

## LWVUS and LWVPDX Positions for Table Discussion on Public Participation

### LWVUS: Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation

(Summary: **Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making.)

*Statement of Position on the Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation, as announced by the National Board, June 1984:*

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.**

### LWVPDX: Planning

**Planning (2009, 1974, 1973)**

**The League of Women Voters of Portland supports comprehensive long-range city planning based on:**

- **Citizen involvement at all stages of the planning process;**
- **Communication and coordination among citizens, citizen advisory groups, and city and regional planning agencies;**
- **Consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed plans and actions;**
- **Determination of long-range goals and priorities.**

**Goals should include:**

- **Area-wide orderly growth and development;**
- **A visually attractive urban community with a sustainable and healthful environment and a healthy economy;**
- **Quality infrastructure and public facilities designed to meet the needs of residents and businesses;**
- **Fair distribution of tax burdens and government investment.**

LWVPDX: Neighborhood Associations (Note that the Office of Neighborhood Involvement is now the [Office of Community & Civic Life](#).)

### **Neighborhood Associations (2007, 1975, 1973)**

**1. The LWV of Portland believes that Portland's Neighborhood Associations have the potential to serve the public good by providing important opportunities for civic participation and improving neighborhood livability. To meet this potential, Neighborhood Associations must be integrated into city networks of communication and decision-making, and they must be adequately supported by city funding and services. Neighborhood Associations, in turn, need to consistently invite and include all residents in their operations.**

**2. Portland's neighborhood system structure:**

- **Neighborhood Associations should continue to be autonomous entities separate from city government.**
- **Because Portland's neighborhood system is grassroots in nature, diversity of NA character should be honored. A decentralized system of service delivery is appropriate.**
- **District Coalitions, in their varied organizational formats, should remain in place as long as they are effective, with funding from the city.**

- **Uniformity and equity should be pursued where possible but should not come at the expense of effectiveness.**

### **3. The city's role in supporting Neighborhood Associations should consist of:**

#### **At the Council and Bureau level:**

- **Informing Neighborhood Associations of city projects and activities affecting them**
- **A willingness to solicit and receive neighborhood input**
- **Consideration of neighborhood needs within city budgeting process**
- **Funding that is adequate to maintain this system**

#### **Through the Office of Neighborhood Involvement:**

- **Ensuring a neighborhood voice in city operations**
- **Encouraging better communication between city bureaus and neighborhoods**
- **The setting forth of healthy governance practices in guidelines for Neighborhood Associations**
- **Support for neighborhoods and District Coalitions including assistance and adequate funding for communication, outreach, leadership training and technical assistance**

### **4. Successful Neighborhood Associations should:**

- **Be independent with the authority to set their own agenda**
- **Have the ability to interact with all government and non-governmental entities**
- **Work to engage the various populations in the neighborhood**
- **Respond to neighborhood needs**
- **Represent neighborhood interests effectively to the city**
- **Utilize effective means to communicate with neighborhood residents at least twice a year**

**Neighborhood Associations should not be the only avenue for civic engagement with Portland's government. If resources are adequate, city assistance could be offered to groups other than Neighborhood Associations to increase organizational capacity. When Neighborhood Associations are functioning effectively, with both the resources to do their work, and city's acknowledgement of their role, encouragement should be given to other community groups to channel work on civic issues through the neighborhood system.**

**\*Note that we also often use this part of the LWVPDX Portland Police Bureau position:**

**We support citizen involvement in the functioning of the Portland Police Bureau including, but not limited to, budget advisory committees, precinct advisory councils, and citizen advisory groups.**