

## Chapter 2: Community Involvement

### What is this chapter about?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City's intent to:

- Provide a wide range of opportunities for involvement in land-use planning and investment decisions, with targeted access and inclusion in decision-making for those with potential to be adversely affected by the results of those decisions.
- Foster ongoing positive relationships between communities and the City in support of positive land-use plans and investment decision outcomes by ensuring accountability for improving community well-being and inclusion.
- Recognize that the City has a responsibility to plan for the needs of, and engage with, under-served and under-represented communities to achieve greater equity.
- Expand opportunities for meaningful community engagement in land-use planning and investment decisions processes, from issue identification and project scoping through implementation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and enforcement.
- Promote civic responsibility, both within communities and at the individual level.
- Require transparent, well-designed, thoughtful, culturally-specific, relevant, representative, and responsive public processes for land-use planning and investment decisions, implementation, and monitoring.
- Build community capacity to increase the community's meaningful participation and leadership in land-use planning and investment decisions.
- Promote thoughtful consideration of and responses to public comment on land-use planning and investment decisions.

### Why is this important?

The results are better — more durable, equitable and accountable — when a wide and diverse range of Portlanders are involved in the scoping, development, and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of plans and investment projects. No one person, agency, organization, or business can provide all things Portland's diverse communities need. Collaborative partnerships and inclusive community participation in land-use planning and investment decision making are essential to creating and sustaining a prosperous, healthy, equitable, and resilient Portland.

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[Portland has a long history of community involvement that gained strength and power in the 1970s and forms the foundation of today's neighborhood system.](#) As the city grows, diversifies, and works to advance equity, it is essential that all community members' needs and concerns are considered. Particular efforts must be made to improve services for people of color, immigrants and refugee communities, people with disabilities, renters, low-income Portlanders, older adults, youth, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community.

It is the City's responsibility to promote deep and inclusive community involvement in [land use planning and investment](#) decisions. [A new paradigm of community involvement and engagement — one that supports intercultural organizing, recognizes that diversity is an advantage, and works to achieve equitable outcomes — must be embraced and paired with Portland's neighborhood organizations to create a robust and inclusive community involvement system.](#)

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### Goals

#### **Goal 2.A: Community involvement as a partnership**

The City of Portland ~~government~~ works together as a genuine partner with all Portland communities and interests. The City promotes, builds, and maintains relationships, and communicates with individuals, communities, neighborhoods, businesses, organizations, institutions, and other governments to ensure meaningful community involvement in ~~land use~~ plan and investment decisions.

#### **Goal 2.B: Social justice and equity**

The City of Portland seeks social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all community members, recognizing a special responsibility to identify, ~~orient~~, and involve engage under-served and under-represented communities in land use planning and investment planning processes, particularly those with potential to be adversely affected by the results of decisions. The City actively works to improve its land use-related decisions to achieve more equitable distribution of burdens and benefits.

#### **Goal 2.C: Value community wisdom and participation**

Portland values and encourages community and civic participation. The City seeks and considers community wisdom, and different cultural perspectives, and integrates ~~it~~ them with sound technical analysis, to strengthen land use decisions.

#### **Goal 2.D: Transparency and accountability**

City ~~planning, policy, investment, and development~~ planning and investment decision-making processes are clear, open, and documented. Through these processes a diverse range of community interests are heard and balanced. The City makes it clear to the community who is responsible for making decisions, and how community input is taken into account.

#### **Goal 2.E: Meaningful participation**

Community members have meaningful opportunities to participate in and influence all stages of planning and decision-making. Public processes engage the full diversity of affected community members, including under-served and under-represented individuals and communities.

#### **Goal 2.F: Accessible and effective participation**

City ~~planning, policy, investment, and development~~ planning and investment decision-making processes are designed to be culturally accessible and effective. The City draws from acknowledged best practices and uses a wide variety of tools to promote inclusive, collaborative, and robust community involvement.

#### **Goal 2.G: Strong civic infrastructure**

Civic institutions, organizations, and processes encourage active and meaningful community involvement and strengthen the capacity of individuals and communities to participate in planning processes and civic life.

## Policies

Ongoing community involvement practices, procedures, and programs are a necessary foundation for project-specific community involvement efforts. Many of the policies in this chapter are intended to build on community wisdom, expand community knowledge, and improve City staff capacity to work effectively with an increasingly diverse and growing Portland population.

### Partners in decision making

Portland benefits when community members are meaningfully involved in [land-use planning and investment](#) decisions. By building and maintaining partnerships with individuals and a wide range of formal and informal organizations that represent a variety of interests, the City of Portland government will have a better understanding of various communities' diverse needs and concerns. These policies support building and maintaining strong and supportive relationships with an increasingly diverse and growing Portland population.

**Policy 2.1 Partnerships and coordination.** Maintain partnerships and coordinate land use engagement with:

**2.1.a.** Individual community members.

**2.1.b.** Communities of color, [low-income populations](#), [Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) communities](#), and other under-served and under-represented communities.

**2.1.c.** [District coalitions](#), ~~n~~neighborhood [associations](#), and business [district](#) associations as local experts and [communication](#) channels for place-based projects.

**2.1.d.** Businesses, unions, employees, and related organizations that reflect Portland's diversity as the center of regional [economic and cultural](#) activity.

**2.1.e.** [Community-based, faith-based, and interest-based](#) ~~and affinity non-~~[profits](#), organizations and groups.

**2.1.f.** Institutions, governments, and tribal sovereign nations.

**Policy 2.2 Broaden partnerships.** Work with [district coalitions](#), neighborhood [associations](#), and business [district](#) associations to increase [diversity participation](#) and to help them reflect the diversity of the people and institutions they serve. [Facilitate greater communication and collaboration among district coalitions, neighborhood associations, business district associations, and community-based organizations.](#)

### Environmental justice

Environmental justice is the equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in public decision-making, as it applies to the development, implementation, and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies that govern the uses of air, water, and land. Environmental justice supports equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of decisions regardless of a person's background. These policies are particularly relevant to plans and investments that impact communities of color, low-income people, Limited English Proficient (LEP) communities, Sovereign Tribes, and other communities that have been historically under-served and under-represented in public processes and decisions, and have historically carried the burden of adverse effects from city planning and implantation. Policies throughout this chapter support the meaningful involvement of Portlanders in public decisions.

**Policy 2.3** **Extend benefits.** Ensure plans and investments promote environmental justice by extending the community benefits associated with environmental assets, land use, and public investments to communities of color, low-income populations, and other under-served or under-represented groups impacted by the decision.

**Policy 2.4** **Eliminate burdens.** Ensure plans and investments eliminate associated disproportionate burdens (e.g. adverse environmental, economic or community impacts) for communities of color, low-income populations, and other under-served or under-represented groups impacted by the decision.

2.4.a. Minimize or mitigate disproportionate burdens in cases where they cannot be eliminated.

2.4.b. Use plans and investments to address disproportionate burdens of previous decisions, where relevant and practicable.



## Invest in education and training

Both the community and City of Portland representatives must have the capacity to work together as effective partners. Ongoing investment in education and training leads to better informed community members who then have increased capacity to participate effectively. Community involvement-focused professional development training helps improve City staff's ability to work with and learn from community members. These policies support both community and agency capacity building.

- Policy 2.35** **Community capacity building.** Enhance the ability of community members, particularly those in under-served and/or under-represented groups, to develop the relationships, knowledge, and skills to effectively participate in [land use plan and investment planning](#) processes.
- Policy 2.46** **Land use literacy.** Provide training and educational opportunities to build the public's understanding of land use, transportation, housing, and related topics and increase capacity for meaningful participation in [land use plan and investment planning](#) processes.
- Policy 2.57** **Agency capacity building.** Increase City staff's capacity, tools, and skills to design and implement processes that engage a broad diversity of affected and interested communities, including under-served and under-represented communities, in meaningful and appropriate ways.

## Community assessment

City staff must build and maintain their understanding of community demographics, trends, and needs. Community members should have opportunities to share how conditions and needs affect quality. The following policies support effective two-way communication between City government and communities and encourage community-level data gathering and information sharing in [land use planning and investment planning](#) processes.

- Policy 2.68** **Channels of communication.** Maintain channels of communication among City Council, the Planning and Sustainability Commission ([PSC](#)), project advisory committees, City staff, and community members.
- Policy 2.89** **Community analysis.** [Collect and evaluate](#) data, including community-[verified-validated population](#) data and information to understand the needs, priorities, and trends and historical context affecting different communities in Portland.
- Policy 2.10** **Community [participation in data collection](#).** Provide meaningful opportunities for individuals and communities to be involved in [inventorying inventories](#), mapping, data analysis, and the development of alternatives.

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- Policy 2.11** **Open Data.** Planning and investment decisions are a collaboration of many stakeholders, including those listed in Policy 2.1. This collaboration is enhanced and opportunities for innovation and value creation are unlocked when:
- Data collected and generated by the City are shared as widely as possible.
  - Data is open by default.
  - Staff works with others to ensure awareness and accessibility of the data sets
  - The City collaborates with the development community and other data providers to maximize the utility of City data sets

### Transparency and accountability

The City is committed to improving transparency in community involvement processes  ~~tied~~ related to planning and use and investment decisions. When community members have a better understanding of a process, they are better able to participate effectively. Improved transparency and communication allows the City to better understand community opinions and needs.

The following policies articulate how and when ~~land use~~ planning and investment decisions are made; the community's role in ~~land use~~ decision-making processes; and what the community can expect from the City of Portland.

- Policy 2.11** **Roles and responsibilities.** Establish clear roles, rights, and responsibilities for participants and decision-makers in ~~land use~~ planning and investment processes. Address roles of City of Portland bureaus, elected officials, and participants, including community and neighborhood leadership, business, organizations, and individuals.
- Policy 2.12** **Project scope.** Establish clear expectations about land use project sponsorship, purpose, design, and how decision-makers will use the process results.
- Policy 2.13** **Community influence.** At each stage of the process, identify which elements of a ~~land use~~ planning and investment process can be influenced or changed through community involvement. Clarify the extent to which those elements can be influenced or changed.
- Policy 2.14** **Documentation and feedback.** Provide clear documentation for the rationale supporting decisions in ~~land use~~ planning and investment processes. Communicate to participants about the issues raised in the community involvement process, how public input affected outcomes, and the rationale

used to make decisions.

## Community involvement program

Much has changed in Portland in the 35 years since the adoption of the 1980 Comprehensive Plan. Much more will likely change between the adoption of this [Plan](#) and the next one. The following policies challenge City staff [and elected officials](#) to assess current practices and develop new tools through ongoing process evaluation and improvement, and direct the City to develop, maintain, and update a manual that details current best practices for community involvement.

**Policy 2.15** [Community Involvement Program. Maintain a Community Involvement Program that supports community involvement as an integral and meaningful part of the planning and investment decision-making process.](#)

**Policy 2.16** [Community Involvement Program Manual Engagement Workbook.](#) Create, maintain, and actively implement a community [involvement program manual engagement workbook](#) that details how to conduct community involvement for [land use planning and investment](#) projects and decisions.

**Policy 2.17** **Community Involvement Committee.** The Community Involvement Committee ([CIC](#)), [a subcommittee of the Planning and Sustainability Commission, an independent advisory body](#), will evaluate and provide feedback to City staff on community involvement processes for individual [land use planning and infrastructure decisions and investment projects](#), before, during, and at the conclusion of these processes.

**Policy 2.18** [Review bodies. Maintain review bodies, such as the Planning and Sustainability Commission \(PSC\), Design Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Adjustment Committee, to provide an opportunity for community involvement and provide leadership and expertise for specialized topic areas.](#)

**Policy 2.19** **Program evaluation.** Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the community involvement program and recommend and advocate for program and policy improvements. The Community Involvement Committee ([CIC](#)) will advise City staff regarding this evaluation.

**Policy 2.20** **Shared engagement methods.** Coordinate and share methods, tools, and technologies that lead to successful engagement practices with both government and community partners [and solicit engagement methods from the community.](#)

### Process design and evaluation

The policies in this section guide the design of project-specific community involvement processes.

These policies will help ensure that community involvement processes for [planning and investment](#) projects fit the scope, character, and impact of [land use projects](#) [the decision](#). The policies also promote full representation in [land use planning and investment](#) processes and actively involve under-served and under-represented communities. Representation can help ensure that City decisions do not further reinforce the disadvantaged position of under-served and under-presented groups, and do not narrowly benefit privileged groups.

**Policy 2.21 Representation.** Facilitate participation of a cross-section of the full diversity of affected Portlanders during [land use planning and investment](#) processes. This diversity includes individuals, stakeholders, and communities represented by race, color, national origin, English proficiency, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and source of income.

**Policy 2.22 Early involvement.** Improve opportunities for interested and affected community members to participate early in [land use planning and investment](#) processes, including identifying and prioritizing issues, needs, and opportunities; participating in process design; and recommending and prioritizing projects and/or other types of implementation.

**Policy 2.23 Verifying data.** Use data, including [community-verified data](#), to guide [land use planning and investment planning processes](#) and priority setting and to shape community involvement and decision-making [processes efforts](#).

**Policy 2.24 Demographics.** Identify the demographics of potentially affected communities when initiating a [land use planning or investment](#) project.

**Policy 2.25 Historical understanding.** To better understand concerns and conditions when initiating a project, research the history, culture, past plans, and other needs of the affected community, particularly under-represented and under-served groups, and persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). [Review preliminary findings with members of the community who have institutional and historical knowledge.](#)

**Policy 2.26 Project-specific needs.** Customize community involvement processes to meet the needs of those potentially affected by the [land use planning or investment](#) project. Use community involvement techniques that fit the scope, character, and potential impact of the [land use planning or investment](#) decision under consideration.

- Policy 2.27** **Culturally-appropriate processes.** Consult with communities to design ~~culturally~~-culturally-appropriate processes to meet the needs of those affected by a ~~land use~~-planning or investment project. Evaluate, use, and document creative and ~~culturally~~-culturally-appropriate methods, tools, and technologies to inform and engage people from under-served and under-represented groups about ~~land use~~planning or investment projects.
- Policy 2.28** **Innovative engagement methods.** Develop and document innovative methods, tools, and technologies for community involvement processes for ~~land use~~plan and investment projects.
- Policy 2.29** **Inclusive participation beyond Portland residents.** Design public processes for ~~land use~~planning and investment projects to engage affected and interested people who may not live in Portland such as, property owners, employees, employers, and students, among others, as ~~appropriate and~~ practicable.
- Policy 2.30** **Inclusive participation in Central City planning. Design public processes for the Central City that recognize its unique role as the region’s center.– Engage a wide range of stakeholders from the Central City and throughout the region including employees, employers, social service providers, students, and visitors, as well as regional tourism, institutional, recreation, and transportation representatives, as appropriate.**
- Policy 2.31** **Accessibility.** Ensure that community involvement processes for ~~land use~~planning and investment projects are broadly accessible in terms of location, time, and language, and that they support the engagement of individuals with a variety of abilities and limitations on participation.
- Policy 2.32** **Participation monitoring.** Evaluate and document participant demographics throughout ~~land use~~-planning and investment processes to assess whether participation reflects the demographics of affected communities, ~~and, adapt~~ Adapt involvement practices and activities accordingly to increase effectiveness at reaching targeted audiences.
- Policy 2.33** **Adaptability.** Adapt community involvement processes for ~~land use~~planning and investment projects as appropriate to flexibly respond to changes in the scope and priority of the issues, needs, and other factors that may affect the process.
- Policy 2.34** **Process evaluation.** Evaluate each community involvement process for ~~land use~~planning or investment projects from both the City staff and participants’ perspectives, and consider feedback and lessons learned to enhance future

involvement efforts.

### Information design and notification

These policies will help improve notification procedures for [administrative and quasi-judicial reviews, as well as, legislative land use decisions](#) and the community's access to processes and technical information related to [land use planning and investment projects](#). The City of Portland's Civil Rights Title VI Plan requires that information ~~shall be~~ available to the public, with assistance provided as requested to interpret and effectively use technical information. Additionally, the City of Portland must ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals have meaningful access to City land use-related activities.

**Policy 2.35 Accommodation.** Ensure accommodations to let individuals with disabilities participate in [administrative, quasi-judicial, and legislative](#) land use decisions, consistent with federal regulations.

**Policy 2.36 Notification.** Notify affected and interested community members [and recognized organizations and groups](#) about [administrative, quasi-judicial, and legislative land use decisions](#) ~~land use and infrastructure projects~~ with enough lead time to enable effective participation. ~~As practicable and appropriate, consider.~~ [Consider](#) notification to both property owners and renters.

**Policy 2.37 Information Tools for effective participation.** Provide ~~community members with~~ clear and easy ~~to~~ access [to](#) information about [administrative, quasi-judicial, and legislative land use decisions](#) ~~land use and infrastructure projects~~ in multiple formats [and through technological advancements and other ways](#).

**Policy 2.38 Limited English Proficiency (LEP).** Ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) individuals are provided meaningful access to information about [administrative, quasi-judicial, and legislative land use decisions](#) ~~land use projects~~, consistent with federal regulations.