

# MEMORANDUM

## Inclusive Public Engagement: Barriers and Actions

*DRAFT*

This memorandum provides an initial outline of potential barriers and opportunities to inclusive public engagement on planning and policy initiatives. These barriers and potential actions to address them will be expanded and fleshed out through the Frog Pond project public engagement process.

### Barriers to Public Involvement

- Participant resources
  - Time needed to participate -> offer a variety of times and amount of time required
  - Ability to travel to meetings -> locate activities close to underrepresented communities, provide or subsidize transportation to meetings, provide a hybrid model for online and in person engagement.
  - Childcare -> provide onsite childcare and activities to engage youth in the project
- Limited knowledge of, or access to technology
  - Internet access -> provide computer and internet access at public facilities
  - Comfort with online platforms -> simplify access and provide support
- Lack of trust in government
  - Past experiences with government initiatives -> document the range of past negative experiences and actively address concerns
  - Fairness of the process -> clearly define the process and maintain transparency
  - Fear of government -> hold meetings in safe environments (schools, churches, neighborhood meeting places)
- Language barriers -> provide translation services and community liaisons
- Cultural -> make accommodations for cultural and religious holidays and norms
- Physical -> provide accommodations for varying physical abilities and limitations
- Lack of project awareness -> provide information across a wide range of media, formal and informal
- Power differentials and dynamics -> assess, document, and address full range of potential power dynamics related to initiative. Consider:
  - Organized groups vs individuals
  - Regular participants vs infrequent or underrepresented participants
  - Politically connected participants vs general public

### Actions to Overcome Barriers

The following are general principles to guide City actions to overcome barriers to inclusive public engagement:

- Create welcoming, safe environments by asking the underrepresented communities how this can be achieved
- Design a process that is friendly to working families
- Go to the community (work places, public gatherings, social and religious organizations, schools)

- Be transparent and open throughout the process by engaging the community in how the city can build trust in the engagement processes
- Explain how public engagement is used in decision making
- Be accessible and responsive
- Use a variety of low-tech/high touch and high-tech opportunities to participate
- Provide information through a wide range of media
- Build community connections for ongoing engagement