An aerial photograph of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, showing a mix of modern skyscrapers and older residential buildings. The skyline includes prominent structures like the PPG Place towers. The foreground shows a dense residential neighborhood with green trees and houses. The sky is clear and blue.

Public Engagement Guide

Recommendations and resources
for equitable, transparent
and inclusive engagement for
planning and policy development
in Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
PLANNING COMMISSION: 11.19.2019



PITTSBURGH
P E N N S Y L V A N I A





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We thank our Working Group members, listed alphabetically on the following page, for their dedication and time.

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Additionally, thank you to all the Pittsburgh residents who attended the various public meetings associated with this work, and the City of Pittsburgh employees who provided support at those public meetings and feedback on the development of this work.

How to Use the Guide

The goals of the City's Public Engagement Guide are for each applicable City project and program to have resources to:

- Define public engagement and understand its value, risks and benefits
- Understand how to integrate public engagement into decision-making process
- Design, deliver, and evaluate effective public engagement planning processes
- Select appropriate techniques that align with public engagement objectives

To create consistency and clarity in all the City's engagement processes, this document will serve as a guide to creating Public Engagement Plans (PEP). Public Engagement Plans will be required for all applicable City projects and programs and will ensure that projects fulfill the principles for public engagement identified herein. With this guide, users will be able to:

- Understand and employ the correct types of engagement tools for effective public engagement
- Articulate and assess the benefits and risks of integrating public engagement into decision-making
- Develop appropriate public engagement objectives that clarify the public's role and are aligned with and support the decision process
- Identify stakeholders and their needs and expectations, and select way to effectively engage them in a decision process
- Evaluate public engagement processes being used and outcomes achieved

In addition to describing Public Engagement Plans, there is also a detailed Public Engagement Toolkit, which outlines a myriad of engagement tools and resources for those carrying out those engagements. These tools can be found in the Resources Section.

Section 1: When does this guide apply, and why does it matter?

- Review page 12 to determine if these guidelines apply to your project
- Chapter 4 will describe exactly what's required in a Public Engagement Plan, and who will review it...In the meantime, proceed to Section 2



Sections 2 & 3: What should I be striving for in our public engagement process?

- Learn the basics of public engagement on page 15
- Equity considerations (p. 22)
- Refer to page 34 for overarching principles that your plan should address, including traditional barriers to engagement



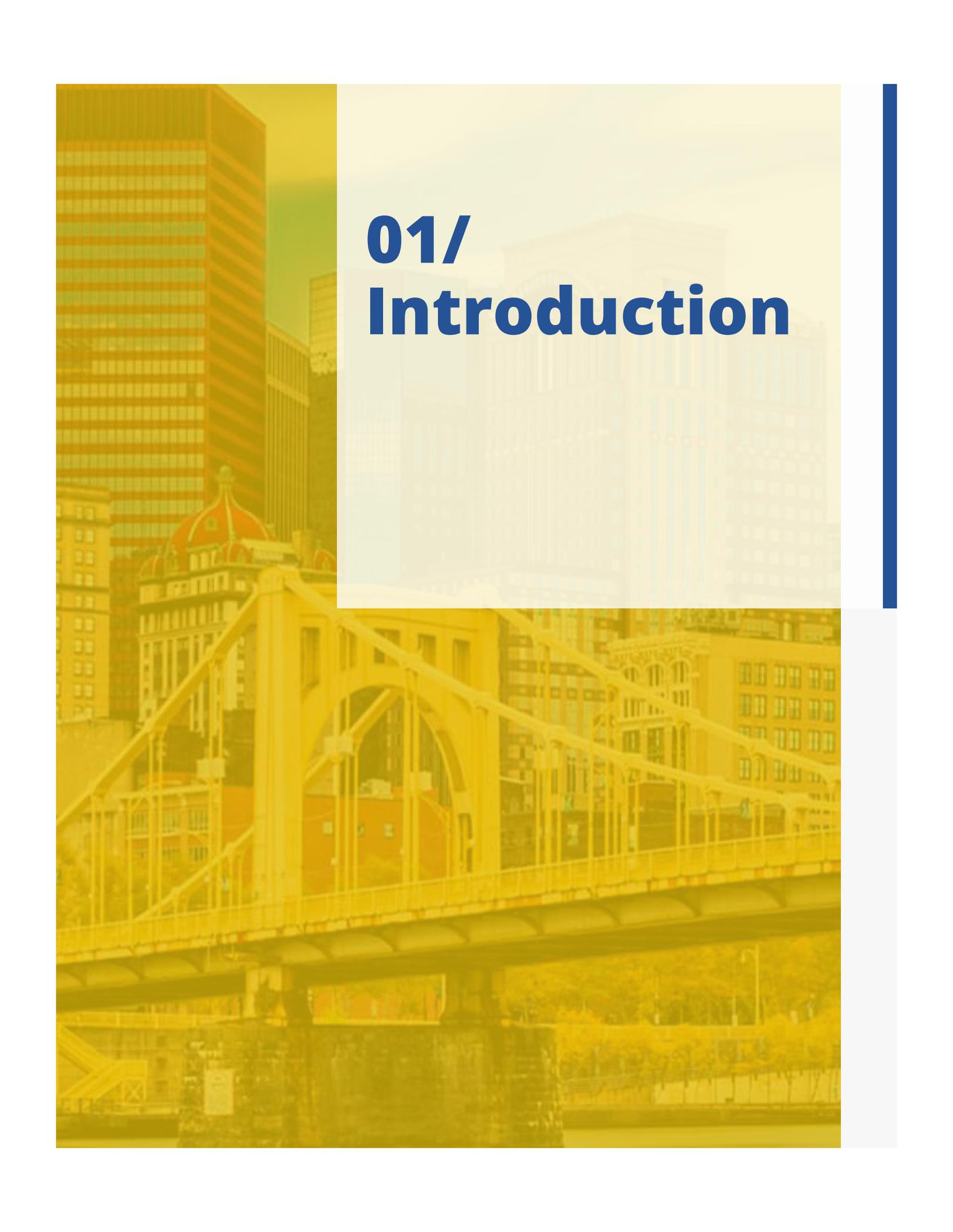
Section 4: What should be included in my Public Engagement Plan?

- Refer to Page 46 for instructions on developing a Public Engagement Plan
- How do I illustrate the impact of public engagement?



Section 5: Where can I find more ideas and resources for a public engagement process?

- Refer to pages 53-70 for sample tools, templates and resources



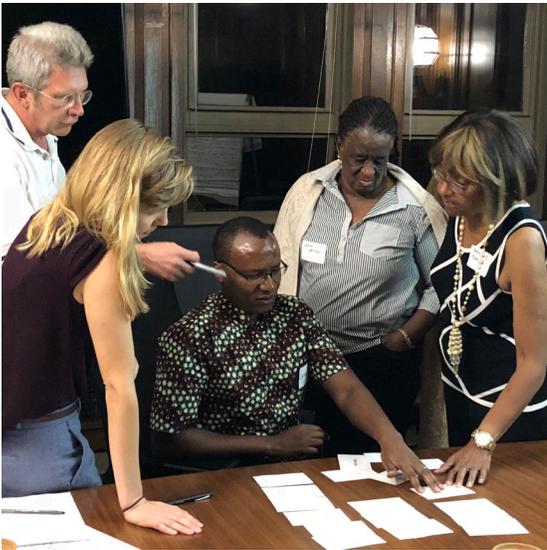
01/ Introduction

01 / Introduction

What is a Public Engagement Guide?

This document is a Public Engagement Guide for the City of Pittsburgh and other users who may be undertaking large-scale planning and policy projects in the City. This Guide outlines a framework for how the City, primarily through the Department of City Planning (DCP), conducts engagement efforts throughout long-range planning processes, and the principles and guidelines for improving the City's approach to engagement in them.

The Public Engagement Guide is a component of the City's Comprehensive Planning project, which began with the City's adoption of Open Space and Cultural Heritage Plans, and will ultimately create a land use vision for the City for the coming decades. The guide sets expectations and best practices for the public, community groups, and staff engaging in the Comprehensive Plan process. It defines what participants can expect as City Planning undertakes specific portions of the Comprehensive Plan, such as land use, open space, and infrastructure, and other projects such as Neighborhood and Corridor plans.



Public Engagement Working Group Meeting #1: Participants engage in an activity designed to help identify common values around public engagement.

This document is also an effort to create a shared set of principles and language to public engagement efforts across City departments. Today, planning processes are managed by a diverse group of entities, including the Urban Redevelopment Authority, The Mayor's Office, Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI), and the Housing Authority (HACP), among others. This plan articulates overarching principles that residents, stakeholders, and practitioners agree to with regard to public engagement.

Why a Public Engagement Guide?

Authentic public engagement is key to the successful completion of the City's Comprehensive Plan, which, in coordination with major planning initiatives including the OnePGH Resilience Strategy and the p4 Principles

(People, Planet, Place and Performance), will shape policy and practice for the City's sustainable growth to 2030 and beyond.

All City Departments and Authorities participate in public engagement on projects of various scales, yet they employ differing standards and best practices. Meaningful public engagement is an anchor activity critical to the successful implementation of plans, stewardship of our City, and to meeting the vision for a resilient City that is livable for all. Recognizing that public engagement efforts have varying levels of success, the Public Engagement Guide will create consistency in quality of engagement across the public's interactions with the City. The Department of City Planning recognizes the need to establish a solid foundation for Comprehensive Plan activities, and as such establishes the following goals for the Public Engagement Guide:

- To renew the approach to public engagement in the City's long-range planning process
- To encourage and achieve active participation across a broad and diverse cross-section of the Pittsburgh community
- To establish City-wide principles for public engagement across Departments and Authorities
- To provide City staff with a diverse palette of tools and resources that they can easily employ as they undertake engagement efforts across the City
- To set clear expectations among residents regarding public engagement efforts
- To acknowledge local expertise, and to look to the expertise of our residents to inform the development of these standards

How was the Public Engagement Guide developed?

This guide was developed in collaboration with the Public Engagement Working Group (PEWG), a group of City residents, stakeholders, advocates, and professionals interested in improving public participation. Members of the Public Engagement Working Group applied their collective experiences to develop the forward-looking participatory guidelines that set the framework for this approach.

The Public Engagement Working Group was a crucial part of developing standards that respond to the unique issues in Pittsburgh and reflect the diversity of our neighborhoods. Discussion with internal departments and the Mayor's Office also inform this document. The result is a compilation of best practices locally and nationally that reflect our collective intelligence. This document will grow over time as new techniques are developed, and as Pittsburgh evolves. The framework set forth here can serve as a foundation to build on in years to come.

When does the Public Engagement Guide apply?

The Public Engagement Guide outlines how the City will conduct public engagement exercises and events; principles and standards which those engagements should achieve; and a comprehensive toolkit outlining different engagement tools that can be used for various purposes and across contexts. In this way, the Public Engagement Guide applies to all long-range planning and policy projects managed, accepted, and/or adopted by the City of Pittsburgh. While development review has not been included in the scope of this strategy, there is potential for specific guidelines relating to that in the future. Some examples of planning efforts when this Guides does apply include the following:

- City-wide Comprehensive Planning
- Neighborhood, Corridor, Art, and Mobility/ Transportation Plans
- Public facility/asset siting, design, planning, and other significant changes to public assets
- Major policy decisions and issues of significant public interest

Department administrators and project managers share a joint responsibility to identify which City actions need public engagement, decide the appropriate level of public engagement, and design and implement the public engagement process. Department administrators are responsible for sharing these standards with consultants to ensure that all processes are respecting the herein established principles. All engagements should uphold the principles outlined in this document, and the toolkit should further serve to determine types of engagement used for different City actions.

Moving forward, Public Engagement Plans will be required of all applicable City long-range planning and policy projects. To learn more about the Public Engagement Plan process, see page 46.



Building values

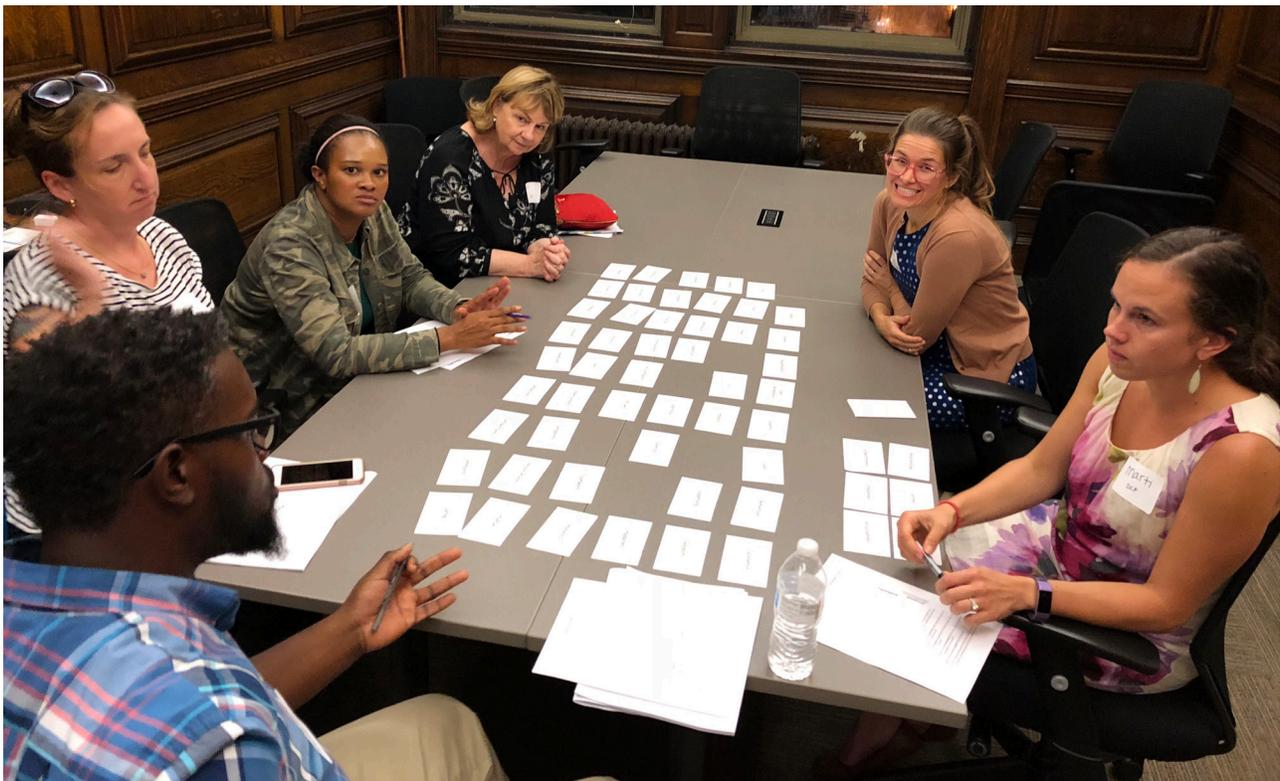
Working Group members used key words from the exit surveys at the Panel on Public Engagement to help identify common values.

Who will use the Public Engagement Guide?

This document is intended for both those doing planning, and those taking part in public engagement efforts as a participant or a stakeholder. Users may include:

- Neighborhood groups working on local plans;
- Practitioners: reference this as a toolkit of techniques and resources throughout the City (this applies to both private practitioners, and city departments);
- Planning process participants and residents: learn about best public engagement practices to be informed about options and not always settle for the same approaches.

For all users, this Public Engagement Guide pushes us to think more critically about what engagement techniques are most appropriate when trying to work through a set of issues.



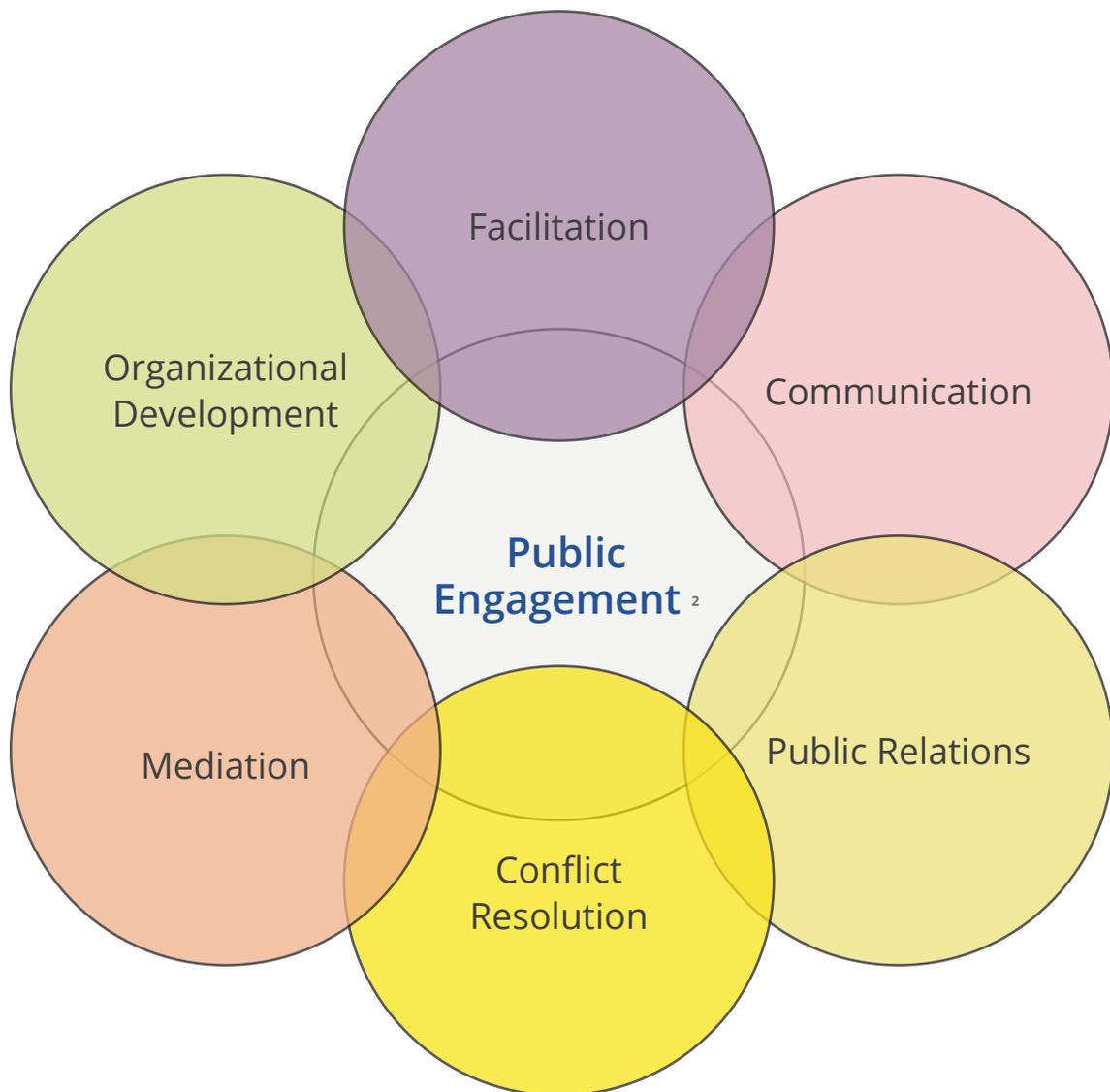
Diverse viewpoints Working Group members represented a diversity of potential users, including CDC representatives, urban planning consultants, and members of Registered Community Organizations.

The background of the slide is an aerial photograph of a city, likely a university campus, with a yellow color overlay. A blue vertical bar is positioned on the right side of the slide. The text is centered in the upper half of the slide.

02/ What is Public Engagement?

02 / What is Public Engagement?

Public engagement is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and uses public input to make sustainable and enduring decisions. Public engagement includes all aspects of identifying problems and opportunities, developing alternatives and making decisions. It uses skills, knowledge and processes common to other fields that require interactions with people.



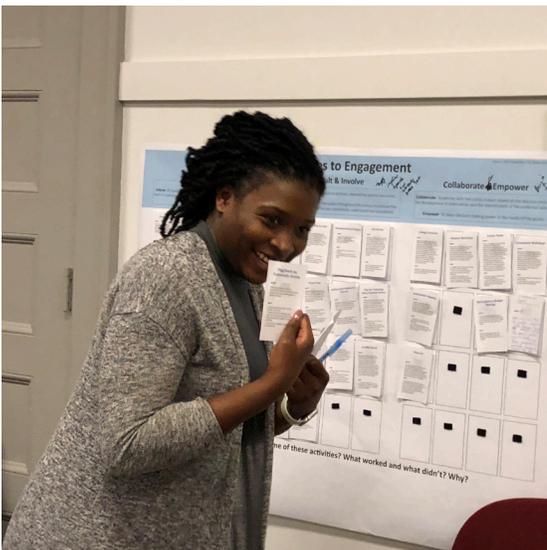
¹ Graphic adapted from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Identifying the Public

The public is any individual or group of individuals, organization, or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a planning decision. They are often referred to as stakeholders. They may be, or perceive that they may be, affected directly or indirectly by the outcome of a decision. Internal stakeholders (individuals who work for or with the decision-making organization) are also part of the public. This public engagement process should reflect their needs as well.

Two effective ways to identify the public are:

- Consider the extent to which the individual, group or other entity perceives it will be affected by the problem/opportunity to be addressed.
- List the people and groups that care about the decision and identify their interests and concerns.



Contextualizing engagement tools In the third Working Group meeting, participants were asked to think about which engagement tools they would use with various publics.

Some common terms include:

Stakeholder: any individual or group who has or perceives a stake in the outcome of a project

General public: any individual or group that is not associated with the decision-making power or special interests.

Professional stakeholders: full-time (paid) advocates for specific issues with an agenda. These may be paid employees of advocacy groups, companies, community groups, etc.

Sponsor: the organization seeking the input in a project.

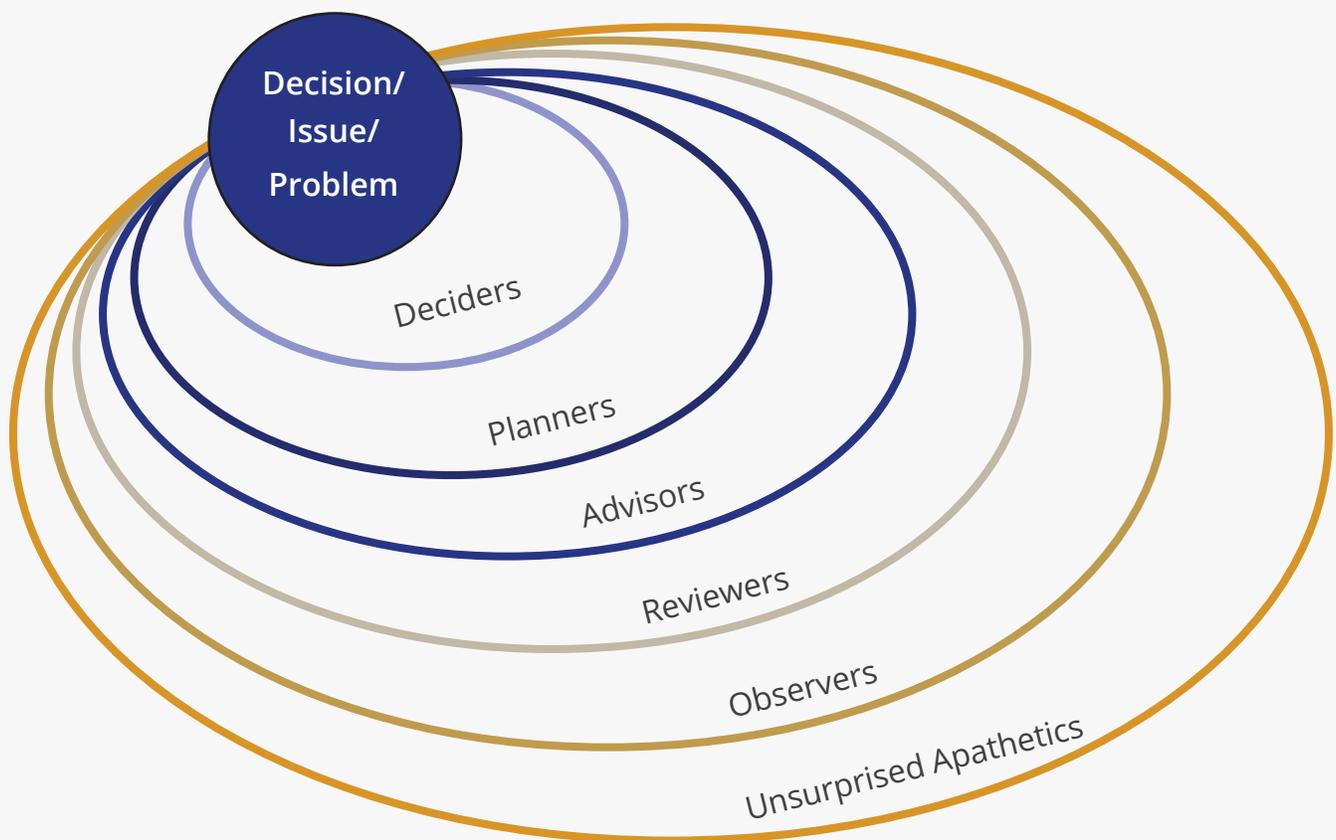
In identifying stakeholders, you can think about the extent of their level of interest and perceived distance from the impacts of a decision. Some people will be extremely engaged, attending every meeting and consistently being part of the process. Others will comment occasionally from afar. Some might know the process is occurring, but will not become engaged. A visual representation of these “Orbits of Public Participation” is shown on the following page.

Orbits of Participation

The model below shows a decision-making center surrounded by “orbits” of activity; the closer to the center, the greater the activity and energy. If you are in an orbit closer to the center, you may have more influence on the decision, but you will need to devote more energy to the process and your participation.

This model clarifies that there is no single public, but different levels of public based on differing degrees of interest and ability to participate, even within a single interest group. Your public process needs to provide for the needs of those in all orbits.

People move from orbit to orbit. The outermost orbit includes people who know of a project, but choose not to participate. People uninformed of the project or decision are outside all the orbits.



Orbits of Participation by Lorenz Aggens

Things to Remember

When to Start Thinking About Public Engagement

Start at the beginning. Before starting any project, it is imperative to build out a Public Participation Plan (see page 36). Although individual engagement activities may not be used until later in the decision-making process, the design of a Public Engagement Plan should occur as part of the overall strategic approach to the project and be created when the project concept is first discussed.

Ongoing vs. One-Time Public Engagement

Consider the duration of the engagement that is needed (or appropriate). Some engagement activities are one-time activities aimed at a single project. Yet, there is often a need for ongoing engagement about a particular subject. It is critical to determine at the beginning of the project the ways in which you will continue to communicate with participants. Relatively simple tools and policies such as web pages requesting feedback and clear recording of public input can improve communication with target audiences and help to build trust. Identifying these tools at the outset can also increase the degree to which the Project Team is perceived to be open and responsive to the public.

Building Positive Dialogue

For issues or projects that generate a high volume of interest, public engagement becomes a dialogue. In this two-way conversation, the Project Team and the public both speak and listen. Ideas are shared and discussed. There is a flow of information, insights, and opinions. Dialogue is more than one-way and one-time communication; it is a two-way conversation that occurs over time. The following figure illustrates three types of communication with the public. Recognizing that processes are iterative, consider the type of dialogue you seek and the appropriate tools for that point in the process.

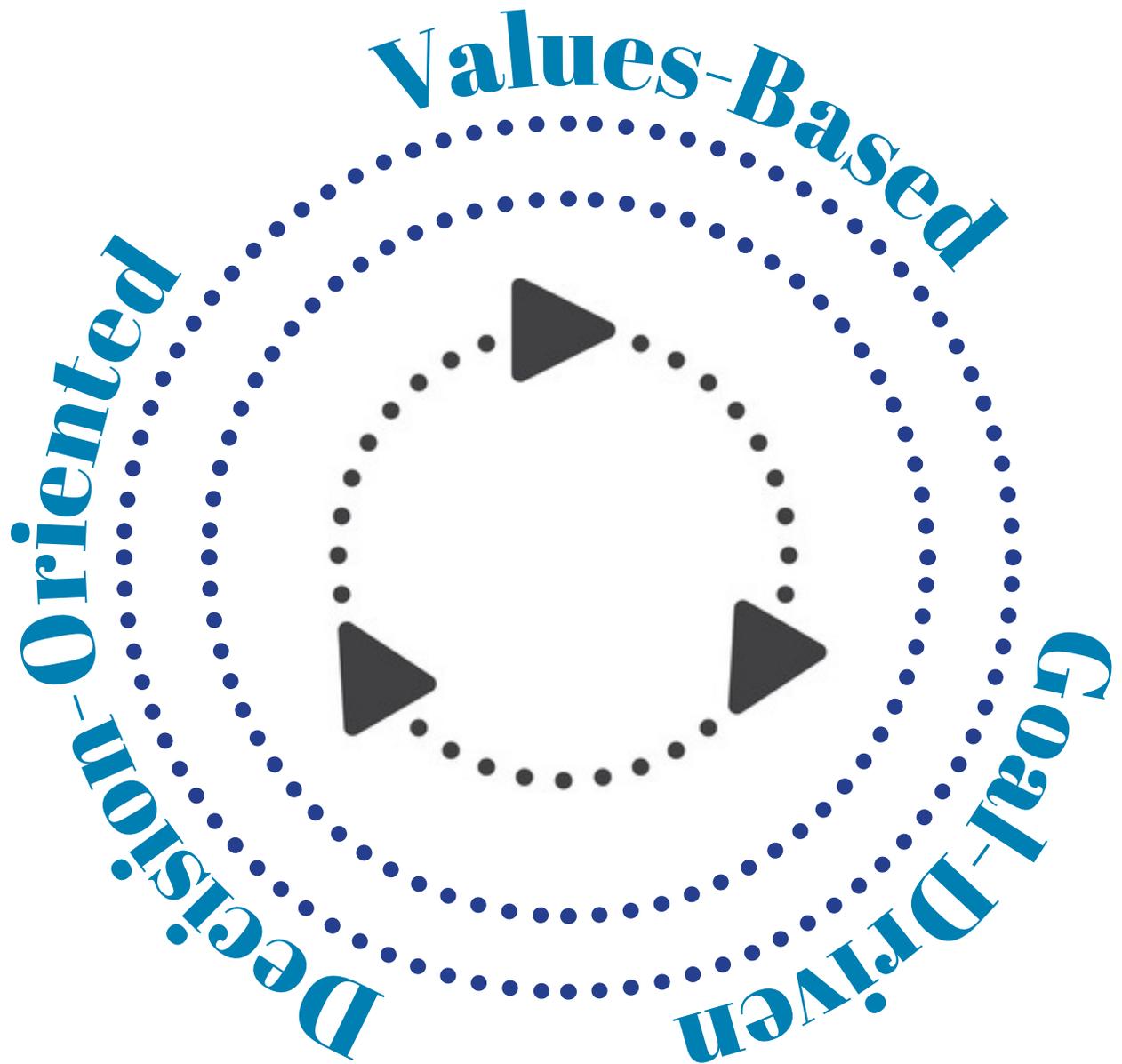
You Inform Us	We Inform Each Other	We Inform You
Public → Project Team	Public → Project Team	Project Team → Public
You tell us what central issues are and what your vision is.	We test ideas, brainstorm, and co-create vision statements.	We tell you about policy, resources, and outcomes after some other form of engagement.

Foundations of Public Engagement

Effective public engagement is based on three foundations that guide the level of participation to be applied to a project or initiative. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) identifies the following Public Participation Foundations ³:

- 1. Values-based:** Meaningful participation is focused on talking to people about what matters most to them and what matters most to you. Within a process, values affect how people perceive the decision process, participate or not, and how they perceive the decision outcome
- 2. Decision-Oriented:** Outlining the scope of issues under discussion to purposefully come to a conclusion or decision over the course of a process.
- 3. Goal-Driven:** Outlining the public's role and potential to influence the issues under discussion with clear objectives of what will be achieved. For example, information is communicated, input or feedback is sought and collaborative development of alternative criteria is desired.

Effective public engagement processes will encompass all three of these foundational elements.



²Graphic adapted from IAP2

DCP Equity Statement

The Department of City Planning will strive to incorporate equity into all levels of planning, understanding the particular role of **public engagement** in reconciling these past inequities. The following is the generally accepted definition of equity from The Department of City Planning:

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their wellbeing and achieve their full potential. ³

This Equity Statement supports the Mayor's Office of Equity which works with Pittsburgh's elected officials and various departments to ensure that the policies, programs and practices of the Department create and promote an equitable Pittsburgh.

The Department of City Planning recognizes that it is the responsibility of the City to engage all communities and seek out voices of underserved and underrepresented people. City Planning will approach all projects through an equity lens, a critical thinking approach to undoing institutional and structural racism ⁴. An equity lens evaluates burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities. In utilizing this technique, City Planning will:

- Identify disproportionate adverse effects our work may have on any community, but particularly on low-income populations and communities of color.
- Recognize the ways communities' needs can influence planning, investment, implementation and enforcement processes.

The Department of City Planning's Public Engagement Guide is a resource towards achieving the Department's Equity Statement and was created in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Equity.

"Pittsburgh, like many cities in North America and around the world for that matter, has experienced growing separation between peoples, classes, and races. These divisions are deep and complicated and rooted in history and embedded in systems. Taking the difficult, but first step of looking in the mirror and acknowledging these separations and their associated challenges is not new. In fact, it is actually in Pittsburgh's DNA."

Mayor Peduto, Pittsburgh Equity Indicators 2017

³ Definition from the Portland Community Engagement Manual: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/581458>

⁴ From the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE): <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-getting-results/>

Equity in Public Engagement

Thinking of public engagement through an equity lens is critical to hosting community meetings that are inclusive and allow for diversity of thought. When done correctly, projects have the ability to address historic inequality and restore communities' ability to participate and interest in civic engagement.

Without acknowledging how equity can be a part of public engagement processes, city projects can often unintentionally have disproportionately adverse outcomes for minorities and low-income communities. Structural inequality and institutionalized racism have long impacted how city projects are designed and how marginalized communities are affected whether they do or do not have the ability to provide input and consultation. Additionally, when communities are excluded from engagement, residents' needs and visions for their neighborhood go unheard and new plans and policies can be adopted without addressing core systemic issues.

City Planning Recognizes that there are many factors that relate to equity including but not limited to⁵:

- Racial
- Economic
- Environmental
- Immigration Status
- Religion
- Social
- Gender
- Ability
- Sexual Orientation
- Housing

Without a commitment to an inclusive public engagement process, City projects impact some of our most vulnerable residents. Inclusive outreach creates processes where the host is conscious of the inclusion or absence of people of diverse races, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic status and where negative impacts can be mitigated.

This approach requires that access to information, resources, and civic processes are transparent and that Project Teams actively seek input from all community members to engage in the design and delivery of public services⁶.

⁵Department of City Planning understands that there are more factors that may be considered in equity as well. More information on the definitions and different factors that go into equity can be found through the Office of Equity and in the glossary at the end of this document.

⁶The Government Alliance on Racial Equity, (GARE) to which the City of Pittsburgh is a partner, has been a major resource in identifying and incorporating best practices into this work.

02 / What is Public Engagement?

Listed below are some strategies for equitable public engagement practices. These should not be restricted to a single project timeline, but should be an ongoing practice for project managers as they interface with communities ⁷.

Understanding the Community

Understanding the community fosters a more informed decision-making process, that focuses on the change community members want to see. Each neighborhood is different across a variety of factors. Failing to understand the different demographics and characteristics of a neighborhood will result in projects that do not reflect the needs of the community nor highlight aspects of the neighborhood already present.

Determinants of Success:

- A thoughtful approach was used to gain insight into the experience of underserved and under-represented communities.
- New information affected the design of the community engagement plan.
- Community members feel heard, have a sense of ownership of the plan- and they express that by continuing to participate and see the plan through implementation.

Examples:

- Ask “How will this project impact people of color and low-income communities?”
- Research community history and current events through interviews, community mapping, or review of documentation.
- Perform a demographic/neighborhood analysis to identify the under-represented and under-served groups and understand current and/or historic trends.
- Assess vulnerability to socio-economic and environmental factors such as involuntary displacement/gentrification, hazard risk, etc.
- Become familiar with government initiatives and community-generated reports, such as plans or investment strategies, to identify potential cumulative impacts and/or opportunities for collaborative policy development.
- Use focus groups and surveys designed and/or administered by the community.
- Train key staff members in equity, transparency, facilitation, and engagement.

Apply the Equity Lens

There must be a conscious effort from staff to dismantle institutional barriers faced by underserved communities. Project managers will seek out the interests and voices of underrepresented community members. Thinking of public engagement from an equity lens is critical to hosting community meetings that are inclusive and allow for the diversity of thought.

⁷ From GARE: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/> and the Portland Community Engagement Manual: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/581458>

Determinants of Success:

- Stakeholders had a say in the setting of goals and benchmarks.
- Steps were taken to prepare staff to work with communities of color and/or low-income communities.
- Stakeholders understood the goals, the size, and the engagement opportunities of the project.

Examples:

- Identify disproportionate adverse effects the project may have on any community, but particularly on low-income populations and communities of color.
- Identify ways in which the communities' needs can inform planning, investment, implementation and enforcement processes.
- Build in time throughout the project to reassess who is engaged in the planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Build in time to check in with participants about how the process is working for them.
- Follow through to track how the process includes activities to mitigate for impacts.

Build Partnerships with Community

The City is invested in allocating sufficient staff time to fostering relationships with underrepresented communities. Previous negative experiences with the government by these under-represented communities demands ample time and support from project managers. This starts with consistent dialogue with community members throughout, and even before, the public engagement process.

Determinants of Success:

- Partners and collaborators who represent communities of color and low-income communities positively evaluated the quality of the relationship with staff and the project.
- Staff time and/or funding was allocated to support building capacity for communities of color or low-income populations.

Examples:

- Support staff participation in community-based initiatives.
- Clarify roles and expectations from the start.
- Institutionalize representation from impacted communities in decision-making.
- Use transparent and proactive communication to impacted communities.
- Report back to the community on how feedback was used.
- Have an honest and transparent conversation with the project team and the community about the resources available for engagement and the decision-making process.
- Establish mutually agreed-upon goals and benchmarks for the project or process, including criteria for a successful process and successful outcomes.
- Provide orientation or training on subject matter to community members.
- Coordinate administrative processes to simplify community interaction.

Factors that Affect Participation

The Orbits of Participation allow us to think about how best to maximize engagement, particularly from harder-to-reach groups. Not all stakeholders will be interested in every topic, and some might find participation difficult because of other commitments and priorities in their lives, even if they profess an interest in the issue. Strategies to maximize participation include:

- **Increase Clarity**
Project leaders should assess if they have sufficiently communicated: (1) the decision to be made, the problem to be solved or the opportunity to be met, (2) the possible impacts of the decision, (3) the decision process and opportunities to participate, (4) the level of influence individuals can have on the decision, and (5) the benefits of participation to members of the public.
- **Improve Communication**
Contributing obstacles for stakeholders include: (1) they did not see/hear/receive notification, (2) the notification did not provide sufficient reason for them to attend, (3) the notification was not in their language, (4) the notification was not culturally appropriate.
- **Respect Belief Systems**
Contributing factors for stakeholders include: (1) they have had previous unsatisfactory experience with the sponsoring organization, other similar organizations, or past participatory processes, (2) they do not believe their participation will be worthwhile or make a difference, (3) they believe their efforts to protect their own interests will be inadequate, (4) they do not trust the process and/or other stakeholders.
- **Maximize Accessibility**
The accessibility of a process or physical location may be particular challenges for: those with physical disabilities, the elderly, child strollers, those who use public transport or have special transport requirements, interested individuals separated from the location by distance (absent property owners), people without access to childcare, those whose public engagement activity will interfere with their work schedules, those celebrating non-traditional holidays or religious observances, those who feel the location is not culturally appropriate, busy people (double income, no kids or single-parent families).

Reaching the Hard-To-Reach

Project managers might also struggle to engage harder-to-reach stakeholders. For these groups, a single advertisement in one local newspaper will not be sufficient to attract all those potentially affected. Some groups who are difficult to reach with traditional communication methods include:

- People who speak a language other than the local language
- People from different cultures
- Indigenous people
- Youths and the elderly
- People with disabilities
- Families with young children
- People who do not belong to organized groups
- Unemployed people

To reach these and similar groups, projects managers might use some of the specific and non-traditional approaches to encourage equitable participation on pages 22-23.

Engagement and Sustainable Decision-Making

1. Effective public engagement acknowledges the desire for humans to participate in decisions that affect them.

- Provides a means for incorporating the public's values, interests, needs and desires into decisions that affect their lives.
- Encourages the public to provide meaningful input to the process.
- Effective public engagement facilitates understanding.

Both the public and the decision-maker need to fully understand both the problem or opportunity and the available options if a solution is to be found. Depending on the approach implemented, it is possible to achieve the following outcomes:

- A clear definition of the problem/opportunity & relevant information
- A forum for sharing ideas and concerns and finding common ground
- A comprehensible decision process and explicit decision criteria
- Incorporation of the public's issues (fears, concerns, needs and desires) into the decision process
- A clear, understandable rationale for the decision

2. Effective public engagement improves decisions.

- Effective public engagement includes all perspectives.
- Effective public engagement improves decisions by bringing all perspectives to the table. Sustainable decisions result when you find common ground.
- Effective public engagement improves decisions by identifying issues early.
- Effective public engagement improves decisions by promoting opportunities to build understanding and balance reviews of the problem or opportunity.

3. Effective public engagement leads to improved stewardship, and ownership of outcomes.

- Effective public engagement can create a sense of buy-in early in the process, and thereby enhance stewardship of the project. Over time, this can ensure more successful (and possibly more cost-effective) implementation of the project.
- Building trust with the community can often expedite, and minimize project costs when there are complex issues at stake.



What makes a sustainable decision? ⁷

⁸Graphic adapted from IAP2

Spectrum of Public Engagement

Levels of public engagement vary by project, size, and scope. Since language drives expectations, clear goals for each stage of engagement are critical. Engagement goals, different from project goals, describe what you intend to achieve with the public. By establishing at the beginning of the process the expectation for the level of engagement, trust is built in the process -- think of this as your promise to the public.

INCREASING IMPACT ON DECISION 

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 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.

Action: Refer to the chart above and think proactively about what level of engagement is desirable, and appropriate ⁹.

⁹Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Using the Spectrum of Public Engagement

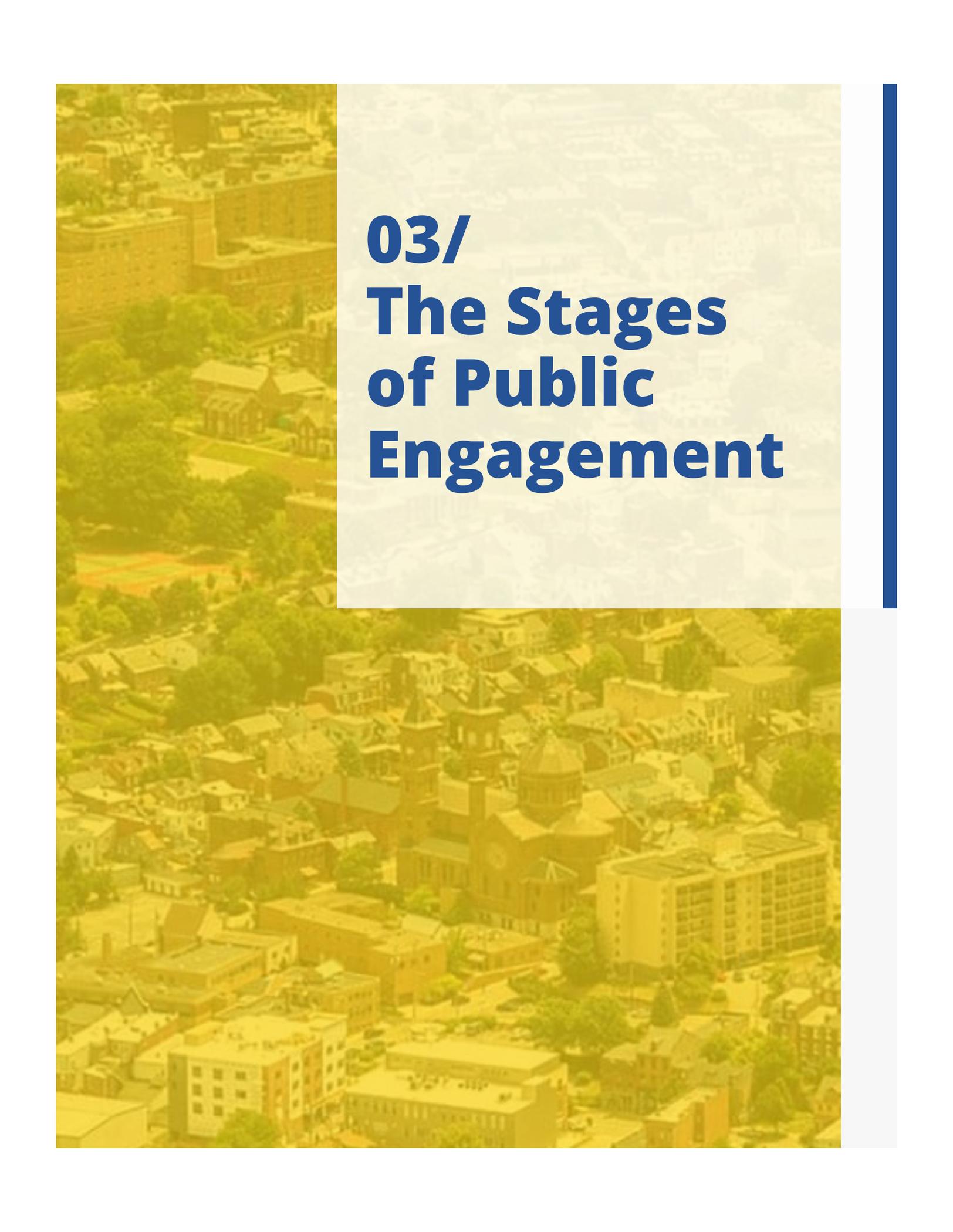
Review the boxes on the left to choose an outcome that aligns with the level of engagement you are anticipating. Higher is not necessarily better -- promise only what you can deliver ¹⁰

The level you select will be the highest level of potential influence, yet many stakeholders will choose to engage at lower levels, or not at all. For example, if you determine your project to be at the **collaborate** level on the spectrum, be sure to also provide opportunities to **inform**, **consult** and **involve**.

My goal is to...



¹⁰Adapted from The Participation Company

An aerial photograph of a city, likely a university town, with a yellow overlay. The image shows a dense cluster of buildings, including a large, prominent building with a dome and a spire, possibly a cathedral or a university building. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

03/ The Stages of Public Engagement

03 / The Stages of Public Engagement

The complex and dynamic nature of participation and engagement means there is no singular policy or practice tool that ensures better participation in every instance; there are practices and tools that can set better conditions for success. Best practice is to define from the beginning of a process the intended engagement plan, and to make that information available to the public.

This section explains the typical stages of an engagement process, and the city-wide principles that all processes should embody. It provides recommendations to address the opportunities and barriers to getting more people involved in a robust and impactful way, and having that engagement result in a more positive experience for participants. It is important to note that every project and audience is different and so the strategy outlined in this document is intended to serve as a guideline that can be adapted to specific project needs. This section includes two key components:

- 1. Principles for Public Engagement**
- 2. The Stages of a Typical Public Engagement Process**

The process for developing this Guide revealed a series of principles that are fundamental towards establishing more authentic public engagement in our City. These principles were developed through a values exercise with the Public Engagement Working Group, and reflect the crucial considerations when undertaking public engagement efforts. In developing a Public Engagement Plan, project teams should keep the principles outlined on the next page at the forefront of the planning process.

One of the main drivers and criteria for the practices identified in this section is the desire to successfully engage residents that traditionally have had limited participation in planning processes; therefore, attention was given to developing tools that communities can tailor and use to successfully engage residents in local planning and problem-solving efforts.

Principles of Public Engagement

The foundation of successful, meaningful public engagement is establishing a shared set of values. The following Principles, a result of collaboration with the Working Group, reflect the values that all public engagement processes should embody. When contracting or otherwise working with City Planning, Project Teams will be expected to articulate how their public engagement reflects these values. This will be one of the accountability measures to raise the bar for public engagement throughout the City. While specific tools may vary on each project, these principles establish a standard for public engagement.

While it's possible to strive for endless ideals, these are the five fundamental principles that should lay the foundation of any effective engagement process:

1. Transparency and Open Communication

Legitimate processes and credibility are built through transparency and open communication with all stakeholders.

2. Build a Foundation of Trust

Reconcile historic inequities to build a new foundation based on trust.

3. Center Equity and Fairness

Acknowledge systematic issues and make intentional efforts to address equity considerations in any engagement process.

4. Value Relationships

Human relationships with the community foster respect and increase engagement from representative community groups and residents. Project leads should value those relationships in any process.

5. Maximize Participation

Well-designed engagement processes maximize participation of residents and stakeholders.

These principles reflect the core desire to build trust among constituencies and to ensure that processes are intentional about the type of participation, not just the quantity. The ways in which these principles are expressed in everyday practices are described through the steps to a Public Engagement Plan and the guidelines and actions for each step. These Principles reflect some of the most common gaps in past experiences and the desires of participants that do want to participate productively in planning.

Stages of a Typical Public Engagement Process

It is important at each point of the public engagement process to clarify where you are in the process and what the goals of any given engagement are. This preserves the integrity of public messages to decision-makers, and ensures the public's trust that the City has utilized an effective participatory process. Outlined here are the typical phases of a public engagement process:

1. PREPARE: Setting Up the Process

The Project Team begins engaging with local partners, and drafting their Public Engagement Plan.

2. NOTIFY: Getting the Word Out

Let stakeholders and the public know the project has started, and set expectations for what the process will be moving forward.

3. EDUCATE & LISTEN: Creating Opportunity for Conversation

The project is live, and the team is soliciting & recording input and facilitating conversations. This is the core period for soliciting project input and hosting engagement activities.

4. FOLLOW THROUGH: Letting People Know What Happened

Based on what you heard throughout the engagement process, adjust the project as deemed appropriate. Communicate this clearly to the public (feedback loop).

ONGOING. ADAPT: Incorporating Flexibility

This is a reminder that engagement is iterative and any given approach should be able to be updated as a project progresses.

The process described above should be documented in a Public Engagement Plan, which will be reviewed by the Project Team at the beginning of a project.

When interacting with the public about an engagement process, think about using these key words (PREPARE, NOTIFY, EDUCATE & LISTEN, FOLLOW THROUGH, and ADAPT) to describe the goals and expectations for an engagement.

Communication & Access

While the internet is an excellent tool for communication and outreach, the Project Team should also include active efforts to reach out directly to the public. Some examples of active outreach are sending flyers or emails directly to stakeholders and presenting at community meetings. Often, active outreach is accomplished through community organizations. There are various community organizations in the City that represent various populations and interests. Some organizations, like community groups, are geographically focused. Others are organized by special interests such as bike and environmental advocates; or populations such as the Latino, Pacific Islander, and African-American, religious, LGBTQIA+, or disability communities. Community organizations can be vital vehicles through which public engagement occurs.

It is a good practice to diversify the groups you reach out to and the techniques you use for outreach in order to reach the greatest number and most representative section of the public. A good place to start is the City's record of Registered Community Organizations (RCO), which are community groups required to meet various transparency and inclusion requirements and that have a history and knowledge of community processes.

When thinking about informational tools to use in your process, be sure to consider potential barriers to engagement and the potential tools to address those barriers. This is an important step in considering the equity implications of decisions about engagement activities.

Consider answering the following questions during the PREPARE step to begin addressing some typical barriers to engagement:

- Will the meeting need a translator?
- Would people from different cultures feel welcome at this event?
- Are there technology or literacy skills needed that may be difficult for people with less education or from another generation?
- Is there a history of mistrust or neglect?
- Is the event held in an ADA compliant location?
- Are informational sessions held at a variety of times to accommodate people with alternative work schedules?
- Would it be appropriate for children to accompany a parent to the event if childcare is an issue for a single parent?
- Should childcare be provided?
- Have you considered power dynamics and differences around race, age, gender, and culture?

1. PREPARE: Setting Up the Process

The first step is to engage major stakeholders & design a Public Engagement Plan.

1.1 What is the level of Engagement?

- Determine the level of engagement expected
- based on the scope/impact of the project.
- Identify who the “Public” is for your project and how you will reach them.

Do your research to understand the community before the process begins.

- Align resources with community needs.
- Recognize the local history that may have included injustices, disenfranchisement, and planning policy that led to the way people may perceive planning today.
- Establish project values at the outset. Consider community stewardship and ownership as tools to achieve goals and promote equity.

Appendix Materials:

Project timeline (pg. 52)

Stakeholder worksheet (pg. 53)

Assessing public impact (pg. 54-55)

1.2 Who will make decisions?

- Engage local community partners to build equity and ownership in the process.
- Identify decision-makers and dates formal decisions will be made (Elected officials? Administrators? Boards or commissions? Working groups? Ad-hoc committees?).
- Support existing and upcoming leaders by providing structured leadership development opportunities throughout the engagement process.
- Utilize existing networks, and consider less visible communities and networks.

1.3 How long will your process take?

- Develop a timeline to set expectations for both the public, and the project team.
- Work backwards from target dates for final decisions to determine how much time engagement will require. For small projects, plan engagements two to three or more months before final decisions are made; medium and large projects require additional time.

2. NOTIFY: Getting the Word Out

After you have laid out your Public Engagement Plan, the second step is to sufficiently notify the public about the project and the Public Engagement Plan. This requires getting the word out early, to as many members of the public as possible, so that the Project Team is clearly communicating the engagement process, and begins to establish trust with core constituencies.

The notification step sends the message to the public that “this project may affect you”, it sets expectations for all parties, and starts the project off on a good foot. During notification, describe the purpose and goals for the project.

2.1 What are some basic communication strategies?

- Build trust by identifying realistic expectations related to process and outcomes, and acknowledging engagement limitations.
- Convey to people who are willing and able to participate that there are opportunities for varying commitments, including options that are simple and enjoyable without major responsibilities.
- Consider visits to community organizations, open houses, emails, letters, phone calls, and posting on the City website.
- Consider how information is shared- long staff reports may need to be summarized in an executive summary or in a bullet-point format.

Appendix Materials:

Communications strategy (pg. 58-59)

Logistics of community engagement (pg. 60)

Comment card (pg. 61)

Website template (pg. 62-63)

2.2 How will you communicate?

- Publish relevant documents & information in an easily accessible online format and in common physical locations.
- Promote upcoming public meetings three weeks in advance, and no less than two weeks ahead of time. This gives community organizations time to share information and promote an engagement opportunity.
- Provide opportunities for people to get up to speed throughout, even if they were not involved in the earlier part of the process.

3. EDUCATE & LISTEN: Creating Opportunity for Conversation

Education allows for meaningful discussion and dialogue to occur by providing common ground for all interested parties.

3.1 What education is necessary and helpful?

- Provide opportunities for education about project topics to eliminate barriers to engagement and increase the comfort level of participants in joining the discussion.
- Create a database that uses knowledge of other City departments and key stakeholders so residents have a clear idea of who to contact to learn more about various topics.
- Refer to community history and past dialogue to build credibility and relevance.
- Take time to clarify the decision-making process, the scope and impacts of the project, and the variables and alternatives to be considered.
- Technical jargon should be translated into simple lay terms.
- Use print and digital resources in addition to public meetings/events to educate.

Appendix Materials:

Strategies for equitable public engagement (pg. 22-23)

Engagement process table (pg. 56-57)

Engagement toolkit

Engagement survey (pg. 66)

Demographic survey (pg. 67)

Sign in sheet (pg. 68)

3.2 How do I use listening and storytelling strategies to improve outcomes?

Gather public input and actively listen to the histories and stories from the public. Once everyone is at the same level of understanding, it is more reasonable to expect a two-way dialogue. Be sure to listen with empathy and mindfulness, and to pay attention to your own nonverbal cues. Consider the following:

- Eliminate barriers to engagement such as language by providing skilled, culturally competent facilitators and interpreters, and ensuring accessibility of content regardless of background.
- Eliminate barriers to attendance by providing childcare and flexibility in location and time. Consider providing relevant trainings to engagement staffers in facilitating the removal of these barriers.
- Provide clear ground rules and norms that foster respectful dialogue at meetings.
- Ask intentional questions and establish the reason for the meeting and the opportunities for change. Use the stages of a typical engagement process (p.36) to clarify expectations for the public.
- Let engagement be a creative, collaborative process that celebrates the uniqueness of communities and their residents. Incorporate activities that are fun and make people happy, that make them want to participate.
- Co-facilitate meetings with community members and leaders.
- Use various methods such as emails, surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

3.3 How should I record public input?

- Keep accurate records of input received. Publish these on the project website to support the fourth engagement stage (FOLLOW THROUGH).
- Determine how verbal input will be recorded.
- Track and share results of any polling or voting conducted.
- Explain how input will be considered, and where/how it will be shared.

4. FOLLOW THROUGH: Letting People Know What Happened

The final stage is to follow through by illustrating how the public engagement process has impacted decision making.

4.1 What are the necessary feedback loops for a project?

- Show how community engagement influenced the outcomes of a project by demonstrating how feedback was included in policy and planning development, even when not directly applied.
- Utilize and share feedback and data collected throughout the process to assess the success of engagement activities after each engagement and at the end of the entire process.
- When possible, invite participants to observe the decision-making process (ex. Planning Commission, City Council, proclamation signing, etc.).
- Inform participants when a decision has been made and of continuing opportunities for engagement on this or similar projects.

Appendix Materials

Engagement log (pg. 64)

Engagement report (pg. 65)

Project website (public comments/
past events + additional resources)
(pg. 63)

ONGOING. Adapt: Incorporating Flexibility

Regularly assess whether goals and expectations related to public engagement are being met, and revise the plan as needed. This may require any of the following:

What are common changes in long-range planning engagement processes?

- Changes to timelines.
- Creation of additional education materials in response to confusion.
- Meeting an additional time with a community group to provide sufficient time for discussion on the topics.
- Adding time for a new group of stakeholders not previously identified to catch up with others in the process.
- Expanding the public engagement process because the level of impact was found to be greater than initially thought.

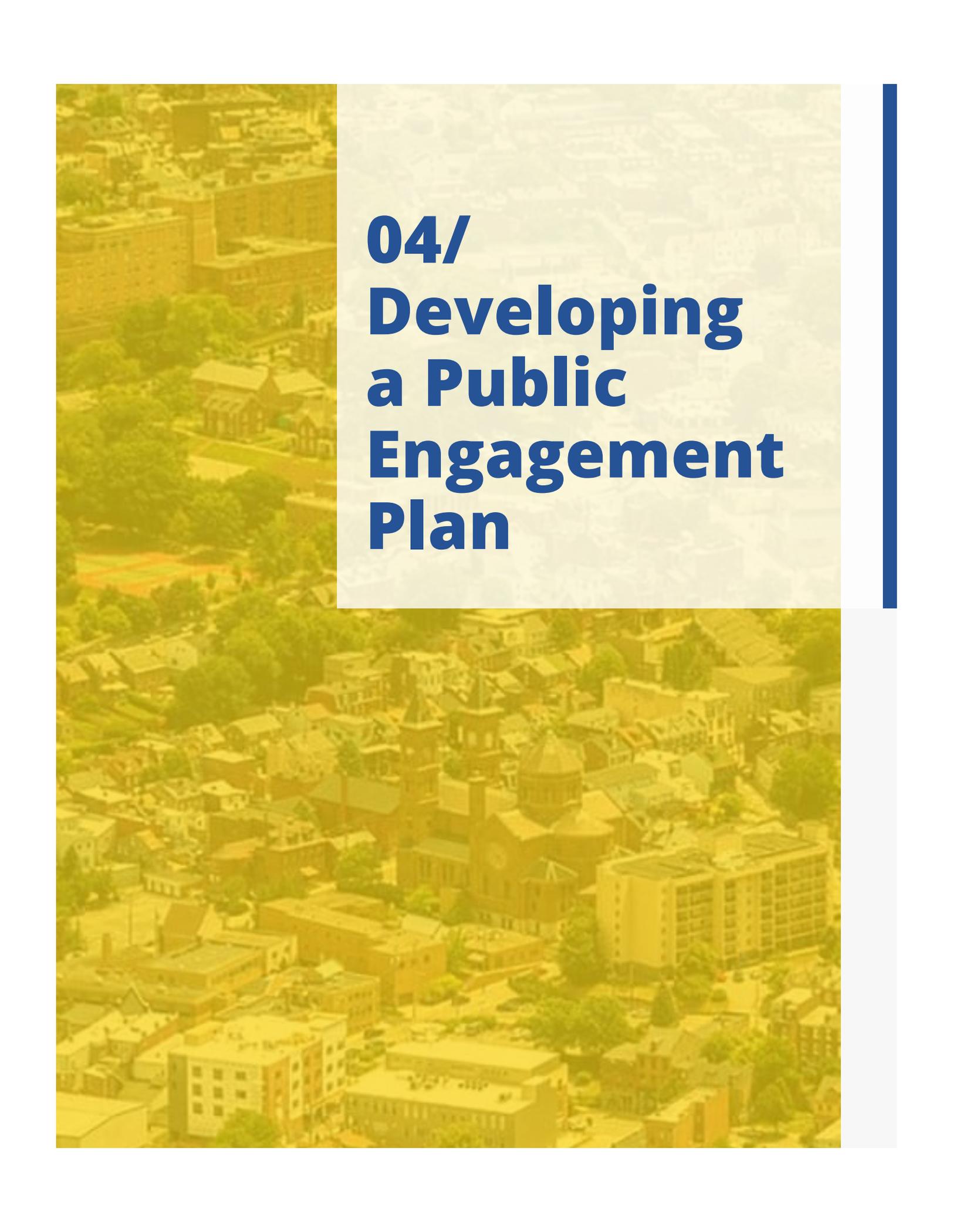
How can I identify lessons learned for future engagements?

During your project, consider gathering feedback from the public and internal working groups on the quality of the process and whether it is meeting their expectations.

After your project is complete, “debrief” both internally and externally with discussions about how public engagement for future similar projects can be improved. Answer the following questions:

- What went well?
- What did not go well?
- What recommendations do you have for the future?

Take time to clarify the decision-making process, the scope and impacts of the project, and the variables and alternatives to be considered.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely a university town, with a yellow overlay. The image shows a dense cluster of buildings, including a large, prominent building with a dome and a spire, possibly a cathedral or a university building. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

04/ Developing a Public Engagement Plan

04 / Developing A Public Engagement Plan

A Public Engagement Plan is a living document that establishes the approach to engagement for a project, sets expectations with the public for engagements, and hosts records of all engagements throughout the course of a project.

Public Engagement Plans benefit project outcomes because they:

- Set expectations with the public and the Project Team for the approach to public engagement on a project from the beginning and creates an avenue for follow-through
- Support well-researched and transparent decision-making using principles and standards co-created with a diverse public
- Documents how a given project will achieve the City's expectations for engagement

This section includes the following information:

- Sections of a Public Engagement Plan with guiding questions
- Process Review for a Public Engagement Plan

Sections of a Public Engagement Plan

Below, each of the sections of a Public Engagement Plan are described in detail. The Public Engagement Plan should follow this format and include an Appendix where all major tables, worksheets, and charts referenced throughout the document are included (this facilitates ease of reading).

1. Project Overview

By the time you start working on your Public Engagement Plan, you should already have a good idea of the big question your project is trying to answer. In this section, you will be asked to describe the project, its impacts, timeline, resources, and context. While some of this may seem repetitive, remember that this section needs to be written for the general public, and so should use simple, straight-forward language that it to the point. Remove all jargon and technical vocabulary from any existing project descriptions. Keep in mind that this section is about explaining the actual project, and not the engagement that will be done for the project. In total, this section should be two to three pages.

2. Explanation of Public Engagement Process

In this section, you will describe your approach to engagement for this project, the engagement goals, the decision-making process, and the communications approach. There are numerous worksheets and guiding documents to help you think about completing this section. This section should be four to six pages, plus a number of pages in the Appendix showing Working Group members, stakeholders, and communications strategies. None of the resources/worksheets provided are required, but are strongly encouraged.

3. Accountability & Evaluation Metrics

This section will describe how you intend to evaluate the success of your engagement approach, and how participants can see follow-through. This section will need to be updated throughout the course of the project, and so in the beginning will be just a couple short descriptions of the accountability and evaluation approach. Before the entire project wraps up, you will need to update this section to reflect the results of your various engagements. At the beginning, this section might only be one page, but by the end of your process it will include a host of evaluation worksheets in the Appendix and a completed engagement log.

The following pages provide more detail and walk you through how to create a Public Engagement Plan.

Section 1. Project Overview	
Introduction	<p>State briefly what the project is and why the community is/will be invested in the project outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose is to have simple language that can be shared broadly. • This should be brief, clear and explain why the public should invest their time in the project. It should include all information relevant to potential Steering Committee members.
Project Area & Demographics	<p>Gather background information about the affected population you intend to reach (ex. population, race, income, language or dialect spoken, customs, historical or geographic data, relevant data reports, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, see the Comprehensive Plan State of the City report (2020). • What other research will you need to better know and understand the relevant public? How will you identify community strengths and assets? Include a map or representation of the affected geography.
Project Goals & Outcomes	<p>Explain what you hope to achieve by completing this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your main purpose for involving community members? • What are the key issues that the project will address? • How have you addressed the equity implications of your project (pages 22-23)?
Project Timeline	<p>Complete a table timeline for your project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example timeline can be found in the Appendix on page 52.
Project Resources	<p>Outline your resources for the overall project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide broad terms such as funding sources, overall budget for engagement, food and advertising, and capacity being dedicated.
Previous Planning	<p>List previous planning or policy created on this topic and how it is related to this project.</p>
Concurrent Efforts & Coordination	<p>Discuss what concurrent planning or policy is underway across the City that may impact your project. Consider what impact it may have on your process, or your outcomes.</p>
Decision-Making Process	<p>What decisions will be made as a result of this process, who decides them, and how does the engagement fit into the overall decision-making process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have representation from affected communities in decisions? • What decisions need to be made after the engagement and how will the community be involved in that process? • How will the affected community be informed of final decisions?

Section 2. Public Engagement Process	
Stakeholder & Issues Assessment	<p>Identify key stakeholders using the Stakeholder and Issues Assessment Worksheet (pg. 53).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is affected by, involved in, or has interest in the project issues? • What steps will you take to ensure impacted communities that were not historically included in the decision-making process are included?
Project Team & Steering Committee(s)	<p>List all members of the project team and their contact information. Explain how the Steering Committee is chosen; list all members and their affiliations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stakeholder type are they and are there any conflicts of interest?
Public Engagement Overview & Tools	<p>Briefly describe how you intend to engage the public about your project. Explain in detail each engagement opportunity, where it falls in the Public Engagement Spectrum, and what engagement tools will be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the worksheet for Assessing Public Impact and the following one-pager on Determining the Level of Engagement (pg. 56-57) • Use Engagement Process Table to map out your engagements (pg. 58-59). • To choose engagement tools, refer to the Public Engagement Toolkit (separate Appendix document). • Why, and with what frequency/geography will each tool be used? • Who are the key audiences for each intended engagement? • Do you or others in the project team have appropriate partnerships or contacts to initiate and support the determined level of engagement?
Communications Strategy	<p>Identify a plan identity and name. Explain your Communications Strategy (pg. 58-59).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how you will use various communication tools and why. • Consider the Logistics of Community Engagement (pg. 60). Apply accessibility considerations (per p.60) • Use communications tools such as comment cards (pg. 61) and a project website (pg. 62-63) • Establish consistent messaging (including branding) from the outset
Public Engagement Principles	<p>How does your chosen engagement process realize the City's Public Engagement Principles (pg. 34)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there trust issues among members of the public or a community that may prevent or make difficult full engagement? • How will you address the differences among affected communities? • Is there community and public support for your project?

Section 3. Accountability & Evaluation	
Feedback Loop	<p>What is in place to inform the community of benchmarks or progress about the project during the process, and after completion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you recognize the contribution of community members? • Will there be opportunities for formal project/program updates and feedback (ex. meetings, website updates, phone calls, emails)? • Who will inform the community on impacts of final decisions? <p>After each engagement, complete the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement Log (pg. 64) • Engagement Report (pg. 65)
Evaluation & Monitoring of Success	<p>Determine how you will evaluate the success of your project both in terms of process and outcomes. Use Exit Surveys (ex. Engagement Survey, pg. 66, and Demographic Survey, pg. 67) at large public meetings to assess the impact of engagement. Summarize Exit Surveys after each phase of engagement into short reports uploaded to the project website that cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were you able to successfully reach the intended audience? See sample sign in sheets on pages 68-69. • Did people receive necessary information to make a relevant response? • Was the right type or level of engagement chosen? • Was feedback from the community positive or negative? • Did the community feel like they received proper feedback on the results of previous engagements? • How does the project outcome reflect the specific feedback and insight you received through the engagement process? • Did attendees indicate they want to be part of a similar process again? Why? • How can you adapt going forward to make the process better, more inclusive, and more impactful?

Process Review

Although a Public Engagement Plan is developed at the very beginning of a project, expect that it may be continuously updated until the project itself ends. Along the way, a Public Engagement Plan will be reviewed by four different bodies. This is the process by which a Public Engagement Plan becomes finalized:

A. REVIEW

The initial audience for the Public Engagement Plan is the relevant City Department, and in this way it should provide a basic overview of the project and the intended public engagement that will occur throughout the course of the project. All language should be simple and understandable, and should identify where there is room to adapt the course given changes to circumstances. The Public Engagement Plan will reflect the desired outcomes of each engagement activity, but the engagements will not have already happened. Wherever the Project Team will provide additional information as the project progresses should be noted. Once the initial Public Engagement Plan is uploaded to the City website, it must be presented to the Planning Commission once every six months until adoption.

B. PUBLISH

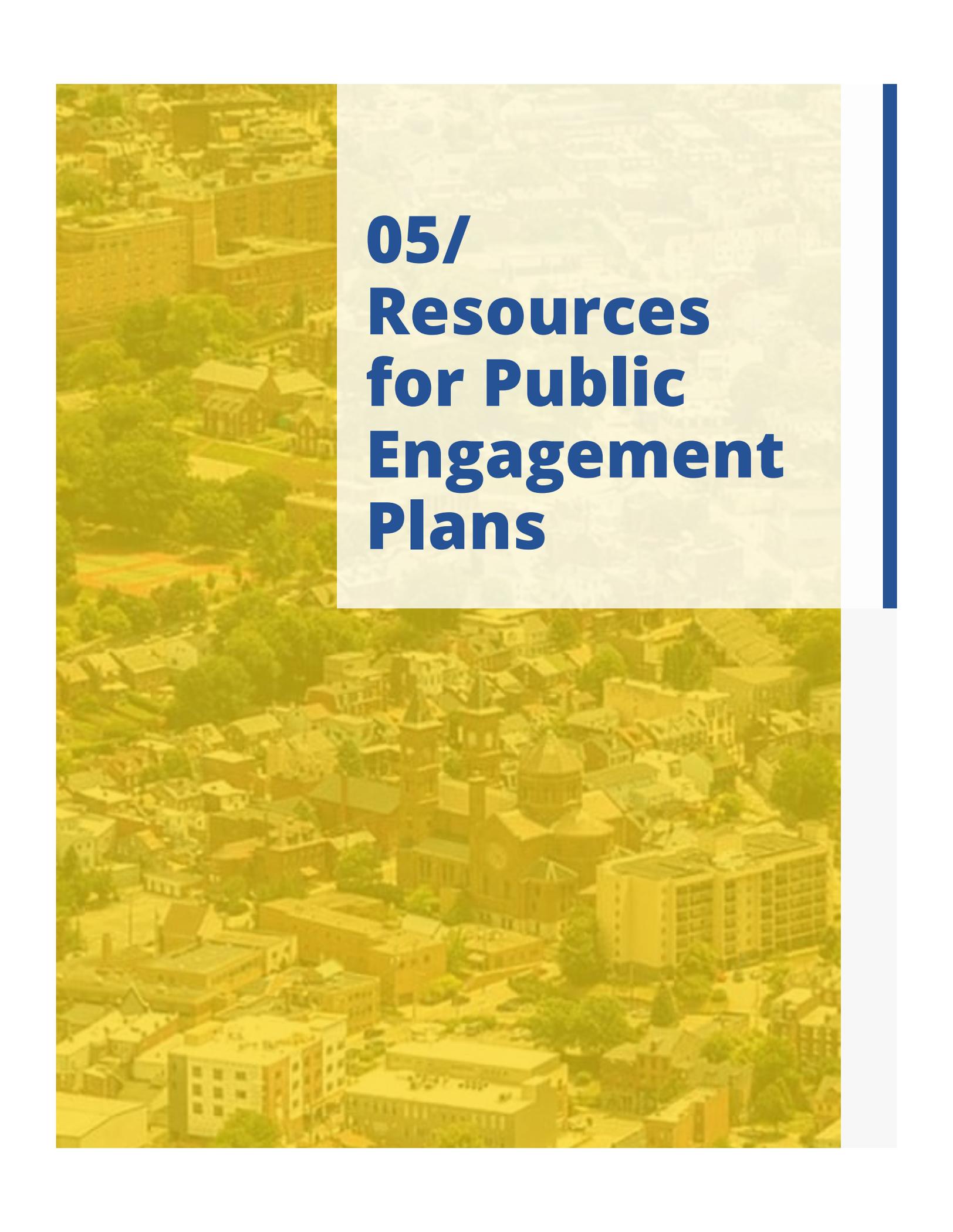
Once the Public Engagement Plan has been approved by the relevant City Department, it is then uploaded to the project website and distributed to the Steering Committee(s) and relevant community organizations (ex. RCOs). This is so they can plan to engage appropriately & set realistic expectations for the course of the project.

C. RECORD

Throughout the course of the project, the Project Team should continuously fill out the Engagement Log and fulfill the communications plan. Keep records of each engagement and add them to your Appendix. Periodically, you should update the Accountability & Evaluation section of your Public Engagement Plan to reflect your success metrics and denote any changes made throughout the process.

D. REPORT

The final audience for the Public Engagement Plan is the City Planning Commission, who will be given a copy of the Public Engagement Plan with the final product as a way of determining if appropriate public engagement was conducted that fulfills the City's Public Engagement Principles.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely a university campus, with a yellow overlay. The image shows various buildings, including a large brick building with a central tower, and a green field. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

05/ Resources for Public Engagement Plans

Project Timeline

This is a rough outline of a process that requires Planning Commission input and a decision by City Council. A timeline such as this could be made available to the **public** to provide an overview on project timing and opportunities for public education and input. The basic **public engagement** steps from this guide are noted in the right-hand column to illustrate the generally linear, but sometimes repetitive and circular progression of the steps throughout the process.

January 2019	Initial meeting with stakeholders. Additional meetings to be held throughout the process	NOTIFY
February 2019	Notify the public about the project and timeline. Initial meeting with community groups to describe the purpose of the project and the public engagement effort.	NOTIFY
February 2019 – July 2019	Online public comment begins. Visit the project website or email comments to the Project Manager @ email/phone/ address.	NOTIFY EDUCATE LISTEN
March 2019	Presentation to neighborhoods directly affected and other community groups upon request.	EDUCATE LISTEN
March 2019	Dialogue meeting with adjacent residents.	EDUCATE LISTEN
March 2019	Focus groups with stakeholders and residents.	EDUCATE LISTEN
May 2019	Planning Commission briefing, public hearing, and decision.	LISTEN
June 2019	Public input summarized and transmitted on website and to the Mayor.	FOLLOW THROUGH
July 2019	Staff report with Administration recommendation and Planning Commission recommendation sent to City Council.	FOLLOW THROUGH
August 2019	City Council briefing, public hearing, and decision. (May include additional public engagement and discussion)	EDUCATE LISTEN FOLLOW THROUGH

Please note that this timeline is subject to change based on scheduling opportunities and the potential for additional discussion on the topic.

For any questions, please contact the Project Manager.

NAME
EMAIL
PHONE

Stakeholders & Issues Assessment Worksheet

Use this worksheet to map priority issues, and relevant stakeholders.

Issue	Stakeholders		
	Stakeholder Group	Geographic Frame of Reference	Contacts
1. Impact on Property Values	Area residents	Quail Run & Mountain Ranch neighborhoods	Joe Smith, President Quail Run Sun Moore, President, Mountain Ranch
	Developers	West of Grand Ave. to White Mountains	Sunstar Development, Inc.
	State Land Department	Statewide	John Ritter, Regional Planner
	Farmers	South of Cotton Land	Brad Duncan, Duncan Farms
	Air Force Base	Within their property limits	Captain Beth Owens
	Flood Control District	Watershed basin	Cathy Jones, Regional Engineer
2.			
3.			

Assessing Public Impact

Based on your public impact score from this worksheet, identify an appropriate level of public engagement for your project. The minimum level of public engagement for City actions is almost always public information and education. Just one mark at the “High” level will warrant careful evaluation about the level of public engagement, even if your answers to the other questions were otherwise low. Note that each level has a different obligation and outcome, and that the levels are cumulative, so if you choose to collaborate, you must also inform, consult, and involve.

- 1-2 Indicates very low to low; Spectrum recommendation: at least INFORM
- 2-3 Indicates low to moderate; Spectrum recommendation: at least CONSULT
- 3-4 Indicates moderate to high; Spectrum recommendation: probably INVOLVE
- 4-5 Indicates high to very high; Spectrum recommendation: minimum INVOLVE, consider opportunities to COLLABORATE or EMPOWER

See the next page for examples within each engagement level given your impact score.

ASSESSING THE PUBLIC IMPACT	Very Low	Low	Mod-erate	High	Very High
1. What is the anticipated level of conflict, controversy, opportunity or concern on this or related issues?					
2. How significant are the potential impacts to the public?					
3. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue, project or program?					
4. What degree of involvement does the public desire?					
5. What is the potential for public impact on the potential decision or project?					
6. How significant are the benefits of involving the public?					
7. How serious are the potential ramifications of NOT involving the public?					
8. What level of public participation does the Mayor and/or City Council desire or expect?					
9. What is the possibility that the media will become interested?					
10. What is the probably level of difficulty in solving the problem or advancing the project?					
Count the number of checks in each column					
Multiply number of checks by the weight	x 1	x 2	x 3	x 4	x 5
Enter column score					
Add total of all five column scores					
Divide total score by the number of questions	/ 10				
PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE (number is out of five)					

Determining the Level of Engagement

Use the results of the Assessing Public Impact worksheet to give you a sense of the level of public participation that you should recommend to the decision maker. These worksheets are only meant to be used as a rule of thumb.

You may choose to apply additional questions that are important to the organization or community to increase the usefulness of the Assessing Public Impact worksheet. In addition, a minimum level of participation may be prescribed by regulation or by internal expectations, in which case this worksheet might be useful in determining whether the required level is sufficient or if another level on the Spectrum should be considered.

NOTE: If any question scores were registered at the very high level, careful evaluation should be given to the level of public participation, even if the average score was otherwise low.

1 ← PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE → 5				
Inform (1)	Consult (2)	Involve (3)	Collaborate (4)	Empower (5)
<u>We Inform You</u> The City will provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	<u>We Inform Each Other You Inform Us</u> Use public dialogue to seek feedback on proposals, analyses and alternatives. Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. Involve adds dialogue to the elements of the "inform" and "consult" levels.		<u>We Inform Each Other</u> Collaborate with the public on some or all aspects of the planning decision-making process, including the identification of issues, development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	
Goal				
We will keep stakeholders informed.	We will work with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. Ensure that stakeholders are informed and feel heard.		We will look to stakeholders for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	
Examples of Techniques				
Letters (mail/email), flyers, fact sheets, reports, newsletter articles, websites, press releases, social media, open houses, signs	Comment forms, public comment periods, small discussion groups, surveys/pools	Advisory groups, workshops, design charrette, deliberative dialogue	Public-involved workgroups/ partnerships, joint venture, ballot, participatory budgeting	
Techniques in Toolkit				
Office Hours / Coffee Hour	Storytelling Workshop		Demonstration Project	
Open House	Community Walkshop		Facilitator / Advocacy Training	
Summit	Community Asset Mapping		Action Teams	
Website / Blog	Pop-Up Exercise		Visioning Exercise	
Advertising Products	Collage Scenarios / Dot Activity		World Cafe	

Engagement Process Table (covers two pages)

Use this table, or similar, to lay out the intended engagements for a project. This is meant to help in brainstorming and visualizing a project's total engagements.

WHAT	LEVEL	LED BY	#	FROM	TO	DESCRIPTION
Short Presentations at Existing Community Meetings	Inform/ Consult	Project Team / Working Group members	~25	5/27	7/2	15 minute presentations on project. OPTION: q&a or values activity. Working Group members might lead some of these meetings.
Website Updates	Inform/ Consult	Website	1	5/27	7/16	Public comment period
Open House	Inform/ Consult	Project Team	2	5/27	7/17	Open house presentation of project with focused activities.
Hands-on meeting	Involve	Project Team	2	5/27	7/2	Values activity and revolving conversation for those who want to contribute at a discussion level
Information Kiosks at Public Spaces/ Events	Inform	Project Team	2	5/27	7/2	Set up an information kiosk at fairs & events already happening.
Focus Groups	Inform/ Consult	Project Team	6	5/27	7/2	Focus groups with specific user types. Two for each target, accommodate schedules.
TOTAL	CONSULT		38	5/27	7/16	

TOOLS	GEOGRAPHY	RESOURCES	TARGET AUDIENCE
Discussion group or values activity	Single neighborhoods or groups of neighborhoods	Staff, flashcards for values activity	Neighborhood groups that might be going through Nghbd. Plans, RCOs, hard-to-reach groups
Digital media	All	Website, maybe website developer	General public
Open House	City-wide, one in each quarter of the City	For each: food (\$200), childcare, ASL	General public, specifically this with limited time
Card storming, revolving conversation, values activity		Food: \$200 Posters: \$200 Stickers: \$200 Childcare, ASL, translation	General public, specifically those looking to comment on values & discuss
Information kiosk	All	Posters, stickers, brochures	General public, maybe those who wouldn't otherwise come to public meetings
Focus group	N/A	Snacks: \$20 each \$120 total	(1&2) City Staff, (3&4) Consultants/Developers, (5&6) community/RCOs/advocates
		\$1,320	

Communications Strategy

In developing a communications strategy, answer the following questions:

- Who are priority targets for communication? What are key messages?
- Who will be in charge of communicating with stakeholders? What are anticipated questions?
- What are the best methods for communication for this project?
- Have you allocated enough time to carry out the engagement properly?
- Have you asked stakeholders how they would like the process communicated?

Use the tables below and on the right to establish how you will communicate about each major element of a project.

WHAT?	KEY MESSAGES/ PURPOSES	STAKEHOLDER GROUP(S)	TEAM MEMBER?	WHEN?	HOW?	SUCCESS IS:
Neighborhood Plan	Comprehensive update on neighborhood plan	Staff	Adam	Within next month	Staff meeting	Presentation at meeting
	Summary update on neighborhood plan	Board	Adam	By 11/28	Email	Communications out by deadline, positive response from donors
			Kevin	By 12/15	Paper mail	
Development Activities Meeting (DAM), June	Help us promote our meeting	Community leadership	Darlene	Within 2 days of DAM date fixed	Telephone	Announcements of meeting appear in at least 3 outlets managed by leaders
	Feedback needed before DAM				New Community Members	
	Promote attendance at DAM	Marge	1 month prior to DAM	listserve, email		Community level of satisfaction with our communication, based on annual survey
	Help us staff the DAM					

COMMUNICATION TOOL		Project Kick-Off	Kick-Off Survey	Community Meeting	Steering Committee Meeting	Action Team Meeting	Public Unveiling	Commission
Hard Copy	Local Distribution	x		x		x	x	x
	Mailing	x		x		x	x	x
Electronic	Email	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Project Website	x	x	x		x	x	x
	Social Media	x	x	x		x	x	x

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Logistics of Community Engagement

The logistics of community engagement are critical for turnout and community interest. Paying attention to a number of logistical issues will enhance participation and improve the overall effort. For each engagement tool chosen, answer the following:

- **Venue:** Making meetings geographically close to communities or stakeholders is critical to getting a good turnout. Choosing a site that is community centered may be more familiar and comfortable for attendees. Does the venue accommodate for public parking and/or transportation?
- **Host:** Consider that the host of the event may drive participation. Consider who you are partnering with to host any event. If inviting public officials, make sure you have followed appropriate channels before inviting them to participate. Clarify in advance the role for each public official and community members prior to the engagement.
- **Staffing:** Will you use program staff, other City staff, or partner staff to help with set up, welcoming and check-in, and meeting facilitation?
- **Budget:** Is your budget adequate to provide resources for advertising, communication and promotion, rental space, refreshments/food, transportation, childcare, translation/interpretation?
- **Accessibility:** Is the location wheelchair accessible and code approved for people with disabilities? Does the building have a clearly marked front entrance, and are the bathrooms ADA compliant? How do you plan to address physical accessibility, and language & literacy needs including translations, interpretations, & reading levels? With regard to materials, provide handouts in larger font; avoid handwriting; use microphones when possible; make websites & all content “readable” by a screen reader. (<https://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm>)
- **Time:** Are you holding the meeting at a time where your core audience can attend? Do you have staff that can attend evening or weekend meeting? Can you accommodate community members to hold evening or weekend meetings?
- **Media/News Coverage:** Will you communicate the event to local news outlets and the City television channel so that it can be viewed on cable/YouTube or reported in the local papers? Do you want to issue a press release? What is your social media strategy?

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Sample Project Website

Project Title:

Location (link):

Logo:

Website Format: Tabs

1. INTRODUCTION

- **Overview:** One page or less explanation of what the project is and why it's happening. Update this as the project progresses
- **How to Navigate:** Explain the tabs within "THE PLAN" and how to find upcoming events, past input, contact information, and any other necessary information. This tab may seem superfluous at the beginning of a process.
- **Get Involved / Upcoming Events:** Details on when meetings are happening, a rough timeline, and information about how to get more involved in the action teams, etc. It would be useful to include a calendar.

2. THE PLAN: These sub-tabs will need to reflect the content of the project you are building and should be adapted as necessary. Be sure to provide definitions in the sub-tabs and in the glossary for your chapter titles or keywords.

- **Goals:** Intended to state a project's intent as clearly as possible. These should be co-created with stakeholders.
- **Topics:** Contain policies that relate to the built, natural, economic, and political environment of the City. They are the organizing framework for policies.
Policies: Adopted statement in the project that support one or more of the goals and topics of the project. You should state which policies and topics are supported by each policy. Policies can also outline action steps.
- **Implementation:** Overview of how the project is implemented through City policies, regulation, process, and programming. Includes an implementation timeline. Consider explaining challenges to implementation and the process for amending the project.

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3. BACKGROUND

- **Planning Process:** This is where your Public Engagement Plan should be published. Be sure to include general information about what public engagement is and why it is important. Update this frequently with a general list of the types of engagement tools used throughout the process and types of stakeholders engaged. Be sure to also explain the internal and Steering Committee structure of the planning process.
- **Public Comment / Past Events:** Provide a summary of each engagement, and link the raw data collected at each engagement, any presentation given, and meeting minutes/ notes. You may want to consider separating these out by policy and content, or by method received (online, in person, etc.). You may also consider adding a map of where the comments come from to demonstrate the geographic coverage achieved during the engagement process. This map could include pins showing where each public meeting happened.

4. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Documents:** Link to all draft or adopted documents and appendices (PDF format).
- **FAQ:** Sample questions include: What is this type of project? How does this project fit into other work being done by the City/Department? How much community engagement has there been? How will the City use this project? How does this project address various hot topics (housing affordability, equity, etc.)? When will the policies in this project take effect? Who can I contact if I have questions about this project?
- **Glossary:** Try to highlight key terms and words, especially if they are a form of jargon. Provide definitions for these terms where possible. You may want to consider building some of these definitions with your Steering Committee or Action Teams.

Notes

Incorporate graphics and visuals into your website to make help communicate complex ideas and timelines. You should also consider the accessibility of your website. Make sure that all text is readable, for example, so that a computer reader can access the site. This will also help with translation, if you're not planning to provide the website in more than one language.

Engagement Log

Keep track of all engagements using this log. It is best displayed in landscape mode.

Date Advertised	Date of Event	Tool	Event Name	Key Audiences	Approximate Attendance	Staff	Comments
1/17/19	2/15/19	Cultural Event	American Indian Attendance Fair	American Indian, Youth & Families, Students	40	Nancy & Bob	etc...

Engagement Report

Use this worksheet to document outcomes of each engagement event.

LOGISTICS	STAKEHOLDERS
Event:	Name of Group(s) / Organization(s) Represented:
Location:	
Date:	
Time:	
Staff person(s):	Approx. Number of Attendees:

How did the meeting inform the community about the project/program? What was the intended engagement level for this event?

Ex. Community engagement to date, location and history of the project/program, action items/next steps, how to get involved, upcoming events.

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Input and Responses

Questions & Comments from Attendees	Reponses from Project Team

Comments:

Planner Completing Report:

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Engagement Survey

The purpose of this survey is to provide City staff feedback on the effectiveness of engagement methods during the PROJECT planning process to ensure equitable access to information for all stakeholders. The response that you submit will remain anonymous and will be used to improve future engagement with community members.

1. How would you like to engage in the upcoming PROJECT planning process?

- Large community meetings
- Interactive website
- Social media
- Email updates
- Festival and cultural events
- Smaller group discussions
- Other (please specify)

2. What are your big ideas for the future of Pittsburgh's built, natural and economic environment?

3. How did you hear about today's event?

4. I was able to fully participate in today's activity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. The information presented today is important to me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. I was provided enough information on how to be informed and involved in the planning process.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. How likely are you to share the information you hear today with others?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

8. How can we make it easier for you to be involved in the planning process?

Demographic Survey

The following questions are OPTIONAL. If you choose not to answer this portion of the survey, please tell us why in the space below. We still want to hear from you!

1. Do you live in Pittsburgh?

Yes No

If yes, which neighborhood?

2. Do you work/study in Pittsburgh?

Yes No

In which neighborhood or suburb do you work or study?

3. Are you a renter or homeowner in Pittsburgh?

Yes No

If yes, which neighborhood?

4. What is your age?

5. What language do you speak?

6. What is your education level?

7. What is your gender identity?

8. What race or ethnicity do you most identify with? The following categories are based on the US Census (Check all that apply).

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

9. What is your zip code?

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Definitions

Accountable - Responsive to the needs and concerns of those most impacted by the issues you are working on, particularly to communities of color and those historically underrepresented in the civic process.

Equity - When everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their wellbeing and achieve their full potential

Equity Lens - A conscious effort by leaders to dismantle institutional barriers faced by underserved communities.

Gender - The behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits associated with one sex.

Individual Racism - Pre-judgment, bias, stereotypes about an individual or group based on race. The impacts of racism on individuals including white people internalizing privilege and people of color internalizing oppression.

Institutional Racism - Organizational programs, policies or procedures that work to the benefit of white people and to the detriment of people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

Opportunity - A good chance for advancement or progress

Professional Stakeholders - full-time (paid) advocates for specific issues with an agenda. These may be paid employees of advocacy groups, companies, community groups, etc.

Public - The public is any individual or group of individuals, organization, or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a planning decision. The general **public** is any individual or group that is not associated with the decision-making power or special interests of a project.

Public Engagement - Any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and uses public input to make sustainable and enduring decisions.

Race - a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics or; a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits.

Racial Equity - When social, economic and political opportunities are not predicted based upon a person's race.

Racial Inequity - When a person's race can predict their social, economic and political opportunities and outcomes.

Stakeholders - Any individual or group who has or perceives a stake in the outcome of a project. Includes all those impacted by a proposed policy, program or budget issue who have potential concerns or issue expertise. Examples might include: specific racial/ethnic groups, residents and property owners, quasi-governmental institutions, schools, community-based organizations, CDCs, unions, etc.

Structural Racism - The interplay of policies, practices and programs of multiple institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions for communities of color compared to white communities that occurs within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions.

Glossary

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CDC	Community Development Corporation
DAM	Development Activities Meeting
DCP	Department of City Planning
DOMI	Department of Mobility and Infrastructure
GARE	Government Alliance on Race and Equity
HACP	Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, +
p4	People, Planet, Place and Performance
PEG	Public Engagement Guide
PEP	Public Engagement Plan
PEWG	Public Engagement Working Group
PWSA	Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
RCO	Registered Community Organization
URA	Urban Redevelopment Authority

Footnotes

¹ Graphic adapted from International Association for Public Partnership (IAP2)

² Graphic adapted from IAP2

³ Definition from the Portland Community Engagement Manual: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/581458>

⁴ From the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE): <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-getting-results/>

⁵ Department of City Planning understands that there are more factors that may be considered in equity as well. More information on the definitions and different factors that go into equity can be found through the Office of Equity and in the glossary at the end of this document.

⁶ The Government Alliance on Racial Equity, to which the City of Pittsburgh is a partner, has been a major resource in identifying and incorporating best practices into this work.

⁷ From GARE: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/> and the Portland Community Engagement Manual: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/581458>

⁸ Graphic adapted from IAP2

⁹ Adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

¹⁰ Adapted from The Participation Company

05 / Resources for Public Engagement Plans

Resources

City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Update: Revised Public Participation Program

<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/CompPlanPublicInvolvementProgram.pdf>

Community Engagement Guide: A Tool to Advance Equity & Social Justice in King County

<https://healthyplacesbydesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CommunityEngagementWorksheet.pdf>

Community Engagement Toolkit: Guidance and Resources for Engaging Community in Planning and Policy Development

<http://www.futurewise.org/assets/reports/CET.pdf>

IAP2 Public Participation Pillars

https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/iap2.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/files/IAP2_Federation_-_P2_Pillars.pdf

IAP2 Trainer's Manual: Planning for Effective Public Participation

http://static.qwad.com.au/iap2/files/06Dec_TrainersPlanning.pdf

Making Austin: Public Participation in a New Comprehensive Plan

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=130643>

Minneapolis Civic Engagement Plan

www.minneapolis2040.com

Portland Community & Civic Life: Engaging Underrepresented Communities

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/61415>

Portland Comprehensive Plan Update: Community Involvement Plan

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/451620>

Salt Lake City Public Engagement Guide

<http://www.slcdocs.com/recorder/publicengagement.pdf>

San Francisco Public Outreach & Engagement Effectiveness Initiative

http://default.sfplanning.org/administration/communications/poe/POE_REPORT_FINAL.pdf

Seattle: Scoping the Major Review of the Comprehensive Plan: A Report on Public Engagement

<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/>

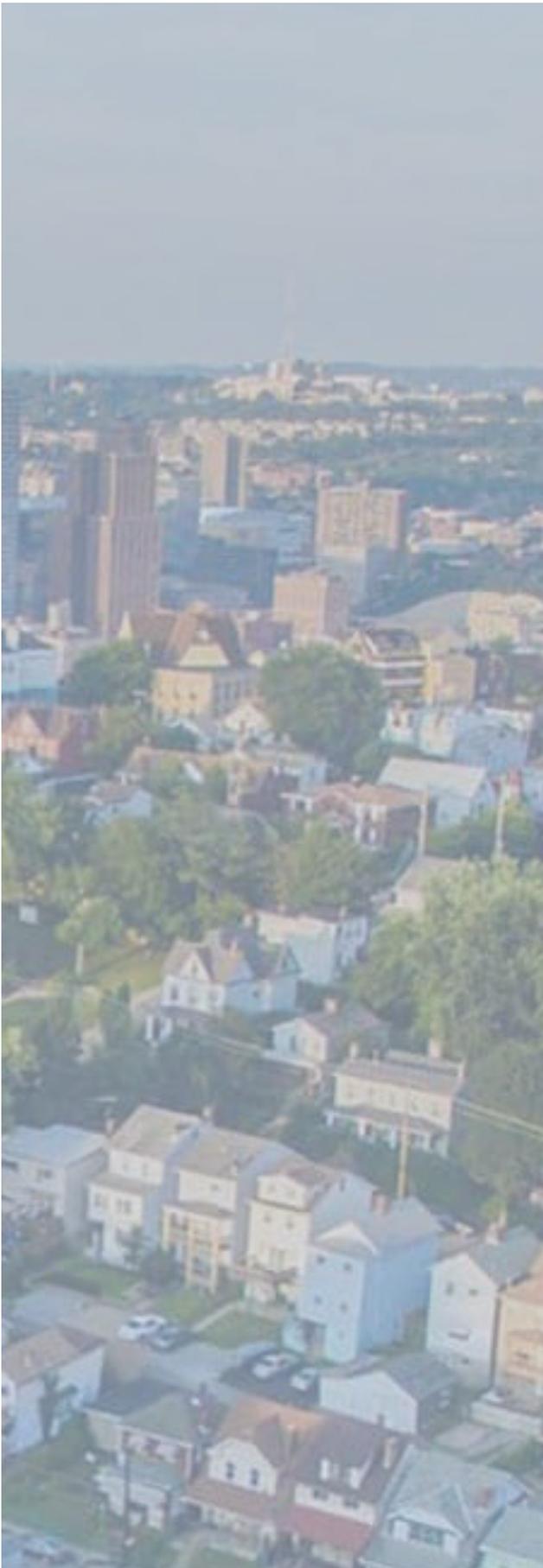
[SeattlesComprehensivePlan/ComprehensivePlanReportonPublicEngagement.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/ComprehensivePlanReportonPublicEngagement.pdf)

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Johnston, K. A. (2018). Toward a theory of social engagement. In K. A. Johnston & M. Taylor (Eds.), *The Handbook of Communication Engagement* (pp. 19-32). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Reference for Business. (2018). Community Relations. In *Encyclopedia for Small Business*.



PITTSBURGH DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

www.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/EngagePGH

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