



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL**                      **DATE: MAY 16, 2023**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**                      **WARDS: ALL**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: CITYWIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY & TOOLKIT WORKSHOP**

**ISSUE:**

Conduct a workshop on a Citywide Community Engagement Policy & Toolkit.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council provides feedback and directs staff on next steps related to a Citywide Community Engagement Policy & Toolkit.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

On August 5, 2020, the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement & Governmental Processes Committee (Committee) directed staff to 1) Initiate a Citywide Community Engagement framework; 2) Provide input on the elements to consider in a Citywide Community Engagement Policy; 3) Engage the community to seek input on the framework; and 4) Return to the Committee with a draft framework for review and comment prior to finalizing a Policy for City Council consideration.

On December 7, 2022, after concluding public outreach and receiving guidance from the community and supporting City team, the Community Engagement & Governmental Processes Committee received an update on progress and directed staff to continue engaging the community and report back to the Committee in February 2023 before proceeding to City Council.

On December 13, 2022, during the City Council Meeting, Councilmember Edwards requested that staff bypass a return to the Committee and conduct a workshop for the City Council so that the community and council could collectively provide feedback and direction on the framework and draft Citywide Community Engagement Policy & Toolkit.

**PURPOSE:**

This workshop is intended to solicit feedback and direction on the contents, purpose, and next steps in the development of a Citywide Community Engagement Policy prior to full implementation of these resources.

The workshop will cover the background of the policy's development to date, a review of key aspects of the draft Policy and its supporting Toolkit, the pilot program, and recent case studies for consideration.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### Defining the Need

Riverside has no formal Citywide Community Engagement Policy requiring public participation prior to the decision-making process. Implementing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy provides a consistent and predictable public participation process that can be applied for future programs, projects, and initiatives. Most importantly, effective community engagement builds trust between the City, and the community, while identifying values, concerns, and input to improve the process and overall service delivery.

### Community/Stakeholder Outreach

On February 20, 2021, a "Community Engagement 101" virtual workshop was held seeking input from participants on the framework of a Citywide policy. This included both community participants and various City staff. The workshops focused on the "What, How, and Why's of Community Engagement". During this workshop, participants were encouraged to engage in working groups to help draft the Citywide Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit (CEP). The working group format was applied throughout the engagement process.

From March 2021 through June 2021, staff hosted five additional virtual meetings inviting public input and participation. Meetings included: a review of the "Community Engagement 101" workshop; best practices from other agencies; draft policy content discussion; and a draft policy review. Overall, 26 community members participated with 13 city team members collectively during the meetings to help develop the draft CEP.

### Policy Review

After the completion of the community workshops and meetings, the draft Policy and supporting Toolkit were provided to the City Executive Leadership Team, Deputy Leadership Team, and those providing community engagement throughout all City departments. Their iterative review and comments were incorporated into the document to complete the final draft Policy and Toolkit in April of 2022.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### Key Goals of the Community Engagement Policy:

The Community Engagement Policy aims to create a clear, inclusive, streamlined, and predictable public participation process. Effective community engagement requires a shared understanding between community members, our stakeholders, and City staff. The Citywide Community Engagement Policy (Policy) includes specific sections on purpose and vision, why, who, when, and how we engage, and supporting details and information. The proposed Policy and accompanying Toolkit act as both a resource and guide for the City and an overview of the engagement process for community members.



This image serves as a guide within the draft Policy for the user to understand key steps in the engagement process.

Purpose of the Community Engagement Toolkit?

This Community Engagement Toolkit is a practical guide to implementing the strategies laid out in the Citywide Community Engagement Policy. It is a resource for City Departments and community members. The Toolkit is a living document meant to help staff within the City understand and develop community engagement plans that align with the City’s Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan. It includes vital elements for engagement, tools & resources, facilitation techniques, and helpful worksheets.



This image serves as a guide within the draft Toolkit for the user to determine the form of engagement that works best for the project and the anticipated audience.

Pilot Program

In the summer and fall of 2022, the draft Policy and Toolkit were used as a guide for several City projects and initiatives, including the following participants:

- The Mayor’s Office (Mayor’s Big Tent Tour)
- City Manager’s Office (Regional Climate Collaborative Grant)
- Building & Safety – CEDD (Building Decarbonization Ordinance)
- Economic Development – CEDD (Northside Master Plan Developer RFP), and
- Libraries (Community Engagement Survey).

During this trial period, staff identified recommended modifications to the meeting approach based on the engagement strategies used and participant feedback received. The pilot program was successful in providing additional input regarding the meeting process and effective communication methods between staff and participants.

## Recent Case Studies

Several more recent case studies facilitated by the Public Works Department proved to be very successful in engaging the community on multiple platforms by applying useful technology, among other creative solutions.

### Case Study #1: Parking Rates and Hours

As part of adopting the new parking rates and hours schedule for the Downtown, the Public Works Department deployed several techniques to collect community feedback and engage in new and unique ways with residents. The Department maintained a webpage using ESRI Storymap technology which contained a roadmap of community engagement and rate approval, and the webpage was updated as the project progressed. The Department deployed an interactive budgeting tool, “Balancing Act,” which was used both through the webpage and as part of in-person engagement in a live-updated “Meeting Mode,” which displayed the feedback of meeting attendees in real-time. iPads were provided to attendees who did not have smartphones, and assistance was provided for those who needed additional help using the technology. English to Spanish language translation services were available.

As part of in-person town hall meetings, Public Works also collected feedback by calling on attendees who represented various community interests and allowing time for them to speak to the group, and additionally by capturing feedback on poster boards which were summarized during the meeting and later shared on the project webpage. Everyone had the means to share their thoughts.

Throughout the process, it was important to capture participant feedback in multiple formats, broadcast feedback with the group as part of the webpage & presentations, and demonstrate how Public Works had investigated or taken action on this feedback.

The Storymap is visible at [www.riversideca.gov/parkingrates](http://www.riversideca.gov/parkingrates)

### Case Study #2: Eastside Climate Collaborative

The Eastside Climate Collaborative is, as the name implies, a collaboration between many partner organizations. Public Works helped to form the Collaborative alongside other City Departments and contributed by developing an interactive ESRI Storymap which leveraged the ESRI Survey 123 and ESRI Collector software to create a live community map which displayed resident feedback geographically. Feedback collected at in-person events, such as walking audits, national night out, regular community meetings, and the “Clean N’ Green Halloween” event, was also reflected on the Storymap. The Storymap was maintained in both English and Spanish languages. The Storymap and integrated survey were heavily utilized during in-person engagement, and community members & partners were trained in using the Storymap to facilitate door-to-door engagement with neighbors. Public Works built community trust by following up on minor community requests throughout the grant development process. The Eastside Climate Collaborative ultimately received a \$31.2 Million grant which is being administered by the City and its partners.

### Case Study #3: Riverside P.A.C.T.

While developing the City’s Pedestrian Target Safeguarding Plan, Active Transportation Master Plan, Complete Streets Ordinance and Trails Master Plan Update (Collectively the Riverside

PACT), the Public Works Department was forced due to COVID-19 to transition to a hybrid style engagement. The resulting engagement was the largest transportation planning effort Public Works had undertaken, incorporating over 40 stakeholder meetings, several technical advisory committees and community workshops, 10 walking audits, and thousands of web impressions. The PACT contains a list of prioritized active transportation projects which has contributed towards the success of over \$30M in awarded/recommended grant funds. The Public Works Department has built upon the momentum of the Riverside PACT by continuing to pilot active transportation projects in the field and collect in-person and web-based feedback throughout the pilot deployment. Most recently, the Fairmount Park Pedestrian Zone pilot resulted in a 92% increase in active transportation usage during the pilot's deployment, and resident feedback was collected by staff on-site at the pilot and through a web survey shared both via a sign-mounted QR code and through e-blasts & social media.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.4** - Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust. It also supports **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3** - Enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

The item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The Policy and Toolkit build public trust with the community through collaborative and transparent public engagement opportunities.
2. **Equity** – The Policy and Toolkit are inclusive of all community members and stakeholders while offering several means of communication and input.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Policy and Toolkit implementation process is conducted by City staff, demonstrating Riverside as a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources while improving communication and outreach efforts between the City and community.
4. **Innovation** – Exploring a uniform and consistent Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit creates another opportunity to address changing community needs and prepares for the future of transparent and collaborative governance through public engagement.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – By implementing an effective and consistent Policy and Toolkit, the organization creates a sustainable and resilient public engagement program that can evolve with continuous feedback and support.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. August 5, 2020 ICE & GSC Staff Report
2. December 7, 2022 ICE & GSC Staff Report
3. Draft - Citywide Community Engagement Policy
4. Draft – Citywide Community Engagement Toolkit
5. Presentation