

June 7, 2016

Planning and Sustainability Commission
City of Portland
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100
Portland, OR 97201

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Testimony from PIAC

Dear Commissioners:

This letter contains comments from members of the City of Portland's Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) on the Proposed Community Involvement Program (CIP) of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. PIAC is a City commission charged with advising elected officials on public involvement in government citywide, and with helping City bureaus improve their community outreach and engagement practices. Established by City Council in 2008, PIAC is comprised of community members and bureau staff working together.

PIAC members have worked closely with City staff over the past several years to review and provide input to the Comprehensive Plan's community involvement chapter, Chapter Two, as well as the Community Involvement Chapter. We believe Chapter Two and the CIP represent an important move forward for Portland, putting the City in alignment with State planning law, the vision of the Portland Plan, and the spirit of the Public Involvement Principles adopted by City Council in 2010.

PIAC members offer strong support for the proposed Community Involvement Program as an essential step to implement Chapter Two of the Comprehensive Plan. The CIP is central to satisfying the requirements of Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1, including the commitment of adequate resources for community involvement and the oversight/evaluation role of the Community Involvement Committee (CIC). It will help to advance longstanding City goals of improving community involvement in planning.

PIAC also supports the ongoing development of a manual to guide staff in the implementation of Chapter Two, and we support the proposed ability of the CIC to change the manual directly.

In addition to our overall support, PIAC offers the following recommendations to strengthen and clarify the CIP, organized according to the kind of action requested:

ACTION: Changes/Clarifications to the CIC Charge and Scope (supporting text)

- Ensure that the description of the charge of the CIC reflects the responsibilities identified in Statewide Planning Goal 1.
- The CIC has the responsibility to oversee both project-specific and ongoing public involvement efforts governed by the Comprehensive Plan, a distinction that is outlined in the Chapter Two policies and should be explicit in the charge and scope.
- One role of the CIC should be to help establish what resources, both financial and staff, are necessary and adequate to provide this value and satisfy its responsibilities. This should be explicit in the charter.
- We encourage you to add in the charter a position of CIC liaison to PIAC comparable to those proposed to the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) and the Equity Office (page 10). The intersection of PIAC’s work and that of the CIC is clear, and it is important for each body to be mutually informed and supportive.
- While the CIC is designed to monitor, advise and support staff who are working on public involvement, it should also be explicit within its charge and scope that the CIC be designed to provide value to the community as well, ensuring transparency and accountability in the planning and policy making process.
- Evaluation is a key role of the CIC. It is foreseeable that members of the community will expect clear metrics that the CIC will use for evaluation. The policies on process design and evaluation in Chapter Two provide guidance to the CIC in its oversight role, and the supporting text can make this suggestion.
- The proposed CIP asks, “How is this different than PIAC?” (p11). PIAC offers the following:

The Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) is charged with providing citywide support and guidance on public involvement principles, policies, and practices. In this role, PIAC works on specific issues with citywide application, and occasionally provides input to individual bureaus on efforts to engage the public. Based on its charter and the capacity of volunteer members, PIAC does not work on individual projects within a single bureau, nor does it have any monitoring or oversight responsibilities. By contrast, the CIC’s role is limited to oversight of projects that “make a change to the Comprehensive Plan that require legislative decisions and action.” The CIC does work on individual projects and does have oversight and evaluation responsibilities. Both the CIC and PIAC are charged with improving the City’s involvement of the community in government planning and decision-making. Both do their work by setting standards (the City’s Public Involvement Principles and the goals and policies of Chapter Two) and supporting staff to meet those standards. While their roles are different, they are complementary. The CIC will benefit from ongoing communication with PIAC to share lessons learned and to inform each other’s work.

ACTION: Changes to City Code

- Regarding the minimum number of proposed meetings, PIAC offers from our experience that four meetings per year does not seem adequate to fulfill the responsibilities of the CIC. We have found that, even with one scheduled monthly meeting, it is often necessary to schedule an additional work session between meetings in order to complete projects. For the final CIP, we encourage you to identify the scope of tasks for the CIC and make a realistic assessment of the level of effort needed by a group of volunteer members to accomplish those tasks, as well as the staff needed to support them. Based on such an assessment, consider increasing the minimum number of meetings and including this in Title 3 code language if appropriate.
- The CIP establishes a supporting role for the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). Consider whether this role should be specified in City Code.

ACTION: Include Recommended Next Steps in the Transmittal letter to City Council

- Please encourage City Council to turn to PIAC for recommendations and assistance in finalizing the details of the CIP in the next phase of work.
- Please request clarification on ONI's role in supporting the processes established in the CIP.

PIAC members thank you for your important work for the future of Portland, and we appreciate your consideration of our testimony.

Please note: While this testimony received unanimous approval by all those members in attendance at PIAC's June 7 meeting, the meeting was one member short of a quorum. This letter is in the spirit of previous comments submitted by PIAC, but is offered in this case as the testimony of those members in attendance (50%) rather than the full body.

Sincerely,

Public Involvement Advisory Council
City of Portland

Attachment: List of PIAC Members

Public Involvement Advisory Council Members

Community Members

Anna Allen – At-large, Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)
Glenn Bridger – At-large, Southwest neighborhood activist
Baher Butti – At-large, Refugee case manager
Donita Fry – At-large, NAYA
Greg Greenway – At-large, Southeast community member
Jenny Kim – At-large, Korean American Coalition and business consultant
Maryhelen Kincaid – At-large, North/Northeast neighborhood activist
Julio Maldonado – At-large, SE neighborhood and East Portland Action Plan (EPAP)
Kaeti Namba – At-large, NAYA, Japanese community, and Portland Business Alliance
Linda Nettekoven – Southeast neighborhood activist
Angela Southwick – At-large, Northeast community member
Ashe Urban – At-large, SE Uplift and Portsmouth Neighborhood volunteer
Jessica Wade – At-large, Southwest community member
Christine White – Port of Portland
Mark Wubbold – Portland State University

City Staff Members

Claire Adamsick – Commissioner Fritz
William Beamer – Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Danielle C. Brooks – Office of Equity and Human Rights
Ross Caron – Bureau of Development Services
Ethan Cirimo – Office of Management & Finance
Michael Crebs – Police Bureau
Michelle DePass – Bureau of Housing
Matt Gough – Bureau of Environmental Services
Felicia Heaton – Bureau of Emergency Management
Brian Hoop – Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Paul Leistner – Office of Neighborhood Involvement
Francesca Patricolo – Bureau of Transportation
Steve Pixley – Parks & Recreation Bureau
Damon Simmons – Fire & Rescue
Sara Wright – Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

PIAC Coordinator – Ashley Horne, ONI