

Engaging All Portlanders

*Revisiting the Public Involvement Advisory
Council, and ensuring it meets today's needs*



OFFICE OF
**Community
& Civic Life**

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Message from Interim Director Michael Montoya

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent racial justice movements exposed many blind spots in our work that require us to build more equitable policies, programs, and processes that indeed work for all Portlanders.

This is why I tasked my bureau to pause and re-imagine all of our programs to determine that we were meeting not only today's needs but anticipating a Portland of the future. This visioning and planning is already underway, including within our graffiti, noise, and community safety programs, and our services to neighborhoods and bureau partners. It also includes the role of the Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC).

Building Toward 2035

In FY 21-22, Civic Life commissioned an updated demographic mapping of each neighborhood in our city. When complete, data from the 2010 and 2020 censuses, the American Community Survey, the Portland Insights Survey, and a range of other data sets will provide a compelling perspective on our city's social geography. We already know that Portland – the City of Roses – will only grow its beautiful bouquet of diversity by 2035. Civic Life aims to help all Portlanders be included, feel safe, and thrive within livable neighborhoods.

We have much work to do. Civic engagement that affirms different visions and voices has succumbed to divisiveness, scapegoating, misinformation, and institutionalized exclusions. Zero sum ideas about power conjure fear and defensiveness. Under these conditions, people are cartooned, involvement is about asserting control, and rhetoric rather than reasoning poses as dialogue. This is a national cultural phenomenon with deep local inflections that prevent us from listening to understand, and working to solve common problems.

Engaging All Portlanders is a report that takes stock of the past actions of the councils, bureaus and publics who created the Public Involvement Advisory Commission (PIAC). It is an imperfect account for a much-neglected part of urban governance. Civic Life takes some responsibility for this neglected public involvement infrastructure. Substantive engagement, not just window dressing, is a collective responsibility, however. Every bureau, employee, elected official, and community member has a role to play in creating structures, reducing barriers, and releasing our individual and collective capacity to engage with one another as if we all belong and matter. Because we do.

That said, it would be a mistake to deny that there are so many Portlanders who have been working tirelessly for the common good. In neighborhoods, civic organizations, places of worship, schools, and workplaces of all kinds people have been making community one relationship at a time. I trust that you will join us in applying our shared City core values of anti-racism, equity, collaboration, communication, transparency, and fiscal responsibility to re-imagine PIAC for a current and future Portland.

What Was the Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) Designed to Do?



When PIAC was formed by a Council resolution in 2008, its mission was to strengthen and uphold the City of Portland’s commitment to public involvement by adopting principles, policies, and guidelines that assist all City bureaus in creating consistent expectations and processes for public involvement activities.

The PIAC was composed of community members and City staff working collaboratively to develop and advocate for policy and best practices related to improving public involvement across all City bureaus.

Does the City Have a Unified Definition of What “Involvement” Means?

The words “involvement,” “participation,” “engagement” and “collaboration” mean different things to different people. But they all point toward people coming together to solve common problems. It is the character of this coming together, that Engaging All Portlanders intends to address.

Who can re-imagine PIAC with us?

We are looking for solution-oriented partners who will not only offer experienced perspectives but do what they can to propose new and old ways of engaging with one another. We are looking for former and future PIAC members from the City and the community to help us find answers to these questions:

- How might a renewed PIAC add value to engagement best practices already in place?
- How can we reduce barriers to participation and engagement?
- What would a global equitable engagement practitioners’ summit look like?
- What would a successful PIAC look like? What would its failure look like? How would we measure both?

If you resonate positively with this call to re-imagine PIAC with us, please contact Sandra Lefrancois at sandra.lefrancois@portlandoregon.gov. Those interested should read our report and its informational links to ground our exploration of our journey together. We are not starting from scratch but what PIAC once was did not achieve the results we will need for 2035. I am confident that with your help, we can create an equitable urban social ecology in which we can all be proud.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Montoya

Synopsis

The pandemic created a lot of uncertainty and PIAC chose to pause its work. In fall 2021, Civic Life began the process of re-examining PIAC's purpose, roles, and outcomes. This report is a result of a year of reflection.

PIAC's Beginnings

The City of Portland's Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) was established on February 27, 2008, by Portland City Council to strengthen and institutionalize the City's commitment to public involvement.

PIAC was created to be a standing advisory council accountable to the Portland City Council. City Council appointed all PIAC members, and thus, PIAC members were considered "public officials" and presented their recommendations to City Council for formal approval and adoption. PIAC's main charge includes:

- Develop guidelines and policy recommendations for citywide public involvement,
- Make recommendations to City Council and City bureaus on how to implement public involvement guidelines and best practices,
- Encourage ongoing collaboration between the community, City bureaus, and City Council in the development of shared public involvement principles, policies, and guidelines.

Since its formation, PIAC has advised City Council how best to create transparency in governance. Over the last decade, PIAC has achieved a lot, including creating standards for involving the public in City Budget Advisory Committees. In its early years, PIAC also understood that authentic engagement relied on creating space for everyone to sit at the table and paved the way for the City's values around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The results from the two PIAC reports, 2013 Public Involvement Assessment and 2019 Budget Advisory Report, demonstrate the value of streamlining intentional community engagement practices across bureaus. The recommendations over time have continuously pointed to the need for greater diversity on committees, earlier involvement, more access to participation and information, convenient locations, understanding influence and role, and deeper community collaboration.

Analysis of PIAC's Effectiveness

When PIAC first formed, they collected and analyzed community engagement data which allowed them to identify their impact, but this process has waned. For example, there has not been a systematic analysis or evaluation of the citywide Financial Impact and Public Involvement Statement (FIPIS) form which PIAC co-developed.

What's more, it is not clear that City Council is applying PIAC's recommendations. Following PIAC's most recent advisory report to Council on the 2019-20 budget process there was no evidence that their recommendations were implemented by Council. By pausing PIAC's work, we can determine its future role, impact, and strategic direction. In PIAC's new iteration, it is also very important to include measures for evaluating its overall impact on community and citywide processes.

PIAC Today & Where We're Heading

PIAC has primarily served as an internal advisory role for the City, and its recommendations have been instrumental in guiding the City to create processes that include all voices in decision-making. However, even though PIAC created clear procedures, best practices, and recommendations for the City, key PIAC reports (2013 Assessment and 2019 Budget Report) indicate that the City continues to face challenges around creating effective and inclusive community engagement.

As a result, this first phase analysis and documentation prompts us to ask questions related to engagement, decision-making structures, measuring success, prioritization of resources and access, influence of advisory work, and partnership capacity.

As a next step, we are recommending an iterative and collaborative process to redefine PIAC's role in leading community engagement practices for equitable impact. This will involve understanding and building on community engagement practitioners' experiences today and will be embedded in Civic Life strategic planning. This includes broad next steps with a three-pronged approach including

- Building on strength-based work across bureaus;
- Working collectively to center voices most impacted by civic decisions; and
- Adapt processes for community partnership and accountability for 2035.

Re-Imagining PIAC's Next Chapter

This phase of redefining PIAC will lean into collaborative solutions to create meaningful outcomes for our communities — and starting down the path to determine what success looks like for engaging all Portlanders. We will work with City and community partners and practitioners to explore the following questions:

- How is success measured with principles, guidelines, procedures, advisory recommendations, consultations/training, and budget tools?
- What is the City's commitment? Where did bureaus make improvements over time?
- What problems are we solving through this advisory work and the work of institutionalizing best practices? What is PIAC's/BACs influence?
- Are Portlanders better off? Are those being engaged feeling heard?
- What other engagement resources and partnership opportunities are available to bureaus (i.e., equity tools-Results Based Accountability (RBA), Comp Plan Community Involvement Committee (CIC), County CIC, etc.)?
- How to effectively support bureaus in reaching engagement goals and on best/recommended practices?
- How to ensure meaningful engagement practices can be applied?

Scope for Strengthening Engagement Practices

CROSS BUREAU COLLABORATION

- Reinvigorate community engagement best practices
- Build on commitment and accountability structures
- Examine influence, expectation, capacity
- Model partnerships for transformation

ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

- Align bureau functions
- Redefine staff support with program goals
- Scale solutions that address participatory barriers
- Connect to internal and external success stories
- Invest in community leadership models

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Support an iterative process for long-term outcomes
- Promote data-informed solutions
- Adapt evidence-based models that work
- Integrate partnership in decision-making

Proposed Timeline for Next Steps

December 2021 - February 2022

- Clarify Civic Life's goals for PIAC review and reorganization.
- Convene key engagement partners for feedback on advisory council and cross-bureau network functions and structure.
- Plan next steps to redefine council/committee structure, charter protocols, advisory expectations.
- Create support position description.
- Build relationships with key community engagement committees/programs across bureaus.

February 2022 - April 2022

- Build momentum with committed practitioners and research community engagement models and practices from other regions.
- Form workgroups/networks that champion intentional engagement practices within the City — a committee from leads on equitable engagement.
- Recruit members for PIAC or a new community engagement coordinating committee.
- Elevate case studies and activate citywide solutions.
- Create structure(s) of engagement that is iterative and connects to Civic Life strategic goals.

Appendix

Historic milestones for the City of Portland and PIAC

The City has a variety of internal initiatives focused on engaging Portlanders in local government-. These milestones show years of advisory leadership from different groups for advancing inclusive practices. The work of these advisory groups points to the need for more collaboration to improve the ways the City engages with all Portlanders.

Year	Milestones	Description or Activity
2006	Public Involvement Task Force Report	To launch the identification of common public involvement standards for City bureaus with a task force.
	Bureau Innovation Project #9 Public Involvement Toolkit	To develop consistent public involvement procedures.
2008	Community Connect Final Report	To increase community involvement in Portland with a five-year plan.
	PIAC City Council Resolution Exhibit A	To establish PIAC to strengthen and institutionalize the City's commitment to public involvement through adopted principles, policies, and guidelines that assist City bureaus in creating consistent expectations and processes for public involvement activities.
2010	PIAC Charter and Protocols Approved	To establish the scope, rules, responsibilities, membership, organization, and decision-making process of PIAC.
	Updated PI Principles Adopted	To set out what the public can expect from city government, while retaining flexibility in the way individual city bureaus carry out their work. Seven new public involvement principles including indicators and outcomes were adopted by City Council.
	PI Best Practices Program & Citywide Public Involvement Network	To support PIAC and lead Citywide policy reform and implementation, and provide consultation to bureaus, and policy leads. Citywide Public Involvement Network (CPIN) was created to foster cross-bureau engagement strategies.
2011	Disability Program	To build the City 's capacity to meaningfully engage with disability communities and to support disabled Portlanders to engage with government.
	Advisory Bodies Program- List	To provide training and resources for advisory body members to understand policies, practices and procedures.

Year	Milestones	Description or Activity
	<u>Financial Impact and Public Involvement Statement (FIPIS) Form Approved</u>	To provide basic information about public involvement planned or completed for every ordinance, resolution, and report filed with the City Auditor's Office for inclusion on the City Council agenda- resulting in the FIPIS form.
2012	<u>PI Guidelines in Bureau BACs Adopted</u>	To establish consistent standards for Bureau Budget Advisory Committees (BACs) including recommended approaches to outreach and participation. The <u>Portland Plan</u> was also adopted with a framework for <u>equity & engagement</u> . PIAC Equitable & Inclusive <u>Public Involvement Worksheet</u> .
2013	<u>Baseline Assessment of Bureau PI Practices</u>	To assess PI capacity and practices across bureaus. Assessment included in the 2014 PIAC Annual Progress Report submitted to PIAC by the Annual State of Public Involvement Report and Evaluation workgroup.
	PIAC members serve on the Policy Expert Group (PEG)	To update the community involvement chapter of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Developed recommended draft goals and policies for PI. New <u>Community Involvement Committee</u> (CIC) formed to oversee projects related to the Comprehensive Plan- <u>Community Engagement Manual</u> .
2016	New Portlanders Policy Commission Established <u>Ordinance</u>	To integrate immigrant and refugee communities' voices into the City's policies and decision-making. Develop new policy recommendations with the Immigrant & Refugee Program.
2019	City Budget Community Engagement Recommendations <u>Budget Advisory Workgroup Review Report</u>	To produce a set of draft recommendations to increase and improve community engagement on the new 2019/2020 budget process. PIAC's Budget Advisory Report was developed to inform Council at their Sept. 2019 work session for a vote in Oct. 2019.
	<u>Disability Equity & Engagement Study</u> 2021/22 Report to City	To gather data about civic engagement and the social determinants of health for people with disabilities and severe health concerns in Portland- RCI and PSU.

Growing Civic Leadership & Community Organizing

In 1974, the City of Portland created the Office of Neighborhood Associations to establish a direct channel for neighborhood associations to engage in City decision-making, determine neighborhood needs, and represent neighborhood interests in land-use and development decisions.



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Nearly 40 years later, the bureau responded to the call to expand its reach and changed its name to the Office of Community & Civic Life to better represent its mission of serving all Portlanders. Today, Civic Life also supports culturally-specific organizations and nonprofit organizations that collectively work together to ensure Portland is an equitable, vibrant, and welcoming city for all.

Civic Life created the means to elevate and streamline civic engagement best practices through advisory bodies, practitioner networks, and partnership development. Examples of these are the Disability Leadership program, the New Portlanders Policy Commission, and the Multnomah Youth Commission.

These types of forums empower leaders and offer them the training and resources to participate in civic collaboration and connect all Portlanders to their local government. By enrolling diverse community partners, Civic Life and the City are able to support capacity building with many identity, disability and affinity groups, as well as neighborhood groups. Furthermore, Civic Life brings on new partnerships through community-centered grant programs.

Also, our Office invests in trainings focused on community-led conflict resolution, relationship building, mental health education, trauma-informed recovery, and personal empowerment. Early on in their development, outward facing programs and initiatives advanced civic involvement and leaned into the lessons learned (see 2009 [article](#)).

Civic Life's Values

- **Promote the Common Good** – We create a culture of civic engagement by engaging and supporting community members in making collective choices that shape our lives and the lives of ALL Portlanders.
- **Adaptive Governance** – We are working toward the future by designing programs to create a city that offers a high quality of life for everyone who lives, works, prays, and plays here.
- **Empower Portlanders** – We serve as a connection to our city; we facilitate understanding and collaboration between communities and their local government. We direct resources, release capacity, reduce barriers, and create opportunities for engagement.
- **Build Inclusive Structures** – We recognize that Portlanders organize in different ways, and we are here to support everyone and reduce barriers to participation.

Civic Life's Evolution

Recently, we changed our name to the Office of Community & Civic Life to better reflect our mission of connecting with and serving all Portlanders. Throughout this change, Civic Life partners remained consistent in their abilities to build civic agency. Programs continued to focus on removing barriers and increasing access for underserved and underrepresented communities. Transformative upstream solutions were implemented, such as the Social Equity & Educational Development (SEED) and Constructing Civic Dialogues grant programs. Today, our office is fully committed to equitable outcomes as we collectively build a strong foundation for engaging with all Portlanders in alignment with our civic values.

City's Core Values: Collaboration

Intentional Inclusion—Practice broad outreach and engage the community to ensure diversity. Approach outreach/inclusion from a culture add (growth), rather than a culture fit (fixed) mindset. Create an environment for diverse perspectives; ensure all voices have value. Reach out to bring in – with authenticity and kindness. Center the voices and experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) staff and staff with disabilities

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is PIAC and why was it established?

A: When PIAC was formed by a Council resolution in 2008, its mission was to strengthen and uphold the City of Portland's commitment to public involvement by adopting principles, policies, and guidelines that assist all City bureaus in creating consistent expectations and processes for public involvement activities.

The PIAC was composed of community members and City staff working collaboratively to develop and advocate for policy and best practices related to improving public involvement across all City bureaus.

Q: What is PIAC's impact on the City and why was its work paused?

A: Since its formation, PIAC has advised City Council how best to create transparency in governance. Over the last decade, PIAC has achieved a lot, including creating standards for involving the public in City Budget Advisory Committees. In its early years, PIAC also understood that authentic engagement relied on creating space for everyone to sit at the table and paved the way for the City's values around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We have found that, in recent years, PIAC's impact has become less evident. By pausing PIAC's work, we can determine its future role, impact, and strategic direction.

Q: How will this analysis influence PIAC and its work?

A: We are looking for solution-oriented partners who will not only offer experienced perspectives but do what they can to propose new and old ways of engaging with one another. We are looking for former and future PIAC members from the City and the community to help us answer questions about what PIAC should look like going forward, and how we can achieve that vision.