

PDC Public Participation Policy

As a public agency entrusted to administer and invest public resources to accomplish a variety of goals and objectives that benefit the City of Portland, meaningful, timely and effective public participation in various aspects of PDC activities is essential to the successful implementation of Commission policies, programs and projects.

Meaningful public participation helps promote democracy and civic engagement, builds public trust in government and enhances the Commission's credibility within the community.

Effective public participation can improve the quality and effectiveness of our plans and decisions.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate public participation processes and activities are incorporated into PDC planning and decision-making, and that they are consistent with these **Guiding Principles**:

- **Building relationships, trust and community capacity** – *The foundation for successful public participation is opening channels of communication early with partners and stakeholders, and developing collaborative working relationships with them. Effective public participation activities should leave neighborhoods and communities stronger and with increased capacity to influence their livability.*
- **Inclusive and respectful** – *Everyone's participation will be welcome. An effort will be made to identify, invite and encourage stakeholders to be involved early in public participation processes; and their input and feedback will be given careful and respectful consideration.*
- **Adaptable and Creative** – *The extent, timing, manner, and outcomes of public participation activities will necessarily vary to suit the circumstances and magnitude of a particular project or decision, and facilitate maximum public participation.*

A. Definitions.

1. **Public Participation** – *Any process that strives to inform, gather input or involve the public regarding decision-making processes. Public participation is the umbrella term to describe all levels of "public" information, education, relations, outreach, input, involvement and collaboration.*
2. **Public Information** – *A one-way communication from PDC to the public with the goal of providing balanced and objective information*

to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

3. **Public Education** – A hands-on public participation activity with the goal of deeper public understanding about the project, program or activity, e.g. questions and answer sessions, guided tours, etc.
4. **Public Input** – Seeking community feedback on a proposal, analysis or alternatives. Requires a response from the public, but limited opportunity for public dialogue.
5. **Public Involvement** – Working directly with the public throughout a process to ensure that the project, issues, aspirations and concerns are consistently understood and considered by staff in planning and decision making. Involvement includes many elements of both public information and public outreach, but adds a third dimension of **two-way communication**.
6. **Public Collaboration** – To collaborate with members of the public in some or all aspects of a decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution.
7. **Public Outreach** – Identifying and inviting target audiences and stakeholders to participate in a public participation activity, or to market PDC products and services..
8. **Public Participation Plan** – A customized plan for undertaking public involvement, information, education and/or outreach activities for a specific project or decision-making process.
9. **Public Relations** – The dissemination of information to the media and the public, with an emphasis on the promotion of a particular policy, project or solution.
10. **Stakeholders** – Any individual, group of individuals, organization or political entity that has an interest in or is potentially impacted by a Commission policy, program or project.
11. **Target Audiences** – Specific private or public individuals, groups and strategic partners within the larger community who are impacted by and whose participation is needed or highly desirable to achieve an identified public participation or project goal.

B. Required Public Participation. Public participation – as outlined in a *Public Participation Plan* – is required and will be an integral component of project schedules, budgets, and Board decision-making processes for the following types of activities.

In the event any public participation activities are part of a scope of work being performed for PDC by others through a contractual arrangement (i.e., consultant or interagency agreement) PDC staff will maintain responsibility for planning and managing such public participation activities in accordance with this policy.

1. **Major Policy Decision:** When PDC is developing a major policy or implementation plan that will be adopted by the PDC Board of Commissioners and/or the Portland City Council.

Examples:

- Urban Renewal Area Plans (or amendments)
- City Economic Development Strategy
- Annual PDC Budget

2. **Project Planning:** When PDC is creating a development study or plan for a specific site or area to implement an adopted Urban Renewal Plan or strategy; or when PDC is the lead agency in a similar activity outside of an Urban Renewal Area.

Examples:

- Fremont/MLK Vision Study
- Killingsworth Block
- Kennedy School
- Fire Station #1 Relocation
- Burnside Bridgehead Project
- Alberta Streetscape Project
- South Waterfront Greenway Implementation Strategy

3. **Strategies and Programs:** When PDC is developing an implementation strategy or program to guide future efforts and investment by the Commission to meet Urban Renewal Plan or City goals.

Examples:

- Gateway Regional Center URA Housing Implementation Strategy
- Lents Town Center URA Economic Development Strategy
- Lents Town Center Residential Street Improvement Program

4. **Other Laws.** Procedures for public notice and/or public participation contained in federal, state or local laws or regulations and applicable to a particular program or project activity shall be followed in lieu of any similar process otherwise required by this policy.

C. Optional Public Participation. Public involvement, information and/or outreach activities – including the development of a *Public Participation Plan* – are optional in PDC projects and activities that are not covered by Section B (above).

1. Appropriate public participation activities are highly recommended for projects where:

- a) PDC has flexibility with elements of a project that could impact stakeholders and/or neighborhoods (e.g., timing, construction use closures, minor design elements, retail strategy, etc.).
 - b) There is significant public interest in a specific project that PDC is contemplating, or undertaking (e.g., Grant Warehouse, Headquarters Hotel).
 - c) A PDC project follows or is a continuation of another public project in the same area and community interest has been or is heightened by the previous project.
2. When undertaking optional public participation activities, staff should follow PDC guidelines and best practices in planning and carrying out those activities.
 3. Development of a *Public Participation Plan* is highly recommended whenever multiple public participation activities are planned for a project or process.

D. Extent of the public participation. Whether required or optional, the extent of public participation will necessarily vary based on a variety of factors, including:

- The desired outcome (e.g., policy, plan or decision).
- Geographic scope and impact.
- Financial magnitude of public investment.
- Relationship to existing public policies and plans.
- Extent and diversity of stakeholder impacts and interest.

Additional details, suggestions and resources for designing a public participation process are contained in a *Public Participation Manual* maintained by the Public Affairs Department.

1. **Major Policy Decisions** will generally require more formal steps in the public participation process such as public hearings and Board meetings; and involve the broadest range of stakeholders.
2. **Project Planning** will typically have a focused range of stakeholders and these common steps.
 - a) Visioning
 - b) Planning
 - c) Designing
 - d) Implementation Plan/Strategy
3. **Strategies and Programs** will typically have a focused range of stakeholders and a unique process to suit the desired outcome.

E. Public Participation Plan.

1. The purpose of a *Public Participation Plan* is to provide a clear description to stakeholders of why, when and how they can participate. Having a clear *Plan* at the beginning of a process will help alleviate misunderstandings during and at the end of the process about how input is to be used and decisions made.
2. Prior to starting a project that includes required or optional public participation activities, a *Public Participation Plan* containing a schedule and description of all the planned public participation activities needs to be prepared and approved by the Public Affairs Director.
3. During the public participation process it is entirely appropriate to revise the *Plan* or schedule as circumstances require, so long as that is clearly articulated to the stakeholders, and the revised *Plan* is approved and modified to reflect changes.
4. Additional details, suggestions and resources for designing a *Public Participation Plan* are contained in a *Public Participation Manual* maintained by the Public Affairs Department.

F. Authorities and Responsibilities.

1. **Executive Director.** The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
2. **Public Affairs Director.**
 - a) The Public Affairs Director is responsible for and authorized to approve all Public Participation Plans.
 - b) The Public Affairs Director is responsible for developing and maintaining a *Public Participation Manual* for staff to use as a resource in developing a *Public Participation Plan* and carrying out related public participation activities.

This Manual will contain standard PDC practices and procedures, as well as suggestions, tips and best practices recommended by public participation professionals.

- c) The Public Affairs Director is responsible for ensuring that this Policy and PDC practices contained in the *Public Participation Manual* are in compliance with City Code and associated standards and procedures related to public participation.
- d) The Public Affairs Director, in collaboration with PDC Human Resources, is responsible for providing training and technical support to staff in meeting the requirements of this policy and integrating effective public participation in PDC projects and programs.

3. **Directors and Managers** are responsible for ensuring that projects under their supervision incorporate public participation plans and activities that promote and support the guiding principles of this policy.
4. **Project managers and staff** are responsible for promoting and implementing effective public participation activities in projects and programs that they supervise or support.