

**Denver Parks and Recreation draft
Department Policy and Procedures**

**Subject: Public Notification
and Civic Engagement Policy**

Effective:
Supersedes: SOP #3-2 6/28/91
Number:

Approved by Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:
Approved by Manager:
Reviewed by City Council:

1.0 Policy

It is the policy of Denver Department Parks and Recreation that Denver’s residents have a ample opportunity for input about proposed actions which would have significant impacts on Parks, Facilities; on planning, policies, development, uses or programs for Parks or Facilities; on surrounding neighborhoods or the City as a whole; and that the public process follow the guidelines set out in this Public Notification and Civic Engagement Policy.

2.0 Philosophy and Background

DPR is committed to substantial, systematic, and ongoing public participation. DPR seeks to involve, as a standing ethic and practice, the voice of the public in proposed Actions with respect to Parks and Facilities which could significantly impact the Parks and Recreation system and the benefits and uses derived by the public.

As noted in the DPR Game Plan, DPR shall use four principles to guide all decision-making processes: system equity, sustainable environment, sound economics and civic engagement. DPR shall consistently assess for fair and equitable distribution of resources and amenities; for the longevity of decisions for our built and passive environments; for responsible budgetary implications; and for open and accessible opportunities to engage our public.

Effective civic engagement for DPR is based on the following core principles: accountability, equity, transparency, responsibility, accessibility, openness, diversity, effectiveness, flexibility, communication and listening. DPR strives to engage the public with strong mechanisms for listening and responding to concerns, strives to be respectful of the public’s time and efforts, and strives to effectively communicate through the uses of improved technology.

This Policy is intended to ensure that the public has adequate and timely input opportunities prior to the initiation of actions. In managing its resources, DPR’s decisions are guided by the **DPR Game Plan**, DPR’s divisional strategic work plans, Denver’s Comprehensive Plan, the City Charter and ordinances, city-wide budget, and Mayoral executive orders and priorities, and value-based master plans.

3.0 Definitions

- 3.1 **Actions.** A general category for decisions which establish or develop certain types of DPR plans, projects, initiatives, programs, policies or new uses related to Parks and Facilities.
- 3.2 **Board.** The Board of Parks and Recreation, commonly referred to as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, as established under section 2.4.3 of the City Charter. The Board consists of members appointed by the members the Mayor, City Council, and the Board of School District No. 1. The Board provides advice to the Manager as to DPR policies and rules and regulations, makes recommendations on specific issues brought to the Board by the Manager, and comments on the annual budget proposed for DPR. Board meetings are open to the public.
- 3.3 **City.** The City and County of Denver and its constituent departments and agencies.
- 3.4 **Council.** The elected Council for the City. Under Part 4 of Article II and elsewhere in the City Charter, the Council must approve certain matters relating to DPR operations.
- 3.5 **Council Committee.** The particular committee which is established by Council to hear, consider and move forward ordinance requests as submitted by the Department. The Council Committee may also hear informational items or be consulted by DPR with respect to matters not requiring Council approval.
- 3.6 **DPR.** The Denver Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 3.7 **Facilities.** All significant buildings or structures in which parks and recreational programs or activities are conducted and which are subject to DPR jurisdiction and management (e.g. golf courses and facilities, recreation centers, swimming pools, play structures, artwork, pavilions, lodges, etc.), including those located in the Mountain Parks, natural areas, and golf courses. It does include Facilities that may be leased or managed by another public or private agency, but only to the extent that an Action is not subject to, or outside the scope of, the terms and conditions of existing contractual agreements.
- 3.8 **Manager.** The Manager of DPR as such officer is recognized under section 2.4.2 and elsewhere in the City Charter. The City Charter delegates exclusively to the Manager and DPR, duties and powers to manage, operate and control Parks and Facilities. See section 2.4.4(A) of the City Charter. The term “Manager,” as used in this Policy may include DPR representatives designated and authorized by the Manager.
- 3.9 **Mayor.** The elected Mayor for the City and County of Denver.
- 3.10 **Parks.** All parks whether designated or not designated as a park under the City Charter and subject to DPR jurisdiction and management, including Mountain Parks, natural areas and golf courses. The term “Parks” does not include parkways or any property under the jurisdiction and management of another City department. It does include Parks that may be leased or managed by another public or private agency, but only to the extent that an Action is not subject to, or outside the scope of, the terms and conditions of existing contractual agreements.

- 3.11 **Policy.** This Public Notification and Civic Engagement Policy as adopted and as it may be amended in the future.

4.0 Authority: Existing Public Processes & Limitations of Policy

Certain DPR Actions are subject to, and must follow certain approval or decision-making and public notification processes prescribed by City Charter, ordinances, or DPR rules and regulations or policies.

- 4.1 **City Charter.** Several Actions require approval of the Council and the Mayor under Part 4 of Article II of the City Charter and other provisions of the Charter and under corresponding provisions of the Denver Revised Municipal Code (DRMC).
- 4.1.1 Reasonable charges for the use of any special facility or activity within Parks and Facilities. § 2.4.4(A) and Article IV, Chapter 39, DRMC.
 - 4.1.2 Enforcement of DPR rules and regulations through the police and courts. § 2.4.4(A) and Article I, Chapter 39, DRMC.
 - 4.1.3 Licenses for the operation of concessions and selling of goods or services in Parks and Facilities. § § 2.4.4(C) and 2.4.5.
 - 4.1.4 Acceptance of gifts of real or personal property. § 2.4.4(E).
 - 4.1.5 Cooperative agreements with School District No. 1, other public and private agencies involving the delegation of Manager authority to said entities or the lease of Parks or Facilities to said entities. § § 2.4.4(F) and 2.4.5.
 - 4.1.6 Park designations. § 2.4.5.
 - 4.1.7 Compatible non-park usage in historic structures. § 2.4.7 and Article V, Chapter 39, DRMC.
- 4.2 **Ordinances.** Certain DPR Actions have approval or adoption processes provided for in Chapter 39, DRMC (“Parks and Recreation”)
- 4.2.1 Adoption of rules and regulations (and related policies). Section 39-2, DRMC.
 - 4.2.2 Permitting process for scheduled events and assemblies in Parks and Facilities. Article II, Chapter 39, DRMC.
 - 4.2.3 Permitting process for golf tournaments. Article III, Chapter 39, DRMC.
 - 4.2.4 Establishment of, and enforcement of rules and regulations in, South Platte River Greenway and the Cherry Creek Greenway. Article VII, Chapter 39, DRMC.
 - 4.2.5 Establishment of, and enforcement of rules and regulations in, areas designated as natural areas. Article VIII, Chapter 39, DRMC.

- 4.2.6 Notification to Registered Neighborhood Organizations for proposals to change or amend park land uses or park traffic patterns. Article III, Chapter 12, Sec. 12-96. DRMC.

4.3 Rules and Regulations; Policies. Certain DPR Actions are subject to certain public processes under rules and regulations and/or policies adopted by the Manager after following the rulemaking process in section 39-2, DRMC:

- 4.3.1 Rules and regulations relating to the regulation of public behavior in and public uses of parks, parks permitting, natural areas designations.
- 4.3.2 Policies (which have components of rules and regulations). For example: acceptance of gifts, corporate sponsorships, naming and renaming parks, recreational facility permitting, alcohol service and sales, temporary construction and access permitting, and utility location approvals.
- 4.3.3 The Manager, upon satisfaction of the rulemaking process in section 39-2, DRMC, may elect to adopt other rules and regulations and policies or to amend existing rules and regulations and policies.

4.4 **Limitations of Policy.** This Policy may not be applied in any manner which:

- 4.4.1 is in conflict or inconsistent with established requirements or restrictions of the City Charter, ordinances, Executive Order, or any other applicable law;
- 4.4.2 is inconsistent with the requirements or restrictions or duplicative of public processes established in DPR rules and regulations or policies adopted or which will be adopted by the Manager; or
- 4.4.3 violates, breaches, or puts the City into substantial noncompliance with any concession license, cooperative agreement, grant agreement, deed, covenants, conservation easement, or other contract, agreement, license or permit in effect or lawfully entered or issued.

5.0 Types of Actions and Mechanisms for Public Involvement

A major premise of the Policy is that the level of public involvement in DPR actions is related to the scale or significance of the change proposed for the DPR Park or Facility. A public involvement strategy is custom designed for each proposed action by DPR staff to ensure timely and effective public engagement to guide the action and ensure its success.

The following sections outline public processes DPR currently has adopted to ensure public involvement opportunities are maximized and shows how various public involvement methods are typically used for each type of Action. DPR continually assess new media and new technologies (such as social media networks) to increase the reach to our public. This is complementary to (not instead of) the legally required public processes as previously defined under City Charter and ordinances of the City, as well as rules and regulations and policies of DPR.

- 5.1 **Actions Triggering Regional or City-wide Public Participation:** City-wide, system wide, regional, large scale programs, plans, improvements or service delivery actions

which have the potential for significant change in service, use and/or appearance of Parks and Facilities. For example:

- 5.1.1 Major Master Plans: For example but not limited to: Playground Master Plan, Irrigation Master Plan, and Dog Park Master Plans.
- 5.1.2 Major Improvements: For example but not limited to: new construction, major expansions, major renovations, and relocations. Typical major improvements for Parks and Facilities involve recreation centers, outdoor swimming pools, visitor centers, museums, historic structures, pavilions, lodges, amphitheaters, regional trails and sidewalks, athletic field complexes, park roads, and significant changes to drainage and flood control in lakes, ponds, creeks and gulches.
- 5.1.3 Major Initiatives: For example but not limited to: recreation services redesign, introduction of substantially new uses or programs not previously occurring in Parks and Facilities.
- 5.1.4 Historic Designation: Proposal to put landmark status on, or place on the National Registry, any Park or Facility.

Communications Strategy Mechanisms for City-wide or Regional Public Participation for Actions under 5.1:

Includes outreach to City-Wide or Regional stakeholders and members of the public through multiple channels and media to maximize opportunity for notification and two-way communication. For example, at a minimum:

- City Council
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
- Citywide Public Meeting(s)
- Registered Neighborhood Organizations
- Press Releases
- Printed Materials
- New technology opportunities such as facebook, twitter, online calendars, Denvergov website home page and DPR page

5.2 **Actions Triggering Local Public Participation:** Small scale programs or lesser infrastructure improvements, plans, or service delivery Actions for Parks or Facilities of a more local character or limited impact, which have the potential for local change in service, use and/or appearance of Parks and Facilities. For example:

- 5.2.1 Local Master Plans For example but not limited to: master plans which are Park or Facility-specific, recreation center improvements plans, etc.
- 5.2.2 Amendments to Major Master Plans For example but not limited to: proposed changes that are consistent or compatible with current expectations in existing major Master Plans.
- 5.2.3 Local Improvements For example, but not limited to: structures such as restrooms, picnic facilities, trails and sidewalks, playing fields, and playgrounds.

- 5.2.4 Local Actions or Initiatives: For example but not limited to: flower beds, grass conversion in a specific park, festival or major event permits, or programmatic activities such as adding or subtracting summer camp locations.

Communications Strategy Tools for Local Public Participation for Actions under 5.2

Includes outreach to local stakeholders and members of the public through multiple channels and media to maximize opportunity for notification and two-way communication. For example, at a minimum:

- City Council – notice to individual members on site specific project or initiative
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – notice to district specific board members
- Registered Neighborhood Organizations: Notice to RNO(s) in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project or initiative site
- Citywide or localized Public Meeting(s)
- Press Release
- Printed Materials
- New technology opportunities such as facebook, twitter, online calendars, Denvergov website home page and DPR page

- 5.3 **Actions Requiring Neighborhood Public Participation**: Small scale programs or lesser infrastructure improvements, service delivery Actions for Parks or Facilities of a more neighborhood character, which have the potential for change in service, use and/or appearance of Parks and Facilities in neighborhoods or for which there has been interest expressed throughout a neighborhood.

- 5.3.1 Routine Repair, Maintenance and Upkeep: For example but not limited to: landscaping, irrigation systems, and common maintenance such as playing fields, circulation paths, planting beds, playgrounds, and restrooms.

- 5.3.2 Actions Implementing Adopted Master Plans. Any project or activity which implements a Master Plan substantially in accordance with the specifications and guidelines of the Master Plan.

- 5.3.3 Neighborhood Initiatives: For example but not limited to: routine operational decisions; internal standard operating procedures, and routine contractual agreements.

- 5.3.4 Actions Complying with Laws and Agreements. Any project or activity undertaken in conformance with and/or satisfaction of federal, state, and local laws and other legal requirements and/or agreements entered by the City.

Communications Strategy Tools for Neighborhood Public Participation for Actions under 5.3

Includes outreach to neighborhood stakeholders and members of the public through multiple channels and media to maximize opportunity for notification and two-way communication. For example, at a minimum:

- City Council – notice to individual members on site specific project or initiative
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – notice to district specific board members
- Registered Neighborhood Organizations: Notice to RNO(s) in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project or initiative site

- Article in DPR e-newsletter

This Policy on Public Notification and Civic Engagement has been duly adopted in accordance with the rule-making requirements of section 39-2 of the Denver Revised Municipal Code and is in accordance with the authority of the Manager of the Denver Department of Parks and Recreation under section 2.4.4 of the Denver City Charter and the authority delegated by the Mayor of the City and County of Denver to the Manager of Parks and Recreation.

This Policy is effective this ____ day of _____, 2009.

In accordance with section 39-2(e), D.R.M.C., copies of this Policy were filed with the Denver Clerk and Recorder and the Denver City Attorney within seven (7) days of the effective date set out above, and a notice of the adoption of this Policy was published in _____ on the ____ day of _____, 2009. The notice included a statement that a copy of the Policy is on file with the Manager of Parks and Recreation and is available for public inspection.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED:

Kevin Patterson
Manager of Parks and Recreation

APPROVED FOR LEGALITY:

David R. Fine
City Attorney for the City and County of Denver

Assistant City Attorney