

Combined Edits- Community Engagement Summary of Responses:

A joint workshop of the City Council and Planning Commission was held on January 21, 2020 to gain input on the development of a strategy for community engagement. This included a number of questions to try and frame the “who, what, when, where, and how” for establishing an effective framework for outreach on some critical projects in 2020. The responses were taken and incorporated into a more action-oriented format that can be folded into an overall plan.

Here are the results:

Who are the people we need to reach?

- Broad-based outreach throughout the community including City residents and the rural community outside of city limits
- Business owners and farmers
- Millennials and younger people who look for information and participation in non-traditional ways
- Persons of all age groups, including young families, seniors, and students
- Outreach into our Hispanic community and those who are under-represented
- Stakeholders within the community who have interests in the ultimate outcomes
- People who don't attend meetings or read the Winters Express
- Potential residents and businesses

How do we generate participation?

Use multiple types/methods of advertising

- Need for extensive outreach and access through social media, websites, newsletters, direct mail, newspaper, and utility bill inserts
- Social media needs to be maximized through an effective interactive method where information, opinion, and feedback can be cultivated to provide a useful forum for engagement
- Effectively advertise and publicize the meetings through editorials, newsletters, and social media so people know the subjects and means of participation
- Partner with other organizations that have community reach

Offer different types/locations/times of meetings

- Facilitated workshops that generate actual participation by all segments of the community and allows a diversity of input
- Have interactions with smaller groups, coffees, one-on-one and door-to-door opportunities for persons to contribute ideas and opinions
- Get out of the typical locations and go to where people are gathering in businesses, youth sports venues, child care centers, schools, churches, library, and service clubs
- Hold the meetings at different times of the day and on weekends
- Meetings need to be less information-based and allow for expression of ideas, opinions, and solutions
- Access to more convenient means of participation through surveys, remote participation, and one-on-one meetings

Offer incentives for participation

- Offer child care and food/drinks at meetings

Where should we outreach?

- Partner and collaborate at non-traditional locations such as businesses (out in front of First Northern), restaurants, coffee shops, laundromat, soccer fields, wine tasting rooms, and events
- Go where people are already gathered such as child care centers, schools, the library, and churches
- Community events such as Youth Day, Earthquake Festival, and the Festival de la Comunidad.
- Civic groups including Rotary, Soroptimist, PTA, ELAC and within established and non-established organizations
- Go door-to-door and person-to-person
- Traditional venues such as town hall meetings, neighborhood gatherings, and Planning Commission and City Council meetings

The approach to the public engagement process should:

- Be broad-based and multi-faceted
- Be interactive through small groups and facilitated (like the Complete Streets process)
- Be family-friendly, allowing parents to participate with accommodation for children
- Go into schools, the library, and venues that maximize the convenience for certain populations

Incentives to gaining participation might include:

- Quality topics that maximize listening and participation
- Validating that people are being heard and opinions are being considered
- Meetings that are worthwhile and have specific purposes to encourage peoples desire to attend
- Sessions held at variable times to allow seniors as well as working folks to attend
- Provide some food!

Key elements of the community engagement plan should:

- Produce “action plans” and be constructive
- Be fact-based, data-driven, and informative
- Have active listening aspects that maximize input
- Be inclusive of all elements of the community
- Results oriented with outcomes and direction
- Chart a course for the future, defining the wants and needs to allow people to work together to accomplish outcomes

Feedback on the process should be:

- Immediate and frequent
- Sent through the combination of direct mail, electronic media, utility bills, and updates
- Provided at public meetings as informational items
- In both English and Spanish