



Governmental Affairs Committee Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE **DATE: NOVEMBER 6, 2019**

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

SUBJECT: PROPOSED APPROACH TO DEVELOPING A CITYWIDE COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT POLICY CONCEPT

ISSUE:

Receive, file, and provide input on staff's proposed approach to developing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy for future City Council adoption.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Governmental Affairs Committee:

1. Receive, file, and provide input on staff's proposal to develop a Citywide Community Engagement Policy; and
2. Direct staff to return to City Council for adoption of a new Citywide Community Engagement Policy.

BACKGROUND:

Citizens are "engaged" when they have the opportunity to play a meaningful role in discussions, decision-making, and/or implementation of projects and programs that may affect the quality of life in the cities where they live. Engagement can be defined by a range of processes from providing clear, dependable information to residents, through asking residents to choose between or prioritize pre-set options, to empowering them to participate in the development and delivery of local policies and services. Providing opportunities for meaningful community engagement is at the forefront of government agencies at the local and federal level, as evidenced by the inclusion of the word "engagement" in job titles, as well as areas of focus in job descriptions and responsibilities.

According to the Institute for Local Government (ILG), local governments throughout California have experienced a variety of benefits from providing inclusive community engagement strategies. Among these are:

- Better identification of the public's values, ideas and recommendations
- Residents who are more informed about issues and local agencies
- Improved local agency decision-making and actions with better impacts and outcomes
- More community buy-in and support, with less contentiousness
- More civil discussion and decision-making

- Faster project implementation with less need to revisit again
- More trust, in each other and in local government
- Higher rates of community participation and leadership development

City staff engages with the community in various ways with practices set by each individual department based on need for community input as well as for sharing educational information. City departments that regularly engage with the community might have strategies that work for their individual needs; however, the process of engaging with the community has been inconsistent among City departments, and members of the public have been asking for this to change.

Legislative Policy/History - Community Engagement Requirements, Policies and Practices

The City of Riverside values public engagement processes and activities that contribute to policy, program, service, and project decisions by providing City Council and Administration with the best possible information to support the decision-making process. Although there is no formal Community Engagement Policy currently in place, there are existing plans, laws and guidelines that require public participation in the decision-making process. Some examples of these are the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the General Plan 2025, the Municipal Zoning Code, Riverside 2.0, and Utilities 2.0. There are also several guiding documents utilized throughout the City that were created with a variety of public engagement opportunities including, but not limited to, the General Plan 2025, Seizing Our Destiny, Riverside 2.0, and more recently, with the Northside Specific Plan process. If there were a comprehensive Citywide Community Engagement Policy, there would be an opportunity for community engagement efforts to be consistent across all City Departments.

The City is preparing to embark on a lengthy process to update its current General Plan. It is important to ensure that community outreach and engagement efforts are conducted to ensure that public engagement is woven within the fabric of the General Plan, to establish opportunities for meaningful public engagement that are provided within the decision-making process. The General Plan is a guiding document that provides goals and objectives that will affect the quality of life in every neighborhood, and having community input is crucial to the success of the process, as well as the General Plan itself. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) includes a requirement for a Community Engagement Plan (CEP), which will ensure that there will be engagement opportunities provided to community members. Having a Citywide Community Engagement Policy for an update as substantial as this would be helpful to staff and the consultant(s) chosen to assist with the work, as there would be specific guidelines enacted to ensure adequate and consistent public engagement and that the ideas/input from the community would be heard and included into the General Plan update.

Neighborhood, Business and Civic Associations and Communities of Faith

Riverside has a rich tradition of local voluntary associations that promote and practice civic engagement. At this time, the City is aware of at least 22 active neighborhood associations in Riverside, as well as a number of neighborhood watch groups, civic organizations, clubs and committees, student organizations, parent-teacher associations, and sport clubs that regularly meet, host presentations and discussions, and advocate for issues and causes of importance to their membership. Riverside's business community strongly supports civic engagement, primarily through various chambers of commerce and business improvement districts. Finally, local communities of faith also actively engage with and enhance the quality of life in their local communities and the city.

One of the areas of focus for neighborhood leaders has been the City's process for public engagement. They have raised concerns with staff that the City's process is inconsistent and often comes across as "checking the box" rather than soliciting meaningful public input that would be incorporated into the City's decision-making process. A group of neighborhood leaders proposed a Community Outreach Concept for the City, and presented the concept to staff in October 2015 (Attachment 1). The fact that a group of community members came together to prepare the concept demonstrates that the community wants to be a more involved, active partner in the decision-making process, especially when decisions that are being made affect the quality of life in the neighborhoods in which they live. Community members would prefer that staff work with them, not for them.

Several staff members have attended and participated in multiple workshops and training opportunities centered on public engagement that will be helpful in creating a Citywide Community Engagement Policy. These trainings have provided staff with an opportunity to see the value in providing quality engagement opportunities for members of the public. The educational opportunities have also provided staff with an abundance of information that illustrates best practices for effective community engagement that can easily be incorporated in the City's decision-making process. Listed below are some of the training opportunities in which staff has participated:

- Advanced Public Engagement for Local Government, Davenport Institute
- Asset-Based Community Development, ABCD Institute
- Cleaning Up Toxic Public Discourse for Meaningful Engagement, Metroquest
- Government 2.0 Technology & Public Engagement, Pepperdine School of Public Policy
- "Public Engagement: The Vital Leadership Skill", Davenport Institute
- TIERS Public Engagement Framework, Institute for Local Government (ILG)

DISCUSSION:

Staff proposes to conduct a process for developing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy for City Council consideration that establishes a consistent public outreach and engagement practice for the development and implementation of major City projects and policies.

The primary reason for a Citywide Community Engagement Policy is to increase trust and communication between residents and the City. Often, the City may want to seek community perspectives and have open dialogue that sometimes might not be heard in a traditional project management process. A Citywide Community Engagement Policy would be helpful to build both internal and external trust, as well as knowledge and capacity for future engagement around substantive changes and issues. A Citywide Community Engagement Policy that is tailored to building knowledge of residents' priorities and capacity for civic engagement would provide more consistency with City standard practices and would be helpful, not only to staff, but to the community at large.

In researching best practices established by other cities and organizations, staff has identified several examples that could be used to assist in developing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy. A common factor in multiple examples is the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum (Spectrum). The Spectrum is a recognized global standard for identifying the different levels of participation. It was developed to help clarify the role of the public in planning/decision-making, and to determine how much influence they would have in the planning/decision-making process. The further to the right of the spectrum, the

more influence they would have over the decision, and each level can be appropriate depending on the context. It is important to recognize that these are levels; not steps. Each level articulates the public participation goal and the promise to the public.

The Spectrum has been used to successfully engage community in a meaningful way where the outcome is amenable to all parties involved by providing an opportunity to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and/or empower community input. The table below illustrates the Spectrum with examples of best practices that are already in place within the organization.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLES OF WHAT CITY HAS DONE/IS DOING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banners • Community Meetings • Digital Billboards • Direct Mail/Flyers • Grower's Forum • Informational Videos • Local Magazine Ads • Newsletter • Newspaper Ads • Press Releases • Public Notices/Direct Mail • Social Media • Video/Cable Channels • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 311 Information Requests • Bill Inserts • Booth Participation at events • Community Meetings • E-mail • Focus Groups • Grower's Forum • Neighbor Fest Planning • On-line surveys • Parking Meters • Public Comment • Public Outreach • Quality of Life Metrics/Surveys • Social Media • Workshops • Written Surveys • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hearings/Meetings • General Plan Updates • Grant Application Development • Neighbor Fest Planning • Neighborhood Visioning • Open Streets Events • Polling • Public Hearings • Public Notices (Friendlies) • Public Workshops • Specific Plans • Steering Committee meetings • Surveys • Organization outreach (task forces) • Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory Committees • Citywide Events • Formation of RFSA • Interagency Collaboration • Neighbor Fest Planning: participatory decision-making • Neighborhood Visioning: consensus-building • Public Outreach • Stakeholder Meetings • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballots • Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful • Neighborhood Strategies • Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program • Neighborhood Visioning • Preferential Parking Zone Program • Transportation Board • Victoria Avenue Forever

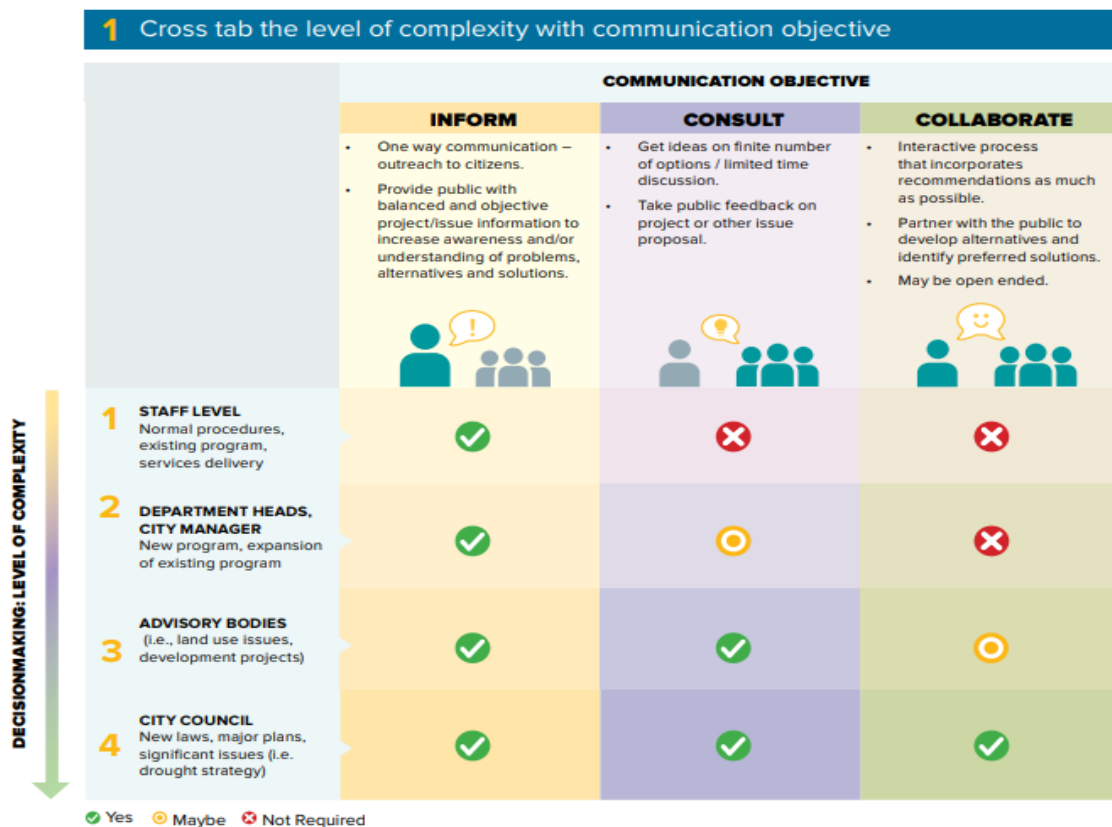
Elements of a Community Engagement Policy

A Community Engagement Policy can be utilized to accommodate different perspectives and encourage residents and stakeholders to be informed and involved in shaping decisions. A consistent Citywide Policy would be a good tool for Capital Improvement Projects and can also be utilized in the private development arena should a developer choose to provide community engagement as part of their project.

A typical Community Engagement Policy would include guidance for providing engagement and outreach efforts for a variety of uses. The City of San Luis Obispo's Public Engagement & Noticing Plan includes a project plan template that helps to determine the level of community engagement needed for an individual project, and starts by asking seven questions:

1. What is the action/program/project you need to communicate?
2. Who makes the final decision on the item?
3. What type of community interaction is desired – inform, consult, collaborate?
4. Who needs to be informed?
5. When does outreach need to happen?
6. What needs to be done?
7. What does success look like?

Once the project plan template is completed, an action plan matrix is prepared that identifies the level of complexity and communication objective, as illustrated in this graphic shown below:



The policy would include Outreach tools for each level of engagement, similar to what is shown below:

INFORM	
EXPECTATION	ADDITIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Official notice (if legally required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal ad in newspaper • Postcards to neighboring owners/tenants • On-site signage <input type="checkbox"/> E-notification (including affected neighbors) <input type="checkbox"/> Website posting <input type="checkbox"/> Applicable advisory bodies <input type="checkbox"/> Key contacts, liaisons	<input type="checkbox"/> Social media (if applicable and available) <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities billing insert – flyer <input type="checkbox"/> Community Calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paid media (newspaper, radio, TV, social media, digital, outdoor/transit) <input type="checkbox"/> Informational materials (should also be available digitally on website, e.g. flyer, fact sheet, PowerPoint, postcard, door hanger, banner, poster) <input type="checkbox"/> City website posting <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness Walk <input type="checkbox"/> Press release/Media notification <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood meetings

CONSULT	
EXPECTATION	ADDITIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> All of the "Inform" expectations listed above <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (if legally required) <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (if applicable and available)	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities billing insert – survey <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed survey <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone survey <input type="checkbox"/> Study session <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Special events with opportunities for interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness walk <input type="checkbox"/> Open City Hall (web based) <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood meetings

COLLABORATE	
EXPECTATION	ADDITIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> All of the "Inform" and "Consult" expectations listed above <input type="checkbox"/> Open City Hall (web based) <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach Event (workshop, open house, neighborhood meeting, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities billing insert – survey <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed survey <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone survey <input type="checkbox"/> Study session <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Special events with opportunities for interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness walk <input type="checkbox"/> Committee formation

Another element that could be included in a Community Engagement Policy is a list of potential stakeholders. One of the most important aspects of community engagement is thinking through the "who" to determine who will be interested in the topic under consideration. The City could maintain a database that has the potential for citizens to add themselves and the organizations that they represent to an interest list so that they can be notified about different matters. Examples

of this list could include airport area, bicycle, economic development, emergency preparedness, historic preservation, housing, neighborhood wellness, natural resources, parking, planning and building, public projects, special events, traffic, utility billing, water, youth services, etc. The Policy should also include best practices for community outreach events with detailed information about how to hold such events and a checklist for organizing outreach efforts. The idea is to provide a toolkit for staff that would include templates and information on how to provide effective community engagement in a consistent manner.

Staff recognizes that although we provide community outreach and engagement opportunities to the public, there are inconsistencies in processes throughout the organization. Community members have expressed on numerous occasions, the need to be involved earlier on for a more transparent and inclusive decision-making process. In order to resolve the inconsistency issues and have a more informed and engaged community, a Citywide Community Engagement Policy would be beneficial.

The documents provided in the links below contain useful information that can be utilized to guide the development of a Citywide Community Engagement Policy and are also included in this staff report as Attachments 2, 3 and 4, respectively.

- ILG What is Public Engagement & Why Should I Do It?:
https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ilg_what_is_public_engagement_and_why_should_i_do_it_8.31.16.pdf
- City of San Luis Obispo Public Engagement & Noticing Manual:
<http://www.slocity.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=7369>
- City of Rancho Palos Verdes Estates Public Engagement Toolkit:
<http://www.pvestates.org/home/showdocument?id=11021>

Create a Process for Developing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy

In preparation for this meeting, staff has engaged with representatives from the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce, Riverside Neighborhood Partnership (RNP), University Avenue Neighborhood Association (UNA) and Magnolia Area Neighborhood Alliance (MANA) to discuss the idea and approach. The concept was received well and the representatives were in support of the idea.

Staff recommends that the Governmental Affairs Committee direct staff to create a process for developing a Citywide Community Engagement Policy that provides a framework for future community engagement efforts by City staff and leadership. This task will include creating an internal and external working committee, reviewing best practices and information available to prepare a draft Policy that would then be presented to the Governmental Affairs Committee for a recommendation to the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund associated with this report.

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Certified as to

availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager

Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Community Outreach Concept
2. ILG's "What is Public Engagement & Why Should I Do It?"
3. City of San Luis Obispo Public Engagement & Noticing Manual
4. City of Rancho Palos Verdes Estates Public Engagement Toolkit
5. Presentation