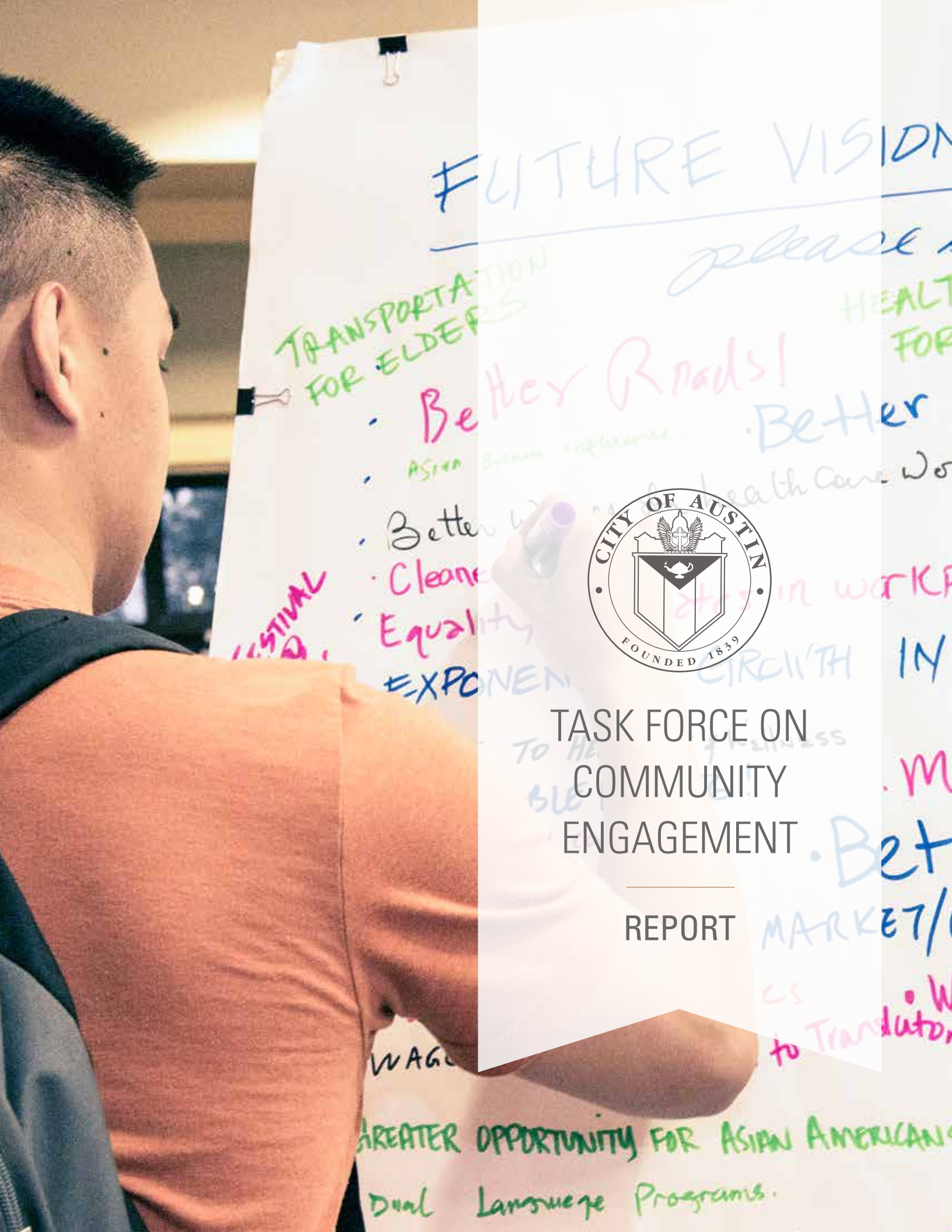

CITY OF AUSTIN
FOUNDED 1839

TASK FORCE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REPORT

CITY OF AUSTIN
TASK FORCE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Final Report | May 6, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Austin moved into its new era of 10-1 district representation at City Hall, members of the public, community leaders, candidates, and eventually the newly elected City Council identified both unmet needs and new opportunities to improve Austin's community engagement. At its first meeting in January 2015, the new Council created by resolution the Task Force on Community Engagement. Over the next few months, the scope of the Task Force was further refined and structured and appointments were made by each Council office and the Mayor's office.

The Task Force formally began its work in July 2015 and, assisted by City staff support from the Communications and Public Information Office and a team of facilitators, met through March 2016 to develop the findings and recommendations presented in this report. This work proceeded through four stages:

1. Understanding and defining key elements of effective community engagement the Task Force thought should shape its recommendations for Austin.
2. Conducting original research and gathering input from the public, key external community stakeholders, and internal City stakeholders, using a variety of methods including surveys, focus groups, interviews, Conversation Corps sessions and direct testimony to the (public) meetings of the Task Force.
3. Using its key elements and the input gathered, developing a needs assessment that included five key themes.
4. Making specific recommendations for programs, policies, practices and strategies that could address the identified themes.

All decisions made by the Task Force, both with respect to process and work planning and regarding the specific needs and recommendations, were made by consensus. Throughout this work, the Task Force was informed both by current efforts going on within the City as an organization as well as by promising practices identified from other communities. Information resources and input were shared electronically via a publicly accessible worksharing platform (Bloomfire) so that members of the Task Force could continue their work between biweekly meetings. All told, members of the Task Force devoted more than 500 hours collectively to the effort.

The Task Force identified the purpose of quality public engagement to offer opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies.

Elements identified by the Task Force to support this purpose included various principles under the following categories:

- Empowered communities
- Time-realistic tools
- Rich two-way methods
- Equity and proportionality
- Mutual trust
- Clear, accessible information
- Quality of listening, impact, accountability
- Appropriate resources (staffing, funding, etc.)
- Cultural relevance

These elements were used to help analyze input received from the community as a whole and from specific stakeholder groups identified by the Task Force for additional consideration. This information included survey responses, focus groups and interviews, and other input from more than 1,000 residents, community and civic leaders, and internal City stakeholders. The Task Force identified several stakeholder groups around which to organize its own workgroups and the resulting analysis, including:

- Neighbors and neighborhoods
- Businesses
- Civic groups and community volunteers
- Underrepresented populations
- City boards and commissions
- City departments (as well as City Council offices).

Processing this information, reviewing promising practices from other communities (shared with the Task Force throughout its work), and deliberating as a group allowed the Task Force to arrive at the five key themes in its needs assessment, around which the recommendations here were developed:

Theme 1:	Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.
Theme 2:	Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them.
Theme 3:	Explain how input will be used and show how that input has an impact on the decisions made.
Theme 4:	Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage.
Theme 5:	Ensure that City staff has the support, training, tools and resources to do engagement well.

The final weeks of work for the Task Force involved bringing to the surface specific ideas that emerged from its research and analysis as practices that the City could pursue to achieve progress toward meeting these needs. These recommendations are presented here both in at-a-glance format, with identified fiscal implications and estimated timeframes, as well as in depth, with notes provided for each that help flesh out the context of the Task Force's discussions and deliberations.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

As one of its final actions, the Task Force asked each member to identify the three recommendations that he or she felt were the most important for the City to consider to most fully attain the group's vision for successful civic engagement and to best respond to the input received from the community. In many cases, these are efforts that the Task Force understands are either under way now or are already priorities for the City in the near term, but this measure of importance also includes recommendations that will take years to fully bring to realization if the City chooses to pursue them at all. Out of the 27 recommendations adopted by consensus by the Task Force, ten rose to the status of priority recommendations and are presented (in rank order) below:

Implement a website redesign.	Recommendation 1A
Invest in creating capacity and trust with under-represented communities.	Recommendation 4A
Provide ongoing training to public-facing city staff who engage with the public so they can provide useful feedback and capture public input.	Recommendation 5A
Sufficiently fund, prioritize, and implement during FY2017 online agenda commenting system for community members to give input to Council, Commissions, Boards, and Task Forces on city issues.	Recommendation 2F
When the City designs an engagement opportunity, provide feedback in a timely manner to participants on what was heard and how the input is being used to inform future decisions. Also make this information easily available to the general public.	Recommendation 3A
Sufficiently fund, prioritize and implement during FY2017 an online engagement platform that has specific capabilities (as listed in recommendation).	Recommendation 2G
Publish content in a standardized machine-readable format to a data portal in real time.	Recommendation 1B
Implement a content-creation policy that helps ensure: (1) clear communication in everyday language across all media types; (2) improved clarity of legal public notices regarding land use cases; (3) creation of explanatory pieces about complex topics being discussed at Council meetings.	Recommendation 1F
Systematically work to engage and partner with community based organizations that have existing community relationships, community trust and community engagement expertise.	Recommendation 2C
City Council, Boards, and Commissions should follow a consistent, structured, transparent process from proposal to decision that allows the public to track online the progress and status of items.	Recommendation 4C

THE FORMATION AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

In 2014, the Austin City Council transitioned to the new 10-1 system of district representation. One impact of this momentous change in the city's governance was an increased focus by citizens, candidates, and newly elected council members on civic and community engagement, particularly on ways that both the 10-1 system and other changes to city structures and procedures could enhance and support and citizen involvement in decision-making.

TASK FORCE

Member	Appointed by
Celso Baez III	Mayor Adler
Mike Clark-Madison (Chair)	CM Pool
Margarita Decierdo	CM Houston
Richard Fonté	CM Gallo
Andrea Hamilton	Mayor Adler
Claudia Herrington *	CM Renteria
Chris Howe	CM Zimmerman
Christopher Ledesma	CM Casar
Koreena Malone	MPT Tovo
Ken Rigsbee **	CM Troxclair
Irfan Syed***	Mayor Adler
Navvab Taylor	CM Kitchen
Sara Torres	CM Garza

* Replaced Joseph Green as D3 appointee
** Replaced Jason Bram as D8 appointee
*** Resigned in February 2016

On January 29, 2015, at its first meeting, the new Austin City Council adopted a resolution to form the Task Force on Community Engagement. This 13 member Task Force, comprised of one appointee from each Council Member and three from the Mayor, was asked to examine community engagement tools and techniques both locally and nationally and develop recommendations to enhance community engagement in the City of Austin (Resolution No. 20150129023, later amended by 20150917067). The City Council also asked the Task Force to examine the fiscal implications of its recommendations and to address the following specific topics:

- Accommodations for persons with disabilities
- Access to information for non-English speakers
- Virtual/online participation in meetings and decision-making
- District- and neighborhood-centered engagement alternatives
- Public hearing notification process

After taking time to organize the Task Force, engage a team of independent facilitators, and make appointments to the body, the Task Force held its first meeting on July 30, 2015 and continued to meet in three-hour sessions approximately every other week for eight months, through March 2016. The group used a collaborative problem-solving process and made decisions by consensus.

The Task Force began by establishing group guidelines, developing its work plan and selecting a chairperson (Mike Clark-Madison, appointed by Council Member Leslie Pool). Initial meetings included review of background materials related to community engagement and question-and-answer sessions with the city's Communication and Public Information Office to learn more about current city practices. This work helped the Task Force identify questions to explore and methods for gathering input from various stakeholder groups and the community at large.

As the work of the Task Force got underway, the group discovered that strict compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA), which was language included in the original City Council resolution, created several significant barriers to completing their work in the anticipated time frame. These included:

- Not allowing participation by video-conference to count toward a quorum and requiring the presiding member to be physically present.
- Not allowing for the use of virtual message boards without enabling the public to post to or participate in those discussions.
- Not allowing for small-group discussions among members during meetings.

While the Task Force remained very committed to transparency and the spirit of TOMA, it sought to employ new technologies, make the most of its limited time and provide more alternatives for public comment and participation. The amended City Council resolution adopted in September 2015 removed the TOMA requirement while reaffirming that Task Force meetings were open to the public and that members of the community would have access and opportunities for meaningful input into the Task Force's deliberations and recommendations. Throughout the work of the Task Force, its meetings were posted in advance with agendas and backup material accessible via the City of Austin website, and members of the public were able to comment and participate both online and in person.

The Task Force used an online resource-sharing system called Bloomfire to share resources, communicate with each other and provide an additional way for the public to view its work and provide input. The Bloomfire site was linked to the Task Force's official city web page and could be accessed by any member of the public. There were more than 70 different examples of promising engagement practices from other communities shared on the site. Task Force members used the site to share reflections on these promising practices, as well as to post the information gathered by the task force's workgroups and the results of its stakeholder and community surveys. As the Task Force explored initial ideas for potential recommendations, members posted to Bloomfire so that the group's comments and discussions were transparent and accessible.

> The Task Force felt that quality public engagement offers opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies.

The Task Force discussed at length its views on the purpose of public engagement and what members hoped would result from their work. The members shared many similar interests, including the desire for more and easier ways for people to engage, greater involvement from people from all walks of life, improved communication and feedback, more inclusive processes that enable people to have an equal voice through multiple channels, and earlier public engagement in decision-making processes. The group also discussed the importance of designing engagement activities that are culturally relevant and help build relationships and trust.

In sum, the group felt that quality public engagement offers opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies. The "Key Elements for Effective Community Engagement" diagram illustrates these how these essential components of public engagement create a bridge between the community and government.

Early in its work, the Task Force identified what it most needed to learn from Austinites in order to understand what is working well and what needs to be improved relative to community engagement. The group crafted a community survey, including multiple-choice, ranking and open-ended questions, which was offered in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese via the City's Speak Up Austin community engagement portal. The survey was promoted through City communication channels as well as on NextDoor (which reaches about 53,000 households) and via direct e-mails to dozens of community groups, neighborhood associations, and other stakeholders. Fliers in English and Spanish were placed at community gathering spots, and social media was also used to encourage participation.

The community survey was available online for four months (September 2015-January 2016) and had a total of 895 responses, including respondents who identified themselves as representing neighbors and neighborhoods, civic and community organizations, businesses, and underrepresented populations; these categories, along with age and ethnicity, were used to develop cross-tab analysis of the results. Verbatim responses to open-ended questions — some of which were quite extensive, were categorized and coded using quantitative research software to ensure Task Force members understood the range of input received. Preliminary results were shared with the Task Force in November 2015; updated versions of these results, including the complete set of responses, can be found in the Appendix.

KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of quality public engagement

Quality public engagement offers opportunities for ALL voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies.

Empowered Communities	· Communities take ownership of their issues and concerns · Empowerment for disenfranchised populations · Overcoming your fear of participating · Knowing HOW to have influence (what does it take?) · Stability, e.g. housing, food, work, etc.
Time-RealisticTools	· Ability for people to participate even if they have limited time
Rich 2-Way Methods	· Opportunities for dialogue & consultation, not just 1-way communication · Willingness to meet in the middle, find common ground · Make it easy & welcoming · Culturally relevant methods
Equity & Proportionality	· Equitable methods AND outcomes · Fully representative not just loudest voices · Proportionality, not just those with access · Physical access, opportunities to be heard
Mutual Trust	· Residents have more trust in facts, experts · City government has more trust in feedback form the community
Clear, Accessible Information	· People know how to have input · Full & organized information · Easily understood information · Transparency · Accessible information for those with special needs
Quality of Listening, Impact, Accountability	· Listen · Adequate follow through, promises are kept · Explicit commitment about how input will be used · Input directly to decision-makers · Clear time table and end point for projects · Show the results, impact of the feedback
Resources	· Staffing · Budgets · Other resources
Cultural Relevance	· Use culturally relevant methods · Understand community strengths and weaknesses to understand capacity · Help people overcome their fear of giving input

Created 9/24/15 by the City of Austin Task Force on Community Engagement

The Task Force also used the Speak Up Austin portal to field customized surveys to gather input from leaders of community organizations of various types and from the city's own council-appointed boards and commissions and their staff liaisons; these surveys gathered an additional 103 responses. Results from these surveys can also be found in the Appendix. (Some members of city boards and commissions also responded to the community survey and were broken out in those results.)

Individual Task Force members also met with their appointing council members' offices to gather input about preferences, expectations and desires regarding community engagement, especially in light of the 10-1 system of district representation. Council members were also asked to promote the community engagement survey to their constituents.

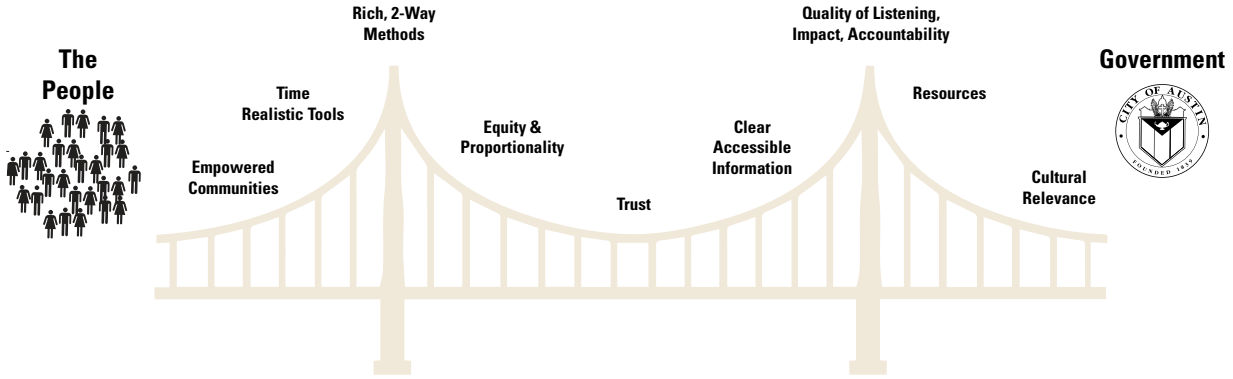
In addition to the surveys, focus groups, interviews, one-on-one meetings, and testimony by citizens at Task Force meetings, the group reviewed input gathered from 16 Conversation Corps events in September 2015 involving a total of 50 people. Conversation Corps is a partnership between the City of Austin, AISD and Capital Metro, administered by Leadership Austin, which engages the people of Austin in meaningful civic dialogue focused on public issues, facilitated by community hosts across the entire city.

The Task Force formed six workgroups to gather input from specific stakeholder groups via interviews and focus groups:

- Businesses
- Civic and nonprofit groups
- Underrepresented populations
- Neighborhoods
- City department staff
- Boards and commissions

Over a total of 15 meetings, Task Force members contributed 384 hours of their time to meeting as a group. In addition, Task Force members worked in between meetings to develop, promote and analyze surveys, conduct and document interviews and focus groups, and review resources about engagement practices in other communities. All told, the Task Force members volunteered more than 500 hours to their efforts. Throughout the process, Task Force members grappled with the challenge of adding this work on top of their already busy lives. In assessing the project overall, the Task Force felt that the amount of work required far exceeded their expectations and took longer to complete than originally estimated.

KEY ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Purpose

Quality public engagement offers opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community which in turn results in better decisions and policies.

Created 9/24/15 by the City of Austin Task Force on Community Engagement

WHAT THE TASK FORCE LEARNED THROUGH ITS EFFORTS

As it gathered input, the Task Force encountered some of the same challenges to effective community engagement identified by its analysis. Despite fielding the community survey in multiple languages and conducting extensive outreach, the Task Force found that the (self-reported) demographics of survey respondents were not representative of the city of Austin as a whole, although they were typical of responses to opt-in or non-probability (i.e., not a scientifically valid random sample) surveys of this type. The Task Force also found it challenging to connect with a broad range of the specific stakeholders identified by its workgroups, or to dive as deeply as members would have liked into the information regarding promising practices in other cities. Task Force members concluded that these efforts that proved to be beyond the scope and bandwidth of the volunteer Task Force should be considered or integrated into the City's own ongoing engagement programs. These considerations inform several of the Task Force's consensus recommendations.

Having acknowledged those limitations, however, the Task Force was able to compile a wealth of data and input from the various channels used, and from this input was able to conduct a needs assessment of important issues to address when working to improve community engagement. Open-ended questions in the surveys were coded using the "Key Elements of Community Engagement" components, and each workgroup also reported on specific themes that emerged from their interactions with stakeholders. Upon discussion and deliberation, the Task Force arrived at five major themes that were used as the basis for its recommendations:

1. Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.
2. Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them.
3. Explain how input will be used and show how that input had an impact on the decision made.
4. Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage.
5. Ensure that City staff has the support, training, tools and resources to do engagement well.

Each of these themes was supported by input from the public, either through surveys, interviews and focus groups, Conversation Corps sessions, or direct testimony to the Task Force. A recap of the kinds of specific input received relating to each of the five themes is summarized here.

1. Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.

People are not aware of all the communication and engagement tools available, but do want information to come across multiple channels and feel that the City as a whole needs to provide these multiple channels. Feedback indicated that there is not an existing online tool in use by the City that meets all needs; the City's website as currently executed does not appear to do well at meeting anyone's needs. People also said they want information to be more accessible to those with special needs, such as disability or low language fluency.

There are issues with the timeliness, consistency and accuracy of information provided through City engagement channels. The existing decentralized system results in inconsistency, with information being scattered and hard to find. Meanwhile, those who manage or implement engagement efforts express concerns about "reinventing the wheel" each time they launch an effort, and that there is no citywide database of people who want to engage on civic issues and what they care about. The Community Registry could be a useful tool but it is not being managed effectively or kept current.

People also advised they want information about what is happening in their district or about issues that directly affect them or in which they have a strong interest. Rather than trying to "drink from a fire hose", they want to be able to filter and "curate" for information on issues they care about. There is a need for localization of information and sources need to be trustworthy. It was suggested that the City find ways to maximize the impact of City communication put out by strategic partners, such as neighborhood groups, business groups, or civic organizations.

2. Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate.

A common sentiment was that people shouldn't always have come to the City; instead, it's important to meet people where they're at, in the places they normally gather and with the groups they are already involved with. The City should create opportunities for participation that don't require people to physically attend meetings and events and instead offer a variety of methods and times for people to engage. Especially for those with families or those who live significant distances from City Hall and other central meeting spaces, a meeting-centered approach to engagement requires too much of a time commitment.

People emphasized the need to use culturally relevant methods, including multiple language access. The City should choose tools and techniques that fit the norms, languages and history / relationships of diverse communities. Each district is different and district-based outreach plans would help. Spanish translation needs vary and the City needs to train more people so there is more capacity for translation and interpretation.

Some people in the community come to engagement efforts with negative attitudes. There is engagement fatigue and people need a lot of persistence to be successful. Engagement could and should be more fun and there are unique approaches that have worked both in Austin and in other cities. The City also needs to find ways for people who want to participate to be put to work. Some would like to see the City use community liaisons to engage them so that they would know whom to work with.

3. Explain how input will be used and show how that input has an impact on the decisions made.

People want to know in advance how their input will be used, so they know if and how giving input matters. In this regard, there is a perceived lack of responsiveness by the City; people feel they are not being heard unless their input is confirmed and reflected back, as well as a summary of what has been shared by others. This requires more consistent follow-up communication.

It is also important to manage expectations. Some feel there are no structures to make sure that the results of engagement are followed. They suggested creating a system that closes the feedback loop, so that after you've engaged, you can find out what decision was made and why.

People are not sure of the most effective ways to get information and give input. Overall, there is a lack of understanding of the processes through which people can engage most effectively with the City and with City Council. Some feel the only way to accomplish things is to go directly to the elected officials, rather than providing input at early stages of policy formation, such as through boards and commissions.

Regarding boards and commissions, the ways they interact with the public and whether, when and how they get input varies. Some members of these bodies feel that they are the appointed representatives and their role is to provide recommendations, not to gather further input. Also, some boards and commission members share the frustration of not knowing what happens to their recommendations and of not having clarity about where their input goes.

4. Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage.

Many people expressed the perception that only certain people really have a voice in civic decision-making and that too many don't. They want processes to be fair and representative and reflect representative input of the entire community impacted by a decision, not just a vocal few. Overall, as the community seeks greater and more effective engagement, we need to focus both on greater equity and greater proportionality.

There is a concern that some people appointed to positions of power, such as boards and commissions, don't necessarily have technical expertise on the issue they are working on. This inconsistency, when combined with the tendency to only hear from people who are always heard from on particular issues, makes it challenging to truly know what everyone in the community needs. While gaining this degree of insight requires extensive efforts that can consume time and resources, if responding to this theme is a subject of consistent commitment, both the City and the community can build capacity that makes future engagement efforts incrementally more successful.

5. Ensure that City staff has the support, training, tools and resources to do engagement well.

There's no consistency in how engagement is called for, designed or implemented among City departments. There is no mandate that decision-making should include certain kinds or levels of engagement. Because of the hands-off structure and silos at the City, everything is a "recommendation," rather than a function of required processes and structures in place throughout the organization. It varies as to how much of a priority the leadership in City departments and at City Hall gives to engagement versus the other important things that they have to do.

City departments don't have the resources they need to execute appropriate engagement strategies. Expectations exceed resources within the Communication and Public Information Office, so that office can't on their own fulfill all the community engagement needs of the City of Austin. City departments often are trying to work through major engagement efforts but then get pulled off because priorities change. They get inconsistent and fragmented direction.

It is a challenge for City staff as well as the public to keep up with the multiple channels for input. Implementing and maintaining bilingual and culturally appropriate processes is a challenge. There aren't enough suitable physical spaces and places around city to do engagement efforts. Working with the website and other online tools can be difficult. Also, there is not enough value placed on building the skills needed to do engagement well. City staff needs training to execute on an organization-wide plan to coordinate efforts, leverage resources and do more than one thing when we have the opportunity to engage people. Alignment and focus on engagement has to happen at the department-head level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Task Force arrived at its consensus recommendations, it identified certain global criteria it wanted all recommendations to meet. These included:

- Legally permissible.
- An improvement over current practices.
- Relatively easy to implement (in the view of the Task Force).
- Addresses a problem raised in the input received by the Task Force.
- Within the City's ability to allocate resources to execute (money, staff, skills, etc.), acknowledging that the Task Force may recommend reallocation of resources.
- Able to produce quantifiable, measurable results for evaluation.
- Producing a significant return on investment.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

The table below provides the Task Force's assessment of the primary focus of the recommendation (type), the fiscal implications of the recommendation (relative to each other), and the anticipated timeframe for realizing the recommendation. Priority recommendations are marked with an (*) asterisk. Priority recommendations of the TFCE are marked with an (*) asterisk.

Theme	**Recommendation**	**Type**	**Fiscal Implications**	**Timeframe**
1. Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.	1A: Implement a website redesign *	Technology	$$$	L
	1B: Publish content in standardized, machine-readable format *	Technology	$$	L
	1C: Recreate the Community Registry	Technology	$$	M
	1D: Accommodations for those with disabilities	Methods	$$$	L
	1E: Create Austin 101 about how city works	Methods	$$	M
	1F: Implement a content-creation policy for clear communications *	Methods	$$	S
	1G: Create was for people to curate and filter Information	Technology	$	S

Theme	Recommendation	Type	Fiscal Implications	Timeframe
2. Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them.	2A: Encourage Council Members to have regular, local contact	Methods, Culture	$	M
	2B: Create designated meeting space in each District	Methods	$$	L
	2C: Partner with community based organizations *	Methods, Culture	$	M
	2D: Experiment with non-traditional engagement methods	Methods	$$$	L
	2E: Design engagement methods with simple, welcoming format	Methods	$	S
	2F: Implement online agenda commenting system *	Technology	$$$	L
	2G: Implement online engagement platform *	Technology	$$	L
	2H: Enable online / virtual participation in City meetings	Technology, Methods	$$	M

Symbols for fiscal implications:
$ = up to $1,000
$ = around $10,000
$$$ = around $100,000 or more

Symbols for timeframes:
Short term = 3 months or less
Medium term = 3 months to 1 year
Long term = longer than 1 year

Theme	Recommendation	Type	Fiscal Implications	Timeframe
3. Explain how input will be used and show how that input has an impact on the decisions made.	3A: Provide timely feedback to participants on how input used *	Methods, Culture	$	S
	3B: Use technology to provide feedback to those who give input	Technology	$$	M
	3C: Structure Boards & Commissions to take public input	Culture, Methods	$	L
	3D: Enforce Board & Commissions By-laws	Culture, Methods	$	S

Theme	Recommendation	Type	Fiscal Implications	Timeframe
4. Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage.	4A: Invest in creating capacity and trust with underrepresented communities	Methods, Culture	$$	L
	4B: Financially support, expand conversational, dialogue opportunities	Methods	$$	L
	4C: Use consistent process to track online status of Council & Commission issues*	Technology, Methods	$$	L

Theme	Recommendation	Type	Fiscal Implications	Timeframe
5. Ensure that City staff has the support, training, tools and resources to do engagement well.	5A: Provide ongoing training to public-facing City staff *	Methods, Culture	$$	L
	5B: Department heads promote community engagement best practices	Methods, Culture	$	S
	5C: Ensure community engagement is equally important to all departments	Culture	$	S
	5D: Have a database of local grassroots leaders that City staff can access	Methods	$	S
	5E: Evaluate all community engagement efforts	Methods, Culture	$	M

RECOMMENDATIONS IN DEPTH

THEME 1: MAKE INFORMATION CLEAR, RELEVANT AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE.

Recommendation 1A: Implement a website redesign that includes the following components:

1. Mobile-friendly;
2. Multilingual with professional translation of important content, with attention to the needs of limited-English-proficiency users, for pages that deal with city services, events or that seek engagement;
3. Accessibility for those who are visually impaired;
4. An enhanced search function that works and search engine optimization;
5. A centralized community calendar that allows user to filter by topic and/or district, including developing criteria for inclusion of events on the calendar;
6. Use of site analytics to develop the home page and input from user experience professionals for the redesign;
7. Dynamic, timely content on the home page
8. Prominent invitation to engage on the home page on important and current issues facing the city or before the city council.

Task Force Context: Issues with the City website at austintexas.gov were cited often in the input received by the Task Force. The group understands and supports the current effort by CPIO to implement a site redesign and offers these recommendations as potential guidelines for that effort.

Recommendation 1B: Publish content in a standardized machine-readable format to an open data portal in real time, with special attention to:

1. Agenda/Meeting postings
2. General Content
3. Calendar

Task Force Context: The Task Force was impressed by and supportive of the efforts of Open Austin's community volunteers and the success to date of the City's publication of data resources to its open data portal. The group feels that this effort can be enhanced and made more systematic through implementation of this recommendation. In full, Open Austin's own recommendation reads:

"Implement a policy for the procurement on IT systems, apps and digital services that requires the procuring department to create an open data plan that specifies how and when public information will be provided to the public-at-large in a raw, machine readable format."

Recommendation 1C: Recreate the Community Registry to:

1. Develop an easier way to ensure it stays current;
2. Allow people to use the Registry to choose what they want information about;
3. Link the Registry to other City communication channels with ways to opt in and out;
4. Consider moving management of the Registry to the Neighborhood Assistance Center;
5. Include information about the type or category of each group (e.g. neighborhood, nonprofit, etc.);
6. Include a way to find groups that operate in a particular area or district;
7. Use a map-based interface as well as a list.

Task Force Context: Members of the public and City engagement staff cited difficulties with the Community Registry as it currently exists. The Task Force recommends finding ways to make the tool more useful, both as a means for notifying the public of upcoming decisions or hearings, and as a tool that allows users to curate the information they receive from the City.

Recommendation 1D: Aspire to effective, useful, consistent accommodations for those with disabilities.

1. Going forward, provide on-screen closed captioning for all videos on ATXN (both published and streaming).
2. Include closed captioning during televised presentation (i.e. slide show) portions.
3. Include a scroll function on the website for transcripts.
4. Review ADA requirements and ensure that the City meets them with respect to community engagement practices.

Task Force Context: The Task Force received extensive input throughout its efforts from disability advocates, notably John Woodley, a hearing-impaired individual who attended almost every meeting. This recommendation is in keeping with a specific charge to the Task Force included in the original City Council resolution.

Recommendation 1E: Create an Austin 101 to provide high-level information about how the City works. Expand City Works Academy content to include online and virtual classes and modules that are available to everyone.

Task Force Context: Prompted by the experience of Task Force member Sara Torres, a graduate of City Works Academy, the Task Force felt it would be useful to find ways to make some of this valuable content more accessible to a broader audience, including those who are unable to make the lengthy time commitment the Academy requires or who wish to gain information on only particular aspects of the city government. The general public should be able to access portions of the City Works Academy Curriculum through online modules.

Recommendation 1F: Implement a content creation policy that helps ensure:
1. Clear communication in everyday language across all media types;
2. Improved clarity of legal public notices regarding land use cases;
3. Availability of explanatory pieces about complex topics being discussed at City Council meetings, when use of plain language is insufficient to ensure clear communication.

Task Force Context: The implementation of a "plain language" standard would address many of the issues raised in public input to the task force — particularly where land-use cases are concerned — and has been a component of successful engagement programs in other cities reviewed by the Task Force. This recommendation is related to Recommendation 2E.

Recommendation 1G: Create better ways for people to curate/filter information they want from the City, including:
1. Filtering content in the AustinNotes e-newsletter by council district;
2. Periodically reminding people of the options they have to choose specific topics.

Task Force Context: The challenge of "information overload" was cited in public input to the Task Force; community members identified a need to be able to choose what information was most relevant to them, either by geography or topic.

THEME 2: MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE INPUT IN WAYS THAT ARE CONVENIENT, ACCESSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE FOR THEM.

Recommendation 2A: Encourage Council Members to have regular localized contact with groups and individuals (e.g., office hours in District/Mobile Office, Town Halls, regularized email newsletters).

Task Force Context: This recommendation responds to one of the specific charges included in the City Council resolution creating the Task Force. Input received by the Task Force noted inconsistencies in council office practices regarding district-level engagement to date, in some cases running counter to citizen expectations of the intended impact of the 10-1 system.

Recommendation 2B: Create designated meeting space that is accessible to all in each District. Accessibility includes public transit availability, ADA/physically accessible, and/or ability to access meetings virtually or by phone.

Task Force Context: Members of the public and City engagement staff noted a lack of places and spaces for effective community engagement in some parts of Austin. The Task Force felt that designating and equipping suitable "go-to" spaces in each district could help build familiarity and trust and increase participation among members of the public.

Recommendation 2C: Systematically work to engage and partner with community-based organizations that have existing community relationships, community trust and community engagement expertise.

Task Force Context: The Task Force felt opportunities exist to increase the leverage and effectiveness of the City's own engagement efforts by more consistently enlisting the help of community partners. This recommendation is related to Recommendation 4A.

Recommendation 2D: Experiment with nontraditional methods of community engagement, such as:

1. Mobile "Engagement Bus" (dedicated bus, with graphic/logo wrapping); regular routes, times, days
2. Input kiosks (mobile or stationary) placed where people gather. If mobile, also schedule regular routes, times, days

Task Force Context: This recommendation echoes promising practices in other cities as identified by the Task Force, such as Calgary, Minneapolis, and Vancouver (from the Bloomfire list of peer cities programs).

Recommendation 2E: Ensure engagement methods are designed in a simple, welcoming format, including:

1. Language
2. Ease of use
3. Accessible reading level
4. Minimize use of jargon and acronyms
5. Provide mechanisms for people to stay informed

Task Force Context: As with Recommendation 1F, a "plain language" standard and an emphasis on accessibility were felt by the Task Force to be worthy of special attention as the City develops and implements future engagement efforts.

Recommendation 2F: Sufficiently fund, prioritize, and implement during FY2017, an online agenda commenting system for community members to give input to Council, Commissions, Boards, and Task Forces on city issues, with features including:

1. Ability to organize input by district for City Council members by issue – including "for," "against," "neutral";
2. Input can flow up to City Council through boards, commissions, task forces, town halls, etc, and through other city entities;
3. Collected and aggregated from various input sources as technology allows;
4. Organized information provided in advance of decision-making meetings;
5. Dedicated staff assigned to monitor the site(s) and maintain system(s).

Task Force Context: Online agenda commenting was one of the highest single priorities for members of the

Task Force, their appointing City Council offices, and members of the public. The Task Force supports the ongoing efforts of CPIO to implement agenda commenting in the near term. This recommendation is intended to partially address the identified frustrations of the general public to provide direct input to the council on particular agenda items without attending meetings late into the night The Task Force understood that this recommendation may require a significant fiscal commitment to implement, but believes it is critical to fund in the next budget cycle and implement as soon as possible. The Task Force was impressed with the best practice examples already implemented in some communities.

Recommendation 2G: Sufficiently fund, prioritize and implement during FY2017, an online engagement platform that has the following capabilities

1. An open data plan;
2. Simple descriptive information on top;
3. Recent developments on topics;
4. Ability for reader to subscribe to issues, including options under consideration and policy tools that are available;
5. Specific questions to elicit feedback;
6. Ability for user to review others' feedback, their demographics and location;
7. Robust search function;
8. Generates "word cloud" of comments;
9. Additional functionalities as noted in other recommendations.

Task Force Context: Specific best-practice examples noted by the Task Force include Salt Lake City's Open City Hall (http://www.slcgov.com/opencityhall) as well as the Peak Democracy platform. The Task Force supports ongoing efforts by CPIO to identify and implement an online engagement platform to succeed Speak Up Austin, which is no longer supported by its developer.

Recommendation 2H: Use innovative meeting practices that enable online or virtual participation during live meetings. (This should include meetings of the City Council, Boards and Commissions, temporary Task Forces, town hall meetings, and other City engagement activities.)

Task Force Context: The Task Force's own experience with the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act highlights some of the challenges faced in implementing these innovative practices. However, the Task Force supports continuing and enhancing current efforts by CPIO and other City departments to open up live meetings to virtual participation. This recommendation responds to one of the specific charges included in the City Council resolution creating the Task Force.

THEME 3: EXPLAIN HOW INPUT WILL BE USED AND SHOW HOW THAT INPUT HAD

AN IMPACT ON THE DECISIONS MADE.

Recommendation 3A: When the City designs an engagement opportunity, always provide feedback in a timely manner to participants on what was heard and how the input is being used to inform future decisions. Also make this information easily available to the general public.

1. Follow up by email or text with all participants who provided such contact information. Thank them, advise them what's happening and invite them to receive updates and/or participate in future engagement opportunities.
2. Ensure that plain language is used when describing decisions made.

Task Force Context: The lack of an adequate feedback loop for participants in engagement efforts was cited frequently in the input received by the Task Force.

Recommendation 3B: Use technology more effectively to provide feedback to those who gave input, for example:

1. Use electronic voting for all City Council votes in order to push real-time results on such decisions.
2. By doing electronic voting at City Council, it would allow information to be pushed out using other platforms.

Task Force Context: The Task Force felt that electronic voting would make it easier for those communicating about City Council decisions (e.g., the city's social media accounts) to convey timely and accurate information.

Recommendation 3C: Structure all boards and commissions to take public input and include this directive in bylaws.

Recommendation 3D: Enforce board and commission bylaws.

Task Force Context: These two related recommendations reflect input received by the Task Force regarding how (or whether) the City's boards and commissions receive (or even encourage) input from the public, and how that input is then disseminated to City Council, City staff, or the public. The Task Force felt that boards and commissions should be utilized to the fullest extent possible as venues for community engagement and that their procedures should consistently enable this role. The new 10-1 council system and the creation of council committees have left some boards and commissions unclear as to their roles. Some current boards and commission function more as advisory entities to the actual day-to-day operations of particular city departments than as policy formulating entities for the city council.

THEME 4: ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO CARES ABOUT AN ISSUE OR IS

IMPACTED HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE.

Recommendation 4A: Invest in creating capacity and trust with underrepresented communities, with strategies including:

1. Connect with, or provide a position for an advocate/organizer for affected populations. This could be a community organization that advocates for the affected populations, with the organization or the City providing financial support for that advocacy.
2. Identify and contract with recognized, trusted, vetted community organizations to organize, using appropriate techniques, opportunities for input from impacted, underrepresented populations. Funding could be for either personnel or projects, or both.

Task Force Context: This recommendation, which is related to Recommendation 2C, calls for what the Task Force realizes is a significant, lengthy and challenging undertaking. It is not the desire of the Task Force to create a field for conflict and controversy between deserving organizations, a means for political patronage, or an entitlement program. However, the clear consensus of the Task Force is that bringing underrepresented communities into the civic dialogue requires more than simply making engagement efforts available; much work needs to be done to build trust and capacity and organize these communities, and the City would do well to look at its best opportunities to work with partners who can leverage these efforts, rather than trying to address these long-range needs itself on a project-by-project basis. The recent planning effort in Colony Park, where the City worked with UT's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement for support, was cited as an example.

Recommendation 4B: Financially support, expand and strengthen public conversational, dialogue opportunities for input, beyond City Council meetings. Expand what is already happening, such as approaches like CodeNext and Conversation Corps, and encourage 'district-based' updates. Help people feel they are being heard and it is worth it to be heard.

Task Force Context: The Task Force felt that efforts such as those cited in this recommendation show signs of success and respond to needs identified in input received by the group, and thus should be supported and expanded. The role of time-limited testimony at public meetings, especially City Council meetings, as the primary venue for citizen input was identified as a shortcoming by much of the input received by the Task Force.

When considering this theme, the Task Force spent a great deal of time discussing whether or how to limit citizen input at City Council meetings in order to avoid dominance by over-represented voices ("the usual suspects") and the consequent under-representation of other members of the community. The Task Force did not reach consensus on a recommendation to achieve this and does not believe it will be addressed by a simple change in one policy. Since that discussion, the City Council itself has proposed new rules regarding public comment on items before the full council or its committees. The Task Force believes that the issue of citizen input at council meeting needs to be addressed through implementation of expanded opportunities

for citizen input outside of the council meetings with special emphasis on technology assisted methods, but

also through the many recommendations contained in this report. Clearly, this issue of citizen direct input cannot be addressed without consideration and modification of the expected roles of existing boards and commissions in earlier stages of policy formulation. The perception and reality that input into policy decisions will only be achieved by standing before the podium of the board must be changed.

Recommendation 4C: City Council, committees and boards and commissions should follow a consistent, structured, transparent process from proposal to decision that allows the public to track online the progress and status of items. See Texas Legislature Online as an example.

1. Expand transparency in the early stages which would involve opportunities for public input and the public viewing of that input on critical issues facing the city before these items appear on the agenda of the city council.
2. Consider expanding the 72 hour window for publicizing agenda items.
3. Encourage putting agenda items out before the agenda is finalized

Task Force Context: The ability of members of the public to follow bills through the legislative process at the state level (via Texas Legislature Online) was seen as something the City could and should aspire to emulate. The Task Force encourages the City's decision-making bodies to publicize agenda items as soon as possible, noting that agendas are not finalized for posting until 72 hours before a scheduled meeting.

THEME 5: ENSURE THAT CITY STAFF HAS THE SUPPORT, TRAINING, TOOLS AND

RESOURCES TO DO ENGAGEMENT WELL.

Recommendation 5A: Provide ongoing training to city staff who engage with the public so they can provide useful feedback and capture public input.

Task Force Context: The Task Force felt there should be tiers of training by role, with the greatest depth of training being delivered to communications or community engagement-specific roles and project managers, planners and others who do departmental community engagement. Training for these roles should include how to design and facilitate community engagement.

Recommendation 5B: Department heads and administrators should promote and encourage best practices in community engagement and should participate in trainings in order to lead by example.

Recommendation 5C: It should be equally important to every department that the people they serve should BE meaningfully engaged and should FEEL meaningfully engaged in developing and implementing Department programs and services.

Task Force Context: Both of these related recommendations reflect input received by the Task Force, as well as the examples of best practices in other cities reviewed by the group, that emphasized the importance of developing an appropriate culture of engagement at all levels of the organization, not just among those whose specific roles include engagement efforts.

Recommendation 5D: Help staff reach deeper into communities and get the word out by having a database of local grassroots leaders that all staff can access.

Task Force Context: This recommendation relates to Recommendation 1C regarding the recreation of the Community Registry as a more effective tool to support engagement efforts.

Recommendation 5E: All community engagement efforts should be evaluated on the basis of three factors:

1. Participant demographics mirror that of the city or the relevant portion of it;
2. Affected districts are equally represented; and
3. Participants are satisfied with the engagement.

The results of these evaluations should be part of the overall evaluation of each Department.

Task Force Context: This recommendation reflects the Task Force's own challenges and its assessment of needs regarding the representativeness of input received. Establishing systematic metrics and evaluation procedures can help the city achieve a more consistent and representative dialogue with community members over time.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTION NO. 20150129-023

WHEREAS, the City Council is committed to deliberate, meaningful, transparent, and open government; and

WHEREAS, successful cities recognize that deliberate, meaningful public engagement is the key to understanding and solving problems; and

WHEREAS, Austin's new form of governance would benefit from an examination of public engagement tools and techniques to better support the 10-1 council district system; and

WHEREAS, enhancing community engagement will also serve to support the successful transition to the new Council committee system; and

WHEREAS, building on best practices would enhance and support the City's current extensive efforts to engage the community; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds having an outside independent facilitator with knowledge, experience and expertise in public engagement issues would substantially enhance the efficiency of the work of the Task Force; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

1. A Task Force on Community Engagement is created and will be composed of thirteen members drawn from the Austin community. Each council member will have one appointment, with the Mayor appointing the balance of the Task Force members. Appointments will reflect the diversity of the Austin community and include members with expertise in the field of public engagement.

2. A quorum for the conduct of business is a majority of Task Force Members. The Task Force shall elect a chair and vice-chair at its first meeting.
3. The Task Force shall be subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the City Council directs the City Manager to retain an outside independent public engagement professional who will facilitate the work of the task force and will collaborate with key City departments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council directs the Task Force to report back to the Council in six months with a description of existing City community engagement tools, innovative techniques and technologies used across the country; identification of best practices; and recommendations for enhancing existing resources, including fiscal implications.

ADOPTED: January 29, 2015 **ATTEST:** Jannette S. Goodall

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. 20150917-067

WHEREAS, for the reasons stated in Resolution No. 20150129-023 the Task Force on Community Engagement needs the greatest possible flexibility in carrying out its task; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Task Force shall make its meetings open to the public, and will ensure that all members of the community – regardless of limitation – will have access and opportunities for meaningful input to its deliberations and recommendations, including public access to any reports, documents, transcripts, recordings or Internet resources used to inform the development of their recommendations, however, the task force does not have to comply with the Open Meetings Act, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Task Force shall report back to the Council by January 31, 2016, and is dissolved when the Council receives its report.

ADOPTED: September 17, 2015 **ATTEST:** Jannette S. Goodall

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk

Task Force on Community Engagement Survey for Boards and Commissions

The Task Force on Community Engagement is charged with making recommendations for improving the ways Austinites can take part in the affairs of their city. By "engagement," we mean the ways that residents can provide input, or participate in activities, that guide the way the City of Austin does business or the decisions it makes.

Question #1

Do you serve on a Board or Commission, or are you a staff liaison to a Board or Commission?

- ○ Board Member or Commissioner
- ○ Staff Liaison

Question #2

Please identify the Board or Commission on which you serve or which you serve as staff liaison.

[ ]

Question #3

How do members of the general public learn about the purpose, agenda, and meetings of this board or commission? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ City of Austin website
- ☐ City of Austin emails or newsletters
- ☐ Signs and notices posted in public places
- ☐ Formal notices mailed by the city to individuals
- ☐ Neighborhood or community websites and social media (including Next Door)
- ☐ Neighborhood newsletters and flyers
- ☐ Local or community newspapers
- ☐ Flyers in school folders sent home with students
- ☐ Word of Mouth
- ☐ other [ ]

Question #4

Of the methods you selected in Question 1, which ones do are used most often? Choose up to 3.

- ☐ City of Austin website
- ☐ City of Austin emails or newsletters
- ☐ Signs and notices posted in public places
- ☐ Formal notices mailed by the city to individuals
- ☐ Neighborhood or community websites and social media (including Next Door)
- ☐ Neighborhood newsletters and flyers
- ☐ Local or community newspapers
- ☐ Flyers in school folders sent home with students
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ other

Question #5

Have their ever been special efforts to reach out to the general public (or interested groups) about a topic or agenda item? If so, what techniques have been used to increase involvement of the public systematically in the decision-making of your board or commission on that topic? Please describe the topic and methods used.

Question #6

How do you view the purpose of input provided by the board or commission of which you are a member or staff liaison? Please choose the statement which comes closest to your view.

- ○ The input provided by this board or commission is intended to primarily impact the decision-making of city departments
- ○ The input provided is intended to primarily impact the decision-making of city departments with some impact on decision-making by the city council
- ○ The input provided is intended to equally impact the decision-making of the city departments and the decision-making of the city council
- ○ The input provided is intended to primarily impact the decision-making of the city council

Question #7

How are the decisions or recommendations of this board/commission used by city government? Please provide an example of a recent decision and how it was used.

Question #8

IF YOU ARE A STAFF LIAISON, PLEASE SKIP TO THE NEXT QUESTION. On a scale of 1 (low degree of impact) to 5 (high degree of impact), to what extent do you believe your board or commission recommendations have on the decisions of city staff or city council?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Question #9

How do the members of this board or commission know the extent to which their decisions or recommendations are used by either the department or the Council? What is the form of the feedback? Please select all that apply.

- A formal written report is submitted to the board or commission on each recommendation or decision on some sort of regular basis.
- A general report is submitted to the board or commission on at least an annual basis.
- City staff indirectly reports back to the board or commission on actions taken by either the city government or city council.
- The board or commission receives minutes of meetings at which their recommendations were discussed.
- other

Question #10

What is the form and frequency of citizen communication to your board or commission meetings? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Citizens frequently publicly address the board or commission concerning a topic on the agenda or about the general areas of concern of this board or commission.
- ☐ Citizens relatively less frequently publicly address the board or commission concerning a topic on the agenda or about the general areas of concern of this board or commission.
- ☐ Citizens frequently send either letters or e-mails to address this board or commission.
- ☐ Citizens relatively less frequently send letters or e-mails to address this board or commission.
- ☐ Citizens have used social media to communicate with this board or commission.

Question #11

Are there particular organizations (or individuals) that play an extraordinary role in the discussion of the board or commission in any citizen input? Please describe whether this role has been helpful or not helpful to the deliberations of your board or commission.

Question #12

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how satisfied are you with the outcomes of the community engagement practices of the board or commission of which you are a member or staff liaison?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #13

As you look to the future, what could this board do differently to improve the ways that residents can provide input or participate in activities that guide the way the City of Austin does business or makes decisions?

Question #14

IF YOU ARE A STAFF LIAISON, PLEASE SKIP TO THE NEXT QUESTION. Please explain why you believe you were asked to serve on your board or commission. Please select all that apply.

- ☐ You asked independently to serve on the board or commission.
- ☐ A peer recommended you to a Council member or the Mayor.
- ☐ You regularly provide feedback to the city.
- ☐ You have a relationship with a Council member who was knowledgeable of your background and/or interest.
- ☐ other

Next

Survey Information

Survey Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/task-force-on-community-engagement-survey-for-boards-and-commissions

Survey Dates: Live on October 7, 2015 until _____

Community Engagement: How Are We Doing?

The Task Force on Community Engagement is charged with making recommendations for improving the ways Austinites can take part in the affairs of their city. By "engagement," we mean the ways that you can provide input, or participate in activities, that guide the way the City of Austin does business or the decisions it makes.

Question #1

Please check any of the following groups that you belong to. These correspond to working groups of the Task Force and help us analyze the feedback we receive from you.

- ☐ Neighbors and neighborhoods
- ☐ Businesspeople
- ☐ Underserved or underrepresented populations
- ☐ Civic or nonprofit volunteers serving the community
- ☐ Member of a City-appointed board or commission
- ☐ None of these

Question #2

How do you usually learn about opportunities to engage with the City? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ My neighborhood newsletters, flyers, etc.
- ☐ My neighborhood's website and social media (including NextDoor)
- ☐ School folders sent home with students
- ☐ Other newsletters, flyers, and mail that I get
- ☐ The City of Austin's own websites, e-mails, newsletters and social media platforms
- ☐ Other websites and social media that I use
- ☐ Formal notices mailed to my home by the City
- ☐ Signs and notices I see posted in public
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ other _____

Question #3

Of the methods you selected in the previous question, which ones do you find most useful? (Choose up to three)

- ☐ My neighborhood newsletters, flyers, etc.
- ☐ My neighborhood's website and social media (including NextDoor)
- ☐ School folders sent home with students
- ☐ Other newsletters, flyers, and mail that I get
- ☐ The City of Austin's own websites, e-mails, newsletters and social media platforms
- ☐ Other websites and social media that I use
- ☐ Formal notices mailed to my home by the City
- ☐ Signs and notices I see posted in public
- ☐ other

Question #4

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how well would you say that the City of Austin informs you about issues you care about?

- ○ 1
- ◉ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #5

Now, also on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how well would you say the City tells you how to get involved in ways to engage on those issues?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #6

Do you have any additional comments about your responses to the previous two questions? If you don't have any comments, please type "none."

Question #7

How frequently, on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), do you take advantage of opportunities provided to you for community engagement?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Question #8

Thinking about your answer to the previous question, which of the following describe you? (Check all that apply.)

- I am engaged with the City on a number of important issues.
- I represent my neighborhood or community when I engage with the City.
- It's part of my job to engage with the City.
- It's part of my volunteer service to engage with the City.
- I only engage with the City as the need arises on certain issues.
- I try not to engage with the City if I can avoid it.

Question #9

With which parts of the City do you most frequently engage? (Check all that apply.)

- City Council: meetings, members' offices, committees
- Boards and commissions
- Specific departments (please list 3 in "other")
- other

Question #10

In what ways do you most frequently engage with the City? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Attend and speak at meetings
- ☐ Write letters and e-mails
- ☐ Use the City's online tools, such as Speak Up Austin
- ☐ Work with City personnel in the community (e.g., APD district reps)
- ☐ other

Question #11

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how satisfied are you that you have a fair, transparent and sufficient ability to engage with the City?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #12

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how satisfied are you with the outcomes of your engagement with the City?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #13

Do you have any additional comments about your responses to the previous two questions? If you don't have any comments, please type "none."

Question #14

Do you need any of the following assistance to be able to engage with the City? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Foreign language translation/interpretation
- ☐ Accommodations for persons with disabilities
- ☐ Mobility assistance for seniors
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ None or N/A
- ☐ other

Question #15

Looking at your answers, have you been able to obtain the assistance you need? If not, what have some of the problems been? If so, simply type "yes."

FINISH

Survey Information

Survey Link: http://speakupaustin.org/surveys/community-engagement-how-are-we-doing

Survey Dates: Live on October 5, 2015, until October 31, 2015

Spanish Link:

Chinese Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/she-qu-can-yu-wo-men-de-cheng-xiao-ru-he-1

Korean Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/jiyeog-sahoe-camyeobangan-urineun-eoddeohgehago-issseubnigga

Vietnamese Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/hop-tac-cong-dong-chung-toi-dang-lam-viec-nhu-the-nao

Community Engagement: How Are We Doing?
社區參與: 我們的成效如何?

"社區參與工作專案組" 負有提供建議給奧斯汀市政府, 如何改善奧斯汀居民積極參與公共事務的責任. 經由 "積極參與 Engagement", 意味著居民可以提供建議, 或參與不同的 活動, 來指引市政府管理公共 事務, 或達成公共決策等.

問題#1:
請勾選下列任何一項來說明您屬於哪一個團體. 下列各個分項與專案組中的各分組相對應, 將有助於我們分析您所反映給們的意見.

- 鄰里及社區團體
- 生意人
- 缺少公共服務或代表人數偏低的人群
- 公民或非營利組織社會服務志願者
- 市政府任命的委員會或委員會的成員
- 以上皆非

問題#2:
通常, 你如何得知積極參與市政府事務的機會? (請選所有適用的選項)

- 我的社區刊物, 海報等
- 我的社區網站, 社交群組媒體 (包括 Nextdoor 鄰居社區應用媒體)
- 學生帶回家的學校資料夾
- 我收到的其他通訊、 傳單和郵件等
- 奧斯汀市政府 的網站、 電子郵件、 新聞通訊和社交媒體平臺
- 其他的網站和使用的社交媒體
- 奧斯汀市政府正式寄給我的通知
- 在公共場合看到的標誌及張貼的告示
- 口語相傳
- 其他.

問題#3:
在前一個問題, 您勾選的項目中，哪些是你覺得最有用的?(最多選擇三個)

- 我的社區刊物, 海報等
- 我的社區網站, 社交群組媒體 (包括 Nextdoor 鄰居社區應用媒體)
- 學生帶回家的學校資料夾
- 我收到的其他通訊、 傳單和郵件等
- 奧斯汀市政府 的網站、 電子郵件、 新聞通訊和社交媒體平臺
- 其他的網站和使用的社交媒體
- 奧斯汀市政府正式寄給我的通知

- 在公共場合看到的標誌及張貼的告示
- 其他.

問題#4:
以程度來分, 從 1 (低) 到 5 (高)，你認為市政府對於您所關心的事物, 通知的程度為何?
1(低) 2 3 4 5 (高)

問題#5
現在，也在 1 (低) 到 5 (高) 的程度來分，你認為市政府是否告訴您如何積極參相關事務?
1(低) 2 3 4 5 (高)

問題#6
關於前兩個問題的答覆, 您有任何額外的評論嗎? 如果你沒有有任何意見，請鍵入"無 none"。

- 額外的評論: _____
- 無 none

問題#7
從 1 (低) 到 5 (高) 的頻繁度來分, 您是否利用提供給您的機會, 積極參與社區事務?
1(低) 2 3 4 5 (高)

問題#8
思考你對前一個問題的回答，下列哪一項對您的描述最準確? (勾選所有適用項目)。

- 我正在積極參與多項重要的市政府的重要問題。
- 我代表我周圍鄰居或社區，從事積極參與市政事務。
- 積極參與市政事務是我工作的一部分。
- 積極參與市政事務是我志願服務工作的一部分。
- 我只在某些必要的事務時，才積極的參與市政事務。
- 如果我可以避免, 我不想參與市政事務。

問題#9
在市政府的工作上, 您經常的參與項目有哪些? (勾選所有適用項目)。

- 市議會: 會議、 議員辦事處、 委員會
- 市政府任命的董事會和委員會
- 特定的市政府部門 (請列出 三項在 "其他")
- 其他 _____

問題#10
你最經常以何種方式, 從事參與城市事務?(請選中所有適用者)

- 出席並在會上發言
- 寫信件和電子郵件
- 使用市政府提供的線上工具，如說話奧斯汀(Speak Up Austin)
- 與市府人員在社區工作上合作 (例如市警察局 APD 的區域代表)
- 其他

問題#11
從 1 (低) 到 5 (高) 的滿意度來分，您對於積極參與事務的公平、 透明和充分的程度，您認為:
1(低) 2 3 4 5 (高)

問題#12
從 1 (低) 到 5 (高) 的滿意度來分，您對於積極參與事務的最後成果，您認為:
1(低) 2 3 4 5 (高)

問題#13
關於前兩個問題的答覆, 您有任何額外的評論嗎? 如果你沒有任何意見，請鍵入"無 none"。

- 額外的評論: _____
- 無 none

問題#14
你需要任何下列的協助，以便能夠積極從事市政府事務嗎? (請勾選所有適用者)

- 交通運輸
- 外國語言的筆譯/口譯
- 殘疾人士的輔助設備
- 老年人的行動性援助
- 兒童照顧
- 沒有或不適用
- 其他

問題#15

- 看著你的答案，你是否已經能夠獲得你所需要的協助? 如果是這樣，只需鍵入 "是的 Yes"。

- 如果不是，您還有哪些問題?
_____

Survey Information:

Survey Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/she-qu-can-yu-wo-men-de-cheng-xiao-ru-he-1

Survey Dates: Live on November 5, 2015 – until December 31, 2015

ENGLISH TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY- ***(Korean)***

<u>지역 사회 참여방안: 우리는 어떻게하고 있습니까?</u>

지역 사회 참여에 대한 태스크 포스는 어스틴의 시민들이 도시 업무에 참여할수있는 방법을 개선하기위한 권고 사항을 청구할수 있습니다. "참여" 함으로써, 당신의 입력 또는 활동을 했다는 의미가 있고, 또한 어스틴시가 사업을 수행하는 방법이나 결정하는 과정에소도 많은 도움이 됩니다.

질문 #1

귀하께서 속해있는 단체들을 모두 체크하세요. 이와같은 단체는 태스크 포스의 실무 단체에 해당되고, 귀하로부터 받은 피드백은 자료 분석하는데 도움이됩니다.

이웃과 지역 단체
사업가
소외 또는 소수 집단
시민 또는 비영리 지역 사회 봉사 단체
도시의 이사회 또는 위원회 멤버
해당되지 않음

질문 #2

귀하께서는지역 사회에 참여 할수있는 기회를 어떻게 알아냅니까? (해당되는 곳에 모두 체크하세요).

- 우리 동네 뉴스레터, 전단지, 등등
- 우리 동네의 웹사이트 및 소셜 미디어 (nextdoor.com 도 포함)
- 학생들한테 보낸 학교 폴더
- 뉴스레터, 전단지 또는 우편으로 받은 다른 자료들
- 어스틴시의 웹사이트, 이메일, 뉴스레터 및 소셜 미디어 플랫폼
- 내가 사용하는 다른 웹사이트 및 소셜 미디어
- 지역 사회에서 집으로 우송된 공식 통지
- 공공 장소에서 본 표지판이나 주의사항
- 입소문
- 기타

질문 #3

위 답변 중에서, 어떤 것들이 귀하에게 가장 유용하다고 생각합니까? (3 개까지 선택 할수 있습니다.)

- 우리 동네 뉴스레터, 전단지, 등등
- 우리 동네의 웹사이트 및 소셜 미디어 (nextdoor.com 도 포함)
- 학생들한테 보낸 학교 폴더
- 뉴스레터, 전단지 또는 우편으로 받은 다른 자료들
- 어스틴시의 웹사이트, 이메일, 뉴스레터 및 소셜 미디어 플랫폼
- 내가 사용하는 다른 웹사이트 및 소셜 미디어
- 지역 사회에서 집으로 우송된 공식 통지
- 공공 장소에서 본 표지판이나 주의사항
- 기타

질문 #4

1(낮음) 부터 5(높음) 까지의 규모중, 어스틴시에서는 귀하께서 걱정하는 문제에 대해서 얼마나 잘 통보를 합니까?

질문 #5

1(낮음) 부터 5(높음) 까지의 규모중, 어스틴시에서는 그 문제에 참여 할수있는 방법을 얼마나 잘 통보를 합니까?

질문 #6

귀하께서는 앞의 두 질문에 대한 답변에 대해서 추가 의견이 있습니까? 없으시면, “none” 이라고 쓰세요.

질문 #7

1(낮음) 부터 5(높음) 까지의 규모중, 귀하에거 주여진 지역 사회 참여를 얼마나 자주 활용합니까?

질문 #8

앞의 질문에 대한 답변을 위주로, 귀하에게 맞다고 생각되는것은? (해당 사항을 모두 선택하세요.)

- 지역 사회에 중요한 문제들과 연결이 되있습니다.
- 지역 사회에 참여 할때 나는 내 이웃이나 지역 사회를 대표로 활동하고 있습니다.
- 지역 사회에 종사하는 것이 내 작업의 일부입니다.
- 지역 사회에 종사하는 것이 내 자원 봉사 서비스의 일부입니다.

- 나는 특정 문제 발생때만 지역 사회에 참여를 합니다.
- 내가 피할수 있다면 지역 사회와 참여하지 않도록 노력합니다.

질문 #9

도시의 어떤 부분 또는 분야에서 귀하는 가장 잘 참여합니까? (해당 사항을 모두 선택하세요.)

- 시의회: 회의, 회원들의 사무실, 위원회
- 이사회 및 위원회
- 특정한 부서들 ("기타"에 3 개를 기재해주세요)
- 기타

질문 #10

귀하는 어떤면에서 지역 사회에 가장 자주 참여합니까? (해당 사항을 모두 선택하세요.)

- 회의 참석 및 연설
- 편지 및 이메일
- 예를 들어서 스피익 업 어스틴이라는 도시의 온라인 도구를 사용합니다.
- 지역 사회의 시 직원과 협력 (예를 들어, 어스틴 경찰서 지방 대표자)
- 기타

질문 #11

1(낮음) 부터 5(높음) 까지의 규모중, 지역 사회 참여에 대한 공정성, 투명성, 충분한 능력 등에 대해서 귀하는 얼마나 만족하십니까?

질문 #12

1(낮음) 부터 5(높음) 까지의 규모중, 지역 사회와의 참여 결과를 귀하는 얼마나 만족하십니까?

질문 #13

귀하께서는 앞의 두 질문에 대한 답변에 대해서 추가 의견이 있습니까? 없으시면, "none" 이라고 쓰세요.

질문 #14

지역 사회에 참여하는 과정에서 다음과 같은 지원이 필요하십니까? (해당 사항을 모두 선택하세요.)

- 교통 문제

- 외국어 번역/통역
- 장애인의 대한 도움
- 노인을위한 이동성 지원
- 육아 서비스
- 없음 또는 해당 사항 없음
- 기타

질문 #15

귀하의 답변을 보면서, 귀하가 필요로하는 지원을 받을수 있었습니까? 아니면, 일부의 문제는 무엇입니까? 그렇다면, "yes" 라고 쓰세요.

Survey information

Survey Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/jiyeog-sahoe-camyeobangan-urineun-eoddeohgehago-issseubnigga

Survey Dates: Live on November 6, 2015 until December 31, 2015

ENGLISH TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY-ENGLISH (1)

Involucración y Participación Comunitaria: ¿Qué Tan Bien Estamos Cumpliendo?

El Equipo de Trabajo Sobre la Participación Comunitaria *(Task Force on Community Engagement*) tiene el cargo de recomendar mejoras en las formas en que residentes de Austin se pueden involucrar y participar en asuntos de su municipio. Para nosotros "participar" significa la facilidad con que usted pueda aportar y participar en actividades que guían cómo la Ciudad de Austin se administra, o cómo toma las decisiones que hace.

Pregunta #1
Entre los siguientes grupos típicos de ciudadanos por favor marque el grupo o grupos en que usted piensa que pertenece. Estas agrupaciones generales corresponden a los grupos de trabajo que ha instituido el Equipo de Trabajo Sobre la Participación Comunitaria, y cuando usted se identifica con alguno o algunos, nos ayuda para analizar sus respuestas.

Vecinos y vecindarios
Negociantes/Comerciantes
Población de ciudadanos con escasos servicios o escasa representación
Voluntarios en organizaciones cívicas o sin fines de lucro (non-profit) dedicados a servicio comunitario
Miembro de alguna mesa directiva o comisión designada por la Ciudad
Ninguno de estos grupos

Pregunta #2
Usualmente, ¿cómo sabe usted cuando hay oportunidades de participar en asuntos o actividades de la Ciudad/Municipio? (Marque todo lo que aplique.)

- En boletines o volantes, etc. de mi vecindario
- En el sitio web de mi vecindario y en los medios sociales del internet (incluyendo NextDoor)
- En las carpetas (*folders)* que las escuelas envían al hogar con los estudiantes
- En otros boletines, volantes, y correo que recibo
- En los sitios web de la Ciudad de Austin, en sus emails, boletines, y plataformas de medios sociales (medios de comunicación en línea)
- Otros sitios web y medios sociales que yo uso
- Avisos oficiales de la Ciudad enviados por correo a mi hogar
- Anuncios y avisos que veo en lugares públicos
- En conversaciones con otras personas
- Otras maneras

Pregunta #3
De los métodos que usted seleccionó en la previa pregunta, ¿cuáles han sido los más eficaces? (Puede escoger hasta tres de ellos.)

- En boletines o volantes, etc. de mi vecindario
- En el sitio web de mi vecindario y en los medios sociales del internet (incluyendo NextDoor)
- En las carpetas (*folders*) que las escuelas envían al hogar con los estudiantes

- En otros boletines, volantes, y correo que recibo
- En los sitios web de la Ciudad de Austin, en sus emails, boletines, y plataformas de medios sociales (medios de comunicación en línea)
- Otros sitios web y medios sociales que yo uso
- Avisos oficiales de la Ciudad enviados por correo a mi hogar
- Anuncios y avisos que veo en lugares públicos
- En conversaciones con otras personas
- Otras maneras

Pregunta #4
En escala del 1 (bajo) al 5 (alto), ¿qué tan eficaz es la Ciudad en informarle sobre los asuntos que más le importan a usted?

Pregunta #5
Ahora, igual, en escala del 1 (bajo) a 5 (alto), ¿qué tan bien diría usted que la Ciudad le informa como puede usted involucrarse para participar en estos asuntos?

Pregunta #6
¿Tiene algún otro comentario o comentarios sobre sus respuestas a las dos preguntas previas? Si no tiene ningún comentario o comentarios, por favor escriba "ninguno".

Pregunta #7
¿Con qué frecuencia, en escala del 1 (bajo) al 5 (alto), aprovecha usted las oportunidades que se le presentan para participar en asuntos comunitarios?

Pregunta #8
Tocante su respuesta a la pregunta previa, ¿cuál o cuáles de los siguientes lo describen a usted? (Marque todos los que apliquen.)

- Yo participo con la Ciudad en algunos asuntos importantes
- Yo represento a mi vecindario o comunidad cuando participo con la Ciudad
- Mi participación con la Ciudad es parte de mi trabajo
- Mi participación con la Ciudad es parte del servicio de voluntariado que hago
- Yo solo participo con la Ciudad cuando hay necesidad de hacerlo en ciertos asuntos y circunstancias
- Si puedo evitarlo, trato de no involucrarme con la Ciudad

Pregunta #9
¿Con cuáles entidades o partes de la Ciudad participa usted con más frecuencia? (Marque todos los que apliquen.)

- Con el Consejo de la Ciudad: asistiendo a reuniones, oficinas de los concejales, comités del consejo
- En mesas directivas y comisiones de la Ciudad
- En colaboraciones con departamentos particulares (Por favor liste 3 en "otro")
- Otro

Pregunta #10
¿Qué son los modos más comunes que usa usted para involucrarse y participar con la Ciudad? (Marque todos los que apliquen.)

- Participo y comento en reuniones
- Escribo cartas y emails
- Uso las herramientas en línea de la Ciudad, tales como Speak Up Austin
- Colaboro con personal de la Ciudad en la comunidad (Por ejemplo, representantes de distrito del Departamento de Policía)
- Otro

Pregunta #11
En escala del 1 (bajo) al 5 (alto), ¿qué tan satisfecho(a) está usted de tener oportunidad justa, transparente y suficiente para participar en los asuntos de la Ciudad/Municipio?

Pregunta #12
En escala del 1 (bajo) al 5 (alto), ¿qué tan satisfecho está usted con los resultados o impactos de su participación con la Ciudad?

Pregunta #13
¿Tiene comentarios adicionales tocantes sus respuestas a las dos preguntas previas? Si no tiene ningún comentario, por favor escriba "ninguno".

Pregunta #14
¿Necesita ayuda con alguno (s) de los siguientes servicios para poder participar en asuntos de la Ciudad/Municipio? (Marque todos los que apliquen.)

- Transportación
- Traducciones/interpretación de idiomas extranjeros
- Adaptaciones/accesibilidad para personas discapacitadas
- Ayuda en movilidad para personas mayores de edad
- Cuidado de sus niños para poder participar
- Ninguno o No aplica
- Otro

Pregunta #15
Considerando o tomando en cuenta sus respuestas, ¿ha logrado conseguir la ayuda necesaria para involucrarse y participar con la Ciudad/Municipio? Si no lo ha logrado, ¿cuáles han sido algunos de los problemas que ha enfrentado? Si los hubo, simplemente escribe "si".

ENGLISH TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY (Vietnamese)

Hợp Tác Cộng Đồng: Chúng Tôi Đang Làm Việc Như Thế Nào?

Uỷ Ban Hợp Tác Cộng Đồng được chính quyền thành phố giao trách nhiệm thực hiện các đề nghị cho việc cải thiện những phương cách người dân Austin có thể tham gia vào các công việc của thành phố nơi họ sinh sống. Dùng chữ "cộng tác", chúng tôi muốn nói đến những phương cách mà quý vị có thể đóng góp ý tưởng hoặc tham gia vào các hoạt động để tư vấn cách làm việc và quá trình duyệt định của Ban Quản Lý Thành Phố Austin.

Câu Hỏi #1

Vui lòng đánh dấu lựa chọn một hoặc nhiều nhóm sinh hoạt dưới đây mà quý vị đang tham gia. Những nhóm này tương ứng với các nhóm làm việc của Uỷ Ban Hợp Tác Cộng Đồng và giúp chúng tôi phân tích ý kiến nhận được từ quý vị.

- ☐ Hàng xóm và láng giềng
- ☐ Nhóm những người làm kinh doanh
- ☐ Nhóm dân số chưa có đủ đại diện trong chính quyền hoặc chưa nhận dịch vụ công bằng như những nhóm dân số khác
- ☐ Nhóm những tình nguyện viên dân sự, hoặc phi lợi nhuận, phục vụ cộng đồng
- ☐ Thành viên của một hội đồng hoặc uỷ ban được bổ nhiệm bởi Thành Phố
- ☐ Không thuộc vào nhóm nào liệt kê bên trên

Câu Hỏi #2

Thông thường quý vị làm thế nào để tìm hiểu về các cơ hội để tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố ? (Đánh dấu tất cả những gì áp dụng) .

- ☐ Những bảng tin và giấy quảng cáo địa phương nơi tôi cư ngụ
- ☐ Các trang web địa phương và các phương tiện truyền thông xã hội (bao gồm NextDoor)
- ☐ Tài liệu từ trường học của con tôi gửi về
- ☐ Những bản tin, giấy quảng cáo và thư từ tôi nhận được qua bưu điện
- ☐ Các trang web, điện thư, bảng tin và mạng truyền thông xã hội do chính Thành Phố điều hành
- ☐ Các trang web và phương tiện truyền thông xã hội khác mà tôi sử dụng
- ☐ Thông báo chính thức Thành Phố gửi thẳng đến nhà tôi
- ☐ Các bảng tin và thông báo tôi thấy ở những nơi công cộng
- ☐ Các tin truyền miệng
- ☐ Cách khác

Câu Hỏi #3

Trong những phương cách quý vị đánh dấu ở câu hỏi trên, những cách nào quý vị thấy hữu dụng nhất? (Chọn tối đa ba phương cách) .

Những bảng tin và giấy quảng cáo địa phương nơi tôi cư ngụ
Các trang web địa phương và các phương tiện truyền thông xã hội (bao gồm NextDoor)
Tài liệu từ trường học của con tôi gửi về
Những bản tin, giấy quảng cáo và thư từ tôi nhận được qua bưu điện
Các trang web, điện thư, bảng tin và mạng truyền thông xã hội do chính Thành Phố điều hành
Các trang web và phương tiện truyền thông xã hội khác mà tôi sử dụng
Thông báo chính thức Thành Phố gửi thẳng đến nhà tôi
Các bảng tin và thông báo tôi thấy ở những nơi công cộng
Cách khác

Câu Hỏi #4

Trên thang điểm từ 1 (thấp) đến 5 (cao), quý vị đánh giá như thế nào về chất lượng việc Thành Phố Austin thông báo cho quý vị về các vấn đề mà quý vị quan tâm?

Câu Hỏi #5

Trên thang điểm từ 1 (thấp) đến 5 (cao), quý vị đánh giá như thế nào về chất lượng việc Thành Phố Austin thông báo cho quý vị về các phương cách quý vị có thể tham gia cộng tác với thành phố để giải quyết các vấn đề đó?

Câu Hỏi #6

Quý vị có ý kiến gì thêm về các câu trả lời cho hai câu hỏi bên trên? Nếu quý vị không ý kiến nào khác, xin vui lòng ghi xuống " không có"

Câu Hỏi #7
Trên thang điểm từ 1 (thấp) đến 5 (cao), quý vị đánh giá như thế nào việc quý vị dùng các cơ hội tạo ra bởi thành phố để tham gia hoạt động chung với Thành Phố vào các công tác cộng đồng?

Câu Hỏi #8
Suy nghĩ về sự trả lời của quý vị cho câu hỏi bên trên, điều nào dưới đây mô tả đúng về quý vị? (Đánh dấu tất cả những gì áp dụng)

Tôi đang tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố để giải quyết một số vấn đề quan trọng.
Tôi đại diện cho địa phương hoặc cộng đồng của tôi khi tôi tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố.
Một phần nhiệm vụ của tôi là tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố.
Một phần hoạt động tình nguyện của tôi là tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố.
Tôi chỉ tham gia hoạt động với Thành phố khi có nhu cầu về một số vấn đề nào đó.
Nếu tránh được, tôi cố gắng để không phải tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố.

Câu Hỏi #9
Quý vị tham gia hoạt động vào những bộ phận nào của Thành Phố thường xuyên nhất? (Đánh dấu tất cả những gì áp dụng)

- ☐ Hội Đồng Thành Phố : các cuộc họp, các văn phòng của các nghị viên, các ủy ban
- ☐ Các hội đồng và uỷ ban Thành Phố bổ nhiệm
- ☐ Các phòng ban cụ thể (vui lòng liệt kê 3 phòng ban trong "Các bộ phận khác")
- ☐ Bộ phận khác

Câu Hỏi #10
Quý vị tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố bằng những cách nào thường xuyên nhất? (Đánh dấu tất cả những gì áp dụng)

- ☐ Tham dự và phát biểu tại các cuộc họp
- ☐ Viết thư và e-mail
- ☐ Sử dụng các công cụ trực tuyến trên mạng của Thành Phố như Speak Up Austin
- ☐ Làm việc với các nhân viên Thành Phố trong cộng đồng (ví dụ, đại diện quận của Sở Cảnh Sát Austin APD)
- ☐ Phương cách khác

Câu Hỏi #11
Trên thang điểm từ 1 (thấp) đến 5 (cao), quý vị hài lòng đến đâu về việc quý vị có một khả năng, điều kiện công bằng, minh bạch và đầy đủ để tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố?

Câu Hỏi #12
Trên thang điểm từ 1 (thấp) đến 5 (cao), quý vị hài lòng đến đâu về các kết quả của việc quý vị tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố?

Câu Hỏi #13
Quý vị có ý kiến gì thêm về các câu trả lời cho hai câu hỏi bên trên? Nếu quý vị không ý kiến nào khác, xin vui lòng ghi xuống " không có"

Câu Hỏi #14
Quý vị có cần bất kỳ sự giúp đỡ nào dưới đây để có thể tham gia hoạt động với Thành Phố? (Đánh dấu tất cả những gì áp dụng)

- ☐ Giao thông đi lại
- ☐ Thông dịch / phiên dịch ngoại ngữ
- ☐ Nhà ở cho người khuyết tật
- ☐ Trợ giúp đi đứng cho quý vị cao niên
- ☐ Chăm sóc trẻ em
- ☐ Không cần giúp đỡ hoặc không áp dụng

☐ Sự giúp đỡ khác

Câu Hỏi #15
Nhìn vào các câu trả lời của quý vị, quý vị nghĩ là quý vị đã có thể nhận được những sự trợ giúp mà quý vị cần đến? Nếu không, một số trở ngại mà quý vị đã gặp phải là gì? Nếu có, quý vị chỉ cần ghi xuống "có"

Survey Information
Survey Link: https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/hop-tac-cong-dong-chung-toi-dang-lam-viec-nhu-the-nao
Survey Dates: November 6, 2015 – December 31, 2015

Community Engagement Survey for Organizational Leaders

The Task Force on Community Engagement is charged with making recommendations for improving the ways Austinites can take part in the affairs of their city. By "engagement," we mean the ways that you can provide input, or participate in activities, that guide the way the City of Austin does business or the decisions it makes.

This survey is specifically designed for leaders or representatives of community organizations of various types. If you'd rather take the survey aimed at the general public, click here.

Question #1

Please check any of the following interest groups that your organization serves or represents. These correspond to working groups of the Task Force and will help us analyze your input.

- ☐ Neighbors and neighborhoods
- ☐ Businesses (of all kinds)
- ☐ Underserved or underrepresented populations
- ☐ Civic, nonprofit or volunteer services to the community

Question #2

Which of the following best describes your organization?

- ○ Most or all of our members directly engage with the City
- ○ We have specific members, officers, committees or staff who are responsible for engaging with the City
- ○ We occasionally engage with the City as the need arises.
- ○ We try to avoid engaging with the City unless we have to.

Question #3

With which parts of the City organization do you most frequently engage? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ City Council: meetings, members' offices, committees
- ☐ Boards and commissions
- ☐ Specific departments (in the box below, please list up to 3 with whom you engage most)
- ☐ other

Question #4

In what ways do you most frequently engage with the City? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Attend and speak at meetings
- ☐ Write letters and e-mails
- ☐ Use the City's online tools, such as Speak Up Austin
- ☐ Work with City personnel in the community (e.g., APD district reps)
- ☐ other

Question #5

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how satisfied are you that your organization has a fair, transparent and sufficient ability to engage with the City?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #6

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how satisfied are you with the outcomes of your engagement with the City?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #7

Do you have any additional comments regarding your responses to the previous two questions?

Question #8

How does your organization inform its members about meetings, events, or other opportunities to engage with the City? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Our own print materials (newsletters, flyers, etc.)
- ☐ Our own website and social media platforms
- ☐ Other print materials (e.g., school folders)
- ☐ Other web/social media platforms (e.g., NextDoor)
- ☐ Signage and posted notices
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ other _____

Question #9

Of the methods you selected, which ones would you say have been most successful in getting the word out? (Choose up to three)

- ☐ Our own print materials (newsletters, flyers, etc.)
- ☐ Our own website and social media platforms
- ☐ Other print materials (e.g., school folders)
- ☐ Other web/social media platforms (e.g., NextDoor)
- ☐ Signage and posted notices
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ other _____

Question #10

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how well would you say that the City of Austin communicates information of interest to your members?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #11

Now, also on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how well would you say the City informs you of ways to get involved in community engagement?

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5

Question #12

What are the most effective ways that the City could communicate with and engage your members? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- ☐ Nextdoor
- ☐ Interactive, televised meetings
- ☐ Facilitated conversations in neighborhoods
- ☐ Public workshops/open houses/meetings
- ☐ Online discussion sites (like SpeakUpAustin.org)
- ☐ Text messaging
- ☐ Print advertising (in newspapers, magazines, flyers, etc.)
- ☐ Billboards
- ☐ other _____

Question #13

Do you have any additional comments about your responses to the previous three questions?

_____

Question #14

Do your members need any of the following assistance to be able to engage with the City? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Foreign language translation/interpretation
- ☐ Accommodations for persons with disabilities
- ☐ Mobility assistance for seniors
- ☐ Child care
- ☐ other

Question #15

Does you organization provide any of this kind of assistance to your members? If so, what?

Question #16

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how important is this kind of assistance to your members for them to engage with the city?

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Question #17

Does your organization include, as part of its mission, services aimed at the following constituencies? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Families with pre-school children
- ☐ Families with school-age children
- ☐ African Americans
- ☐ Hispanics/Latinos
- ☐ Asian Americans
- ☐ Native Americans
- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ Persons with physical disabilities
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Renters
- ☐ Homeowners
- ☐ Young adults and families (18-34)
- ☐ Persons with mental/cognitive/emotional disabilities
- ☐ Immigrants and/or non-English speakers
- ☐ Children and youth in foster care or CPS
- ☐ Persons in poverty or at risk of homelessness
- ☐ Ex-offenders and/or adjudicated youth
- ☐ other

Question #18

Of the constituencies you selected, which are the most important to fulfill your mission?

- ☐ Families with pre-school children
- ☐ Families with school-age children
- ☐ African Americans
- ☐ Hispanics/Latinos
- ☐ Asian Americans
- ☐ Native Americans
- ☐ Seniors
- ☐ Persons with physical disabilities
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Renters
- ☐ Homeowners
- ☐ Young adults and families (18-34)
- ☐ Persons with mental/cognitive/emotional disabilities
- ☐ Immigrants and/or non-English speakers
- ☐ Children and youth in foster care or CPS
- ☐ Persons in poverty or at risk of homelessness
- ☐ other

Question #19

Are there any other comments you'd like to provide to the Task Force on Community Engagement?

Finish

Survey Information

Survey Link:
http://speakupaustin.org/surveys/community-engagement-survey-for-organizational-leaders

Survey was live October 5, 2015 until December 31, 2015

Workgroup Data

Under-represented Populations Workgroup

1. Process Used
   - Contacted (e-mail, phone, or both) 21 non-profits, religious organizations, and over 50 individuals. Non-profits organizations contacted where those that missions predicated on community engagement; as it required majority to reach out to their members.
   - Eleven (11) of the 21 non-profits responded and would send to the staff and members; projected total reach through survey 1000 people.
   - Held a Focus Group (1 Non-profits, 1 Religious Organization, and 1 Retired City Employee/Community Volunteer) was present.

2. Who participated
   - Karen Duke, Women's Community Center of Central Texas,
   - Erik Dumtemary, UT School of Social Work student and Intern for Central Presbyterian Church of Austin,
   - Win Bent, Central Presbyterian Church of Austin,
   - Ruby Roa, Retired City Employee/Community Volunteer

3. Questions you asked

Which city departments do you work with to accomplish your mission?
- City Council Members, Mayor, Council Member Staff, Building and Permits, Capital Metro, Parks and Recreation, Libraries, Police Department, Code Complies, and Electricity. Summation…all

Do you have any best practices you can share from your organizations past accomplishments?
- When dealing with the City, County, on any level, there was an overall frustration amongst the focus group. It differentiated on the department and task at hand. Overall, any accomplishments were completed through lots of hard work, communication, and an unwillingness to give up. However, for someone who is unfamiliar with the City of Austin, if was notated how easily people would give up in the process, as it is hard to navigate who does what.I.E. A renter having issues with mold and their landlord may have to call three or four places to be lead to Code Compliance. It's not a common knowledge to call Code Compliance regarding this particular issue.

What most frustrates you about working with the city?
- Convoluted information or information that isn't there.
- Undertrained and unwilling staff to learn what their department does, or what other departments do,
- Council Members elected and want to engage the community, but they don't have the staff to do it,
- Council Members elected to represent their district and they don't, they represent their own interest.
- Communication between departments, constituents and staff,
- The city staff and departments is in denial about the cultural, social, and economic divide in Austin. There isn't one that has truly grasped or confronted the fact that Austin is divided.
- There is no real accountability for staff, if they don't or won't do their job.

How do the citizens you represent share information with you?
- Through conversations, e-mail, and social media. All the participants of this focus group can navigate to find their way around, but the beginning process wasn't easy. And after finding what they need, they share the information to help the burden of other people want to know the same information.

How could the city improve the current system in place to reaching out to the Citizens?

- Each Council Member should have a staff member that is affiliated with Organizing and Community Engagement. This person is hired by the Council Member, but accountable to a Task Force of community leaders within that District. This is to impose a control that would allow the staff to be independent from the council member, a paid position on the staff, and accountable to the community.
- This position would entail direct community engagement and organizing with in the district on various issues affecting the district and would partner with other people, organizations, and council members to follow-through on completion of various projects.
- Many of the Council Members may have Community Liaisons, but they are relying on the community to reach out to them.

What programs would you recommend that you may have seen other cities use.

- Retraining employees; between the City of Austin and Travis County, together represents one of the largest workforce in Austin. If the employees were trained to understand they are stewards of the City/County and not just representing a particular job/department.
- Other city have incentive programs for their employees; creating a program to employees that are going above and beyond by passing out flyers, posting notices, or talking to their neighbors regarding city business. Doesn't matter which department or program.
- Council Members add a specific staff position; see e for details.1.Process Used (Briefly describe what you did and when.)

<u>Civic & Non-Profit Workgroup</u>

Environmental Non-Profit Sub Group

1. Process Used
   - Contacted members of 13 highly visible and influential non-profits. Of those, 10 responded and said that they would circulate the survey to members/contacts, and 8 said they would attend the focus group. The date of the focus group, only 3 attended.

2. Who participated?
   - George Cofer, Hill Country Conservancy;
   - JJ Langston, Barton Springs Conservancy;
   - Andy Gill, Peace Park Conservancy

3. List of questions you asked
   - Which city departments do you work with to accomplish your mission?
   - Do you have any best practices you can share from your organization's past accomplishments?
   - What most frustrates you about working with the city?
   - How do the citizens you represent share information with you?

4. What you learned/heard categorized by interest.
   - Time-realistic tools: Andy Gill shared information about an online tool called Crowdbrite and made contact with the founder via e-intro.
   - Impact, accountability: No trust between City Staff and the non-profit leaders. The folks who participated in the focus group feel that their goals and the COA goals should be aligned but they are not. Donors are often reluctant to donate money to the environmental groups working on public access because they (donors) think COA should use tax revenue to build public infrastructure.

- Adequate resources: Citizens who want to join the conversation need to be given meaningful volunteer opportunities to help them feel important.

Human Services non-profit subgroup

1. Process used:
   - Contacted 13 non-profit groups in the "human services" category for this non-profit subgroup. Of the 13, 5 responded but I was only able to connect with two to date. In-person conversation and phone conversation, 11/16/15 and 12/14/15

2. Who participated?
   - Alba Sereno of GAVA 78745
   - Simone Talma-Flowers of iACT

3. Questions asked:
   - What City tools/methods have worked well for your organization? What hasn't worked well or what could be improved?
   - What tools/methods do you communicate information to your constituents?

4. What I learned/heard categorized by interest:
   - Letting people know what power they DO have: There needs to be a new way of working which catalyzes the potential of people and puts residents at the forefront of building their society. The result of improper engagement is that people then do not feel valued, their voices are not heard and no action is taken, and therefore their needs are not addressed.
   - More representative and fair "pulse": Often when looking at the demographic information, we find that there is one type of demographic that is engaged. Non-profit organizations such as this work in groups with other like-minded organizations to have a larger voice and stretch their resources.
   - Rich, 2-way communication: Engagement is an ongoing mechanism, it is a lengthy process which requires much time. It is not just a drop-in, drop-out activity. Person-person conversations are the most effective ways to engage, especially with people who have. Conversations have to be in a trusted location (safe place)
   - Time – realistic tools: There is a sense of "meeting fatigue" – so many meetings it is overwhelming. Could provide bus passes/transportation to engagement opportunities, as well as possibly childcare
   - Cultural relevance: It is often difficult to ask Spanish-language speakers or foreign-language speakers to complete an engagement survey due to lack of translation or lack of internet at home. Use interpreters/volunteers from the community, not outside the community. This gives the community someone they can trust and also helps provide jobs to those in need. The "cookie cutter" approach doesn't work for all cultures – needs to be specific to the community being addressed. When doing engagement, think ahead and understand who you are addressing, have a plan
   - Impact, accountability: These exercises of asking for input happen repeatedly but with no promise of implementation. Interactions need to be action oriented and need catalyst funding to make a change
   - Adequate resources: In some cases, especially in underrepresented neighborhoods, community liaisons are needed across the community to be able to engage people appropriately. There should be positions in the city to engage people in the community and develop those on-going relationships. An example of this is community policing, and how APD has a district rep who goes deep into getting to know the community. Funding should be provided to groups who are already out there doing the work, who have developed relationships and the trust of the community – combining resources and partnering with these groups can be more effective than starting from scratch. The city can learn from these groups. When doing planning efforts, there needs to be adequate funding, "seed money" in order to do demonstration projects so people can see things implemented. Better accessibility – better transportation is needed to connect low-income families
   - Other:

    - Efforts for engagement should be combined across departments for consistency
    - Non-profit organizers can often reach people in ways that the city can't, due to their status and nimbleness of the organization. Example: you wouldn't invite City staff to a planning meeting in your own home, but a non-profit, grassroots community group meeting in your home is within accepted and comfortable norms. This is especially true when reaching out to people with trust concerns, undocumented status, or other status concerns.
    - When implementing recommendations, keep in mind that investment may need to go further/deeper in historically underfunded areas – can't just divide by 10 districts. Needs to be equitable, not equal.

5. Most important "take-aways" from this conversation:
   - Engagement opportunities and services are needed where people are (in their immediate communities). It is difficult for people working multiple jobs, with families, low-income, often dependent on public transit, to have time or funds to make a trek across town.
   - There is no one way to reach people, you need to have a variety of methods to work with (in person, online, meetings, small groups, etc)
   - Entities doing engagement need to provide continuous support, understanding, openness and patience
   - There needs to be a new way of working which catalyzes the potential of people and puts residents at the forefront of building their society
   - Interactions need to be action oriented and need catalyst funding to make a change
   - The city should combine resources with groups who are already out there doing the work. These groups know the community, have its trust, know how to organize it, and can advocate for it effectively

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Neighborhood Workgroup

1. What & Where:
   - Meeting with Southwood Neighborhood Association (in District 5) at Central Market Westgate, 10/27/15.
   - Meeting with South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association (in District 9) at Habana Cuban Restaurant, 10/26/15. Present: Officers of the Neighborhood Associations and members of its various committees

2. Questions asked:
   - What tools/methods do you communicate information to the neighborhood?
    - SNA primarily uses their listserv and NextDoor for communicating with the people in the neighborhood. They also produce a newsletter which is emailed 4x/year (a few hard copies are distributed to local businesses and business sponsors)
    - SRCC primarily uses their website, listserv, and monthly e-newsletter for communicating with the people in the neighborhood. They also use NextDoor and produce a newsletter which is printed approximately 3x/year and hand delivered door-to-door.
   - What City tools/methods have worked well for your organization? What hasn't worked well or what could be improved? See below.

3. What I learned/heard categorized by interest:
   - More representative and fair "pulse"
    - There is a strong feeling that the loudest voices make the most noise. Additionally, the voices of lobbyists are louder than citizen voices because they are paid to be there. There should be some "weighing" done so that citizen voices can be given more weight.
    - The subcommittee structure and citizen input isn't working well – decisions get made in committee but don't seem to take into account input which was collected at other forums (for example on STRs and ADUs)

    - There needs to continue to be a variety of ways for people to provide input and a variety of methods for sharing information from the City to citizens
- Rich, 2-way communication
    - Opportunities for dialogue, such as the town halls work well.
    - Some of the best ways to connect on City issues are when City representatives come to the NA – such as to their monthly NA meetings, then everyone can hear the information, participate in a dialogue, and hear multiple points of view
- Time-realistic tools
    - Need to be able to comment online on council meeting agenda items
    - City notices should be sent via email as well as by paper mail. It would be faster and then NA officers wouldn't have to manually scan the notice and email it to the NA. Also, the notification currently only goes to 1 individual. If sent via email, it could go to a NA group email or distribution list that multiple people could have access to. If a person is on vacation and a notice arrives, the whole neighborhood may miss out on an opportunity to have a say.
- Cultural relevance
    - People get some info via TV, some info via newspaper, some info online. Still need mailings and paper flyers to reach everyone.
    - Wants to make sure that the focus on engagement isn't only on the younger generation. The older generation helped make Austin the great place that it is, and the older generation wants/needs to stay informed about City policies that affect them. However, the older generation isn't always "connected" the way the younger generations are.
- Impact, accountability
    - They want to see the results: meeting notes should be taken and published, and see the comments made at the meeting so that we know what others are saying
    - That said, it takes too long to get the results of a meeting (sometimes weeks for results/minutes/outcomes to be posted).
    - Define the goal of the meeting upfront, and then what are the actionable outcomes from a meeting? What was the result? What is the deadline for action?
    - When people attend meetings, their information is taken but it seems like the actions/results aren't summarized or there isn't any follow-up
- Adequate resources
    - Appreciates that staff is always very professional, good demeanor even when getting bombarded with difficult issues
- Clear, accessible information
    - If you want to get involved, the learning curve is really high – takes time to learn all the acronyms and understand what the jargon is and means. Need training or someone in the know who is actually knowledgeable to help decipher information, there is a lot of misinformation out there.
    - The City website should have a glossary or definitions link – like a Kindle or e-reader has, where a keyword can be highlighted in blue, with a link to the word's definition (ex: ADU or STR)
    - When City notices are sent out to neighborhoods, the information sent should include a better explanation of the issue at hand and why someone should be interested. Language such as "A proposed amendment to the Code, Item C15-xxxx-xxxx" is not sufficient. There should be a synopsis of what that item is.
    - City could have an online database for each planning area or neighborhood association, containing current communications and archived communications. This could be planning area /neighborhood specific, and anyone in any part of the city could see the communications.
    - Neighborhood Associations need more time to distribute City notices. City notices should also include a better description of the action or issue and the effect on a citizen (why should I care?)
    - Budget in a Box – this didn't work so well, there wasn't enough information provided, it's hard to compare the value of services/determine whether one service or another should get more funding, not a "zero sum game"

- Other
    - They appreciated the AMANDA training given by Carol Gibbs, neighborhood liason – this is something everyone should know how to use. Perhaps there could be several citywide sessions offered per year (1 in each district)?

4. Most important "take-aways" from this:
    - People need to see their feedback and comments captured so that they know that their time is well spent.
    - Need to do a better job of educating the public about the issues.
    - Low participation is tied to election turnout – busy, so much chatter, so little time, need to prioritize, and don't feel voice counts
    - They want follow up on the report from the TFCE – be sure to send to them and all groups contacted
    - More training sessions
    - Better use of online tools/emails from the City
    - Technology can help connect people on issues, but there needs to be a variety of overlapping methods to communicate with the City to cover differing individual needs. The older generation used methods available to them at the time such as party line phone calls and block-walking. Don't discount person to person opportunities for connections.

<u>Neighborhood Workgroup</u>

1. Process Used:
    - Spoke with community leaders in southeast Austin by telephone and in-person.

2. Who participated?
    - Leaders from the Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan Contact Team, Go Austin/Vamos Austin, Austin Interfaith
        a. Janet Barkley-Booher, former Secretary of the SCNPCT
        b. Ofelia Zapata, Austin Interfaith Leader and former Chair of SCNPCT
        c. Estrella De Leon, Go Austin/Vamos Austin Geo Team Organizer

3. List of questions you asked
    - See Neighborhood Groups Question List

4. What you learned/heard categorized by interest.
    - Letting people know what power they DO have
        a. Getting the word out is more difficult in our part of town
    - More representative and fair "pulse"
        a. Different strategies are required for quality engagement in Spanish-speaking and lower income areas, compared with the rest of Austin. Comparisons need to be made between who is participating demographically and who actually lives in that part of town, so that we know how representative an engagement was. We could then use that data to better inform future initiatives.
    - Rich, 2-way communication
        a. Participants in community engagement efforts need to be told how their feedback will be used, and need updates on issues they participated in. Otherwise they lose interest and stop participating
    - Time-realistic tools
        a. People have lives, and when we are asking them to volunteer their time, we need to respect that time and not waste it. The show up to be heard philosophy has created inequities, and it is difficult to show up in person with the sheer number of community meetings going on in the community. Working parents find it especially difficult to participate in community meetings, as they are generally held in the evenings.
    - Cultural relevance

    a. Wants to have relevant ways to incorporate Art and Culture into engagement opportunities.
- Impact, accountability
- Adequate resources
    a. Go Austin/Vamos Austin (GA/VA) has adequate resources from the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation to have full-time organizers to promote their work and recruit residents; it has made a big difference. Austin Interfaith also has organizational support. The Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan Contact Team is prohibited from raising money, and members must personally absorb any costs associated with their volunteer service.
- Clear, accessible information
    a. Spanish translation is provided at every opportunity possible for Go Austin/Vamos Austin. The Southeast Combined Neighborhood Plan Contact Team does not have the capability to offer translation so many Spanish speakers have stopped attending.

5. What our Subgroup thought were the most important "take-aways" from these data.
    - The current system of "show up to be heard" has created inequities.
    - People who have participated in City engagement efforts often did not feel like their voices were heard, as they received no feedback or updates on issues they participated in.
    - Each Council District is distinct and different engagement strategies work better in different parts of town.
    - There are too many meetings.
    - Organizers can be much more effective than volunteers.

Additional comments by Sara Torres dated 1/14/16:
Many of the themes captured from my Neighborhood and Underrepresented interviews were very similar:
1. There is limited knowledge of principals of effective engagement, several interviewees are civic volunteers who perform community engagement.
2. Spanish language translation is important, both written and verbal, groups who provide translation are better engaged and diverse.
3. In general there was limited knowledge of current COA engagement tools. All interviewees knew about Austin311, some had heard of Conversation Corps, and none knew of the City's newsletter or other online engagement tools.
4. Most interviewees reported trust issues between residents and the City, with some reporting this had improved dramatically with 10-1, now that residents can go directly to their council member.
5. Time is the number one thing preventing people from getting involved, as there are lots of in-person meetings to attend. Work, family, and other commitments often make attending meetings impossible, there should be an alternative method of participation that doesn't demand so much time.
6. Non-profits are a good way to engage residents, particularly in areas where there are not strong neighborhood associations, as they are already working in communities and have built networks. A two-way information sharing model could be very effective, possibly with the Non-profit sharing the particular city initiative to their members, and the city sharing information about the non-profit in return.

<u>Board and Commissions Workgroup</u>

The City of Austin has long had a significant number of Boards and Commissions created by the city council to gather citizen and resident input. Divided by designated subject area, the 47 boards and commissions provide opportunity for over 300 people to participate and provide input to city decision-makers. In addition, city will from time to time create temporary taskforces and advisory groups to focus on some issue and problem. In fact, it is important to recognize that the meetings of these boards, commissions, taskforces and advisory groups are a formal and structured vehicle for community

engagement with an appointed group of citizens who have expressed interest in particular topics. The City of Austin, of course, is not unique in its use of boards, commissions, taskforces and advisory groups since it is a common practice among municipalities to ask residents to serve as representatives from the community to provide advice and counsel.

The Task Force on Community Engagement focused special attention on the more permanent entities—Boards and Commission. The workgroup examining boards and commissions found that they could be divided into three broad categories. A limited number of Commissions could be classified as ”regulatory” involving land use, such as the Zoning and Platting Commission, the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. These entities were charged with holding legal public hearing to which community residents testify on behalf of particular projects or land use modifications. Another broad category would involve advisory entities that are related to significant city functions or programs such as the Electric Utility Commission, Environmental Commission, Public Safety Commission, Parks and Recreation Board and Water and Waste Water Advisory Commission. A third category involves what might be labeled quality of life commissions including the commissions on Seniors, Women, Veteran Affairs, People with Disabilities, Hispanics/Latinos, Immigrant Affairs, Asian and African Americans.

The workgroup charged with studying boards and commissions gathered data through two survey instruments about community engagement and follow-up phone and email interviews with selected chairs of the land use regulatory boards and the city program advisory boards. While a separate workgroup focused on under-represented populations interviewed the quality of life commissions and boards, the information gathered through the two survey instruments included all three types of boards and commissions. One survey was sent to board and commission members and their city staff liaisons which explored not only member’s views of their quality of engagement and participation in city decision-making, but also the engagement by the broader community with the work of their board and commission. We had 45 board members respond to this survey and 6 city staff. Our second source of survey data was derived from the community engagement survey of Austin residents. Of the nearly 700 community responses, 40 individuals declared themselves as a member of a board or commission. These data allowed comparison between the general community response about community engagement and the responses of board and commission members.

The results of the information gathering by the workgroup demonstrated that the Board and Commission members consider their role “in flux” in light of the new 10+1 city council structure. First, of all, many board members were clearly new and recent appointees of the geographically dispersed city council system. While some reported they maintain regular contact with the respective council member who appointed them or their staff, others reported little contact. One board member who answered an open-ended question on the survey, stated, “the Council Member who appointed me has not once asked my opinion on a topic related to my commission.” Interviews by the Community Engagement Taskforce with Austin City Council members or staff verified considerable differences in the relationship between a board or commission appointee and their City Council Member.

In comparison to the general community engagement with the city, Board and Commission members, as you would expect, are more frequently engaged with the city, better informed on the issues and more involved. However, notwithstanding their advantages of serving directly on a board or commission, board members expressed considerable dissatisfaction “with the outcomes of your engagement with the city.” While showing greater satisfaction with their community engagement outcome than the average respondent to the community survey, the board and commissions members expressing dissatisfaction (1 or 2 on a five point scale) was 35% while only 30% reported “high satisfaction”—a 4 or 5 on the scale.[1] Yet, in the direct survey of board and commission members, more do believe than not, that their recommendations “have an impact on the decision of the city staff or city council.” That is, 45.7% believe they have a high impact (4 or 5 on a five point scale), compared with 32.6% rating their impact as low with a 1 or 2 on the scale. On the other hand, only 11% rated their impact at the highest level (rating of 5), while 20% rated it at the lowest level (1 out of 5).
Although it is hard to generalize the source of some level of dissatisfaction by board members, one indicator was the frustration expressed by some board member concerning feedback on whether or not

their recommendations are used. Very few reported there is a formal mechanism to report back on their recommendation.

The information gathered through the surveys indicated a wide range of viewpoints on general satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the broader community engagement practices of the board or commission. While some members prefer limited public participation in the meetings of their boards, other are quite dissatisfied. [2] While some see the board members having the primary responsibility to provide advice and recommendations to the city policy-makers, other wish to encourage the board to act as a forum for broader community engagement and input.
Currently, there is considerable difference in the form and frequency of citizen communications and citizen input at a board of commission. Of course, certain regulatory boards such as those dealing with zoning, land-use variation, require public hearings and formal presentation by advocates and opponents of a particular project, while many have much more limited opportunities for citizens or residents to participate in the proceedings of a board and commission. Only about 50% of the respondents indicated that they had frequent public participation at their public meetings and even fewer suggest that letter, emails or social media are used by those seeking to provide input to a board or commission.

Both survey instruments reported that members of general public learn primarily about the agenda of a board or commission meeting through traditional channels. That is, the city web-site rated as the most frequent source, although neighborhood sources (web-site, newsletter, social media (Next Door) were also listed in the board members survey. When board and commission members are compared to all respondents of the community survey, there are clear and expected differences. That is, neighborhood sources are much more frequently relied upon by respondents of the community survey.[3]

The open-ended follow-up question to board and commission members on how to “improve the ways residents can provide input or participate” provided over 50 separate responses. While some suggested relatively minor changes, some would require extensive reorientation on how the boards and commissions actually operate. Here are some examples:

- Notice to public on city web site that they can communicate to the commission by e-mail.
- Allow citizen input when items come up on agenda, rather than only during front-end of the meeting.[4]
- Meet occasionally in the evening (or at different times) or different locations in the neighborhood.
- More public hearings on key issues
- One or two town halls per year that engage the Austin Community or host forums to hear directly from community members about community needs.
- Planned outreach to stake-holders on controversial issues.
- Utilize stake-holder engagement process for Planned Unit Development (PUD) projects that provide early and ongoing public input as the project is developed.
- More “Working Groups” to be assigned specific tasks and allowing a less structured input from stakeholders.
- Increased social media use: post commission meeting dates/times on social media, use social media to gather input (i.e. create a hashtag), live-tweet commission meetings
- Have individual board members attend community meetings on topics related to the board business.

Some boards and commissions have actually established a workgroup of their members to consider expanded community engagement.

There is an obvious interest in increased use of social media by most boards and commissions. As one commission member stated, “Citizens in a tech-savvy city, expect updates and announcements posted on Facebook and Twitter. They are not looking on the static city web page for commission notices.”
However, others warned that reliance on technology alone will not reach all segments of the community, especially those not tech-savvy or who do not have access to technology. As another board member

stated, “if they’re not reaching us, we need to reach out to them.” The fact that boards and commissions are now being reconstituted with geographic-nominated seats by council members was viewed as a hopeful improvement that might be helpful to improved linkage to segments of the community that perhaps may not have been engaged in the past.

The actual achievement of benefit from a geographically dispersed board or commission, however, was also seen as dependent on a clarification of role between the city council and boards and commission particularly involving the council’s expectation of the nature of expanding community engagement by a board or a commission.

Follow-up interviews with Chairs were conducted with selected boards and commissions and advisory taskforces. These interviews were intended to supplement the information gathered through the survey instruments. With these interviews we attempted to probe further the nature of citizen communication and engagement, the nature of the agenda or types of decisions, the flow of decisions to city policy makers and any out of the ordinary community engagement approaches utilized. One clear take-away from the interviews is that the nature of citizen communication and engagement varies significantly from Board to Board and Commission to Commission. In fact, in some cases, it is safe to say that there is limited amount of community engagement. For example, water rates, the subject area of one commission interviewed received limited public comment, since apparently citizens have chosen to wait to make comments at meetings of the city council. On the other hand, zoning and land-use manner require formal public hearings conducted by the appropriate commission and result in significant public input from advocates and opponents of any project. The Zoning and Platting Commission encouraged the neighborhood and developers to engage in a charette planning process prior to formal submittal to the commission and in contemplating expanded use of this broader community planning tool for other projects.

Based upon interviews, several of the advisory taskforces, (generally more temporary and narrow focused than boards and commissions), have engaged in some innovative community engagement techniques. For example, the Land Development Code Advisory group, developing CodeNEXT, has used social media and extensive meetings with community stakeholders. Likewise, the Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community Taskforce utilized more flexible engagement formats than the related Water and Waste Water Advisory Commission.
The interviews also explored how agendas of the boards and commissions are developed and the work of a commission is actually carried out. Most interviewed stated that staff suggested most items for agenda with the chair having approval over the agenda. For boards with extensive agenda items, there has been the use of consent agenda. The success of the use of consent agendas depend on willingness of members not to “knit-pick.” A review of the by-laws of some boards and commissions found the existence of various sub-committees who review issues related to departments aligned with the board or commission. Also, some commissions are starting to undertake some joint meetings with related boards and commission. These joint meetings were encouraged by the city council transitions taskforce committee.

A review of agendas of boards and commissions found both short and long agendas. In one case, the commission was actually reviewing all purchases of a particular department, which had a tendency to distract from “big picture” conversations. The chair of this commission suggested that the agenda should be cleared of such minor administrative detail. One chair reported that the related department would often “test out” discussion points with the commission that involve items on a future city council agenda, while another suggested they acted as a “buffer” for the city council. Although some taskforce interviews with city council members revealed a concern that boards and commissions are really “owned” by various departments, several board chairs and the survey data provided examples where their disagreements with the staff position has been forwarded to city council members. It is impossible to come to a summary conclusion over the independence of boards and commissions that are closely related to departmental functions, since it well vary based upon seniority and the nature of the issues brought up within a board or commission. One board chair remarked that the 10-1 system is leading to some changes on how the boards view their role. In the board & commission member survey, members were asked on the purpose

of their input with most suggesting it was to provide input equally to a city department or the city council. Only 1/3 of the respondents reported their sole purpose was to influence council decision-making[5] and even fewer consider their role as to provide advice only to the department. From the open-ended questions on the board member survey and also from the follow-up interviews, some board members expressed doubt on the real value of their respective board and commission.

Austin is increasingly a diverse ethnic community. A challenge, of course, is to assure that those members of the community who are engaged with city policy-makers are broadly representative of the ethnicity of the community overall. This objective is more clearly achieved through the more broadly ethnically diverse make-up of boards and commission than the average resident engaged with the city. That is, while the average respondent to the community engagement survey was 78% Caucasian or white, only 56.8% of boards and commission members were Caucasian. Not only did boards and commissions have higher than average of Asians, Blacks, Hispanics and those with two or more races, but also from special populations such as physical disabilities and immigrants and renters.

The education level of board and commission members is quite high with 56% having a graduate degree, significantly exceeding the average community volunteer.[6] Obviously, significantly underrepresented are those in the categories of “Some College” or “High School.” Similar to the average respondent to the community engagement survey, the age of board and commission members tends to skew older, although boards and commissions seem to be engaging the 35-44 age group better than average.

General Conclusion

The role of boards and commissions in the community engagement process is clearly in flux. Some board and commission members seek to have a greater public participation at their meetings, while others do not.

Is the primary purpose of a board and commission to provide expertise and advice or its member or to provide a forum for public discussions. The board members are looking for direction from the city council. *For example, would the council wish to have boards and commissions host public hearings on controversial topics to provide early public airing of issues prior to these issues being placed upon a city council committee or full council agenda. Is the city council satisfied with the level of public input at each stage of the decision-making/advisory process and what role should the boards and commissions play in this process.*

In light of the 10 + 1 council system with is greater assurance of geographically and ethnically dispersed representation, are all the current boards and commissions still necessary.

[1] Question 12 on the Community survey asked. How satisfied are you with the outcomes of your engagement with the city?” Among all respondents, 47% expressed low satisfaction (1 or 2 on the five points scale), while only 16% expressed high satisfaction (4 or 5 on the scale). Community volunteers reported a low/high ratio of 40.9% to 23.9%

[2] Board/Commission Survey-“On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) how satisfied are you with the outcomes of the community engagement practices of the board or commission of which you are a member or staff liaison.” There were 51 responses-16 responses 1 or 2 (31.4%), 18 responses of 3 (36.3%) and 17 responses of 4 or 5 (32.4%)

[3] The community survey asked: “How do you usually learn about opportunities to engage with the city? (Choose all that apply).” All respondents listed the “Neighborhood web/social, inc. Next door the highest source at 61.9%, while for board and commission members, this source was the fifth most frequent source at 32.5%

[4] There seems to be a significant difference among boards and commissions on this point with many restricting citizen input at meeting to only the beginning of the meeting. In fact, some restrict citizen comment only on items not on the agenda.

[5] Board and Commission Survey Question: “How do you view the purpose of input provided by the board or commission of which you are a member…” Responses 50 in total-16 said their purpose was to influence Council, 7 said their purpose was to influence departments, while 27 said purpose was to influence both equally

[6] Among all respondents to the survey, 43.4% had a graduate degree and 41.5% had a Bachelor's degree, while of those self-identified as "volunteers" 48.5% had a graduate degree and 38.8% had a Bachelor's degree.

City Department Staff Workgroup Report

The Task Force on Community Engagement's City Department workgroup received input from several community engagement specialists at the department level, along with the feedback provided to the Task Force as a whole by CPIO staff. The workgroup focused particularly on departments with regular, established engagement efforts, including Planning and Zoning, Development Services, Transportation, Neighborhood Housing, Police, and Budget/Capital Planning.

The workgroup used the following seven questions to solicit input from the departments. Below is a summary of main themes that emerged from this input. Italic text captures verbatim responses from the workgroup's contacts.

1. **How do you decide when you need to engage the public on a project or issue? What factors influence those decisions?**

    - Responses generally tracked with the IAP2 spectrum, with departments identifying needs to inform, consult, involve, or collaborate with community stakeholders and the people they serve, to:
        - Further their department's missions through education and awareness (including more ambitious efforts *"designed to be a learning exchange between staff, consultants, and Austinites"):*
            - *"Every project and issue at our department) a public engagement component; however, they occur at varying degrees depending on the project. ..*
        - Seek public input that would help them enhance program delivery;
        - Seek public input that would help shape public policy recommendations.
        - *We engage with the public whenever our project or a City decision will impact them. In general, it is important to engage Austin residents when we have an important milestone and need their feedback in order to advance our work. It is important to have an "ask" of the public so they feel their time is well spent and the work they provide to us is meaningful.*

    - Some of these decisions are influenced by external mandates (such as federal regulations), the needs of other departments, or direction from Council, as well as projects that come from the neighborhoods.
        - "Numerous projects have more formalized community engagement components. With these larger efforts, we incorporate a public engagement process."

    - As was the intent of the workgroup, the departments we consulted place a high priority on engagement and generally agreed that it results in better outcomes for their programs and initiatives.
        - However, this commitment can be difficult when the department (or some of its principals) have traditionally strained relationships with some of the more established or persistent stakeholders.
        - Managing stakeholder relationships and building solid partnerships are important. Engagement can lead to

"stronger public understanding of the challenges, opportunities and strategies that city departments work with. Greater understanding helps to build the public's capacity to support those tasked with building a better Austin."

"The type of project dictates how we will first engage the public. On a small area plan, for example, we often start with a survey, walk, or pre-project meeting to being a dialogue with the community. If we have a special-interest project or issue we will often start with a public meeting for discussion and education around the issue at hand."

2. **When you do decide to engage the public, how do you determine how extensive those efforts will be and what engagement methods to use?**

    - For many departments, these decisions have to be made within the context of the constraints they face. Commonly cited challenges include:
        - Staffing (not all departments have dedicated staff, so engagement activities are being implemented by staff with other responsibilities).
        - Budget (both the amount of funds and, potentially, the conditions placed on those funds, as with grants and private donations to departments such as APD's Office of Community Liaison).
            - *"On one hand we, the City, want more public engagement; however, funds allocated for advertising/engagement are often the most criticized. It costs money to reach people, and even more money if we are trying to reach people who aren't the same stakeholders that are already engaged. This is an interesting challenge because while we want to reach as many people as possible, it isn't a responsible use of taxpayer funds to do a full launch on every single project/issue."*

        - Access to technology, expertise and other city resources (including the shared resources offered through CPIO).
        - Timelines placed by policy (e.g., Council resolutions) or regulations

    - At the same time, departments recognize and try to respond to the variety of demographics and different stakeholder groups and populations they serve, and thus try to customize their engagement where possible.
        - *"Every project has a different scope- therefore, we hold initial internal meetings to identify a first round of project stakeholders- then we engage those stakeholders to see if there are any other people/groups that need to be included."*
        - *"We incorporate periodic education sessions to help participants – coming from different backgrounds and varying levels of technical understanding – engage with complex information and how it impacts daily life."*
        - *"Resources are the biggest constraint. Where possible, we try to piggy-back on existing networks, events or outreach to groups, organizations and neighborhoods."*
        - *"Sometime we conduct "pre-engagement" to better understand preferences for engagement in a particular community."*
        - *"We always work to get the most for our money, reach as many people as possible, and to use all the free resources we have available."*

3. **What are some of the internal (within the City organization) challenges you've experienced when conducting public engagement efforts?**

    - Finding appropriate meeting spaces — *"large and fully equipped spaces that are centrally located, free of charge to the organizers and public, and easily accessible by multiple transit routes."*
        - *"Many City meeting spaces are not conducive to good dialogue. Many have white walls with bright lights, little to no views, uncomfortable chairs, poor audio and video quality, and a bad layout for a meeting. … Also, the lack of available meeting spaces. This is a continuous problem for us especially for meetings that must accommodate over 30 people. Not only does this waste a lot of staff time, it causes regular meetings to be moved from location to location which must confuse the public."*

- Publicizing engagement opportunities through multiple platforms.

"With an ever-expanding number of social media sites, we must constantly expand the number of tools to reach out to people, and people to manage, monitor and keep these resources up to date."

- Coordinating city meetings and events without a centralized calendar.
    - "*Austin is a very active city with public events seemingly happening every day; we probably lose participation because of competition and possibly public burnout. City departments frequently have events that are held at the same time as each other."*

- Resistance to engagement within the organizational culture.
    - *"General perception that engagement will be a negative experience or more trouble than it is worth."*
    - *"There's still pretty significant bad attitude within the staff toward these people they're supposed to reach out to ... There are some who, regardless of their skill set, truly and obviously value public engagement. But there are plenty who see community engagement as a box to check."*

- Limitations on capabilities for digital engagement
    - *"City notification tools like Austin Notes do not have a sufficient membership (i.e. not even all City staff and commissioners are signed up). Technology is limited in how the departments can expand use of the tool."*
    - *"We cannot control the layout of our website. We need to coordinate with CTM when changes to layout are desired."*
    - *"CTM has not demonstrated an ability to create apps or digital platforms in-house so we must rely on outside vendors for many digital engagement platforms. This is not necessarily bad. The challenge is that this requires funding, which is often not anticipated whenever budgets are decided."*

- Resource constraints, particularly for departments without their own communications specialists.
    - *"The biggest challenge is resources. We do not have one (or any) staff member dedicated to public engagement. … With all of our responsibilities, public engagement is incorporated as one more duty rather than one person's primary responsibility."*
    - *"How we hire consultants/vendors for engagement projects could use some rethinking. … Austin has many very qualified engagement firms and there are times that it makes sense to bring in outside third-party expertise; there are times when it does not. The City's decentralized communications network has vast capabilities but they vary across departments, so the needs and gaps vary. It would be interesting to explore setting up firms/vendors to be pre-cleared to fill gaps on engagement projects in a more agile way."*

- Working with the City Council and other city decision-makers
    - *"There is no identified process to work with Council District constituencies that would coincide with Council District representation and/or expectations."*
    - *"The City of Austin organization has no strategic plan so City Council, City management, Boards, Commissions and Task Forces, and departmental priorities compete with each other, generating high demand on all City staff and in particular, engagement resources."*
    - *"We are still learning how to collaborate with the Council offices to reach their district constituents. Lots of opportunity here."*

"Items from Council (IFCs) are very common, which often result in a directive to understand a complex issue, conduct public and/or stakeholder meetings, make sense of the results and draft a new policy by a deadline of 3-4 months. Each time that happens, work must shift from other initiatives."

4. **What are some of the external (outside the organization) challenges you've experienced when conducting public engagement efforts?**

- Working with Austin's diversity of community stakeholders

    - *Numerous registered community organizations, sometimes with overlapping boundaries and conflicting interests*

    - *"Organizations do not reach out to their greater constituencies, which leads to the same players at the table every time."*
    - *"Our mission is to reach new participants and gain a more representative perspective. Despite trying new methods, we often see familiar faces."*
    - *"We solicit as much engagement/feedback as possible, but most in-person meetings are attracting smaller and smaller audiences. This presents a challenge when our most organized stakeholders do show up to the meets and there is a false perception that they represent the majority of stakeholders."*

- Lack of understanding or distrust of the City
    - *"There is general confusion around facts of City policies, and many people come with a negative attitude and mistrust of City employees."*
    - *"Poor conduct by the public as well as Board and Commission members is often tolerated, which impedes effective dialogue by staff and participants."*

- Stakeholder fatigue.
    - *"People want to know 'what's in it for me today?' when the impact will be seen most likely by their children.*
    - *"We know our community members/stakeholders value their time just as much as anyone. It is extremely difficult to get people to engage on projects/issues before there is a problem."*

5. **Think of some of the community engagement efforts you've done that went well. What were the most important factors contributing to that success?**

- *"We had bands, food, and other fun activities for a variety of people. The event had a fun and positive energy. Many people said they enjoyed the event. … The event was held at a busy social gathering space. An active area is essentially free advertising."*

- *"Having very specifically defined goals and "assignments" for the session. This sometimes means a series of meetings is required to get through everything but we have found it makes each session more productive and helps participants to leave with a clear understanding of what was accomplished as a group."*

- *"The most successful engagement effort as of late was a senior staff member's full time project for roughly 2 months (and it continues). She was able to meet with every City Council office individually, brief them on the process, engage with the districts via Council town halls, brief the City Manager's Office on a regular basis, presented to the committees and commissions and finally to the full Council. Ideally this would be the process for all large-scale projects/initiatives; however, staff and resources continue to be a challenge."*

- *"City staff did not dictate the process but rather designed the engagement process with the stakeholders – and then implemented in partnership. City staff did not dictate who should be at the table."*

- *"In order to maintain a continuous presence with the community, we provide opportunities to meet with stakeholders at their meeting sites to talk about their issues and questions. This allows for us to meet them on the terms on their turf."*

- *"Being respectful at all costs. Understanding the art of listening. Ensuring the meeting is designed with respectful decorum and dialogue at the center of all engagement contacts. Bringing in mediators or facilitators as needed; it's not always ideal for staff to facilitate."*

6. **What kinds of resources (tools, training, etc.) do you think would help you, your department, and/or the City be more effective at engagement?**

    - "*Our department would benefit by having a full-time Public Information Officer who has extensive knowledge about community engagement."*

    - *"City adopted rules of engagement that Boards and Commissions were also held accountable to uphold."*

    - *"When possible, there should be communication between departmental public information officers (suggestions: email correspondence, meetings, etc.) to help minimize audience competition. This tactic would also explore possible partnering opportunities for cost-effective public engagement."*

    - *"Continuous access to an online, virtual open house tools would allow us to host more online open houses Additionally, we frequently hear from elected officials that there needed to be something done differently in the public engagement process. It would be interesting to hear what they consider successful engagement processes. They also need to understand at budget time that public engagement is a time intensive effort that requires labor and marketing resources."*

    - *"Investment in technical expertise and support available for community engagement (i.e. digital platforms, apps, interactive websites and dashboards, visualizations to simplify complexity)."*

    - *"Training and stronger resources to engage those with the most barriers to participation – focus on overcoming digital inequalities and reaching those with limited English proficiency."*

    - *"Having readily available Spanish translators and interpreters is also vital. Sign language interpreters should be available for all televised events."*

    - Annual updates of email/contact lists.
        - *"Public contacts! There is an assumption that departments have compiled contact lists for neighborhood groups, businesses, etc.- this is not always the case and it is hard work compiling this contact information. Just having a centralized contact repository would do wonders."*

7. **What kinds of policies or management practices do you think would help you, your department, and/or the City be more effective?**

    - *"Our department's policies should allow us to do our work."*

    - *"Citywide Strategic Priorities to allow for some focus and doing a few things well rather than scrambling and doing several things mediocre. Imagine Austin is a good tool to utilize for establishing these priorities."*

    - *"We have a very talented team working on community engagement from a centralized office in City Hall; however (as I am sure you know!) they are only two people. Some way to extend their services to smaller projects and/or to projects on a more frequent basis would be helpful.*

- *“Annual town hall style meeting for citizens to share general feedback with departments, or when a City Council member holds a town hall meeting there should always be representatives from City departments present to capture comments and follow-up on these comments in some way.”*

- *“I fear we have fatigued our community with engagement opportunities. We are starting to see City Council town halls as opportunities to better coordinate all of these efforts; however we often only have a few days notice on these events. Possibly further developing these as engagement efforts could help reduce stakeholder fatigue.”*

- A centralized outreach calendar of all events by department.
- Allowing organizations and individuals to sign up for outreach on multiple platforms on the topics that interest them.
- *“Bi-directional communication across the department divisions will help staff better understand who to engage, how to engage internal stakeholders and other divisions, and eventually, external stakeholders.”*

Lists of organizations the Task Force reached out to

Civic & Nonprofit Workgroup
ACLU Austin
AISD
ARCH – Front Steps
Asian Pacific Islander Public Affairs Association
Austin Interfaith
Austin Parks Foundation
Austin Urban League
Bike Texas
Capital Idea
Community Action Network
Community Development Corporations (Clarksville, Rosewood, Blackland, Guadalupe, Frameworks, etc)
Equal Justice Center
Foundation Communities
Foundation for the Homeless
Go! Austin/Vamos! Austin (GAVA)
Goodwill
Greenlights (now Mission Capital)
Habitat for Humanity
Hill Country Conservancy
HousingWorks
Interfaith Action
Michael and Susan Dell Foundation
Mobile Loaves and Fishes
MRC – Share Open Arms
NAACP Austin
Salvation Army
Save Barton Creek Association
Sierra Club
SOS
St. David's Foundation
Tree Folks
United Way
Waller Creek Conservancy
Women's Community Center of Central Texas
Workers Defense Project

Business Workgroup
Austin Board of Realtors
Austin Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
Austin Independent Business Alliance
Austin Music People
Austin Technology Council
Downtown Austin Alliance
Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Medical Society
The Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
The Real Estate Council of Austin, Inc.
Urban Land Institute
Womens Chamber of Commerce of Texas

City Departments Workgroup
Austin Code Department
Austin Energy
Austin Police Department
Austin Resources Recovery
Austin Water Utility
Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Department
Capital Planning Office
Development Services Department
Economic Development Department
Fire Department
Homeland Security
Innovation Office
Neighborhood Housing and Community Development
Office of Sustainability
Parks and Recreation
Planning and Zoning
Police Department
Public Works
Transportation Department
Watershed Protection Department

Boards & Commissions Workgroup
General List of Boards & Commissions of City Auditor-who were sent special survey
Electric Utility Commission
Historic Landmark
Parks and Recreation Board
Planning Commission
Public Safety Commission
Urban Forestry Board
Urban Renewal Board
Urban Transportation
Water and Waste Water Commission
Zoning & Planning Commission

Neighborhoods Workgroup
Active Neighborhood Associations in Community Registry
Austin Neighborhoods Council
City of Austin recognized Contact Teams
Go! Austin/Vamos! Austin
Love North Austin
NextDoor List
Agave Neighborhood Association
ARNL (Asociación de Residentes de North Lamar)
Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association
Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association
Canyon Creek HOA
Circle C Homeowners Association
Colony Park Neighborhood Association
East Austin Neighborhood Association
East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Contact Team
Friends of Austin Neighborhoods (FAN)
Govalle/Johnston Terrace Contact Team (Daniel Llanes)

Northwest Austin Civic Association
OCEAN (Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods)
Park Ridge Homeowners Association
River Place HOA
South Austin Neighborhood Alliance
South River City Citizens
Southeast Combined Neighborhood Contact Team
Southwood Neighborhood Association
Village of Western Oaks

Underrepresented Populations Workgroup
African American Resource Advisory Commission
Asian American Quality of Life Advisory Commission
Commission for Women
Commission on Immigration Affairs
Commission on Seniors
Commission on Veteran Affairs
Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resources Advisory Commission
Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
AIA Latinos in Architecture
African-American Chamber
Asian American Resource Center
Asian Austin
Asian Family Support Services of Austin
Asian Pacific Americans for Progress (APAP) - Texas
Austin's African American Cultural Heritage District
Austin Area Black Educators
Austin Area Urban League
Austin Area Urban League Young Professionals
Austin Chinese Professional Society
Austin South Asian
Center for Mexican American Cultural Arts
Chinese Austin
El Mundo Newspaper
FuturoFund Austin
HABLA
Hermanos de East Austin
Hispanic Austin Leadership
Hispanic Women's Network of Texas – Austin Chapter
Hispanos Network Austin
Indian Community Center of Austin
La Familia Texana Unida
Latina Leadership Network
Latinos / Hispanics Over 40 Austin Group
Latino Professional Business Network
Latinos Ready to Vote
Network of Asian American Organizations
Netip Austin (Network of Indian Professionals)
Taiwanese American Professionals – Austin Chapter
Telemundo Austin
Telugu Cultural Association, Austin
Travis County Hispanic Network
Young Hispanic Professional Association of Austin

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City of Austin
NEWS RELEASE
Communications and Public Information Office - 301 W. Second St, Austin, TX 78701

For immediate release:

October 13, 2015

Contact: Communications and Public Information Office (512) 974-2220

Task force survey seeks citizen ideas to improve engagement with the City of Austin

The City of Austin's Task force on Community Engagement has released a survey to gather public feedback on all aspects of engaging with the City.

The survey asks questions about how the public currently engages with City of Austin and how Austinites would like to connect with City government moving forward. This includes providing input or participating in activities that guide the way the City of Austin does business or the decisions it makes.

"The Austin City Council affirmed how important community engagement is to their work and the work of City staff." said Mike Clark-Madison, Chairman of the Task Force on Community Engagement. "We need to hear from all over Austin how they currently connect with their government, what are some of the barriers around engaging, how they would remove those barriers, and how they would like to engage in the future."

The newly elected 10-1 City Council established the task force this past January to examine public engagement tools and techniques that could better support the 10-1 council district system. This task force is charged with finding and developing new techniques to ensure an engaged population. At the end of the process they will present a report with recommendations from

input they have gathered from the public and ones they have developed during their meetings.

People interested in helping the task force with creating their recommendations are encouraged to take this survey, share their ideas on SpeakUpAustin.org, and attend the meetings of the task force.

The Task Force on Community Engagement meets every other week on Thursday from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. The meetings take place 1000 E. 11th Street, Austin, TX in room 400A, unless noted otherwise on the meeting agenda. To view future meeting dates or agendas, click here.

Here is the direct link to the survey:
https://austintexas.granicusideas.com/surveys/community-engagement-how-are-we-doing

###

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unsubscribe from this list | update subscription preferences

Do you feel like the City of Austin

The citizen-led
Task Force on Community Engagement
wants to know.

The task force was formed by city council to make recommendations on how to improve the ways city government informs and engages Austinites in city and community affairs.

All Austinites are invited to take an online survey, available at **SpeakupAustin.org**, to share their thoughts on the city's current community engagement efforts and ways it can be improved.

Survey available online at **SpeakupAustin.org/surveys**. Tear off a reminder below

Austin Community Engagement Survey **http://speakupaustin.org/surveys**

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Cree Ud. que La Ciudad de Austin

El Equipo de Trabajo Sobre la Participación Comunitaria
(Task Force on Community Engagement) quiere saber.

El Equipo de Trabajo Sobre la Participación Comunitaria tiene el cargo de recomendar mejoras en las formas en que residentes de Austin se pueden involucrar y participar en asuntos de su municipio.

Le invitamos llenar la encuesta, disponible en **SpeakupAustin.org**, para compartir su pensamamientos y experiencias participando en los asuntos de la ciudad.

La encuesta está disponible en el web: **SpeakupAustin.org/surveys**. Desgarre un recordatario abajo.

Encuesta de Participación Comunitaria **http://speakupaustin.org/surveys**

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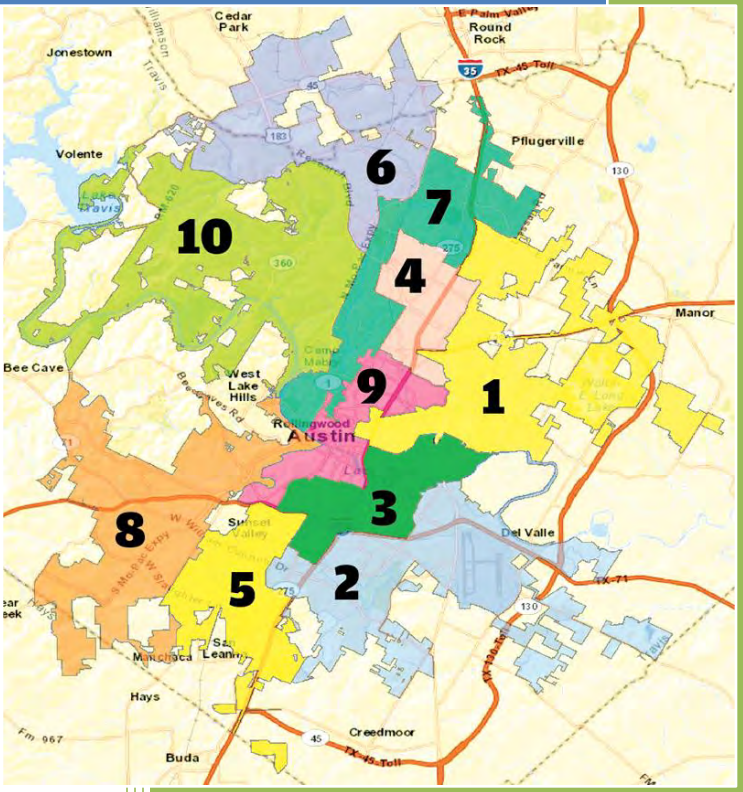
2015

City of Austin Community Engagement Current Practices



Diane Miller, Juli Fellows, Pat Korbus
Civic Collaboration
7/10/2015

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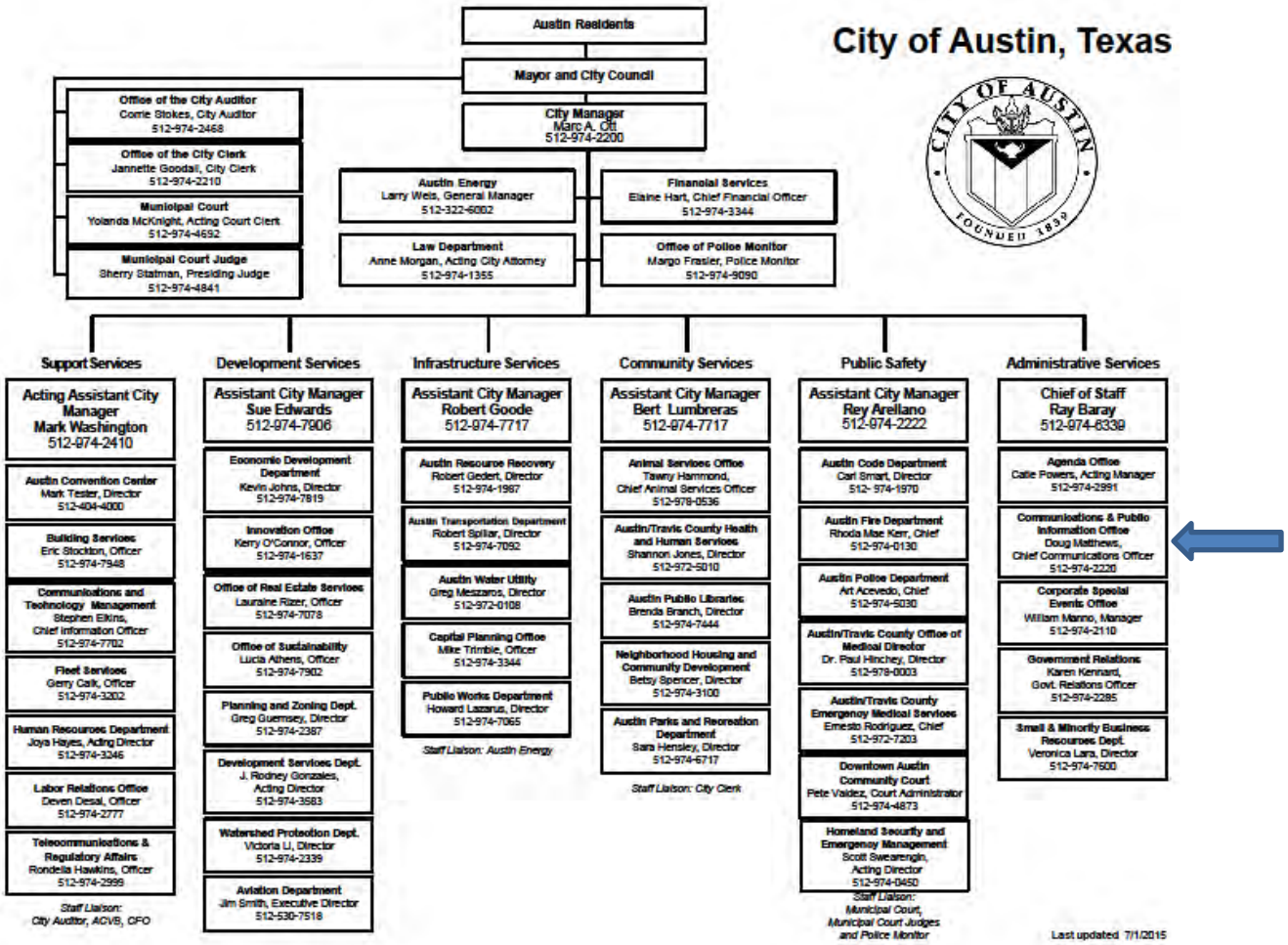
Background

From May through June 2015, the consultants gathered information from City of Austin staff on the current state of community engagement. Most of this information came from the Communications and Public Information Office, which houses the Community Engagement Division. Another source was a February 2015 report to the Austin City Council compiled by the Office of the City Auditor entitled "Special Request Report on Public Engagement in Peer Cities."

Key Points

- Community engagement activities are conducted through a decentralized system. Many, if not most, of the community engagement activities are designed and orchestrated within City Departments or Offices.
- The Communications and Public Information Office (CPIO) employs two full-time staff dedicated solely to community engagement. In addition, three other CPIO employees contribute some of their time to community engagement efforts. An average of four interns per year work in the Community Engagement Division.
- The most active Departments in terms of community engagement are Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Public Works and Planning.
- There are no data on the number or type of engagement activities handled exclusively by the City Departments.
- The Community Engagement team serves as a resource to the other Departments and entities. Departments and Offices are encouraged but not required to use the team's resources.
- The two full-time staff members in the Community Engagement Division have facilitated a total of 431 events or activities from 2010 through May 2015, with an average of about 78 events per year. The precise number or characteristics of participants at these events is not known, though an informal estimate for participation is in the thousands.
- There is no documented City-wide plan relative to community engagement. CPIO does include community engagement as a key goal, and develops year-to-year objectives to support that goal.

City of Austin Organization Chart



City of Austin Public Participation Principles

These principles have been adopted by the City Manager's office. Formal adoption of such principles is uncommon among city governments.

Accountability and Transparency
The City will enable the public to participate in decision-making processes by providing clear information on the issues, the ways to participate, and how their participation contributes to the decision.

Fairness & Respect
The City will maintain a safe environment that cultivates and supports respectful public engagement and will expect participants to do so in turn.

Accessibility
The City will respect and encourage participation by providing ample public notice of opportunities and resources and accommodations that enable all to participate.

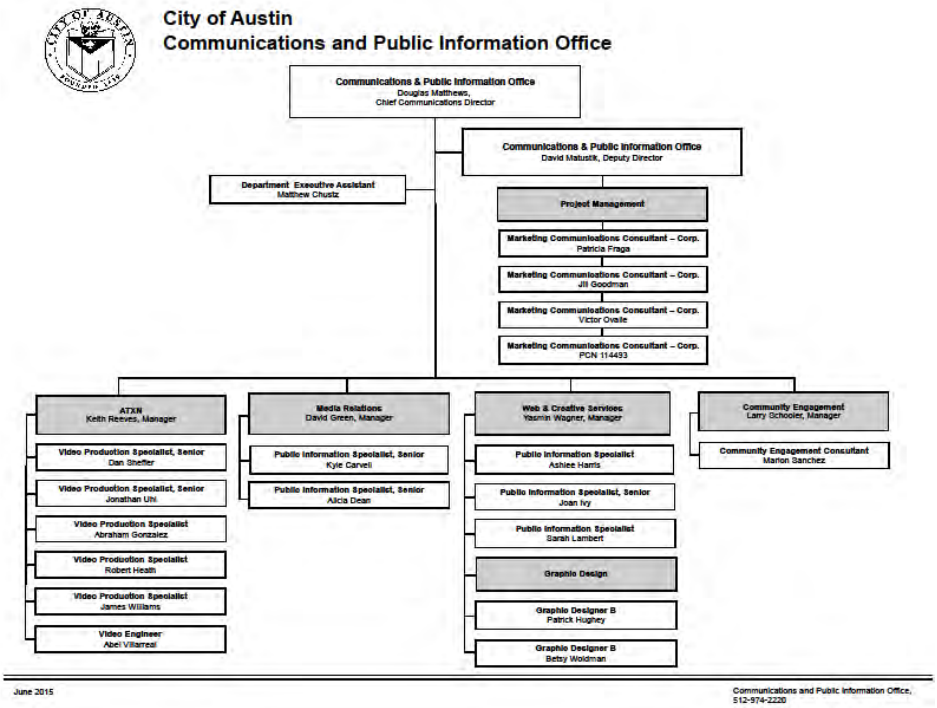
Predictability & Consistency
The City will prepare the public to participate by providing meeting agendas, discussion guidelines, notes, and information on next steps.

Creativity & Community Collaboration *(Inclusivity and Diversity)*
The City will use innovative, proven, and customized engagement solutions that are appropriate to the needs of the projects and the participants.

Responsible Stewardship
The City will balance its commitment to provide ample opportunities for public involvement with its commitment to delivering government services efficiently and using City resources wisely.

Community Engagement Division Services

- Design and implementation of large scale public participation activities.
- Design and facilitation of in-person events.
- Design and moderation of online tools.
- Development and implementation of alternative engagement, mediation and capacity building strategies.



- Development of strategies to diversify outreach…
- Facilitation of task forces, advisory groups
- Training for City Departments of effective community engagement and conflict resolution.

The two full-time staff members in the Community Engagement Division have facilitated a total of 431 events or activities from 2010 through May 2015, with an average of about 78 events per year. The precise number or characteristics of participants at these events is not known.

Appendix B contains more detailed descriptions of the variety of community engagement activities that are facilitated by the Community Engagement Division.

Types of Community Engagement Activities (as of February 2015)

This chart is based on the International Association of Public Participation Spectrum which is shown in Appendix A. As you move to the right, the public impact of participation increases.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
• Websites • Televised programs and meetings • Social media • Spokespersons • Open Data Portal • CityWorks Academy • Visits to community and neighborhood organizations • Community Forums • E-newsletters • Fliers • Nextdoor • ATXN.tv • Media • PSA's • Agenda Community Blog	• Public meetings • Field Trips, Walkabouts • Surveys • Forums • Speak Week • Meeting in a Box • Conversation Corps • Austin Youth Council • Community forums • Virtual town-halls (televised and streamed) • Feedback via text, phone, Twitter • Community Forums	In addition to practices listed under "Consult:" • Design charrettes • Austin 311 • SpeakUp Austin • University engagement	• Task Forces • Advisory Groups • Working Groups • Boards • Commissions • Partner with organizations to provide community-engagement training	• Voting

Other Practices Tested/Considered by CE Division, but not currently active:

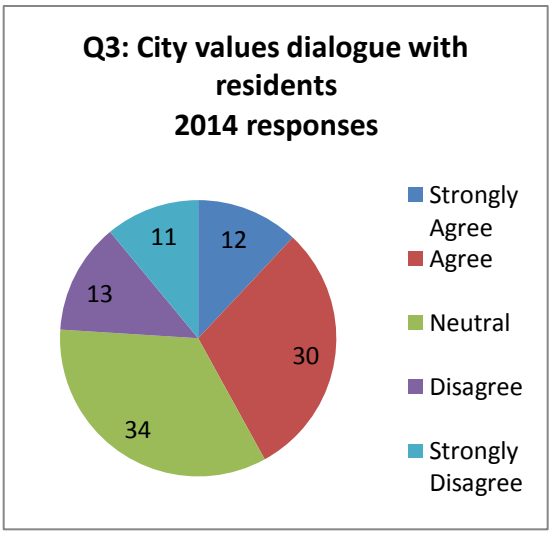
- Metroquest (interactive/visual surveys) – used during Project Connect, is a tool at the Consult level.
- HeartGov/Textizen (text-based feedback tools) – used once, is a tool at the Consult level.
- Bang the Table/MindMixer (similar to SpeakUpAustin) – used once and then replaced by SpeakUpAustin.org. A tool at the Consult, Involve and Collaborate levels.
- IdeaScale/ChangeByUs (social ideation, crowdsourcing) – used several times, is a tool at the Consult level.
- Coveritlive/UStream (live video and chat) – used several times, is a tool primarily at the Inform level.
- eComment (commenting tool) – considered but not used. CPIO is currently exploring alternatives for online commenting for City Council agenda items.

Data on Effectiveness of Community Engagement Efforts

During the summer of 2014, ETC Institute administered a survey for the City of Austin to gather input from residents to improve the quality of City communication with the public. The survey was administered by phone to a random sample of 460 residents in the City. The results for the full random sample of 460 respondents have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4.5%.

- Ninety-four percent (94%) of those surveyed indicated that they are at least "somewhat interested" in keeping informed about City events and City government.
  - 40% are "very interested"
  - 29% are "interested"
  - 25% are "somewhat interested"
- Forty-nine percent (49%) of respondents are satisfied with the City's efforts to keep them informed about City services, issues, events, and programs. This was a decrease of 4 percentage points, from 53% in 2013 to 49% in 2014.
- The three topics for which respondents were most satisfied with the amount of information provided by the City were: (1) special events, (2) the environment, and (3) parks. Residents were least satisfied with the information available on the City budget. There were no significant increases and four significant decreases in satisfaction from 2013: special events (-9 percentage points), parks (-6 percentage points), water and public utilities (-7 percentage points), and libraries (-9 percentage points).
- Of the 193 residents (out of the 460 surveyed) who had accessed the City's website, 56% were satisfied with the quality of information provided on that website. This was a decrease of 12 percentage points from 68% in 2013 (N = 167). These residents also reported a decrease in satisfaction with the visual design of the City's website: 43% in 2014 compared to 51% in 2013. (Note: level of precision was not calculated for these smaller sample sizes.)
- Of the 347 residents (out of 460 surveyed) who had experience with any of the community engagement activities listed on the survey, 64% rated their experience with these community engagement services as "very good" or "good." This compared to 63% of the 295 residents in 2013 who had had experience with any of the community activities.

There are no known data on the impact or outcome of City-run community engagement efforts. CPIO has collected internal client satisfaction data for several years and their clients are satisfied with their services. CPIO has also recently developed survey instruments to collect feedback from the public about their services but the instruments haven't been used long enough to serve as a reliable measure. It is not known whether the Departments or Offices collect any data on the impact of the engagement activities which they manage themselves.



The chart to the right shows the 2014 responses to question 3 of the ECT survey, "The City of Austin values dialogue between residents and government." Appendix C shows the questions asked by ECT and data trends from 2013 to 2014.

Appendices

Appendix A: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

International Association for Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses	▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings	▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling	▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making	▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision

© IAP2 International Association for Public Participation

Appendix B: Memo Describing Community Engagement Activities Facilitated by CE Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Leslie Pool

FROM: Doug Matthews, Chief Communications Director
Ray Baray, Chief of Staff

RE: Community Engagement Inventory

DATE: January 23, 2015

In response to your request, and in light of the discussions regarding community engagement, our office is providing you with a general overview and inventory of the work done by our community engagement team. This is inclusive of the work that our team has led or contributed to, and does not include peripheral engagement programs that may exist within departments.

The Community Engagement Division assists departments in designing and implementing public participation and community outreach strategies. Our efforts are guided by a core set of community engagement principles (Attachment A) and the Public Participation Spectrum used by organizations like the International Association for Public Participation (Attachment B).

The department currently has two engagement professionals with extensive background in community involvement. **Larry Schooler** is the past president of the International Association for Public Participation, an Annette Strauss Fellow, certified mediation professional and an adjunct professor at Southern Methodist University. **Marion Sanchez** has 20+ years of private practice experience in outreach, engagement and communications with a specialization in minority/foreign-language engagement. Our services include:

- Design and implementation of processes for large-scale public participation activities.
- Design and facilitation of community workshops, educational programs, open houses, virtual town hall meetings and other in-person events.
- Design and moderation of online tools to engage the public, including SpeakUpAustin.org, text message-based polling and live chat capability.
- Development and implementation of alternative engagement, mediation and capacity-building strategies.
- Development and implementation of strategies to diversify outreach and reduce barriers to participation.
- Facilitation of task forces and advisory groups designed to take a closer, more extended look at a particular issue or initiative.

- Training for departments on effective community engagement and conflict resolution strategies.

The Department has a demonstrated history of innovation and experimentation in community engagement, and has been recognized as a leader in the field for those efforts. Following is a summary of the tools that the Community Engagement Division has employed over the past few years. It is important to note that our office works closely with our partners to ensure that the mix of engagement opportunities is appropriate to the goals, the audience and the timing of the matter at-hand.

While we've made an effort to be all-inclusive in this list, the community engagement landscape (and the tools supporting it) is constantly evolving.

Community Engagement Events

Community Forums: CPIO works with clients to innovate and customize forums to meet the identified needs of the particular engagement. That has included "games" where participants work to prioritize items or balance a budget; facilitated small group discussions; interactive open house booths; moderated forums with subject-matter experts; "open" discussion spaces (where participants choose their own topics), and blended forums that may incorporate television, telephone, text/social and live polling.

To enhance the quality of dialogue and participation, CPIO has launched a pilot program with the Dispute Resolution Center, engaging their trained volunteers to assist in table discussions where staffing may be limited.

Design Charrettes: Participants may participate over multiple hours or days to contribute toward a vision for a large piece of land or area of the City.

Field Trip/Walkabouts: Participants visit an area germane to the topic at hand (a park being master-planned, etc.) to learn more about it and provide preliminary feedback.

Neighborhood/Organizational Meetings: City staff visit neighborhood and other community organizations to discuss topics with stakeholders in the context of an existing organizational meeting (neighborhood association, business group, etc.).

Task Force/Advisory Group/Working Group: A broad mix of stakeholders may engage in facilitated dialogue over multiple meetings to develop recommendations for City Council.

Focus Groups: Intentionally targeted, guided group discussions around a particular subject or activity. These may include specific interest groups, demographic groups or organizations.

Alternative Methods for Participation

Speak Week: Staff and/or volunteers position themselves at popular local events and destinations (ACL, UT West Mall, Barton Springs Pool, etc.) and solicit input via tablet computers, posters or other short-form input gathering tool. Used for large citywide projects.

Meeting-in-a-Box: Conversion of public meeting elements into portable form so that individuals can host their own localized conversations about city topics. These can be downloaded or picked up from City locations, and allow for self-directed input gathering with groups of friends, interest groups, or other small groups not normally reached by broader processes.

Conversation Corps: Newly launched initiative will enable Austinites to participate in facilitated monthly conversations at locations all across Austin on rotating topics. Used for citywide discussions; facilitators will be trained community volunteers. This is a cooperative partnership between the City of Austin, Capital Metro, AISD and Leadership Austin.

Austin Youth Council: The Community Engagement Division works in partnership with the Youth and Family Services Division to administer a program to involve leaders from local high schools in the discussion of relevant and timely projects.

CityWorks Academy: An intensive, 11-week program designed to introduce residents to City government operations. This is an application-based program that builds civic capacity. Graduates have been called upon to participate in focus groups to complement engagement activities on a number of issues.

SpeakUpAustin.org: Online hub for engagement in multiple forms, including:

- Surveys
- Discussions
- Forums (review of a finite set of ideas and comments on those ideas)
- Crowdsourcing/Social Ideation

Mediation: On several occasions, staff has been called in to facilitate and mediate discussions between parties (on amplified music permits, as an example).

University engagement: The department recently launched an effort to regularly engage student leaders at local universities to enhance engagement and involvement.

Other social media: Twitter and/or Instagram hashtags for specific projects allow for targeted input gathering. We have also used Reddit forums to post and gather feedback.

Austin 3-1-1: Those who may not be able to participate by other means can now call 3-1-1 to provide feedback on active discussions. They may also submit feedback via the 3-1-1 mobile application.

Survey Administration: This may include telephone, mail, online, in-person, intercept or Web intercept surveys to collect feedback.

Additional Tools/Pilots: The department has piloted or reviewed a variety of engagement tools, and continues to do so actively. This has included Metroquest (interactive/visual surveys), HeartGov/Textizen (text-based feedback tools), Bang the Table/MindMixer (similar forums to SpeakUpAustin), IdeaScale/ChangeByUs (social ideation/crowdsourcing), Coveritlive/UStream (live video & chat) and eComment (commenting tool for Council agendas).

We have also partnered with a number of outside groups to provide training and perspectives on community engagement, including the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning (Bleiker Method), The International Association for Public Participation (Certificate in Engagement Program), the Study Circles Resource Center/Portsmouth Listens (Study Circles) and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (Deliberative Dialogue).

Hopefully you will find this information helpful as you explore further engagement opportunities with a new, district-based Council. We stand ready to assist, and are available as needed. Please contact me should you have any questions.

CC: Mayor and City Council
Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Assistant City Managers

Appendix C: Citywide Survey on Communications, Trends from 2013 to 2014

2014 Survey

Participants (N) = 468 (random selection)

Precision = +/- 4.5 percentage points

2013 Survey

Participants (N) = 405 (random selection)

Margin of error = +/- 4.8 percentage points

Trends from 2013 to 2014	2014	2013	Change from 2013 to 2014
Combination of "Very Interested" and "Interested"			
Q1. How interested are you in keeping informed about City events and City government?	68.3%	68.1%	0.2%
Combination of "Very Satisfied" and "Somewhat Satisfied"			
Q2. In general, how satisfied are you with City government efforts to keep you informed about City services, issues, events, and programs?	49.4%	52.9%	-3.5%
Combination of "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"			
Q3. The City of Austin values dialogue between residents and government	39.4%	44.0%	-4.6%
Q3. The City of Austin is customer-oriented	40.2%	46.3%	-6.1%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Public Safety	48.7%	51.0%	-2.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on The Environment	50.4%	52.7%	-2.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on The City Budget	27.6%	27.3%	0.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Economic Development	38.9%	41.9%	-3.0%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Infrastructure Activities	37.8%	35.3%	2.5%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Water and Public Utilities	45.4%	53.0%	-7.6%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Public Health & Welfare	44.1%	47.4%	-3.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Transportation and Traffic	45.1%	50.4%	-5.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Libraries	41.4%	51.3%	-9.9%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Parks	50.1%	56.0%	-5.9%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on the Austin Animal Center/Animal Services	48.0%	52.3%	-4.3%
Q6. The City Provides Enough Information on Special Events	71.3%	80.0%	-8.7%
Q11. Satisfied with the quality of information provided on City's website	56.3%	68.3%	-12.0%
Q11. It is easy to find the information I am looking for	49.2%	51.3%	-2.1%
Q11. City's website is easy to navigate	50.0%	51.0%	-1.0%
Q11. I like the visual design of the City's website	43.2%	51.4%	-8.2%
Combination of "Frequently" and "Occasionally"			
Q9. Frequency with which Group E-Mail from the City is used to stay informed about the City	13.6%	11.3%	2.3%
Q9. Frequency with which Person to Person/Word of Mouth is used to stay informed about the City	79.0%	72.2%	6.8%
Q9. Frequency with which Non-City Media is used to stay informed about the City	95.0%	93.0%	2.0%
Q9. Frequency with which The Internet is used to stay informed about the City	65.8%	65.1%	0.7%
Q9. Frequency with which City's Social Media is used to stay informed about the City	18.2%	19.0%	-0.8%
Q9. Frequency with which City Staff is used to stay informed about the City	29.7%	28.8%	0.9%
Q9. Frequency with which Public Meetings is used to stay informed about the City	35.9%	36.5%	-0.6%
Q9. Frequency with which City of Austin Website is used to stay informed about the City	46.4%	41.9%	4.5%
Q9. Frequency with which Radio Broadcasts of Council Meetings is used to stay informed about the City	17.5%	23.6%	-6.1%
Combination of "Very Good" and "Good"			
Q17a. Overall, how would you rate your experience with this (or these) community engagement activities?	64.3%	66.9%	-2.6%
Combination of Ratings "9" and "10" on a 10-point scale,where a rating of "10" Meant "Very Warm/Positive"			
Q21. How would you describe the way you feel toward the City of Austin today?	22.5%	40.8%	-18.3%

City of Austin

SPECIAL REQUEST REPORT

A Report to the Austin City Council

Mayor
Steve Adler

Mayor Pro Tem
Kathie Tovo

Council Members
Ora Houston
Delia Garza
Sabino Renteria
Gregorio Casar
Ann Kitchen
Don Zimmerman
Leslie Pool
Ellen Troxclair
Sheri Gallo

Special Request Report on Public Engagement in Peer Cities

February 2015

Office of the City Auditor

Acting City Auditor
Corrie E. Stokes
CIA, CGAP, CFE

Acting Deputy City Auditor
Jason Hadavi
CPA, CFE

REPORT SUMMARY

Current City of Austin public engagement practices are conducted through various City departments. The Communications and Public Information Office acts as a City resource, employs guiding principles, and follows an industry-recognized model in an effort to create a culture of civic engagement. However, management notes that measuring outcomes is challenging. The professional literature suggests common public engagement themes include focusing on the long term, building capacity, using multiple communication channels, and ensuring a diversity of viewpoints. Common challenges are performance measurement, engaging underserved citizens, and adequately addressing non-English speaking communities. We identified six cities for comparison, including Dallas and San Antonio in Texas as well as Kansas City, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

REPORT NUMBER: AS15103

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PROJECT TYPE

This project was conducted as a non-audit project.

TEAM

Patrick A. Johnson, CGAP, CICA, Assistant City Auditor
Rachel Castignoli, Auditor-in-Charge
Michael McGill, Auditor
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February 2015

Special Request Report on Public Engagement in Peer Cities

Report Highlights

Why We Did This Project

This memo responds to a request from Council Member Pool regarding public engagement practices in peer cities.

What We Did

To complete this special request, we:

- interviewed key staff and researched Austin's current practices regarding public engagement;
- researched and summarized professional literature and practices related to municipal public engagement; and
- contacted staff in selected cities to determine how they conduct public engagement.

For more information on this or any of our reports, email oca_auditor@austintexas.gov

Mayor and Council,

I am pleased to present this report on public engagement in peer cities.

BACKGROUND

Public engagement is a process through which members of the public become more informed about, and are able to influence, public decisions. Professional literature indicates that public engagement is important because it helps shape a city in accordance with citizen values.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

Our objective was to research and summarize public engagement practices including Austin's current practices, guidance from professional literature, and peer city practices.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Currently, City of Austin practices related to public engagement are conducted through various City departments. The Communications and Public Information Office is a resource for City departments and employs:
  - guiding principles in an effort to create a culture of civic engagement;
  - an industry-recognized model for public engagement including multiple tools and tactics that seeks to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower citizens; and
  - performance measures to track public engagement activities, but management notes that efforts are needed to better track outcomes.
- Professional literature suggests common public engagement themes include:
  - focus on the long term, build capacity, use multiple communication channels and trained staff, and ensure a diversity of viewpoints; and
  - challenges such as performance measurement, engaging underserved citizens, and adequately addressing non-English speaking communities.
- We identified six cities similar to Austin or recognized for public engagement, including Dallas and San Antonio in Texas as well as Kansas City, Missouri; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; and Vancouver, British Columbia.

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from the Communications and Public Information Office as well as peer city staff during this project.

Corrie E. Stokes, Acting City Auditor

RESULTS

Public Engagement Practices in the City of Austin

Public engagement in Austin occurs through various City departments. The Communications and Public Information Office's (CPIO) Community Engagement division is a resource for City departments to create and coordinate community outreach strategies and conduct public engagement. The Community Engagement division has two staff members that are directly responsible for public engagement, including one that is focused on limited access, or hard to reach, populations. Management reported that CPIO would like to be the provider of choice for City departments related to a suite of services, including public engagement. However, City of Austin departments are not required to utilize CPIO resources and some departments have their own public engagement resources that are not coordinated through CPIO. We also noted that Austin does not have a citywide strategic plan related to public engagement. Management indicated that a citizen's public engagement experience with the City may be inconsistent from department to department.

While we did note that a number of City departments conduct public engagement activities, we focused our research on CPIO efforts. The Community Engagement division reported adhering to guiding principles in their effort to create a culture of civic engagement. Those principles are accountability and transparency, fairness and respect, accessibility, predictability and consistency, creativity and community collaboration, and responsible stewardship. In addition, CPIO utilizes a model developed by the International Association for Public Participation called the iap2 public participation spectrum (see Appendix A). Below are various tools and tactics the City employs to address the iap2 spectrum principles:

- **Inform**: The goal of this principle is to inform the public in a neutral manner on policy, problems, and possible solutions. The City has a variety of ways it communicates to the public such as the website, including Austin Finance Online and ePerformance; television; social media; and people, including various department spokespersons. In addition, Austin conducts CityWorks, a program for citizens to learn about the City from City staff. Also, City staff visits community organizations to discuss various topics of interest with stakeholders.
- **Consult**: The goal is to obtain public feedback. The City has many tools for gathering public input, including public meetings, surveys, forums, and specific tools like speak week, meeting in a box, and Conversation Corps. Also, the Community Engagement division facilitates community workshops and virtual town hall meetings. Town halls are televised and streamed online with public participation available by text, phone, and Twitter.
- **Involve**: The goal is to work with the public throughout the entire policy process. The City involves the public via many of the consulting tools listed above, but also through design charrettes; Austin 311; and SpeakUp Austin, an online forum moderated by the Community Engagement division, where citizens can discuss policy and present ideas as well as vote on the ideas posted by other citizens.
- **Collaborate**: The goal is to partner with the public in each aspect of the process of designing policy. The City uses task forces, advisory groups, and working groups, in addition to the traditional boards and commissions, to bring citizens into a policy-building role. The Community Engagement division facilitates some of these groups and provides them with the resources and connections they need to make meaningful recommendations to decision-makers. In addition, Community Engagement partners with local organizations to

provide training in community engagement and opportunities to facilitate public engagement.

- **Empower**: The goal is to place final decision-making in the hands of citizens. This is where public engagement intersects with the classic tools of democracy. One reflection of citizen empowerment is voter turnout.

The Community Engagement division tracks its performance via feedback and survey responses from its users and CPIO reports performance measures, including how many facilitated events were held and what percentage of Austin residents believe Austin values dialogue between citizens and government. Management reported a challenge of performance measurement is that outcomes are not measured as well as activities.

Public Engagement: Summary of Professional Literature

The professional literature[1] notes benefits to creating public engagement opportunities in a city. These benefits include developing public support for a project, proactively identifying citizen concerns, fostering understanding among different groups, and developing citizen priorities for addressing issues. Public engagement is noted as especially useful for addressing public problems and ensuring informed decisions are being made.

Challenges noted in the literature include the difficulty of measuring performance related to public engagement. Surveys and headcounts are used, but that does not always address the quality of the collaborative process. It was also noted that many cities experience problems attracting underserved citizens to public engagement events. Another challenge was translating public engagement materials and programs so that non-English speaking communities can fully participate.

The literature produced by public engagement organizations and professionals highlights many tools and tactics that can be used to build a culture of civic engagement. In addition to the five principles of the iap2 spectrum outlined earlier, some themes emerged from our survey of the literature. For public engagement to be meaningful, citizens must have the power to change the outcome of a project. Also, public engagement is a two-way street – information flows from city government to citizens and citizens need to provide feedback to the city. Further, cities need to provide the public with multiple and varied opportunities to get that information as well as to provide feedback. The information being shared must be responsive to public needs, such as providing data in a searchable format. Finally, the engagement must be ongoing through the public decision-making process – from contemplating, deciding, and creating programs to monitoring their outcomes and providing feedback. Other common theme areas noted in the literature include:

- **Focus on the long term.** The literature suggests it is important to begin a public engagement strategy with a focus on the long term. While each project is different and requires different resources, creating and maintaining partnerships with community groups and local media makes each subsequent project easier because it fosters a culture of trust and collaboration between the city and citizen groups. Additionally, each project increases citizen understanding of the city's capabilities.
- **Build capacity.** As a corollary to focusing on the long term engagement goals, a second suggestion is to build capacity. This means informing and educating the public on city government and its public processes as well as giving them the resources to become

[1] See Appendix B for a listing of the professional literature reviewed.

community leaders or influencers. The literature suggests that cities can provide community groups with the resources and structure they need to bring their members into a more collaborative relationship and partner with the city. Where community groups are less organized, cities can still reach out to influential and respected members of the community to assist in reaching those communities.

- **Multiple channels.** Another common theme area noted in the literature is that public engagement transpires through multiple channels. While cities should keep abreast of the latest communication technologies, including mobile applications, it is also important to use traditional channels of communication as well as channels accessible to people with limited access to technology. Using multiple channels to engage citizens can result in a more diverse pool for the engagement process.
- **Small groups / large meetings.** The literature strongly encourages the use of small groups in addition to large meetings. Small groups can be more dynamic and facilitate ideation and collaboration. Also, small groups are usually less contentious than public hearings. Large meetings are important for building public acceptance and holding a public debate of policy propositions.
- **Trained facilitators.** The literature also notes that facilitation of public engagement efforts requires high-quality, trained people to guide participation, especially for the "consult" and "involve" principles noted in the iap2 spectrum. Neutral guides can aid in making a public participatory event a success by fostering a climate of collaboration and ensuring each citizen is heard and respected.
- **Diversity of viewpoints.** The literature suggests that cities need to ensure that public engagement provides a diversity of viewpoints. This can be done by recruiting communities that have traditionally been less involved with citizen input. It may also require promoting city projects to those communities. The literature notes that a certain level of trust and cultural understanding, as well as language fluency, is required for effective public engagement. Additionally, cities must be willing to learn from all of their communities what works best for each community related to the engagement and collaboration process.

Public Engagement Practices in Peer Cities

In order to better understand the practices of other municipalities in the area of public engagement, we selected six cities including two in Texas (Dallas and San Antonio), one with a similar governing structure (Kansas City, Missouri), and three with acknowledged practices in the professional literature (Minneapolis, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; and Vancouver, British Columbia).

Among the selected cities, all mentioned the need to embrace digital engagement tools like social media or more specialized applications to augment traditional town-hall style meetings. Two cities, Minneapolis and Portland, reported having more formal relationships with neighborhood associations. Each city reported providing capacity-building resources and improvement grants to these participating associations in return for additional expectations related to the governance, transparency, and diverse representation of those associations.

Related to public engagement challenges among the selected cities, outreach to diverse perspectives and traditionally hard-to-reach populations, such as non-English speakers, was commonly reported. Another challenge noted by each city was the difficulty in measuring the success of their ongoing efforts at public and community engagement.

We noted that all cities reported established, centralized functions for informing the public, but some did not have consistent or well-structured ways to receive input from citizens. Finally, in several cities, we noted that plans and measures for public and community engagement extended to include volunteerism, voter participation, and the diversity of representation.

Dallas, Texas: In Dallas, communication is organized into two separate groups. There is a public information group that focuses on media and social media expression. This group is involved in informing citizens and also works on branding (Dallas recently went through a rebranding process). The other group is a strategic customer service department that tracks performance of city services and solicits resident input through surveys.

Kansas City, Missouri: In Kansas City, the public engagement approach is to make it easy for citizens to provide input. The city also seeks to improve the quality of the information shared with citizens by explaining, as much as possible, the reasoning behind policy issues. They use online videos, online town halls, social media, and text messages to reach residents. They also engage community groups to help with business planning through budgeting workshops as well as a "communications summit" where city staff hears from community organizations about their communications needs. As in Austin, Kansas City has a program for educating interested citizens on how the city operates and they maintain one site where links to all department social media accounts are located. Kansas City also includes public engagement goals as a part of their strategic business plan.

Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minneapolis reported having a formal relationship with their neighborhood associations. The city provides resources (including funding) for the associations and, in return, the associations must comply with City guidelines. The city also funds grants for leadership development programs created and run by community organizations. As in Austin and Kansas City, Minneapolis conducts a city academy for residents.

Related to outreach, Minneapolis reported that they try to reach people where they gather. For example, the city engages with the South East Asian Community through a soccer league. Also, they reported being especially sensitive to Minneapolis communities with limited English skills. The city has employees who focus on outreach to those communities as well as communication plans to assist in reaching those groups in their native language.

Related to measurement, Minneapolis has a community engagement work plan which they periodically update. The yearly results report considers data such as voter turnout, the ethnic makeup of board and commission members, and citizen survey results to determine how successful their public engagement efforts have been.

Portland, Oregon: As in Minneapolis, Portland has a public engagement plan (which is included in their comprehensive plan). The three goals outlined in the plan are to increase the number and diversity of people involved in their communities, strengthen community capacity, and increase community impact on public decisions. In 2010, they created a Public Involvement Development Council made up of city staff and citizens. The city stresses that government and community must be a true partnership and act as peers in decision-making.

As in Minneapolis, Portland supports their community organizations with funding and maintains standards for governance and representation. Originally, this support was provided to neighborhood associations. Over time, Portland discovered that not all people consider "community" as a geographic concept, so they expanded the support to include other identity

groups. In addition, they use a neighborhood small grants program as an incentive for neighborhoods to engage with city government.

Portland reported having tools for determining what level of public involvement is recommended for each project. Every item that goes before Council must either outline how the community was engaged or state that no engagement occurred. Portland also has a standing advisory council on community engagement. The council is made up of community members and city staff that make recommendations to Council.

In Portland, early involvement of groups is critical. They noted that there is no piecemeal way of creating a culture of engagement. Rather, it comes about through building community. Portland also noted that providing food is an important means of attracting people to community events, especially when they are held in the evening.

San Antonio, Texas: In San Antonio, the Communications and Public Affairs Office focuses primarily on informing the public through a variety of channels including billboards, utility bill inserts, and various social media platforms. Performance measures are focused largely on the quantity of outreach through these channels. This office also operates the city 311 system and recently developed an ambassador program to bring neighborhood leaders into 311 operations to better understand how it works and identify better ways to serve community needs.

San Antonio reported taking special care to ensure that all materials are available in Spanish and they work with district council members to identify representatives for hard-to-reach populations. In addition, San Antonio Promise Zone staff is used for outreach and helps with determining what methods are more successful at reaching target audiences in that zone.

Separate from the Communications and Public Information Office, SA2020 is a community vision created in 2010 for the future of San Antonio. An accompanying non-profit, also called SA2020, partners with the community with a mission of turning that vision into a reality. Civic engagement is included in SA2020 with a goal of increasing voter turnout, increasing the diversity of elected officials, and increasing volunteerism.

Vancouver, British Columbia: Vancouver has an Engaged City task force that was formed in 2012 made up of community leaders and supported by city staff and the Mayor's office. The task force was charged with providing recommendations on how to increase city residents' sense of belonging and inclusion and deepen their electoral engagement. Their recommendations included providing food at events, creating citizen academies, making 311 better for non-English speakers, and using property management companies to create better social connections among residents of condominiums.

Vancouver also has an employee who specializes in online engagement. Similar to Austin's SpeakUp Austin, Vancouver has an online citizen forum called Talk Vancouver. Vancouver also values face-to-face interaction at large events. They reported holding open houses at various city sites as well as sponsoring Pecha Kuchas, which are short presentations on a variety of topics. The city is also looking into ways of making the budgeting process more participatory. They receive feedback via surveys and have recently been adding the capacity to receive feedback in Mandarin.

APPENDIX A

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCCIATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM:

iap2 public participation spectrum

developed by the international association for public participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns 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 provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	• Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

SOURCE: City of Austin Community Engagement staff, January 2015

APPENDIX B

PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE REVIEWED:

Birnback, Lara, et al. "Public Engagement in the Latino Community" (2009) Working paper. Center for Advances in Public Engagement.

Bittle, Scott; Chris Haller & Alison Kadlec "Promising Practices in Online Engagement" (2009) Occasional Paper No. 3. Center for Advances in Public Engagement.

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Kadlec, Alison & Will Friedman "Beyond Debate: Impacts of Deliberative Issue Framing on Group Dialogue and Problem Solving" (2009) Occasional Paper No. 4. Center for Advances in Public Engagement.

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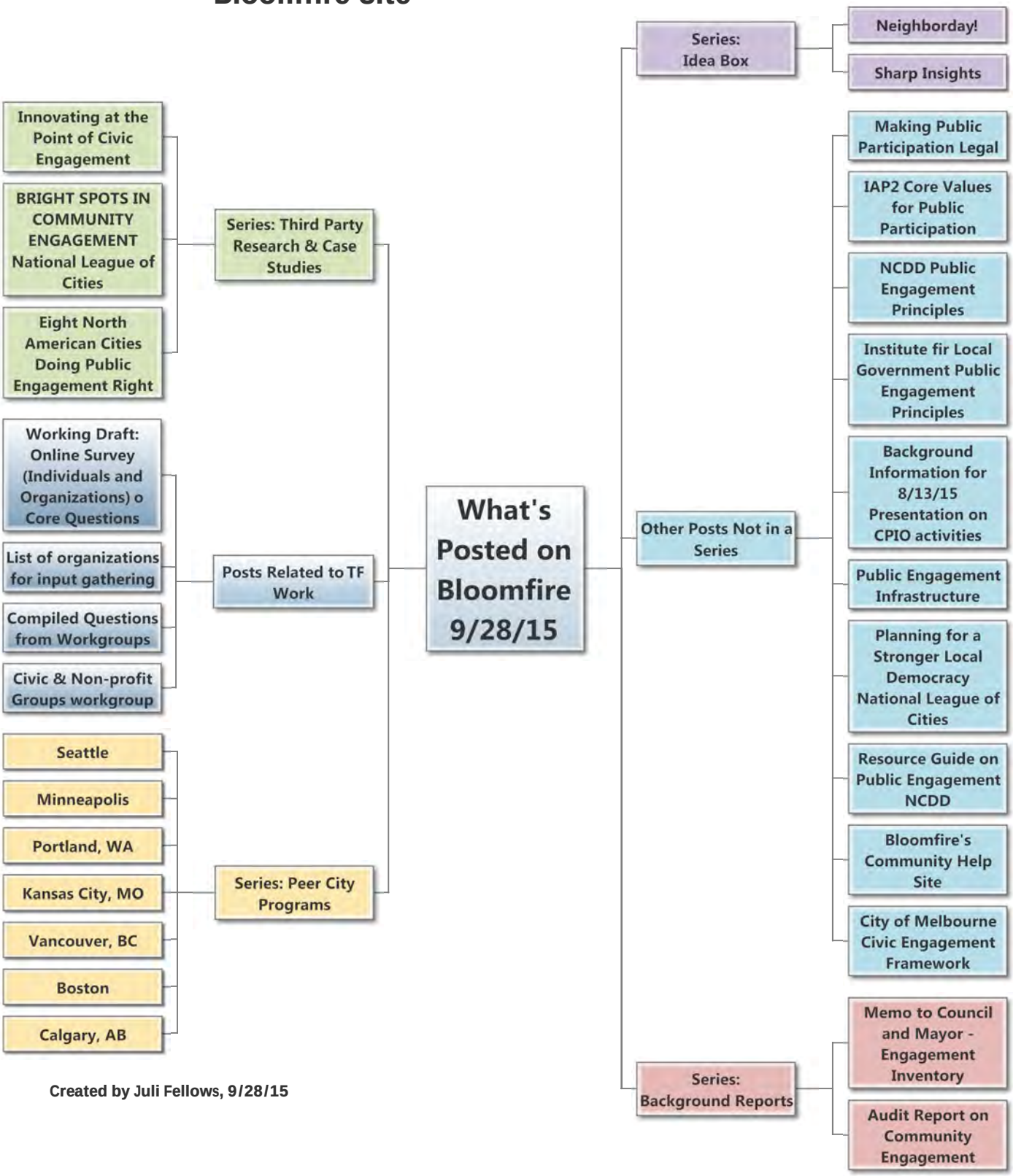
Task Force on Community Engagement
Bloomfire Site



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