City of
Gainesville

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDEBOOK

Developed by Public Participation Partners for the City of Gainesville, FL

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# INTRODUCTION

# I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Gainesville seeks to foster collaboration with local community members through equitable and inclusive community engagement. Departments throughout the City of Gainesville share a commitment to center the needs and perspectives of community members in all we do. We can improve our neighbor-centered mission by connecting it to a set of core values for engagement.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook offers a shared framework for defining engagement, tips on how and when to engage, and guidelines for promoting mutually beneficial engagement with communities and community partners. It contains resources for the design, planning, review, and evaluation of community engagement efforts.

> "The engagement professional's role is often to identify barriers to participation and help people to overcome them. Professionals face increasing responsibility to make it easier for the public to become engaged and stay engaged in a way that is meaningful and convenient for them."

(Source: Planning for Effective Public Participation, Foundations in Public Engagement, IAP2 International Federation 2016, p.21)


## WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT?

Public engagement is a critical tool for building trust between neighbors and the City. Public engagement is a **continual process** that involves neighbors in city problem solving or decision-making and uses their input to make sustainable decisions that affect their communities. It is a two-way dialogue between an agency and the community and is continued throughout individual projects and across the City.

All meaningful engagement is rooted in trust and requires time and resources. With that said, there is a spectrum of engagement ranging from outreach efforts to inform communities, to deep engagement efforts aimed at empowering community members to make decisions.

## WHAT ENGAGEMENT IS NOT

Public engagement is not customer service that involves daily interaction with neighbors, public information in the form of records online or otherwise, or general programming where staff interact with the community. These items all play an important part in building trust with the community, but are not a part of a structured public engagement process.

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Public engagement fulfills the City's commitment to neighbors by defining goals, identifying the needs of communities, and determining key audiences. It creates an opportunity for City staff to ensure that the decisions made reflect the needs of neighbors and provide a platform for neighbors to guide those decisions.

Public participation can lead to well-informed decisions when decision-makers have complete information – in the form of community knowledge, values, and perspectives obtained from the public – that can be applied to the decision-making process. Decisions that incorporate the perspectives and expertise of all stakeholders are more achievable and sustainable because they consider the needs and interests of all participants, including vulnerable/ marginalized populations. In addition, public participation helps participants better understand project impacts to their community and creates opportunities for participants to become invested in the project outcomes.

As a result, decisions that are informed by public participation processes are seen as more legitimate and are less subject to challenge. Decision-makers who fully understand stakeholder interests also become better communicators and are able to explain decisions and rationale in terms stakeholders understand and in ways that relate to stakeholders' values and concerns.

## BENEFITS AND COSTS OF ENGAGEMENT

Before planning an engagement event or process, it is important to consider both the benefits of community engagement and the costs and resources required to see it through. It is also important to consider whether or not to engage.

| Benefits of Engagement | Costs of Engagement |
|---|---|
| • Inspires a sense of ownership over decisions made<br>• Gains support from the outset of decision-making<br>• Fosters equity<br>• Fosters inclusion<br>• Builds social capital<br>• Respects the diversity of perspectives<br>• Builds trust between the City of Gainesville and community members as well as between and among different communities<br>• Ensures representation of multiple socio-cultural perspectives and avoids pitfalls of universalism | • Not everyone will agree that the right decision has been made<br>• Power sharing requires negotiation between different interests<br>• Process takes longer<br>• Some individuals will feel that they have lost power<br>• Staff experts will need to translate their professional language into lay-terms<br>• Requires more resources |

-Adapted the from the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

| Good Reasons to Engage | Good Reasons Not to Engage |
| --- | --- |
| • When we are genuinely curious about community perspectives about an issue<br>• When there is a real opportunity for community perspectives to impact decision-making<br>• When issues to be decided truly matter to communities | • When there is a lack of clarity about decision-maker needs or intentions<br>• When there is a low probability that community feedback will have an impact on decisions<br>• When there is a risk of adding to public mistrust by over-promising |

-Adapted the from the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

## ENGAGEMENT CORE VALUES

The City of Gainesville seeks to foster collaboration with local community members through equitable and inclusive community engagement. Departments throughout the City of Gainesville share a commitment to centering the needs and perspectives of community members in all we do. We can improve our citizen-centered mission by connecting it to a set of core values for engagement.

The core values for engagement (adapted from the International Association for Public Participation, IAP2) are as follows:

1. We seek to ensure that individuals and groups most affected by a decision will be involved in the decision-making process.
2. We seek to ensure that the public's contributions will influence the decision.
3. We strive to make sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. We seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. We seek input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. We will provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. We will communicate to participants how their input affected the decision.
8. We will continuously improve our awareness of power and culture so that we can respect the diverse histories, experiences and needs of local neighbors.

By keeping the above core values in mind, we will increase the impact of the resources and time spent on engagement. We will build stronger relationships with communities. We will support a stronger, more connected, and more equitable community. Most importantly, we will make inclusive decisions that are more likely to be supported by a greater number of people over time.

# ENGAGEMENT GOALS: THE T.R.U.S.T. MODEL

Transparent. Reliable. Useful. Sustainable. Timely.
TRUST Gainesville's Promise for COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement goals should be the foundation of every public engagement effort. The T.R.U.S.T. Gainesville's Promise for Community Engagement was developed as an easy-to-remember model for engagement goals. Every project should use the TRUST model as its engagement foundation and expand upon this model to create a successful engagement plan.

Each goal in the TRUST model represents a promise being made by the City of Gainesville to the public. This promise can be achieved by implementing the objectives listed beneath each goal throughout the engagement process.

**Transparent.** The City will be transparent with the public. This can be achieved by...

◊ providing early and ongoing engagement opportunities
◊ closing the feedback loop to let participants know how their feedback impacted project decisions

**Reliable.** The City will be a reliable source of information. This can be achieved by...

◊ communicating in an authentic, easy-to-understand, and comprehensive way
◊ creating easy opportunities for the public to learn more about projects

**Useful.** The City will create useful opportunities for community engagement. This can be achieved by...

◊ asking for feedback only when it can reasonably be used in project decisions

**Sustainable.** The City will engage the public in a sustainable way. This can be achieved by...

◊ implementing measures to prevent participation fatigue, including coordinating between projects and only engaging the public when it is necessary

**Timely.** The City will provide timely notification of engagement opportunities. This can be achieved by...

◊ notifying the community of engagement opportunities with enough time to plan to participate

# PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

# II. PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Public engagement planning is the process by which staff determine if a public process is needed for a particular project or initiative, when and how to include the public in project decisions, and what methods to use to involve the public in the project development process. Ideally, public engagement planning should begin at the concept and initiation stage of a project or initiative. This will ensure that adequate staff time and financial resources are allocated to support the desired engagement process. Planning for engagement helps staff to focus outreach efforts by outlining a clear plan of action for conducting engagement at each point of the process.

### Planning for engagement helps agencies

- ☑ Define engagement goals
- ☑ Identify the community's needs
- ☑ Determine key audiences
- ☑ Develop a method for measuring success
- ☑ Ensure that a public participation process:
    - ✓ is needed
    - ✓ fits the context of the project
    - ✓ is based on a clear understanding of the challenge or problem

# WHAT IS A PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN?

A public engagement plan (PEP) should be developed as the end product of the engagement planning process. A public engagement plan outlines the process of involving the public in a decision-making process. It describes engagement goals and objectives, identifies key stakeholders, and outlines specific approaches and tools used to accomplish those goals.

## How Should a Public Engagement Plan Be Used?

The engagement plan should be used to guide the implementation of public engagement activities for all stages of the decision-making process that require public input. It should be returned to throughout the process to keep outreach activities consistent with engagement goals.

It is important to develop the public engagement process based on the needs of the community, not the convenience of the project team or agency. This includes the selection of communication strategies and engagement activities outlined in the plan.

## How to Create a PEP

At minimum, a public engagement plan should contain the following components:

- Project Overview and Timeline
- Engagement Goals and Objectives
- Project Area Demographics
- Target Audiences
- Public Outreach Plan
    - ◊ Meeting Methods
    - ◊ Data Collection Methods
- Communication Plan
    - ◊ Communication Methods
    - ◊ Communication of Results
- Success Measures

The following steps will guide you through the process of developing an effective engagement plan report.

Use the Public Engagement Plan Checklist in **Appendix A** to help you plan for your next project.

### Plans for public engagement help to:

- ✓ Outline the steps that will be taken at each public input point and the data used to support the selected methods and tools.
- ✓ Offer consistency in implementation of strategies.
- ✓ Provide clear guidance to document and measure the effectiveness of engagement strategies that can provide insight for future projects.

# STEP 1: DEFINING THE DECISION PROCESS

All projects require agencies to make decisions regarding how public funds will be used. Public engagement must follow a logical and transparent process that allows the public to understand how and why the decisions were made. Agencies can lose public trust by not involving the public in the decision-making process, or by waiting until possible or agency-preferred options have already been determined before asking for feedback.

## Why is it Important?

It is important for engagement staff to understand the project's decision making process so that they can plan their public engagement process to support it. Without a clear understanding of what type, how, and when decisions are made for a project, it is difficult to determine when and how to include the public in the decision-making process and how to communicate project decisions to the public.

## How to Define a Project Decision Process

The following steps will help you to define the decision process for your project:

**Step 1: Define The Purpose For The Project**

It is important to clearly define the desired project outcomes prior to developing a public engagement plan. Answers to the following questions will help you to determine the purpose of your project.

- What is the problem to be solved or the decision to be made?
- What is the agency's position on the project?
- What types of actions are being considered?

**Step 2: Define The Decision**

It is important to clearly define the necessary decisions to accomplish the desired project outcomes. This can help determine if public engagement is necessary based on the information needed from the public to make project decisions. If no tangible project decisions are expected, or if information isn't needed from the public to make decisions, then public engagement isn't necessary. Answers to the following questions will help you to define project decisions.

- What are the boundaries around what's on the table for community members to influence?
- Which specific decisions are open for community members to influence?
    - ◊ Which decisions have already been made?
    - ◊ Which decisions are not open for community members to influence?
- Who will make the decisions?
- What information will be used to make the decision?
- How will decisions be made?
- How will we communicate all of the above to participants at the start of engagement?

**Step 3: Define The Project Parameters**

It is important to identify what can and cannot be achieved by the project. This information helps staff to better understand when to seek public feedback and what information the public needs from staff to provide educated feedback and assist them with making decisions. The following project information must be clearly understood to define the project parameters.

- What is the scope of the project? – What specifically needs to be achieved, in what timeframe, and what activities, tasks, and deliverables are needed to accomplish it?
- What are the constraints? – What cannot be achieved, and what is the source of these constraints? (Budget, regulations, time, etc.)

Useful.

Sustainable.

### Step 4: Define The Public's Role

Once project decisions are defined, it is important to determine when and how public feedback can best contribute to the process so that the public isn't being asked for input on things that they cannot influence.

If it is determined that the public cannot influence the decisions or their input will not be used by the decision-makers, then public feedback should not be sought. Instead, it might be more appropriate to share information with the public through communication methods. Answers to the following questions must be clearly understood to determine the public's role in the decision process.

**Consider how best to understand and communicate all participants' needs and interests in the decision:**

- What are the needs of each stakeholder group (including staff, community members, and partner organizations)?
    - ◊ How are we inviting and sharing the various needs and desires of different community members/ stakeholders?
- How will decisions made at each level be communicated to stakeholders, the affected community, and the general public?
    - ◊ How are we communicating the practical limitations of any potential outcome?

Transparent.

### Step 5: Determine How Decisions Will Be Communicated

It is important to inform the public about how project decisions are made and the outcome of those decisions whether they are included in the process or not. A clear statement of how the following information will be communicated to the public should be included in the public engagement plan.

Use the Decision Process Checklist Worksheet in **Appendix B** to help define a project's decision process.

# STEP 2: DEVELOPING ENGAGEMENT GOALS

The second step in the public engagement planning process is to identify the public engagement goals and objectives for the project.

## Why is it Important?

Outreach goals help staff to ensure that the public engagement process is incorporated into the decision making process. Outreach goals also make it easier for staff to select the appropriate outreach tools and techniques and develop success measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement process.

## How to Develop Engagement Goals

The Gainesville TRUST model is a good starting point for determining goals for an engagement process. To develop additional outreach goals for the project, staff should first determine what they hope to achieve with public engagement. Do they want to learn about neighbors' vision for their community? Do they need specific feedback on design alternatives? Knowing what needs to be achieved can help in the development of outreach goals that will help get the desired results.

Next, consider what regulations, guidelines, and equity policies must be followed in the engagement process. The third consideration is what are the constraints of the project's resources? This can include the project budget as well as scope of work, staffing, or other time or funding-limited resources. Knowing the limits of project resources will help to create realistic outreach goals.

### How to Develop Engagement Goals Checklist

- ☐ **STEP 1:** Determine what needs to be achieve through public engagement.
- ☐ **STEP 2:** Consider what regulations, guidelines, and equity policies must be followed.
- ☐ **STEP 3:** Consider project resource constraints.
- ☐ **STEP 4:** Develop engagement goals using the SMART goal criteria.

To make sure that engagement goals are clear and reachable, each one should be developed using the SMART goal criteria:

- **S**PECIFIC: State what will be done, expected outcome, and those involved.
- **M**EASURABLE: Define outcomes that can be measured and documented.
- **A**CHIEVABLE: Ensure that expectations are realistic based on known constraints (ex. Time, staff resources, financial resources, community capacity, etc.).
- **R**ELEVANT: Determine if outcomes of meeting the objective will support overall public participation goal and level on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum (**Appendix C**).
- **T**IME SENSITIVE: Set expectation for when objective will be achieved.

Based on these considerations, project staff can develop outreach goals for the project, which will help identify outreach methods and tools later in the planning process.

### Writing the PEP: Engagement Goals and Objectives

The project's public engagement plan (PEP) should contain an Engagement Goals and Objectives section that lists the goals and objectives for the project's engagement. The TRUST model is a good foundation for this section, and other engagement goals can be developed and refined with the SMART goals checklist in **Appendix D**.

# STEP 3: IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

The identification of potential stakeholders is an important step to making sure outreach efforts are effective, representative, and equitable. Stakeholders are typically individuals, groups, or communities who have a vested interest in or affected by the outcome of a project or decision.

The first step in identifying stakeholders is to determine who will be directly or indirectly impacted by the outcomes of the decision or project. This can be done by compiling and analyzing demographic data on project area neighbors from the U.S. Census Bureau, conducting field visits to get a first hand account of potential project impacts, and interviewing community leaders to identify stakeholder issues.

## Creating a Demographic Profile

A thorough analysis of the social and economic characteristics of a project area will help throughout the rest of the public engagement planning process. It provides critical information to help staff better understand their audience and what barriers to engagement they may face. Understanding the diversity of a community can help staff determine the best and most productive methods for engaging its neighbors. Overall, this will create a more inclusive and equitable engagement plan.

**Step 1: Identify Census Tract Block Groups.**

Using Census data, identify the Census Tract Block Groups (CTBG) that encompass the project area. Do not include block groups with no neighbors.

**Step 2: View American Community Survey Data.**

Locate the most recent American Community Survey data to collect the following data for the project area CTBGs and the city:

- Race, including Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race
- Poverty Level
- Median Household Income
- Zero Car Households
- Limited English Proficiency
- Disability Status
- Age
- Educational Attainment
- Housing Tenure

**Step 3: Compare the outreach area data to the city data.**

Compare the project area data to the city data to determine if there are any significant trends. For example, is there a higher percentage of zero car households in the project area compared to the city?

**Step 4: Recognize Hard-To-Reach Populations.**

Document notable presences of people of color, low income, or limited English proficiency, as well as disabled, youth, senior, and renter populations.

**Step 5: Conduct additional methods of data collection and analysis.**

Conduct field visits, examine satellite imagery, consult with community leaders, and use other sources to help to identify groups that are too small to be noted at the Census geography level. Some groups, such as undocumented immigrants, may not be incorporated into Census data, but should still be targeted in outreach efforts so they have opportunities to participate.

### Writing the PEP: Project Area Demographics

The project's public engagement plan should contain a Project Area Demographics section that includes the project's demographic profile. This section should include a summary of the:

- Total population for the block groups that contain the project area
- Racial and ethnic demographics
- Median annual household income
- Percentage of project area population living below the poverty line
- Percent of neighbors who speak a non-English language
- Any other notable demographic considerations for the project area

## How To Use The Demographic Profile Data

Using this demographic profile will bring a better understanding of who makes up the communities within the project area, how to reach them, and how to develop outreach methods that will include them to the fullest extent possible and the resources needed to do so.

Furthermore, having demographic data will provide metrics to compare to when evaluating the success of outreach methods. Staff can compare the demographic profile of the project area with the demographic profile of meeting attendees and survey takers through voluntary demographic surveys to determine if those engaged are representative of the population.

The demographic data should not be used to exclude certain groups from outreach efforts, nor should the data be ignored altogether. Demographic data should not be paired with personally identifiable information; it should only serve to provide an understanding of the groups of people who live in the project area, not the specific individuals who reside in the area.

For more examples on how to use demographic data to develop outreach methods, please see the Chart 1: Demographic Profile Engagement Considerations.

**Remember to think about inclusivity and equity when analyzing project area demographics.**

- Have we collected demographic data to ensure that we were able to engage in a way that is equitable and inclusive?
- How will we ensure that we connect with communities who could be adversely affected by the decision at hand?
- Have we sought multiple perspectives on the history of the issue we wish to engage about—particularly from communities that have been historically excluded from decision-making?

### How to Use Demographic Data

| Do | Don't |
|---|---|
| • Figure out who your audience is<br>• Tailor your approach to reach and engage neighbors<br>• Assess engagement<br>• Develop targeted outreach | • Use it to exclude certain groups<br>• Ignore it<br>• Attribute it to specific individuals |

Chart 1: Demographic Profile Engagement Considerations

# Demographic Profile Engagement Considerations

## Race

If there is a notable presence of people of color and/ or immigrant groups, then consider the following:

- Are there any cultural, religious, political, or historical factors that may influence or serve as barriers to their engagement? (ex: appropriate meeting venues, meeting times/dates, perception of safety in government interactions, etc.). If possible, consider contacting community leaders to identify best methods to engage these groups.
- Is it possible that these groups could be disproportionately or adversely impacted by the final decision? If yes, consider conducting small group meetings with these groups to identify ways to avoid or mitigate potential negative or adverse impacts.

## Poverty

If there is a notable presence of low income and/or zero car households, consider:

- Holding meetings at multiple times of day and on weekends to accommodate shift workers.
- Holding meetings in geographically accessible locations and/or providing transportation to/from meetings.
- Offering child care and refreshments.
- Ensuring that all online outreach uses mobile-friendly platforms and does not require application downloads to view.

## LEP

- According to N.C. Department of Transportation standards, if at least 50 adults of a Block Group's population within a language group speak English less than very well, then it is recommended that oral interpreters be provided at meetings and targeted media advertising be used to reach these individuals.
- Federal guidelines state that if a language group that speaks English less than very well exists within the outreach area that either has 1,000 adults or makes up 5% of the aggregate population (with at least 50 adults), then translated meeting and notification materials should be provided.

## Education

If there is a notable presence of neighbors with less than a high school education, consider

- Lowering the reading level of all outreach materials.

Chart 1: Demographic Profile Engagement Considerations (cont.)

# Demographic Profile Engagement Considerations

## Disability

After reviewing disability status data, if there are neighbors with disabilities within the project outreach area, consider:

- Providing American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at public meetings by participant request (see the access to language services and disability accommodations statement on p. 5).
- Following ADA accessible recommendations for print and visual materials.
- Providing phone-in lines or video conferencing sessions for public meetings.
- Providing staff to assist disabled participants.
- Holding meetings in accessible venues.
- Including a request for accommodations statement on all meeting notices.
- Following Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) for all online meeting content.

## Age

If there is a notable presence of senior neighbors, consider:

- Limiting the use of online or social media outreach and instead use direct mailers.
- Following ADA accessible recommendations for print and visual materials.

If there is a notable presence of youth, consider:

- Incorporating methods to obtain their input through essays, poster contests, video submissions, or interactive visioning exercises during public meetings.

## Housing

If there are renters living in the project outreach area, consider:

- Ensuring that all mailed notices are sent to the property owner AND physical address.
- Asking apartment property managers to distribute notices using their communication channels and/or to host popup events to allow the project team to engage neighbors.

## Creating a Stakeholder Profile

Once stakeholders have been identified through demographic data analysis, answer the following questions to create a profile for each stakeholder group.

- Are there specific communities that will be impacted/affected by decisions?
- Are people already organized?
- Who is typically not involved in the process?
- What steps will be taken to ensure the inclusion of impacted communities that have not historically been involved in the decision-making process?
- What is the issue?
- What is each stakeholder level of impact?
- What is the level of concern among stakeholders?
- What area is the stakeholder located in relationship to the project?
- Are there any language barriers?
- Is there government mistrust?
- Is there disagreement to the project?
- Is education on a particular topic necessary?

## Writing the PEP: Target Audiences

The project's public engagement plan should contain a Target Audiences section that lists categories of neighbors and stakeholder groups that should be considered and contacted during the engagement process. For instance, a project may want to ensure that neighbors of a certain neighborhood are notified, or that local religious organizations are included. This list should be generalized, and a more comprehensive and specific list can be added to the PEP appendix.

**Consider the history of the issue/problem/challenge:**

- How will different stakeholders understand the history of the issue/problem/challenge about which we are seeking their feedback?
- How has the history of the issue/problem/challenge impacted community perceptions of the decision we are currently engaging the public in making?
- What history and context do community members need to share with staff in order to effectively collaborate in decision-making around this issue? What history and context does staff need to share with the community in order to support effective engagement?

# STEP 4: SELECTING THE PUBLIC'S LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

The next step in developing a public engagement plan is to select the level of public participation for each stakeholder group identified in Step 3, based on the decision process defined in Step 1 and engagement goals created in Step 2.

The role of the public will vary based on the project and the type of decisions. For example, a controversial project or a project with significant property impacts may require collaboration with the public at each stage of the decision-making process, including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution. Conversely, a study update may only require the public to provide feedback on study alternatives or final recommendations.

Each level of public participation and the accompanying goal on the spectrum suggests that a commitment is being made to the public, and that the agency promises to take the identified action that will achieve the goal of the level selected.

It is necessary to identify the role of the public and the level of participation in the project or initiative development process to determine what type of public engagement is needed to reach decisions.

**How does this differ from the public's role in the decision making process?**

The project decision definition process helps staff to determine if, when and how the public can best contribute to project decisions.  The level of public participation identifies how staff will include the public in making project decisions.

## Using the Level of Participation Spectrum

Use the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (condensed chart in **Chart 2** and full chart in **Appendix C**) to select the level of participation that best describes the goal for including each major stakeholder group that you identified in step 3 and document it in the Target Audiences section of your engagement plan. Then, select the outreach and communication tools that best match the selected level of participation.

## Writing the PEP: Level of Participation

The project's public engagement plan should contain an Public Outreach Plan section that details the outreach that will be conducted throughout the project process. An introduction to this section should list the level of participation for the general public and any other group. For instance, the general public may be able to participate at the level of Involve, while a stakeholder advisory group may be able to contribute at the Collaborate level.

**Chart 2: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation**

**Increasing Level of Participation**

| INFORM: | CONSULT: | INVOLVE: | COLLABORATE: | EMPOWER: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| is a form of one-way communication conducted by the agency to provide information to community members. | informs community members of and can provide feedback on provided options but have little to no involvement in developing solutions. | allows for more discussion with community members as well as flexibility for alternative outcomes in the project; however, it is important to be transparent with the public about the final decision-making process before expectations are formed. | emphasizes the partnership between community members and the agency where a level of decision-making control is delegated to the community involved. | allows the community to make the final decisions. |

# STEP 5: SELECTING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to community engagement. A range of activities are necessary to reach stakeholders, engage the people most critical to the project, and motivate those people to participate.

When considering which engagement type to choose, keep in mind the following questions:

- Can I use this technique given the resources I have?
- Can we generate the required information and outputs to satisfy the objectives of the process and make the necessary decisions?
- Can we build productive relationships using this technique?
- What level of community engagement is preferred (or required)?
- What community engagement techniques best suit the participants' skill levels?
- What techniques are applicable given the available resources?
- What needs to be completed to satisfy regulations?
- What techniques will achieve the engagement goals and objectives?

## Meeting Methods

Meetings can be useful to share information, provide opportunities for participation, and to educate the public on certain issues or topics. They can be used for either large or small groups of neighbors, depending on the type of problem being explored or the decision being made.

Meeting methods should be chosen based on:

- What level of participation is needed from the public and/or stakeholders
- What information needs to be conveyed to the public and/or stakeholders at each decision-making point
- What the engagement and outreach goals are for the project

Outlining meeting methods before a project is underway will help ensure that meetings have a purpose in the decision-making process and are only conducted when they are necessary, which will prevent participant fatigue. It will also ensure that time, resources, and money are not wasted on unnecessary meetings.

**There are two types of meetings: formal and informal.**

Formal meetings are typically more structured and set in formal locations. Formal public meetings include public meetings/hearings, workshops, open houses, small group meetings, charrettes, focus groups, and virtual public meetings. Formal meetings are typically more structured and set in formal locations. The type of formal meeting to use will depend on project goals and phase goals. A kickoff meeting to introduce the project may best fit in the form of a public meeting with a presentation to explain the project. Small group meetings may work best when you want to understand public perspectives on specific aspects of the project.

Informal meetings are typically less structured and can take place in more relaxed settings. The informal nature of these meetings work as a supplement to more formal engagement methods. For example, a pop-up at a local community hub may be a great way to increase awareness about a formal public meeting happening soon. Informal meetings also provide a convenient way to provide project information to the public. Hosting a Community Conversation at a local coffee shop may be a good way to informally educate members of the community regarding the project.

**Useful.**

**Sustainable.**

## Writing the PEP: Meeting Methods

The Outreach Methods section of the public engagement plan should include the chosen meetings that facilitate the designated level of participation.

Each individual meeting that will be conducted should be explained (ex. Public Meeting #1: Visioning Workshop) in this section. Each listed meeting should have a description that includes:

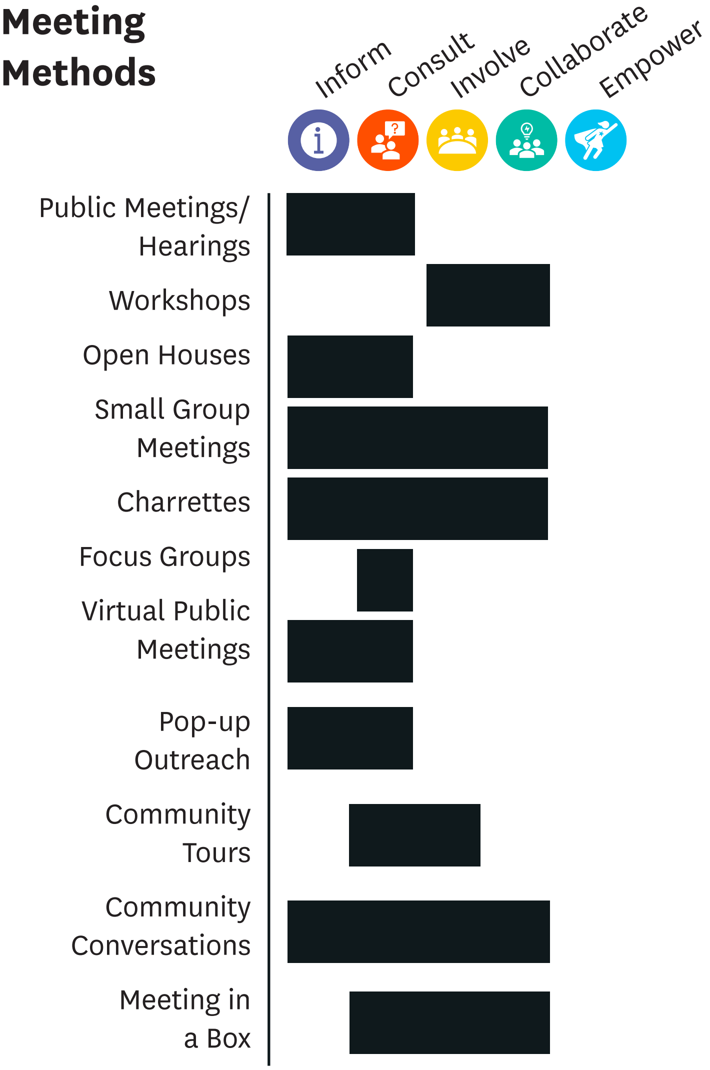
- When the meeting will be held in relation to the scoped timeline for the project
- The purpose of the meeting (ex. To share existing conditions and discuss potential goals)
- What the format of the meeting will likely be (ex. A virtual meeting and smaller pop-up sessions held outdoors)
- What materials will be used at each meeting (such as handouts, surveys, etc.)
- What staff will be needed to conduct the meeting
- How the public or stakeholders will be notified about the meeting (can reference the Communication Methods section of the PIP without going into detail)

If each meeting will use a different data collection method, then each description should also include:

- How feedback will be collected (i.e. by note takers, online survey, comment form, etc.)
- How any input gathered during the meeting will be used in decision-making
- How information and comments will be organized and distributed back to the public

Use the Meeting Methods Chart in **Appendix F** to help determine which methods will work best for each phase of a project. Consider when the method is best used, the pros and cons of each method, and the resources required to execute that method. Also consider how accessible the meeting method is to those without technological access or skill, or to those with other physical impairments.

## Meeting Methods




Meeting Methods Chart located in Appendix F.

## Data Collection Methods

There are various methods for collecting input data from groups and individuals. In order to collect feedback from a diverse group of neighbors, it may be necessary to use a combination of techniques including face-to-face, written, and online feedback.

**What type of data is needed?**

In order to select the right method of data collection, you must consider the information you want to collect, at what point in the decision-making process it is needed, and the timeframe it is needed.

**Step 1: Determine what information is needed**

Based on the selected level of public participation, identify which aspects of the decision that the public can influence. For example, if the chosen level of participation asks the public to react to a predetermined option, it is unproductive to structure the input approach to ask the public to develop alternatives. When determining the type of information needed, do not ask the public to make decisions that are outside of their authority or level of understanding.

**Step 2: Determine when the information is needed**

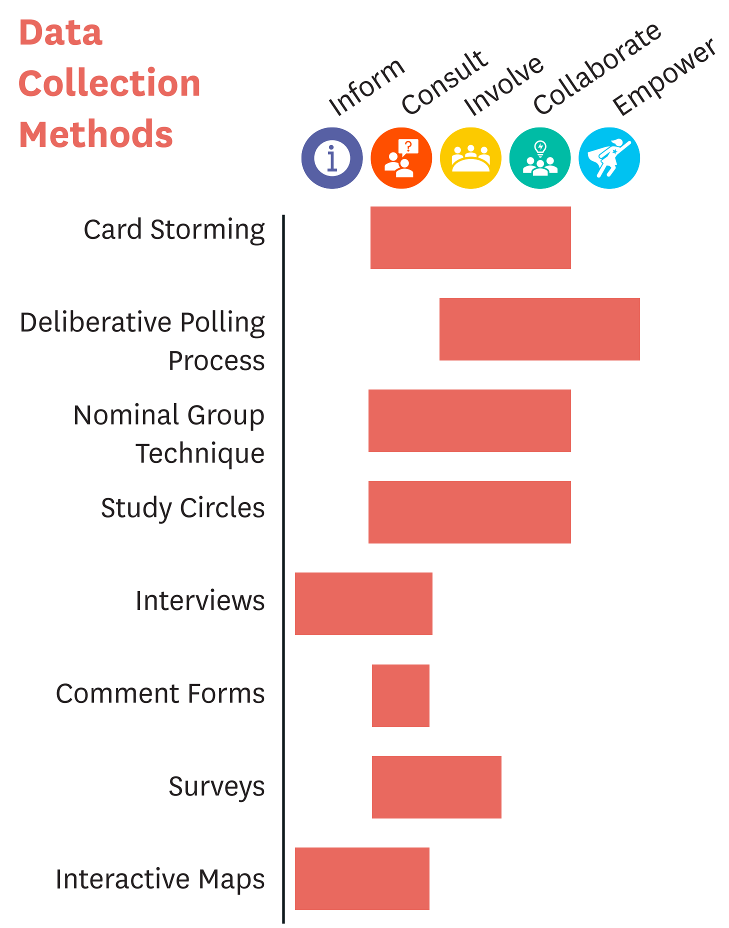
It is always important to involve the public early on and throughout a decision-making process; however, it is necessary to know when to seek public input and when to make the needed decision. Based on the selected level of public participation and level of public influence, determine at which points in the decision-making process can the public most usefully contribute.

Based on the proposed project timeline, determine the timeframe in which public input is needed in order to be considered.

**Step 3: Identify which data collection methods fit the context**

Different techniques are needed at different points in the decision-making process. For example, data collection methods that are best used in visioning processes may not be effective in collecting data for final recommendations. And not all techniques will be effective in collecting data from all stakeholders. Once you have determined the type of information needed and the timeframe that it is needed by, identify which data collection methods will support each stage of the decision- making process and will be effective based on the targeted audience.

Feedback can be collected through interactive group methods or individual data collection. Group methods include card storming, deliberative polling process, nominal group technique, or study circles. These processes rely on collaboration as a group and discussion and interaction to develop feedback. Individual feedback can be collected through interviews, comment forms, surveys, or interactive maps. These feedback methods rely on the solo participation of a member of the community and gather individual input. Refer to **Appendix G** for a list of group and individual data collection methods.




**Data Collection Methods Chart located in Appendix G.**

## Using and Managing Public Input

The next step in the public engagement planning process is to determine how the data collected from the public will be used in the decision-making process, how the data will be managed, and how results will be communicated to the public.

Useful.

Sustainable.

**Step 1: Based on the selected level of public participation, determine and document how public input will be considered in the decision process.**

**Step 2: Develop a method for compiling and managing public comments.**

Prior to collecting information, create a comment management system to track and analyze the data. Identifying a comment management system and the appropriate data fields during the planning process will provide a consistent method for collecting data and will simplify the data entry and analysis process.

Transparent.

**Step 3: Determine how and when results will be communicated with the public.**

Communicate to participants how their input affected the decision, a process for reporting on the participation and feedback received and how the decision-maker will address comments is needed. To develop an appropriate process, consider the following:

- How will participant questions be responded to? (ex. Individually in writing, FAQ lists, etc.)
- How will the feedback loop be closed? (ex. Comment summaries, newsletters, etc.)

## Survey Ethics

Transparent.

Reliable.

Useful.

Sustainable.

It's crucial that surveys adhere to ethics to receive higher quality data. Without this consideration, survey responses may be skewed or biased and therefore not an accurate representation of the population's perspective. Using an ethical approach to survey writing ensures each participant has a fair opportunity to provide feedback without misrepresentation. Ethical surveys help capture accurate data and therefore make participation not only fairer, but more worthwhile for the participant and agency.

Here are some tips to consider for writing an ethical survey.

**Clearly state the survey's purpose.**

A critical part in writing an ethical survey is letting the participant know what the survey is for and how their feedback will be incorporated into the decision-making process. This statement should not be unreasonably long, but should clearly state the survey's intent and how the input will be used.

This is also a good time to mention confidentiality and guarantee that respondent's personal information will not be shared in any summaries or reports without their permission. You may also choose to let participants remain anonymous throughout the survey.

**Ask specific and unbiased questions.**

Asking specific questions is a key part of creating relevant survey content. Specific questions will adhere to a particular issue you are looking for feedback on and this will provide the high-quality input that will guide project decisions. Additionally, questions that clearly address a topic are more effective than vague questions as the survey team will not have to infer what was meant by a particular response.

One of the hardest parts of survey writing is formulating questions that are unbiased. However, this is also one of the most important parts of survey writing. Biased questions skew data and produce unreliable results that cannot accurately be used to draw conclusions. The below chart includes question types to avoid in survey writing:

**Chart 3: Survey Questions to Use**

| USE | Description | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Mutually exclusive, exhaustive options for close-ended questions | Answer choices should cover all possible options without overlap so the respondent's answer is clear. | Ex: What is your age?<br>• Under 18 years old<br>• 19-25 years old<br>• 26-34 years old<br>• 35-44 years old<br>• 45-54 years old<br>• 55 years old or older |
| Close-ended questions | If there are limited alternatives for a decision, do not ask open-ended questions for what the respondent would like to see. Keeping the responses relevant and closed will eliminate confusion and irrelevant answers. | Ex: Which proposed community center design do you prefer?<br>• A<br>• B<br>• No Preference<br>• Neither |
| Comments after questions | This allows participants to include additional information to supplement close-ended questions. | Ex: Please provide any comments about question 2 below. |

**Chart 4: Survey Questions to Avoid**

| AVOID | Description | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Double-barreled questions | These ask about two things in one question. Respondents may feel differently about the two options, but this type of question makes their perspective unclear. | Ex: Do you like the proposed sidewalk and the creation of a bike lane?<br>• Yes<br>• No |
| Leading questions | These questions use overtly positive or negative language to encourage a respondent to answer a particular way. These questions will create biased results. | Ex: Do you support the beautiful new addition to the parkway?<br>• Yes<br>• No |
| Loaded questions | These questions include assumptions about the participant and require them to answer in a way that may not align with their actual opinions. | Ex: What do you love about the new median design? |

**Make all participation voluntary and anonymous.**

Giving a respondent the option to skip any question they do not wish to answer is another important part of ethical survey design. Sometimes, participants may not wish to share their answer to a question due to personal reasons or simply not having an opinion on the issue. Whatever the reasoning behind it, it's crucial to allow respondents to skip a question if they do not feel comfortable. Requiring an answer may cause participants to drop out to avoid answering, or they may provide a response that does not truly represent their perspectives, skewing results.

Participation should also be anonymous. Participants should be able to respond to any survey or comment period without having to input any personally identifiable information. If the project team collects any personally identifiable information, such as email addresses for participants who would like to receive project updates, this information should be stored separately from survey responses.

**Leave the survey open for a reasonable amount of time.**

Decide up front how long the survey will remain open for comment and include the deadline for participation in the survey's description so respondents know how long they have to respond. The length will vary based on the project. It's best to leave it open for enough time for people to hear about the survey and take it, but not so long that the project is moving on and the survey is still collecting old data.

Leaving a survey open for an extended period of time expands access to the survey and allows for those that are interested to have ample time to participate. It also gives the agency the chance to continue outreach and push for more people to take the survey, increasing participation throughout the life of the survey. With shorter time spans to take surveys, some may hear about it too late into the process and feel they do not have enough time to respond.

**Give the option for paper responses.**

Some prefer to answer surveys on hard copies rather than online. Provide ample opportunities for those that prefer this method to participate via printable surveys through emails, in-person meetings, and mailed copies of the paper survey for participants to take and mail back if requested. If using a method other than emailing to receive surveys back, be sure to include return postage so it doesn't cause an undue burden on those that prefer paper to online.

Providing alternatives to internet participation removes barriers to involvement that may stem from lack of Wi-Fi or technology access. This allows for more representative outreach, as opposed to a strictly online survey which may exclude some in a community.

## Writing the PEP: Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods should be included as a part of the Feedback Tools section of the PEP. If the same data collection method will be used for each phase of the project, then a "Public Comments Solicitation and Documentation" section may work best for your PEP. If each meeting will have a different data collection method, then it may work better to relay this information in the Meeting Methods section.

Regardless of where the data collection methods are included in the PIP, the following information should be detailed:

- What data collection method will be used
- How comments will be collected (i.e. By online survey, note taking, email, phone, etc.)
- How comments will be used (ex. To develop roadway alternatives)
- How comments will be documented and relayed back to the public

If only online methods of engagement are proposed for the project, this section should also include considerations for those without technological access or skill. This could include collecting comments by phone or email.

Use the Data Collection Methods Chart in **Appendix G** to help determine which methods will work best for each phase of a project. Consider when the method is best used, the pros and cons of each method, and the resources required to execute that method.

# STEP 6: SELECTING COMMUNICATION METHODS

The success of a project is directly influenced by successful implementation of communication strategies. If stakeholders are not effectively reached, the project will lack the input needed to make decisions that best represent the community. Communication tools work to provide community members with the necessary information on the project and how to participate in a meaningful way.

A communications strategy should incorporate multiple forms of communication methods, from working to raise awareness and educate the public about the project to sharing information about how to actively participate. The type of communication methods used will depend on the audience and the message being conveyed.

There are two primary techniques for sharing information for a public engagement process: awareness campaigns and information/education programs. Both of these methods have their own distinct purposes, but can also be used together to create a cohesive communication strategy.

## Awareness Campaigns

**Level of Participation: Inform**

Awareness campaigns are conducted to make people aware of an upcoming opportunity to be involved in an engagement process or announce a decision or action. Awareness campaigns focus on getting people's attention through limited information. Awareness campaigns are best used to announce the launch of a project or notify neighbors of an upcoming meeting or survey, upcoming construction, or a final decision (ex: plan recommendations).

**Awareness Campaign Tools:**

- Social media posts
- Press releases
- Direct mailers
- Door hangers
- Flyers
- Emails

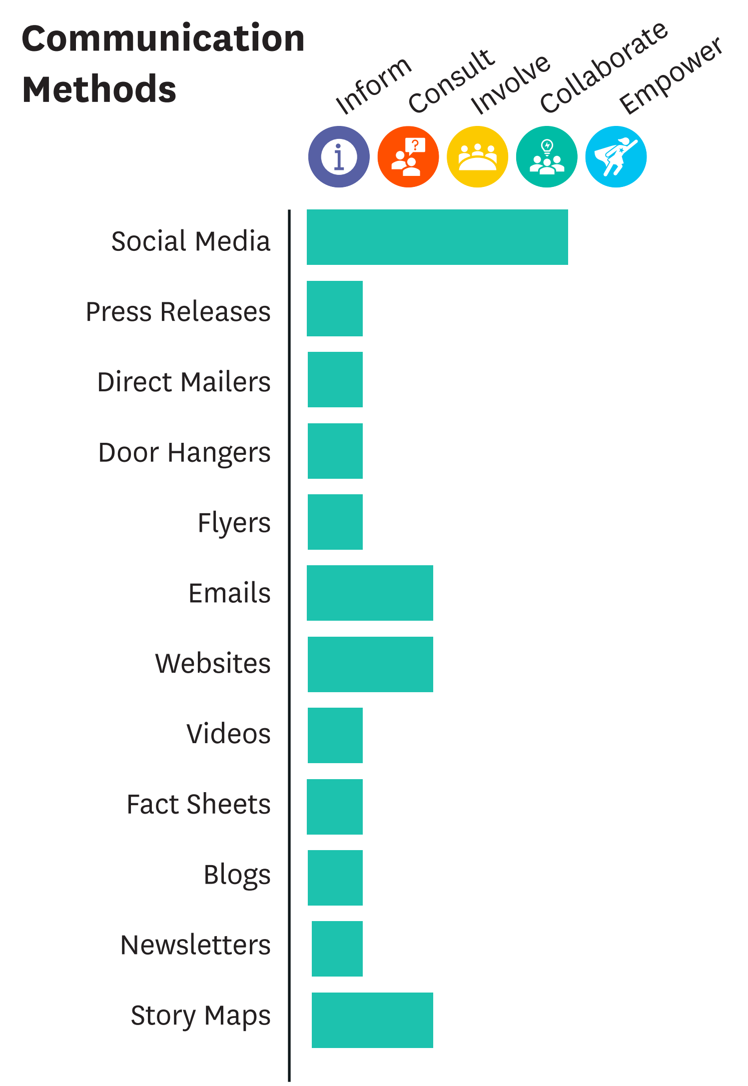
## Education Programs

**Level of Participation: Inform**

Education programs are conducted to provide the public with an understanding of a particular topic prior to solicitation of comments or participation. Education programs are best used for updates to maps and ordinances, projects involving changes to land use or transportation facilities, and provision of new services or amenities.

**Education Program Tools:**

- Websites
- Videos
- Fact sheets
- Blogs
- Newsletters
- Storymaps




Communication Methods Chart located in Appendix H.

## Communicating with Diverse Groups

Effective communication strategies consider the diversity of the audiences that they attempt to reach. To ensure that your message reaches and is received by all members of the community, it is necessary to use multiple communication tools and channels that are tailored to diverse neighbors. Consider using the following methods to reach each identified group:

| Communication Method | People of Color and/or Immigrant Groups | Low-Literacy | Senior Citizens | Youth |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Using minority media sources (newspapers, radio and television stations) to distribute information | ✓ | | | |
| Using traditional media sources (newspapers, radio, and television stations) to distribute information | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Limiting the use of technical jargon and use simple language and graphics that are clear and easy to understand | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Providing materials and notices in languages that are most common to the outreach area | ✓ | | | |
| Providing printed materials and surveys | | | ✓ | |
| Using photos that are representative of the targeted groups in materials | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Asking schools, local businesses, faith-based and community organizations to distribute notices, surveys and newsletters | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Using direct mailers or door hangers | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Placing placards and digital advertising inside buses | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Using short videos and social media to convey information | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Using large font and clear graphics in all materials | | | ✓ | |

Transparent.

Reliable.

When preparing any type of communications, it is important to consider the following:

- The level of complexity of the information and how the audience will receive it
- The literacy levels of the intended audience
- The audience's access to technology in terms of both logistics and skill
- How to communicate the information in a way that works best for the audience
- The different meaning of words in different communities
- Gender-specific protocols and sensitivities
- Presenting all information in a transparent way (honest, factual, easy to understand)
- Using multiple tools to deliver the information

Other accessibility considerations for the visual design of communications for the visually impaired can be found in **Appendix I**.

Timely.

## Writing the PEP: Communication Methods

A Communication Methods section of a PEP will help ensure that communications are consistent, timely, and thorough throughout a project. This section should list every type of communication method that will be used with a description that includes:

- The purpose of the communication method
- What information the communication might contain
- How this method will be distributed to the public
- Whether the deliverable needs to be translated into another language

Use the Communication Methods Chart in **Appendix H** to help determine which methods will work best for each phase of a project. Consider when the method is best used, the pros and cons of each method, and the resources required to execute that method. Also consider how accessible the communication method is to those without technological access or skill, or to those with other physical impairments.

## STEP 7: SUCCESS MEASURES

The final step in the public engagement planning process is the development of success measures. Success measures are methods used to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a public engagement process. Evaluation allows the agency to learn from each engagement experience to improve outcomes both throughout the process and in future engagement projects.

It is important to plan for evaluation before the public engagement process begins so that the appropriate data needed to conduct the evaluation is collected throughout. Once engagement begins, it is difficult to effectively determine what adjustments should be made to improve outcomes based on what has been done without a basis for measuring success or failure.

For example, the same voluntary demographic information should be collected during each phase of the project. By having the same information from each phase, you can measure if a survey is reaching a representative sample of the project area or how well targeted outreach efforts are working.

The benefits of evaluation include:


- Demonstrates the value of engagement to all stakeholders and decision-makers, and justifies the resources spent
- Provides an understanding of what works, what does not work, and why
- Ensures that successes are built upon and mistakes are not repeated
- Adapts an ongoing engagement process to increase its effectiveness
- Captures learnings to help plan future engagement processes
- Ensures that engagement processes are meeting all regulations and guidelines

Evaluation can be quantitative (e.g.  the number of people involved in the process) or qualitative (e.g.  feedback from community members about whether they felt they had been listened to). A robust evaluation process will also include input from participants in the engagement process.

## What should be evaluated?

There are two main aspects of the engagement process that should be evaluated:

| Evaluating the Engagement Process | |
|---|---|
| **The Process** | **The Results** |
| The process is the methods and tools used to implement the engagement plan. It involves examining and documenting the project's activities and processes. | The results are the outcomes of the engagement process. This involves the results' analysis of the engagement process in comparison to the stated engagement goals and objectives. Methods should measure impacts over time. |
| To evaluate the process, develop methods to assess:<br>• If the public engagement approach is relevant and realistic for the stage of the decision-making process<br>• What information is being shared with the public, how it is being shared, and if the information is receiving the appropriate attention<br>• If all desired stakeholders are involved, and if not, who is missing?<br>• If participants represent a diversity of the interested and impacted public, and if not, who is missing?<br>• If the selected tools and techniques are appropriate for the selected level of public participation and participation goals | To evaluate the results, develop methods to assess:<br>• If the outcomes are a direct result of the public engagement process<br>• If the decision was influenced by public engagement<br>• If the public is satisfied with the level of influence on the decision-making process that they were given<br>• If the overall results of the process justify the resources spent<br>• If the lessons learned can be used in future engagement processes |

Other considerations include:

- How much learning occurred?
- Did participants leave the process feeling better informed and able to participate in future processes?
- Did the project team learn things from the participants that resulted in better outcomes?

## How to Evaluate

**Step 1: What is success?**

Select the areas of the engagement process that are important in demonstrating the success of an approach. Next, identify specific results for each area listed below that will help to measure performance.

- Public engagement goals, including equity goals
- Level of public involvement
- Participation objectives
- Communication objectives
- Engagement regulations and guidelines

**Step 2: What will be used to measure success?**

Select appropriate performance indicators that are observable (ex. changes in public attitude) and/or measurable (ex. total number of participants) to identify if the desired outcome for each area has been achieved.

**Step 3: How will the data be collected?**

After determining what should be measured, identify how the data needed for measurement will be collected and how it will be used to evaluate the identified performance indicators. Example evaluation data collection tools include: project team debriefs, participant feedback forms, interviews, exit surveys.

**Step 4: What does the data mean and how will it be used?**

Determine how the results of the measurement data will be interpreted and presented.

Evaluations should be conducted throughout the implementation process (ex: after each outreach activity and phase, comment period midpoints) to confirm that engagement goals are being met and that the process stays on course. This can be accomplished by obtaining feedback from project staff and participants and using the input to adjust the engagement process as needed.

### Writing the PEP: Success Measures

The project's public engagement plan should contain a Success Measures section. This section should detail:

- What successful engagement looks like for the project
- What will be used to measure success
- How data will be collected
- How the data will be interpreted and used

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLANNING: CONCLUSION

It is important to plan for engagement to outline a clear plan for engagement practices throughout a project's process. The end product, a public engagement plan (PEP), will include information such as an overview of the project, goals and objectives of engagement, demographics and targeted audiences, the plan for public outreach and communications, and measures for success of engagement. The PEP will help one stay focused throughout engagement efforts and create a more efficient and effective engagement process.

# ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

# III. ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Once a public engagement plan has been created, it can be implemented through outreach efforts like public meetings and surveys. These efforts provide crucial public input through community participation that shapes decision-making. However, engagement planning does not stop once in the implementation stage. Collaborating with other departments, coordinating logistics of public meetings, and developing a survey all require consistent planning to ensure the community is effectively reached through opportunities for public participation and feedback.

## MEETING PLAN(S)

A meeting plan is an internal document that outlines how a meeting will be conducted and what resources will be needed. It serves as the meeting agenda and instructional guide for carrying out the meeting. Meeting plans should be created prior to each event and used to provide instructions for meeting setup, staff roles, and group activities.

### Why is it Important?

Developing meeting plans prior to each engagement activity gets everyone on the same page, provides instructions for activities, and details the materials and staffing needed. It is critical to ensure that activities are well-organized and planned ahead of time as to be beneficial to the participants. A meeting plan is important because it helps to ensure that a meeting is:

- **Useful** because it makes sure that a meeting has a purpose in the decision-making process
- **Sustainable** because it helps prevent having unnecessary meetings
- And **timely** because respects the time of the participants who attend.

## These are the steps to consider when creating a meeting plan:

**Step 1: Determine the date, time, and location of the meeting.**

- When and where your meeting will be held.
- Will the meeting be virtual or in person?
- Will it be hosted at multiple times?
- Is the location accessible to the targeted audience?

**Step 2: Determine the purpose of the meeting.**

- What is hoped to be accomplished by engaging the public?
- What are the goals of the meeting?

**Step 3: Determine the meeting format.**

- If the meeting will be in person or virtual. Refer to the meeting methods charts in **Appendix F** for more information on the different types of meetings.

**Step 4: Determine the activities to be included in the meeting.**

- Based on your meeting type (Informal or Formal), determine activities to include to engage participants during the meeting.
- Consider the type of feedback you want to gather when planning meeting activities.

**Step 5: Determine the meeting agenda.**

- Include a schedule of meeting activities: staff introductions, meeting purpose, presentation, activities, and feedback methods.
- Try to set realistic time frames for each section of the agenda to ensure the meeting stays within the allotted time.

**Step 6: Determine the meeting materials and resources needed.**

- Determine the meeting materials and resources needed, including supplies, equipment, refreshments (if applicable), staffing, and more.

**Step 7: Determine the staff roles for the meeting.**

- Outline which staff will be responsible for presenting materials, facilitating or monitoring discussion, meeting sign-in, and more. This can be City staff or outside consultants, but ensure that roles and assignments are clearly defined for all staff.

**Step 8: Determine the setup of the meeting (if applicable).**

- The considerations for setup of the meeting will depend on whether it is virtual or in-person. If planning an in-person meeting, consider the floor plan layout and setup of the room. If the meeting is virtual, consider the online platform and structure of discussion and activity groups (ex: breakout rooms).

## Meeting Setup - In Person

When planning for a meeting it is important to consider how to set up the room to accommodate planned activities and to create a comfortable environment for participants. When deciding on the proper room arrangement, consider the following questions:

- Does the space accommodate the desired meeting format? How will the information be presented? (ex. Boards, presentations, videos, discussion tables, etc.)
- How much equipment is needed to present the information? (ex. Number of boards/easels, presentation podium/table, audience chairs, discussion tables and chairs, etc.)
- In what order will the information be presented?
- Is there more than one entry/exit? If so, which one(s) will be used to accommodate the desired traffic flow?
- Is there space for a welcome table?
- How will comments be collected? (ex. Comment box, electronic survey kiosk, flip charts, etc.)
- Is it necessary for participants to interact with each other? (ex. Discussion tables, group activities, etc.)

Once the space needs are determined, arrange the meeting room based on the most logical flow to present the desired information from start (entry) to finish (exit) while incorporating enough space around information areas to accommodate the number of people that are expected and to allow other participants to maneuver. When arranging meeting rooms make sure that displays are positioned to accommodate participants in wheelchairs, and that there is enough space between areas for a wheelchair to navigate.

The Meeting Preparation Checklist in **Appendix J** can be used to help ensure that all neccessary materials, supplies, equipment, and project information is prepared for a public meeting.

## Meeting Setup - Virtual

While planning a virtual meeting does not require physical setup planning like an in-person meeting, there are other considerations to keep in mind. When planning a virtual meeting, it is important to consider the following questions:

- Where will the meeting be hosted online?
  - ◊ Is it accessible to those without the internet?
- What resources are needed?
  - ◊ What resources are needed during the meeting?
  - ◊ What materials do you need to successfully notify the public of the virtual meeting?
- Is there a way to create a more relaxed live virtual meeting without refreshments?
  - ◊ How can community building take place virtually?
- What times of day work best for neighbors to virtually attend a live meeting?
  - ◊ How long should a virtual open house be available for viewing online to allow those who are interested an opportunity to participate?
- Do the budget and available resources allow for a virtual meeting?
- What staff are needed to help prepare the virtual meeting?
  - ◊ What staff are needed to help with facilitation?

# MEETING LOGISTICS - WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Considering meeting logistics well in advance of a public meeting can help create easy opportunities for the public to learn more about projects and implement measures to prevent participation fatigue. Incorporate meeting logistics in the meeting plan, such as location, resources, refreshments, time, budget, and staffing. This will help prepare for an engaging, comprehensive, and effective public engagement opportunity.

## Meeting Logistics Considerations

### LOCATION

Hold meetings in locations that are geographically close and familiar to communities or stakeholders. If possible, choosing a location within the project area is best because it creates a convenient, relevant location for neighbors to get to and makes travel easier.

### RESOURCES

Consider what types of resources are needed for successful engagement. Depending on the stakeholders, you may need language services, refreshments, or childcare. Depending on your meeting type, you may have venue fees or need additional or specialized staff. Also determine what outreach supplies and equipment are needed to effectively advertise and conduct outreach activities, and to collect feedback.

### REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments foster a more relaxed setting. Providing food at a meeting can be a way to increase meeting attendance. It allows parents to pick up their child and come directly to the meeting. When people go home first to eat, their willingness to attend a meeting may wane and they may remain at home. Often having a meal at a meeting provides neighbors an opportunity to get together and becomes a reason to attend the event. When choosing refreshments, make sure that the refreshments offered are appropriate for the time of day, and fit the budget.

### TIME

Consider holidays (especially non-Christian holidays), other community events and activities, day of the week, and time of day when planning meeting dates and times to best accommodate the diverse socio-cultural characteristics within any given community. For example, evening meetings may not suit young families and the elderly, and Wednesday evening meetings may conflict with religious services. It is important to provide alternatives to ensure representative participation of any community.

### BUDGET

When choosing an engagement method, you conduct an honest assessment of available resources and funding that can be allocated to outreach and engagement activities. Is your budget adequate to provide resources for materials printing, advertising, communication, venue and/or equipment fees, refreshments, translation/ interpretation, and childcare?

### STAFFING

Consider staffing availability when scheduling meetings. Who will provide staffing to help with meeting setup and breakdown, station management, and/or meeting facilitation? Do you have available staff that can attend weekend or evening meetings?

**Considering meeting logistics makes engagement:**

- **Reliable** because it creates easy opportunities for the public to learn more about projects
- **Sustainable** because measures are implemented to prevent participation fatigue

## Public Meeting Best Practices

Useful.

Transparent.

Sustainable.

Reliable.

Transparent.

- Focus on gathering information rather than just presenting prepared talking points.
- Ask participants about their own experiences, needs, and attitudes on project-related issues, and ideas for improvements.
- Hold small group meetings, using facilitators and exercises to encourage interaction.
- Collect participants' input visibly on maps, flip charts, in comment boxes, and through documented interviews.
- Document and share with participants how their input has been and will be considered and acted upon by decision makers, and follow up with the public after a decision is made. This helps build trust and encourage sustained participation over the long term.
- Ask participants how they heard about the meeting.
- Ensure that meeting materials are available for participants that are unable to attend (website information, paper surveys, handouts, etc.).

Timely.

| Meeting Dos and Don'ts | |
|---|---|
| **Do** | **Don't** |
| • Pick dates and times for meetings that work best for stakeholders.<br>• Clearly present the project and any problems/solutions.<br>• Use clear language with visual aids.<br>• Value participants' time. | • Use excessive technical jargon.<br>• Assume that everyone is coming in with the same level of knowledge.<br>• Become offended or act defensively when provided with passionate comments . |

## Do’s and Don’ts of Planning an Engagement Event

**Dos**

Sustainable.

- Work with community leaders and organizations to plan events and ensure that previous feedback is acknowledged.
  - ◊ Make an extra effort to work with community leaders that may not have engaged in previous projects (i.e. leaders for hard-to-reach populations).
- Work with other departments that may have already established relationships in the community.

Useful.

- Open with an activity that will get participants talking.

Transparent.

- Clearly state what you hope to gain from community input and what influence the public can have on decision-making.

Timely.

- Plan communication and notification efforts well in advance to give the community ample opportunity to plan for participation.

Reliable.

- Use City resources like websites, social media, and more to communicate project and meeting information with the community in an easy to understand and accessible way.

**Don’ts**

- Plan the event without understanding the purpose of the event.

Timely.

- Start the meeting by talking for more than five minutes or spend too much time on presentations/lectures.
- Assume the needs and desires of the community.
- Assume that the community leaders most likely to engage with the city are the only community leaders.
- Spend all of your funding on one resource (i.e. consultants).
- Plan the event without incorporating considerations for members of the community.

Sustainable.

- Assume all participants have a knowledge of the project.

## Materials Development - presentation, boards and handout guidelines

Presentations, boards, and handouts can be used to convey information to the general public. Materials should be clear and free of technical jargon.

**Presentation guidelines**

- Present the problem and potential solutions.
- Keep the silde content concise.
- Include pictures and diagrams that are clear and easy to understand.
- Test the presentation prior to starting.
- Keep presentations brief (5-15 minutes plus Q & A).
- Ensure that the presentation content does not exceed the allotted time.
- Look and face the audience.
- Speak clearly.
- Make sure presentation meets ADA requirements (reference in Appendix B).

**Boards/Displays**

- Make sure the boards and/or displays meet ADA requirements (large fonts, etc.).
- Minimize map details to include only key road and area features and use clear labels.
- If a legend is used, make sure the information represented matches the visible features on the map.
- Place boards/displays at eye level for easy viewing by participant.
- Use graphics to make complex concepts more understandable.
- Use content written at a 5th – 8th grade reading level.

**Handouts**

- Use clear and concise (short sentences and paragraphs) written messages in plain language.
- Use graphics to make complex concepts more understandable.
- Use pictures of people from a broad demographic.
- Make sure the font size is readable (minimum 11pt font; minimum 18pt font for large print documents).
- Use content written at a 5th – 8th grade reading level.
- Use color for visual interest.
- Translate handouts based on language needs of participants.

ADA accessible recommendations for presentations and handouts have been compiled from multiple sources and are referenced and listed in Appendix I.

# MEETING FACILITATION

A key component of successful public engagement is effective public facilitation. Public facilitation can be defined as the act of taking people through a group process with clearly defined outcomes. It also means encouraging participation and a group commitment to meaningful results. Successful facilitation requires communication and listening skills, credibility within the community, expertise of the project, and adequate preparation and understanding of the selected engagement tools and methods.  Use the following steps when conducting group discussions for small group meetings, workshops, and community meeting breakout sessions.

**Step 1: Prepare for the meeting.**

To prepare for facilitation, become familiar with the materials that will be used to conduct the meeting and any group activity instructions. Create an agenda for the meeting and print a copy of discussion points, questions, and/or activity instructions for reference.

**Step 2: Create the right environment.**

Make sure to provide plenty of space and ample seating set up in an informal manner. If possible, adjust the room temperature to a level that is comfortable for the group. Provide water or refreshments for participants. Plan for enough time for the group discussion and any needed breaks.

**Step 3: Establish expectations.**

Clearly articulate the meeting purpose and intended outcomes, the role of the participants, and how the information shared will be used in the decision-making process. Provide clear instructions for any group activities both verbally and in writing for participants to reference.

**Step 4: Establish ground rules.**

The creation of ground rules is key to establishing participant expectations for group discussions. Ground rules are guidelines used to establish an acceptable code of behavior for participants during a meeting.  The rules can be developed by the facilitator and approved by participants or developed by participants at the beginning of the meeting. Ground rules are best used for open forums, small group discussions, and any group discussion that involves participants of diverse backgrounds and opinions. Set aside time at the beginning of the meeting to either present and discuss predetermined ground rules, or to allow participants to develop a list of ground rules.  Document the list of rules on a flip chart or board that will remain visible to all participants throughout the meeting. Examples of public meeting ground rules include:

- Silence all cell phones.
- Let everyone participate.
- Don't interrupt others while speaking.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Respect other's point of view even if it is different than your own.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Respect the groups' time and keep comments brief and to the point.

For large-scale meetings or projects with high levels of distrust or emotion, consider using a professional facilitation consultant.

**Step 5: Exercise Active Listening.**

When guiding participants through the discussion, do not provide personal opinions or take sides.  Be patient and allow each speaker time to share their thoughts, and to think about a question prior to responding. Focus on the speaker's words and show verbal and non-verbal signs of listening.  Reframe or summarize participant responses to ensure that they were understood. Ask for clarification when necessary.

**Step 6: Manage Participation.**

Pay attention to who from the group is participating in the discussion and provide opportunities for quieter participants to share their thoughts. Rephrase the content of inflammatory or emotional statements to focus on the message. Assign note taking or time keeping roles to dominating participants to allow other participants with time to speak. Keep the discussion on track by redirecting the discussion if it goes off topic or wrapping up a question to move on to the next.

It is important to challenge any repetitive negative statements or behaviors of participants during the discussion. Use the following techniques to address negative statements or behaviors:

- Move the focus away from the person by asking another participant to share their thoughts.
- Change activities.
- Reflect their statement back to them as a question (ex: “it always happens?”).
- Ask the group for their view on the situation and then move the group on.

**Step 7: Document Comments.**

Document participant comments using note takers. Allow participants to review comments to make sure that nothing is missed.

# DEALING WITH PUBLIC EMOTIONS

Many projects deal with topics that people feel very passionately about, including topics that will directly impact those individuals’ way of life. When dealing with controversial topics or issues that may spur high public emotions, consider the following steps:

**Step 1: Prevent**

Preventing high public emotions begins with being proactive. Take some of the following steps to prevent emotions from getting out of hand:

- Host small group meetings.
- Use facilitated small group discussions during small group or large public meetings.
- Do not conduct open forum meetings.
- Use a professional, neutral facilitator or team member with credibility to be viewed as more trusted by the audience.
- Clearly communicate the meeting purpose, agenda, and decision-making process.
- Admit when a decision may not be fair to everyone involved and be fully transparent about potential impacts resulting from the decision.
- At the beginning of the meeting, provide participants the option to help establish the meeting rules.
- Inform participants that project team members will remain after to address any issues or concerns.
- If there are time constraints and a lot of participants, set reasonable time limits and treat all participants the same.

**Step 2: Recognize**

When interacting with participants, it is important to recognize escalating emotions. Take the following steps:

- Do not ignore warning signs that someone is upset or troubled. Otherwise, things may escalate beyond what can be managed or resolved. Here are some things to take note of:
  - ◊ Individuals or parties who disagree with each other
  - ◊ People who frequently interrupt staff or other participants
  - ◊ Negative body language. This includes arm crossing, tense shoulders, furrowed eyebrows, eye-rolling, or forceful sighs.
- Ask questions to pinpoint why someone is upset. The cause of interpersonal conflict can relate to:
  - ◊ Differences in values and worldviews
  - ◊ Failure to recognize or acknowledge the differences in worldviews or values
  - ◊ Uncertainty or lack of knowledge about the process

**Step 3: Identify**

Keep in mind that people often have interests behind their passion. Knowing what these interests are will help determine where the conflict comes from, what issues need to be addressed, and how to respond to the conflict.

Three common types of interests are:

- Result interests – What outcome(s) does this person/party want to see happen?
- Process interests – How does each person/party want to achieve the end result?
- Emotional interests – Does this person just want to be heard? Do they want to achieve status? Do they want to feel appreciated? Do they want an apology? Do they want to feel validated?

**Step 4: Respond**

When managing high public emotion, it is important to respond in an appropriate way. When responding to conflicts or high public emotions, remember to:

- Avoid fighting fire with fire to escalate or continue down a destructive path.
- Move towards constructive outcomes by reframing the issues involved. Example strategies include:
  - ◊ Conduct face-to-face or in-person interaction.
  - ◊ Find out what the underlying issues and interests are.
  - ◊ Collaborate to generate alternative options. Make a clear, specific list of each option's pros and cons. Treat each person or party's idea as valid.

## Facilitation Dos and Don'ts

### Do

- Remain unbiased when collecting input – the purpose of engagement efforts is to educate and inform neighbors and to document any thoughts or opinions about the project that they share.  It is not to promote or gain support for any topic or specific outcome.
- Explain the purpose of collecting feedback and how it will be used
- Ensure community members understand the benefit of their participation
- Be flexible with time and conversation topics. Work with community members on their schedule and discuss things important to them, rather than reciting a script of questions.
- Have project information ready or accessible if a neighbor has further questions

### Don't

- Become agitated or offended by passionate commentary from community members
- Simply ask scripted questions
- Take in feedback without giving something in return. Offer further resources, contact info, etc.
- Make assumptions or inferences about what neighbors mean. Ask them to clarify instead.

# EVALUATION & REPORTING

# IV. EVALUATION & REPORTING

## WHAT IS EVALUATION

Engagement evaluation is an important part of successful engagement. Performance measures outlined in the PEP should be monitored during each engagement activity and documented after each phase of the project. This will help you determine whether outreach goals are being met and if any targeted outreach is needed to reach a more representative sample of the project area.

### Why is Evaluation Important?

While the purpose of evaluation is mainly to aid in the creation of successful engagement, it also can help build trust with the public. Evaluation can be included as part of outreach, meeting, or survey summaries in order to be transparent about what efforts were made to reach the public, who was ultimately reached, and what methods can be tried in the future to improve participation.

In addition to assessing the performance measures established in the PEP, performing an equity analysis during and after each engagement activity can help determine the success of engagement.

## What is an Equity Analysis?

An equity analysis is an evaluation of the demographics collected during a particular phase of a project. It compares the demographics of survey or meeting participants to the demographics of the project area. Once compared, one is able to see what groups are underrepresented and can begin developing targeted outreach for future engagement activities.

A formal equity analysis should be conducted after each phase of a project, if not after each engagement activity. At the end of the project, each phase's equity analysis should be compiled into one document for review. This can help determine what worked well and what did not work well during the engagement of the project to inform future projects.

An informal review of equity can be useful during a particular engagement activity, such as a survey, to monitor who is being reached and who is not. By following the same process as a formal equity analysis, you can implement targeted outreach during the engagement activity to try to improve your equitable outreach during that engagement activity.

The first and most important step to completing an equity analysis is preparing for one. Voluntary demographic surveys should be available at all public events and on every project survey. This voluntary demographic survey should contain consistent questions with consistent ranges of answers (i.e. for an age question, the ranges of ages for each answer should be the same on each survey). Refer to **Appendix E** for a full list of voluntary demographic questions and a standard set of answers to use in future surveys.

An equity analysis worksheet can be found in **Appendix K** for use during your projects.

**Questions to Ask During an Equity Analysis**

- Which demographic groups participated the most?
- Which demographic groups were underrepresented?
- What outreach activities were conducted during this activity or phase?
- What communications were distributed during this activity or phase?
- What outreach and communication methods can be used to reach the underrepresented populations in the next activity or phase of the project?

# REPORTING RESULTS TO THE PUBLIC

Transparent.

Reporting the results of engagement activities and project decisions builds public trust and encourages ongoing engagement. When project decisions are not communicated back to the public, or not done so in a transparent or easily understandable way, participants do not understand how their input influenced the outcome and may lose faith in the process. It is good practice to provide a report of input received by the agency and how it was used after each public comment phase of the engagement process.

## Outreach Summaries

Useful.

An outreach summary is a report that documents the results of outreach activities conducted during the engagement process. The summary can be used as a way to document the success of outreach activities and can be helpful in educating the public and decision-makers about the benefits of public outreach. Outreach summaries can be composed after each phase of outreach and compiled into a final project engagement report. Outreach summaries should be completed for every project. Each outreach summary or engagement report should include the following information:

- Project overview, including purpose of outreach
- Overview of all outreach activities, when they were held, and results of each (ex. Number of participants, participant demographics, etc.)
- Communication methods used
- Data collection methods used for each public comment period and results of each
- Effectiveness of techniques used
- How public feedback was used in the decision-making process

Outreach summaries should be written in a clear and concise manner, with limited technical jargon, and include graphics to depict data when possible. This will make the content more understandable for the public. Outreach summaries and engagement reports should be distributed to all participants and posted to project websites for public viewing.

Transparent.

Documentation of outreach and data collected and reporting those summaries to the public are crucial to concluding an engagement process and maintaining community trust. Keeping a record of data and reporting out on it provides backing for decisions made in the future and creates a point of reference if members of the public question where a decision came from. Transparent communication of outreach efforts and their results create a more credible decision-making process and in turn, establishes stronger relations with the community.

## Meeting Summaries

Like outreach summaries, meeting summaries help build trust through transparent communication about outreach efforts and how decisions are being made. Meeting summaries should be composed after each meeting in the engagement process. These summaries should include:

- A meeting overview, including the purpose, format, and logistics of the meeting (where it took place, when, etc.)
- How participants were notified about the meeting
- Meeting metrics, including how many people attended and any demographic information collected
- Comments received during the meeting
- How feedback will be used to influence the decision

Each summary should be written in a concise way and include visualizations for easy comprehension. They should be distributed to any participants who provided their contact information and posted publicly on a project website within a reasonable amount of time after the meeting.

Often, meeting summaries can be combined with survey comment summaries for website posting. However, this combined document should still contain the individual elements of each type of summary and distinguish between input received at a meeting versus through a survey.

## Survey Comment Summaries

To uphold the transparency and ethicality of a survey, results should be reported fully and objectively. This increases confidence in the agency by allowing the public to see the data and how it was interpreted. The final report should be distributed to all participants and posted to project websites for public viewing.

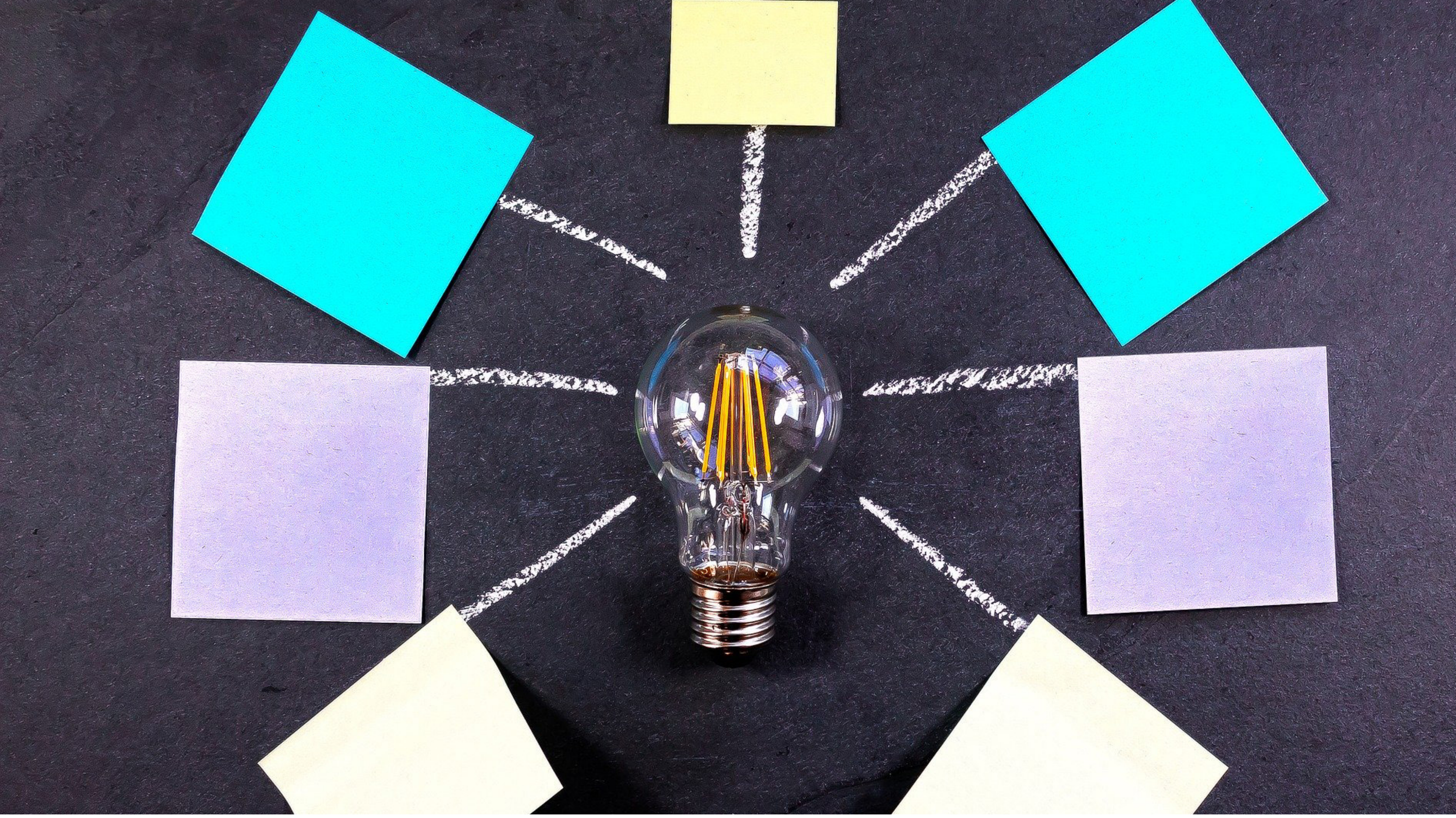
The survey report should include:

- Information that allows non-participants to understand the purpose of the survey
- A copy of the survey questions
- Description of how the data was collected (ex. Online survey, in person, phone interviews, etc.)
- How participants were contacted, how many people participated, and if there were any trends in demographics or characteristics of those who refused to participate
- Results of the survey and how the data will be used in the decision process

The conclusions of the report should be based on the data gathered during the survey and not generalized past the scope of the project or the sampled population (de Jong, Hibben, & Pennell, 2016).

Data should be summarized accurately and in a way that is easy to understand, following similar guidelines as mentioned in the Survey Design section. It is important that the report not include any information that can identify participants individually unless permission has been given (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

# SOURCES



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## Adapted Materials Sources

**II. Step 2: Define Public Engagement Goals and Objectives** Adapted from: Doran, G. T. (1981). “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives”. Management Review. 70 (11): 35–36.

**II. Step 7: How to Evaluate** Adapted from: Planning for Effective Public Participation, Foundations in Public Engagement, IAP2 International Federation 2016, p.97

**III. Meeting Facilitation** Adapted from: Larkins, Kim, Tips for Facilitating Groups, KSL Training, 2020

**IV. Survey Comment Summaries** Adapted from: de Jong, J., Hibben, K. C., & Pennell, S. (2016). Ethical Considerations. Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines, p. 794-842.

**Appendix E. Survey Best Practices** Adapted from:

Kelley, K., Clark, B., Brown, V., & Sitzia, J. (2003). Good Practice in the Conduct and Reporting of Survey Research. International Journal for Quality in Health care, p. 261-266.

& de Jong, J., Hibben, K. C., & Pennell, S. (2016). Ethical Considerations. Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines, p. 794-842.

# APPENDICES

## CONTENTS

# A. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help you prepare your project's public engagement plan.

## Engagament Goals and Objectives

- ☐ Use the TRUST model as a foundation for engagement goals
- ☐ Develop engagement goals and objectives
- ☐ Use the SMART goals worksheet to refine the goals

## Project Area Demographics

Use the following steps to develop a demographic profile to be included in the PEP:

- ☐ Step 1: Identify Census Tract Block Groups
- ☐ Step 2: View American Community Survey Data
- ☐ Step 3: Compare the outreach area data to the City data
- ☐ Step 4: Recognize hard-to-reach populations
- ☐ Step 5: Conduct additional methods of data collection and analysis

## Target Audiences

- ☐ List categories of neighbors and stakeholder groups that should be considered and contacted during the engagement process (ex. neighbors of a specific neighborhood, or that local religious organizations are included).

## Public Outreach Plan

**Meeting Methods**

Each meeting method being used throughout the engagement process should be listed with a description including:

- ☐ When the meeting will be held in relation to the scoped timeline for the project
- ☐ The purpose of the meeting (ex. To share existing conditions and discuss potential goals)
- ☐ What the format of the meeting will likely be (ex. A virtual meeting and smaller pop-up sessions held outdoors)
- ☐ What materials will be used at each meeting (such as handouts, surveys, etc.)
- ☐ How the public or stakeholders will be notified about the meeting (can reference the Communication Methods section of the PIP without going into detail)

**Data Collection Methods**

Each data collection method being used throughout the engagement process should be listed in the Public Outreach Plan section:

- ☐ How comments will be collected (i.e. by online survey, note taking, email, phone, etc.)
- ☐ How comments will be used (ex. To develop greenway alternatives)
- ☐ How comments will be documented and relayed back to the public

## Communication Plan

**Communication Methods**

Each communication method being used throughout the engagement process should be listed with a description including:

- ☐ The purpose of the communication method
- ☐ What information the communication might contain
- ☐ How this method will be distributed to the public
- ☐ Whether the deliverable needs to be translated into another language and what language translations are needed

**Communication of Results**

- ☐ Detail what communications will be used to inform the public about how public input was used in decision-making.

## Success Measures

A Success Measures section should detail how the process and results of the engagement process will be evaluated. Answer the following questions to develop this section:

- ☐ What is success?
- ☐ What will be used to measure success?
- ☐ How will data be collected?
- ☐ What does the data mean and how will it be used?

# B. DECISION PROCESS CHECKLIST WORKSHEET

Before beginning your public involvement plan, use the worksheet below to define the purpose, decision, parameters, and public's role in the project. Then determine how decisions will be communicated.

## 1. Define the purpose for the project:

**What is the problem to be solved or the decision to be made?**

**What is the agency's position on the project?**

**What types of actions are being considered?**

## 2. Define the decision:

**What decisions need to be made during and as a result of the project?**

**What information will be used to make the decision?**

**Who will make the decisions?**

**How will decisions be made?**

## 3. Define the parameters of the project:

**What is the scope of the project?**

**What are the constraints of the project?**

## 4. Define the public's role:

**At what points in the decision-making process can the public most usefully contribute?**

**What are the potential obstacles to obtaining public input (known controversy, budget, time, public distrust, etc.)?**

**What information is needed from the public to make the decision?**

**What decisions need to be made after the engagement and how will the public be involved in that process?**

## 5. Determine how decisions will be communicated:

**How will decisions made at each level be communicated to stakeholders, the affected community, and the public?**

# C. IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**Increasing level of participation**

| | Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Public Participation Goal** | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| **Promise to the Public** | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |
| **Example Context** | Bus route is changing. RTS sends out flyers. | RTS wants to know local preferences for route change options. | RTS is considering changes to bus shelters in several locations. | RTS seeks community participation to create First/Last Mile routes. | RTS teaches community members how to do route planning and implements their preferred routes to Commission. |
| **Example of Tools** | Tabling, Social Media, Open Houses, Flyers, TV 12, Fact Sheet | Surveys, Polls, Feedback forms, Kiosk | Focus groups, Public workshops, Online discussion group | Advisory board, Facilitated workshop | Community-led route planning, workshops |

(Source: Planning for Effective Public Participation, Foundations in Public Engagement, IAP2 International Federation 2016, p.29-30)

# D. SMART GOALS WORKSHEET

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| S | **SPECIFIC:** state what will be done, expected outcome, and those involved | What do you want to accomplish in your outreach? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal? |
| M | **MEASURABLE:** define outcomes that can be measured and documented | How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal? What demographic data can you collect to measure outreach success? |
| A | **ACHIEVABLE:** ensure that expectations are realistic based on known constraints | Do you have the resources required to achieve the goal (e.g. staff, time, budget, skills)? If not, can you obtain them? What helpful information can be acquired with this goal? |
| R | **RELEVANT:** determine if outcomes of meeting the objective will support overall participation goals | Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall project objectives? |
| T | **TIME SENSITIVE:** set expectation for when objective will be achieved | What's the deadline and is it realistic? |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SMART Goal:** Review what you have written and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed. | |

# E. SURVEY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help you prepare surveys for your project.

## Step 1: Develop Survey Objectives

Develop specific objectives based on the types of data that are needed to make the decision.

## Step 2: Identify the Targeted Audience

Based on study area demographics, who needs to be reached?

## Step 3: Compose an Introduction to the Survey

A survey introduction should include:

- ☐ A description of the survey and its purpose, and identification of the agency/ department administering the survey
- ☐ The estimated amount of time it takes to complete the survey
- ☐ How the results of the survey will be used
- ☐ A note that participation is voluntary
- ☐ A privacy statement that informs participants that the information they provide will not be shared
- ☐ A description of the benefits or risks of participating, if any
- ☐ Contact information for the project team

## Step 4: Develop Survey Questions

An easy to understand and successful survey:

- ✓ Has clear instructions and headings to make the survey easy to follow
- ✓ Avoids two questions in one (i.e. “Do you like sidewalks and crosswalks?” where a participant might like one but not the other)
- ✓ Uses closed questions (like multiple choice) for questions with known responses. It is also important to use closed questions when there are only so many answers a person will be able to choose between. For example, don’t make an open-ended question for “What would you like to see happen at this intersection?” if there are only two possible options for changes.
- ✓ Uses open ended questions (like short answer questions) for questions where the answers are unknown or numerous
- ✓ Has questions numbered and clearly grouped by subject
- ✓ Avoids using technical language and jargon
- ✓ Includes explanations of unfamiliar concepts and terms
- ✓ Avoids use of all capital letters
- ✓ Does not require online survey participants to login to submit their feedback
- ✓ Allows anonymous participation

## Step 5: Ensure the Survey is Ethical

An ethical survey:

- ✓ Communicates the purpose of the survey
- ✓ Does not generalize survey data to use in a context not previously disclosed. (In other words, if the survey states it will be used to gather public opinion on a specific project, the survey data should not later be generalized to support an entirely different project.)
- ✓ Does not over-promise the benefits of participation
- ✓ Does not guarantee that survey participation will lead to a specific outcome
- ✓ Asks specific and unbiased questions
- ✓ Makes all participation, especially voluntary demographic information, voluntary
- ✓ Is left open for a reasonable amount of time
- ✓ Gives the option for paper responses
- ✓ Obtains informed consent from participants to use personal contact information or use identifying information in reports
- ✓ Stores personally identifiable information separately from survey information in the project database

## Voluntary Demographic Questions

The following is a standard statement for and list of voluntary demographic questions that can be used as a foundation for project surveys.

**Voluntary Demographic Questions**

The following questions ask about you and your background. This information helps us work toward our goal of inclusive engagement. Please note that your responses will be used solely for data collection, will remain confidential, and are optional.

1. Do you have a disability?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Prefer not to answer
2. What is your gender identity?
   a. Man
   b. Woman
   c. Non-binary
   d. Prefer not to answer
3. What is your age?
   a. Younger than 18
   b. 18-29
   c. 30-44
   d. 45-64
   e. 65 and older
   f. Prefer not to answer
4. How well do you speak English?
   a. Very well
   b. Well
   c. Okay
   d. Very Little
   e. Not at all
   f. Prefer not to answer
5. Which of the following best describes you? (Choose all that apply)
   a. Asian or Pacific Islander
   b. Black or African American
   c. Hispanic or Latino
   d. Native American or Alaskan Native
   e. White or Caucasian
   f. A race/ethnicity not listed here
   g. Prefer not the answer
6. What is your approximate annual household income?
   a. Less than \$12,000
   b. \$12,000 – \$19,999
   c. \$20,000 – \$30,999
   d. \$31,000 – \$46,999
   e. \$47,000 – \$69,999
   f. \$70,000 – \$93,999
   g. \$94,000 – \$117,999
   h. \$118,000 or greater
   i. Prefer not to answer
7. How did you hear about this survey? (check all that apply)
   a. Email
   b. Social Media
   c. Newsletter
   d. Flyer
   e. Phone banking
   f. Project website
   g. Friend/Neighbor told me about it
   h. Community organization leader told me about it
   i. Prefer not to answer
   j. Other (please specify)
8. Would you like to be notified about project updates and opportunities to provide feedback? Please provide your mailing address and/or email address below.*

*IMPORTANT: Only ask for contact information if you plan on using it to provide meeting and survey summaries, project updates, and engagement opportunity information.

# F. MEETING METHODS CHARTS

Formal Meeting Methods

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public Meeting *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | Large-group meetings used to educate and give neighbors the opportunity to ask questions or give feedback | Use when giving a chance to vent frustrations, concerns, etc. Generally last 2-3 hours | ✓ Provides information to a large group of people<br>✗ Does not allow for everyone to speak unless paired with small group discussions | - Staff to greet and staff to present<br>- Flip charts and markers<br>- Sign-in sheets<br>- Refreshments<br>- Presentation materials and mics<br>- Room with chairs arranged facing presenter (chevron or semi-circle style is good) |
| Public Hearing *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | Meeting where participants give comments at specific times | Used to meet regulatory or legal requirements for a project | ✓ Structured so that all participants who sign up have a chance to speak<br>✗ Requires signing up in advance | - Agenda of meeting<br>- Recording equipment (notes or video)<br>- Venue with seating and microphone equipment if needed |
| Workshops *(level of participation: involve and collaborate)* | Public meetings where participants work in small groups – usually "scripted" so everyone knows what to expect, groups report out afterwards | Sessions can run 2-3 hours and are open to public – use to foster discussion on a specific issue and get participants engaged | ✓ Interactive structure allows all participants to provide input<br>✗ Might need additional staff support and/or materials | - Agenda<br>- Staff to facilitate the small groups<br>- Venue to host<br>- Graphic tools: maps, diagrams, etc.<br>- Feedback tools: flip charts and markers, sticky notes, etc. |

Formal Meeting Methods

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Open House *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | Informal public setting where participants can rotate through designated sections, or walk around and ask questions to staff | Before holding public meetings, workshops, etc. This improves public understanding about a project. | ✓ Allows participants to view information at their own pace<br>✗ Requires enough staff for all stations, may not receive as much feedback | - Comment form<br>- Sign-in sheet<br>- Easels<br>- Signs identifying stations<br>- Open space floor plan<br>- Enough staff for all stations |
| Small Group Meeting *(level of participation: inform, consult, involve, and collaborate)* | Small-group meetings used to educate and give key stakeholders the opportunity to ask questions and/or give feedback | Used to discuss issues and/or concerns about a particular topic | ✓ Small groups are less intimidating for providing feedback<br>✗ Only gathers perspectives from a small group | - List of questions/ script<br>- Staff to facilitate and record comments<br>- Info material<br>- Refreshments |
| Charettes *(level of participation: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower)* | A working meeting or series of meetings to generate ideas, scenarios, alternatives, and plans for a decision involving urban design and planning | Use when there's time for longer meetings. Charettes typically meet multiple times over the course of multiple days. Use to conduct discussions about planning techniques. | ✓ Interactive meetings can reach all levels of participation<br>✗ Requires a large amount of time over more than one day | - Facilitators or specialists<br>- Computers / design software<br>- Flip charts, boards, markers, sticky notes, etc.<br>- Large space for small groups to work<br>- Refreshments |
| Symposia *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | A meeting with different speakers to discuss a topic | Used to provide expert opinions and information on the project | ✓ Educate a large group of people<br>✗ Not interactive | - Experts to speak on issue<br>- Venue with lots of seating for large group |

Formal Meeting Methods

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus Groups *(level of participation: consult)* | One-time small-group discussion/ interview to listen to and gather information from a pre-selected group of people on a particular issue | Used to reach a diverse group of stakeholders whose perspectives might not be captured through other meeting types | ✓ Interactive meetings can reach all levels of participation<br>✗ If feedback is required from multiple groups, may take a longer amount of time than other methods | - List of questions/ script<br>- Staff to facilitate and record comments<br>- Info material<br>- Refreshments |
| Virtual Public Meetings (VPM) *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | An online meeting with project information and/or updates posted for a set period of time to allow for participation | Used as an alternative to face-to-face meetings and/or to allow neighbors to participate on their own time | ✓ Allows participants to view meeting at their convenience, interactive<br>✗ No face-to-face interaction; requires technological access | - Online hosting platform that can be available 24/7<br>- Ability to host and record a live meeting, if desired<br>- Easy-to-access platform that's mobile friendly<br>- Staff to monitor responses and/or comments |

Informal Meeting Methods

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pop-Up Outreach *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | A booth or table at a high-density location to provide information and get quick feedback | Used to gather feedback from people who otherwise may not be reached in a location that they already frequent | ✓ Meet general public and businesses/ organizations that could be partners<br>✗ Requires staffing for 4-6-hour periods, may be challenging to get people's attention | - Portable table<br>- Survey/comment cards/comment wall/boards<br>- Pens<br>- Project handouts/info materials including contact info<br>- Prizes and swag |

Informal Meeting Methods

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mobile Tours, Field Trips, and Community Tours *(level of participation: consult and involve)* | Site visits to a particular community with staff and/or the public to view and take pictures of a topic first-hand, with time to debrief and answer questions at the end | Used to get first-hand experience of community features, assets, and areas of concern | ✓ Shows staff and/or the public info and perspectives first-hand<br>× Requires transportation and knowledgeable tour guides | - Tour guides prepared to answer questions<br>- Transportation with provisions for physical limitations<br>- Meeting agenda/itinerary<br>- Notebooks and pens to document comments and observations, bottled water, and camera |
| Community Conversations *(level of participation: inform, consult, involve, collaborate)* | A hosted and facilitated conversation between project staff and community members that help to establish relationships and openness | Best used with groups that typically are not included or do not participate in traditional engagement activities, and with communities with high levels of distrust in the agency | ✓ Can reveal unknown info or opinions about the project<br>× May have distrust that needs to be addressed first | - Meeting venue<br>- Staff to lead the group conversation<br>- Note takers<br>- Flipcharts and markers for notes |
| Meeting in a Box *(level of participation: consult, involve, collaborate)* | Agencies provide a conversation kit to a participant or organization leader with discussion questions about projects or plans for the participants in each group to consider | Used to reach groups of people who may not otherwise participate | ✓ Allows for participation at convenient locations/times<br>× Staff are not present to answer questions/clarify info | - Meeting materials<br>- Volunteer hosts<br>- Refreshment stipend for host and prizes/swag for participants |

# G. DATA COLLECTION METHODS CHARTS

Interactive Group Data Collection

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Card Storming (level of participation: consult, involve, and collaborate) | Individuals write down ideas about a topic and report to small group; small group chooses top 4-6 ideas; all small groups work together to sort ideas into themes | Used to gather consensus on best ideas to answer a question or solve a problem. Allows individuals to share perspectives and whole group to identify themes | ✓ Can be useful for participants who are not comfortable speaking in larger groups<br>× May be hard to get through all of activity with very large group | - Meeting venue<br>- Sticky wall or flip charts taped to wall<br>- Sticky notes and marking pens<br>- Theme cards<br>- Facilitators for each table |
| Deliberative Polling Process (level of participation: involve, collaborate, and empower) | A representative sample of participants takes a prepoll before being given more information by experts; after learning more, they are asked to take the poll again | Best used to discuss complex issues which the public knows little about. Used to determine changes in perspective with more information | ✓ Provides a baseline of public opinion before education<br>× Requires extra time in project schedule to plan and implement before general outreach | - Large meeting venue<br>- Speakers, staff facilitators, and independent moderator<br>- Information materials<br>- Flip charts and notepads to record table comments<br>- Participant stipend<br>- Refreshments |
| Nominal Group Technique (level of participation: consult, involve, and collaborate) | Structured small group discussions to develop a set of priorities for action; participants share their ideas and vote or rank all ideas according to original question | Used when a group is not easily working together or generating ideas | ✓ Creates a set of prioritized solutions that represent the group's preferences<br>× Requires a lot more logistical planning than other data collection methods | - Staff to facilitate voting and discussion<br>- Paper and pens<br>- Flip charts and markers to record ranks, votes, and ideas |

Interactive Group Data Collection

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Study Circles (level of participation: consult, involve, and collaborate) | Small group process where stakeholder groups meet multiple times, each meeting building off the last; all circle groups use the same process and may come together at the end | Used to engage many diverse people on an issue without all meeting at the same time | ✓ Uncovers areas of agreement and common concern between groups<br>✗ Can take up to two months to facilitate 10-50 circles of 8-12 people | - Staff to coordinate circles<br>- Participant facilitators for each circle<br>- Meeting location(s)<br>- Promotional/recruitment materials<br>- Discussion materials<br>- Language translators, childcare, refreshments<br>- Flip charts, markers, pens |

Individual Data Collection

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interviews (level of participation: inform and consult) | Structured conversations conducted between a facilitator and one or multiple participants | Best used to build rapport with stakeholders, to learn individual perspectives, or to identify issues or concerns | ✓ Builds stakeholder relationships and identifies individual perspectives<br>✗ Only gathers one perspective at a time; time consuming | - Interview script with questions<br>- Pen and notebook to document responses or a voice recorder<br>- Refreshments for participants |
| Comment Forms (level of participation: consult) | Printed or online forms used to collect input regarding preferences and concerns or to evaluate the process | Best used to provide the opportunity for less vocal participants to share their views | ✓ Gathers perspectives of those less likely to speak during meetings<br>✗ Printed forms at meetings can often be overlooked or not turned in | - Printed comment forms<br>- Staff time for compiling comment form responses and reviewing comments |

Individual Data Collection

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Surveys (level of participation: consult and involve) | A structured list of questions to obtain specific information from a particular group of people | Best used to obtain the opinions of a large group of people | ✓ Can gather input from a large number of people confidentially<br>✗ Limited opportunity to clarify questions if there is confusion; participants can get survey fatigue | - Online survey tool and/or paper form<br>- Staff reviewer |
| Interactive Maps (level of participation: inform and consult) | Online maps used to collect location-specific information; allow participants to assign problems, unmet needs, or potential improvements to specific location | Best used in visioning or scoping phases of a project | ✓ Allows for visualization and specificity of participant ideas<br>✗ Mapping technology can sometimes be hard for participants to navigate and/or use | - Online mapping tool<br>- Staff reviewer |

# H. COMMUNICATION METHODS CHARTS

Awareness Campaigns

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Media Posts (level of participation: inform and consult) | Text, images, and/or video content posted to a social network to reach followers | Use to broaden a project's reach to those who may be interested but not directly impacted, to target certain groups who may not have participated in or heard about the project to-date | ✓ Reaches people on a platform they already use<br>✗ Participants have to have access, skill, and an account | - Social media accounts<br>- Staff to review and reply to comments and/or messages |
| Press Releases (level of participation: inform) | One- to two-page statement issued to media sources to solicit a news announcement | Use to notify the general public or to reach underrepresented groups (such as seniors, minorities, and those with limited English proficiency) | ✓ One press release can be used for most media outlets and distributed via email<br>✗ No guarantee the media outlet will share on their platform | - Composed press release document<br>- Staff to distribute via email |
| Direct Mailers (level of participation: inform) | Written material directly mailed to the public | Use to reach directly impacted neighbors within a project study area | ✓ Reaches all addresses within a geographic region<br>✗ If mailer is only sent to property owners, it may not reach renters in the area | - Mailing list of addresses<br>- Printed materials<br>- Postage<br>- Return envelope and postage for comments, if applicable |

Awareness Campaigns

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Door Hangers *(level of participation: inform)* | Printed material that can be hung from residences' doorknobs with information on a project | Best used when there is a large amount of renters in an area | ✓ Ensures neighbors within a geographic region receive information<br>✗ Requires staff time to individually distribute | - Staff to distribute door hangers from door to door<br>- Printed door hanger |
| Flyers *(level of participation: inform)* | One- to two-page designed material typically announcing an event or providing limited information; can provide URL to more information | Use to distribute info: at popups; to employees and customers of local businesses; and to cultivators and other project partners to distribute on behalf of the agency | ✓ Can be printed to display in locations or emailed for electronic distribution<br>✗ Flyers are sometimes easily disregarded; does not provide a lot of information | - Printed and/or electronic flyer<br>- Email list for distribution<br>- Staff time to physically distribute or mail |
| Emails *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | Electronic correspondence that can include project information, announcements, files, and links | Use to electronically distribute meeting or outreach activity instructions; use to distribute surveys, project updates, information, etc. to subscribers | ✓ Reaches a large amount of people directly<br>✗ Only reaches those who have subscribed or emails that have been identified | - Email platform<br>- Email distribution list |

Education Programs

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Websites *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | A digital information repository on the Internet for project information and updates | Used to create 24/7 access to project information for people who won't or can't attend meetings | ✓ Can provide information and register contact info<br>✗ Must be updated frequently | - Website platform<br>- Staff to update content |
| Videos *(level of participation: inform)* | Digital compilation of pictures, film, and/or sound that conveys a message to viewers | Use to provide information in a captivating way for online meetings, upcoming meetings, and/or project updates | ✓ Can be used with any online communication tool<br>✗ Can be more time consuming to create, especially to ensure accessibility | - Film or picture content<br>- Captions or subtitles for ADA<br>- Host platform to view video |
| Fact Sheets *(level of participation: inform)* | One- to two-page document providing useful information about a project or topic | Use to address commonly asked participant questions (FAQs), to provide background info, to explain technical terms/processes | ✓ Educational in nature; provides useful information for making decisions<br>✗ May be difficult to condense information down to 1 to 2 pages; some people may not read entire document | - Printed and/or electronic materials<br>- Method to distribute |

Education Programs

| Type of Meeting | Description | When It Is Best Used | Pros & Cons | Resources Required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blogs *(level of participation: inform)* | Articles compiled on a singular website written in an informal style and updated regularly | Best used as a platform where participants can check for project updates on their own time | ✓ Can provide updates over the course of months or years<br>✗ Requires frequent updating | - Staff to write content and update regularly |
| Newsletters *(level of participation: inform)* | Articles concerning a specific project or location information, or updates mailed or emailed to stakeholders | Best used to convey various updates and multiple facets of project information to subscribed group of people instead of hosting additional meetings | ✓ Keeps participants updated on project information<br>✗ Requires monthly or bimonthly composition and distribution | - Staff time to write, design, and distribute newsletter<br>- Printed newsletter<br>- Email distribution capabilities |
| Story Maps *(level of participation: inform and consult)* | A stand-alone, interactive, linear web map that utilizes maps, legends, text, photos, and videos to convey project information | Use to communicate project designs and alternatives, provide public information about an event or project, or educate the public on a topic | ✓ Interactive platform that allows for in-depth and visual exploration of project information<br>✗ Requires specific software and/or technical expertise to create | - Platform to distribute link to Story Map, such as website, social media, mailers, flyers, email blasts, etc.<br>- Staff with ArcGIS technical capabilities |

# I. VISUAL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

## Accessibility for PowerPoint Presentations

**PowerPoint has an Accessibility Checker. Go to Review>Check Accessibility and go through the items indicated in the right-side bar.

- Include alternative text for all visuals (including pictures, SmartArt graphics, shapes, groups, charts, embedded objects, ink, and videos).[1]
  - ◊ Right click > Edit Alt Text – to edit the Alt text. Images that are redundant or add no value (decorative) do not need Alt text.[2]
- Isolate important images (such as maps, graphs, charts, etc.) on individual slides and accompany them with explanatory captions.[6]
- Arrange your content in reading order (Home>Drawing>Arrange>Selection Pane>rearrange items in order they should be read).[1]
  - ◊ Built-in slide layouts are automatically in the correct reading order.[1]
- Add meaningful hyperlink text and ScreenTips (ex. Instead of “Click here” include the full document name).[1]
- Ensure that color is not the only means of conveying information, instead use text labels.[1]
  - ◊ In the View tab, switch to Grayscale to assess your presentation for color coding.[1]
  - ◊ Ex. Add an underline to indicate a hyperlink; use a bold or larger font to indicate a heading.[1]
  - ◊ Add text next to or within color-coded items to indicate meaning.[3]
- Use strong contrast for text and background colors.[1]
  - ◊ Control brightness and contrast.[5]
- Give every slide a unique title.[1]
- Lists should be correctly formatted using the “Bullets” or “Numbering” features (rather than inserted characters with spaces).[3]
- Use a simple table structure and specify column header information.[1]
  - ◊ If the data is more complex, consider converting to a PDF and adding additional accessibility info in Adobe Acrobat Pro.[2]
  - ◊ Screen readers cannot read information in the correct order if spaces or tabs are used to separate content into columns.[3]
- Use 24pt font or larger; sans serif fonts (such as Arial, Helvetica, or Calibri) [2] (sources differ, some also say that 18pt should be the smallest font size[1]).
- Make videos accessible by adding subtitles, closed captions and video descriptions.[1]
- Avoid animation as it can be distracting, cause screen readers to re-read slides, read parts out of order, and may not allow enough time to reach slide content.[2]
- Use PowerPoint for live presentations; better to convert to PDF for posting on the web.[2]
  - ◊ When saving, under Options, make sure to check both boxes for “Include non-printing information” (“Document properties” and “Document structure tags for accessibility”).[2]
- Save the PowerPoint as a PDF when uploading to the web.[3]

The Section 508 Basic Checklist is a good resource to use when testing a PowerPoint for Accessibility: https://www.section508.gov/create/presentations

## Accessibility for Documents:

- Font Guidelines:
  - ◊ For large print documents, use at least 18pt font, preferably 20pt, bold, sans serif, mono or fixed space font.[6]
  - ◊ Titles should be larger than the text and contain both upper and lower case letters.[6]
  - ◊ To emphasize words, use bold, double bold, or underlining (do NOT use color or italics).[6]
- Paragraph Guidelines (for large print documents):
  - ◊ All text should be left-aligned when possible.[6]
  - ◊ 1.5 line spacing (leading).[6]
  - ◊ 2.0 spacing between paragraphs.[6]
  - ◊ Bulleted text identified by large solid dark bullets with double spacing between items.[6]
- Low vision readers have trouble with graphs, charts, and pictures in documents. An effort should be made to isolate them on individual pages accompanied by explanatory captions.[6]
- Don't assume your readers have knowledge of the subject.[10]
- Make use of white space to make pages easier to scan.[10]
- Write in Plain Language:
  - ◊ Choose words that are common and easy to understand.[9]
  - ◊ Avoid run-on sentences. Use clear, short sentences and paragraphs.[9]
  - ◊ Write in the active voice instead of the passive voice.[9]
    - ▪ Passive: Applications for the job were submitted by 100 people.[9]
    - ▪ Active: 100 people submitted applications for the job.[9]
  - ◊ Break documents into separate topics.[10]
  - ◊ Use short bullets and lists to organize information.[10]
  - ◊ Eliminate unnecessary words.[10]

### Resources for writing in plain language:

Hemingway App (shows you your readability score and ways to improve your language): http://www.hemingwayapp.com/

U.S. General Services Administration, Plain Language Training: https://plainlanguage.gov/training/online-training/

U.S. General Services Administration, "Checklist for Plain Language on the Web": https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/web-checklist/

## Accessibility for Social Media:

**General Guidelines**

- Ensure that you link to accessible content with captions, transcripts, etc.[8]
- Don't assume your audience knows what an acronym means (i.e. spell out an acronym in the first instance of its use: "Gainesville Community Engagement (GCE)").[8]
  - ◊ If there is no space in the post to spell out the acronym, consider using a different way to convey the information.[8]
- Use camel case (capitalize the first letters of compound words) within hashtags (e.g. use #CityOfGainesville not #cityofgainesville).

**Facebook**

- Add captions to images that describe the scene, how elements of the image appear, and provide context for the image.[8]
- Add closed captioning to Facebook videos or upload to YouTube and include closed captioning (make sure to double check accuracy of the captioning!).[8]

**Twitter**

- When posting an image on Twitter:
    - ◊ Describe the image in your tweet.[8] OR
    - ◊ respond to the original post with a description of the image and link to the original sources for image (helpful also to link to the original tweet you're referencing).[7]
- Consider indicating that a link is a photo, video or audio file (e.g. [PIC], [VIDEO], [AUDIO]).[8]
- Provide recaps or Twitter Chats on a blog or webpage.[8]

**YouTube**

- Ensure all videos have close captions and audio descriptions.[8]
    - ◊ It is also useful to have a full transcript available.[8]
    - ◊ Audio descriptions should be descriptive to ensure audio and visual elements are clear to those who have visual or hearing disabilities.[8]
    - ◊ Good captions include:
        - ▪ Descriptions of sounds (e.g. laughter).[8]
        - ▪ Tone of voice notes (e.g. tone of music is bright and cheery).[8]
- High quality video is easier to hear/see. People who are hard of hearing may have difficulty with background music or other effects that have not been produced in high quality.[8]

## References/Resources:


[1]Microsoft Office Support, "Make Your PowerPoint Presentations accessible to people with disabilities": https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25

[2]California Department of Rehabilitation – Disability Access Services, "Seven Steps to Creating an Accessible PowerPoint Slideshow": https://www.framingham.edu/Assets/uploads/about-fsu/accessibility/_documents/7-steps-accessible-ppt.pdf

[3]Section 508 Accessibility Guidance, "Microsoft PowerPoint 2016 Basic Authoring and Testing Guide": https://www.section508.gov/create/presentations

[4]Section 508 Accessibility Guidance, "Section 508 Basic Checklist-MS PowerPoint 2016": https://www.section508.gov/create/presentations

[5]SlideGenius, "Making Your PowerPoint Accessible for the Visually Impaired": https://www.slidegenius.com/blog/making-your-powerpoint-accessible-for-the-visually-impaired

[6]American Council of the Blind, "Best Practices and Guidelines for Large Print Documents used by the Low Vision Community authored by the Council of Citizens with Low Vision International An Affiliate of the American Council of the Blind Arlington, VA": https://www.acb.org/large-print-guidelines

[7]18F – U.S. General Services Administration, "Making Twitter images accessible": https://18f.gsa.gov/2015/03/24/making-twitter-images-more-accessible/

[8]U.S. General Services Administration, "Improving the Accessibility of Social Media in Government": https://digital.gov/resources/improving-the-accessibility-of-social-media-in-government/

[9]U.S. General Services Administration, "Federal Social Media Accessibility Toolkit Hackpad": https://digital.gov/resources/federal-social-media-accessibility-toolkit-hackpad/

[10]U.S. General Services Administration, "Checklist for Plain Language on the Web": https://plainlanguage.gov/resources/checklists/web-checklist/

# J. MEETING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

As you prepare for a meeting, please use the checklist below to gather all necessary materials. You should reference the meeting plan to identify exact supplies needed for a meeting. Cross out any materials not needed.

For All Meetings | For Specific Meeting Types | Miscellaneous

Project Name: ____________________

Meeting Date: ____________________

Meeting Type:

- [ ] Public Meeting
- [ ] Small Group Meeting
- [ ] Stakeholder Meeting

## MATERIALS

- [ ] **Meeting Plan**
  Make a copy for each primary staff (facilitators, consultants, and agency leads)
- [ ] **Presentation**
  Electronic and paper copy
- [ ] **Sign-In**
  Electronic and/or paper copy
- [ ] **Handouts**
- [ ] **Comment Forms**
  Used if there is a handout
- [ ] **Table Exercise Materials**
  (questions, instructions, maps, stickers, etc.)
- [ ] **Directional Signs**
  Indoor and outdoor
- [ ] **Table Signs**
  (sign-in, comment, stations, etc.)

## SUPPLIES

- [ ] **Notepads**
  For table discussions
- [ ] **Flip Charts, Easels & Chart Holders**
  For table discussions
- [ ] **Black Markers**
  For name badge stickers
- [ ] **Sticky Notes**
  For map comments and table exercises
- [ ] **Pens**
- [ ] **Kids Table Activities**
- [ ] **Refreshments/Snacks**
- [ ] **Water Bottles**
- [ ] **Hand Sanitizer**
- [ ] **Napkins, Plates, Cutlery**

## EQUIPMENT

- [ ] **Projector and HDMI cord**
  (as a backup for all presentatiowns)
- [ ] **Laptop**
  For presentation and preloaded sign-in spreadsheet file
- [ ] **Wi-Fi Hotspot**
- [ ] **Comment Box**
- [ ] **Power Strip(s)**
- [ ] **Table Sign Holders**

## PUBLIC MEETING

- [ ] **Boards**
- [ ] **Easels** (for boards)
- [ ] **Printed Name Badges** (staff only)
- [ ] **Name Badge Holders** (staff only)
- [ ] **Name Tag Stickers**
- [ ] **Tablets**
  For comment table and with preloaded online survey

## SMALL GROUP MEETING

- [ ] **Attendee List**
- [ ] **Printed Name Badges** (staff only)
- [ ] **Name Badge Holders** (staff only)
- [ ] **Name Tag Stickers**
- [ ] **Tablets**
  For comment table and with preloaded online survey

## STAKEHOLDER MEETING

- [ ] **Attendee List**
- [ ] **Printed Name Badges**
  (all participants and staff)
- [ ] **Name Badge Holders**
- [ ] **Extra Name Badges**
  (blank)

Miscellaneous:

- [ ] ______________________
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Checklist created by Public Participation Partners, 2019

# K. EQUITY ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

A formal equity analysis should be conducted after each phase of a project, if not after each engagement activity. At the end of the project, each phase's equity analysis should be compiled into one document for review.

Use the worksheet below to help you complete an equity analysis for your project.

**Project Name:**

**Project Phase:**

**Date:**

## Outreach Analysis

**What outreach activities were conducted during this activity or phase?**

**Which demographic groups participated the most?**

**Which demographic groups were underrepresented?**

**Demographics to Consider:**

- ✓ Race
- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Annual Household Income
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Limited English Proficiency
- ✓ Gender

## Communications Analysis

**What communications were distributed during this activity or phase?**

**Who did they reach?**

## Future Approach Plan

**What outreach and communication methods can be used to better reach the underrepresented populations in the next activity or phase of the project?**

# L. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| Glossary of Terms | |
|---|---|
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Advisory groups | Provide oversight over the project planning process to ensure decisions have broad representation of the community. Advisory groups serve as an information channel between the project agency and the community. Members are selected to represent various project stakeholder groups. Advisory groups are best utilized for projects with numerous decisions needing public input or controversial projects. |
| Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 | Ensures the rights of disabled individuals to participate and benefit from the services, programs, or activities of any public entity regardless of funding sources. |
| Awareness campaign | An engagement method used to bring the public's attention to a specific project or event through various communication modes. |
| Card storming | A data collection method used in small groups to capture key ideas and issues and then organizing those ideas/issues into clusters. |
| Community | A group of people who share goals, values, or sense of identity. |
| Community Capacity-Building | Processes and actions that build a community's ability to solve problems. This might be the result of increased access to information, networks and social capital, and/or resources. |
| Community conversations | Impromptu conversations between staff and neighbors that help build relationships, reveal unknown opinions and reduce conflict or tension. |
| Community Cultivators | Individuals who are dedicated liaisons between communities and the project agency to assist in notifying, education, and involving neighbors in the public engagement process. As a best practice, cultivators are typically compensated for their time and efforts through stipends and transportation fare. |
| Community engagement | Methods to collaborate with local communities to ensure that decisions represent the interests of diverse stakeholders. |
| Community leader | An individual who is deeply connected and trusted by other neighbors, business owners, religious leaders, community advocates and organizers to prioritize the wellbeing of their community. Community leaders are typically also long-term neighbors of their neighborhood community. |
| Community leader groups | Special interest groups that represent their communities and/or neighborhoods. |

| Glossary of Terms | |
|---|---|
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Community outreach | Methods to inform members of the community about a particular issue through Public Service Announcements, social media, newspapers, flyers, and videos. |
| Decision makers | Individuals in the project process who have the authority to make decisions related to budget, procurement, project direction, engagement methods and locations, etc. |
| Deliberative polling process | A structured process that allows participants to explore a specific issue or topic and then present their opinion after considering the pros and cons. A representative sample of the population fills out a questionnaire on their opinions on the issue, are provided with unbiased background material and information provided by subject matter experts and/or policy makers, and then asked to discuss the issues in small groups with trained facilitators. After this deliberation, participants fill out the original questionnaire again. The process is intended to last for a few days. |
| Demographic profile | An informational overview of race, gender, income, education, language, poverty level, housing tenure, age, disability, and zero car household data of a community. The data is typically obtained through the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. |
| Digital literacy | The proficiency of an individual to utilize digital tools and technology with ease. |
| Education program | An engagement method that is focused on relaying information to the public about project updates or new amenities, facilities, and services. |
| IAP2 | International Association for Public Participation, an international organization focused on the developing and implementing public participation processes to help inform better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. |
| Interactive map | A spatial depiction of an area that allows individuals to select and engage with features in the map. Some interactive maps allow individuals to create and/or edit features. |
| Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual | Any person who does not speak English as their primary language and who has limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals are entitled to fair treatment by agencies receiving federal funding for any program or activity through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Public engagement activities and events for federally funded projects where more than 50 LEP individuals are neighbors are required to have language assistance with translated written material and translation services. |
| Meeting in a box | A conversation kit with discussion questions, worksheets, feedback questionnaires, and directions for recording and returning responses about projects or plans. |
| Meeting plan | An internal document that outlines how and what resources will be needed to conduct a meeting, including a meeting agenda and instructional guide for carrying out the meeting. |

| Glossary of Terms | |
|---|---|
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| Mobile tours | Site visits to a community to get firsthand experience of community features, assets, and areas of concern. |
| Nominal group technique | Structured small-group discussion to develop a set of prioritized solutions or recommendations that represent the group's preferences. |
| Outreach area | A focused spatial area of residences, religious institutions, public institutions, businesses, and other community centers surrounding a project or study area who will be included in project mailing lists and geotargeted social media. |
| Outreach summary | A short, concise document that provides an overview of survey results, survey demographics, and meeting summaries. |
| Participatory Decision-Making | An approach to making decisions that enables stakeholders with multiple perspectives to develop shared-priorities and to offer contributions that influence outcomes. |
| Performance measure | Metric used to evaluate outreach methods and tools such as reach, social media impressions, etc. |
| Pop-up outreach | A method of outreach that involves attending community events with informational project materials and surveys |
| S-M-A-R-T | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time sensitive. An acronym used to guide the creation and development of public engagement goals and objectives. |
| Stakeholders | Individuals, groups, or communities who may be impacted by the outcome of a project or decision. |
| Study circles | A small group process where a diversity of participants from a particular geographic location meet as separate groups several times to discuss critical issues using a structured process where each session builds on the one before it. |
| Social Capital | Economic, social and political benefits people and communities gain from having a strong network of social relationships. |
| Universalism | The assumption that a single perspective can represent the needs, desires and priorities of everyone. |
| Virtual public meetings | A digital mode of public meetings hosted as an alternative to in-person sessions. They take place over the internet allowing participants to view project information and/ or updates on their own schedule. |

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