

The 2009 Neighborhood Plan Update (NPU) process took place in three Southeast Seattle neighborhoods of Martin Luther King Jr. Way at Holly (Othello), North Beacon Hill and North Rainier Valley. The Department of Neighborhoods (DoN) in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) implemented the principles of the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) and the Translation and Interpretation Policy in performing outreach and engagement to traditionally underrepresented communities in these very diverse communities.

The Planning Outreach Liaison (POL) Model

The DoN developed the Planning Outreach Liaison (POL) model, which is based on the Trusted Advocates model developed by the Annie E. Case Foundation and practiced in the White Center area. The basic principle is to *take* the message to underrepresented communities *through trusted and qualified bilingual and/or bicultural liaisons*.

The 13 POLs were reimbursed for the personal time they spent working on outreach and engagement activities. Most POLs have other full time job and undertake the NP work on a contract basis. The City partnered with the Seattle Neighborhoods Group (SNG) who functions as a fiscal agent to subcontract with the POLs. In accordance to the Memorandum of Understanding with SNG, the City would be responsible to recruit, train, and monitor as well as approve all payments to the POLs. Planning Outreach Liaisons were recruited, trained and received technical assistance and support to ensure their outreach efforts were effective.

Recruiting POLs

Recruiting the *qualified and trusted* POL is one of the crucial processes towards a successful civic outreach and engagement. It is important that the candidate is respected in the community he or she would be the liaison for. To that end, community input and assistance is thought during the process. Care is given to ensure that the POL is perceived as neutral person with respect to representing the City, being an advocate for the respective community, or siding any one faction that may obstruct the coming together of the community.

The POL Qualifications used for recruitment included:

- Experience providing outreach to respective community
- Experience working with diverse community members (even w/n the under-rep. group)
- Capacity to communicate in mainstream and respective community cultures (bicultural)
- Fluency in English and language of respective community if applicable
- Familiarity with respective community (where do they live, meet, ...)
- Capacity to perform outreach through flexible time, personal transportation ...
- Experience and skills in providing presentation and facilitation services
- Experience providing translation service if applicable
- Experience providing interpretation service if applicable

POL Training

The POLs are community people whose recruitment qualification does not include planning knowledge nor experience from participating in the original neighborhood planning process. It is the City's responsibility to train, equip with necessary tools and support them if they are to be successful in assisting the City bridge the cultural and/or linguistic barriers in its effort to outreach and engage the underrepresented communities.

Some of the ongoing trainings include:

- Administrative issues such as contractual & reporting related paperwork
- Logistics, expectations, values and goals
- Content materials including information to be presented, and questions/guidelines for facilitation
- Skills such as outreach & workshop facilitation tips, community building and leadership
- The needs for and resources available towards continued civic engagement

Activities Performed by POLs

Typical activities of the POLs include:

- Spread the word about neighborhood plan and that the Updates are here
- Extend invitation to POL hosted workshops
- Facilitate workshops in the community's language, at familiar venue, utilizing culturally appropriate settings such as providing childcare and familiar food from licensed local businesses
- Take flipchart notes in communities own language if applicable and translate the same to English for the City to incorporate in the process
- Extend invitation and encourage participation at the City hosted NPU workshops
- Provide interpretation at City hosted workshops and translation of invitations and content materials

Traditionally Under-Represented Communities

POLs were key in the success of engaging over 1200 people in Southeast Seattle neighborhoods. The 1200 individuals were key stakeholders who were from historically underrepresented communities.

1. African Americans
2. Native Americans
3. Seniors and People Living with Disabilities
4. Youth
5. Renters
6. Immigrant and Refugees

For the NPU process in the three Southeast Seattle neighborhoods, the City, in keeping with the Translation & Interpretation Policy and based on common knowledge from working in the community, identified the following *immigrant and refugee* groups for special outreach through the POL model:

<u>Language</u>	<u>Spoken by Community</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Spoken by Community</u>
1. Amharic	Ethiopian	6. Spanish	Latino
2. Cantonese & Mandarin	Chinese	7. Tagalog	Filipino
3. Khmer	Cambodian	8. Tigrinya.....	Eritrean, Ethiopian
4. Oromiffa.....	Ethiopian	9. Vietnamese.....	Vietnamese
5. Somali	Somali		

In addition to the above 13 underrepresented communities that had one POL person assigned to them, the City provided limited outreach to the Lao Highland, Orthodox Jewish Synagogues, the Seventh Day Adventist church and the Samoan communities.

Opportunities for the City

The following are some actions the City can show in order to build trust and encourage continued civic engagement with the underrepresented communities:

- Transparency in process
- Accountability through periodic feedback
- Demonstrating strive for equity
- Maintain the same level of outreach and engagement during the implementation and stewardship of the neighborhood plans
- Manage community expectations
- Negotiate cultural barriers and cultural norms
- Overcome past disappointments with government
- Respect that this is a time intensive process
- Create more outreach tools for those who can't read and write in their own language