



Portland Transition

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Monthly Community Engagement Status Update: November 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	November 2023	Total to-date (since Nov. 2022)	Transition projections to March 2025
Community survey responses	0	625	600
Transition newsletter signups	72	3,293	3,665
Community listening sessions & workshops	0	6	7
Participants at listening sessions	n/a	459	250
Public comments received	34	2,611	2,000
Hours of verbal public comment	1	19	37
Public meetings and hearings	8	93	100
Briefings and presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those done by GTAC 	15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13/15 	50 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 37/50 	126 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 126
Policy discussions with community organizations	0	38	60
Employee townhalls	0	6	18
Employee attendance per townhall	n/a	1,624	1,100
Media coverage	33	228	200



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Public comment

The public is invited to comment through our online comment form, email, and verbal public comment. From November 1 to 30, 2023, the Portland Transition Team received **34** public comments.

This month's public comments were driven by engagement opportunities for the month including City Council's vote on the city organizational chart.

Topic	November 2023 (% of comments received)	Total to-date (since Nov 2022)
Service delivery & bureau management (including city organization chart)	97%	34%
Community education & engagement	6%	7%
Form of government (including roles and responsibilities of elected officials)	3%	20%
Geographic districts	0%	42%
Salaries of city leaders	0%	37%
City budgeting, resource allocation, participatory budgeting	0%	6%
Transition management	0%	4%
Other	0%	2%
Rank-choice voting	0%	2%
Number of comments	35	2,611

Big questions raised and themes

The following themes emerged from public comment, public meetings, and community briefings and presentations in November 2023. Note that all public comment is available in the [November 2023 public comment report](#).

Public comment. Comment focused on the draft city organizational structure with much of comment coming from public testimony at the council hearing on November 1 and several emails. Testimonies called for clearer definition of roles and responsibilities between the executive and legislative branches including separation of powers in Council staffing. Many expressed concern for the cost of the



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proposed organizational structure including that the cost should not come at the expense of public safety, the number of high-level management positions, and its complexity. Some commented it was under resourced. Other comments stated support for establishing an equity officer at the executive level, called for less politicized decision making around transportation, and highlighted the opportunity to improve support and programs for disabled and aging communities. Finally, many comments were made regarding commissioner proposed amendments including how natural resources should be managed within the organizational structure and adding a chief sustainability officer to the City Administrator's office.

Other comments emphasized the need for collaboration between transition staff and GTAC to address key issues and raised questions regarding the role and election process of council president and vice president as well as the mayor's part in setting agendas.

Public meetings. Public meetings were split between City Council (three) and the Government Transition Advisory Committee (five). City Council adopted a new city organizational structure, had the first reading of changes to the Current Appropriation Levels, and agreed to facilities plan to accommodate the physical space needs of the new mayor, city administrator, and 12-member city council. Government Transition Advisory Committee meeting topics included media, committee workplan, transition finances, facilities improvements, a discussion with Mayor Wheeler, and one-year reflections. November also saw the first meetings of the Government Transition Advisory Committee's two new subcommittees: Voter/Candidate Education & Outreach Subcommittee and Districts + Council Operations Subcommittee.

Community briefings and presentations. The Government Transition Advisory Committee held 13 community briefings and presentations. Transition Team staff held two community briefings and presentations. Seven of the presentations were held with neighborhood associations and the remaining were held with mostly community groups, a Portland State University class, a business district group, and a consulting group. Themes raised included offices and constituent relations for districts, roles of the city administrator and mayor, where neighborhood associations fit within the organizational structure, community engagement, and most groups expressed interest in learning more about ranked-choice voting.

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.



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The City collects zip codes from public commenters, but this information is optional and 4 comments (or 11%) included zip codes in November.

Table 3: Public comments received by geography

Location	November Public Comment	Total Public Comment (Since April 2023)	Portland Population
North/Northeast Portland	0%	23%	28%
Southeast Portland	50%	43%	25%
East Portland	0%	6%	24%
West Portland	25%	18%	23%
Portland-Metropolitan area	0%	7%	N/A
Other Oregon cities outside metropolitan area	25%	2%	N/A
Outside of Oregon	0%	0%	N/A
Number of commenters with geographic data	4	1,162	
% of comments sharing geographic data	12%	45%	

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 November 2023:

- Cascadia Partners
- Civic Life SW – Transportation and Land Use Committee
- East Portland Action Plan



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- NEPDX Village
- Pearl District Neighborhood Association
- Piedmont Neighborhood Association
- Portland State University urban planning class
- Powelhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association
- South Burlingame Neighborhood Association
- Sumner Neighborhood Association
- Thrive East PDX
- Venture Portland
- Woodlawn Neighborhood Association
- Individuals
 - Cecily Hope Pretty, former employee in the City Clerk's Office, City of San Antonio
 - Liesl Olson, City Manager's Office, City of Bellevue
 - Jane and Ron Cease, former state senators
 - Bucoda Warren, Chief Policy Analyst for City of Tacoma's Mayor
 - One-on-one conversations at a Future Portland gathering

Transition Team staff, without GTAC members, also presented to the Portland Metro Chamber and Woodstock Neighborhood 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:

- Opportunities
 - There is a guide for new legislators that may relate to new councilors
 - Educating candidates
- Future presentations
 - "Consulting" groups
 - Future Portland
 - Many groups requested follow up presentations, especially to provide voter education (East Portland Action Plan, NEPDX village update next year, Pearl District Neighborhood Association, Piedmont Neighborhood Association, South Burlingame Neighborhood Association, Venture Portland, Sumner Neighborhood Association, and Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association)



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- Organizations attending the Thrive East presentation: - East Portland Collective - Agile philanthropies - Thimbleberry farms - Hazelwood Neighborhood Association - Midway alliance - Centennial school board+ neighborhood association

Big Themes or Questions

- Future districts and council operations
 - In-district offices to make city more accessible
 - Council sessions and council committees
 - How new councilors can best perform as policy-makers
 - How districts might affect urban planning and regional transportation
 - Navigating constituent services for neighborhood concerns
 - Research on the charter commission's recommendation of multi-member districts
- Candidates
 - People expressing interest in running for city council
 - More questions about candidates and eligibility etc.
 - Recall process for future councilors
 - Explaining future councilors do not have term limits in the new charter
- Neighborhood associations
 - How districts impact neighborhood associations
 - How the new city organizational structure impacts neighborhood associations' engagement and advocacy
 - When neighborhood coalitions will be consolidated to represent the four new districts
 - Lack of community engagement on neighborhood-specific issues of the transition
 - Whether changes are planned for Code 3.96
- Voter education – ranked choice voting
 - Ability of tabulators to count choices under single transferable vote
 - Ranked choice voting explanation and benefits
- City organizational structure
 - How does business fit in the new structure and how can they advocate for candidates of their choice
 - Number of staff for electeds and city administrator
 - How is the sustainability officer's role different from the role of city council
 - How are new fees or taxes reviewed and approved
- Mayor / City Administrator
 - Role of the mayor and how responsibilities are divide between the mayor and city administrator
 - Hiring and firing or the city administrator through mayoral changes



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- Pros/cons of big changes and lines of accountability
- Community engagement and access in the new form of government
 - How to build trust in the new government
 - How public input will be received
 - Accessing city services through transparency and/or support in navigating bureaucracy
- Transition costs
- Facilities improvements

Upcoming transition decisions

The following milestones serve as a reference to promote early engagement. Please note there will be a series of transition work sessions with topics including facilities planning, roles of council during the transition, organization chart and staffing of future elected officials, and proposed budget and funding plan.

- December 2023 – Create five non-represented classifications to support the transition to the government structure supported by City Charter and establish compensation ranges for these classifications
- December 2023 – Amend Elections Code to align with the amended City Charter approved by voters in Portland Measure 26-228
- February 2024 - Title 15 – Emergency Code
- March 2024 – Title 5 – Revenue & Finance; Title 6 – Special Taxes; Title 7 – Business Licenses; Title 12 – Civil Rights (tentative)