

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 support City of Tallahassee policy by encouraging and incorporating 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 of this policy 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.

PHASE 1: BUILD THE PLAN

CITY AND COUNTY STAFF SHALL:

Step 1: Identify the associated timelines, approval process steps, and existing opportunities for community engagement/citizen input for the project/program/policy/ordinance (hereinafter referred to as “project”). The City’s/County’s standards for public notice (signage, mailed notices, and newspaper advertisement) shall remain in effect.

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

Step 3: Identify the needed level of community engagement that will be used for the project ranging from: to inform, to consult, to involve, or to collaborate (*See Table 1 — Levels of Community Engagement*). The selection of the community engagement approach should be based on the scope of the project, the existing opportunities for community engagement, and its potential impacts to neighborhoods and impacted stakeholders short-term and long term.

- Projects such as infrastructure repairs or upgrades would generally require only “Informing” impacted neighborhoods (e.g., street resurfacing, or water line replacements).
- Projects such as large developments impacting a neighborhood(s) would at a minimum require “Consulting” with to potentially “Involving” impacted stakeholders depending on the levels of long-term impacts (e.g., rezoning part of a neighborhood for new construction, development that requires amending the comprehensive plan, expanding the Urban Service Area (USA), significantly increased traffic, etc.).
- Projects such as development or redevelopment of a **City/County** property would at a minimum require “Involving” to potentially “Collaborating” with stakeholders depending on the level of disagreement regarding the use of the property between stakeholder interests (e.g., Northwood Mall property, Lake Ella property, Cascades Park, etc.).

Step 4: Create a *Draft Community Engagement and Notification Plan*.

(*Note: 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 (i.e., Type A and pre-submittal meetings, Development Review Committee (DRC) meetings, Post-Application conferences, public hearings, etc.). 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 communicate, disseminate, and make easily accessible **1)** the Final *Community Engagement and Notification Plan* and schedule for the project including dates, times, venues, and formats; 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 highlight the consistencies and 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(s) representatives to discuss the project and take neighborhood input. Providing information in stations should be used to educate and communicate the goals of a project and not as a primary method to solicit feedback.

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 substantive issues on key project goals from these discussions, convene additional meetings with neighborhood representatives, and for public projects convene stakeholder workshops. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phone Community Contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Community Contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Direct Mail Community Contacts	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper Advert of Notice	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
City/County Website – Information, Notices, and Updates	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Fact Sheets/Brochures/Flyers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Radio/TV Community Announcements and/or Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentations at Community Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Posters/Signage/Banners	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
CONSULT			
Written Community Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-Line Community Questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Invite Written Comments	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholder Focus Group Sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hot-Line/Phone-In to City/County	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Intercept Interviews – Asking People in Public Places	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Public Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Facilitated Community Group Meetings/Discussions to Provide Feedback/Input	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
INVOLVE			
Meetings With Key Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting With Stakeholders at the Site	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Workshops With Stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Community Forums/Discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Community Reference Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
COLLABORATE			
Community Stakeholder Advisory Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Community Summit	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Expert Advisory Committee/Panel	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Desirable — <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Desirable — <input type="checkbox"/> May Be Appropriate			