



Engagement Summary Report

Draft: 3/6/2022

This report satisfies the requirement of the City's Public Engagement Guide which calls for a Public Engagement Plan to be created at the outside of the planning process (attached to the end of this report and includes the Communications Plan), followed through the course of the project, and a final summary report created to capture actual process and outcomes.

There are three sections to this report:

1. **Public Engagement Log:** this is a high-level summary of all public engagement activities conducted throughout the plan. This also includes a list of members of Technical Advisory Groups and focus groups.
2. **Equity Strategy:** created by members of the Oakland Plan staff team in collaboration with the Steering Committee during early 2020.
3. **Lessons Learned:** this summary speaks to the actual experience of conducting public engagement during the planning process and recommendations for future efforts in other neighborhood planning processes and in the implementation of the Oakland Plan.

Oakland Plan engagement by the numbers:

Online engagement – EngagePGH, Zoom, etc.

- Summer 2020 online open house: 2,500 visits and 800 comments
- Fall 2021 online open house: 2,400 visits and 550 comments.
- Vision, goals, and all strategies posted online with various ways to engage throughout planning process.
- Monthly Action Team meetings of 20-30 members of the Oakland community for the four chapters: Community, Development, Mobility, and Infrastructure.
- Monthly Steering Committee meetings.
- May 2021 virtual workshops for Forbes/Meyran and Boulevard of the Allies sites.

In-person engagement – nearly a dozen outdoor events in 2021

- Spring through Fall 2021 walking tours, block parties, and small-scale neighborhood meetings with approximately 1,600 people in attendance.
- Online equivalents were provided for all in-person events.

1. Public Engagement Log

Introduction and COVID-19 impacts

The Oakland Plan process started outright in October 2019. The first three meetings all dedicated time to working with the Steering Committee to develop the Public Engagement Plan which was provided to the Steering Committee and reviewed at the January and February 2020 meetings. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted the nature of public engagement and the PEP was quickly updated using the best information possible during the spring of 2020.

At the same time, the Oakland Plan staff team began to search for online engagement platforms that would support robust virtual engagement given limits on public gatherings established at both the County and State levels. Significant research including interviews with over a dozen US, Canadian, and Australian cities, resulted in DCP initiating a pilot license of The Hive software out of Australia. Research showed that online engagement predated public health concerns, but instead were driven out of making engagement more equitable by “coming to” people where they are as opposed to making people attend set public meetings that they may be unable to attend due to life circumstances, or feel uncomfortable participating in. The system was up and running by late August when the first online open house was launched. A combination of EngagePGH pages and Zoom meetings was largely used for all activities. When outdoor tours, block parties, and meetings were possible, these augmented the online activities.

Detailed log

Type	Frequency	Goals
Fifth and Forbes Avenue Urban Design Workshop	Once	Introduce Oakland stakeholders to design issues and opportunities for this important corridor. Get input on desired outcomes to inform potential Interim Planning Overlay District.
Planning Education Series	Four parts over two months	Introduce the plan topic areas to stakeholders in a low street environment to prepare them for the planning process and how to engage.
Steering Committee meetings	Monthly	Collaborate on creation of Public Engagement Plan, vision statement, goals, and work to integrate public input to create draft plan. Space for dialogue about important issues facing Oakland. Build collaborations between community organizations.
Steering Committee work sessions	Weekly from November 2021 through February 2022	Reviewing draft Strategy Summaries for each chapter of the plan, help to define priorities and list of implementers for strategies.

Type	Frequency	Goals
Action Team meetings	Monthly between October 2020 and May/June 2021	Reviewing input from 2020 Online Open House, research from the Existing Conditions Report and other sources, hearing from experts on the topics, and then working with staff to develop ideas for projects and programs that can make up this component of the plan.
Online open houses	2-3 month long online events in the summer/fall of 2020 and 2021	The initial open house introduced the plan topics as identified through the Steering Committee process, the issues and opportunities that had been identified at that time, and sought high level input about priorities and needs. The second open house one year later presented draft strategies coming out of the Action Teams. Input was sought online, but also in person at various events. All comments were captured using the EngagePGH pages.
Technical Advisory Groups	Two TAGs assembled for 3-5 meetings each.	Gain expert advice on how to structure proposals in the plan on a variety of topics. The two TAGs were the Arts, Culture, and Design TAG, and the Equity TAG. List of participants is listed below.
Focus Groups	Individual meetings in January and February of 2022	Held with groups of stakeholders around specific topics to gain input on draft plan materials and how they can be improved/strengthened. The focus groups covered Housing proposals and Equitable Economic Development. List of participants is listed below.
Site-based tours and workshops	One tour and workshop per site in the month of May 2021, followed by an open house to review outcomes from both	These workshops and associated tours allowed stakeholders to dig into the details of development on two sites with publicly owned property and partnerships with Pitt and UPMC: Forbes and Meyran and Boulevard of the Allies and Zulema Street. In addition to site-specific proposals, these workshops were designed to get input on broader issues such as potential building heights, transition between Forbes Ave and the adjacent areas, urban open space desires, transit oriented development and circulation, and desire for public realm improvements.
Neighborhood association, non-profit board, and Oakland Task Force meetings	Attended roughly quarterly for all three types	Update members on the status of the planning process, gain input on specific issues or areas of the neighborhood, identify any concerns that need to be addressed.

Type	Frequency	Goals
Special interest groups: Pitt Faculty Senate, Student Governments, Pitt staff residents, Oakland Square residents, etc.	Attended one meeting of each	Provide introduction to the neighborhood plan process, opportunities to engage, impacts of the plan on Oakland. Later in the process, these included presentation of strategies and input on changes to the proposals.
University classes	Attended multiple meetings of most classes	Introduced students to the Oakland Plan process, after which, most classes worked on a related topic and provided materials to staff to consider as part of the planning process. Classes were at the University of Pittsburgh, CMU, Carlow, and Ryerson University (Toronto).
Walking tours	Multiple times throughout planning process	Held walking tours around mobility work in December 2020, specific site workshops in May 2021, and with the West Oakland Neighborhood Council in September 2021. These were generally impacted by COVID-19 restrictions throughout 2020 and 2021.
Block parties	Four block parties hosted by Pitt in September 2021	Presented draft strategies coming out of the Action Teams and got input using EngagePGH platform.
Opportunistic events	Multiple events	The project team was invited to table at a variety of events and venues including including Pitt's Volunteer Fair and Bike Pittsburgh's Bike to Work Fair during fall 2021, OBID Stakeholder meeting on the proposed zoning, and the Mayor's Office meeting on the OPR-E proposal and the Oakland Plan.
Online review of draft vision statement and goals	March 2021 through January 2022	Draft materials created with the Steering Committee were published online and advertised using the project's mailing lists. Members of the public were asked to review and comment on these materials and their comments were used to update these materials for the draft plan.
One-off surveys	Once	During the first two months of 2021, staff attended all neighborhood association meetings with a map-based survey tool designed to capture issues and opportunities on a map. A second survey was used in January and February of 2022 to capture input from West Oakland residents on the elements of the Reimagine Robinson Street proposal.

Membership of Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Groups, and Focus Groups

The lists below include all invited attendees. Not all invitees were able to attend all meetings and some invitees chose instead to offer input through email.

Steering Committee

Name	Stakeholder Group Represented
Adam Butkus	Bellefield Area Citizens Association
Amy Bowman-McElhone	Faculty - Carlow
Andrea Boykowycz	OPDC
Ann Ogoreuc	Allegheny County
Beth McGrew	University of Pittsburgh
Bob Reppe	CMU
Brad Clauss	Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens
Brosha Tkacheva	Councilperson Kraus's Office
Dan Wood	Councilperson Lavelle's Office
David Salcido	Faculty - Pitt
DaVonn Brown	Councilperson Strassburger's Office
Divyansh Kaushik	Students - CMU
Elena Zaitsoff	Oakcliffe Community Organization
Emily Gaspich	Carlow University
Georgia Petropoulos	OBID
Jennifer Styran	Carnegie Library
John Krolicki	UPMC
John McCabe	Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum
Jonathan Russell	Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
Josh Hoffman	Community Human Services
Kate Honan	Students - Pitt
Leonard Hammonds	State House Representative Wheatley
Martell Covington	State Senator Jay Costa
Mavis Rainey	OTMA
Mike Madden	InnovatePGH/Avenu
Nadine Masagara-Taylor	West Oakland Neighborhood Council
Ray Gastil	Faculty - CMU
Sean Harrington	State House Representative Frankel
Ty Williams	South Oakland Neighborhood Group

Name	Stakeholder Group Represented
Ursula Mackenzie	Schenley Farms Civic Association
Yousef Tamimi	Students - Carlow

Arts, Culture, and Design Technical Advisory Group:

Name	Organization (Role)
Amy Bowman-McElhone	Carlow University (Art Program and Gallery Director)
Andrea Boykowycz	OPDC
Beth McGrew	University of Pittsburgh (Planning and Facilities)
Bob Reppe	CMU (Planning and Facilities)
Cate Irvin	OBID (Placemaking and Activation)
Drew Armstrong	University of Pittsburgh (Architectural Studies)
Dana Bishop Roots	CMoA (Director of Education and Public Programs)
Farooq Al-Said	1Hood Media
Golan Levin	CMU (Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry)
Ivette Spradlin	University of Pittsburgh (Studio Arts)
Jessica Moss	Artist and Arts Consultant
John Krolicki	UPMC (Facilities and Services)
Jon Rubin	CMU (MFA Program)
Jonathan Kline	Studio for Spatial Practice
Rachel Rearick	Contemporary Craft
Ray Gastil	CMU (Remaking Cities Institute)
Sarah Minnaert	DCP (Public Art and Civic Design Manager)

Equity Technical Advisory Group:

Name	Organization
Derrick Tillman	Bridging the Gap / Hill District Steering Committee
Farooq Al-Said	1Hood Media
Nadine Masagara-Taylor	West Oakland Neighborhood Council / The Corner
Ty Williams	SONG
Martell Covington	State Sen. Costa
Mavis Rainey	OTMA

Name	Organization
Ting Yen	Sushi Atarashi
Mayan / Shea	Uzima
Guillermo Velazquez	Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation
Rabbi Ron Symons	JCC
Kate Honan	Pitt Undergraduates
Liam O'Connell	CMU Undergraduates
Annalise Abraham	Pitt Students
Megan Stafford	Pitt Students
Daniel Temmallo	Pitt Students
Luke Decker	Pitt Students
Kara Fulton	Pitt Students
Cameron Spooner	Pitt Students
Rachael Magdalena Stowe	Pitt Students
Divyansh Kaushik	CMU Graduate Students
Adriana Modesto	Pitt
Brent Rondon	IEE at Pitt

Housing Focus Group:

Name	Organization
Lina Distilio	University of Pittsburgh
Bob Damewood	Regional Housing Legal Services
Bob Reppe	CMU
Derrick Tillman	Bridging the Gap
Georgia Petropoulos	OBID
John Krolicki, Kevin Progar	UPMC
Kevin Burns	Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
Nadine Masagara-Taylor	West Oakland Neighborhood Council
Ty Williams, Randy Sargent	South Oakland Neighborhood Group
Wanda Wilson	OPDC
Andrea Boykowycz	OPDC
Shaina Madden	URA

Alan Sisco	Rebuilding Together
James Eash	ACTION Housing

Equitable Development Focus Group:

Name	Organization
Lina Distilio	University of Pittsburgh
Lisa Garland	University of Pittsburgh
Bob Reppe	CMU
Georgia Petropoulos	OBID
John Krolicki	UPMC
Kevin Progar	UPMC
Nadine Masagara-Taylor	West Oakland Neighborhood Council
Ty Williams, Randy Sargent	South Oakland Neighborhood Group
Wanda Wilson	OPDC
Andrea Boykowycz	OPDC
Camille Dixon	OPDC
Councilman Lavelle	Electeds
Divyansh Kaushik	CMU Graduate Students
Mike Madden	PID
Lindsay Powell	PID
Sean Luther	PID
Matt Trepal	Allegheny County
Markese Long	Partners4Work
Gina Winstead	Vibrant Pittsburgh
Guillermo Velazquez	PHDC

2. Equity Strategy

Our approach

During Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, the project team worked with the Steering Committee to establish shared goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the planning process. These discussions led to an equity strategy that has been integrated into the planning and process and intentionally engages underrepresented and marginalized groups in Oakland.

Groups identified in Oakland include:

- African-American residents
- University students
- Immigrants and newcomers

The Oakland Plan's equity strategy included the following components to understand and plan to overcome inequities in the groups above:

- **Staff:** Staff from the Office of Equity and Green Building Alliance took on this important work. In addition to the items below, staff worked to understand how programs and partnerships can benefit this work such as the City of Pittsburgh's role in the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and Welcoming Pittsburgh.
- **Technical Advisory Group:** Convening a Technical Advisory Group that consists of interested Oakland stakeholders and citywide professionals working on behalf these groups to provide advice as needed on how equity should be incorporated into various aspects of the planning process.
- **Equity Workshops:** Specific events were planned throughout the planning process as a way for Action Teams, staff, and the Steering Committee to learn and develop a strong equity approach.
- **Intentional Language:** The plan's vision statement, goals, and strategies include language that explicitly calls out inequities and identifies how they will be addressed. These were highlighted at each stage in the planning process.
- **Advocacy Organizations:** Professional advocacy organizations that represent marginalized and disadvantages groups were invited to participate in Action Teams and provide their expertise and experiences as a way to improve the outcomes of the planning process.

Defining Equity for this Project

What do we mean by "equity"?

This project uses the definition of equity established in the City of Pittsburgh's Public Engagement Guide: Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their wellbeing and achieve their full potential.

The Department of City Planning recognizes that it is the responsibility of the City to engage all communities and seek out voices of underserved and underrepresented people. City Planning will approach all projects through an equity lens, a critical thinking approach to undoing institutional and structural racism. An equity lens evaluates burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities.

In utilizing this technique, the project team sought to:

- Identify disproportionately adverse effects our work may have on any community, particularly on low-income populations and communities of color.
- Recognize the ways communities' needs can influence planning, investment, implementation, and enforcement processes.

As an organization that seeks to counter a community legacy of inequity, we commit to:

- Understand and counter the impacts and causes of bias that include racism and white supremacy, learned patterns of oppression, and the strong connection between poverty, homelessness and race.
- Continue our growth into an intentionally anti-bias, anti-racist organization that actively aligns with community-based efforts to overcome inequality and its roots in racism and oppression.
- Confront and challenge all forms of institutional oppression within our organization so that staff and those who partner with us will experience Human Solutions as truly inclusive. We will create the time and space to continue learning vital lessons, to do the urgent work necessary to counter the centuries-old and still-active forces that block opportunity for people of color and other oppressed people.
- Acknowledge who holds power in our organization, whose voices shape our decisions and who is not "in the room." We will work constantly and vigorously to address disparities within our own ranks.

Technical Advisory Group

The Equity Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was comprised of individuals who represent the disadvantaged groups above including leaders from the student, resident, and business communities as well as non-profit advocates. The full list of attendees can be found earlier in this report.

The TAG worked with staff to review 3-4 strategies from each Action Team. Members were asked to view strategies through the lens of the group(s) they represent in order to:

- Improve the scope and nature strategies to better overcome inequities and better detail what success looks like in terms of equity;
- Identify any related inequities that staff should be aware of related to the topic;
- Help avoid any pitfalls; and
- Help reduce the potential for unintended consequences that might create further inequities as a result of implementing the strategy.

Meeting Topics and Materials

For the first two meetings, 3-4 strategies from each Action Team were reviewed and discussed using the framework above. A third meeting was added to allow the group to return to some of the discussions from the previous meetings in more detail and develop additional recommendations for staff to integrate into the draft plan. Presentations for each of the meetings below can be found in the "Document Library" on the EngagePGH site.

Meeting #1 (10/27/2021) - Topics: Mobility and Infrastructure draft strategies

Meeting #2 (11/3/2021) - Topics: Community and Development draft strategies

Meeting #3 (11/9/2021) - Topics: Digging deeper into strategies, additional recommendations

Equity Workshops

Staff leading equity strategy implementation held the following workshops:

- Summer 2020: the first workshop focused on staff leading the Action Teams and was an opportunity to start the process of understanding the potential for their topic areas to overcome past inequities.
- Fall 2020 and Winter 2021: workshops were held for each Action Team with a focus on increasing awareness of the topic, and understanding where the Action Team members were in their own understanding of the issues involved. Initial ideas for equity goals were established.

Advocacy Organizations

Staff worked with the Steering Committee to identify advocacy organizations that represented groups identified as "hard to reach" in the City of Pittsburgh's Public Engagement Guide. These groups are noted below and were invited to be involved in the planning process. Many started participating as early as Fall 2020.

Race

- 1Hood Media
- Gwen's Girls and Black Girls Equity Alliance
- CMU Black Grad Student Organization
- CMU Latino/a Graduate Student Association
- CMU Indian Graduate Student Association
- Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh
- Pittsburgh Hispanic Development Corporation
- Latino Community Center

Income

- Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group
- One Pennsylvania
- JFCS
- Women's Center

Immigration

- Acculturation for Justice, Access, and Peace Outreach
- Casa San Jose
- Facilitating Opportunities for Refugee Growth and Empowerment (FORGE)
- Hello Neighbor
- Leadership Pittsburgh
- Indian Community Center

Religion

- Islamic Center of Pittsburgh
- Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
- Jewish Community Center
- Cathedral of Hope
- Commonwealth of Pittsburgh Friendship Community Church St. Regis Church

Gender identity

- SisTersPGH
- Garden of Peace
- Persad Center
- Women and Girls Foundation

Sexual orientation

- Proud Haven

- Pennsylvania Youth Congress
- PGH Equality Center
- CMU CMQ+
- SAGE Advocacy and Services for LGBT Elders

Disability

- Oakland for All
- Pittsburgh Center for Autistic Advocacy
- AIDS Free Pittsburgh
- Steel Smiling
- Achieva

Access to housing

- Action Housing
- Open Hand Ministries
- City of Bridges Community Land Trust
- ReBuilding Together PGH
- Homeless Children's Education Fund
- NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania

Age

- Jewish Association on Aging
- Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging

3. Lessons Learned

Responding to COVID-19 impacts

The planning process had barely started when the COVID pandemic caused all meetings to shift to Zoom and broader community engagement to shift to EngagePGH. Some key lessons learned from this aspect of the project are:

- Online and virtual engagement make it easier for most to participate, but not for all. Our research showed the most people had access to mobile phones even if they lacked access to computers, but that the nature of the data contract could be limiting. We didn't hear from any individuals that they were unable to access our online materials, and instead that most found it very helpful and easy to use. There was a small group of seniors who consistently expressed confusion about how to navigate the webpages. It also seemed that issues with the basic use of technology were the greater barrier than the actual nature of the webpage. We know from research that many low-income residents lack basic technology skills, so it may be that this barrier existed for them and they weren't accounted for.
- Using 311 as a backup to online engagement generally works. Reports from participants in the planning process and also from 311 staff showed that having people call 311 and walk through the online materials and engagements was successful in overcoming barriers to technology for those willing to make the call. We plan to continue this for the roll out of the draft plan but will provide more detailed materials and training to 311 staff. We also used postcards mailed to all addresses to cue people into the planning process and ability to call 311 so that there was no need to have a computer to know when and how to engage.
- The same lack of trust for underrepresented groups means they will also be underreported participants. When we setup the EngagePGH platform, a interdepartmental working group determined that requiring registration and the completion of a survey that gave us insights into the demographics of attendees would be a detriment to engagement. This is based on research that shows that groups with histories of abuse by government agencies are much more likely to be unwilling to share their identifiable information with government. To reduce this barrier, we allowed anonymous commenting which likely did increase the numbers of these groups engaging with our project, but we had not real way to track that other than confirmation by word-of-mouth. This made it difficult to try to meet any of our original goals about ensuring those we engaged were representative of the larger Oakland population.

General inequities in engagement

It was acknowledged by all going into this planning process that not all Oakland residents were equally attending community meetings with a general bias towards older, wealthier, and often retired, white residents. The project initially sought to meet people where they were with coffee klatches and other more personal ways to engaging people from marginalized communities, however, COVID made these impossible.

The result was a process that was largely dependent on committees, be it the Steering Committee which was purposely established to represent the diverse array of

stakeholders, or the Action Teams where anyone could join. These committees had great conversations, but the ability and comfort of participating in committees, even when they are virtual, has known biases. Each committee had 20-30 members that attended monthly for over a year.

What became clear over the course of the planning process was that those most in need of support, were least likely to be able to participate in these committees. African-American residents in particular were often represented by a relatively small share of members of these committees. In South and North Oakland, data shows that these neighborhoods are largely composed of renters from various life stages, but the neighborhood associations are almost entirely composed of homeowners, many of whom were retired.

Unfortunately, the project did not have set aside funds to compensate members of disadvantaged groups from participating as has been a growing practice elsewhere. This should be something that is considered for all future planning processes. Likewise, staff were able to competently create and manage the equity strategy, but it was not a budgeted activity and took extra energy that should be factored into future consultant contracts and staffing models. In many communities, equity conversations dig into traumatic issues that require professional training and experience to navigate effectively. It may be that such staff can be hired or receive training, but in the near-term, it may be necessary to include consultant funds to achieve consistently high quality outcomes on this front.

Additionally, it became clear that even compensation for engagement in specific meetings or for specific projects was not the same as having ongoing and well-informed representation. For this reason, the Oakland Plan includes a recommendation to establish paid representatives that would establish trust and dialogue with residents from underrepresented groups, canvass them on specific issues or projects/programs that are coming up, and then represent their interests on committees. The proposal is for a collaboration with OPDC and others to fund and hiring these positions. OPDC reported that they have been increasing staffing to do just that, so the implementation of the strategy may change over time. The benefits not just to planning processes, but also to development activities, and community development efforts, will be enumerable.

Appendices

Public Engagement Plan with COVID Updates (2020)

[https://hdp-us-prod-app-pgh-engage-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/2115/9702/9680/Public Engagement Plan for Oakland Neighborhood Plan 8.9.2020.pdf](https://hdp-us-prod-app-pgh-engage-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/2115/9702/9680/Public_Engagement_Plan_for_Oakland_Neighborhood_Plan_8.9.2020.pdf)