



City of Arts & Innovation

Inclusiveness, Community Engagement, and Governmental Processes Committee Memorandum

TO: INCLUSIVENESS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & GOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES COMMITTEE **DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2022**

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

SUBJECT: CITYWIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND TOOLKIT UPDATE

ISSUE:

Update on the Citywide Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit and request for direction on the next steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement, and Governmental Processes Committee:

1. Receive an update on the Citywide Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit; and
2. Provide direction to staff on the next steps for adoption and citywide implementation.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

Riverside has no formal, consistent Community Engagement Policy currently in place, though several state and local laws and ordinances require public participation in the decision-making process. For example, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, General Plan 2025, the Riverside Municipal Code, Riverside 2.0, and Utilities 2.0, among others, require some form of community engagement ranging from workshops to public hearings.

BACKGROUND:

On August 5, 2020, the Inclusiveness, Community Engagement & Governmental Processes 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 Inclusiveness, Community Engagement and Governmental Processes Committee with a draft framework for review and comment prior to finalizing a Policy for City Council consideration. A comprehensive Community Engagement Policy would provide an opportunity for uniform community engagement efforts to be consistent across all City Departments throughout the organization.

On February 20, 2021, a “Community Engagement 101” virtual workshop was held seeking input from stakeholders on the Citywide policy. The workshops focused on the “What, How, and Why’s of Community Engagement”. During this workshop, stakeholders were encouraged to participate in the working group that would be instrumental in drafting the Citywide Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit (CEP). Approximately twenty-three community members and a dozen City team members participated to develop the CEP.

From March 2021 through June 2021, the City hosted five virtual meetings inviting public input and volunteer participation. Those formative meetings included a refresher of the “Community Engagement 101” workshop, best practices and ideas from other agencies and municipalities, elements of the draft policy, content discussions, and draft reviews including input and guidance from the volunteers. Working with the external and internal team members, a draft framework was prepared and reviewed. Once all revisions and comments were addressed, a revised version of the draft policies framework was distributed in July 2021.

Thereafter, the proposed policy and toolkit was presented to staff, including the Executive Leadership Team, Deputy Leadership Team and those responsible for engagement in all departments. These internal stakeholders provided feedback, which was iterative, consisting of several rounds of discussion before the final draft was deemed ready for pilot testing.

DISCUSSION:

The draft CEP was finalized in April 2022. As part of a pilot program, staff began implementing the policy and toolkit framework with five internal partners as part of a soft launch by providing guidance and meeting facilitation for key citywide projects. Internal partners included the Mayor’s Office (Mayor’s Tent Tour), City Manager’s Office (Regional Climate Collaborative Grant), Building & Safety – CEDD (Building Electrification Ordinance), Economic Development – CEDD (Northside Master Plan Developer RFP), and Libraries (Community Engagement Survey).

During the soft launch, staff identified modifications to their approach based on the engagement strategies used and participant feedback. For example, during the Mayor’s Big Tent Tour, the Asset-Based Community Development approach was too broad, and a more focused discussion was needed. Staff shifted the approach to ensure that the feedback received was helpful in implementing change. Similarly, during the Building & Safety Building Electrification workshops, the open-ended conversation strategy shifted to a focused question-and-answer discussion where staff documented responses and received necessary input to consider some modifications to the upcoming policy changes.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is defined as the range of opportunities for public involvement in the decision-making process, relationship building, and community strengthening. Community engagement is achieved when the community is and feels a part of a process.

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 organization and community while helping ensure transparency and collaboration. A uniform Policy also better identifies the priorities, needs, and aspirations of the community will assist City Council and staff in improving strategic planning and service delivery.

Key Goals of the Community Engagement Policy:

The Community Engagement Policy aims to create a clear, streamlined, and predictable public participation process. Effective community engagement requires a shared understanding between community members and City staff. The Citywide Community Engagement Policy (Policy) and accompanying Community Engagement Toolkit (Toolkit) are both a resource guide for the City and an overview of the engagement process for community members. These documents increase accountability on both ends – City staff have an agreed-upon path to follow, and the community has a standard to expect from the City.



The above diagram gives the user a visual definition of the goals and importance of the Community Engagement Policy.

What is the Community Engagement Toolkit?

This Community Engagement Toolkit builds upon and utilizes several of the tools laid out in the Citywide Community Engagement Policy. It is a resource for City Departments and community members. Because these documents work in conjunction with one another, the Citywide Community Engagement Policy should be read before working through the Community Engagement Toolkit.

This guide is a living document meant to help anyone at any level of involvement within the City work together to understand and develop broad community engagement plans that align with the City's Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan.

The toolkit includes key elements like getting started, key stakeholders, tools & resources, successful facilitation and useful appendices and worksheets.

Purpose of the Guides:

To design a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan, determine the appropriate level of community engagement, identify stakeholders, create an outreach plan, and implement timelines and strategies that fit individual projects and ensure public access to accurate information.

Key Elements of the Community Engagement Toolkit:



This above scale serves as a guide within the toolkit for the user to determine the form of engagement that works best for the project and the anticipated audience.

The Community Engagement Policy and Toolkit is being presented to this Committee for feedback, and ultimately to the entire City Council, as the next step to full implementation throughout the organization.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being (Goal 2.4 - Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust)** and **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government (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 the following Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The Community Engagement Plan and Toolkit aligns with the Community Trust Cross-Cutting Thread as hearing the item in the public forum builds trust with community members through active engagement opportunities.
2. **Equity** – The Community Engagement Plan and Toolkit aligns with Equity Cross-Cutting Thread by being inclusive to all community members and offering several means of communication options.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Community Engagement Plan and Toolkit aligns with the Fiscal Responsibility Cross-Cutting Thread as the Plan and engagement has been completed by staff.
4. **Innovation** – The Community Engagement Plan and Toolkit aligns with the Innovation Thread by implementing efforts and actively using this policy as the guide for community engagement.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Community Engagement Plan and Toolkit aligns with the Sustainability & Resiliency Cross-Cutting Thread by adapting and growing through the engagement process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for this project.

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Attachments:

1. Draft - Citywide Community Engagement Policy
2. Draft - Citywide Community Engagement Toolkit
3. Presentation