



OUR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

The City of Riverside's Community Engagement Policy is built upon a set of commitments that guide the planning, development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of community engagement processes undertaken for City projects.

When engaging the community, City staff will be open and accountable in the decision-making process. The commitments to the Riverside community are as follows:

1. To ensure that the purpose of community engagement is clear, relevant, and the methods used are well suited to generate highly effective community engagement.
2. To provide information that is clear, easy to understand, and accessible to all people.
3. To proactively engage with our community in an ethical manner using a range of methods and enable everyone to have a voice on matters of importance to them. We will provide engagement opportunities that are mutually respectful, undertaken in reasonable time frames, and with a shared understanding of how the input will inform decision-making processes.
4. To value all participants' knowledge, expertise, and experiences, acknowledging that everyone has different views and needs.
5. To undertake evaluation processes to continually improve our approach to community engagement.
6. To report back to our community in a timely manner about how their input was considered and influenced the outcome.
7. To use information provided by community engagement to advocate on behalf of our community to relevant parties.

These commitments are built upon the core values identified by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).



WHY WE ENGAGE

Community engagement is a collaborative process that connects City Staff with the community in a mutually beneficial way by the sharing of new ideas, skills, knowledge, expertise, and experience.

Effective community engagement benefits both the City and community members. Better identifying the priorities, needs, and aspirations of the community will assist City Council and Staff to improve strategic planning and service delivery. A regular, two-way conversation ensures transparency, accountability, and an informed governing body in its decision-making process, which demonstrates integrity and builds trust within the community.

Where appropriate, community engagement should go above and beyond legislative requirements. The information and knowledge gained through hearing a range of community perspectives assists in making informed decision, develops strong partnerships, and creates sustainable outcomes.

The community also benefits from participating in engagement activities. Participating in matters that may have an impact on them can create a sense of belonging and connection, increases community involvement, unites and empowers individuals and communities, and leads to a greater community ownership and resilience.

The knowledge and experience gained also provide the City with a foundation to advocate other relevant parties, including federal and state government bodies, on issues of community importance that are out of its direct control.

There are a broad range of benefits to effective and authentic community engagement, both to the City and to the community.

Some of the benefits include:

1. Increasing community involvement and connections.
2. Developing strong relationships and partnerships with community, leading to a shared understanding of community needs, aspirations, and priorities.
3. Meeting legislative requirements.
4. Providing a valuable source of evidence-based information that gives a wider perspective on issues and supports future planning and service delivery activities.
5. By supporting transparency and accountability, integrity is demonstrated, and trust is built between all parties.
6. Ensuring the community's right to assist with the democratic process.
7. Ensuring informed decision-making occurs and issues are addressed.
8. Helping inform and assist with advocacy.
9. Leading to more sustainable outcomes.
10. Building community resilience and capacity leading to community empowerment.





WHO WE ENGAGE

The City of Riverside is a diverse community with a mix of people from all walks of life, with unique interest groups. Everyone has a role to play in the community, so it is important that the methods used are accessible and have a broad reach.

For the purpose of this Policy, the Riverside community is defined as individuals or groups who live, work, play, visit, study, invest in, or pass through the City. They could share a geographical location, characteristic, or interest.

The term “stakeholder” defines community groups or individuals who are directly impacted by, involved with, or interested in, the City’s decision-making, relationship building or community strengthening process.

Each person within the community has the potential to be a stakeholder in the City’s community engagement activities.

In Riverside, some of the stakeholder groups include:

- Arts & culture community
- Business and industry
- Chambers of Commerce
- Children
- Community service providers
- Commuters
- Emergency services
- Environmental groups
- Faith-based organizations
- Families
- Government departments
- Heritage groups
- Indigenous community
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, background transgender
- and intersex
- Local, State and Federal agencies
- City staff
- City Council and Mayor
- Media
- Neighboring cities or other local government agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
- People experiencing homelessness
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- People with disabilities
- Public transport user groups
- Ratepayers
- Residents
- Schools, education facilities, and students
- Seniors/senior groups
- Service groups
- Sporting, leisure, and recreational clubs
- Visitors to Riverside
- Volunteers/volunteer organizations
- Youth



WHEN WE ENGAGE

Community engagement will take place at the planning stage of a project or initiative or when a need arises such as a change in service, activities or infrastructure is considered. Community engagement is likely to be undertaken at multiple stages within a project, program, or development.

CIRCUMSTANCES THAT TRIGGER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

City staff will promote opportunities for the community to actively participate in the following processes:

- Where a proposed change to activities or strategic direction may significantly affect the community in terms of the economy, lifestyle, environment, wellbeing, or amenity of the municipality
- When developing new or reviewing existing policies, strategies, or plans
- Introducing a new service, discontinuing an existing service, substantially changing, or reviewing a service that may significantly affect how services are provided
- Proposals for changing the way in which public space looks, is used, or enjoyed
- Planning and development of major projects and capital improvement works, including public buildings, centers, or other infrastructure
- Urban development/redevelopment proposals, such as infrastructure plans, that may significantly alter the existing amenity or characteristics of a geographical area
- Any circumstance where more information or evidence was needed to make an informed decision

MANDATORY ENGAGEMENT

While the City of Riverside Administrative Manual and a range of legislation sets out minimum requirements for public involvement, each community engagement process will be considered on an individual basis. In many instances City staff will go above and beyond the minimum requirements to gain a strong understanding of the community's vision to ensure we are achieving the best possible outcomes for the City of Riverside.

Some of these specific matters may include, but are not limited to:

- Adopting Citywide plans
- Adopting budgets
- Creating local laws
- Declaring special rates or charges
- Selling, exchanging, or leasing land
- Entering into regional agreements
- Deviating or discontinuing a road
- Making amendments to the General Plan

CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WILL BE LIMITED

There are times when the City's level of community engagement and key stakeholders will be limited. In certain circumstances, staff may only be able to inform the community and stakeholders of the decisions and actions taken.

Examples include when:

- An immediate resolution is required
- Technical or other expertise is required
- An initiative involves confidential information
- There are clear and defined legislative responsibilities that legally require compliance
- Developing or reviewing internal policies and procedures
- Emergency response is necessary
- There is a risk to public safety

INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING

Where decision-making is the purpose of a community engagement process, it must be identified that the final decision rests with the City Council.

Good governance is based on the belief that those impacted by a decision may have important contributions to make in the decision-making process. In planning a community engagement process, staff will determine at which levels they will engage and what corresponding commitment they will make to stakeholders and/or the community. This decision is likely to impact the nature and methods of community engagement.



HOW WE ENGAGE

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement activities. A variety of methods will be required to cater for the different purposes of community engagement, as well as a broad range of groups and individuals in the community.

PLAN

The planning stage is critical to ensuring a successful and authentic community engagement process. During this stage we will understand, outline, and gain agreement on:

- Why we are engaging (purpose)
- What we are trying to achieve through the process (engagement objectives)
- How results will be used (engagement outcomes)
- Who we want to engage with (stakeholder analysis)
- At what level do we wish to engage
- How we will engage (engagement methods)
- When to engage (time frame)

During this stage, it is also important to consider the monitoring and evaluation steps that will be embedded into the process.

DO

Those undertaking the community engagement process will do so in a non-judgmental and respectful way. They will follow the community engagement principles as outlined in the “Our Commitments” section. The following steps will be considered to ensure the activity is successful.

1. Decide on the most appropriate ways of informing the community and stakeholder groups of the planned community engagement activity.

2. Organize resources, including identifying who will conduct the community engagement activities, meeting locations will be, logistics, and determine supplies needed. It is also important to consider specific needs, such as transportation, childcare, and translation services.
3. Invite previously identified stakeholders to participate in the community engagement activity.
4. Provide information to participants in clear and simple terms. Use case studies or examples to assist in explaining the initiative. Provide translation services as needed.
5. Conduct community engagement activity.

SHARE

Following the community engagement process, we will report the results and outcomes of the community engagement activity back to the community. This will be done in a timely, accessible, and informative manner so that participants understand how their involvement influenced the process, and therefore, the outcomes or decisions.

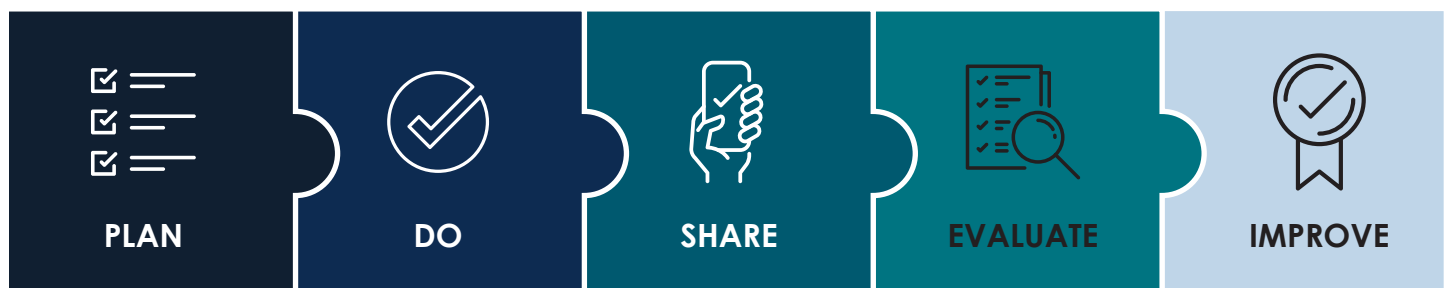
If the community engagement process is lengthy, it is important that we regularly report on the project's development to ensure that the community remain involved and engaged.

EVALUATE

Evaluation of the community engagement process will be planned at the beginning of the project so we are aware of the outcomes that will be measured. Evaluation will be continuous so that the process can be adjusted should any aspect need refinement. After completion, the community engagement process will be reviewed to ensure we understand what happened and why. We will objectively reflect on what did and didn't work. We will prepare an evaluation report to share observations and recommendations.

IMPROVE

We will take the lessons learned throughout the project, capturing them in an accessible format. Ideas for improvement of the community engagement process will be shared across the organization and will aid in informing future versions of this policy, as well as the City's broader community engagement framework.





SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an international organization advancing the practice of public participation. The IAP2 framework is underpinned by seven core values that are aimed at ensuring organizations make better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

These values are:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including the decision-makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community engagement is the responsibility of all City Departments as appropriate to their role and functions. Engaging the community should be a core process considered by staff in the delivery of services, development of projects, or building relationships.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ENVISION RIVERSIDE 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community engagement processes support the delivery of all outcome areas identified in the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan. Principles and processes of community engagement outlined in this policy are aligned with the Strategic Plan's Vision and Mission.

VISION

Riverside is a city where every person is respected and cherished, where equity is essential to community well-being, where residents support one another, and where opportunities exist for all to prosper. In Riverside, everyone comes together to help the community, economy, and environment reach their fullest potential for the public good.

ENVISION RIVERSIDE 2025 MISSION

The City of Riverside is committed to providing high quality municipal services to ensure a safe, inclusive, and livable community.

RELATED KEY GOALS

Arts, Culture & Recreation:

1.1: Strengthen Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior, and lifelong learning programs and amenities through expanded community partnerships, shared use opportunities, and fund development.

Community Well-Being:

2.2: Collaborate with partner agencies to improve household resiliency and reduce the incidence and duration of homelessness.

2.3: Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.

2.4: Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement and build public trust.

2.5: Foster relationships between community members, partner organizations, and public safety professionals to define, prioritize, and address community safety and social service needs.

Economic Opportunity:

3.1: Facilitate partnerships and programs to develop, attract and retain innovative business sectors.

3.2: Work with key partners in implementing workforce development programs and initiatives that connect local talent with high quality employment opportunities and provide access to education and training in Riverside.

3.4: Collaborate with key partners to implement policies and programs that promote local business growth and ensure equitable opportunities for all.

High Performing Government:

5.3: Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

Policy Control Schedule:

Policy Title: Citywide Community Engagement Policy		Policy Number: TBD	Policy Type: City Council Policy
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Parent Policy: None	Policy responsibility: Community & Economic Development Department		Resolution Number: TBD



