Raleigh

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Saturday, February 22, 2020 | 11:00 am - 1:00 pm | Walnut Creek Wetlands Center

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS DEVELOPMENT
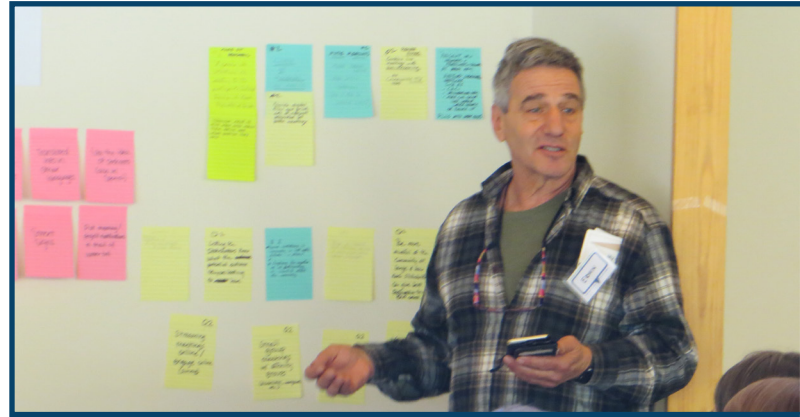## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Raleigh City Planning conducted a Community Workshop at the Walnut Creek Wetlands Center on Saturday, February 22, 2020 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The workshop was the last meeting for the Community Engagement Process Development (CEPD) project. It was a follow-up meeting to the Community Forum held on October 25, 2019.

Representatives from community agencies, groups and associations (Appendix I) were invited to participate in the workshop to provide their expertise and knowledge about the communities they represent and/or serve. Their ideas shared during their workshop will help the City Planning Department develop a comprehensive and equitable community engagement plan for all future projects.

ATTENDANCE

There were twenty-one (21) persons in attendance from seven (7) identified organizations (Appendix II). There was an opportunity for the attendees to sign up for project updates at the sign-in table before and after the meeting.

MEETING LOGISTICS

Kristin Williams, Project Manager for the City of Raleigh, gave a welcome speech and introduced the purpose of the Community Workshop. Simone Robinson, Principal of Public Participation Partners, then led the meeting, gave a presentation, and facilitated discussion. The presentation included an overview of the CEPD project to date, highlights of the Phase I outreach, and instructions for the small group activity.

Following the presentation, attendees were invited to participate in a small group discussion and card-storming activity at their tables. Table facilitators first asked the participants to discuss two general questions to lead into the activity. The participants then started the card-storming activity, which involved participants reflecting individually on questions before sharing their ideas with the small group. The small group then chose their top three to five ideas to post to the wall and share with the larger group. As a large group, a participant leader shared out the top ideas for each question, and everyone had the opportunity to ask questions and add additional ideas.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions asked by the staff facilitator at each table to begin the discussion:

1. Have you ever participated in any engagement activities for a City Planning project?

2. Please tell us about your experience - how did you participate? (meeting, survey, CAC presentation, etc.)

Card-Storming Activity Questions:

1. What are some things that prevent you or your community from participating in City Planning engagement activities?

2. What can City Planning do to make future engagement activities more accessible and welcoming?

3. How can City Planning communicate with you and your community in a way that is more inclusive and easier to understand?

The following provides a transcription of the card-storming activity ideas/answers and summaries of the notes taken by table facilitators.

OPENING SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Many participants had attended City of Raleigh outreach events and activities before. Others had never attended any activities at all. For those who had attended, they had participated in the following types of meetings:

- City Council
- Equitable Development Around Transit
- Citizen Advisory Councils (CACs)
- City development meetings
- Neighborhood meetings
- Re-zoning meetings

Some participants felt that at meetings, they had to ask questions to understand what was going on. Sometimes, they felt not welcome at City Council meetings. A group of attendees said they went to a re-zoning meeting that could not accommodate everyone who attended. The meeting started at 7:00 pm and they had a chance to speak at 11:30 pm. Many participants felt that community meetings seemed like venting sessions. Others felt that the information presented did not have a personal impact on them.

One participant noted that physical accessibility was an issue at some meeting locations. He cited slopes in auditoriums with no railings to grab on to for someone without a motorized wheelchair. This slope would make it difficult to go to the stage to speak and back. He also said sometimes bathrooms were far from the meeting room. At times, it has also been difficult to find an accessible entrance to the meeting location. He noted that these accessibility issues could also be barriers for senior citizens. He recommended announcing that a staff member is available to assist anyone with mobility issues. He stated that people do not like to ask for help or feel dependent on other peoples' kindness. Having a staff member dedicated to that would make meetings less intimidating.

Those who had not attended meetings in the past said that they find it hard to get information on meeting locations. They also said they only heard about Raleigh Planning during the CEPD's Community Conversations.

CARD-STORMING & LARGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS SUMMARY

Many participants listed meeting times and locations as an issue preventing meeting attendance. Some wanted meetings during the evening, after work and dinner. Others noted that evening times did not work well for people with disabilities or medical conditions. This is because they may need to get rides or be tired at the end of the day. Many thought that meetings currently are too far away from the communities they're trying to reach. They found that parking is often difficult at the meeting locations.

Many participants listed streaming meetings online as an avenue to reach more people. They also noted that regularly scheduled meetings would be easier to plan for and attend. Most participants noted that they would prefer more pop-up events and more informal locations.

Below are some recommendations for pop-up locations:
- The international grocery store on South Saunders
- The Grand Asian Market
- The Hispanic grocery
- Get out in the open – host pop-ups at city parks, do outreach at sports events
- Make it social, not structured, at a bar or a restaurant so it's enjoyable and not as big a time commitment
- Hotdog truck near ACE hardware – good crowd, get a tent and info up next to it
- Caraleigh neighborhood near the farmer's market – they are mostly on foot, need meetings closer by
- Have a table and free coffee at the Wal-Mart or somewhere with passerbys. Bring the meeting to the people, not just long, structured meetings

Some participants were not aware of any outreach activities. Many said that they wanted different or other forms of meeting notices. Ideas for meeting notices included:
- Facebook groups
- Using #RalPol to highlight posts
- Podcasts with short rundowns on projects
- Emails for people interested in specific subject or affinity groups rather than emails by project

Many participants noted that some people may have limited access to or ability with computer technology. This could create a barrier for participation. They recommended:
- Mailing postcards/flyers
- Putting mailers in utility bills
- Posting signs outside and in local businesses such as grocery stores
- Creating neighborhood sharing circles that will distribute meeting information by word-of-mouth
- Making use of the Raleigh TV Network
- Having apartment complexes or community groups distribute flyers

To do these things, participants noted that projects needed to have funds allocated for communications.

Some participants expressed concern about the physical and language accessibility of meeting locations and information. For physical accessibility, one participant noted a different between legal and practical accessibility. He suggested posting temporary signs pointing to the accessible entrance. He also recommended posting a picture of the location on meeting notices to make the location more familiar. Other participants cited a need for multi-lingual translation of meeting notices and information. There may be an intimidation factor that prevents those with language barriers from taking part.

This intimidation factor could also be present for those who have never attended or do not feel knowledgeable. To mitigate this, City Planning could make their meeting information easier to understand. This includes:

- Explaining or not using jargon
- Having videos that act as a primer on complicated issues
- Using visual aids
- Explaining the real impacts of a project rather than being broad
- Having definitions available for those who aren't knowledgeable

To help establish trust, they also recommended having the staff member introduce themselves. They wanted to know their role and how long they have been in that role. They also could give a brief overview of what City Planning does as a department. Participants wanted meeting materials ahead of time to be in the know when they arrived. They also wanted speakers who make meetings more personal and welcoming.

CARD-STORMING ACTIVITY

Each participant individually reflected on the first card-storming question. They then shared their ideas in their small groups. As a group, they decided on their top three to five ideas. Participant leaders then posted these ideas to the wall with the other groups' ideas. They repeated this process for all three card-storming questions.

After completing all three questions, the participant leaders shared out their group's ideas to the large group. Simone Robinson facilitated the large group discussion and asked if anyone wanted to add anything to each question. New ideas were then added to the wall.

The participants ran out of time to categorize the comments for each question. However, for the purposes of this report, the ideas have been categorized by similarity or subject matter. The following pages relate the answers given during the card-storming activity.

1.

What are some things that prevent you or your community from participating in City Planning engagement activities?

Time/Location of Meetings

Time of meetings

Availability of parking

Dates and times of meetings

Inconvenient meeting times (9-5 on weekdays)

Timing – Scheduled during work hours

Location only accessible by car

Timing and conflict with personal schedules

Too many structured events – not enough where people already are (Wal-Mart, Target, Parks)

Lack of Transportation

Accessibility/Language Barriers

Access to technology

Physical accessibility of location

Proximity to restrooms

Multi-lingual information from Planning Department

Communication and interpretation to Muslim community (near Method)

Translations for language barrier

Notice of Meetings

Timing – get notice too late

Lack of advance information

Agendas not public/provided in advance

Tell folks who will be at the meetings

Too much internet-based announcements – need TV, radio, flyers, billboards, newspapers, etc.

Community sometimes doesn't realize what is going on

Meeting Information

Planning materials expressed with technical jargon – too confusing or meaningless to be useful (Example: "What is a UDO?")

Accessibility of information

Individual/Societal Barriers

Intimidation factor (likeness of people attending, translation services, knowledge barriers/lack of knowledge) – affinity groups

Minority groups and people that do not regularly attend meetings may feel uncomfortable speaking up

People would be busy

Unmotivated

When your community is considered a stakeholder, they should always be a stakeholder

2.

What can City Planning do to make future engagement activities more accessible and welcoming?

Time/Location of Meetings

Variety of meeting times

Choose locations with access by bicycle and public transit

More meetings – more opportunities for meetings overall (Ex. 3 for a whole City?)

Meeting Type

Small group meetings with affinity groups (disabilities, immigrants, etc.)

Streaming meetings online / engaging online (surveys)

Remote access – combine live meetings with live streaming on Community TV too

Pop-ups – going where people already are

Present new ordinances and procedures and changes at many, many existing organization meetings such as CACs, neighborhood associations, other CMC groups like WakeUp Wake County or Power Up

Plug into what exists

Accessibility/Language Services

Staff to keep an eye out for accessibility and offer assistance

Translated info into other languages

Accessible meetings for people without cars

Notice of Meetings

Flyer at libraries, local coffee shops, churches, and other places where people congregate

Spread invitations to community in hot spots (media…. With others)

Emphasize the importance of participating or how it to affect the community

Put meeting and project notifications in mail with water bill

Street signs

College campuses and job fairs

Meeting Information

Letting the stakeholders know what the potential outcome they are looking to have

Provide digital files and printouts of subject presented at public meetings

Copies of materials at meetings

Instructor needs to give more info about themselves and what position they hold

Make it personal – a speaker who introduces the meeting to the participants and describing its purpose – explanation of jargon

Like the idea of podcasts (also in Spanish)

Be more mindful of the community at large and how each stakeholder can give best participation to receive best overall outcomes

3. How can City Planning communicate with you and your community in a way that is more inclusive and easier to understand?

Meeting Information

Provide definitions and visual aids

Presentations and meeting materials needed in advance

Ask people if they understand

Primer videos about what planning does

Ask broader, big-picture questions to educate and help understand initially

Visual aids and ways to appeal to a variety of learning styles

Concentrate info more with specific areas

Accessibility/Language Translation

Posting pictures of location (and accessible entrances) for meetings

Establish affinity groups to have input with land use plans (gets people not necessarily driven by a specific project)

Miscellaneous

Communications included in the project budget

Notice of Meetings

Radio/TV commercials (local)

Neighborhood sharing and sharing circles (share flyers and notices with people in their group)

The Bud system

Mailed notices for meetings/surveys

Mailers/postcards to every address related to the project

Apartment complexes posting notification/flyer to each unit and community centers and neighborhood associations

Get the "word out" through new media and traditional media (emails, water bills, public service ads, work with local media outlets)

Email and text messaging (as a millennial… phone calls cause anxiety!)

By phone – text message easier or email

City planning would update us with the process

Use the churches

Post info at local grocery stores

Door-to-door

NEXT STEPS

At the end of the meeting, Simone Robinson related the project's next steps, which included the development of a Public Participation Playbook, staff training, and presentation to City Council.

Attendees were informed that their comments from the Community Workshop would be incorporated in the Playbook. They would have the opportunity to comment on the Meeting Summary before they were finalized for the Playbook via email. Participants also were informed that they would receive a copy of the draft Playbook for their review and comment in March.

Simone asked participants to sign up for the email list to make sure they got a copy of the Meeting Summary and the draft Playbook for review and comment.

CEPD **Community Engagement Process Development**
Planning for a More Equitable Raleigh

Raleigh

APPENDIX I

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INVITED

AARP of North Carolina
African American Caucus of Wake County Democratic Party
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Alliance of Disability Advocates
ALPES Alianza Latina Pro-Educacion en Salud
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
AME Zion Church
Atlantic CAC
Black Raleigh / Launch Raleigh
Boys to Men
CASA
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh
Centro Para Familias Hispanas (CPFH)
Church of God in Christ
City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources
Council on Immigrant Relations
Crosby- Garfield Community Advocacy Group
D.E.A.R. Foundation Inc.
Delta Sigma Theta - Social Action Committee M
Downtown Housing Improvement Corp
Downtown Raleigh Alliance
East CAC
El Pueblo
Evolve Mentoring, Inc
Five Points CAC
Forestville CAC
General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
Glenwood CAC
Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
Habitat for Humanity Wake County
Hillsborough CAC
Iglesia Hispana Macedonia
Islamic Association of Raleigh
LGBT Center of Raleigh
Lincoln Park Church
Meredith University
Midtown CAC
Mordecai CAC
National Alliance on Mental Illness Wake County
NC Council of Churches
NC State University
North CAC
North Carolina Chinese Business Association

North Central CAC
Northeast CAC
Northwest CAC
Oak City Baptist Church
Oaks and Spokes
Partners for Environmental Justice
Piney Grove AME Church
Raleigh Boys and Girls Club
Raleigh CAC Chair
Raleigh Organizing Against Racism (ROAR)
Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association
Roman Catholic Diocese of Raleigh
Shaw University
South CAC
South Central CAC
Southeast CAC
Southeast Raleigh Promise
Southwest CAC
St. Augustine's University
St. James AME Church
Step Up Ministry
Step Up Ministry
Swedish American Chamber of Commerce
Tammy Lynn Center
The Jewish Federation of Raleigh-Cary
The Power of the Dream
The Raleigh/Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness
The Rotary Club of Raleigh
The Vietnamese-American Association of Raleigh
UNC Rex Hospital
Urban Ministries of Wake County
Wade CAC
Wake County Public School District
Wake Med Health System Raleigh
Wake Tech Community College
WakeUp Wake County
West CAC
William Peace University
YMCA of the Triangle

APPENDIX II

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS IN ATTENDANCE

El Pueblo
Hillsborough-Wade CAC
Method Boys to Men
Midtown CAC
North CAC
Power Up
The Jewish Federation of Raleigh-Cary