Community Engagement

Continuing the Conversation and Next Steps

city of CINCINNATI
CITY PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT

Overview

1 Current State of Engagement

2 Community Conversations & Survey Overview

3 What We Heard

4 Next Steps in City Manager's Community Engagement Plan

CURRENT STATE OF ENGAGEMENT

City of Cincinnati Community Engagement

- **Website** (cincinnati-oh.gov)
- **Social Media** (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor)
- **Email**
- **City Council and Committee Meetings** (in-person, virtual meeting, CitiCable)
- **City-led presentations** at community council meetings and Invest in Neighborhoods meetings
- **Mobile App and 513-591-6000** (Fix It Cincy App/Phone)
- **Board and Commission Meetings** (in-person, virtual meeting, CitiCable, i.e., Cincinnati City Parks Board, City Planning Commission)

Photo Credit: Cincinnati Enquirer

City of Cincinnati Community Engagement

- **City-led, community engagement meetings** (i.e., community engagement meetings for development projects, public staff conferences for zone changes)
- **City-led, special engagement meetings and processes** (topic- and site-based public project meetings, i.e., Oskamp Recreation Area Expansion, Rapid Run Park/Dunham Recreation Center Connection, Property Tax Working Group, Police Station District-Five Site Planning)
- **Community Budget Requests** and **Neighborhood Project Suggestions**
- **Neighborhood Planning Process**
- **Special events** (i.e., Neighborhood Summit, Greater Cincinnati Water Works Events, Neighborhood Leadership Academy, etc.)

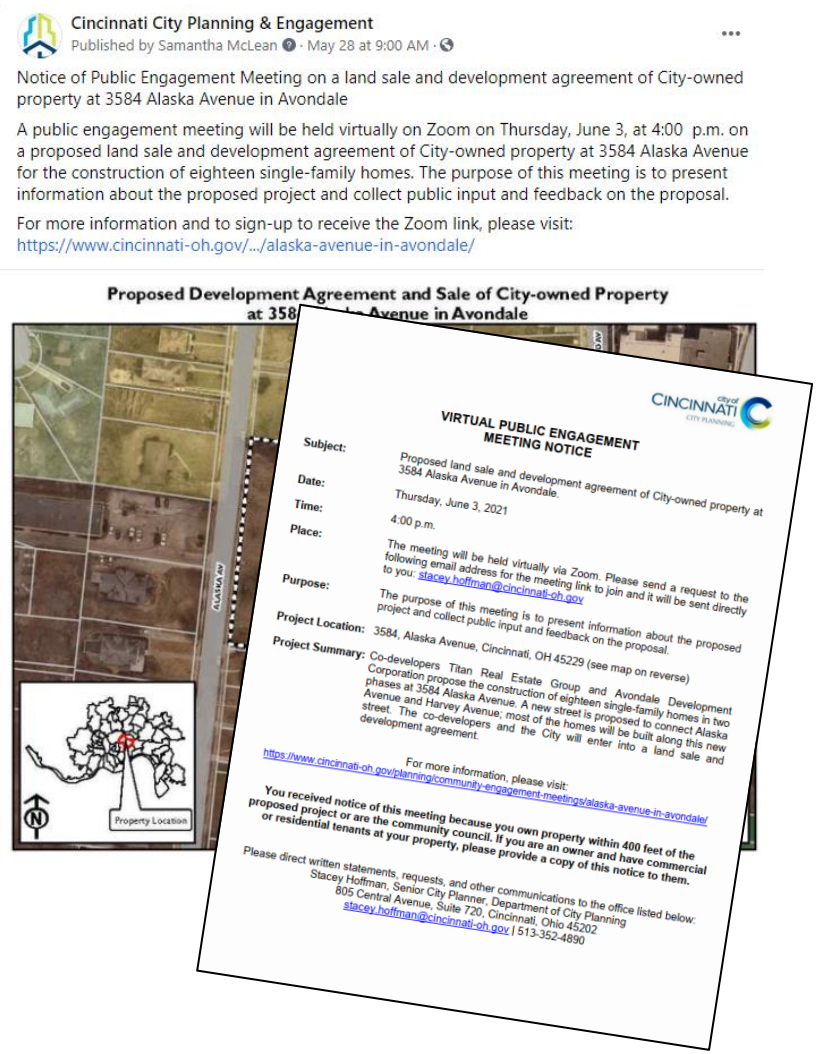
GREATER CINCINNATI WATER WORKS
Citizens Water Academy

City Planning & Engagement Community Engagement

- Noticing for public meetings and City Planning Commission
- Feedback sessions (Community Engagement Meetings and Public Staff Conferences)
- Long-range planning processes (City-wide and neighborhood level)

Noticing

- Mailed legal noticing requirements for subdivisions, zone changes, etc.
  - Property owners with proximity
  - Community Council
- Notice sign for subdivisions
- Additional best practices
  - Emailed notice to community councils and community development corporations
  - Webpage on website
  - Social media



Community Engagement Sessions & Public Staff Conferences

Community Engagement Meetings

- For lease/sales of City-owned property or appropriations for development projects valued at $50,000 or more
- Prior to City Council

Public Staff Conferences

- For zone changes
- Prior to City Planning Commission

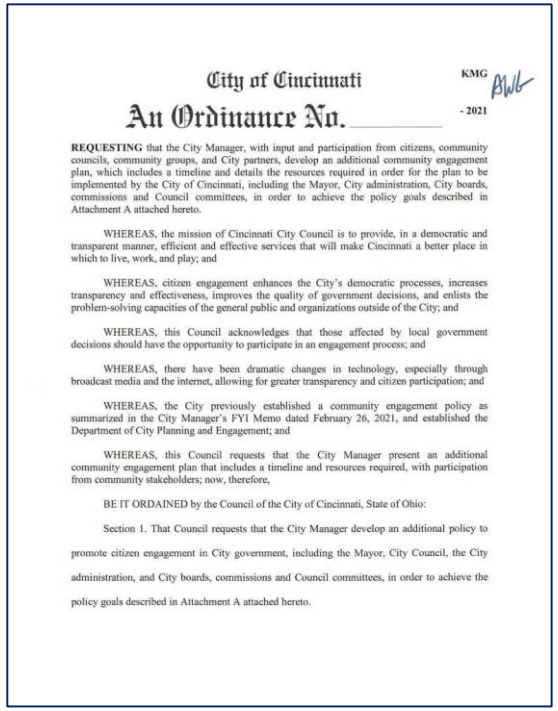
Purpose of Meetings

- Share information about project
- Collect feedback on proposals for memo or staff reports
- Opportunity to answer questions from community

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS – FALL 2021

Community Conversations

Community Engagement Ordinance



City of Cincinnati

KMG

An Ordinance No. _____ - 2021

REQUESTING that the City Manager, with input and participation from citizens, community councils, community groups, and City partners, develop an additional community engagement plan, which includes a timeline and details the resources required in order for the plan to be implemented by the City of Cincinnati, including the Mayor, City administration, City boards, commissions and Council committees, in order to achieve the policy goals described in Attachment A attached hereto.

WHEREAS, the mission of Cincinnati City Council is to provide, in a democratic and transparent manner, efficient and effective services that will make Cincinnati a better place in which to live, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, citizen engagement enhances the City's democratic processes, increases transparency and effectiveness, improves the quality of government decisions, and enlists the problem-solving capacities of the general public and organizations outside of the City; and

WHEREAS, this Council acknowledges that those affected by local government decisions should have the opportunity to participate in an engagement process; and

WHEREAS, there have been dramatic changes in technology, especially through broadcast media and the internet, allowing for greater transparency and citizen participation; and

WHEREAS, the City previously established a community engagement policy as summarized in the City Manager's FYI Memo dated February 26, 2021, and established the Department of City Planning and Engagement; and

WHEREAS, this Council requests that the City Manager present an additional community engagement plan that includes a timeline and resources required, with participation from community stakeholders; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio:

Section 1. That Council requests that the City Manager develop an additional policy to promote citizen engagement in City government, including the Mayor, City Council, the City administration, and City boards, commissions and Council committees, in order to achieve the policy goals described in Attachment A attached hereto.

Community Conversation Meetings

Join us for

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

on Community Engagement

The City Manager's Office, with input and participation from citizens, community councils, community groups, and City partners, is developing a community engagement plan. As a first step, the City will facilitate conversations during public meetings to gather feedback and brainstorm how the City can work to improve or create new methods of engagement. Join us at one of the following meetings:

Tuesday, November 9
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Bond Hill Recreation Center
1501 Elizabeth Place

Wednesday, November 17
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Westwood Town Hall
3017 Harrison Ave.

Monday, November 22
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
On Zoom
(Visit website to register)

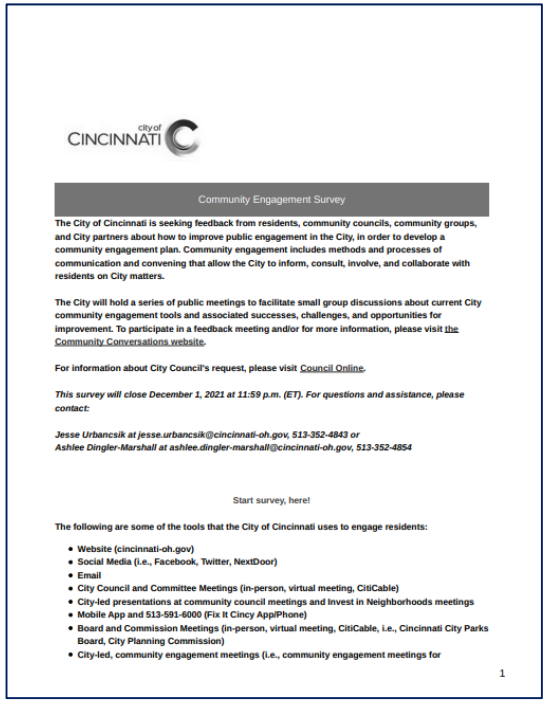
Registration is required for the virtual meeting. Registration encouraged, but not required for in-person meetings.

Scan the QR code or visit
cincinnati-oh.gov/community-conversations
to **register**, **learn more**, and **take a survey** to share your feedback.

city of CINCINNATI

The City of Cincinnati is committed to equal access at meetings and facilities by providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities upon request. For questions or assistance, please contact: Jesse Urbancsik | jesse.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov | 513-352-4843 or Ashlee Dingler-Marshall | 513-352-4854 | ashlee.dingler-marshall@cincinnati-oh.gov.

Community Engagement Survey



city of CINCINNATI

Community Engagement Survey

The City of Cincinnati is seeking feedback from residents, community councils, community groups, and City partners about how to improve public engagement in the City, in order to develop a community engagement plan. Community engagement includes methods and processes of communication and convening that allow the City to inform, consult, involve, and collaborate with residents on City matters.

The City will hold a series of public meetings to facilitate small group discussions about current City community engagement tools and associated successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. To participate in a feedback meeting and/or for more information, please visit the Community Conversations website.

For information about City Council's request, please visit Council Online.

This survey will close December 1, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. (ET). For questions and assistance, please contact:

Jesse Urbancsik at jesse.urbancsik@cincinnati-oh.gov, 513-352-4843 or
Ashlee Dingler-Marshall at ashlee.dingler-marshall@cincinnati-oh.gov, 513-352-4854

Start survey, here!

The following are some of the tools that the City of Cincinnati uses to engage residents:

- **Website (cincinnati-oh.gov)**
- **Social Media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor)**
- **Email**
- **City Council and Committee Meetings (in-person, virtual meeting, CitiCable)**
- **City-led presentations at community council meetings and Invest in Neighborhoods meetings**
- **Mobile App and 513-591-6000 (Fix it Cincy App/Phone)**
- **Board and Commission Meetings (in-person, virtual meeting, CitiCable, i.e., Cincinnati City Parks Board, City Planning Commission)**
- **City-led, community engagement meetings (i.e., community engagement meetings for**

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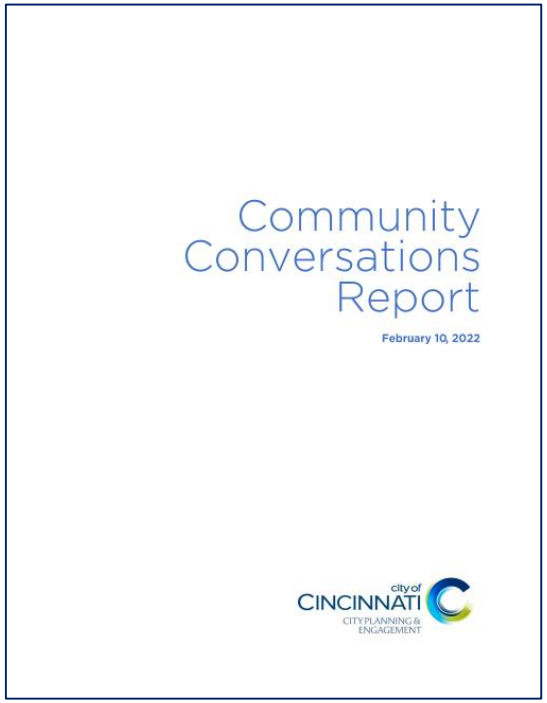
Community Conversations Report



Community Conversations Report

February 10, 2022

city of CINCINNATI
CITY PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT

Community Conversations Meetings

- 3 public meetings in November 2021
  - 2 in-person (Bond Hill and Westwood)
  - 1 on zoom
- Total of 85 participants

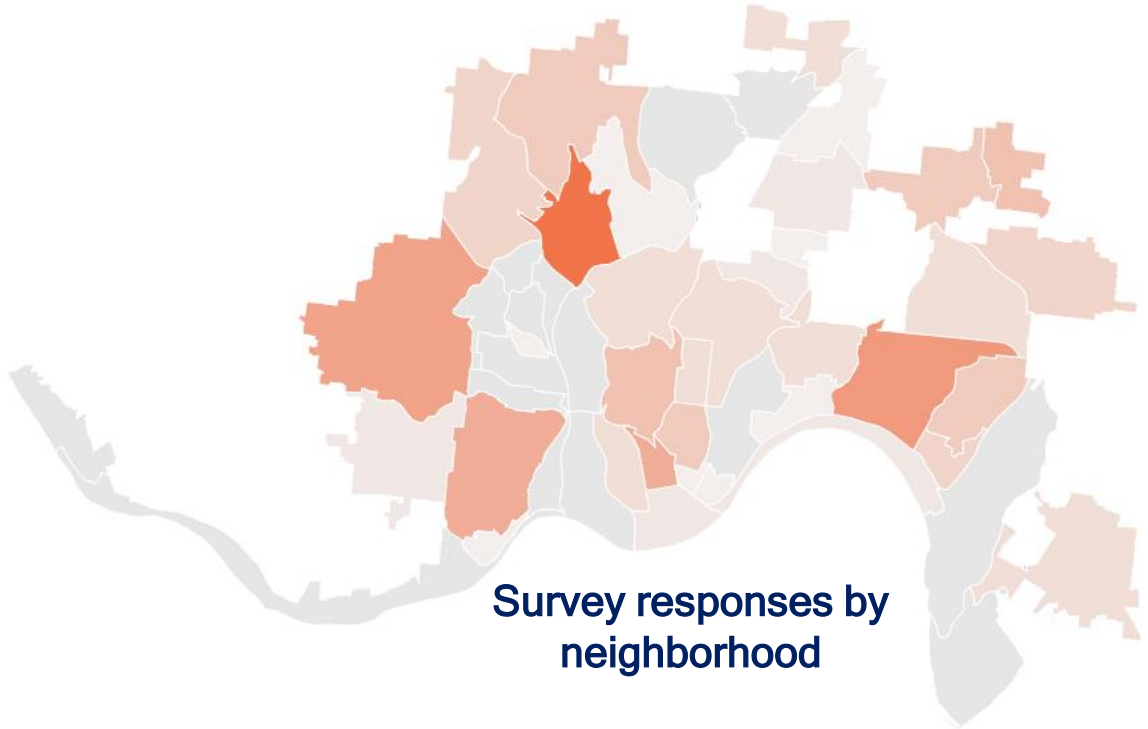
Community Conversations Meetings

Small group conversations on:

1. What does **successful engagement** mean to you?
2. In a city that successfully engages its residents, **how** and on **which topics or issues** would you prefer to be engaged?
3. In a city that successfully engages its residents, **how do we connect with diverse groups** about community engagement?
4. Has the **pandemic changed the topics or methods by which you engage** or prefer to be engaged?
5. In a city that successfully engages its residents, what is **the role that education (trainings, guidebooks, etc.)** plays, by which residents are trained and informed, regarding communication and topics about community engagement?

Community Engagement Survey

- Online survey open for over a month
- 159 responses from 33 neighborhoods
- Questions:
  - How do you **currently engage**?
  - What engagement methods are you **aware of** and which ones do you **use**?
  - How would you like to **engage in future**?
  - What **prevents** you from engaging?
  - What would **motivate** you to become more involved?
  - How can the City **improve** community engagement?



Survey responses by neighborhood

What We Learned Current State of Engagement

41%

of survey respondents rated their level of engagement between 6-8 on a scale of 1-10

"While I've heard of the [tools], many times I do not hear about specific opportunities or events… I believe outreach is the main struggle."

More people at virtual meetings, but quality of engagement and discussion has decreased

Engagement when topic/issues directly concerns street or neighborhood.

Top **5** ways residents currently engage:

1. Website and Social Media
2. City Council and Committee meetings
3. Email notifications
4. City-led presentations at community council meetings
5. Board and Commission meetings

What We Learned Important Topics

What We Learned Definitions of Successful Engagement

Communication

Empowerment

Collaboration

Transparency

- Accessible – able to reach all people
- Two-way street
- Centralized location on website
- Spread word through non-traditional avenues (go beyond the City's website and social media)
- Timely notification
- Breaking down language barriers

What We Learned Definitions of Successful Engagement

Communication

Empowerment

Collaboration

Transparency

- Having a clear understanding and definition of engagement
- More involvement earlier in the decision-making process
- Providing more than just two-minutes to speak on a topic at a meeting
- Education/trainings on processes

What We Learned Definitions of Successful Engagement

Communication

Empowerment

Collaboration

Transparency

- With community councils, but also other organizations who actively engage their communities
- Build trust and relationships with community members
- Meeting communities where they are (utilizing existing events, channels, etc.)

What We Learned Definitions of Successful Engagement

Communication

Empowerment

Collaboration

Transparency

- Engagement earlier in process
- Understanding levels of engagement
- Feedback on what happens with the engagement

What We Learned Barriers to Engagement

- Lack of time and/or accessible tool
- Lack of knowledge
- Other barriers

"Lack of opportunities for meaningful engagement."

"Often times I hear of an engagement opportunity after it has occurred."

"I don't have lack of time, but the times of meetings are not convenient."

"No sense of urgency about being involved. General sense that things are not working."

What We Learned What Would Motivate Engagement

"Engagement at the front end before decisions are made. Engagement with the decision makers. Opportunity for discussion, not just one-way communication."

Avoiding jargon; more centralized location of information

"Please keep remote options! Love being able to tune in from home. It has made a huge difference."

- A change in City's communication & knowledge about how to get involved
- A change in City meeting places and times
- A change in City engagement tool options
- Other

What We Learned Ways to Improve Engagement

- Increase **communication** with residents
  - Add a more visible, centralized place on the website for engagement
  - Provide education on how to engage
  - Earlier notice of engagement opportunities
  - Create a strong communication channel with community councils and other respected community institutions
- Ensure **accessibility** of engagement methods (for varying abilities, language, education level, location, time, etc.)
- Increase opportunities to be **engaged earlier** in the decision-making process
- Follow up on input and **be transparent**

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Importance-Satisfaction Analysis Ratings

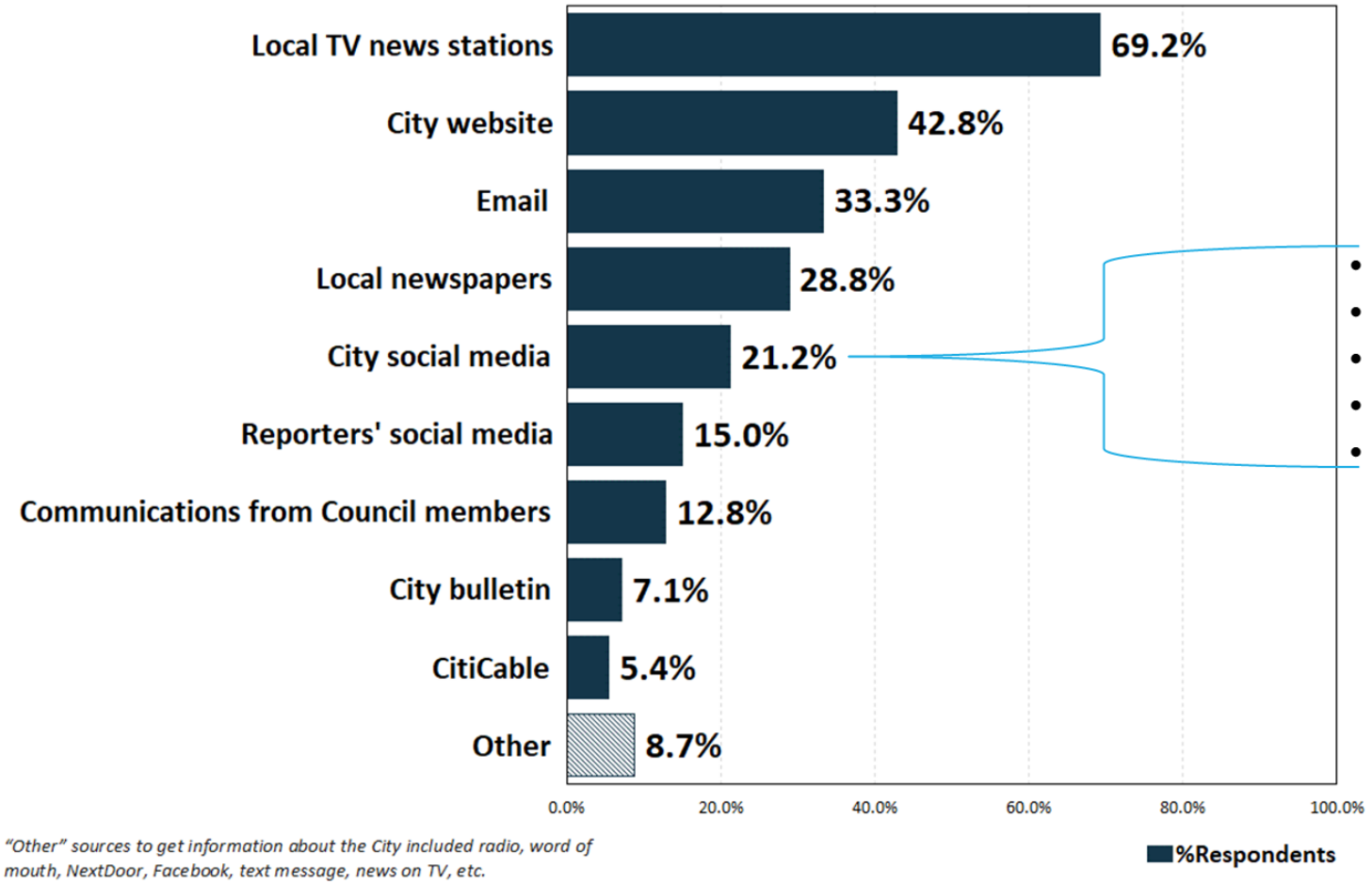
2021 City of Cincinnati, Ohio Resident Survey

Communication & Community Engagement

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Elected officials' efforts to support a dialogue with City residents	49%	1	21%	8	0.3830	1
Opportunity to engage/provide input into decisions made by Elected Officials	36%	3	18%	10	0.2935	2
Availability of information about City programs and services	36%	2	29%	3	0.2545	3
Opportunity to engage/provide input regarding City operations in public engagement opportunities provided by the City Administration	23%	4	19%	9	0.1893	4
Access to information about Campaign finance and lobbyist disclosures	16%	6	11%	12	0.1419	5
Overall usefulness of City website	22%	5	37%	1	0.1407	6
Access to information about Finance and Budget information	16%	8	17%	11	0.1316	7
Access to information about City Council meetings (schedules, agendas, videos)	16%	7	28%	4	0.1142	8
Quality of the City's Open Data portal	7%	9	22%	7	0.0576	9
Access to information about Boards and Commissions meetings (schedules, agendas, videos)	7%	10	24%	6	0.0554	10
City Administration's use of social media	6%	11	27%	5	0.0467	11
Quality of City video programming (television channel and web streaming)	3%	12	30%	2	0.0224	12

Q24. Please CHECK ALL of the sources you use to get information about the City of Cincinnati.

by the percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be selected)

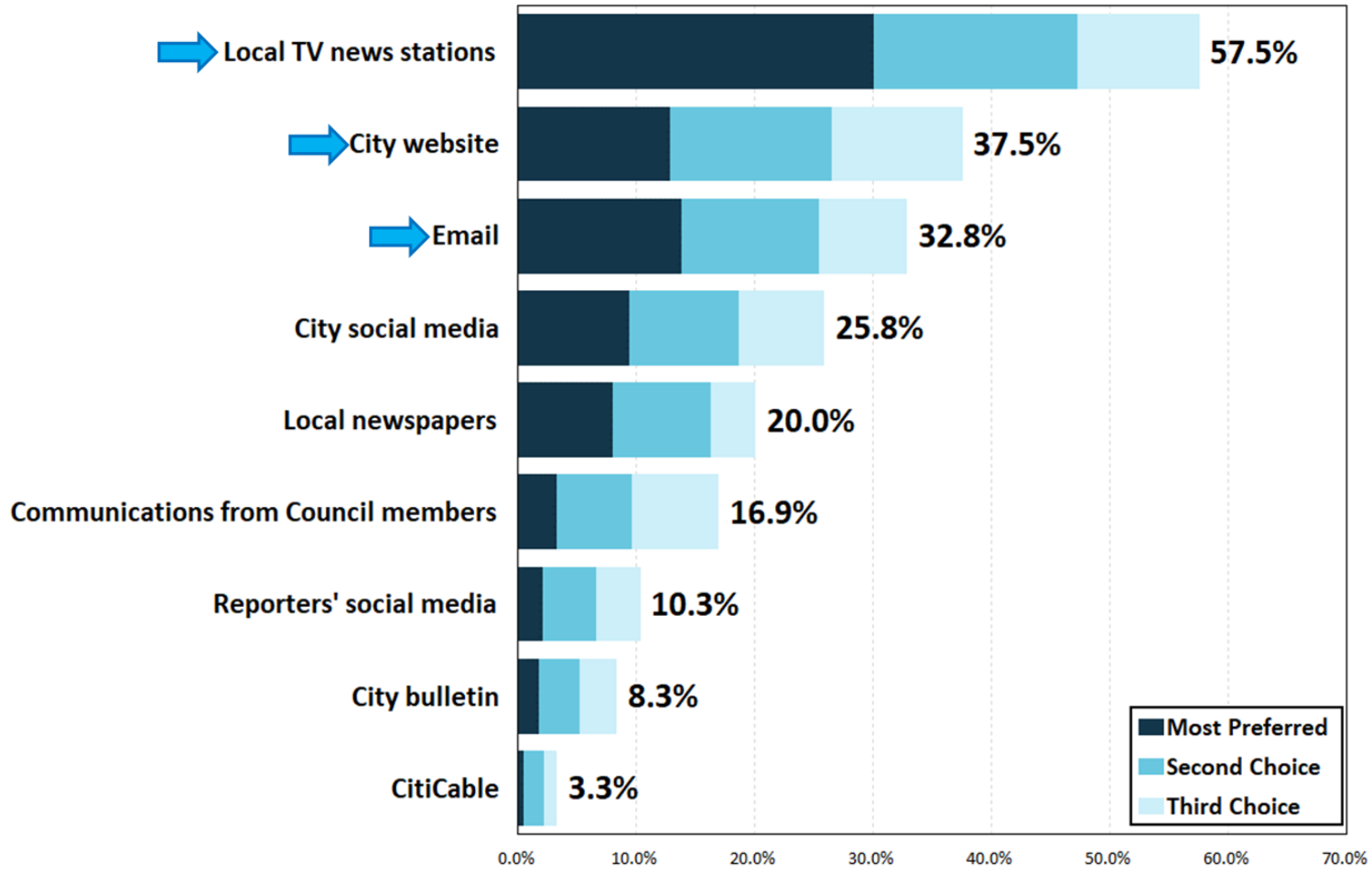


- 34% Facebook
- 27% Nextdoor
- 16% Twitter
- 13% Instagram
- 10% LinkedIn

"Other" sources to get information about the City included radio, word of mouth, NextDoor, Facebook, text message, news on TV, etc.

Q25. Which THREE of the sources do you MOST PREFER to use to get information about the City of Cincinnati?

by the sum percentage of respondents' top three choices



SHORT TERM ACTIONS

Immediate Improvements in Engagement

- Improved Communications
- Community Survey
- Develop Overall and Operational Engagement Plans
- Leverage Bloomberg Training Program
- Revise Existing Policies to Align with New Community Engagement Vision
- Increase Staff Capacity for Communication and Engagement Work

Improved Communications

Staffing City Communications Office

Dedicating three full time employees to City-wide Communication efforts

Creating Strategic Communications Plan

Research and establish a plan that creates an effective, active, responsive, and two-way culture of communication throughout city government

Opportunity Areas

City Website - Ensure the website is more user-friendly, clear, and accessible and create comprehensive hub for engagement opportunities

Social Media - How can we better use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor to reach out?

Video Content - Support Citicable resourcing to ensure events and public meetings widely available

Community Survey

- Solicit community feedback on City operations from a random sampling of households
- Benchmark our results against peer cities, our region, and national results
- Statistically significant survey

Develop Operational Engagement Plans

Budget Development Engagement

- How can we continue to improve Budget Engagement based on two-year cycle?
- Aggregate specific feedback to support allocation decisions
- Communicate on how engagement impacts budget

Development Project Engagement

- Continue to develop and refine how the City engages on future development

Public Safety Engagement

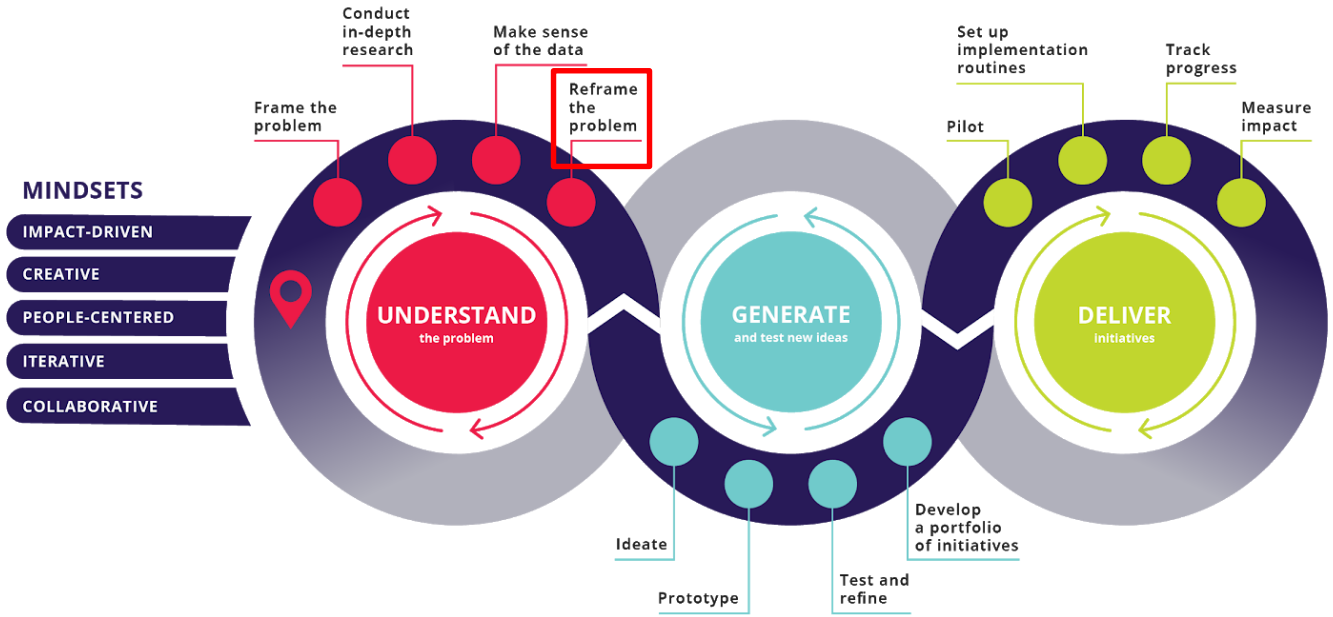
- How to translate feedback into CPD and CFD operations

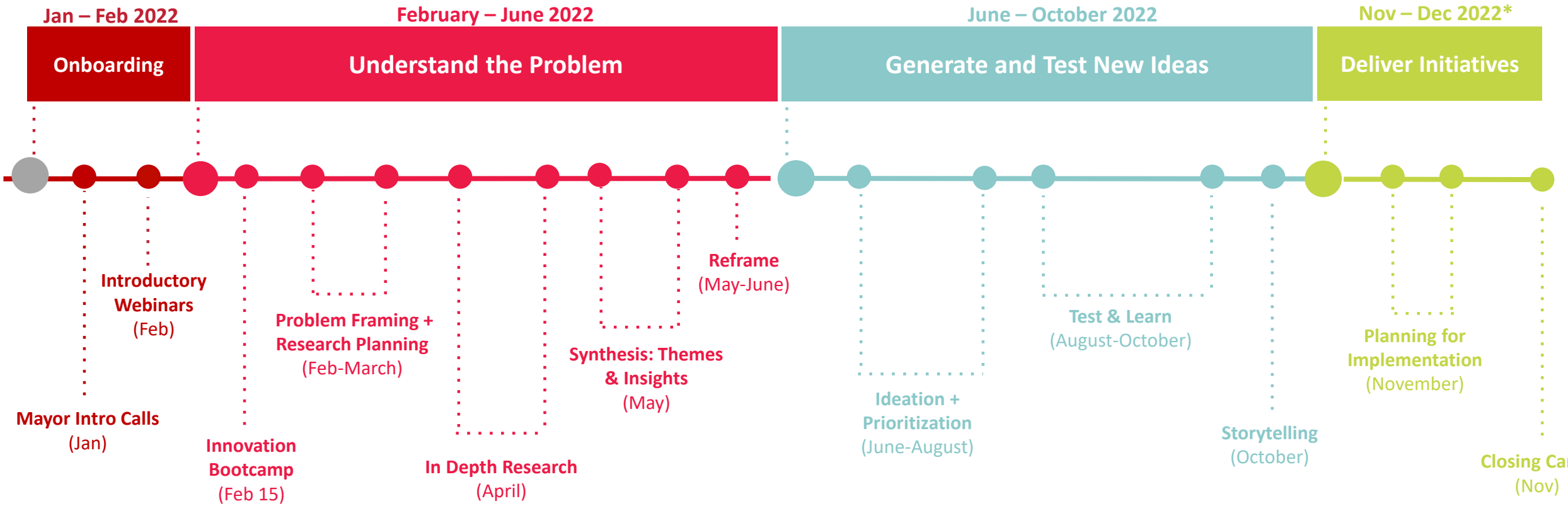
Engagement Values

- Engaging at all levels - in person or virtually, in depth or more casually, in multiple languages, and at times and locations that are convenient for community members
- Using new or creative methods or technologies to reach community members who are not associated with a recognized community group – helps engage all residents and better align with demographics
- Continuous Engagement and Improvement and Research on Best Practices
- Better communicating how we use the input

Bloomberg Innovation Training

- Team of 12 cross-departmental City staff
- Focusing on how to engage with historically-excluded community members
- Training provided by the Bloomberg Center for Public Innovation following their nationally recognized "Pathway to Innovation" methodology

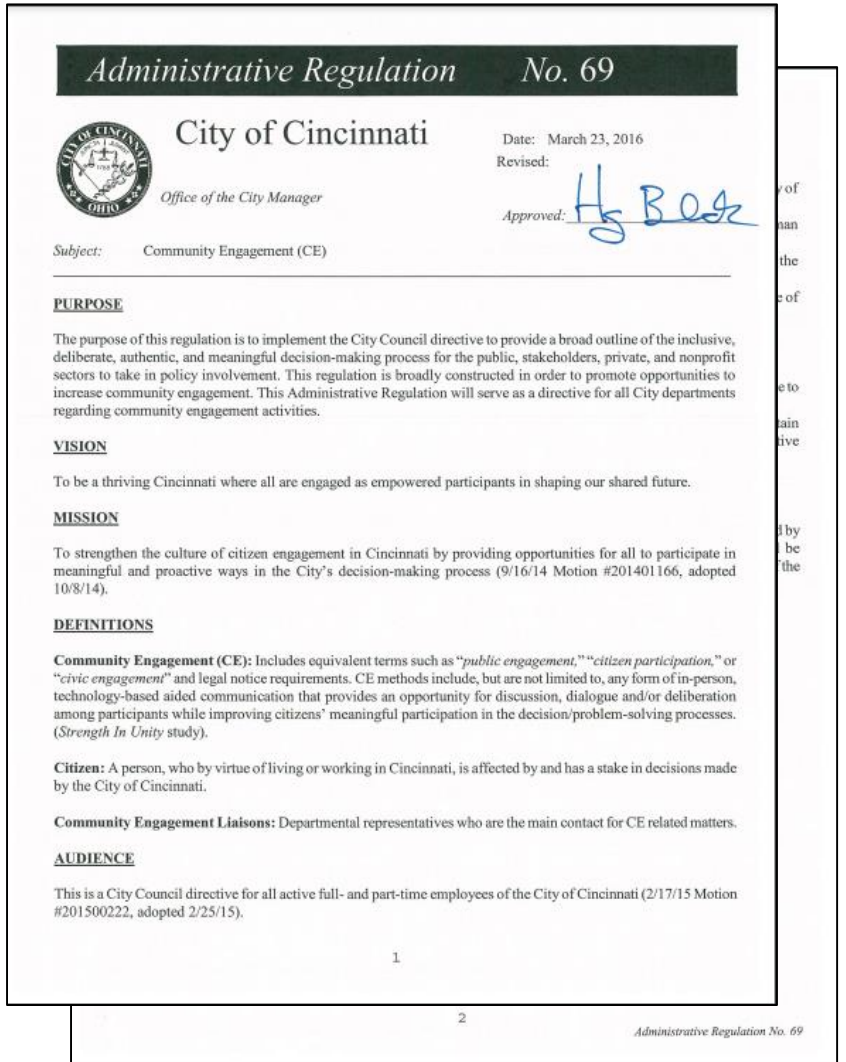




**There will also be an optional add-on unit for 'Scaling Innovation" in the New Year for select cities*

Revise Existing Community Engagement Policies

- Administrative Regulation #69 – Community Engagement
  - Training for City Staff
- ECAT
- Other Engagement Policies and Procedures



Administrative Regulation No. 69

City of Cincinnati

Office of the City Manager

Date: March 23, 2016
Revised:
Approved:

Subject: Community Engagement (CE)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to implement the City Council directive to provide a broad outline of the inclusive, deliberate, authentic, and meaningful decision-making process for the public, stakeholders, private, and nonprofit sectors to take in policy involvement. This regulation is broadly constructed in order to promote opportunities to increase community engagement. This Administrative Regulation will serve as a directive for all City departments regarding community engagement activities.

VISION

To be a thriving Cincinnati where all are engaged as empowered participants in shaping our shared future.

MISSION

To strengthen the culture of citizen engagement in Cincinnati by providing opportunities for all to participate in meaningful and proactive ways in the City's decision-making process (9/16/14 Motion #201401166, adopted 10/8/14).

DEFINITIONS

Community Engagement (CE): Includes equivalent terms such as "*public engagement*," "*citizen participation*," or "*civic engagement*" and legal notice requirements. CE methods include, but are not limited to, any form of in-person, technology-based aided communication that provides an opportunity for discussion, dialogue and/or deliberation among participants while improving citizens' meaningful participation in the decision/problem-solving processes. (*Strength In Unity* study).

Citizen: A person, who by virtue of living or working in Cincinnati, is affected by and has a stake in decisions made by the City of Cincinnati.

Community Engagement Liaisons: Departmental representatives who are the main contact for CE related matters.

AUDIENCE

This is a City Council directive for all active full- and part-time employees of the City of Cincinnati (2/17/15 Motion #201500222, adopted 2/25/15).

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Administrative Regulation No. 69

Increase Staff Capacity for Engagement Work

- Department of City Planning and Engagement – request for two (2) FTEs for Engagement Specialists for FY2023 budget
- Additional resources needed for Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Neighborhoods Division (for Neighborhood Liaisons)
- Additional resources needed for Office of Communications and Public Information
- Identify communication and engagement specialists in all departments and establish a framework for cross-training and collaborating (Additional resources may be needed)

Next Steps

- Engage other City Departments to better understand their communications and engagement practices – Already started, Complete Summer 2022
- Continue research on national best practices – Ongoing, Bloomberg
- Create toolkit of engagement improvement opportunities – Ongoing, Bloomberg
- Develop preliminary strategies for the community engagement plan- Summer 2022
- Conduct additional engagement with community members and stakeholders on preliminary strategies – Late Summer/Fall
- Deliver draft of community engagement plan to City Manager – Fall 2022
- Additional opportunity for public review and comment – Fall 2022/Winter 2023
- Present community engagement plan to City Council – Spring 2023

Thank you!

Questions & Discussion

For more information:

www. cincinnati-oh.gov/community-conversations