

Near Northwest Area Plan Engagement Strategy

Draft - October, 2021



Overview

Inclusive and effective community engagement is vital for the creation of a successful neighborhood plan. This engagement strategy lays out the goals for the Near Northwest Area Plan, the methods that will be used to achieve those goals at each stage of the process, and how progress will be tracked. The intent of this strategy is to lay out a framework for engagement that includes a diverse cross-section of the community and historically underserved and often excluded groups, while remaining flexible to accommodate changes throughout the process.

Goals

Community Planning and Development has four general goals for community engagement in neighborhood plans, that were informed by community input.

- Goal 1:** Engage community members who are representative of those who live, work, visit, and study in the plan area.
- Goal 2:** Include historically marginalized, underserved, and hard-to-reach communities. Focus populations include, but are not limited to, youth, people of color (particularly black, brown, and indigenous residents), non-native English speakers, people experiencing homelessness, lower-income residents, people with disabilities, and renters.
- Goal 3:** Build trust between all participants by recognizing past harms of planning, creating a space to listen, and showing the community how their feedback is incorporated into the planning process.
- Goal 4:** Educate participants on their role, the project, and the importance of a collaborative planning process.

Community Input on the Engagement Strategy

The first phase of the engagement process, Understanding the Area, will include opportunities for the public to provide input on this engagement strategy. A simplified version of the draft engagement plan will be posted on the project website and will allow for comments. The strategy will also be shared directly with members of the project Steering Committee and Community Navigators (Promotoras), who represent a diverse cross section of the community. Additionally, the City will seek feedback on the engagement strategy through an online survey. The input received will be used to update and finalize this strategy, and the complete strategy will be made available to the public.

Equitable Participation

This strategy is intended to generate participation in the planning process from a broad range of community stakeholders, with a focus on equity. A community stakeholder is anyone with a connection to the plan area: whether they live there, work there, own a business or property, are part of a non-

profit or advocacy organization, or a school or church. Community stakeholders can participate in a variety of ways, including interviews, surveys, neighborhood meetings, and community events.

To ensure an equitable plan is created, the planning process must be equitable in opportunity and voice. This requires intentional outreach to underserved groups and providing access in appropriate languages and venues. The process anticipates using Community Navigators (or Promotoras) and tailored engagement strategies to help reach underserved stakeholders.

Steering Committee

The project Steering Committee is a group of volunteers who are expected to meet once a month throughout the duration of the project to provide input, help shape recommendations, and assist the planning team in engaging a broad and diverse range of community members. The City posted a solicitation for participation in the Steering Committee and received over 100 responses. A group of 20 to 25 members was selected to reflect a diverse set of interests in the plan area, including residents of varying incomes, races, homeowners, renters, local business owners, property owners, representatives from neighborhood groups, schools, and other community-serving organizations. Geographic representation by neighborhood was also considered.

Community Navigators & Focused Population Outreach

Community Navigators (or Promotoras) will assist the planning team in reaching traditionally hard-to-reach populations and/or those not often heard from in planning processes. Community Navigators will be reflective of the four neighborhoods and assist in connecting with stakeholders who are often underserved.

Underserved Stakeholders

The following are considered to be historically underserved populations in the Near Northwest plan area:

Group	Strategies for Engagement
Hispanic/Latinx residents and non-English speakers	Spanish language media (newspapers, social media, radio); Denver Latino Commission; non-profits (e.g. Padres y Jovenes Unidos), English language classes, places of worship, and other gathering places (e.g. parks, car wash, entertainment venues)
Youth	School-based engagement; YMCA/recreation groups; recreation centers, religious youth groups; SEL based programming; North High School Alumni Association
Seniors	Senior apartments and/or assisted living facilities (e.g. The Gardens at St Elizabeth); veterans’ homes; targeted mailings/door hangers; Denver Commission on Aging; Elks Lodge
Renters	Small group meetings; apartment managers
Lower income residents	Affordable housing communities; affordable housing waitlists; Department of Housing Stability; Neighborhood Development Council; WIC clinics; healthcare clinics; non-profit service providers (e.g. Bienvenidos Food Bank), unions, day labor pick up/drop off locations
Single and working parents	School-based engagement (newsletters, pop-ups, small group meetings); DPS FACE (family and community engagement team), non-profits

People experiencing homelessness	Service providers (e.g. Lambuth Family Center); transitional housing; Elks Lodge
People with disabilities	Atlantis Community, Inc.
Small businesses	Door-to-door outreach, small group meetings, Business Improvement Districts

Language Access

The following table shows the percentage of the population in each neighborhood that speaks English less than very well, according to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS).

Neighborhood	Percent that speak English less than very well
Chaffee Park	12%
Sunnyside	9%
Highland	5%
Jefferson Park	12%

The predominant language spoken by those who speak English less than well is Spanish. Based on the Community Planning and Development language access plan, the following documents will be translated into Spanish throughout the process. Additional translation will be considered as requested.

- Promotional materials
- One-page summaries/handouts
- Brochures
- Surveys
- Executive summaries
- Key summary reports

Internet Access

24-50% of residences in Jefferson Park, Chaffee Park and portions of Sunnyside do not have in-home internet access (ACS, 2012-2017 Summary). In-person engagement and additional tools for reaching those without in-home internet access will be prioritized in these areas.

Engagement Tools

The planning team will undertake a variety of communication tactics to create broad awareness of the plan process, ensure transparency, respond to the specific needs of the community, and give everyone who wants to participate in the planning process an opportunity to do so. This list is intended to remain flexible so that tools can be added or modified as needed to meet engagement goals.

Activity/Tool	Description
Plan website	A website with updated information on the plan and planning process will be maintained throughout the project

Steering Committee	<p>Comprised of community members who represent a diverse set of interests across the plan area, the committee meets monthly throughout the process, helps spread awareness and gather community input, and seeks consensus on plan content. All meetings will be open to the public.</p> <p>Steering Committee meetings will include an experienced facilitator to help members of differing views to communicate constructively.</p>
Neighborhood Tours	On-site activities with community members to learn about specific areas or discuss recommendations for those areas.
Focus Groups	Focus groups will be identified to address key topics and/or key areas throughout the planning process. Focus groups will be intentionally comprised of diverse community members and technical experts. Topics will be aligned with the four areas of the plan: mobility, land use, economy and housing, and quality of life.
Stakeholder Interviews	Meetings with individual or small groups of stakeholders to understand key issues, opportunities, and needs at the outset of the planning process.
Focused Population Engagement & Community Navigators (Promotoras)	Focused population engagement is tailored to meet needs of underserved or underrepresented groups throughout this process. The planning team will work with Community Navigators (Promotoras) to help organize and support these meetings and engagements to meet people where they are. This can include grocery stores, businesses, places of worship, schools, community centers, and more.
Pop-Ups at Existing Community Events	<p>Meet people where they are and provide simple and brief opportunities for input. These activities can also be used to share project information.</p> <p>This can include small meetings held in community establishments (restaurants/coffee shops, parks, places of worship, schools or recreation centers, grocery stores).</p>
Surveys	Digital and print opportunities for input.
Fliers, posters, yard signs, etc. (with QR code)	Deliver fliers to community gathering places such as libraries, schools, recreation centers, and churches. Place yard signs in parks and along the right of way of key corridors, request use of business storefronts for posters/decals.
Small business outreach	Go door-to-door in commercial areas within the plan area to share information with business owners and employees. Also engage with area Business Improvement Districts to disseminate information.
Community Workshops & Open Houses	Large platforms that offer opportunities for all community members to inform the plan at major milestones. They will be virtual and in-person as safety allows.
Ad in the Denver NorthStar	On-going announcement of the plan in the Denver NorthStar – a widely read local paper
Social media	Utilize City platforms, community organizations, registered neighborhood organizations and others to post information on social media during key plan milestones and to encourage and share opportunities for participation

Office Hours	Specified times where community members can meet one-on-one or in small groups with members of the planning team to have their questions answered and provide detailed input.
Public Hearings	Public meetings before Planning Board and City Council where public comment is taken before decisions are made on adopting the plan.
Other	May include text message campaign, door hangers, or other engagement ideas that are presented during the planning process.

Engagement Throughout the Plan Phases

The Near Northwest Area Plan will take between 18 months to two years to complete, involving several phases. Each phase will utilize a variety of engagement methods as described above.



Phase 1: Kick Off & Understanding the Area – In this phase, engagement is intended to create a shared understanding of the plan process and its parameters as well as the plan area, develop the plan vision, and identify issues and opportunities for the plan to address. Methods of engagement may include:

- a) Steering Committee
- b) Stakeholder outreach and interviews
- c) Community workshop
- d) Survey
- e) Focused population engagement
- f) Neighborhood tours and field assessments
- g) Pop-ups at existing community events
- h) Community Navigators (Promotoras)

Phase 2: Define the Issues and Develop Initial Recommendations – In this phase, engagement is intended to confirm the plan vision, specifically define issues and opportunities in the area, generate recommendations to address those issues and opportunities, and explore alternative development scenarios. Methods of engagement may include:

- a) Steering Committee
- b) Stakeholder outreach and interviews
- c) Focus group meetings
- d) Community workshop
- e) Survey
- f) Focused population engagement
- g) Pop-ups at existing community events

- h) Community Navigators (Promotoras)

Phase 3: Refine Recommendations – In this phase, engagement is intended to further define and improve the draft recommendations, select preferred development alternatives, and explore transformative projects to help achieve the plan goals. Methods of engagement may include:

- a) Steering Committee
- b) Community workshop
- c) Survey
- d) Focus group meetings
- e) Focused population engagement
- f) Pop-ups at existing community events
- g) Office hours
- h) Community Navigators (Promotoras)

Phase 4: Community Review of Draft Plan – In this phase, engagement is intended to refine the draft recommendations, preferred alternatives, and transformative projects and get them into their final forms. Methods of engagement may include:

- a) Steering Committee
- b) Community workshop
- c) Survey
- d) Focused population engagement
- e) Office hours
- f) Community Navigators (Promotoras)

Phase 5: Legislative Review / Adoption – In this phase, engagement is intended to provide a final review of the draft plan and make any necessary improvements as it goes through the legislative process. Methods of engagement may include:

- a. Steering Committee
- b. Public hearings
- c. Focused population engagement
- d. Community Navigators (Promotoras)

Progress Reporting & Tracking

Reporting

Information collected throughout the process will be available to the public. Steering Committee meeting materials will be posted on the plan website within approximately two weeks of each meeting. Other materials will be compiled into an **Engagement Summary Report** at the end of each phase of the plan. In addition to making information available on the plan website, documents will be provided in appropriate formats in response to community needs. Efforts will be made, where possible, to gather demographic information to make sure the planning team is reaching a representative sample of the neighborhood.

Activity	Report Format	Type of information	Timing
Steering Committee Meeting	Staff Presentation and Meeting Minutes	Project presentations, staff notes	Approximately 2 weeks from event
Focus Groups	Summary Report	Staff notes	At the end of each project phase
Community Workshops and Open Houses	Staff Presentation Summary Reports	Project presentations, summary of event activities, scanned activity materials (maps, boards, dot exercises), transcribed public comments, event photos, staff notes, demographic summary	Presentations and materials within 2 weeks of event; Summary Reports at end of each project phase
Office Hours	Summary Reports	Staff notes	At end of each project phase
Pop-ups at Existing Events	Summary Reports	Staff notes Activity Summary	At end of each project phase
Neighborhood Tours and Field Assessments	Summary Reports	Staff notes	At end of each project phase
Surveys	Full Reports	Direct community feedback Demographic summary	At end of each project phase
Stakeholder Interviews	Summary Reports	Staff notes	At end of each project phase
Focused Population Engagement	Summary Reports	Staff notes Activity summary	At end of each project phase
Other Meetings & Events (RNOs, community groups, etc.)	Summary Reports	Staff notes	At end of each project phase
Public Plan Drafts	Summary Reports, Full Reports	Summary of feedback Direct community feedback Demographic summary	At end of public review period
Public Email	Compiled Reports	Feedback submitted via emails	At end of each project phase

Tracking

The planning team will track several metrics and establish performance measures to gauge how well engagement is meeting the goals of this strategy. These measures will be tracked throughout the process and reported on the plan website at the completion of each phase. Measures to be tracked include:

- Demographics of participants (in comparison to demographics of the plan area)
- Participant sectors (residents, business owners, etc.)
- Number of participants

- Email sign ups and open rates
- Website traffic
- Email comments received
- Events & communication in languages other than English
- Promotional material distribution locations
- Online mapping tool and social media interactions
- Number of outreach events
- Number of events and participants reached through focused population engagement
- Evaluation and measures to focus on improving in next phase