

# RECOMMENDATIONS for Public Participation



December 2004



**Fermilab Community Task Force**  
**On Public Participation**



*In March 2004, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) convened the Fermilab Community Task Force on Public Participation. 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 Task Force gladly accepted this advisory role and believes its recommendations will help Fermilab to develop a workable public participation policy that will benefit the laboratory and its stakeholders.*

The Task Force was made up of 18 individuals who live in DuPage, Kane, and DeKalb Counties. Potential members were identified by Northern Illinois University and selected with the help of a private consultant hired to facilitate Task Force activities. Although Task Force members served as individuals, members were selected to represent diverse community interests, including local residents and neighboring land managers, local businesses, county and municipal governments, environmentalists, educators, students, and laboratory scientists (see Appendix B). A representative of the U.S. Department of Energy served as an ex-officio member of the Task Force. These members 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 about the Task Force can be found at its web site: [www.fermilabcommunity.org](http://www.fermilabcommunity.org).

The members of the Fermilab Community Task Force for Public Participation reached consensus on the recommendations contained in this document. These recommendations include a proposed 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.

The Task Force proposes that Fermilab determine which decisions warrant public participation and choose participation strategies appropriate to those cases. The public does not expect to contribute to every decision made at the laboratory. Furthermore, the Task Force does not intend for Fermilab to relinquish its decision-making authority or provide veto power to the public. Rather, the Task Force recommendations are intended to help Fermilab foster an organizational culture that views appropriate public participation as a beneficial component of good laboratory decision making.

Where the Task Force believed it was necessary, 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 active public participation.



## Recommended Vision for Public Participation<sup>1</sup>

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 6800-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 creates critical habitat for wildlife, contributes to air and water quality for the area, and provides an important resource for ecological research. The natural beauty of the property has drawn people seeking quiet reflection, as well as recreational walkers and cyclists. Since 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, its management contractor (i.e., Universities Research Association), 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 contribute to 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 formation of laboratory policies by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science, the U.S. Congress, and the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, federal regulations, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, provide opportunities for citizens to comment directly on proposed actions.

Elected officials and regulatory agencies represent the people of the State of Illinois, as well as the counties and municipalities surrounding Fermilab's facilities. In addition to complying with legal and regulatory mechanisms, Fermilab actively provides these interests with information and gathers their input on decisions.



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 and collaborative projects, the Physics Advisory Committee, the Users Executive Committee, the High Energy Physics Advisory Panel, and other scientific working groups provide a voice for 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, local units of government, 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 contribute to planning and decision making for the programs and operations of Fermilab.

*Fermilab's vision for public participation is the integration into its planning and decision-making processes a variety of proactive mechanisms and procedures that 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 promotes these principles in its collaborations with other organizations and entities.*



## Recommended Principles for Public Participation

These principles are recommended as the 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 help determine program- and project-specific public participation processes and strategies.
5. Stakeholders have access to up-to-date and user-friendly information about activities and decisions of concern to the community.
6. Input from stakeholders is actively and continually sought during planning and decision-making processes.
7. All interested stakeholders have opportunities to provide input on activities and decisions that are of concern to local communities.
8. Stakeholders provide input early in the planning process, when there is an opportunity to contribute to fundamental aspects of a project or program.
9. Stakeholders receive information about the decision-making process, regulatory and technical limitations, and opportunities available for them to contribute to the process.
10. Public participation seeks consensus that minimizes negative effects and maximizes value to all stakeholder communities.
11. Stakeholders receive timely feedback regarding the results of a decision process and the role their input played in the outcome.



## Suggested Policies and Procedures

The following policies and procedures are recommended for inclusion in a comprehensive Fermilab policy on public participation.

### 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.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.3. Develop and disseminate a public participation guide for Fermilab personnel and users, which clearly explains public participation procedures.<sup>3</sup>
- 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 program areas or projects that require public participation.
- 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 into the annual performance reviews for all relevant managers.
- 1.10. Promote the Principles for Public Participation when Fermilab is involved in projects sponsored or managed by other organizations and entities.<sup>4</sup>

### 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.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3. Clearly define public participation roles for each project or program that warrants public participation and identify who will fill those roles, including a "real contact person" who will respond to public questions and comments.





- 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.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The Participation Process

- 3.1. For projects or programs likely to create significant public concerns, create appropriate opportunities for stakeholders to provide input throughout the planning process.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.2. Assess each project or program to judge whether it is likely to create public concerns and warrants public participation.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.3. In all new project proposals and design studies, include a section that explains whether public participation is warranted and, if it is, outlines how public participation will be handled by the project.
- 3.4. Develop criteria for the internal review of public participation assessments and determine the appropriate individual(s) to approve them.<sup>9</sup>
- 3.5. Use a variety of public participation strategies for communicating with the public and gathering input (e.g., direct mailings, ad hoc advisory groups, small informal gatherings, and large public events) in order to effectively involve the full array of interested stakeholders.<sup>10</sup>

- 3.6. For projects that warrant public participation, match the scope of public participation and techniques used to the phase of the project. Different strategies may be appropriate for different phases of decision-making.<sup>11</sup>
- 3.7. Ensure that subcontractors conform to the Public Participation Principles and public participation strategies developed for each project or program.
- 3.8. 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 open communications with local governments and major interest groups in the area (e.g., environmental groups, recreational groups, chambers of commerce, and homeowner organizations), including groups that oppose projects, and encourage them to engage in the public participation process.
- 4.2. For projects and decisions that are of concern to the public, 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.



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- 4.3. Make courteous personal contact with individuals and stakeholder groups that have expressed concern about a specific project or activity.<sup>12</sup>
  - 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 on issues of concern.<sup>13</sup>
  - 4.5. Provide the laboratory's and/or a project's public point of contact with resources necessary to provide timely answers to inquiries by members of the public.<sup>14</sup>
  - 4.6. When appropriate, maintain and use mailing lists to directly contact all stakeholders who might be affected by a project or to communicate with those who have provided input on a project.
  - 4.7. 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 Likely to Warrant Public Participation

The Task Force recommends that programs and projects evaluate public participation needs on a case-by-case basis. However, task force members also identified several types of laboratory activities that could concern local stakeholders. These activities and specific concerns about how they could affect local communities are listed in the following table. This table could help Fermilab assess whether a particular project or activity might warrant public participation. For example, an on-site construction project that will affect local traffic might warrant public participation. Note that stakeholders are interested in positive, as well as negative, effects. Also remember that the public might perceive potential effects that are different from the impacts anticipated by scientists.

| TYPE OF ACTIVITY                   | SPECIFIC CONCERNS   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Laboratory Planning and Budgeting  | Economic (local or regional)<br>Employment<br>Fermilab role/standing in the physics community   |
| Property Management                | Amount of open space<br>Visual quality<br>Public access to site<br>Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution)<br>Electric supplies<br>Water supplies<br>Ecological conditions<br>Wildlife and/or quality of habitat<br>Recreation activities |
| Off-Site Construction              | Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution)<br>Storm water control<br>Traffic<br>Noise<br>Subsurface/surface property rights<br>Home/property values<br>Visual quality<br>Ecological conditions<br>Wildlife and/or quality of habitat         |
| On-Site Construction               | Human health and safety (e.g., air and water pollution)<br>Storm water control<br>Traffic<br>Noise<br>Visual impacts<br>Ecological conditions<br>Wildlife and/or quality of habitat<br>Recreation activities  |
| Research Programs and Publications | Fermilab role/standing in the physics community<br>Economic (local or regional)<br>Employment<br>Community education and outreach   |



## APPENDIX B

### Participants in the Fermilab Community Task Force on Public Participation

#### Task Force Members

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Connie Cooke    | Naperville  |
| Eva Cruz        | Aurora      |
| Tom Cuculich    | Wheaton     |
| Roger Dixon     | Batavia     |
| John Fildes     | Batavia     |
| Tom Flanders    | Elburn      |
| Alan Gard       | Warrenville |
| Mark Intihar    | Wheaton     |
| Craig Jones     | St. Charles |
| Tom Kowske      | Batavia     |
| Vivian Lund     | Warrenville |
| Michael McCoy   | Aurora      |
| Steve Pawlowicz | Lisle       |
| Jeff Schielke   | Batavia     |
| Bill Weidner    | Wheaton     |
| Ed Weiss        | Batavia     |
| Herman White    | Batavia     |
| Barbara Zeitz   | St. Charles |

#### Ex-Officio Member

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Sally Arnold | Office of Science<br>U.S. Department of Energy |
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#### Task Force Support

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Judy Jackson   | Office of Public Affairs<br>Fermilab                            |
| Mike Perricone | Office of Public Affairs<br>Fermilab                            |
| David Bidwell  | The Perspectives Group, Inc.                                    |
| Carol Zar      | Center for Governmental Studies<br>Northern Illinois University |



## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> 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 off the laboratory's main property, "local" is defined by the public's proximity to the actual project. For example, the MINOS project has local stakeholders in Soudan, Minnesota.

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

<sup>3</sup> The Brookhaven National Laboratory's Community Involvement and Laboratory Decision-Making Handbook for Managers is a good example of such a document.

<sup>4</sup> There are times when Fermilab is involved in projects and activities that are instigated or managed 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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."

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Early participation in a project allows decision makers to consider public values and priorities as alternatives are produced and data is collected. Appropriate participation of local stakeholders during the conceptual stages of a project can help the laboratory define which specific issues would benefit from further public participation, identify relevant stakeholders, and



plan appropriate participation strategies for different phases of the planning process. Stakeholder input on these issues is important because the public is likely to perceive potential impacts differently from laboratory scientists and employees. In these early project phases, it is critical that Fermilab clearly define expectations for its decision-making process. This helps foster public trust and reduces surprises later in the project.

<sup>8</sup> Many programs and projects have little impact on the surrounding communities, while others have the potential to generate significant public concern. Examples of the types of activities that are likely to warrant public participation are listed in Appendix A. A decision of whether a project warrants public participation requires that Fermilab make an informed judgment. For some projects, the laboratory might want to consult informally with a few stakeholders to help inform this decision.

<sup>9</sup> It is preferable that the person signing off on public participation assessments and plans be trained and/or experienced in public participation and separate from the project manager.

<sup>10</sup> There is a broad range of public participation strategies to choose from. Fermilab must choose strategies that are appropriate to the situation. In some situations, public participation might consist of informal contacts with specific stakeholders. In others, it might involve large-scale public workshops.

<sup>11</sup> For example, a public workshop may be appropriate when several project design alternatives are being evaluated, but a quarterly newsletter might be preferred during construction of the project.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.



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