

Informational Advisory Committee - Role Description

The City of Petaluma is using a new democratic tool - a Lottery-Selected Panel, facilitated by non-profit Healthy Democracy - to help plan the future of the Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds. The Informational Advisory Committee (IAC) helps ensure that the Panel has access to the information it needs to make a well-informed recommendation on this important topic.

Background

On February 28th, the Petaluma City Council approved the use of a lottery-selected deliberative panel to consider the future of the Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds property. This model is being used around the world to empower everyday people to make recommendations about complex policy topics. These panels differ from traditional advisory boards in that they engage new voices - those who aren't usually involved in public decision making - and they give Panelists significant time to learn about the topic before forming recommendations. The Informational Advisory Committee is made up of stakeholders who will support the Panel in that information gathering effort.

For more information about the process, review the Feb. 28th City Council meeting [here](#), the full process proposal [here](#), or Healthy Democracy's introductory slideshow [here](#).

Role Overview

The IAC's primary role is to curate quality, balanced information for the Panel. The IAC will meet weekly during April and May to conduct the following activities:

1. Select introductory information about the topic.
2. Select initial presenters to provide context to the Panel.
3. Compile a list of potential additional presenters to be included on the "Presenter Menu", from which the Panel may choose to invite speakers.
4. Provide oversight and process feedback for the project's information-gathering phase, including directing Healthy Democracy process designers to make high-level changes ahead of the Panel's first meeting.

IAC members commit to:

- Attending one onboarding session with Healthy Democracy staff during the week of March 28th or April 4th
- Attending all meetings of the IAC, including 90-minute weekly meetings during April and May and one additional meeting in late-July (exact schedule TBD by members and HD staff)
- Responding to scheduling emails in a timely manner
- Engaging in a respectful deliberative process with other stakeholder organizations
- Recommending information about the Sonoma-Marín Fairgrounds property and surrounding policy context
- Representing the interests and views of organizations within your stakeholder category - not just your organization. *Note: this will require you to communicate with others in your community between formal IAC meetings.*

- Debriefing the Panel process and meeting with Panel Subcommittees (if requested)

IAC Details

Authority: As a group of balanced stakeholder interests representing a variety of perspectives on the policy topic, this Committee is tasked with selecting and recommending presenters that inform the Panel's deliberative process. Its authority is limited to the responsibilities outlined in this document. It has no authority over the Panel's process after the information gathering phase, nor any ability to change the Panel's policy recommendations.

Membership: The IAC will consist of diverse stakeholder representatives, potentially including anyone with an interest in the future of the site.

Selection: Due to widespread stakeholder involvement in the Fairgrounds, Healthy Democracy will select IAC members by lottery *from a pool of nominees* that was generated by City staff and approved by City Council. The full list of nominated organizations can be found [here](#). This selection method will ensure that members are knowledgeable enough to fulfill their service to the Panel, while avoiding excessive political biases associated with hand-selecting individual members. In this model, members will be asked to represent the entire stakeholder category from which they are selected – for example, a member of 4H would be responsible for taking a wide range of agricultural interests into account in their committee service. *If stakeholder groups disagree with the category under which they have been nominated, they may request to change categories.*

The nomination and selection process follows these steps:

1. Informed by conversations with the City Council subcommittee, Fair Board subcommittee, and stakeholders, City staff proposed draft stakeholder categories and nominated organizations under each category.
2. City Council reviewed these proposed categories on Feb. 28th and suggested several changes to the categories and nominated organizations. Final stakeholder categories were approved by Council.
3. HD contacts nominated organizations in mid-March to solicit individual representatives from each (and that individual's demographic information, as necessary for the selection process).
4. HD holds a lottery selection in late-March to choose an individual within each category, stratifying for demographic representation to the extent possible on two factors: gender and race/ethnicity.

Meetings and Scheduling: Meetings will be scheduled no less than two weeks in advance, in consultation with Committee members and HD staff. Meetings will last for 90-minutes every week throughout the months of April and May. Members may choose one alternate to attend meetings in their place if an absence is unavoidable.

Decision Making: Most key decisions require super-majority support from the Committee, following the decision-making philosophy of the Panel itself: "aim for consensus, but don't force it." Elements where each representative on the Committee may submit information – e.g., the Presenter Menu – would not have the same requirement, in order to allow a wide diversity of views to reach the Panel.

Conduct: While the Committee meets for fewer hours than the Panel itself and cannot be expected to develop the same degree of deliberative quality, Committee members are asked to work respectfully across their differences and adhere to their group agreements (to be approved during Meeting 1).

Representation: In addition to being representative of diverse stakeholder interests, HD will attempt to select a committee that is demographically representative on race/ethnicity and gender, to the extent possible given the pool of nominees. While the selection process for this Committee cannot guarantee the same degree of representativeness as the Panel itself, demographic diversity is a key consideration to ensure balanced perspectives on the policy topic. The Committee should publish its demographic composition according to the same factors reported by Panelists.

Honoraria: Organizations with limited funding available to participate as IAC members may request to receive a stipend for their participation on the committee (\$20/hour, commensurate with Panelist compensation). HD will make every attempt to provide honoraria to organizations that need financial assistance.

Dispute Resolution: In the rare case that the Panel's own process committee escalates a process dispute, IAC members may be called upon to hear the dispute and recommend a resolution. In such a case, only two members of the IAC would fulfill this role. The exact dispute resolution protocol is outlined in the public proposal, which can be found [here](#).

IAC Roles & Responsibilities:

The following table represents the responsibilities of the IAC as compared with the lottery-selected Panel itself.

	Informational Advisory Committee	The Panel
Areas of Final Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve all informational inputs to the Panel, including the welcome packet, presenters, and options on the 'Presenter Menu'. • High-level process decisions related to the information gathering phase of the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All writing and editing of reports. • High-level process decisions following the information gathering phase.
Pathways to Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel's Policy Impact Committee works with City staff and decision makers to promote their Final Report and process.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve high-level process outline for the information gathering phase – or work with staff to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in good faith in information gathering and deliberation. • Uphold group discussion

	<p>amend the process to reach approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select an initial group of background presenters to speak to the Panel. • Select additional presenters for the Presenter Menu. 	<p>agreements in all small and large group work.</p>
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to scheduling emails and attend all meetings of the IAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate all necessary personal travel and arrangements with external parties (including work, school, and family) to ensure full participation in the Panel process. • Arrive on time and ready to engage in all Panel work time.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate needs for accommodations (interpretation services, child/elder care, transportation, etc.) to program staff.
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve on one of four task-specific committees throughout the process [see section 3f].
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel's Public Outreach Committee works with communications staff to promote the Panel's work and share their experiences with the broader community.
Oversight & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and approve any high-level changes to the information-gathering phase of the process. • Debrief Panel process and meet with Panel Subcommittees, if requested by either party. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel's Process Committee approves of high-level process outline for the deliberation phase – or work with staff to amend the process to reach approval. Monitor and approve any high-level changes to this portion of the process, as it moves forward.