

## **Public Engagement, Communication and Notification**

### **"PECAN"**

#### **Purpose of this policy**

The Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) public/community outreach policy is intended to create standards that the DPR administration can follow to ensure that public input and the dissemination of information is a top priority. The standards that make up the framework of this policy are intended to be flexible. The overall goal in creating this policy is to develop a better-informed public, encourage participation and to work collaboratively with our constituents to hear their ideas and collect their feedback.

#### **Tiers**

Because Denver Parks and Recreation is such a large entity, a one-size-fits-all approach to public communications and engagement is nearly impossible. With more than 5,000 acres of parks and open space in the City and County of Denver, 27 recreation centers and more than 14,000 acres of mountain parks, the department constantly has projects and programs in various stages of implementation and completion. These projects can range from major, multi-million dollar bond projects to minor park improvement or maintenance projects. With that in mind, a tier system is proposed in an effort to set standards for identifying and prioritizing DPR projects and programs, and the appropriate level of public engagement and communication to support them.

The tiers are described in detail below. A separate table and a glossary of terms are also attached to help explain and illustrate this approach.

#### **Tier 1: Citywide/Regional Participation/Notification**

This is the most comprehensive tier when it comes to communications, engagement and outreach. This tier would include major capital improvement or bond projects that have complex planning, design and funding requirements. Given their size and complexity, these projects require far-reaching communications and multiple opportunities for the public to provide feedback and share ideas.

Projects and issues that fall under this tier include, but aren't limited to, City-wide, regional and large-scale programs, plans, improvements or actions that have the potential for significant change in service, use and/or appearance of parks and facilities. For example:

- City wide or Regional Master Plans
  - Capital Improvements in any park above \$500,000 that have city-wide impact
  - Major facility or park expansions and renovations
- Citywide Initiatives, such as recreation program redesign; development of new departmental policies; rule changes;
- Proposed fee changes

## **Communication/outreach standards for Tier 1:**

Given the size and impact of issues and projects included in this tier, the standards for public communication, engagement and outreach should be comprehensive. Outreach efforts and planning should begin as early as possible before the project is completed or the issue is addressed.

The following is a proposed outreach standard to be followed for Tier 1:

- Stakeholder group identified with at least one meeting planned
- Presented and discussed at DPRAB meeting
- Presented and discussed at City Council LUTI committee
- At least one public meeting planned and announced with at least 30 days notice.
- Outreach to all RNOs via e-mail blast and/or phone calls
- Presentation and discussion at INC PARC and/or larger INC meeting
- Outreach to other business and community organizations as they are identified
- City Council notification for distribution to their constituents (via newsletter, etc.)
- Press releases and media outreach to all news outlets
- Materials created for awareness/marketing (distributed to many locations around the City, including all Recreation Centers)
- DPR Website – Page created for information, documentation, plans, photos, etc.
- Social Media – posts on Facebook, Twitter, online calendars, etc.
- Method for soliciting feedback from public who is not part of the stakeholder group will include surveys and public repository of email comments

*Intent of public input for Tier 1: Participate in process and provide feedback, suggestions and insight to DPR management/administration; voice concerns, objections or support; and influence final decisions*

## **Tier 2: Neighborhood/Local Participation/Notification**

This is an equally important group, but involves a more targeted and specific public outreach than in Tier 1. This includes smaller-scale programs and infrastructure improvements; smaller-scale planning and service delivery; and actions for parks or facilities of a more local focus or limited impact. These would all have the potential for local change in service (temporary or long-term), use and/or appearance of parks or facilities. For example:

- Local or neighborhood master plans – Park- or facility-specific plans, neighborhood/local recreation center improvement plans, etc.
- Local Improvements – Structures such as restrooms, picnic facilities, trails/sidewalks, playing fields and playgrounds
- Local Actions or Initiatives – Flower beds; grass conversion for a specific park; temporary park closures/detours; programmatic changes/activities such as summer camp locations, etc.



- Historic Designation – Proposed landmark status or National Registry placement for any park or facility (although this is a City-wide issue, because it is largely handled by third parties, it is placed in Level 2 because the outreach we can control/perform is limited).

### **Communication/outreach standards for Tier 2:**

Outreach efforts/planning will begin at least 30 days before project/issue completion (and often will have a longer lead time). The following is a proposed outreach standard to be followed for Level 2:

- Outreach to local RNOs in related area (**no less** than ½ mile from the park/facility) via e-mail blast and/or phone call to leadership
- Presentation to DPRAB, LUTI or INC PARC if requested by a member
- City Council notification for distribution to their constituents (via newsletter, etc.)
- Press outreach to neighborhood publications and to daily news outlets as warranted (Denver Post, TV, radio).
- DPR Website as warranted – Page created for information, documentation, plans, photos, etc.
- Social Media as warranted – posts on Facebook, Twitter, online calendars, etc.

*Intent of public input for Tier 2: Participate in process and provide feedback, suggestions and insight to DPR management/administration; voice concerns, objections and support; influence final decisions.*

### **Tier 3: Site-specific notification; no advance notification; unforeseeable issues**

From time to time, issues might come up that weren't predicted or planned and require some level of immediate attention and communication. These issues may certainly cause minor disruption in parks or facilities. Typically these issues will only last for 24-48 hours, but require some level of notification to the public in an effort to keep citizens informed and to ensure concerned parties that the situation is, indeed, only temporary.

For example:

- Emergency repairs – irrigation systems, landscaping; utilities; mechanical facility repairs (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, etc.)
- Actions complying with laws/agreements – Any project or activity undertaken in conformance with and/or satisfaction of federal, state and local laws or other legal requirements and/or agreements entered by the city (public health issues, safety issues, police/fire activity, film office permits, etc.)
- DPR administrative decisions/manager directives – field closures due to drought conditions; severe weather issues; acts of God, etc.

### **Minimum Communication/outreach for Tier 3:**

Because many of these issues and projects aren't planned and have a relatively small shelf life, this tier has a much narrower audience. Communications and outreach for this group needs to be flexible, easy and quick. The following is a proposed outreach standard to be followed for Level 3:

- Press releases (as warranted)
- Social media – posts on Facebook, Twitter, online calendars, etc.
- E-mail sent to RNOs in the affected area.
- Information sent to City Council District for possible dissemination through e-newsletters
- Signage posted in the park/facility as needed
- Outreach to Denver and neighborhood media outlets (as warranted)

It is important to note here that, despite our best efforts to communicate, there may be many instances where the information required for distribution at this level is largely dependent of a very mobile workforce proactively communicating with the marketing office through various channels. As such, the information required can be very dependent on human factors and the communications office may not receive notification in a timely manner. We hope that over time this policy helps to eliminate those instances, but it is human nature nonetheless.

*Intent of public input for tier 3: at this level, communication is intended to be informational only and any public input will be accepted as comment/feedback and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*

### **No Public Outreach Planned/Required**

It is necessary to establish a standard for issues/events that don't automatically require any public outreach that is planned or unplanned. This is necessary to keep the department functioning as efficiently as possible. The Department's overall policy is to communicate and to do it often and openly, but there may be times where that is not fiscally possible or the act of doing so would be ineffective. Examples include:

Minor park maintenance/construction items  
Minor Park/Rec center improvements or renovations  
Day-to-day operational decisions  
Permit distribution  
Volunteer programs  
General wildlife management/hazing (this does not include prairie dog management)



### **Communication Tools/Vehicles**

The Department has a number of communication tools and vehicles available that can be used to help achieve and supplement our outreach efforts for all levels. The following tools/vehicles available include, but aren't limited to:

Traditional press releases	White Papers	Social Media
Internet/Web	Newsletters	Email Distribution Groups
Public Meetings	PRAB	INC/PARC
RNO Partnerships	Public Notices	Press Conference
Letters	Printed Materials	Door-to-Door
Community engagement	City Council	Media Interviews
Word-of-mouth	Paid Advertising	Stakeholder Meetings
Focus Groups	Surveys	Street Team Marketing
Email correspondence	City Partnerships	Festivals/Events
Denver 311	Council District Newsletters	Attend community meetings

### **Issues and Projects That Have Significant Public Interest**

It is likely that, from time to time, projects and issues that seem relatively small in scale and therefore fit into tiers two or three (or none at all) will have a much greater level of public interest. As such, even though a lesser amount of outreach is called for under this policy, the DPR communications staff and department management have the ability responsibility to elevate the issue or project to a higher and more appropriate level of public engagement and communication.

All tiers included in this policy are designed to be standards for how the department will handle public information and engagement. At any time, the department management can choose to go above the listed standards, but should never go below it.

### **Glossary of Terms (To be completed before final)**

Regional Park  
Master Plan  
Capital Improvement Project  
Recreation Center  
Recreation Program  
DPRAB  
Stakeholder Group  
LUTI Committee  
RNO  
INC  
INC PARC  
DPR  
Social Media

	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>	<b>No Required Notice</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Building regional recreation center</li> <li>* Expansion/renovation of regional parks and facilities</li> <li>* Capital improvement projects \$500K+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Local renovation projects</li> <li>* Construction of new structures &amp; facilities</li> <li>* Park-specific capital improvement projects under \$500K</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Citywide/regional master plans</li> <li>* Capital improvement projects \$500K+</li> <li>* New regional parks</li> <li>* Planned changes to regional parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Local/neighborhood master plans</li> <li>* Local facility changes and upgrades</li> <li>* Planned park features</li> <li>* Local/neighborhood fundraising initiatives to benefit DPR programs and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Temporary planning initiatives</li> <li>* Research projects and surveys</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Large-scale turf repair or replacement</li> <li>* Capital improvement projects \$500K+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Non-emergency maintenance projects that will have medium-to-long-term impact</li> <li>* Park-specific capital improvement projects under \$500K</li> <li>* Temporary park closures/detours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Emergency repairs to park or recreation center facilities and systems</li> <li>* Emergency road closures</li> </ul>	* Minor park & recreation center maintenance
<b>Policy Initiatives and Legal compliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* DPR new policy proposals</li> <li>* Existing policy changes</li> <li>* Proposed fee changes</li> <li>* System-wide rule changes</li> </ul>	* Park-specific policy or rule changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Filming permits</li> <li>* Any actions that are necessary to comply with laws or directives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Permit distribution</li> <li>* Rule or policy enforcement</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Natural-area de-designation;</li> <li>* Proposals to change park designation status</li> <li>* Land transactions</li> <li>* Proposed new major festivals/gatherings(?)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Proposed landmark status</li> <li>* Recreation programming changes</li> <li>* Permanent athletic field changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Emergency closures due to severe weather or other safety/security issues</li> <li>* Temporary closures at the direction of the manager</li> <li>* Volunteer initiatives</li> </ul>	* Day-to-day operational decisions