



Portland Transition

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Monthly Community Engagement Status Update: August 2023

Purpose

This monthly status update gives an overview of community engagement activities related to the government transition, highlighting progress toward engagement goals, themes from public comment, activities by the Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC), and upcoming milestones.

Summary of engagement activities

Table 1: Engagement activities to-date

Engagements	August 2023	Total to-date (since Nov. 2022)	Transition projections to March 2025
Community survey responses	0	744	600
Sign-ups for monthly email	222	2,925	3,665
Community listening sessions & workshops	1	4	7
Participants at listening sessions	45	137	250
Public comments received	39	1,739	2,000
Hours of verbal public comment	0	17.5	36
Public meetings and hearings	9	68	100
Briefings and presentations	5	18	107
Policy discussions with community organizations	1	37	60
Employee townhalls	0	4	18
Employee attendance per townhall	0	807	550
Media coverage	10	144	200
GTAC engagements – community groups	3	6	126

Public comment

The public is invited to comment through our online comment form, email, and verbal public comment. From August 1 to 31, 2023, the Portland Transition Team received **39** public comments.



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This month's public comments were driven by engagement opportunities for the month including a listening session on updating Code 3.02: Council Organizations and Procedures, which would align City with the revised charter, providing a framework for the 2025 council to operate under after they take office.

Table 2: Public comments received by topic

Topic	August 2023 (% of comments received)	Total to-date (since Nov 2022)
Geographic districts	59%	49%
Community education and engagement	26%	5%
Transition management	21%	3%
Other	13%	2%
Form of government (Responsibilities of elected officials)	3%	4%
Service delivery & bureau management	3%	2%
Ranked choice voting	0%	2%
Salaries of elected officials	0%	43%
City budgeting, resource allocation, participatory budgeting	0%	4%
Phase II of charter review	0%	3%
Number of comments	39	2,223

Big questions raised and themes

The following themes emerged from public comment, Code 3.02 listening session, and GTAC engagement activities in August 2023. Note that all public comment is available in the [August 2023 public comment report](#).

- City Council Organization and Procedures (Code 3.02 Update) including questions about the timing of the update, whether the mayor in particular with six councilors should be able to call a special meeting, whether the number of duties assigned to Council President gives the role



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too much power, and whether there should be a defined process to remove the president or vice president during their terms.

- Districting including continued recommendations on the districts, and then access to the final map.
- General input about how and where to find information.

Demographics

Collecting demographic data allows us to understand the representation of historically underrepresented communities in City Hall and decision-making processes. We gather this data with a commitment to collecting only necessary information, ensuring its value to the City and the communities we serve.

The City collects zip codes from public commenters, but this information is optional and only three comments (or 7.7%) included zip codes in August.

Table 3: Public comments received by geography

Location	August Public Comment	Total Public Comment (Since April 2023)	Portland Population
North/Northeast Portland	33%	24%	28%
Southeast Portland	33%	52%	25%
East Portland	0%	6%	24%
West Portland	0%	16%	23%
Portland-Metropolitan area	33%	1%	N/A
Other Oregon cities outside metropolitan area	0%	>0%	N/A
Outside of Oregon	0%	>0%	N/A
Number of commenters with zip code data	3	693	



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Government Transition Advisory Committee (GTAC) engagement

GTAC is the primary public engagement body for the transition, advising on the Transition Plan's development and implementation. Committed to augmenting the City's engagement strategy, members actively engage with the community by providing at least two education or engagement opportunities each quarter outside of City-hosted events from June 2023 to February 2025.

Individuals and groups engaged

GTAC members reported engagement with the following individuals and groups in August 2023:

- Former Independent District Commissioners
- Margaret Strachan, former City Commissioner
- North Portland Neighborhood Services
- Northwest District Association

New opportunities for engagement or barriers to engagement

GTAC reported the following reflections as new opportunities for engagement or barriers to engagement identified as part of their outreach efforts this month:

- Upcoming presentation or partnership opportunities:
 - Committee member will reach out to Friendly House, Lincoln High School, Home Forward, Rose Haven, Street Roots
 - Voter education for neighborhood associations

Key takeaways from joint meeting with Independent District Commission - August 21, 2023

Community engagement lessons learned

- Especially for harder to reach communities, emphasis on personal connections and talking to smaller groups for effective feedback -- engaging with trusted leaders in communities can significantly amplify the outreach and education efforts.
- Suggest multi-faceted engagement strategy where outreach is also taken to the community rather than waiting for community to come to hearings / discussions.
- Recognize barriers such as childcare, transportation, and economic challenges are crucial to ensuring broader participation.
- Recommendations for improvement include proactive outreach, leveraging trusted community leaders for engagement, and ensuring that changes are communicated well in advance to



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prevent surprises; Collaborate with experts in community engagement to bridge gaps in skills and knowledge.

- There's an opportunity to engage folks in congregate living situations.
- Meet people where they are, such as information booths or community gatherings as public hearings can be far or inaccessible.

Gaps in community engagement

- The current engagement strategy might not be reaching all communities effectively.
- Not all community members were adequately engaged such as non-English speakers, youth; challenges in ensuring widespread and diverse participation, particularly among ethnic minorities, the houseless, and younger citizens.

City community engagement improvements

- The city needs to invest in building the required skills within its teams for effective community engagement and communication.
- City needs a more systematic and defined process for gathering public feedback across all its initiatives and community engagement rather than relying on one-off groups.

Accountability for community input through decision making

- Reading all comments and feedback with sincerity and seriousness.
- While feedback is essential, commissioners didn't decide solely based on public comments—they also leveraged their experience, expertise, and values in decision making; based on belief of what's best for the city's future
- Being honest and transparent about personal views and understanding where community members are at can help move a conversation
- There were concerns about the consolidation of neighborhood coalitions. It wasn't a primary factor in their decision-making process, and the announcement came as a surprise to many. The purpose of the neighborhood associations is to provide a voice to the residents, and any changes to this structure need careful consideration.

Future considerations

- Importance of voter education given community concerns about feeling underrepresented. The emphasis should be on reassuring voters that the system will be fairer and more representative.
- Rapid changes, especially without prior communication, can lead to uncertainty and discomfort. The pace of change and communication is crucial for a smooth transition and to maintain trust.



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- There is a strong feeling that the changes in representation will provide significant opportunities for the East Portland community, making voter education critical.

Upcoming transition decisions

The following milestones / events serve as a reference to promote early engagement:

- September 20, 2023– Code 3.02: Council Organization & Procedure goes to City Council for reading and adoption.
- October 19, 2023 – City Organization Resolution goes to City Council.