



June 8, 2010

Don Hanson, Chair
Planning Commission
City of Portland
1900 SW Fourth Ave, 7th Floor
Portland, Oregon 97201

RE: The Portland Plan Community Involvement Committee
Progress Report

Dear Mr. Hanson

The Portland City Council appointed the Community Involvement Committee (CIC) on July 8, 2009. The Council charged the CIC with oversight for all public outreach elements of the Portland Plan.

Community involvement for the Portland Plan will occur at several levels in order to identify what kind of city we want to be in 2035 and strategic actions we want take to move toward that vision. This involvement is intended to be broad, cooperative, on-going and inclusive.

CIC Role and Function

- The CIC membership is diverse, reflecting essential constituencies within Portland, however, the CIC works on a participatory rather than a representative model. It is the CIC as a whole that reflects Portland as a community; members do not view themselves as the sole representative of a particular constituency or interest.
- The CIC has greeted its charge with enthusiasm. Our first major task was creation and ratification of our bylaws. We took this task seriously, because as the guardians of an open public process, it is important that we lead by example. We also formed a number of working subcommittees to take advantage of the skills of our membership.
- To effectively evaluate whether or not the Portland Plan process is based on an inclusive public engagement and outreach strategy, the CIC established five measurable goals:
 1. Build on existing relationships.
 2. Engage broader and more diverse groups with education and information, and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate.
 3. Provide multiple venues and means for community involvement and engagement.
 4. Involve as many people as possible.
 5. With feedback and continuous engagement throughout Portland Plan development and implementation, ensure community members are being heard.

Phase I Community Workshops

- Although we understand that community workshops attract a limited, albeit interested, segment of the population, we have encouraged the use of the workshops as an organizing framework that helps produce the core messages and materials that support our other outreach efforts.
- The purpose of the workshops was to introduce the Portland Plan framework (Action Areas) and facts about current conditions and trends. In November and December 2009, we conducted the Phase I community workshops. Nearly 1,000 people participated in seven workshops held throughout Portland, and over 8,200 survey responses were received from the Curbsider newsletter.
- CIC members directly participated in testing workshop formats, publicizing the meetings, and facilitating at the workshops. After completion, we worked with City staff to evaluate how the meetings went, and develop recommendations for the next wave of public outreach.
- A key finding of our evaluation was that renters, lower income households, and persons of color were under-represented at the workshops. We worked with City staff to carry out additional Portland Plan meetings, which resulted in an additional 75 meetings, involving over 1,500 people.
- One example of the follow-up meetings was working with Latino organizations to design and host an outreach event for the Spanish-speaking community in February 2010. As part of this event, Portland Plan publications were translated into Spanish and distributed to participants.
- Other outreach activities were targeted to issue-oriented groups like Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) groups, urban design/architecture, environmental, education and the arts.
- The Youth Planning Program also worked to create a youth-oriented survey that was distributed by Multnomah County Libraries' Teen Councils and other youth organizations. Over 750 completed youth surveys were collected.
- CIC members collaborated with City staff to create an online business survey and promote it through the Portland Business Alliance and the Association of Portland Neighborhood Business Associations. About 450 survey responses were received.
- As part of the transition from Phase I to Phase II, the Technical Action Groups (TAGs) held community work sessions for each Action Area to preview and test the Directions and Objectives that would become the focus of Phase II.

Phase II Community Workshops

- The purpose of the Phase II workshops was to review a series of directions and objectives for each Action Area. In April and May 2010, we conducted seven community workshops. Over 500 people participated in these workshops. In addition, we conducted another survey with approximately 3,000 survey responses.

- As with Phase I, the Phase II community workshops will be supplemented by other outreach activities that will be focused on community groups, summer festivals and events, and outreach to businesses over the next three months.

Community Involvement Strategy Adjustments

- The CIC and City staff continue to work with the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) to expand how we discuss diversity and equity in the Portland Plan.
- In an effort to enhance relationships with under-represented community groups, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability is proposing to offer grants to the five organizations under ONI's Diversity and Civic Leadership program to engage their constituents in culturally-appropriate and relevant ways.
- Portland Plan materials, including the Phase 2 survey, have been translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Russian to reduce the language barrier.
- In Phase 2, the distribution of the Curbsider newsletter was expanded to include all residential units, not just single-family households.
- The Phase 2 workshops included a presentation and focused discussion on equity and disparities in Portland.

Amendments to the Citizen Involvement Work Plan

As we complete the first year of our work, the CIC recommends a few formal amendments to the City's Periodic Review Public Engagement Work Program:

- Incorporate the CIC Charter and By-Laws to be clear about the role and function of the CIC.
- Include the five measurable goals the CIC established to effectively evaluate the Portland Plan community involvement process.
- Include the proposed program to direct grants to community organizations to develop their own participation strategies to help underrepresented communities to engage in the Portland Plan process.
- Describe the relationship between the Portland Plan Advisory Group (PPAG) and the CIC. The CIC was created to ensure robust and inclusive public participation in the Portland Plan process. The PPAG was appointed to focus on reviewing the facts and strategy underlying the plan and subsequent policy choices.
- Acknowledge Mayor Adams' proposal to create the Planning and Sustainability Commission. We support the exploration of merger concept and in the hope this proposal will provide a broader perspective and will fit with the broader mission of the Portland Plan.

Planning, by definition, is a work in progress. As the Portland Plan evolves, the CIC is prepared to be nimble and adjust its work to meet the emerging challenges. We believe it is important to set a high standard for community involvement that will create stronger outcomes and a better Portland.

Sincerely,



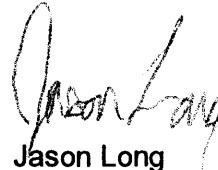
Peter Stark



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Portland Plan Community Involvement Committee