

# **PORT HOUSTON**<sup>SM</sup>

THE INTERNATIONAL PORT OF TEXAS

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## **Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy**

July 2019

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# Community and Stakeholder Engagement Overview

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Every day, the Port of Houston Authority (“Port Houston”) engages with people who have a vested interest in what we do and who are, in some way, connected to our mission. The quality of these relationships with our stakeholders will determine how well we deliver on our vision of becoming America’s Distribution Hub for the Next Generation. Port Houston is committed to building partnerships with its surrounding communities and a range of stakeholders, and seeking greater community and stakeholder involvement in the activities and decision-making processes of Port Houston.

## Port Houston’s Mission

*To move the world and  
drive regional prosperity*

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy (“Engagement Policy”) is designed to form the foundation for the way in which Port Houston’s community and stakeholder engagement is undertaken.

## Background

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**2015 Strategic Plan:** In April 2015, the Port Commission adopted a Strategic Plan, setting forth Port Houston’s mission, vision, and strategic goals and objectives. This Engagement Policy is intended to align with the following components of that Strategic Plan:

- **Mission:** To move the world and drive regional prosperity
- **Vision:** America’s distribution hub for the next generation
- **Stewardship Goal and Objectives:** Sustain the business for the long-term; cultivate productive relationships with all stakeholders; be an environmental leader
- **Infrastructure Goal:** Leverage key partnerships to influence regional infrastructure investment.

**Legislative Requirements:** Section 5007.216 of the Texas Special District Laws Code provides that the Port Commission “shall develop and implement a policy that provides a structure for public involvement.” The policy must include:

- 1) a clear and detailed description of how Port Houston will seek to actively engage stakeholders;
- 2) specific actions Port Houston will take to meet or exceed the requirements of laws related to open meetings; and
- 3) strategies that include use of Port Houston’s website to make available clear, updated information on issues of public concern.

**2015 Community Engagement Plan:** In October of 2015, the Port Commission adopted a Community Engagement Plan. In the spirit of continuous improvement, this Engagement Policy is intended to replace the 2015 Community Engagement Plan, and offer further detail and a more comprehensive, organizational process to engage with stakeholders.

# Engagement Objectives

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**Engagement Process Objectives:** When developing and delivering engagement communications and activities, Port Houston shall strive to:

- 1) Ensure that engagement communications and activities are planned with a clear understanding of what Port Houston wants to achieve
- 2) Provide a unified organizational approach to stakeholder engagement
- 3) Deliver or create easily accessible avenues for consistent information and timely messaging to stakeholders
- 4) Prioritize funding needs and carefully leverage resources for greatest impact
- 5) Assess and update engagement strategy based on experience and the changing wants and needs of stakeholders

**Engagement Outcome Objectives:** Effective stakeholder engagement should accomplish the following:

- 1) Productive relationships with stakeholders
- 2) Greater understanding of and ability to meet stakeholder needs and wants
- 3) Improved public involvement with Port Houston and Port Houston involvement with its stakeholders and surrounding communities
- 4) Increased awareness and understanding of Port Houston and its objectives
- 5) Improved dialogue between Port Houston and its stakeholders
- 6) Improved transparency of Port Houston plans and operations
- 7) Improved ability of communities and stakeholders to set expectations regarding Port Houston's operations and activities
- 8) Increased trust between Port Houston and its stakeholders
- 9) Identification of new engagement opportunities
- 10) Improved public perception of Port Houston

# Community and Stakeholder Groups

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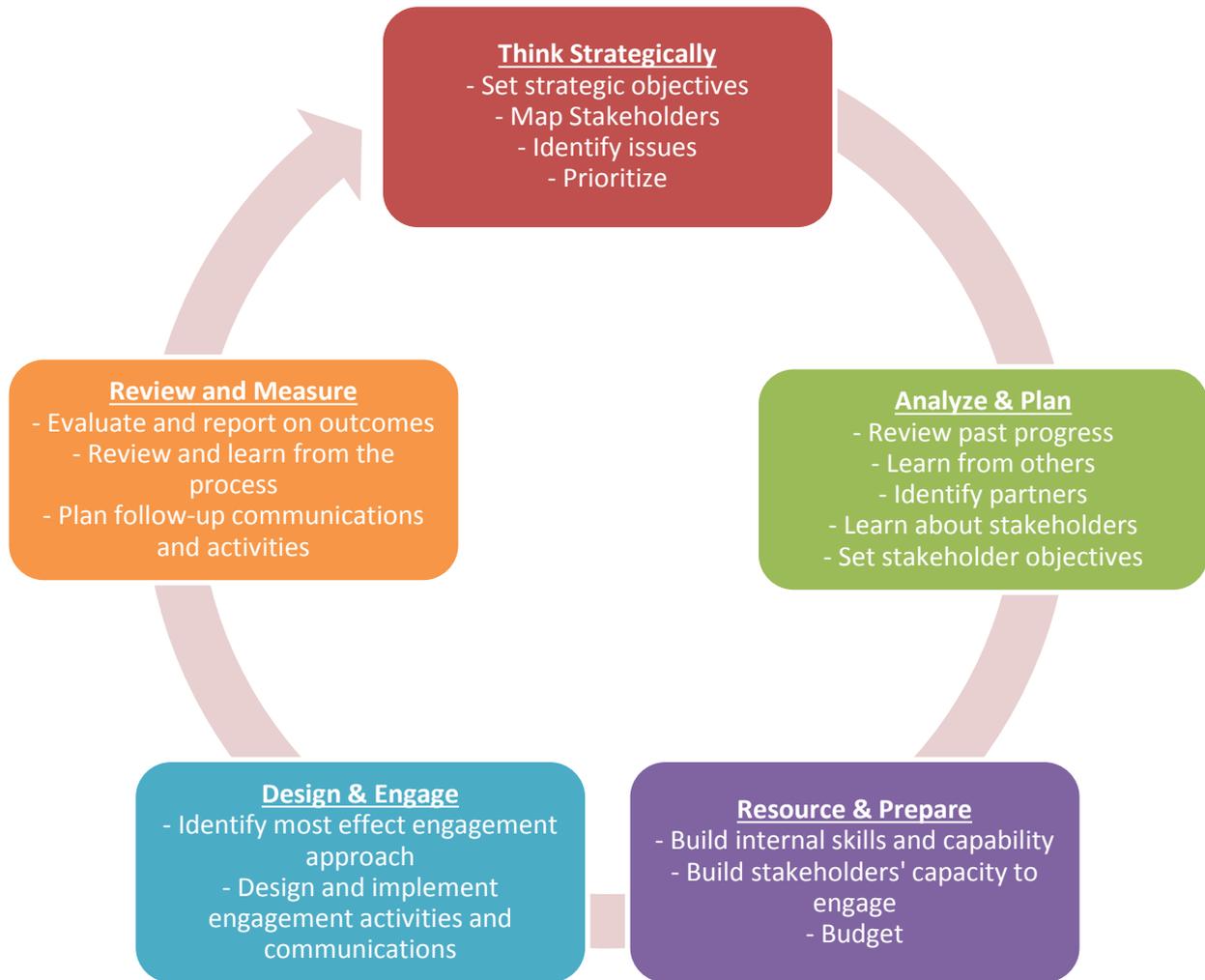
Stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations that have the potential to impact or be impacted by Port Houston operations and activities. Port Houston's stakeholders\* include, but are not limited to:

- Users of the Houston Ship Channel and other waterways within Port Houston's jurisdiction
- Neighbors of Port Houston's facilities and the waterways within Port Houston's jurisdiction
- Community leaders and members
- Taxpayers of Harris County
- Government representatives
- Regulators
- Local and other businesses
- Labor organizations
- Not-for-profits, including humanitarian organizations
- Chambers of commerce
- Educational institutions and students
- Pilots
- Media

\*Port Houston recognizes that its customers, trade partners, vendors, employees, and Commissioners are stakeholders and that some of the concepts set forth in this Engagement Policy could apply to those groups. However, this document is not intended to govern Port Houston's engagement with those groups.

# Process for Engagement

Working with stakeholders isn't a one-off activity. It is an ongoing, dynamic process. Port Houston's model for stakeholder engagement is a five-step which guides the planning, preparation, action, and evaluation of Port Houston's engagement activities.



<p style="text-align: center;">Step 1 – <b>Think</b> <u>Strategically:</u> Identify material issues and stakeholders</p>	<p>In this step, Port Houston takes into consideration its organizational objectives, underlying issues relating to those objectives (including the potential impact of Port Houston activities on stakeholders), and how those objectives and issues relate to stakeholders. Port Houston then develops strategies for prioritizing stakeholders and issues for further analysis.</p> <p>Some specific tasks in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying stakeholders who could impact the ability of Port Houston to achieve the objectives set forth in its strategic plan or be impacted by Port Houston’s activities</li> <li>• Mapping stakeholders and organizing them into categories</li> <li>• Identifying and considering strategic engagement risks, challenges, opportunities, and potential objectives</li> <li>• Setting high-level engagement goals and objectives</li> <li>• Prioritizing stakeholders and issues based on the above considerations</li> <li>• Creating, reviewing, and revising this Engagement Policy</li> </ul>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Step 2 – <b>Analyze &amp; Plan:</b> Develop an understanding of issues and stakeholders, in order to best address them</p>	<p>The aim of this step is to increase Port Houston’s understanding of the key issues and stakeholders identified in Step 1 so that they can be properly addressed.</p> <p>Some specific tasks in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing how the key issues and stakeholders identified in Step 1 are currently being addressed and managed by Port Houston</li> <li>• Learning from other organizations and networks about how best to respond to key stakeholders and issues</li> <li>• Reviewing the current state of Port Houston’s relationships with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Building up a profile of key stakeholders - their expectations, influence, characteristics, and preferred approaches to engagement</li> <li>• Considering what Port Houston is and is not able to do in relation to these issues and expectations</li> <li>• Developing a detailed strategic engagement plan which lays out the groups of stakeholders with which to engage, the types of engagement activities in which to engage, and what Port Houston hopes to achieve</li> </ul>
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<p>Step 3 – <b>Resource &amp; Prepare:</b> Ensure Port Houston has the capacity to understand issues and effectively engage with stakeholders</p>	<p>In this step, Port Houston develops the skills, systems, and resources needed to effectively engage with stakeholders.</p> <p>Some specific tasks in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering the individual skills and capacities and organizational systems needed for engagement and identify areas for improvement</li> <li>• Developing and carrying out plans to strengthen Port Houston’s and stakeholders’ capacities to engage with one another</li> <li>• Developing a budget for meeting overall engagement needs</li> </ul>
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<p>Step 4 – <b>Design &amp; Engage:</b> Plan and effectively carry out engagement activities</p>	<p>In this step, Port Houston plans and carries out engagement activities with its stakeholders.</p> <p>Some specific tasks in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deciding the best ways to engage with stakeholders</li> <li>• Assessing potential engagement risks and barriers to effective engagement with stakeholders</li> <li>• Designing engagement activities, investments, and communications that suit the needs of a specific situation and help achieve Port Houston objectives</li> <li>• Carrying out or delivering engagement activities, investments, and communications</li> </ul>
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<p>Step 5 – <b>Review &amp; Measure:</b> Review and learn from the results of the engagement process</p>	<p>The aim of this step is to understand the outcomes of engagement and to translate that new learning and insight into additional action.</p> <p>Some specific tasks in this step include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the outcomes of engagement</li> <li>• Reporting internally (including to the Port Commission) and externally to stakeholders regarding stakeholder input and engagement outcomes</li> <li>• Developing plans of action based on stakeholder input and engagement outcomes</li> <li>• Reviewing the engagement <i>process</i> to improve future activities</li> </ul>
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# Levels and Methods of Engagement

All engagement methods have their benefits and limitations. Port Houston will evaluate and select methods of engagement that best fit the particular stakeholder and issue. The following table provides an overview of the various levels and types of engagement Port Houston could consider when deciding how to engage with a particular stakeholder:

Level	Goal	Communication	Nature of Relationship	Method(s) of Engagement
Monitor	Monitor stakeholders' views.	One-way: Stakeholder to Port Houston.	No relationship	Media and internet tracking. Second-hand reports from other parties, possibly via targeted interviews.
Inform	Inform or educate stakeholders.	One-way: Port Houston to stakeholders.	Short- or long-term relationship with stakeholders.  <i>For example, "Port Houston will keep you informed."</i>	Website and social media postings. Bulletins, letters, brochures, magazines, and reports. Speeches, conferences, and public presentations. Open houses and facility tours. Road shows and public displays. Press releases, press conferences, advertising, and lobbying.
Transact	Work together in a contractual relationship.	Limited two-way: setting and monitoring performance according to terms of a contract.	Relationship terms set by contractual agreement.  <i>For example, "Port Houston will do what we said we would" or "Port Houston will provide the resources to enable you to do what we agree."</i>	Public-private partnerships, inter-governmental agreements, and service agreements.
Consult	Gain information and feedback from stakeholders to inform decisions made internally.	Limited two-way: Port Houston asks questions and the stakeholders answer.	Short- or long-term involvement.  <i>For example, "Port Houston will keep you informed, listen to your concerns, consider your insights, and provide feedback on our decision."</i>	Surveys. Focus Groups. One-to-one meetings. Public meetings and workshops. Standing stakeholder advisory forums or meetings. On-line feedback and discussion. Community information and complaint phone line.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Nature of Relationship</b>	<b>Method(s) of Engagement</b>
<b>Involve</b>	Work directly with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are fully understood and considered in making decisions.	Two-way, or multi-way between Port Houston and stakeholders. Learning takes place on both sides. Stakeholders and Port Houston act individually.	May be one-off or longer-term engagement.  For example, <i>"Port Houston will work with you to ensure that your concerns are understood, to develop alternative proposals and to provide feedback about how stakeholders views influenced the decision-making process."</i>	Interviews. Town hall meetings. Multi-stakeholder forums. Advisory panels and committees. Consensus-building processes. Participatory decision-making processes. Workshops.
<b>Invest</b>	Equip stakeholders to achieve certain outcomes.	Two-way, or multi-way between Port Houston and stakeholders. Port Houston learns what is needed to help stakeholders achieve stakeholders' objectives or stakeholders play a formal role in Port Houston decisions.	May be one-off or longer-term engagement.  For example, <i>"Port Houston will provide you with resources to assist you in achieving your objectives"</i> or <i>"Port Houston will implement what you decide."</i>	Sponsorships, services agreements, or other investments in stakeholder initiatives. Integration of stakeholders into Port Houston's governance structure.
<b>Collaborate</b>	Partner with or convene a network of stakeholders to develop mutually agreed solutions and joint plan of action.	Two-way, or multi-way between Port Houston and stakeholders. Learning, negotiation, and decision-making on both sides. Stakeholders work together to act.	May be one-off or longer-term engagement.  For example, <i>"Port Houston will look to you for direct advice and participation in solving shared challenges."</i>	Joint projects, two-party or multi-stakeholder initiatives and partnerships.

# Guidelines for Port Houston Support of Stakeholders

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Port Houston's support of its stakeholders, whether financial or in-kind, should be carefully evaluated against Port Houston's other needs and available resources, and only appropriate, mission-driven items, should be funded, consistent with prudent financial management and in accordance with applicable law, including Subchapter H of Chapter 60 of the Texas Water Code. Examples of existing stakeholder support include:

- **Support of initiatives**, such as by providing volunteer time and other in-kind donations for programs, projects, and engagement opportunities that align with Port Houston's strategic objectives.
- **Sponsorships** may be provided for activities, events, or other matters that align with Port Houston's strategic objectives.
- **Service agreements** may be provided to specialized organizations that provide a unique benefit to the Port of Houston and Port Houston and align with Port Houston's strategic objectives.

In making decisions regarding stakeholder support, priority should be given to 1) those stakeholders who are or have the potential to be most impacted by Port Houston and 2) those that have or could have the greatest impact on Port Houston's strategic objectives.

## Budgeting and Reporting

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As part of the process for engagement, Port Houston staff will recommend stakeholder engagement budget annually, during the Port Houston budget cycle, and will propose in the annual budget the organizations and programs that will be funded for that budget year. These stakeholder engagement budget items will be recommended to the Port Commission for consideration and approval at the budget workshop or other public meeting of the Port Commission.

In furtherance of Port Commission review, certain requests will be again reviewed and re-evaluated by the Executive Director. Requests that come to the attention of the Port Houston that were not included in the budget have been delegated by the Port Commission to the Executive Director for review and potential approval. The Executive Director should evaluate each such request to assure that it is aligned with Port Houston's strategic goals, supports Port Houston's mission, and properly leverages resources.

Staff will develop and annually review a plan for tracking and internally and externally reporting on engagement outcomes. The plan may include:

- Reporting requirements regarding stakeholder groups engaged by Port Houston, how those groups were selected, the specific engagement activities conducted, and any concerns, successes, or opportunities identified through the engagement activities
- The establishment of performance measures relating to engagement
- The use of market assessments and attitude surveys
- Other methods deemed by the Port Commission or staff as appropriate to track and report on the effectiveness of engagement activities and outreach

# Compliance with Texas Open Meetings Act

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In accordance with Section 5007.216 of the Texas Special District Laws Code, Port Houston will take the following specific actions to meet or exceed the requirements of laws related to open meetings:

- 1) The Chief Legal Officer of Port Houston shall ensure all Port Commissioners have completed the open meetings training described in Section 551.005 of the Texas Government Code within the timeframe set forth in that Section;
- 2) Port Houston shall prepare and maintain minutes and recordings of each open meeting of the Port Commission and Commission committee and task force in accordance with Subchapter B of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code and Chapter 203 of the Texas Local Government Code;
- 3) Port Houston shall post the meeting notices for all Port Commission meetings and all Port Commission committee and task force meetings both on Port Houston's website and at the bulletin board located outside of the public gate to the Turning Basin Terminal, 111 East Loop North, Houston, TX 77029
  - a. Unless one of the exceptions set forth in Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code relating to the timing of the notice applies, all such notices shall be posted at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting;
  - b. All such notices shall state the date, hour, place, and subject of each meeting.
- 4) Port Commission and Commission committee and task force meetings shall be open to the public, unless otherwise determined by the Port Commission, in accordance with law. Closed executive sessions may be convened as authorized by Subchapter D of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.
  - a. Port Houston shall only conduct a closed meeting if a quorum of the meeting body first convenes in an open meeting for which notice has been given as provided by this chapter and during which the presiding officer publicly announces that a closed meeting will be held and identifies the section or sections of the Texas Government Code under which the closed meeting is held.
  - b. A final action, decision, or vote on a matter deliberated in a closed meeting may only be made in an open meeting that is held in compliance with the notice provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.
  - c. Port Houston shall either keep a certified agenda or make a recording of the proceedings of each closed meeting, except for a private consultation permitted under Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code and the presiding officer of the meeting shall certify that such an agenda kept is a true and correct record of the proceedings.
  - d. The certified agenda shall include (1) a statement of the subject matter of each deliberation; (2) a record of any further action taken; and (3) an announcement by the

presiding officer at the beginning and the end of the meeting indicating the date and time.

- e. A recording of a closed meeting must include announcements by the presiding officer at the beginning and the end of the meeting indicating the date and time.
- f. Port Houston shall preserve the certified agenda or recording of a closed meeting Subchapter E of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

## Use of Port Houston Website

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In accordance with Section 5007.216 of the Texas Special District Laws Code, Port Houston will use its website to make available clear, updated information on issues of public concern, including, but not limited to, providing:

- 1) Press releases and blog entries regarding recent Port Houston activities and issues impacting Port Houston;
- 2) Links to current and past editions of Port Houston's trade magazine;
- 3) Links to Port Houston's social media accounts;
- 4) The upcoming schedule for regular Port Commission meetings and the agendas, minutes, and audio recordings of recent regular and special Port Commission meetings;
- 5) The agendas of recent Port Commission committee and task force meetings;
- 6) Information regarding Port Houston's financial performance, budgets, check registers, investments, audit reports, promotion and development funds, cargo and tonnage statistics, debt, pension and benefits plans,
- 7) Copies of (i) reports tracking of all expenditures from the promotion and development fund, (ii) Port Houston's most recently adopted budget and any plan adopted by the Port Commission at an open meeting, including the long-range plan, mid-range plan, one-year capital plan, and updates to that budget or those plans, and (iii) Port Houston's risk-based annual audit plan;
- 8) Policies that document its governance practices, its code of ethics, and other policies and procedures;
- 9) Instructions and links for submitting public information requests, sponsorship requests, special tour requests, and questions, comments, suggestions or complaints;
- 10) Information on how to participate in a public tour along the Houston Ship Channel,
- 11) Contact information for its Commissioners, executive leaders, and security, police, fire, community outreach departments; and
- 12) Information regarding its community outreach, maritime education, small business, environmental, terminal operations, trade, marketing, real estate, procurement, and channel development programs.

## References

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United Nations Environment Programme, *The Stakeholder Engagement Manual: The Practitioner's Handbook on Stakeholder Engagement (Vol. 2)*, prepared by AccountAbility, the United Nations Environment Programme, and Stakeholder Research Associates, October 2005

Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code

Chapter 203 of the Texas Local Government Code

Chapter 5007 of the Texas Special District Laws Code

Chapter 60 of the Texas Water Code

## Adoption

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This Policy was adopted by the Port Commission on July 29, 2019, as evidenced by Minute No. 2019-0729-09.

Policy Owner: Chief People Officer  
Policy Version: 2.0