

**STANDARD CONSTRUCTION OPERATING PROCEDURE**

City of New York Department of Design and Construction  
Division of Infrastructure Bureau of Construction

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL**

**SCOP..... : 04 -002G**

**CATEGORY.... : ADMINISTRATIVE**  
**Subcategory : PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Keywords ..... PUBLIC AFFAIRS, POLICY  
COMMUNICATIONS

**APPROVED:**

*Assistant Commissioner - Richard Zetterlund, P.E.*

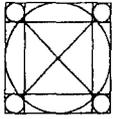
Supersedes.... : N/A

Supplements.... : N/A

Sheet..... : 1 of 1

Issue Date..... : February 24, 2004

DDC's Public Affairs Communication Protocol (attached) is to be followed by all DDC personnel (and Consultants) in responding to the various type of queries and requests that maybe made by the News Media and Elected Officials. Please ensure that all DDC staff and Consultants are provided with the attached policy and that it is reviewed at all preconstruction meetings.



City of New York Department of Design and Construction

## Memo

DATE: February 5, 2004

TO: Distribution

FROM: Matthew Monahan  
Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Communication protocol

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**INTENT:** As a department with numerous public projects it is important to establish a communication protocol to ensure that city and agency policies are clearly articulated. This protocol is intended to provide guidance to staff in responding to the various types of queries and requests that may be made.

**MEDIA:** If a reporter sees or calls you and asks for information about a project, mention that it is standard DDC policy to refer the media person to the Public Affairs office, and its spokesperson, at 718-391-1641. That also includes if a newspaper reporter or one from television or radio appears with electronic equipment. Responsible reporters know it is customary for their questions to be routed to the agency's designated spokesperson. Longstanding practice is to include client agencies for a heads-up call, as they do so for DDC and it helps in maintaining a consistency in forming the eventual response.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS:** It is natural for publicly funded projects to draw the attention of the local elected officials. Should the official request a meeting about particular aspects of the project or seek a personal briefing, respond by asking for the specific topic and to ascertain if the setting of the meeting is a private one among staff at an office or at the site, or if it is a town hall-type meeting with the public invited. Next, tell the official it is DDC policy for you to contact your supervisor and to then be back in contact. Then either send an e-mail or forward the request if written to your Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs. Should the request be an item of specific information such as expected completion date, ask for a contact number and reply you'll contact them as soon possible. Then contact your Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs before you respond. Should a request from the Comptroller or Public Advocate be made for information about contracts or to conduct an audit, please advise the Commissioner and ACCO Don Hooker for instructions as how to respond.

Continued.

**MEETING INVITATIONS:** Projects have an impact on a community and it is expected that a civic association or community board would want details or a presentation on DDC work. Should you be contacted informally in the field or by phone, reply standard policy is for the organization to send a written invitation, which includes the proposed date, time and location of the meeting as well as the expected subject area for presentation. It is unreasonable for an organization to expect a presentation be given on short notice and the date gives us an opportunity to determine if sufficient time is offered. Also, there may be multiple invitations on the same project and a choice may have to be made as to which invitation is accepted. In some cases there may be so many similar invitations, the best course may be for DDC to organize the briefing and invite interested parties to attend. A reason for requesting the expected subject area is to give a degree of assurance that the premise on which the DDC person is invited and prepares is the same as what actually occurs at the meeting. Forward that request to your Deputy Commissioner and copy the Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs. **NOTE:** Any comments made by a public employee about a public project should be considered "on the record." As such do not be surprised if they subsequently get disseminated to a wider audience. Therefore, choose your words with care.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** If approached to request or arrange a groundbreaking or ribbon-cutting event, pass along the request to those previously noted. Should an elected official or community leader ask that certain elements be added or deleted to the project, request they directly contact your Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner in writing.

Feel free to call 718-391-1641 with any questions.

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