

**Fermilab Community Task Force on Public Participation
DRAFT Recommendations**

[Insert Date]

In March 2004, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) convened the Fermilab Community Task Force on Public Participation. The task force was made up of more than 20 individuals, representing diverse local community interests. These individuals met monthly to learn about the laboratory and its management, identify issues of concern to the community, and seek consensus on recommendations regarding public participation in Fermilab decisions. Summaries of each meeting and additional information can be found at the task force web site, www.fermilabcommunity.org.

Fermilab committed to use the task force's recommendations to develop a comprehensive policy for public participation, incorporating community desires and concerns to the maximum extent possible. Fermilab charged the task force to provide advice regarding how the laboratory and the community could interact on issues that affect them both.

The members of the Fermilab Community Task Force for Public Participation reached consensus on the recommendations contained in this document. The recommendations include a vision and principles for public participation, which would form a philosophical foundation for the laboratory's approach to local stakeholders. The task force has also recommended policies and procedures that would help Fermilab support its vision and principles. Where the task force believed it was necessary, certain recommendations are elucidated through endnotes. In addition, an appendix provides examples of the types of activities and their potential effects that are of concern to the local community and might warrant public participation.

Recommended Vision for Public Participation¹

Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) is a leader in the global scientific community. High-energy physics research conducted at Fermilab reveals the fundamental particles and forces that make up the universe. The laboratory, however, represents more than science to its stakeholders; it is a critical component of the local community.

When Fermilab was created in 1967, its founding director Robert Wilson emphasized the importance of aesthetics and the total environment of the laboratory. As the surrounding communities developed and became densely populated, the 6000-acre Fermilab property became a unique open space and cultural resource in the region. The cultivation of crops on portions of the property is among the few agricultural activities remaining in the surrounding communities. The lab's stewardship of extensive native prairie and wetlands has created critical habitat for wildlife, and this greenspace attracts ecological researchers as well as recreational walkers and cyclists. Because Fermilab also attracts top scientists, technicians, and students from more than 30 nations, it is a hub of intellectual activity and contributes to the quality of life in the region. The laboratory hosts cultural events and educational programs for thousands of community members and local school children each year. Moreover, as a major employer and

purchaser of goods and services in the region, Fermilab influences the economies and character of surrounding communities.

Because Fermilab has such a broad scope of activity and influence, numerous individuals and groups have a stake in decisions made at and concerning the laboratory. Fermilab's stakeholders include its employees and the scientists who use its facilities, the global scientific community, the U.S. Department of Energy, the taxpayers of the United States and the State of Illinois, and the individual community members who live and work near Fermilab and its off-site projects. These groups and individuals have diverse priorities, values, and outlooks.

Fermilab's continued success as an institution is highly dependent on the laboratory's ability to integrate these values, priorities, and outlooks into its operations and decision making. Various laws, contract provisions, policies, and practices provide many stakeholders with opportunities to influence decisions about Fermilab and its programs:

- As a national laboratory, Fermilab is accountable to U.S. taxpayers. Taxpayers are represented in budgeting, long-range planning, and laboratory policies by the U.S. Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Energy's Office of Science.
- Elected officials and agency staff represent the State of Illinois, as well as the counties and municipalities surrounding Fermilab's facilities. In addition to legal and regulatory mechanisms that influence operations at Fermilab, the laboratory actively provides these interests with information and gathers their input.
- Fermilab's decisions and programs have profound and immediate impact on the lives of its 2100 employees and their families. Ongoing communications with managers, human resource services, labor unions, and other internal structures and policies provide these employees with opportunities to provide input on decisions.
- Fermilab is a leading member of the national and global scientific community. International initiatives, the Physics Advisory Committee, the Users Executive Committee, the High Energy Physics Advisory Panel, and other scientific working groups provide a voice to scientists and other technical experts in decisions regarding current and future programs of the laboratory.

The informed support of local community members is also integral to the long-term success of Fermilab. Moreover, it is an inherent right of these individuals to have a meaningful voice in the decisions that directly affect their lives. These local stakeholders include homeowners, families, businesspersons, and other individuals who live and work near Fermilab and its projects. Public participation is the means through which these local stakeholders' values, priorities, and outlooks can influence planning and decision making for the programs and operations of Fermilab.

Fermilab's vision for public participation is the integration of a variety of proactive mechanisms and procedures into its planning and decision-making processes, which meaningfully and honestly engage local community members in identifying issues, sharing information,

understanding the needs of other interests, evaluating options, and reaching conclusions. Fermilab realizes this vision through its adherence to its Principles for Public Participation and advocates for these principles in its collaborations with other organizations and entities.

Recommended Principles for Public Participation

These principles provide criteria by which the success of public participation will be judged at Fermilab:

1. Fermilab uses public participation to build and maintain open and honest relationships with local stakeholder communities.
2. Because diverse voices and viewpoints are valued, all views are welcomed, documented, and publicly disseminated.
3. Stakeholders help define the scope of issues and decisions that require public participation.
4. Stakeholders have access to up-to-date, understandable, and user-friendly information about activities and decisions of concern to the community.
5. Input from stakeholders is actively and continually sought during planning and decision-making processes.
6. All interested stakeholders have opportunities to provide input on all activities and decisions that are of concern to local communities.
7. Stakeholders provide input early in the planning process, when there is an opportunity to influence fundamental aspects of a project or program.
8. Stakeholders help determine program- and project-specific public participation processes and strategies.
9. Public participation seeks consensus that minimizes negative effects and maximizes value to all stakeholder communities.
10. Stakeholders receive timely feedback regarding the results of a decision process and the role their input played in the outcome.

Suggested Policies and Procedures

1. Creating a Culture of Public Participation

- 1.1. Seek support and formal concurrence for the Fermilab public participation policy from the U.S. Department of Energy and the laboratory's management contractor (i.e., University Research Associates).
- 1.2. Develop an institution-wide program to implement the Fermilab public participation policy.²

- 1.3. Develop and disseminate a public participation guide for Fermilab personnel and users, which clearly explains public participation procedures.³
- 1.4. Develop a comprehensive communications plan, which includes goals and objectives for outreach, education, and public participation.
- 1.5. Communicate laboratory management's support for public participation to all laboratory employees and users.
- 1.6. Include funding for public participation activities and resources in the budgets of each program area or project.
- 1.7. Integrate the Principles for Public Participation into each program area's planning processes.
- 1.8. Include public participation in routine project reviews.
- 1.9. Incorporate criteria on public participation in the annual performance reviews for all relevant managers.
- 1.10. Advocate for adherence to the Principles for Public Participation when involved in projects sponsored or led by other organizations and entities.⁴

2. Define Public Participation Roles

- 2.1. Designate an individual or individuals trained and/or experienced in public participation techniques and strategies to serve as a public participation resource to the laboratory.
- 2.2. Designate a point of contact to serve as the liaison between the laboratory and the public and to help the laboratory understand public perspectives on issues.⁵
- 2.3. Clearly define public participation roles for each project or program, including a "real contact person" that will respond to public questions and comments, and who will fill those roles.
- 2.4. Establish a mechanism (e.g., a standing task force of Fermilab's leadership, local community stakeholders, and an expert in public communications) to review the effectiveness of Fermilab's public participation efforts during the initial implementation of a public participation policy.⁶

3. The Participation Process

- 3.1. Evaluate each project or activity to determine if it warrants public participation.⁷
- 3.2. Provide opportunities for the public to define issues on which public participation is needed.⁸
- 3.3. Include a section on public participation in all project proposals and design studies and develop criteria for the internal review of this information.
- 3.4. Obtain approval (i.e., "sign-off") for each project's plans for public participation from a designated member of the Fermilab staff and/or a designated member of the local community.
- 3.5. Involve stakeholders in the conceptual stages of a project in order to identify potential concerns of the public, identify relevant stakeholders, and determine appropriate participation strategies.
- 3.6. Create opportunities for stakeholders to provide input throughout the planning process, including early in a project when there are still opportunities for public input to influence fundamental aspects of a project.⁹
- 3.7. Use a variety of methods for gathering public input (e.g., ad hoc advisory groups, small informal gatherings, and large public events) for each project, in order to effectively involve the full array of interested stakeholders.
- 3.8. Match the scope of public participation techniques to the phase of the project. Different strategies may be appropriate for different phases of decision-making.

- 3.9. Ensure that contractors conform to the Public Participation Principles and public participation strategies developed for each project or program.
- 3.10. Continually evaluate whether stakeholder needs are being considered and what could be gained through public participation.

4. Communication on Issues of Concern to the Public

- 4.1. Establish and maintain contacts with local governments and major interest groups in the area (e.g., environmental groups, recreational groups, chambers of commerce, and homeowner organizations).
- 4.2. Establish open communication with opposition groups and encourage them to engage in the public participation process.
- 4.3. Make amicable personal contact with individuals and stakeholder groups that have expressed concern about a specific project or activity.¹⁰
- 4.4. Create mechanisms through which the community can be regularly briefed on laboratory activities and the status of planning processes and can provide input.¹¹
- 4.5. Provide the laboratory's and/or project's public point of contact with resources necessary to provide timely answers to inquiries by members of the public.¹²
- 4.6. When appropriate, maintain and use mailing lists to directly contact all stakeholders who might be affected by a project or have provided input on a project.
- 4.7. For each decision, clearly communicate to stakeholders how a decision will be made, a timeline for key components of the decision process, who will be involved in the process, and the degree to which public participation can or cannot affect a decision including technical constraints that limit how much stakeholder input can change a project.
- 4.8. Provide stakeholders with timely feedback regarding the results of a decision process and the role their input played in the outcome.

APPENDIX A

Examples of Activities and Effects Likely to Warrant Public Participation

Although the task force recommends that each program or project evaluate its public participation needs on a case-by-case basis, the task force members identified types of laboratory activities and potential effects of those activities likely to concern local stakeholders. This table could help Fermilab evaluate whether a particular project or activity might warrant public participation. Remember, however, the potential effects perceived by the public might be different from the impacts anticipated by scientists.

Type of Activity	Potential Effects (+/-)
Laboratory Planning and Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic (local or regional) • Employment • Fermilab role/standing in the physics community
Property Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of open space • Visual quality • Public access to site • Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution) • Electric supplies • Water supplies • Ecological conditions • Wildlife and/or quality of habitat • Recreation activities
Off-Site Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution) • Storm water control • Traffic • Noise • Subsurface/surface property rights • Home/property values • Visual quality • Ecological conditions • Wildlife and/or quality of habitat
On-Site Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution) • Storm water control • Traffic • Noise • Visual impacts • Ecological conditions • Wildlife and/or quality of habitat • Recreation activities
Research Programs and Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fermilab role/standing in the physics community • Economic (local or regional) • Employment • Community education and outreach

End Notes

¹ Members of the task force felt it was important to place public participation at Fermilab in the context of a broader understanding of the laboratory and its relationship with its many stakeholders. Furthermore, the task force members stressed that they were not only interested in minimizing negative effects but also maintaining the positive contributions that Fermilab makes to their communities. While there are established practices for many stakeholders to participate in decisions at Fermilab, there is no comprehensive vision for how local community members will provide input to laboratory decision-making processes. Because Fermilab is involved in projects conducted entirely or in part off the Fermilab property, “local” is defined by the public’s proximity to the actual project. For example, the MINOS project has local stakeholders in Soudan, Minnesota.

² Past institutional culture-change efforts at Fermilab (e.g., improving safety performance) may serve as appropriate models.

³ The Brookhaven National Laboratory’s *Community Involvement and Laboratory Decision-Making Handbook for Managers* is a good example of such a document.

⁴ There are times when Fermilab is involved in projects and activities that are instigated by or overseen by other entities. These projects include the involvement of Fermilab scientists and technicians in scientific collaborations with other research institutions. Also, organizations and municipalities sometimes propose projects that would utilize Fermilab property or other resources. The task force acknowledges that Fermilab may not be able to dictate public participation practices for these activities; however, Fermilab representatives could advocate that the project conform to the laboratory’s Principles of Public Participation. Furthermore, Fermilab could use public participation strategies to inform the public and get its input on the laboratory’s role in these activities.

⁵ There is great value having a specific, individual point-of-contact with whom the public can communicate and develop a long-term relationship. This was sometimes referred to as being able to connect with a “real person.”

⁶ The task force was not certain that a standing public advisory board was necessary for the laboratory. It may make more sense for Fermilab to establish ad hoc advisory groups or use other public participation strategies, based on the needs of a specific project or issue. However, task force members did agree that it would make sense to have a standing board during the initial implementation of Fermilab’s new public participation policy. This board could help Fermilab determine when public participation is needed, select appropriate participation strategies, and evaluate the success of the implementation.

⁷ Please see Appendix A for examples of the types of activities that are likely to raise public concerns and warrant public participation.

⁸ It is vital to include members of the public in defining which issues require public participation, because the public is likely to perceive potential impacts differently laboratory scientists and employees.

⁹ Participation of the public during early, conceptual phases of a project could help the laboratory to understand potential public concerns and plan appropriate participation strategies for different phases of the planning process. In these early phases, it is critical that Fermilab establish clear expectations by explaining its decision-making process and where it is in that process.

¹⁰ Reaching out to other organizations and stakeholders by meeting with them face-to-face “on their own turf” could help stakeholders to understand that Fermilab values their input.

¹¹ It is critical for community members to be able to get up-to-date information related to projects, activities, and potential effects that are of concern to them. This could be accomplished through an interactive website dedicated to public participation, a standing advisory group, and/or regular column in local newspapers. Over time, the laboratory should adapt its communication approaches to new technology and communication channels.

¹² If the public point-of-contact is able to respond quickly to questions, the laboratory will maintain a high degree of credibility. Therefore, Fermilab might want to develop a fact sheet and/or talking points for each of its projects or activities.