

Comprehensive Plan

Proposed Engagement Strategy Appendices

Appendix A: Metrics

Below we discuss an array of **proposed** metrics for our engagement process. We anticipate working closely with the Advisory Council to refine these as the planning process proceeds.

Did we listen?. Were residents of Baltimore made aware of the Comprehensive Process overall? Were community residents integrated into the engagement process?

- Resident engagement – was it representative of Baltimore?
 - How many events were held and where?
 - How many total residents engaged with the plan through leadership opportunities, and where were they from?
 - Who was engaged through the Ambassadors strategy and where?
- Comments – how many people left comments on our draft plan?

Did we build community? Did we strengthen civic relationships through this process in a way that felt authentic and began to build/repair trust?

- How many residents were able to tell their story?
- Did engagement offer additional opportunities for participants to stay connected and engaged with each other and with the City of Baltimore?
- Did students/youth engaged through this process continue to develop their interest in careers in municipal government?

Did we apply an equity lens to the process? Did voices typically left out of the planning process have an opportunity to participate and have their voice heard during the engagement process?

- Did the community Engagement Advisory partners selected reflect our priorities in this document for reaching communities otherwise often unheard?
- What was the demographic breakdown of our Ambassador network?
- What did we hear through engagement, and do these narratives reflect the broader story of both Baltimore and the communities typically not heard in the planning process?

Appendix B: Process

Three groups of residents were invited to participate in the pre-planning process. These groups were familiar with Planning engagement process through their involvement in past years and what worked and what needed a different approach.

The **Sustainability Ambassadors** contributed to the Sustainability Plan adopted by the City of Baltimore in 2019. The Office of Sustainability recruited 125 Ambassadors representing different neighborhoods and backgrounds to sit down with their neighbors and have one-on-one conversations about what they liked and disliked about their communities.

The **Food Equity Advisors** program brings together community residents to participate in an intensive process to learn, share and engage on urgent food policy topics. Each cohort tackles a specific topic that needs public input. Advisor input is then translated into concrete policy.

The **Planning Academy** is a six week program that provides residents with an overview of the planning, zoning and development review processes specific to Baltimore City. The goals of the program include building cross-neighborhood community and providing residents with the tools necessary to be stronger neighborhood advocates.

The alumni of the programs above are familiar with our work, and best able to provide critical comments to shape the design of our engagement strategy.

A. Survey

Using a survey, we reached out to alumna of the three programs described above. In total, the survey reached about 240 residents. Typical email surveys have a 10%-30% response rate. In total, 72 responses were received, hitting a targeted 30% rate.

The goal of the survey was to begin to gather initial external feedback and ideas on public preferences around engagement.

The survey was not designed to be a statistically significant survey of all Baltimore residents. We sought out responses from a subset of residents already familiar with past engagement work, so that they could comment on what has worked and not worked in recent years.

A statistically significant survey will be a component of the broader Comprehensive Plan digital engagement strategy.

Who Participated

The survey included demographic questions so that the Department of Planning could assess whether or not the responses reflected Baltimore City demographics overall, and whether or not the survey respondents were representative of the City.

In total, 45 respondents were Black (62.5%) while 23 (32%) were white, corresponding with City demographics. In total, 61% of respondents lived in Baltimore 20 years or more. By age, the respondents represented most City age groups, led by those in the 50-64 range (28%) followed by 30-somethings (22%) and seniors 65+ (20%). Most respondents identified as female (73%), reflecting usual patterns of City civic engagement.

What We Heard

The survey asked respondents to identify the methods they employed to reach their neighbors. In their own community work, respondents reported reaching out via digital or social media (39%) followed by in-person outreach/word-of-mouth (27%). One respondent stressed the importance of “meeting residents where they are” and noted the example of successful Census 2020 outreach at public markets.

We also asked about methods of engagement, soliciting creative and fun ideas from survey respondents. Many respondents noted that, in their view, their neighbors would prefer in-person events (41%) or pop-up events (42%) over digital or social media engagement. One respondent made an interesting comment, noting “it’s not how you reach out, it is who reaches out”. Meaning, effective outreach will require a large team of trusted neighborhood-level messengers.

Respondents identified a number of potential locations for pop up events, including festivals, block parties, “stoop” nites, and especially playgrounds, parks and sports-related events. One interesting comment stressed the importance of small group conversation over large, town hall events in order to get deeper engagement and more precise feedback. Town hall events generate comments that are “vanilla” in nature, diluted and are less meaningful.

Respondents identified barriers to civic participation and groups least likely to participate in the civic process. Distrust of government and a sense that their participation would not inform or change the outcome was the most commonly cited barrier to civic engagement (53%). This was followed by awareness (22%) - not knowing that an opportunity to provide feedback

existed. Planning fatigue was mentioned; “how will this process be any different than prior processes”? Others noted that prior planning processes did not necessarily result in change, despite time and resources spent in conversation and dialogue.

Finally, respondents identified the group they felt was “least likely to participate”. Groups mentioned most often were youth (15), renters (10) and seniors (9). In addition, multiple respondents noted that households or individuals facing day-to-day life challenge – including working multiple jobs, facing housing insecurity, unemployment, addiction, unhoused, facing other multiple stressors – are least likely to participate. Finally, several noted that anticipating not feeling welcome could be a major barrier for everyday people in Baltimore.

The final survey question solicited ideas on reaching groups mentioned as unlikely to participate. One respondent noted the importance of making materials available in multiple languages and ensuring that any surveys are formatted to be short (because people are often short on time) and easy to digest quickly. Videos, memes and Tik Tok were named as strategies to reach the youngest audience.

Ideas generated through this open question tended to fall into three categories: (1) Adopting a trusted messenger strategy, as employed during the 2020 Census and Sustainability Plan; (2) Meeting people where they were through pop up events at the neighborhood level. Specific suggestions included metro stops, bus stops, food distribution points, grocery stores and places where people socialize or play sports. Finally (3) Cultivating partnerships with community organizations or other groups connected to the people we want to reach. Suggestions under this strategy included fraternities, property managers and Baltimore City Schools.

B. Public Engagement Community Conversations

On June 30 and July 1, 2021, the Department of Planning hosted small group “follow up” conversations with a subset of community residents who filled out the June 2021 public engagement survey. The residents self-selected to participate.

The goals for the conversations were to: (1) identify principles of engagement most important for a planning engagement strategy; (2) dig deeper into a discussion of “meeting people where they are” and (3) talk about the role of culture and history as it relates to a public engagement process in Baltimore.

What We Heard:

- **Compensate community leaders.** Prioritize compensating partners or ambassadors to do the outreach, using creative channels including videos (TikTok). Ambassadors must reflect the demographics of the priority groups that the Department of Planning is hoping to reach.
- **Partner with trusted organizations.** Work closely and compensate organizations that have a strong network and are trusted by the community.
 - Mentioned organizations included: Safe Streets, No Boundaries, Youth Works, Urban Oasis, community health centers, and food distribution organizations/hubs.
 - Adult education was noted as an opportunity to connect, especially with immigrant groups enrolled in English classes.
 - Public spaces discussed included libraries, schools, transit stops, and recreation/community centers. All of these were noted as important places to connect with residents of all ages, but especially the young and elderly.
- **Neighborhoods, not downtown.** Focus on the neighborhoods; don't expect people to attend meetings or events downtown. Partner with existing community events (block parties, Fish Fries, ext) rather than organizing City-led events. Seek out and cultivate casual, welcoming spaces.
- **Prioritize organizations that lead on culture and amplify Black voices.** Several Black-led organizations were noted by participants as important potential partners because of their work lift up and connect Black voices – specifically across neighborhoods. Art focused organizations were brought up as part of this part of the conversation.
- **Prioritize long term relationship building and communication.** Follow up post-engagement was noted as important; participants deserve to know how their input is integrated into the process. And engagement should not be one-time; the frequency and visibility matters as building relationships take time.
- **Input must shape policy.** Goals for engagement must be clear, and there must be a direct link between community input and the ideas captured within the plan itself.

Appendix C: Case Studies

Case Study: Let's Bike Oakland Plan

Oakland, CA's Bike Plan was adopted in July 2019. The plan successfully reached 3,500 Oakland residents by partnering with key community-based organizations, who led the engagement work. These organizations played a

key role in identifying and giving voice to the needs and priorities of different communities in Oakland.

[Let's Bike Oakland: Community Voice \(Ch 3 of Plan\)](#)

Case Study: The East Baltimore Historical Library

The East Baltimore Historical Library is a resident-driven initiative that preserves, interprets, and shares the history of East Baltimore. Community organizer Nia Redmond pitched the idea of the library as a response to the development process currently underway in the community (East Baltimore Development, inc.).

<https://www.facebook.com/eastbmorehistoricallibrary/>

Case Study: The Baltimore Guardians Portrait & Public Art Project

Baltimore Muralist Whitney Frazier and West Baltimore based photographer/cinematographer Kirby Griffin are currently working on a photo documentary and storytelling project to celebrate Black female leaders working tirelessly at the neighborhood level in Baltimore. The project, consisting of portrait photos accompanying by narrative text, will premier at the Carroll Museum in November 2021. One of the Guardians portrayed are Planning Academy alumni.

<https://www.thepealecenter.org/events/the-guardians-reshaping-history-exhibition/>

Case Study: Greetings from East L.A.

This is an urban planning and journalism focused project that works with High School students. It is a pathway program to USC's public policy school. It is built on the idea that students are "local experts", so they can lead public processes.

<https://publicmattersgroup.com/projects/greetingsfromeastla/>

Case Study: Forefront Fellowship

The Forefront Fellowship is a professional, ten-month program through which fellows spend three months working with a City agency, meeting weekly to learn about a particular policy issue. They then work in teams over six months, designing an original project, typically partnering with a community based organization. These projects conclude with a capstone event to further develop partnerships and ideas.

<https://urbandesignforum.org/review/forefront-2021-neighborhood-fare/>

