



Community Involvement Committee Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2009, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Linda Nettekoven (neighborhood/community activist), Jason Long (NAYA),

Absent: Liz Gatti, Lai-Lani Ovalles (NAYA), Angie Thompson

Staff (BPS): Debbie Bischoff (BPS), Kim White (BPS), Joan Frederiksen (BPS), Eden Dabbs (BPS), Kate McQuillan (BPS), Jeri Williams (ONI), David Brandt (ONI), Paul Leistner (ONI)

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Role of Outreach Subcommittee
- Round 1 Outreach Strategy Draft Discussion and Comments
- Suggestions on Initial Hosted Presentations/Discussions
- Miscellaneous and Next Steps

Welcome and introductions (by attendees) to the first CIC Outreach Subcommittee meeting by Debbie Bischoff (BPS staff). Nobody objected to the proposed agenda and the meeting continued accordingly.

Role of Outreach Subcommittee

The role of the subcommittee was written in the agenda as follows:

- Identify audiences to reach
- Help determine how to reach these audiences (other than workshops)
- Help us engage non-English speakers
- Learn and share basic planning terms
- Coordinate with other subcommittees, e.g. communications

Additionally, CIC members are seen as “ambassadors” to the Portland Plan who help make our message understandable and relatable to a multitude of diverse audiences. Committee members raised questions including how to legitimately make the Portland Plan messages relevant to so many diverse audiences and how can the Portland Plan process steer clear of confusing “planning jargon.” Likewise, the group advised caution when discussing concepts like the 20-minute neighborhood so as not to imply a one-size-fits-all approach to planning. This approach can alienate groups. Both staff and CIC members readily agreed to these ideas.

Round I - Outreach Strategy Draft Discussion and Comments

Meeting attendees were given a couple of minutes to review a draft of the “Portland Plan Outreach Strategy: Direction Setting- Preparation for Round 1 Workshops” prepared by Deborah Stein.

The first issue discussed was the possibility of making “cultural understanding and sensitivity” more explicit in the objectives of the approaches laid out in the document. Outreach approaches should be culturally sensitive, and should also be sensitive to potential distrust of either BPS or the planning process in general. Utilizing and referencing previous plans (neighborhood, community, visionPDX, etc) in which numerous stakeholder groups have already provided great

input can help us navigate cultural boundaries. By reflecting on the work already accomplished and how it will impact the Portland Plan process, groups may be more willing to participate and more trusting of the Portland Plan.

The second issue discussed was whether there is too much “talking” or emphasis on education in the first phase. While it is acknowledged that education is an important component of this phase of the Portland Plan, there is a fear of “too much talking” at the audience and not enough feedback from community members themselves. Again, referencing previous vision work and plans can help emphasize this is not a starting point but rather a mid-point and continuation of a discussion. Meeting attendees agreed that we can reference previous vision work as a jumping off point to acquire more input in these stages of the Plan.

The discussion of education in this phase of the Plan turned to how important it is for committee members and staff to facilitate meaningful conversations; where community members and stakeholders can discuss trade-offs of inter-related (and seemingly competing) concepts within the Portland Plan. The example brought up was healthy communities versus high-density development along transit corridors by interstate highways. Instead of presenting the two concepts as opposing concepts, it is the responsibility of staff and committee members to engage the community in meaningful discussions about the trade-offs and interconnectedness of the two concepts.

The concept of a “kit” to reach out to numerous community groups during Phase I without needing the intensive resources of workshops, raised a number of concerns. Meeting attendees discussed the great benefits of utilizing a kit: groups can facilitate their own discussions and report back; less resource intensive; and can reach out to groups not typically involved in planning processes. Concerns about the kit include: can a one-size-fits-all kit relate to or be interpreted in the same manner by various audiences; and the importance of well-designed survey questions to get the information we need and in a manner that is easy for input and analysis. Staff raised potential concerns about timing and resources in creating multiple “kits.”

Meeting attendees discussed the various levels of engagement proposed in Phase I of the Outreach Strategy and roughly focused on four methods: a master notification list for general updates; “speaker-style” presentations at existing community meetings; community groups that will receive the interactive but self-administered kit; and intensive hosted meetings (possibly 8-10, but 6-8 more likely, through out the City). Staff is looking for subcommittee member advice in strategically determining the levels of engagement for recommended organizations and groups.

Suggestions on Initial Hosted Presentations/Discussions, Outreach Matrix

Meeting attendees were asked to review the draft Outreach List provided by staff and provide comments. First order of business would be to identify primary contacts for each organization listed, and to also consider what groups or communities we’d like to work with on the hosted workshops. Community groups that will host workshops should be community groups with the most leveraging power to help outreach to groups not reaches as effectively by other methods.

A great starting point to strategically choosing organizations to invite to participate in hosted workshops would be to first consider the Diversity and Civic Leadership (DCL) Program Partners, identified as the following: IRCO, Latino Network, Urban League, NAYA, and the Asian Family Center (through IRCO). Additionally, APNBA and Elders in Action were both identified as groups that would be great for hosted workshop events. Elders in Action even

could be partnered with people with disabilities communities so long as explicit actions were taken to distinguish both shared and unique interests of each group.

Meeting attendees discussed a few group types noticeable missing from the current outreach list. Committee members were asked to consider whether issue groups such as Community Alliance of Tenants, Community Development Corporations, etc. could be included in the outreach list. The group Center for Diversity and the Environment was identified as a potential resource. Additionally, committee members were asked to consider whether faith communities would be important to include. Specifically, staff requested that the committee consider the Muslim community as they may have been unintentionally excluded from previous planning processes.

Miscellaneous and Next Steps

There was a suggestion to always confirm that meeting sites are accessible to the disabled. Often locations list accessibility but attendees come to find that this is not the case. Also there is specific text staff should use for event notification that provides people with disabilities a number to call to request accommodation of their needs at a meeting or event.

It was noted that several CIC subcommittee members are also members on other CIC subcommittees. Cross-communication and coordination with other subcommittees will be key in establishing a common vocabulary for the Portland Plan process.

Jason Long will be the designated spokesperson for the Outreach Subcommittee at the upcoming CIC Meeting on Wednesday, September 2, 2009.

Next steps for the subcommittee will be determined upon group discussion at the September 2 meeting.