining the Public Role.** It is absolutely critical that what we are asking the public to do is defined at the outset. Are they designing a park? Are they developing a policy? What impact will their participation have on the outcome? The role and responsibility of the public will often drive the nature of the involvement.

II. **Identification of Stakeholders.** A stakeholder is identified as any person, business, community group or cultural group who has an interest in the outcome of the project or impact of the policy. During the initial assessment, PP&R staff can develop an initial list of stakeholders based on their information and experience, but it is ultimately our responsibility to allow the individual or group to determine their interest in the effort. A basic responsibility is to make sure enough information is out there so that if someone were interested, they could be involved.

III. **Identifying Key Strategies.**

To Provide Information (these tools allow us to both provide and receive information)

Public Meeting – A public meeting is held by PP&R on a specific topic or issue. We are asking the audience to come to us to participate in an agenda we created. Public meetings are effective tools to consider under the following circumstances:

- The target audience is ill-defined or unknown.
- The policy or issue has broad public interest.
- There are strong opinions on different sides and a broader understanding is sought.
- The project is at a very early stage and you are trying to generate interest and/or involvement.
- The project or issue warrants enough time to allow for full explanation and discussion.

Preparation for public meetings should be done with the Project Manager, Public Involvement staff, and consultants and community members where appropriate. Public meeting format:

- Have a clearly stated outcome.
- Present information appropriate to a variety of learning styles.
- Allow for individual discussion.

Presentation – A presentation is when a staff person goes to an already scheduled meeting or gathering to provide information about a project. Generally the amount of time allotted to staff is small and the ability to engage in discussion is limited. Presentations are generally given to neighborhood associations, community organizations, business associations, churches, and schools. The audience is typically groups that already exist, hold regular meetings, and have a mission or purpose that is similar or lends itself to our work.

Media – PP&R's Public Information Officer is available to assist staff to pitch stories to reporters, and write news releases and public service announcements. Media can help increase public and political awareness of a project, advertise meetings, and lend credibility to an effort.

Print Materials – Print materials allow us to get information into the hands of individuals in a very strategic and intentional manner. The advantage of our doing the writing and delivery is that we control the message, content, and distribution. Print materials continue to have a slightly higher readership than electronic materials. Print materials can include newsletters, postcards, fliers, leaflets, and posters.

Electronic Materials – Every project and policy should be available on our website. Additionally, PP&R has a blog, listserv, and an electronic newsletter to get information out to the public. Unfortunately, electronic communication is restricted to those who have access. Using this technology we control the message, but we do not control the response.

Material Distribution – In general, publications are distributed through the postal service, email, and various community locations. The distribution plan should include all stakeholders and community gathering places where the information could be shared or posted, e.g., libraries, police stations and community policing offices, community centers, schools, grocery stores, and senior centers. It should also include citywide print and electronic media including City Search, ONI Notification, and PP&R event calendar. All publications are posted on the PP&R website.

As a rule, project publications are always sent to City Commissioners and other city departments as appropriate, PP&R Expanded Management Team, Public Information staff, and to each department for posting.

Signage – Signs announcing the planning process, inviting participation, and explaining park improvements should be posted. In addition, opportunities to display project-related information on site or elsewhere in the community should be considered – particularly when a mechanism for citizen response could be included.

Site Walk-Through – Informal site walk-throughs are an excellent way to exchange information about current conditions, issues, challenges, and possible solutions. A walk-through can be included as part of a scheduled meeting or planned at a separate time.

Display/Stop & Talk – Staffed displays at traditional community gathering places are a good way to reach out to individuals who might otherwise not be aware of the project. Libraries, shopping malls, grocery store parking lots, downtown plazas, trailheads, and onsite "Stop & Talks" can be especially effective when advertised in advance and timed to coincide with an upcoming public meeting or decision point. Static displays (not staffed) are also useful and can be placed at a variety of locations simultaneously.

Hard Hat Tour/Sneak Preview – Hard hat tours or sneak previews are popular and very useful during extended construction periods. For safety purposes, these tours are generally limited to members of an advisory committee, neighborhood leaders, and members of the design or project team. Community sneak previews are an option if safety concerns are addressed.

Open Trailer – During major construction projects, open trailer events (essentially an 'open house' held in the construction trailer) provide an opportunity to keep interested citizens updated on the project's progress, answer their questions, and address their concerns. Open trailers are usually scheduled monthly, in cooperation with the contractor, and can be hosted by the project manager, associate or construction manager, along with the contractor and design consultant.

To Gather Information

Interception Strategy – An interception strategy is used to convey information or gather feedback from individuals based on location. Examples could be tables by off-leash areas to share information about times or locations changes, or collecting surveys from individuals as they enter a community center. These strategies allow us to gather feedback from individuals who may or may not attend a meeting.

Design Workshop – Workshops are similar to a meeting, but they convey a sense of active engagement. A person attending a workshop expects to be engaged and to see results in the end product.

Advisory Committee – An Advisory Committee is a selected group of individuals who generally participate on behalf of an organization or perspective. The role of the Advisory Committee is to communicate that perspective in the design or policy development process.

Person-to-Person Opportunities – Plans may also include other opportunities for sharing information during the planning phase, as well as during construction or project implementation. These opportunities vary depending on the nature and complexity of the project and are refined as the project develops, but may include community presentations, site walk-throughs, hard hat tours, sneak previews, open trailers or acquisition site visits.

Attending Existing Meeting – Most groups and organizations already have full agendas and lots of work. It is important to keep your presentation brief and allow time for comments. A key goal of attending these meetings should be to listen and learn from the audience at least as much as we expect them to learn from us.

Survey/Questionnaire/Poll – Depending on the information and outcome needed, the Public Involvement staff can assist with development and implementation of the appropriate tool.

IV. **Evaluation.** Each Public Involvement Plan includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of the public involvement process from both external and internal points of view. Evaluation tools vary depending on the nature of the project. Regardless of the tools used, however, the final evaluation always includes observations and recommendations from both public participants and the Project Team. The recommendations are incorporated into future public involvement strategies. The evaluation should include:

- Questions from public meeting surveys or comment cards that ask for feedback about the public involvement process and how it might be improved

- Small group critiques of the public involvement process conducted with community groups, neighborhood coalitions or similar organizations
- Internal critiques by Project Team members
- Written evaluations by Advisory Committee members (if appropriate)
- Feedback/comments from the PP&R website

Public Involvement Process Documentation

The final Public Involvement Plan is documented and then shared with the individuals, organizations, and staff that participated in its development. At the end of the project, a summary of the public involvement process, including actual dates and activities and any additions or changes made along the way, is filed in the central project files along with appropriate back-up information. The Public Involvement staff will be responsible for creating this file. Materials filed include, but are not limited to:

- A list of Advisory Committee members
- Copies of all publications, press releases, and other related materials
- Results of all public meetings, including attendance, issues, and outcomes
- Tabulations from any surveys and comment cards
- Event outlines and supporting materials

Working with a Public Involvement Consultant

Before contracting with an outside consultant, you need to develop a PI Plan with the PP&R Public Involvement staff. At that time it can be determined if the public involvement process can be handled internally, or if the services of an outside consultant will be required.

If proceeding with an outside consultant, first identify the skills and services you need. What are the primary roles and responsibilities you wish to assign to the consultant? Outline the major tasks, products, and timeline in context of the larger project scope and schedule. Do you need a meeting facilitator for a single event, a person to design and conduct outreach or a consultant to help you recruit, facilitate, and support the work of a project advisory committee?

Selection Considerations

Credentials – Relevant education and training are strong indicators that a consultant has a foundation of knowledge and a broad set of skills. In addition to academic degrees, look for advanced training, professional skill development, technical expertise, and credibility with key stakeholders.

Experience – It is important to select an experienced consultant that will strengthen your team with essential and relevant skills. How many years has the consultant been in business? Are they a sole operator, a small firm or a part of a large company? What public involvement, outreach or information work have they done on projects of similar scope, size, and complexity? Have they worked effectively with diverse audiences, minority communities, and youth? Are they expert in managing public controversies, large group discussions, and high-profile issues? Do they have a working knowledge of the technical aspects of the project?

Remember that every consultant was inexperienced at one time. We all need a break to get started in a new field or in a new location. You might decide to give a talented newcomer or a growing firm a chance, but realize that this may mean a greater level of management on your part. On the other hand, the most experienced consultant may become stale, stuck in tradition, and be less motivated to tailor their services to your specific needs.

Style and Attributes **–** The communication skills of your consultant are extremely important. You want someone that is easily understood and relates well with everyone involved in the project. They should be highly organized, dependable, and able to adapt to changing circumstances. The ideal person is skilled at seeing the big picture and able to translate your needs into specific information and proposed actions. Consultants should be tactful in dealing with people, but also confident and assertive when the need arises.

Availability **–** Does the consultant have sufficient days available to provide the needed support throughout your project schedule? Are they in high demand and likely to be overcommitted to other projects? Is the person or company located in Portland and able to attend meetings with you in person? Will their need to travel to Portland constrain their participation and limit your contacts to phone and email? Are they able to respond to work requests on short notice and deal with urgent deadlines?

Access **–** How easy has it been to reach the consultant during the selection process? Have they promptly returned your email messages and telephone calls? Are they able to respond to reasonable schedule changes or do they require several months notice to reschedule?

***References* –** Ask the consultant for at least three references from similar organizations. Check with the listed contacts to determine their satisfaction with the work performed by the consultant. Ask the references for additional contacts who are also familiar with the consultant. Verify past results and whether a consultant has or would be rehired.

***Cost* –** An obvious consideration will be the consultant fees and expenses. However, the decision should not be based on cost alone. The higher-priced consultant may also be the most competent and efficient. Everything else being roughly equal, cost may be the deciding factor.

Managing the Work of a Consultant
Even an expert consultant needs to be well managed. Your work does not end with selection. Once hired, a consultant works for you, PP&R, and the City of Portland. As project manager, your role is to coordinate their work and ensure that it meets our standards for content and quality. Make sure they fully understand their role, your expectations, and the PP&R approach to involving and engaging the community.

Note: If the PI consultant is a sub on a larger contract, they are managed by the primary firm who is fully responsible to you for the quality and timeliness of their team's work. In this case, you will need to establish expectations with the primary contractor and subs. It is essential that all PI tasks and products are fully integrated into the project scope and schedule. This will allow you to effectively view and manage the interdependent tasks that support the public involvement process.

Set Expectations and Ensure Accountability
It is important to establish expectations about ongoing communication and availability before work begins. This will provide the structure for your working relationships, minimize misunderstandings, and keep everyone moving forward together.

- Have an initial meeting to review the scope, schedule, and PI Handbook. [See checklist on page 9]
- Develop and use a detailed task list with deadlines. This tool will help you coordinate the work of staff and consultants, manage the review and production of materials, and prevent scheduling conflicts.
- Be accountable, stay on schedule, and follow-through on your own commitments. This will reinforce responsible behavior and help keep your project at the top of the consultant's priority list.

Communicate Regularly
Set a time for regular check in with the consultant. Review upcoming tasks and deadlines in detail. Discuss the progress they are making, review and comment on draft materials, and address outstanding issues. Provide them with information about scope and schedule changes that might affect their tasks.

Provide timely feedback and address issues promptly as they arise. Follow through if a consultant does not meet deadlines, delivers poor quality work or doesn't communicate with you about progress. Bring your concerns to their attention immediately. Clearly explain how they fell short of expectations and what remedy or change you require.

Initial Meeting Discussion Topics

Staff and consultant roles.

Primary contacts for PP&R and consultant.

Scope of work, schedule, draft PI plan, and budget.

Regular meeting and check-in schedule.

Materials – newsletters, postcards, comment forms. Review templates, logistics for the development of drafts, printing, and distribution.

Project Advisory Committee

- PAC recruitment and selection process – use of standard forms, timelines, outreach to ensure diversity, process to review and select.
- PAC meetings – designate note taker, review templates, discuss logistics for draft and final summaries, web posting, schedule to prepare and mail advance materials packet to PAC.
- Agenda and meeting materials – review templates, establish schedule for advance mailing and web posting.

Project web page – review template, required formats, ongoing updates, logistics and schedule to post project materials, presentations, comment forms.

Events & meetings – review templates for sign-in sheets, signage, notices. Discuss format and approach to community discussions, open house events, and other meetings.

How to Develop a Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Public Involvement Coordinator and Project Manager will discuss the scope/nature of the project to determine the optimum composition of the PAC.

The PAC can be anywhere from 5-50 people depending on need, scope, and public interest in the project. Generally a committee of 9-13 works best.

Consider the following when recruiting for the committee:

- Neighborhood Association (NA) representative
- Local school district representative
- Person who is involved with active recreation
- Person who is involved with the natural environment
- Person who is involved with the local business community and/or has specific knowledge of potential community partners, funding strategies, etc.
- Representatives of anticipated key user groups, e.g., parent with young children, senior, immediate neighbor of site, member of the local ethnic community.
- Representative with design skills or who has a big picture perspective with regard to park development and provision of park & recreation services citywide.
- Member-at-Large (represents the general community on issues of interest or concern)

The specific skills/interests required for the committee will be refined based on each individual project. Potential candidates will be recommended by local community organizations, staff, and/or by open recruitment. Each candidate will be required to submit a PAC Member Interest Form.

Information about committee member recruitment will be distributed via neighborhood meetings, publications, and schools, as well as through the PP&R website and database listserv. If an initial community-wide newsletter is in the PI Plan to introduce the project, it will include an invitation to participate on the committee. Submitted interest forms will be reviewed by PP&R project staff and potential members will be contacted to discuss the project further. In most cases, PP&R will appoint committee members, but for some projects, the Parks Commissioner may choose to make the appointments.

PP&R will respond to all who express an interest in serving on the committee to thank them for their willingness to serve and to encourage their participation in the overall process.

How to Run an Effective Meeting

Running an effective meeting is a critical leadership skill. A poorly run meeting diminishes the facilitator and Project Manager's credibility by reflecting badly on their organizational and communication skills. In contrast, a well-run meeting reinforces confidence and builds trust. Preparation and follow-through are key to ensuring a good outcome. While the meeting structure and organization depends on its purpose and the size of the group, there are a few general rules you can follow to insure that the time spent in meetings is worthwhile.

1. Make every meeting matter.

Meetings are not for the mere dissemination of information. They are for issues that require or would benefit from face to face discussion. Emails and newsletters are usually sufficient and often a more timely way to keep participants up-to-speed on a project.

Plan ahead. Decide who and what the meeting is for. What do you need to accomplish? Is this a staff meeting, planning meeting, problem solving meeting? If a meeting is needed, invite only the necessary people. Is there a key person without whom the meeting would be a waste of time? Make sure that person can attend.

2. Set an agenda and distribute it *before* the meeting.

This allows people to prepare for the proposed discussions. It is also useful to send out handouts in advance, especially lengthy ones, if possible. When participants have the appropriate information before a meeting, their discussion can be much more focused and fact-based. Without preparation, participants often react emotionally.

Additionally, this can serve as a gentle reminder of the upcoming meeting and also allow people to propose additional items of discussion.

When developing the agenda, identify the necessary outcomes of each discussion item and assign times. Be honest about how much time an item will take and design your agenda accordingly. Make sure that items on the agenda need the input of the larger group. Meet with key personnel *ahead of time* to get them on board and to help identify key talking points. If needed, have them introduce the issue and provide background information.

3. Plan logistics to ensure success.

Consider the meeting location and room set-up carefully. Make sure the location is ADA-accessible and easily reached by public transportation. Plan ahead for materials needed such as handouts, sign-in sheets, flip chart, pens, laptop and/or projector, extension cords, and refreshments. Identify who will play roles such as facilitator, chairperson, scribe, and presenters.

4. Start and end on time.

Ensure at the beginning of the meeting that all are familiar with the ground rules and decision-making process. Respect everyone's time. Is the discussion moving towards your goal? You may want to let a worthwhile discussion continue for a few extra minutes, knowing that another item may need to be deferred. If the conversation starts to stray, refocus the group on the agenda. Suggesting another time or place to continue the discussion lets the participants know that their input is worthwhile, reminds them of the goals of the current discussion, and keeps your meeting moving forward. Meetings don't have to take up their entire allotted time.

5. Get the constructive input you need from *everyone* present.

It's easy for one or two vocal personalities to dominate a meeting. Similarly, discussions can be stifled if a meeting leader is too free with his/her opinion, as everyone assumes that the outcome is already determined. Since the point of a meeting is two-way communication, it's your responsibility to get honest input from everyone. Make a point of asking those who have not spoken yet to contribute. Stay positive and avoid the temptation to dismiss ideas immediately – even if they initially seem outrageous. You also need to actively moderate the discussion in order to maintain an atmosphere where embarrassing or insulting comments are not allowed, otherwise you run the risk of missing someone's key input because they felt shut out or not vested in the discussion.

6. Make an action plan.

End each meeting by going around and reviewing the action steps each person has captured. This doesn't take much time and often reveals a few items that were missed. The exercise also instills a sense of accountability by having the responsible person publicly declaring what they will follow up on. Establish appropriate due dates for when the information or action needs to be completed. Make sure that everyone agrees on what constitutes completion of the task.

7. Follow up after the meeting.

The meeting doesn't end with everyone leaving the room. Notes should be published within 24 hours, while items are still fresh in people's minds and enthusiasm is high. Most people use the minutes as the ignition to get going on their particular assignment. Also, be sure to let the appropriate people know what was decided and what will happen next. At the very least, send out a list of assignments everyone agreed to take on so you can follow up and keep things moving, even if you don't send out complete meeting minutes.

In summary, good meetings require good leadership. Good leaders maximize the use of meeting time by planning ahead. By laying the groundwork and maintaining an open, but structured forum for discussion, a good leader facilitates creativity and the development of action items, and provides follow-up to ensure that assignments produce tangible results that move a group towards its goals.

Project Advisory Committee Ground Rules
This committee represents a diversity of expertise, skills, and viewpoints. As such, committee members are expected to listen carefully and consider the range of local and citywide needs and goals. Committee recommendations should represent a broad base of collective wisdom about what will best serve our city and the local neighborhood.

Ground Rules

- Arrive on time and be prepared for the meeting topics.
- Follow the topics and time set by the agenda.
- Listen carefully and speak honestly.
- Respect the views and opinions of others.
- Keep an open mind.
- Critique issues, not people or organizations.
- Allow everyone the opportunity to speak once before speaking twice.
- Use discussion to clarify information, not advocate for positions.
- Consider the needs and concerns of the local community and the larger city.

Process to Develop Recommendations
The PAC will work to reach agreement on advice and recommendations. The group will use a consensus process that respects the perspectives and contributions of all members. Whenever possible, the group will forward recommendations that are supported by the full group. If full agreement is not possible, the PAC will use a simple majority vote to finalize recommendations. In the case of a majority vote, minority reports will be accepted and submitted along with the PAC recommendation.

The suggestions, advice, and recommendations of the PAC will be provided to the project staff and the Director of Portland Parks & Recreation for consideration. Final decisions will be made by the PP&R Director.

Project Materials

A distribution plan should be developed for all materials prior to production and be included as part of the PI Plan. All projects materials – fliers, newsletters, posters, postcards, signage, agendas, meeting notes, meeting handouts, display materials, comment forms, reports – must be created using the approved PP&R templates. The Project Manager will ensure that consultants hired to produce materials work closely with the Public Involvement Coordinator. All materials must be approved by the PI Coordinator or the PP&R Graphics Manager.

Newsletters

Why would you want to produce a newsletter?

- You have a geographically specific area you want to communicate with
- You have a mailing list of at least 100 names to contact
- You have a lot of information and detail to communicate (minimum 4 pages 8.5 x 11")
- The information will be relevant for at least a month after people receive it
- You want to increase the likelihood that your communication will be read (as opposed to inserting the information in an already existing publication, e.g., *SE Examiner*)
- You have the budget and time in the project for production and distribution (the project manager is often responsible for developing the bulk of the content)

Things to consider before you begin to write:

- What do you want the reader to know or understand after having read it (what are your three most important points?) What is your message?
- Who is your audience? What is their level of knowledge of the information before receiving it? What is the likelihood that it will be distributed beyond the intended audience?
- What are you asking from the reader? Are you asking the reader for a response? To complete a survey? To provide feedback? To engage as a supporter?
- Are you providing the reader with the information and motivation they need to respond positively to your request?
- What other information or projects are happening within PP&R that would add value or interest for the reader?

Postcards

- Mail to a targeted audience, distribute at meetings and events or place on counters or in kiosks.
- Best used to announce or remind of events, document releases, comment periods or recruitments.
- Contain primary details with contact information and web links to learn more, take action, participate, respond or attend. Think of these as ticklers, reminders, announcements or save-the-date messages.
- Should be eye catching, colorful, and carry only the essential information.
- Can be relatively inexpensive to print and mail.

Fliers

- Post on bulletin boards, distribute at meetings and events, place in store windows or mail to targeted audiences.
- Best used to announce a meeting or event, encourage participation or share basic information about a project or issue.
- Should be bold and eye-catching. Focus on primary details with contact information and web links to learn more, take action, participate, respond or attend. Use an image, picture, map or graphic to grab attention.
- Can be relatively inexpensive to print and distribute.

Content

- Description of project/policy
- Pictures, graphs, and/or photographs are essential communication tools to supplement written material.
- Describe the significance of the project/policy – why would the reader care about this? What impact will it have on them?
- Describe the history of the project/policy – how did we get here?
- How is the project/policy funded?
- Solicit contributions from community supporters

Layout

To comply with PP&R's graphic standards, the official PP&R templates for all publications must be used, even if an outside consultant is hired for the project. Publications are not to be printed or distributed without final approval by the PI Coordinator or the PP&R graphics staff.

Editing

The Project Manager will be responsible for technical editing. Public Involvement staff will review publications to ensure that the content is appropriate to the audience and to maximize the desired outcomes. Both staff will work together to ensure that the publication meets the needs of the entire organization.

Distribution

This will be determined as part of the Public Involvement Plan.

Public Involvement Toolkit

November 2006

Submitted by:
The Mayor's Bureau Innovation Project #9:
Public Involvement

Eileen Argentina and Jo Ann Bowman, Co-Chairs

Guidelines for Using this Toolkit

Introduction

The Bureau Innovation Project #9 team, an initiative of Mayor Potter that began in June 2005, developed this toolkit. A team made up of both city staff and public members developed the tools based on research and discussion of models from around the world. It was important to the team to develop a model that would be easy to apply to all city bureaus and create consistent expectations for the public, yet not limit the creativity or flexibility of public involvement staff.

Before the Toolkit:

Before a public involvement staff person starts using the toolkit, there are activities that should normally occur in the overall public involvement project. The Process Overview demonstrates a typical public involvement process[1]. More about general steps and guidance for performing public involvement is available in the City of Portland's Outreach and Involvement Handbook, the third edition of which will incorporate the Toolkit.

First, project managers – be they public involvement staff, general project managers, or consultants – should perform, at the very least, an assessment of the project or initiative that includes the following:

- An environmental scan for related mandates, plans and other directives that may have bearing on the project,
- An initial stakeholder assessment, including considering whether this project may disproportionately affect a particular community or traditionally underrepresented community.
- A review of the goals and purposes of public involvement for the project, and
- An evaluation of resources available for the public engagement component of the project.

Once this preliminary review is complete, the toolkit can be drawn upon to further define the public involvement approach most suited to the particular project. The toolkit can also be used multiple times throughout the span of a project to assess options in a project's phases or to reassess in the event that circumstances change or modifications are needed.

How to use the Toolkit:

This toolkit is designed to be used, ideally with participation from a representative stakeholder group, to assess the optimal approaches and methods for engaging the public in a project or initiative. It is applicable to development and planning projects as well as policy explorations and general public education.

[1] Appendix A, page 4 of Toolkit

Consisting of a series of questions intended to clarify public interests and needs in the engagement process followed by a spectrum of approaches matched with tools and methods, this toolkit can help with identification of prospective options. Used with a stakeholder group, it can also help develop early public commitment to project success as public members participate in the development of the public process. The suggested steps for using the toolkit are as follows.

The Facilitated Stakeholder Meeting:

Step 1: Asking the Questions

Once an environmental assessment (see above) has been completed, convene a stakeholder meeting. Bringing together stakeholders with diverse perspectives and interests helps insure that the resulting involvement will respond more readily to community needs and values.

Referring to the list of questions[2], pose each question and allow all participants to answer the question in turn. If the group is very large, dividing into multiple small groups of 6-10 is recommended. As participants answer the question, the facilitator should place a check mark in the appropriate box. When all participants have answered, the facilitator moves on to the next question and each subsequent question in turn.

The facilitator should take care to ensure all voices are heard and that no answers are discussed or judged during this process. It is a free-flowing question and answer period, and all answers are equally valid.

Step 2: Assessing the Answers

Once all the questions have been answered in this manner, after thanking participants for their input, the facilitator should get agreement that the next step is to assess the group's general majority view on each question. The facilitator assessing the answer patterns, averaging them to determine a probable midpoint, and then affirming this with the group can informally accomplish this. Another option is to assign a number value to each answer and then average the answers for a mathematical average.

Step 3: Overall Scoring or Scale Assessment

After each question has been assessed and the average answer plotted, the facilitator should work with the group to come up with an overall score or location on the scale for the project. Some answers may seem to have opposing scales for this purpose. It is better not to focus on this, but to work with the group to determine a general rating or characterization of the project that will help point to the type of engagement and tools of engagement are warranted.

The questioning exercise can result in multiple positive outcomes. The facilitator, who is likely the public involvement manager for the project, will have a much better sense

[2] Appendix B, page 5 of Toolkit

of stakeholder views and issues. If the outcomes of the questions conflict with the limitations of mandates driving the project, this early warning system will help daylight potential sources of conflict so they can be dealt with early on. In addition, engaging stakeholders in discussing the community interest and positions regarding the project can result in early education as well as participation.

Step 4: Using the Spectrum

Once the project assessment using the questions is complete, the group can turn to the spectrum[3] to discuss levels and methods of engagement. Usually, the facilitator will suggest a "landing place" for the project on the spectrum based on the question discussion, the question-by-question scores, and the overall score or outcome.

The group should discuss and come to agreement on the level of public involvement dictated for the project by the assessment. The ultimate choice need not conform directly with the "score" from the questioning exercise. It is important that the level of involvement take account of the answers to the questions but also other associated factors of the project – mandates, timelines, resources, geographic scope, etc.

Step 5: Determining the Appropriate Tools and Methods

Once the group has agreed where the project falls on the spectrum and understands the purposes and roles associated with the result, the facilitator can lead a discussion of likely tools and methods[4] for ensuring public engagement at the determined level. This is the point in the exercise where stakeholder participation can be particularly effective in providing insights of which project staff may be unaware and in matching tools and methods to the community in which the engagement is to take place.

What Follows:

Putting the toolkit to use early in a project is an important step in developing a public involvement plan. Following these initial planning steps, staff should develop a public involvement plan that includes timelines, goals, benchmarks, and a detailed budget for the project's involvement components. Common steps following the toolkit exercise are:

- Complete and gain approval for the public involvement plan
- Share the plan with your initial stakeholder group and incorporate feedback
- Launch and implement the plan
- Evaluate and revisit the plan as warranted
- Ensure evaluation of the plan's success, especially with the initial stakeholder group
- Assess and report on successes and lessons learned

[3] Appendix C, page 6 of Toolkit
[4] Appendix D, page 7 of Toolkit

Additional Resources

1. Outreach and Involvement Handbook (http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=98500)
2. IAP2 website (www.iap2.org)

APPENDIX A
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT, PROCESS OVERVIEW

NOTES:

- ✓ This model should apply to any project, no matter where it comes from
- ✓ Assumption: process should be able to deal with 90% of the issues that come up

Inception of Project

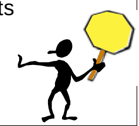
Characteristics:
- ✓ Origin of the project (its history & prior decisions)
- ✓ Timeline
- ✓ Cost/Budget
- ✓ Scope
- ✓ Policy background
- ✓ Precedent/Mandate
- ✓ Urgency *
- ✓ Level of community interest

* perhaps hardest to identify due to limiting factors

Questions Exercise & Project Assessment
with Stakeholders, see Guidelines

LEAST IMPACT
(light bulb change)

Incorporate:
- ✓ Course Corrections
- ✓ Early Alerts



MOST IMPACT
(Ice Rink)

Spectrum of Involvement

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Decide

Choose
Tools/ Methods

After Analysis

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN:
- Audience/ Stakeholder(s)
- Tool(s)
- Timing
- Goals
- Evaluation

Levels of Impact

Assessment Questions	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1. What is the anticipated level of conflict, opportunity, controversy, or concern on this or related issues?					
2. How significant are the potential impacts to the public?					
3. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue, project, or program?					
4. What degree of involvement does the public appear to desire or expect?					
5. What is the potential for public impact on the proposed decision or project?					
6. How significant are the possible benefits of involving the public?					
7. How serious are the potential ramifications of NOT involving the public?					
8. What level of public participation does Council and/or bureau directors desire or expect?					
9. What is the possibility of broad public interest?					
10. What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem or advancing the project?					

DRAFT Public Participation Spectrum

Level:	Public Participation Goal:	*The City will:*	Tools* to Consider:	*The Community:*
Decide	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	*Implement what the public decides.*	#5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #8 Community Driven & Organized #9 Techniques & Methods	***Decides***
Collaborative	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	*Partner with public in each aspect of decision.*	#6 Feedback Mechanisms #8 Community Driven & Organized #9 Techniques & Methods	***Partners***
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	*Work with the public to ensure that their concerns are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.*	#5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #7 Formal Hearings/Forums #8 Community Driven & Organized	***Participates***
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	*Keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.*	#3 Events/ Meetings #5 Committees #6 Feedback Mechanisms #7 Formal Hearings/Forums	***Contributes***
Inform	To provide the public with balanced & objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	*Keep the public informed.*	#1 Information/ Notification #2 Publications #3 Events/ Meetings #4 Community Education	***Learns***

Increasing Level of Public Involvement

*Refer to "Public Involvement Tools, by Category" on the next page for the full list of techniques.

Adapted from IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum (www.iap2.org)

DRAFT – October 2006 – Bureau Innovation Project # 9, City of Portland

Public Involvement Tools, By Category – BIP #9

#1 Information/ Notification	#2 Publications	#3 Events/ Meetings	#4 Community Education	#5 Committees	#6 Feedback Mechanisms	#7 Formal Hearings/ Forums	#8 Community Driven & Organized	#9 Techniques & Methods
• Advertisements • Advertisements, Newspaper Inserts • Advertisements, Transit Ads • Bill Stuffer • Clerical Information Contact • Email • Info Centers & Field Offices • Information Hot Line • Information Repositories • Media: Comics, Community Media/Cable Access, Feature Stories, Podcasting, Radio, TV • News Conferences • Postcards • Press Releases • Soap Box • Staffed Displays • Tabling	• Brochures • Fact Sheets • Issues Papers • Mailings • Newsletters • Reports • Review Drafts • Websites	• Community Fairs • Community Forums • Design Charrettes • Door to Door/Canvass • Field Trip • Groundbreaking Ceremonies • Meetings with Existing Groups • Meetings, Virtual • Neighborhood Walks/Strolls • Open Houses • Roadshow • Summits • Tours • Open Houses • Virtual Open Houses • Web-based Meetings • Workshop, Computer-Facilitated • Workshops	• Briefings to Neighborhood & Community Organizations • Brown Bags • Door to Door/ Canvass • Panels • FAQ's • Field Trip • Media: Feature Stories & Editorials • Speakers Bureau • Staffed Displays • Tabling • Trainings	• Advisory Committees • Citizen Juries • Commissions & Boards • Established Groups & Committees • Expert Panels • Task Forces	• Comment Cards • Community Feedback Board • Door to Door/Canvass • Fishbowls • Focus Groups • Handheld Voting • Interviews • Large Group Study • Media, Blogs • Online Testimony • Polling: Computer-Based, Deliberative • Response Sheets • Surveys: Exit/Follow-up, In Person, Intercept, Internet, Mailed, Telephone • Tabling • Virtual Room	• Community Forums • Online Testimony • Public Hearings	• Coffee Klatches/ House Parties • Community Facilitators • Form New Community Group • Meetings, Community Initiated • Small Grants	• Consensus Building Techniques • Deliberative Dialogue • Design Charette • Future Search Conference • Network with Leadership (esp. cultural groups) • Open Space Technology • Outside Consultant/ Facilitator • Popular Education • Role-playing • Samoan Circle • Study Circles • Technical Information Contact