

Testimony before Land Conservation and Development Commission

RE: CITY OF PORTLAND PERIODIC REVIEW "PORTLAND PLAN" PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

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A MAJOR QUESTION IN THE COMMUNITY:

- The City of Portland has a historic opportunity to make its periodic review of Portland's Comprehensive Plan (a.k.a. "The Portland Plan") a model for good public involvement.
- How does the Portland Plan process live up to the letter and spirit of Goal 1 and the principles of good public involvement set out by Portland's recent Public Involvement Task Force (PITF), BIP #9, Community Connect?
- The PITF principles provide a good general framework. They include:

GOVERNANCE AS PARTNERSHIP

- Culture of listening, hearing, and acting on public input
- Collaborative, consensus-seeking, community-based approach
- Early Involvement
- Inclusiveness

BUILDING CAPACITY

- Build Capacity within City Government
- Build Capacity within the Community
- Coordination and Consistency

PROCESS DESIGN

- Effective and Flexible Process Design and Implementation
- Ongoing Communication and Dialogue
- Diversity and Accessibility

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

- Accountability
- Transparency of Governance and Processes
- Evaluation

KEY ACTIONS REQUESTED:

- CITY OF PORTLAND BUREAU OF PLANNING (BOP) STAFF SHOULD DESCRIBE HOW THE PORTLAND PLAN PROCESS SUPPORTS THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (e.g. from GOAL 1, PITF, BIP#9, and Community Connect).
- BOP SHOULD REACH OUT TO STAFF OF THE CITY OF PORTLAND OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT AND REQUEST PROCESS DESIGN GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE
- BOP DIRECTOR SHOULD MEET WITH SMALL GROUP OF NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY/ONI REPS.
  - Discuss overall BOP and community goals for Portland Plan—what does each want to get out of the process
  - Discuss hopes and fears around public process for the Portland Plan
    - What would good process look like?
    - What would bad process look like?
    - What are the challenges and opportunities?
  - Agree on way to move forward collaboratively to develop a good public involvement strategy that meets BOP and Community needs.
- BOP SHOULD RECONSTITUTE GROUP OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ADVISE ON PI STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
  - Strong need to draw on community experience to develop successful public involvement strategy.
  - Ensure that people with good strategic thinking skills and experience with public process are on the group.
  - Process will benefit from having a group of people, including BOP staff, air different needs and perspectives.
  - As process proceeds, the group can help fine tune the public process as it moves forward and we see how its working.
- BOP SHOULD BRING ON A STAFF PERSON TO HEAD THE BOP PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORT WHO HAS THE NEEDED KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE
  - Individual should have understanding of planning issues.
  - Individual should have strong strategy planning experience in designing collaborative community involvement processes around complex policy issues.
- BOP SHOULD WORK WITH THE GROUP OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO DEVELOP A STRONG AND SUBSTANTIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY
  - The strategy should include:

- Clear statement of the goals and purposes of the public involvement strategy, including recognition of the bureau's main needs, the public's main needs, state requirements, etc., and who will use the strategy and how.
  - Clear description of the formal public involvement requirements for the Portland Plan (e.g. Goal 1 and other formal local or state process requirements)
  - Guiding Principles: identify the key principles AND say how the principle relates to the challenge of developing and implementing the public involvement strategy—what does the principles mean for the Portland Plan process.
  - Description of the different phases of the Portland Plan planning and implementation process and a general description of the generic types of public involvement needed (by the bureau and by the public) in these different phases
  - Identification of key challenges: No strategy can be effect without an understanding of the key challenges to achieving the project goals. Key challenges include: engaging people beyond the usual neighborhood association representatives who participate in these types of processes—especially traditionally underrepresented groups; limited time; limited resources; lack of trust of the Bureau of Planning in the community from past process problems; process fatigue in the community; complex issues; community members need for adequate context to be able to provide useful feedback; different community audiences (e.g. policy wonks, the generally involved, the mostly unengaged) require different approaches; etc.
  - Identification of Public Involvement Strategies, Activities and Events: Identification of strategies, activities, and events that achieve the goals, support the principles, and help overcome the challenges.
  - Required Funding, and Resources: Determination of the resources needed to carry out the plan. This will include bureau resources (dollars and human capital—people with the right skills), skilled public involvement practitioners, and a wide variety of community resources.
- BOP SHOULD CREATE AND USE A TRUE CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (CIC)—NOT USE THE PORTLAND PLANNING COMMISSION TO COMPLY WITH GOAL 1.
    - If Portland, with all its capacity and sophistication cannot comply with the intent of Goal 1, how can the state