

# PDC

## PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**DATE:** September 12, 2007  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Bruce A. Warner, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report Number No. 07-108  
Communications and Public Involvement Briefing

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Portland Development Commission has undertaken an approach to external and internal communications and public involvement based on a Board direction of openness, transparency, and ongoing communications with the public, stakeholders, employees, businesses, neighborhood associations, and the news media. This briefing will discuss these changing roles and approaches, link communications and outreach with the Board's strategic approach, update the Board on extensive changes over the past nine months, and discuss results to date.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Introduction**

The information briefing has a number of elements:

#### **Staff and Organizational Overview**

- Executive Department Operations Manager John Jackley will discuss how Public Affairs and Public Involvement are organized, what communications and outreach challenges are facing PDC, and briefly introduce and recognize the staff and other contributors to PDC's communications and outreach efforts.

#### **Public Affairs**

- Public Affairs Manager Shawn Uhlman will discuss the agency workload in terms of media inquiries, media releases, events, speeches, publications and graphics, Public Affairs' new Spanish bilingual capability, and the increasing use of the Internet and a digital-based platform to communicate with the public and news media.

#### **Public Involvement**

- Public Involvement Manager Joleen Jensen-Classen will discuss public involvement including outreach and communication with the Urban Renewal Area Committees (URACs); an overview of the 2006-07 workload; the anticipated project workload in 2007-08 for outreach and public involvement; and next steps as PDC continues to reach out to multiple and diverse communities.

#### **Planning and Activities**

- Executive Department Operations Manager John Jackley will discuss recent survey results including a citywide poll of citizen perceptions of PDC, conducted by the Portland

firm of Davis, Hibbits and Midghall, Inc.; and an internal employee communications survey.

**Community Connection Report**

- The Portland consulting firm of CH2A Associates will present their second and final report on their interviews with Portland residents, particularly minority communities. Mr. Harold Williams, Sr. and Mr. Harold Williams, Two will present findings and recommendations on how PDC can continue to improve its community connections and communications.

**Next Steps**

- Executive Department Operations Manager John Jackley will present next steps, including:
  - Continuing to build on recent successes.
  - Develop a comprehensive communications plan to support the Board's upcoming strategic direction.
  - Develop a common operating plan with the Community Relations and Business Equity Department.
  - Plan for the celebration of PDC's 50<sup>th</sup> year.
  - Conduct a publications audit, including a bilingual component, to ensure that publications and other communications products meet the needs and expectations of the public.
  - Support the communications and outreach needs of the Future of Urban Renewal Project/West Side Study

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. CH2A Associates Final Report and Recommendations

**CC:** J. Jackley, Executive Office Operations Manager  
M. Baines, General Counsel  
J. Cody, Interim Central Services Director

# Portland Development Commission

## Communication – Community - Connection Report



**Submitted by: CH2A & Associates**  
Harold C. Williams, Sr.  
Harold C. Williams, Two

## Scope of work

PDC engaged the services of CH2A & Associates, Inc. in July 2006 to help improve the agency's approach to communication with Portland's diverse communities, particularly those to whom PDC had not traditionally reached out. PDC asked CH2A to interview PDC customers, those involved with PDC policies, and to assist with initiatives to minority and other communities.

We made over 500 contacts, had over 80 face-to-face interviews, and held a number of community events and meetings. Interviewees included developers, small businesses who received PDC services, labor unions, neighborhood groups, and contractors. After December 6, 2007 the focus moved toward small businesses. CH2A reached out to all communities and focused on the African American community because of its experience in communications and its historical knowledge of that community.

## Introduction

**Harold C. Williams Sr.** is the CEO of CH2A Associates, Board Chair of Success Academy, and Board Member of Portland Community College. Mr. Williams has been heavily involved in the community for over 47 years. He completed his undergraduate work in Political Science at Portland State University. In 1972, he studied in Zagreb, Yugoslavia where he earned his certificate in International Relations, and upon his return to the United States, Harold obtained his Master's degree in General Studies. Harold's professional background is extensive. In 1975, Harold was appointed to serve as Oregon's first Affirmative Action Director for the State of Oregon Office of the Governor. As a result, he was instrumental in bringing about legislative changes for minorities, women and the disabled. Harold also served as State of Oregon Labor Relations Manager for the Executive Department. He has received numerous awards for his leadership and volunteer service. He acquired valuable knowledge and skills in contract negotiations, mediation, grievance processes, and developed an overall knowledge of Oregon's labor laws and practices.

Harold C. Williams Sr. has also been active in community support and has earned recognition for his efforts. In 1973 the Portland Jaycees presented Harold with the "Man of the Year" award. The following year, he was noted in a national publication, "Jet" magazine, for Outstanding Achievement in Human Services. In 1975, Harold was nominated for Whitehouse Fellow. He has taught at various universities throughout Oregon.

**Harold C. Williams Two** is a graduate of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, where he received a BS in Early Childhood Development. Mr. Williams is currently the President of CH2A associates, Vice Chair of Success Academy, and Board Chair of PDX Confidential. Mr. Williams has worked in the

field of child development and social work for over 10 years, and during that time he has also pursued a career in collegiate and professional football.

CH2A & Associates is a progressive consulting firm that is the culmination of 50 plus years of professional experience shared by Harold C. Williams Sr. and Harold C. Williams Two. We offer a unique package of services to both the privately owned business and the public sector. Some of the services that we specialize in include the following:

- *Affirmative Action*- Policy development, legislative compliance, investigation and resolution of complaints, other related matters.
- *Labor Relations*- Contract negotiation, interpreting policies and procedures, mediation, grievance processes, and rendering assistance on contractual bids.
- *Personnel Management*- Recruitment, interview techniques, training and orientation, workshops, management skills.
- *Counseling*- Career options, conflict management, cross-cultural and interpersonal relations.
- *Fashion Design*- Custom designs to fit the occasion, body type, and personality.
- *Wardrobe Planning*- Personalized plan, total coordination from accessories to how to build a better wardrobe. In 1975, coordinated the Governor's wardrobe.
- *Event Planning*- Workshops, parties, and conferences.
- *Motivational Speaking*
- *Political consulting*- Campaign design and strategies.
- *Media coaching*- Communication.
- *Public speaking*- Skill training.

## Historical overview of PDC

African Americans have a negative view of PDC that goes back to the late 50's, and beginning as far back as the Vanport Community and the Vanport flood that displaced many African Americans and caused them to relocate to inner North and Northeast Portland. After the flood the Vanport Community relocated to where the Portland Memorial Coliseum now stands. With the development of the Coliseum, the African American community was again displaced. Around 1958 PDC was established and once again this community was displaced to the boundaries of Broadway to Alberta, from Union Ave. (now known as MLK Blvd.) to Interstate Ave. The heart of the business community was located on Union Ave to Interstate and from Broadway to Fremont. Then came the expansion of Emmanuel Hospital and Interstate 5. The Emmanuel Hospital property

expansion was achieved through property condemnation, which many in the community viewed orchestrated by PDC. Businesses, social structures, and the center for cultural identity were destroyed. Because of this the community is hesitant in trusting PDC. This view has been compounded by the fact that other communities are being developed while North/Northeast Portland has lagged behind.

## **Minority Issues**

PDC began with a very negative image within the African American community. PDC had problems across the board, including lack of cultural competency and communication with the community at large. At the same time, PDC had the opportunities to engage community, while community was ripe for dialogue.

## **PDC's Direction to Change**

In CH2A's view, PDC has to come out from behind their desks and engage the community. The best way to address these issues is to put them all on the table with positives and negatives, and begin to sort through and find out what was based on fact and what was not.

## **Interviews**

CH2A asked interviewees four basic questions, then engaged them in culturally sensitive dialogues:

1. From your point of view please state the good, the bad and the ugly in PDC.
2. If you had a magic wand and could make PDC what you want it to be, do different, and or give them a letter grade, what would it be?
3. How can PDC help you?
4. Are there any issues you see now that PDC needs to be aware of?

We found that because of the of lack communication between PDC and the community at large, these are the perceptions and comments:

*City Council / Tri-met / Housing Authority took most of the money earmarked for PDC to use in inner N/NE and left PDC in a negative light and now hold PDC responsible for misuse of funds. Inner N/NE Interstate community was the only community in the Portland area that had to pay for its own MAX line.*

*The Pearl District had more front-end costs in its development (environmental survey and clean up, ADA code, earth quake proofing cost, etc.) and therefore received more funds for development (South Water-Front had the same issues.)*

*The land banking in regards to Emmanuel Hospital is due to Senator Hatfield moving the development money to OHSU leaving Emmanuel with undeveloped land. If Emmanuel had the funds to develop this land, there would not have been a need for the South Waterfront Project or the Tram, which would have saved taxpayers millions of dollars. Also if Emmanuel had been able to develop those lands, it would have greatly benefited inner N/NE Portland by providing jobs and giving other surrounding businesses more revenue.*

*The property on Beach and MLK used for the Planned Parenthood Project. Many people in the community had no idea that PDC owned or that they were willing to sell it. Church leaders and community members have since stated that if they had this information, they could have made a bid on the land and made plans for development. Why were there secret negotiations?*

*PDC spent millions on the China Town Project even through many of the businesses in this area have moved out to 82<sup>nd</sup> and beyond.*

*PDC is getting credit for developing inner N/NE, although they had very little to do with it (PDC's participation was mainly storefront/DOS, funds which only come to about 15% of a project).*

*Majority (white) small businesses seem to be in just as bad, if not worse, shape as minority small businesses with regard to lack of available, resources for developments, remodels, and other projects. Both minority and majority small businesses often had to resort to funding projects with high interest credit cards ranging from 17% to 30% interest rates.*

*The art community needs more credit for developing areas such as Mississippi, Albina, Alberta, MLK Blvd., Russell St. and the Pearl District. The art community were some of the first to invest in these communities and now bigger developers are piggy-backing on their groundwork and don't have to deal with the REDLINING ISSUES many N/NE residents and businesses have dealt with in the past. This is because the lending institutions now see more value in these areas.*

*PDC needs to invest in developments and projects that produce living wage jobs, not just on the construction and development side, and provide new market tax credit to small developers and property owners to use as*

*collateral for the banks. This would allow smaller entities to tap into those tax credit.*

*The DOS program is great first step but how about the rest of the way? There is a need for a 1-2-3-4-5 process - plan for the DOS program which incorporates a scoring system to go long with process, DOS program is seen as free money for larger developers. An exit interview for DOS program is needed.*

*PDC needs to provide on-going technical support for smaller businesses.*

*PDC needs to help smaller organizations in building relationships with lending institutions, developers, contractors and other agencies in regard to available funding and other resources.*

*PDC needs to tap into the Jazz community to help develop a Jazz district on the East side (starting at the Rose Garden and north on the Williams Vancouver Corridor).*

*PDC needs to be more of a conduit to promote collaboration with other systems and/or agencies (for example, City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, Multnomah County, Metro, Tri-MET, etc.)*

*PDC needs to explain who the players are and their roles, what PDC's responsibilities are and where their responsibilities end in conjunction with other agencies.*

*PDC needs to better manage the side effect of development. PDC can change the feel of PDC's project (work with - not impose) by communicating with and informing the community.*

*PDC need not allow unions, contractors, and/or developers to play one minority group against another.*

*It was stated that a large percentage of our minority able-bodied workforce is in jail for whatever reason. PDC and others need to tie into that workforce population by way of avenues like the CLEAN SLATE program.*

*PDC needs to promote its programs and to communicate better across the board and in more strategic ways. We're seeing some good changes in this recently, but want to see more of it.*

*PDC should adopt the Nordstrom's customer service model, based on respect and user friendliness.*

*PDC's small business loan application process needs to be simplified.*

*Communication is key notify small business when money for programs and/or projects has already been allocated.*

*It was expressed that the Store Front & DOS budgets need to be expanded along with the size of the awards.*

*PDC's needs to adopt a new rule of thumb to have a three level process depending on the project (small, medium, and large.)*

The perceptions/concerns arising from the findings include:

*Small business owners are concerned with the lack of communication with the PDC and question the direction for the future.*

*The recruitment of women and minority workers, contractors and subcontractors is an issue that needs to be addressed.*

*PDC needs to address staff turnover, which will help to promote and preserve relationships with the business community, unions, and similar group.*

*There is a lack of communication and connection with the community at large, including workforce training programs, government agencies, private business and unions that need to be addressed.*

*The Prevailing Wage issue impacts women and minority businesses more than anyone else.*

*Larger contractors and developers know how to "get around" many Emerging Small Business requirements.*

*Small business loan processes seemed to be more difficult than the much larger organization loan processes.*

### On the positive side

*It is much easier to get into apprentices program because of retirements, which are opening up the workforce, especially for minorities.*

*Many feel the PDC outreach efforts are the first step toward a brighter future for PDC and the community.*

*No one wants to see the demise of the Portland Development Commission, but they do want more focus on the original mission of PDC and on small businesses, more communication and relationship building.*

*PDC needs to speed up the process of change and the time is now.*

In summary, we found that the perception of PDC was that PDC had a communication and education problem when dealing with not only the minority community, but also the community at large. It was also perceived that PDC had little or no concern about bettering its situation. Small businesses (defined as any organization with an annual gross income not exceeding five million dollars) as a whole feel left out and under siege. When there is no communication and/or education there is no relationship. Communication, education and outreach have to be the foundation for the new Portland Development Commission and its future.

## **Differences Between Minority and Majority Contractors**

### View from Minority Contractors

*The same players are still cutting the pie, and African Americans are being cut out.*

*African Americans are also being pimped and used to raise certain dollars, but see none of those dollars in the end.*

*On project sites there needs to be an Inspector General for PDC projects to make sure that benchmarks are being met.*

*PDC should also be the governing agent over all projects whether or not they are government funded.*

*The unions should be de-certified if they don't meet their benchmarks for dealing with African Americans and other minorities in their apprenticeship programs and unions.*

### View from Majority Contractor / Developer

*There is very a small minority (especially an African American) population to tap into for employees with skill sets in the trades.*

*PDC can assist minority contractors by helping with bonding, licensing, and skill training.*

*Communication and relationship building are the "keys" in this game.*

*When doing business with PDC you have to spend five times as much in legal fees.*

*City Counsel should not have control of PDC and the commissioner should not have control; that would compound the problem.*

*PDC should spread the dollars around more (for example, more development of the east side).*

Shortly after we began our interview process, we saw that there were very few differences between Union vs. non-union, majority union member vs. minority union member, contractors and small businesses. The common themes and issues with PDC were lack of communication, accessibility, and accountability such as information about available funds, notification of RFPs and their deadlines, job openings, staff hires and fires, etc. The feeling was that the little guy does not have a chance because they are not allowed the same opportunities as larger entities.

## **Program Successes**

CH2A was able to partner with PDC on a number of successes during the period covered by this report.

- The December 6, 2006 PDC Board of Commissioners meeting, in which we helped present the annual Diversity Report and announced a number of significant policy changes with John Jackley and Dr. Garfield DeBarteleban and presented a strategic shift in attitudes and relations with the minority community.
- A series of nontraditional community outreach meetings with the faith-based community and others has been successful and opened doors for PDC where none had been opened before.
- CH2A participated in the development of the PDC construction wage policy, both on the policy level and through our grassroots work with the community.
- Our research assisted PDC in the development and announcement of its Minority Contracting Initiative on December 6, 2006, both on the policy and community levels.

## **Recommendations**

Key PDC staff needs Portland history and cultural competency training. It is essential that PDC's public affairs staff be trained in culturally competent communications.

Using only small ads in community newspapers limiting attendance at events that would further PDC's connection with the community, has made PDC's outreach attempts unsuccessful.

We spoke with people face-to-face in their homes and places of business: going to where the people are and not making them come to us. Meeting the people on their level allowed us the opportunity to engage in an open dialog—PDC should do the same.

And the second part our Communication - Community – Connection efforts allowed us the opportunity to go into churches, coffee shops, and other places of business to set up events so that the PDC Board of Directors and other executives in the organization could meet with the public face to face.

PDC needs to reach out and communicate by hitting the streets (churches, coffee shops, barber shops, book stores, etc.) PDC needs to communicate better inside and outside of PDC and be clearer on what PDC does and does not do.

**Some things PDC can do differently in their communication /connection efforts.**

People need to see PDC out in the community, for example at high school football and basketball games (helps in recruiting interns). Communication, engagement, and involvement are key. Communication within PDC's organization is also needed. Provide opportunities for employees to engage with each other at open houses, lunch with the director, and forming a PDC Hood to Coast team.

There are plenty of nontraditional means of communication PDC could employ, such as television and radio ads promoting programs and projects. Often times, the problem is the lack of value felt by the PDC employee and what they bring to the table. PDC should get involved in the communities their employees are already a part of (for instance the biking community, running community, etc.). PDC's employees are its biggest assets; forming and nurturing employer and employee, and staff to staff relationships, are most important. When PDC employees go out in the community, PDC should always be seen in a positive light; if this is done correctly. Communication is the foundation of any relationship, which encourages ownership, which brings about pride, and which builds better relationships with all parties included.

In our opinion, here at CH2A the training that would be useful for the public affairs staff, as part of their professional development and commitment to culturally competent communication training would consist of:

- Affirmative Action
- Labor Relations
- Personnel Management

- Media coaching
- Public Speaking-skill training
- Culturally competent communications across the board

PDC can better communicate with the various communities, especially those without access to mainstream forms of communication, such as the Internet by engaging in those communities on their level. Hit the streets, get staff to buy-in, provide training to do so, and be willing to be challenged.

In closing, we at CH2A would like to thank Portland Development Commission for the opportunity to be a part of this project, and the groups and individuals we interviewed for their straightforwardness in their dialog and their hospitality. For our last recommendation we at CH2A would like to focus on RESPECT. Respect on all levels must be communicated from start to finish. Starting with PDC's Board Members, executive team, upper and middle management, field staff, maintenance staff, security, front decks, and the community at large. If this is not done, the efforts of PDC to this point, including this project, will be in vain. Communication is the key.