

## Summary of TFCE Needs Assessment Discussions

### 1) Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.

- a. *Disability accommodations*
  - i. Make the information accessible to those with special needs.
- b. *Foreign-language access*
- c. *Notification of public hearings at Council meetings*
- d. *District / Neighborhood-centered engagement alternatives.*
  - i. People want information about what is happening in their district or what directly affects them.
- e. *Virtual/online participation*
  - i. There is not an online tool that meets everyone's needs and the City's website is not meeting needs.
- f. People are not aware of communication and engagement tools.
- g. People want multiple channels and the City as a whole needs to provide multiple channels.
- h. Being able to filter for information on issues you care about, having curated information, not a "fire hose".
- i. Find ways to maximize the impact of City communication that is put out by our strategic partners, e.g. neighbors and other organizations
- j. A decentralized system results in inconsistency, information being scattered and hard to find, reinventing the wheel each time and no city-wide database of people who engage and what they care about.
- k. There is a need for localization of information and sources need to be trustworthy.
- l. There is an issue with the timeliness, consistency and accuracy of information.
- m. The community registry could be a good tool but it is not.

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

- a. *Disability accommodations*
- b. *Foreign-language access*
  - i. Spanish translation needs vary – need to train more people so there is more capacity for translation and interpretation.
  - ii. Use culturally relevant methods including multiple language access
- c. *District / Neighborhood-centered engagement alternatives.*
  - i. Every district is different. District-based outreach plans would help.
- d. *Virtual/online participation*
  - i. Create opportunities for participation that don't require people to physically attend meetings and events.
- e. Need to meet people where they are at and with groups they are already involved with.
  - a. Shouldn't always have to have them come to the City.
- f. We need to offer a variety of methods and times for people to engage.
  - i. In some cultures, the mom needs to be home in the evening.
  - ii. It takes too much time to participate, especially for those with families.
- g. Choose tools and techniques that fit the norms, languages and history / relationships of diverse communities.

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- h. People in community come to efforts with negative attitudes and there is engagement fatigue.
- i. Need to make engagement more fun – unique approaches have worked.
- j. Need to find ways for people who want to participate to be put to work.
- k. It is challenging to engage with the City, there is meeting fatigue and people need a lot of persistence to be successful.
  - i. Some would like to see the City use community liaisons to engage them so that they would know who to work with.

### 3) Explain how input will be used and show how that input had an impact on the decision made.

- a. People want to know in advance how their input will be used so they know giving input matters.
  - i. There are no structures to make sure that the results of engagement are followed.
- b. Create a system that closes the feedback loop, so after you engage you find out what decision was made and why.
  - i. There needs to be follow up communication.
  - ii. There is a lack of responsiveness by the City.
  - iii. Some Boards and Commissions are frustrated because they don't know what happens to their recommendations and there is a lack of clarity about where their input goes.
- c. People are not sure what the most effective way is to get information and give input.
  - i. There is a lack of understanding of the process for how people can engage more effectively with the city and with City Council.
  - ii. Some feel the only way to accomplish things is to go directly to the elected officials.
- d. People feel they are not being heard. They want a summary of input. They need to know that they were heard as well as what was said by others.
- e. The ways Boards and Commissions interact with the public and whether, when and how they get input varies.
  - i. Some feel that they are the appointed representative and their role is to provide recommendations, not to gather further input.
- f. Need to manage expectations – if what people want is outside the scope of an engagement, we need to tell them that

### 4) Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage and that some voices don't count more than others.

- a. People think only certain people have a voice and that they don't.
- b. We need processes to be fair and representative and reflect input of the entire community impacted by a decision, not just a vocal few.
- c. We need to focus on greater equity and proportionality.
- d. There is a concern that people are appointed to positions of power, such as Boards and Commissions, and they don't necessarily have technical expertise on the issue they are working on.

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- e. When only hearing from people you have always heard from, then the challenge is knowing what needs are for everyone

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

- a. There's no consistency in how engagement happens across City departments.
  - i. There is no dictate that decision making should include certain kinds of engagement.
  - ii. Because of hands off structure and silos, everything is a recommendation rather than putting the processes and structures in place that are required.
- b. It varies as to how much of a priority the leadership in City departments and at City Hall give to engagement versus the other things that they have to do – for some the priority is not engagement.
- c. City departments don't have the resources they need to do appropriate engagement strategies.
  - i. PIO is overtaxed so they can't fulfill all the needs.
  - ii.
- d. City departments often are trying to work through major engagement efforts but then get pulled off because priorities change.
  - i. They get inconsistent and fragmented direction.
  - ii. It is a challenge to keep up with the multiple channels
- e. Bilingual and culturally appropriate processes are a challenge.
- f. Don't have enough physical spaces / places around city to do engagement.
- g. Working with the website and other online tools can be hard.
- h. There is not enough value placed on building the skills needed to do engagement well – city staff need training.
- i. Needs to be organization-wide plan to coordinate efforts, leverage resources and do more than one thing when we are engaging people.
  - i. Alignment and focus on engagement has to happen at the department head level.