

Randy Leonard, Commissioner

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enhancing the quality
of neighborhoods
through community
participation

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Executive Summary

**Proposed changes to
ONI Guidelines/Standards
and City Code Title 3.96**

Portland’s Neighborhood Associations were first recognized by the City in 1974 with this directive from City Code 3.96: “Council finds that there is a need to broaden channels of communication between the people of Portland and City officials on matters affecting neighborhood livability.”

Thirty years later that charge is carried forward by a citizen-led taskforce, the Guidelines Review Empowerment and Assessment Taskforce (GREAT). The Task Force has maintained the spirit of the current Guidelines towards building a stronger neighborhood system.

The Task Force has completed its review of existing policy and proposed language to update the ONI Guidelines establishing details of the functions, responsibilities and benefits of Portland’s neighborhood system including 95 Neighborhood Associations, 7 District Coalitions, 40 Business Associations and the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. In addition GREAT is proposing changes to City Code Title 3.96, authorizing language for the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, which has not been updated since 1987.

You are invited to review these documents and provide public comment through **Friday, November 12** to the Task Force before they are forwarded to City Council for approval in early winter. There will be two public hearings on **Thursday, October 28** and **Monday, November 8**. In addition, we are scheduling presentations for discussion and comment at District Coalition and Neighborhood Association meetings throughout Portland. *(See below for details.)*

Since its inception City and Neighborhood leaders have taken this charge to heart in building a neighborhood system that creates opportunities for individuals to participate in the democratic process and make their voices heard to City Council and other governmental agencies on issues of concern at a neighborhood level.

**Information & Referral
Center**
503-823-4000

**Crime Prevention
Center**
503-823-4519

**Neighborhood Support
Center**
503-823-7306 Inspections
503-823-7350 Noise Office

**Neighborhood Resource
Center**
503-823-4519

Over time, policies and rules have been established with the intention of ensuring a neighborhood system that promotes early notification to a broad base of residents within a neighborhood, open participation at association meetings, transparent procedures for deliberations and decision-making within the organizations, and measures to hold participants accountable within and without both Associations, ONI and City agencies.

In 1987 a set of Guidelines were established describing the, “components and the procedures for the smooth functioning of this neighborhood program.” Every four years the Guidelines have been reviewed and updated by neighborhood leaders, who are chosen by their representative District Coalitions, to reflect the changing needs of a dynamic and evolving system. The Taskforce is proposing to rename the Guidelines as “Standards” to more accurately reflect the directive of Code 3.96.030 establishing “Minimum Standards for Neighborhood Associations.”

The Taskforce has produced an informational brochure to assist Neighborhood Association leaders in better understanding the purpose of the Standards and highlighting the significant changes recommended by the Task Force. ONI staff and Taskforce members are available to meet with your Neighborhood or Business Association to answer questions through November 12. Draft documents and Task Force background material can be viewed online at www.portlandonline.com/oni.

Enclosed are the highlighted changes the Task Force members believe will result in more clearly delineated functions and responsibilities of neighborhood system partners. The most significant changes you will find are made to the numbering and reorganization of categories that we believe will result in an easier to understand and vastly improved document that brings the Code and Guidelines/Standards language into harmony.

Sincerely,

Patricia Gardner, Co-Chair
Neighbors West-Northwest, Pearl District

Moshe Lenske, Co-Chair
Southeast Uplift, Woodstock

Other Committee members:

Kathy Bambeck	Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc., Bridlemile
Jimmy Brown	Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Director
Nancy Chapin	Alliance for Portland Neighborhood Business Assocs.
Leonard Gard	Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.
Raymond Hites	East Portland Neighborhood Office, Lents
Brian Hoop	Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Stan Lewis	Unaffiliated Associations, Downtown
Michael O'Malley	Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Inc., Irvington
Jerry Powell	At-large, Goosehollow
Mark Sieber	District Coalition Exec. Directors

Ways to make public comment

Public comment can be made through 5:00 PM, Friday, November 12, 2004 via:

Email: onistandards@ci.portland.or.us

Mail: Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Attn: ONI Standards
1221 SW 4th Ave., Rm. 110
Portland, OR 97204

Online: www.portlandonline.com/oni

Public hearings: **Thursday, October 28**
7 PM
Central NE Neighbors, Community Room, 4415 NE 87th Ave.

Monday, November 8
7 PM, City Hall, Lovejoy Room, 1221 SW 4th Ave.

Other Q & A Sessions: **Monday, October 4**
7 PM, SE Uplift, 3534 SE Main, Fireside Room

Monday, October 4
6 PM, North Portland Neighborhood Services,
2209 N. Schofield, 1st Floor

Wednesday, October 27
6:30 PM
SW Neighborhoods, Inc., Multnomah Arts Center,
7688 SW Capitol Hwy., Rm 34

Wednesday, November 3
6 PM
East PDX Neighborhood Office, East Precinct,
735 SE 106th Ave., Community Room

To request copies of documents, questions or to have a speaker attend your Association meeting

Contact: Brian Hoop 503-823-3075
TTY 503-823-6868
bhoop@ci.portland.or.us

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Below are some key proposed changes you might want to learn more about:

Grievance and Appeal Procedures

Rules governing the resolution of conflict are hopefully a means of last resort in a system built upon promotion of informed and respectful dialogue. However, when needed it has been the historical philosophy of Portland's neighborhood system to encourage intra-organizational conflict to be resolved between neighbors at the Association level. Proposed step-by-step procedures and timelines for grievance procedures go a long way towards clarifying existing vague language.

Open Meetings and Public Records

Neighborhood Associations in Portland have been directed to follow open meetings laws since the adoption of Code 3.96 in 1974. It was later in 1987 that Associations were directed to abide by State statutes (ORS 192.410 – 192.710). This was a move on the part of the City to ensure a more transparent and accountable neighborhood system. The Taskforce is proposing the establishment of local open meetings and public records rules that closely mirror the spirit of State statute. They would allow more flexible standards for confidential meetings and stricter standards for notification. We believe these procedures are better suited to volunteer-based organizations.

Neighborhood Associations

Changes affecting Neighborhood Associations include the establishment of minimum sizes of future Associations and minimum quorums for Association meetings, clarifying ONI's role in the resolution of boundary disputes, confirming what has been a widespread practice – businesses must be allowed to be members of Associations, and adding gender identity and citizenship status to the list of protected classes protected against discrimination.

District Coalitions

Significant changes were made to this section primarily to better differentiate between the organizational structures and contractual relationships with ONI of the non-profit and city-staffed District Coalitions. In addition, the Standards would establish step-by-step procedures for creating new Coalitions and how Associations chose to affiliate with or move amongst Coalitions. Communication standards would clarify that positions still cannot be taken on candidates for elected office or printed in newsletters funded by the City. However, Associations and Coalitions could take positions on ballot initiatives.

Office of Neighborhood Involvement

Clarifies the role of ONI in coordinating the neighborhood system including specific outcomes including organizing neighborhood summits, providing leadership training support, and provision of technical support in building a more diverse neighborhood system in partnership with the District Coalitions. To meet the challenge of the Public Involvement Task Force, ONI would be required to develop and implement an internal public involvement policy.

Business District Associations

Business Associations were first engaged in City public involvement efforts in the early 90's at the directive of Mayor Vera Katz. That relationship was formalized in the 1998 Guidelines when they were "Acknowledged" and listed in ONI's Neighborhood Directory of contacts to assist City bureaus in outreach efforts. BDA's have yet to be provided organizational support funds, as have Neighborhood Associations through District Coalitions. Due to this unique relationship with the City, Business Associations would not be held to the same standard as Neighborhood Associations such as requiring membership dues to be voluntary and eliminating the requirement that the Business Associations have grievance procedures. Minimum sizes of 75 businesses per Associations would be established.

Communities Beyond Neighborhood Boundaries

This is a policy established in the 1998 Guidelines to address the increasing recognition that participation in public involvement processes were not reflecting the rapidly diversifying demographics of Portland. Its goal was to acknowledge ethnic minority organizations and encourage City bureaus to more aggressively include such constituencies in their outreach efforts. While no organizations have since sought recognition ONI has met the spirit of the goal by building a database of several hundred immigrant, refugee, and community organizations of color. The Task Force proposes to eliminate this policy. In its place both ONI and District Coalitions would be directed to expand efforts to build the capacity of Neighborhood Associations to diversify their membership and leadership.

Responsibilities of City Agencies

Since 1975 City Code 3.96.070 has established that, "City agencies shall include Neighborhood Associations in all planning efforts which affect neighborhood livability." In addition, "Notice of pending policy decisions affecting neighborhood livability shall be given 30 days prior to decisions by City agencies to the Neighborhood Associations affected." The Public Involvement Task Force is currently addressing this issue and will propose a more comprehensive approach to City public involvement efforts at a later date. It is likely that this section will require further dialogue between citizens, neighborhood and community groups and City staff before establishing a workable procedure for public involvement acceptable to all parties.