



# GUIDE TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



## What is Public Engagement?

Good planning is as much about the **process** as it is the final document – community engagement can, and should, shape the project. Here are some tips and tricks to help you get started!

### Get the Word Out

- Post flyers at community centers, parks, libraries, and other public places
- Issue a press release about the process and meeting details
- Mention engagement opportunities at meetings of your governing body
- Share flyers with the Chamber of Commerce and other community organizations
- Ask local businesses to share meeting and survey details at their registers or storefronts
- Create a Facebook event (not just a post!) to help your event “go viral”
- Use promoted posts to get the word out on social media platforms
- Run a message on your local access station
- Advertise in the local paper and local events pages

### Prep for Participation

- Schedule workshops on different weeks, days, and/or times to enable broad participation
- Offer different types of engagement opportunities – such as workshops, stakeholder meetings, and public surveys
- Identify the meeting times that will work best for your target audience
- Partner with hosts to encourage participation – such as a business luncheon at the local chamber, or a daytime meeting at local senior or youth centers
- Set up a project webpage and keep it updated as a go-to resource throughout the project
- Give yourself plenty of time to advertise events!

### Survey Your Community

- Share the survey link on social media
- Place hardcopies at community centers, parks, libraries, and other public places
- Partner with schools to distribute survey flyers in backpacks
- Partner with high school teachers to have students take the survey during class
- Have survey flyers and hardcopies on hand at public workshops
- Add the survey link to staff email signatures

## Go Above & Beyond!

Here are some great ideas our clients have used to go “above and beyond” to engage their citizens.

- Encourage survey participation by offering a prize drawing for passes to local events or gift cards to local businesses
- Offer (and promote) pizza or sandwiches – especially for meetings held during dinner time!
- Takeover the airwaves by partnering with the local radio station to promote the process
- Host pop-up booths at farmers markets, festivals, and other community events to collect answers to simple questions like “what do you love about your community?”, pass out flyers, and build interest
- Use branded SWAG to attract a crowd
- Conduct specialized surveys or meetings for underrepresented groups or important stakeholders (Spanish-speaking residents, businesses, etc.)
- Ask the Planning Commission chair to write a “letter to the editor”
- Host a community picnic to attract input from families with children

