

DATE: October 8, 2013
TO: Board of Commissioners
FROM: Patrick Quinton, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Report Number 13-41
Amending the Public Participation Policy

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

Adopt Resolution No. 7028

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Staff requests the Portland Development Commission (PDC) Board of Commissioners (Board) approve an amendment to the 2005 Public Participation Policy (Policy) to reflect PDC's current approach to public participation. Since the amended Policy provides replacement public participation methods for input previously provided by Urban Renewal Advisory Committees (URACs), this action will also replace the URAC Policy. The Policy has not been amended since 2005, and this will be the Board's first action on public participation policy since the creation of the Portland Housing Bureau, the Board's and Portland City Council's adoption of the 2009 City Economic Development Strategy and the 2011 Neighborhood Economic Development (NED) Strategy, and the Board's adoption of a new PDC mission and strategic plan in 2012. The updated Policy tailors PDC's public outreach and involvement to reflect both the agency's mission and its organizational capacity.

Moving forward, PDC's main approaches to solicit public participation will be as follows:

1. **NED Leadership Group.** The charge of this approximately 35 member group is to guide the implementation of the NED Strategy.
2. **Central City Budget Advisory Committee.** This committee, which is currently being assembled, will advise PDC during the budget development process, focusing on projects, programs, and activities in the Central City Urban Renewal Areas (URAs).
3. **Citizen Advisory Committees.** As they have done for many years, PDC staff will continue to create, manage, and staff one-time and ongoing citizen advisory committees to advise and inform PDC on significant projects and activities.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The proposed amendments to this Policy reflect the culmination of three years of external and internal review, assessment, and effort intended to find the proper alignment between PDC activities and the most effective and inclusive ways to bring community partners together for the pursuit of PDC's mission and strategic plan.

The purpose of the Policy, first adopted by the Board through resolution no. 6266 on June 22, 2005, was "to ensure appropriate public participation processes and activities are incorporated into PDC's planning and decision-making." Since the URACs were, at the time, one of the primary forums for meeting this standard, the Board formally created a URAC Policy on September 14, 2005, through resolution no. 6393 (subsequently amended through resolution no. 6614 on July 9, 2008). For years, staff managed and

hosted URAC meetings, which in any given year could exceed 40 meetings. Given PDC's declining resources, expiring URAs, and Board direction to explore the efficacy of the URAC Policy, staff proposes creating alternative participation vehicles that will replace URACs.

In addition to assessing historic public participation processes, PDC staff has created new ways to gather citizen input, most notably through the NED Leadership Group. This group of community leaders has been meeting regularly since late 2011 to partner with PDC in implementing the NED Strategy. Over the course of summer 2013, PDC solicited nominations for new members to fill open seats on the NED Leadership Group, placing particular emphasis on recruiting individuals that live or work in the Interstate, Gateway, and Lents URAs. The newly reconstituted NED Leadership Group met on Friday, September 27, 2013, to chart out their work plan for the year ahead. During the annual budget process, PDC staff will assemble a sub-committee of the NED Leadership Group (with additional representation from the Interstate, Gateway, and Lents URAs) focused on reviewing and advising PDC on its neighborhood project and program budgets.

To provide a forum for public input on PDC activities in the downtown area, staff is creating a Central City Budget Advisory Committee. This committee, expected to have 12 to 15 members and be formed by November 2013, will likely meet four times over the course of fiscal year (FY) 2013-14 to review and advise staff, the Board, and Portland City Council on FY 2014-15 budget. Like the NED Leadership Group, the Central City Budget Advisory Committee will include representatives with expertise in areas such as business ownership, workforce development, finance, community leadership, and redevelopment. It will include representation from the River District, North Macadam, Oregon Convention Center, Central Eastside, and Education URAs.

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

This action allows PDC to continue to provide public participation that aligns with the agency's reduced size and capacity. While PDC is no longer hosting URAC meetings, staff is confident that it has the tools and means to effectively engage with stakeholders and solicit meaningful input on agency activities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

At a public hearing in June 2011, the Board requested staff to assess the role and composition of URACs given PDC's increased focus on economic development. Since then, staff surveyed the membership of the seven URACs on three separate occasions to gauge their interests and perceptions of the effectiveness of the URAC system and structure. Survey results indicated that URAC members wanted a means to participate in civic discourse, but that their interests did not necessarily mirror PDC's strategic plan goals. More recently, Board Chair Scott Andrews and PDC Executive Director Patrick Quinton discussed the proposed policy change with leadership of all seven URACs. In addition, staff hosted meetings with all three neighborhood URACs and a group meeting of the Central City URACs to share the agency's new direction in public participation.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This proposed action will save PDC money by reducing the amount of staff costs and administrative expenses related to planning for and hosting URAC meetings.

RISK ASSESSMENT

There is a risk that geographic-specific feedback may be reduced related to activities in URAs. Staff is mitigating this risk by:

1. Proactively seeking representation from the Interstate, Lents, and Gateway URAs on the recently reconstituted NED Leadership Group;
2. Creating a budget subcommittee on the NED Leadership Group that will be augmented with citizens interested in advising on the Interstate, Lents, and Gateway URA budgets;
3. Creating a Central City Budget Advisory Committee that will include representation from the Oregon Convention Center, Central Eastside, River District, North Macadam, and Education URAs; and
4. Continuing to increase opportunities for the public to engage with PDC via social media, e-updates, and the PDC website.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

The Board could choose not to replace the URAC Policy and direct staff to continue to plan and host URAC meetings and find budget to fund such activities. Since a vast majority of URAC members' terms have expired, the Board would also have to either re-appoint prior URAC members or solicit interest from the community to replace any vacancies.

ATTACHMENTS

None