City of Louisville
Public Involvement Policy

Public participation is an essential element of the City's representative form of government. To promote effective public participation City officials, advisory board members, staff and participants should all observe the following guiding principles, roles and responsibilities:

Guiding principles for public involvement

- **Inclusive not Exclusive -** Everyone's participation is welcome. Anyone with a known interest in the issue will be identified, invited and encouraged to be involved early in the process.

- **Voluntary Participation -** The process will seek the support of those participants willing to invest the time necessary to make it work.

- **Purpose Driven -** The process will be clearly linked to when and how decisions are made. These linkages will be communicated to participants.

- **Time, Financial and Legal Constraints -** The process will operate within an appropriate time frame and budget and observe existing legal and regulatory requirements.

- **Communication -** The process and its progress will be communicated to participants and the community at-large using appropriate methods and technologies.

- **Adaptability -** The process will be adaptable so that the level of public involvement is reflective of the magnitude of the issue and the needs of the participants.

- **Access to Information -**The process will provide participants with timely access to all relevant information in an understandable and user-friendly way. Education and training requirements will be considered.

- **Access to Decision Making -** The process will give participants the opportunity to influence decision making.

- **Respect for Diverse Interests -** The process will foster respect for the diverse values, interests and knowledge of those involved.

- **Accountability -** The process will reflect that participants are accountable to both their constituents and to the success of the process.

- **Evaluation -** The success and results of the process will be measured and evaluated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council

City Council is ultimately responsible to all the citizens of Louisville and must weigh each of its decisions accordingly. Councilors are responsible to their local constituents under the ward system; however they must carefully consider the concerns expressed by all parties. Council must ultimately meet the needs of the entire community—including current and future generations—and act in the best interests of the City as a whole.

During its review and decision-making process, Council has an obligation to recognize the efforts and activities that have preceded its deliberations. Council should have regard for the public involvement processes that have been completed in support or opposition of projects.

City Staff and Advisory Boards

The City should be designed and run to meet the needs and priorities of its citizens. Staff and advisory boards must ensure that the Guiding Principles direct their work. In addition to the responsibilities established by the Guiding Principles, staff and advisory boards are responsible for:

- ensuring that decisions and recommendations reflect the needs and desires of the community as a whole;

- pursuing public involvement with a positive spirit because it helps clarify those needs and desires and also adds value to projects;

- in all public involvement activities fostering long-term relationships based on respect and trust;

- encouraging positive working partnerships;

- ensuring that no participant or group is marginalized or ignored;

- drawing out the silent majority, the voiceless and the disempowered; and

- being familiar with a variety of public involvement techniques and the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches.

All Participants (Proponents, Opponents, Public, Council, Advisory Boards and Staff)

The public is also accountable for the public involvement process and for the results it produces. All parties (including Council, advisory boards, staff, proponents, opponents and the public) are responsible for:

- working within the process in a cooperative and civil manner;

- focusing on real issues and not on furthering personal agendas;

- balancing personal concerns with the needs of the community as a whole;

- having realistic expectations;

- participating openly, honestly and constructively, offering ideas, suggestions and alternatives;

- listening carefully and actively consider everyone's perspectives;

- identifying their concerns and issues early in the process;

- providing their names and contact information if they want direct feedback;

- remembering that no single voice is more important than all others, and that there are diverse opinions to be considered;

- making every effort to work within the project schedule and if this is not possible, discussing this with the proponent without delay;

- recognizing that process schedules may be constrained by external factors such as limited funding, broader project schedules or legislative requirements;

- accepting some responsibility for keeping themselves aware of current issues, making others aware of project activities and soliciting their involvement and input; and

- considering that the quality of the outcome and how that outcome is achieved are both important.