# Appendix

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## Engagement Framework Memo

# Measure A Community Engagement Framework

The purpose of this framework is to outline best practices for community outreach and engagement in the park planning process and to recommend these practices for inclusion in Measure A's Community Engagement Guidelines and Technical Assistance Program. The framework is organized in three sections: recommended community outreach standards, recommended community engagement standards, and recommendations for future phases of RPOSD's community engagement work. This first two sections are based on best practices for community outreach and engagement for specific park projects but can be used to inform ongoing engagement between agencies and communities. The third section focuses specifically on next steps for RPOSD's community engagement work. The framework expands upon the work accomplished by the Measure A Implementation Steering Committee on Community Engagement Guidelines.

## Section I. Community Outreach Standards

Community outreach is an opportunity to develop strong relationships with residents and stakeholders in a specific neighborhood. Community outreach must be an integral part of a plan when building new parks/open green spaces and improving existing park projects. Community outreach is also required by the Measure A grant guidelines. The standards outlined in this document will support the implementation of the community outreach guidelines, and thus should be included in the technical assistance package as best practices to potential grantees.

By involving community in the process, it is more likely that the project will meet community needs and develop long term stewards of projects. Community stewards can provide ongoing support to park agencies by organizing programming, neighborhood watch programs to keep projects safe, clean ups, and other programs that are beneficial to both the park and the community. Community outreach best practices include, but are not limited to:

1. Outreach plan
2. Timing
3. Message & call to action
4. Asset map
5. Tactics
6. Budget
7. Materials

8. Partnerships with CBOs
9. Community Stakeholders

An **outreach plan** is a tool that can be used to identify tactics, develop a message, highlight important dates, and identify potential partners. Work backwards from a significant date, such as an initial community design meeting, for effective planning. Planning should start early to ensure that there is time to develop an outreach strategy and materials, meet language access requirements, and conduct an asset map of the neighborhood.

**Timing** of outreach efforts should be carefully considered. It is important to start outreach planning at least six weeks before a small meeting. For larger meetings and events where the goal for attendance is over one hundred residents, it is best to start outreach planning at least twelve weeks before the event. This timeline works for most small nonprofit agencies, but park agencies are encouraged to adjust the timeline based on their agency culture and best practices.

In the beginning of the outreach period, banners and flyers should be posted in key locations. Online outreach should take place at the beginning of the timeline and should continue on an ongoing basis throughout the duration of the outreach timeframe. Grassroots outreach can occur at key events throughout the duration of the period and should accelerate at key gathering areas as the engagement event approaches (1-2 weeks in advance).

A strong **message & call to action** should be identified and is an important step to mobilize residents and stakeholders to meetings and events. To develop an effective message, answer the following questions:

1. *Who is the audience?*
   Be as specific as possible. For example, young adults who are skaters, and who also live in Unincorporated Whittier.
2. *What is the event or meeting type?*
   For example, is it an informational meeting, community design meeting, family fun park grand opening, etc.
3. *What is the message?*
   How best to describe the purpose of this meeting or event to the audience? Message should be clear, compelling, concise, culturally relevant, and tailored to your audience. Materials must be developed in multiple languages to reach target constituencies.

4. *What type of graphic image should be used to use to convey a message to the audience?*

> Graphics should include images related to the project, as well as the agency or organization logos.

5. *What is the ask?*

> Be direct. For example, *can we count on you to join us on August 15 at 1:00pm at this community meeting?*

An **asset map** outlines the strengths, areas of improvement, resources, community-based organizations, and other community valuables in a neighborhood or Study Area. Some organizers refer to this as social investigation or ground-truthing. To successfully complete this step requires a significant amount of time exploring the neighborhood by foot and car examining its strengths and potential threats. See Appendix A for a sample asset map.

**Tactics** are the individual steps in carrying out a community outreach plan. While there are many tactics, the most effective tactics involve direct contact or communication with residents and stakeholders. These include door-to-door outreach to communicate directly with residents, presentations at community gathering spaces, phone and text banks, and direct contact with community-based organizations, churches, and park recreational staff with an ask to attend meetings and events. Passive outreach tactics are less effective because they do not have direct communication with residents and stakeholders. Passive tactics include social media postings, mailers, leaving flyers at residents' door without talking to them, and posting flyers on bulletin boards. See Appendix B for sample outreach tactics.

An **outreach budget** is a plan for how to spend resources for outreach. Resources are needed for staff time, flyers, translation, printing, and for hiring community-based organizations to support outreach efforts.

A flyer and banner are examples of **outreach materials**. Outreach materials should be translated in all appropriate languages for the area. Materials should be easy to read and prominently display important information about the event or meeting such as the date, time, location, and a brief, compelling description. It is recommended that outreach materials have information about language interpretation at the meetings and events. Important to let potential attendees know if there will be simultaneous translation or just key written materials. See Appendix C for a sample event flyer.

Forming **partnerships** with community based organizations (CBOs) is a strategy to consider during the planning stage.  Funding contracts can be provided to CBOs to lead outreach and mobilizations to events and meetings. The ideal CBO should have a

history of working in the community and experience with mobilizing residents and stakeholders to events and meetings. Usually these organizations will have an existing base in the neighborhood and Study Area. It is important to budget for this tactic because most CBOs are nonprofits and need to be compensated for their work. One tactic to consider is developing a "stakeholder" committee of CBO's to meet with on a month-to-month basis to help conduct accurate and regular updates and outreach to the community.

As the outreach plan is developed, it is important to identify **community stakeholders**. Community stakeholders are individuals, groups, organizations, government departments, businesses, and any other key groups with a stake in the project. Key stakeholders to engage within a mile of a specific project are:

- Churches
- Elementary, Middle, and High School
- Neighborhood Councils
- Block Clubs/Homeowner Associations
- Businesses, large and small
- Community Based Organizations/Labor Unions
- Park recreational staff
- Youth and adult recreational programs
- Government Agencies (i.e. Local police, social service agencies, etc.)
- Libraries
- Social services agencies
- Local, state, and federal elected officials

## Section II. Community Engagement Standards

Community engagement efforts are crucial in working toward a park planning process that is transparent and responsive to the needs and desires of the community that the planned parks and amenities are intended to serve. Community engagement events can take many forms, from the more robust meetings, roundtables, and park advisory boards, to more basic information sharing on social media or at events. In planning for community engagement, it is imperative that the community understands the intended level of engagement from the park agency. Before any given event, park-building entities should clearly communicate how the community can expect to be engaged:  whether through information sharing, community design, or decision-making.

In order to collect accurate feedback and input from community members during the initial phases of a project, direct and robust community engagement should take place

during the planning and concept design phases. Conversations should be held with different community stakeholders to collect feedback. Creation and distribution of surveys in digital and physical formats can engage those who cannot attend meetings.

In the beginning planning phases of a project, it is important to solicit community input to ensure that a project fits the needs of the community and in turn, will be used frequently and appropriately by the community. After the initial planning and concept design phase, which often includes the most extensive engagement efforts, community engagement should continue throughout subsequent phases of the park project planning process.  This will ensure the community remains informed as the project progresses. Relevant content should be shared with the community at each phase of the project.

Frequent timeline and project status updates should be provided. These should be communicated in written and graphic format, and materials should be translated in the appropriate languages.  Information sharing can occur in the form of community presentations, tabling at events, social media postings, email blasts, newsletters, newspaper editorials, etc. Agencies should participate in both community and agency-led meetings.

If a robust engagement effort has taken place during the planning and concept phase of the project, it is possible to engage the community through project updates and information-sharing during later phases of the project. This strategy will help avoid the problem of receiving contradictory feedback from the community after the project is already underway. Community expectations around project timelines can be managed by providing an estimated project timeline to the community in the beginning phases, and following-up to provide regular project updates, including both accomplishments and setbacks, throughout the duration of the project.  An honest, open, and ongoing dialogue is the best way to sustain a healthy relationship with the community. It is important to be consistent in engagement with the community, even if a project is stalled.

It is important to note that not all community members are entering the planning process with the same level of knowledge and information. It is recommended to assess communities for their level of understanding prior to requesting feedback, and to provide enough information to fill in any gaps. In working with a community to select a project, it is important to be detailed and transparent about the process and where the community can expect to have influence. Presentations, roundtable discussions, question and answer sessions, and surveys are all ways to engage community members.  Digital and social media platforms can also be used to collect information from members that are

not able to attend in-person meetings (i.e. schedule Twitter chat parties, use Google forms or Survey Monkey, etc.). When feedback/input cannot be incorporated into the project, it is important for agencies to be transparent with the community about the reasons. If necessary, information should be provided regarding the selection processes, including relevant data and statistics. If possible, provide information on other ways in which input may be incorporated for other projects, or during another phase.

### *Community Engagement: Frequency and Timeline*

It is important that community members who attend public meetings are engaged at different points during the process and not only during the beginning or end of a project. If a project is going to take several years to complete, the community should be invited to hear updates at a meeting or event at least twice a year. The update should include progress since the last meeting, updated timelines, and any setbacks that have occurred. Communities can be engaged via monthly emails, mailed newsletters, and/or through social media. These are helpful tools in keeping community members engaged and active but should supplement, not replace, in-person meetings.

In preparing for a community meeting or other in-person engagement, outreach should begin 6-12 weeks in advance, as noted in Section I above. All event details and written outreach materials should be finalized at this time, and outreach partners, community stakeholders, and outreach strategies should be identified.

### *Community Engagement Event Standards*

Community engagement events should be held at locations that are familiar to and frequently used by community members. The likelihood of good turnout is higher if a meeting or event is held in a location that community members already visit as opposed to one that is unknown. If possible, the location should be an existing community hub, such as a community center, park facility, library, or senior center. For parks-related community engagement, a park facility is ideal. However, the location should be one that is already used often by a large swath of the community for events, meetings, programs, and other gatherings.

The event location should be in a well-known and highly frequented area, easily accessible by public transportation. The location should have parking, especially in dense urban areas, as lack of parking alone can deter attendance. Please see Appendix D for lists of potential meeting locations in select High and Very High Need Study Areas.

For language interpretation and translation requirements at engagement events, agencies must adhere to RPOSD's Language Access Methodology and Requirements.

Translation of all printed and digital material, including presentations, outreach materials, signage, and agendas will be necessary for each language required within a particular Study Area. Best practice includes using two projectors and screens to allow for simultaneous presentation of materials in two languages. For interpretation needs, it is a best practice to have all monolingual speakers wear a headset. If more than one language (other than English) is required per the Language Access requirement, headsets with multiple channels should be available for use during an event.

The best date and time for a community meeting will depend on the community that is being served. A time and day of the week when parks or community centers are busiest and when programming is well-attended should be selected. Evenings can work well, but if a meeting or event cuts into dinnertime, consider providing a meal. In some instances, it can be very successful to pair a meeting or event with an existing, well-attended event or program.

If the meeting or event is scheduled during a regular mealtime, it is encouraged that food be provided. Healthy and local catering options should be considered and use of Styrofoam and single-use plastics should be avoided. If possible, compostable or other eco-friendly alternatives should be used instead.

Providing "childwatch" is an important strategy to increase attendance at meetings and ensure that parents can fully engage. It is recommended to work with a CBO and/or agency recreation department to organize "childwatch." Provide an engaging activity for children, and if possible, make it relevant to the meeting.

Free giveaways are great incentives to encourage participation. Small items such as stickers, lip balm, beach balls, tote bags, bracelets, etc., can encourage community members to participate in surveys, sign-ups, question and answer sessions, or other meeting activities. Large items are best used as raffle items. Raffles should be advertised on the flyer and the raffle should be held at the culmination of an event.

It is important to celebrate the completion of a project and thank the community and other stakeholders for their feedback and support throughout the project. At the final stage, depending on the size of the project and budget, it is recommended to host an event such as a "party", a concert at the site, a Grand Opening, a thank you dinner, or other celebratory event. This is the opportunity to recognize key players and highlight community members to further garner support and build trust and relationships. It is also recommended, whenever possible, to reach out to local bands, artists, and school groups. to participate in the event. This is not only a celebration, but also a thank you

gesture. For this reason, each event should be tailored towards its community. Finally, it is important to invite elected officials as well as all CBOs involved and those with whom you are interested in furthering a relationship.

## Section III. Feedback and Specific Recommendations for RPOSD's Future Phases of Community Engagement

### Asset Map

The asset map is a critical element of community engagement, and it is essential that community input be incorporated into that map on an ongoing basis to reflect current conditions. For the High and Very High Need Study Areas, changing demographics impact community values and must be updated regularly. Therefore, it is recommended that RPOSD provide training to all agencies in developing asset maps.

### Complete Spreadsheet with Stakeholders and Meeting Locations for All Study Areas (Appendix D)

Meeting locations for the community meetings conducted as part of this scope of work were staged primarily in parks. To a certain degree, the informed or already park-affiliated community members attended the community meetings. For future phases of this work, it is recommended that outreach be conducted with non-park-affiliated organizations such as church, social justice, school, and health groups as well. These programs must reach new audiences to increase the participation of community members.

### Language (Translation and Interpretation) Costs and Budgeting

In addition to the cost of language translation, there should be more focus on outreach to these populations to bring them to the meetings. There was not sufficient budget in this phase of the work to do any type of canvassing of monolingual organizations in order to cultivate trust and interest in parks issues.

**Next Phases of Work:**

*Community Engagement and Base Building*

In order to build on the work initiated in the first phase, it is critical to have sustained community engagement to ensure that there is a knowledge base in the community about the community and social benefits of parks and to provide a platform for identifying pressing park needs which will enhance personal and community experiences.

As RPOSD rolls out the technical assistance programs that will be initiated prior to the release of the competitive grant programs, these community engagement opportunities will have established a base that will be able to engage with their cities and non-profits considering projects in their area.

Maintaining these relationships on at least a quarterly basis is essential to ensure that a deep knowledge and understanding of the issues is developed and sustained. The training with community members should include the principles of civic engagement to ensure that community members are well equipped to work with their local jurisdictions on park projects and to promote outcomes that meet their unique community needs.

*City education & engagement*

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1. RPOSD should engage cities-one on-one and provide education regarding community outreach and engagement at least once per year.

2. RPOSD should continually build upon information obtained during interactions with cities.

3. RPOSD should discuss and address challenges that cities face in learning about and implementing community outreach/engagement and develop strategies for mitigating those challenges.

4. RPOSD work closely with cities that have had significant staff transitions to ensure that park projects are ready for implementation once funds are released.