

Draft Citywide Community Engagement Framework

What is Community Engagement?


Community engagement gets community members **involved in important decisions** that may impact them. This includes **learning about and providing feedback** on these decisions. City staff could do engagement for a proposed project, a long-term plan, a policy change, or a new program.

Engagement activities to consider:


- Workshops
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Presentations at pre-existing community meetings
- Walking, biking, and transit tours

- Community advisory/working groups
- Community event pop-up booths
- Inviting community members to participate in pre-existing City meetings
- Partnerships with community groups
- One-on-one interviews

Questions that help guide the creation of an engagement plan:




What materials are accessible to as many community members as possible? How can I simplify what I am saying?



What data is there to collect? What information is there to give out?



What places do community members already go to?




Should activities be in person, online, or both?

Who Should be Included?

It is important to identify the appropriate audiences for each planning effort.

To reach target audiences:

- Advertise engagement events through strategic channels.
- Meet communities where they are. This might be through trusted community groups.
- Consider ways to reach unengaged residents. Potential strategies include targeted promotion through social media advertising or traditional media.
- Consider the languages spoken and levels of internet access in the community.
- Promote engagement activities. Give enough notice for community members to take part.
- Send reminders to community members the day before and the day of the event.



How big is my target audience? How many people should I engage with to consider my effort successful?

What Goes Into Planning Community Engagement?

City staff should plan for community engagement at the start of a project. The City of San José aims to engage community members early and often. This makes it possible to incorporate feedback and meet people's preferences.

The City of San José takes the following steps to plan engagement:

- Set goals, measures of success, and timelines.
- Identify stakeholders, such as government agencies, community leaders, and partners. Explore their roles in engagement.
- Make a list of activities to engage the right people.



How often should the community be engaged in this process?

How Does the City of San José Do Engagement?

The City of San José aims to develop and implement engagement processes that are:



People-centered

Treat community members with respect and empathy. Frame issues in ways that are relevant to community members. Make it interesting and worthwhile for them to participate in the process.



Equitable

Provide incentives to encourage participation from low-income community members and to show appreciation for community expertise. Lower barriers to participation by providing meals, drinks, or childcare at in-person events.



Accessible

Offer translation, interpretation, or closed captioning as needed. Conduct engagement in the language people speak. Make materials easy to understand for your audience. Choose physical spaces that are accessible by people with limited mobility.



Transparent and accountable

Plan meaningful updates to the community to build trust with community members. Communicate clear expectations with the public. Avoid making promises that you can't follow through on.



Collaborative

Create engagement strategies that keep in mind communities' wants, needs and preferences. Be willing to adapt your strategy as project and community needs arise.