

ALLIANCE OF TALLAHASSEE NEIGHBORHOODS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY 24 AUGUST 2022

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE. Public participation is central to good government and a strong democracy. While our city and county governments value such participation, it is difficult for the public to understand when and how to participate and when they do, they often feel their ideas are not included and their concerns are not addressed. These recommendations encourage and incorporate public participation in our local government processes.

APPLICABILITY. This Process for development of a Community Engagement and Notification Plan will be utilized for Development Projects, New or Amended Programs, and Policies or Ordinances that Significantly impact Neighborhoods.

SEVEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. **Inclusive.** Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. **Equitable.** Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by identifying and incorporating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
3. **Meaningful.** Community engagement includes the promise that the public's contribution will be reflected in the decision.
4. **Collaborative.** Community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision, and creates opportunities for collective respectful dialog among these groups.
5. **Fair.** Community engagement seeks input from participants in designing how they are to participate to ensure the process is accessible, transparent, predictable, timely, and reliable.
6. **Informed.** Community engagement provides participants with the information they need in sufficient time to participate in a meaningful way.
7. **Responsive.** Community engagement informs participants on how their input affected the decision.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & NOTIFICATION PLAN PROCESS

- The City and County shall formally adopt and disseminate the adopted Community Engagement and Notification Plan Process (Process) throughout City and County departments, and the administration shall ensure coordination and consistent application among departments.
- For the first year after adoption of the Process, the City and County shall convene a Community Engagement Advisory Committee to provide guidance and oversight on the initial utilization of the Process.
- The City's/County's standards for public notice (signage, mailed notices, and newspaper advertisement) shall remain in effect.

PHASE 1: BUILD THE PLAN

CITY AND COUNTY STAFF SHALL:

Step 1: Identify appropriate project/program/policy/ordinance (project), associated timelines, approval process steps, and existing opportunities for community engagement/citizen input.

Step 2: Determine whether the neighborhoods impacted by the project have a neighborhood/homeowner association and if not develop key neighborhood contact lists.

Step 3: Identify the needed level of community engagement. (*Table 1 describes the 4 levels of community engagement*)

Step 4: Create a *Draft Community Engagement and Notification Plan*. (*Table 2 provides examples of options (methods/tools) that could be used for each of the levels of community engagement described in Table 1*)

Step 5: Work with each affected neighborhood to identify representatives for the project. Utilize all existing neighborhood communication networks and where needed assist in establishing additional contacts and methods of communication.

Step 6: Meet with the neighborhood representatives to explain the projects' scope, timelines, and steps in the approval process including existing opportunities for citizen input. Discuss Staff's draft *Community Engagement and Notification Plan* for the project. Determine how and when all relevant project submittals will be provided. If this is a development project, these submittals should include any project narrative, site plan, elevations, expected requests for deviations or variances, bicycle, pedestrian and transit alternatives, anticipated traffic and noise abatement measures.

Step 7: Revise Staff's *Draft Community Engagement and Notification Plan* to include specific neighborhood recommendations on preferred formats, methods for sharing information, times and locations of any meetings. Employ social media when appropriate.

PHASE 2: USE THE PLAN

CITY AND COUNTY STAFF SHALL:

Step 1: In advance of the first Public Engagement opportunity, broadly disseminate **1)** the Final *Community Engagement and Notification Plan* and schedule for the project including dates, times, and **2)** how the public can easily and timely access project documents.

Step 2: Determine whether the proposed project is consistent with any formalized Neighborhood Plans, and if not highlight the conflicts.

Step 3: Prior to initiating a City/County development project review and approval process, the applicant and the City/County project manager will meet with the identified neighborhood reps/neighborhoods to discuss the project and take neighborhood input.

Step 4: Staff will, in consultation with the project applicant, respond in writing to the comments, suggestions, and concerns raised by the neighborhood representatives. All comments and responses shall be compiled and made readily available to the public.

Step 5: Facilitate direct person to person dialogue on the project in meetings that include affected neighborhoods, project representatives, and project staff.

Step 6: If there are unresolved issues from these discussions, quickly begin a facilitated process designed to build consensus. Separate, sequential meetings or shuttle diplomacy shall not be employed as substitutes for inclusive, direct interactions.

Step 7: Proceed with City/County project review and approval steps, implementing the steps specified in the *Community Engagement and Notification Plan*.

TABLE 1: LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT*

INCREASING LEVEL OF IMPACT ON THE DECISION 

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fact Sheets ➤ Websites ➤ Open Houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Comment ➤ Focus Groups ➤ Surveys ➤ Public Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Workshops ➤ Deliberative Polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Citizen Advisory Committee ➤ Consensus-building ➤ Participatory Decision-making ➤ Neutral Facilitation

Note: These are levels of engagement, **NOT** steps in a process. The level of commitment to meaningful community engagement is reflected in the approach selected by our local governments.

* This table is a modified version of IAP2's (International Association for Public Participation) Spectrum of Public Participation. It was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world. © IAP2 International Federation 2018.

TABLE 2: METHODS/TOOLS FOR LEVELS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT AND METHOD/TOOL	LEVEL OF IMPACT		
	LEVEL 3 (HIGH)	LEVEL 2 (MEDIUM)	LEVEL 1 (LOW)
INFORM			
In-Person Meeting	*	*	*
Phone Community Contacts	**	**	*
Email Community Contacts	**	**	**
Direct Mail Community Contacts	***	**	*
Newspaper Advert of Notice	***	**	
City/County Website – Information, Notices, and Updates	***	***	**
Fact Sheets/Brochures/Flyers	**	**	**
Radio/TV Community Announcements and/or Interviews	**	*	*
Presentations at Community Meetings	***	***	**
Posters/Signage/Banners	***	***	**
CONSULT			
Written Community Questionnaire	**	**	*
On-Line Community Questionnaire	***	***	**
Invite Written Comments	***	***	**
Stakeholder Focus Group Sessions	**	**	*
Hot-Line/Phone-In to City/County	*	*	*
Social Media	**	**	
Intercept Interviews – Asking People in Public Places	**	**	
Public Meetings	**	**	
Facilitated Community Group Meetings/Discussions to Provide Feedback/Input	***	***	
INVOLVE			
Meetings With Key Stakeholders	***	***	*
Meeting With Stakeholders at the Site	**	**	
Workshops With Stakeholders	**	**	
Community Forums/Discussions	*	*	
Community Reference Groups	*	*	
COLLABORATE			
Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee	***	**	
Community Summit	***	*	
Expert Advisory Committee/Panel	**	*	
*** Strongly Desirable — ** Desirable — * May Be Appropriate			