

Portland Engagement Project (PEP) Talks Summit

Summary and Guiding Questions



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Executive Summary and Overview

As part of the City of Portland Office of Civic Life's Portland Engagement Project (PEP), the City convened a series of PEP Talks on April 27, 28, and 29, 2023 in partnership with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT) and the Center for Public Service, both housed in the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. The PEP Talks were supported by the City of Portland staff, OKT staff, students and faculty from the Center for Public Service, and numerous community partners.

The PEP Talks identified four international guests whose expertise was relevant to questions being posed by the City of Portland, including Julia Carboni, associate professor at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University; Bryna Helfer, assistant county manager and director of communications and public engagement at Arlington County, Virginia; Andrew Wilkes, chief policy and advocacy officer at Generation Citizen; and Felipe Rey, professor of public law at Pontificia Universidad. The international guest experts were joined by local community leaders who provided the context and history of engagement in the City of Portland.

This summary of the effort emphasizes three themes of equitable engagement organized into the broad categories of people, place, and practice. The results of the PEP Talks Summit also revealed three anchoring needs for equitable engagement in the City. These include:

- Recognizing past harm and repairing relationships
- Developing and sustaining non-transactional relationships
- Sharing power

This report concludes with guiding questions that the City may use to inform its engagement efforts. Taken together, these may be considered as the City explores its next steps and synthesizes these results with other initiatives.

About this PEP Talk Summary

As part of the PEP Talk, the Center for Public Service team took notes to capture the themes and observations with the goal of providing a summary of ideas for equitable engagement. The notes included participant activities, including a Day 3 mural describing participants' visions for engagement in a graphical illustration.¹

The purpose of this summary is not to document the entirety of the event.² Rather, its purpose is to synthesize the many ideas and concepts that were developed during the PEP Talks. In a later section of this document, guiding questions for the City of Portland's engagement programs and its framework are presented. These questions are based on the insights offered by experts and community members who participated in the PEP Talks and should not be construed as formal policy recommendations.

The analysis and theme development process involved several steps:

- 1) Each member of the notetaking team individually analyzed and coded their notes based on themes.
- 2) The notetaking team met and identified important and overlapping themes.
- 3) Following that process, a more refined set of themes emerged that were organized into three large categories of People, Place, and Process.

What also emerged were three central takeaways from Summit participants that are implicit in each set of themes described above. These takeaways were that equitable engagement should:

- recognize and repair past harm
- build relationships
- share power

As Figure 1 below shows, there is synergy among the thematic categories presented in this document. For example, processes are designed to convene people, and who is engaged is a result of process design. At the same time, intentions drive process design and who is engaged. Similarly, place matters for who, how, and when people are engaged. Readers should consider how each of these themes are related. Readers should also consider how the different practices suggested by the themes can be combined, recombined, and emphasized based on an explicit framework that should be inherent in the City's engagement efforts.

¹ Participants were asked to create a mural of engagement in small groups that emphasized and embraced many, if not all of the themes mentioned here. These murals appear in Appendix D of this document.

² PEP Talks were recorded will be available at: <https://www.portland.gov/civic/portland-engagement-project>

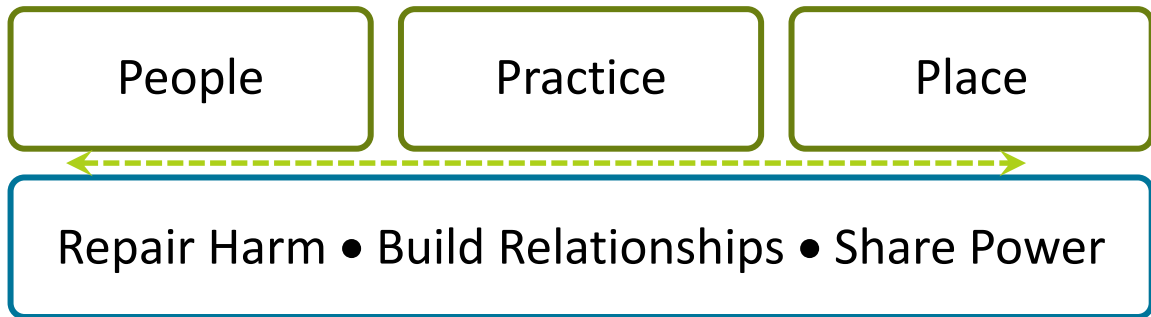


Figure 1: Relationship Between Summit Themes and Takeaways

PEP Talks Summit Overview and Agenda

The Office of Civic Life Portland Engagement Project (PEP) Talks Summit³ were held on April 27, 28, and 29, 2023. The summit was part of a broader process entitled the Portland Engagement Project, an initiative undertaken by the City of Portland Office of Community and Civic Life.⁴ The Office of Civic Life partnered with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT) and the Center for Public Service, both housed in the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University, to implement the PEP Talks. The PEP Talks were supported by a large team, including notetakers, who prepared this summary.

The goal of the Portland Engagement Project is to reimagine the way civic engagement is carried out by the City of Portland. The initiative was launched in Spring 2021 with internal (City of Portland employees) and external (community members) listening sessions, culminating in the Summit, which was held in Spring 2023. In addition to these listening sessions, the non-profit partner, Know Agenda Foundation conducted approximately 11 community connector interviews with a variety of local community leaders and engaged community members to tailor the design of the PEP Talks Summit and collect feedback on equitable engagement (see Appendix E).⁵

The PEP Talks Summit aimed to foster dialogue related to innovative civic engagement and design. This dialogue was intended to further the development of ideas related to equitable civic engagement.⁶ This summary and the PEP Talks Summit will be considered along with the other efforts the City has undertaken.

PEP Talks Guests

The goal of the PEP Talks Summit was to engage both international and local experts on the topic of civic engagement to envision innovative and equitable civic engagement in the City of Portland. To accomplish this, the organizers identified four guests whose expertise was relevant to questions being posed by the City of Portland. These four guests were selected from an extensive list of civic engagement experts generated by employees within the Office of Civic Life, Oregon's Kitchen Table, and the Center for Public Service. The final list was generated based on what is most relevant to the City at this time, such as engaging youth, diversifying modes of public participation, and innovating in complex urban

³ The three-day PEP Talks Summit are referred to both as PEP Talks, PEP Talks Summit, and Summit.

⁴ More about the Portland Engagement project can be found here: <https://www.portland.gov/civic/portland-engagement-project>

⁵ Feedback from the community connector interviews was remarkably similar to the themes discussed in the PEP Talks Summit. The results are incorporated here in Appendix E of this document.

⁶ The City is working towards building a definition of equitable civic engagement through this, and other, projects.

environments. Throughout the PEP Talks the guests were referred to as ‘international experts’ or ‘guest experts,’⁷ or ‘international guests.’ They were as follows:⁸

- Julia Carboni, Associate Professor, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University
- Bryna Helfer, Assistant County Manager and Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Arlington County Virginia
- Andrew Wilkes, Chief Policy and Advocacy Officer at Generation Citizen
- Felipe Rey, Professor of Public Law at Pontificia Universidad

The role of the guest experts was to share their experience and scholarship and to reflect and discuss themes that developed during the PEP Talks.

In addition to the guest experts, Portland storytellers were asked to frame and generate discussion at each of the PEP Talks Summit days. This is described in the section that follows.

Location and Session Format and Agendas

To maximize participation and to highlight local experience, each day of the Summit was hosted in a different part of the city. Each day was also accessible to online participants via Zoom. The daily agendas appear in Appendix C of this document.⁹

To frame each day, the guest experts shared concepts, experiences, or practices related to civic engagement. Each had a unique message that focused on different aspects of equitable engagement. Some comments related to the conceptual and value-based framing of engagement, while others focused on the practice.

Each guest expert focused on different aspects of equitable engagement throughout the three-day PEP Talks. A summary of their central points and/or recommendations appears below.

- Dr. Julia Carboni’s primary message was centered on the concept of intentionality in how practitioners can create civic spaces and maintain relationships within communities. She reminded attendees that communities have assets and expertise; and that government should lead with that perspective, rather than focusing only on deficits. Carboni noted that small design decisions can determine whether participants feel as if the process belongs to them. She described how transformational engagement can be when the government shifts its mindset and chooses to honor local expertise and collaborate with the community.

⁷ Despite this terminology, participants and organizers recognized that local guests and participants were also experts.

⁸ Biographies of international guests appear in Appendix A of this document.

⁹ The daily agendas were the team’s initial plan for the day; in some cases, the agenda was adapted to honor the guest experts, Portland storytellers, and participant interests and needs.

- Dr. Bryna Helfer proposed that successful engagement required an awareness of context when designing civic processes. Bryna Helfer noted that engagement is a journey and focused on the importance of knowing your community, nourishing community relationships, and ensuring good communications. She emphasized the role that government plays in enhancing civic culture and practice. To that end, Helfer’s message considered that equitable public engagement should be integrated into every department and that every staff member must be trained in the best practices of engagement. She also underscored the importance of effectively utilizing demographic and community data to help the government know the community and work towards racial equity.
- Andrew Wilkes offered examples of civics education in schools where students are empowered to become lifelong engaged members of their community. He noted how community partners and coalitions can bring civic engagement to life in the classroom. He emphasized that investment in youth and adult civic education can lead to a more diverse and equitable democracy.
- Felipe Rey shared specific methods of effective engagement and power-sharing, focusing on how citizen assemblies engage community members in formal participatory decision-making processes. He emphasized the importance of listening and reminded attendees that active dialogue between the government and the community is a core aspect of engagement. He urged the attendees to rethink democracy to include, as an essential component, engagement that honors human needs.
- On Day 2 and 3 of the PEP Talks Summit, the sessions began with a discussion among the guest experts reflecting on themes and insights from the prior day. This served to situate the day’s conversation within the context of the knowledge that had been produced the day before, ensuring an interconnectedness of themes across each day of the Summit.

Each day, following the discussion between guest experts, a panel of Portlanders were invited to share their stories about engagement.

A summary of the messages from the local experts appears in Appendix B of this document.

Day 1 (East Portland Focus): Zenger Farm

- Blanca Gaytan Farfan, Policy & Communications Director, Participatory Budgeting Oregon
- Linda Robinson, East Portland park advocate
- Karol Wai, Youth Leader for Youth Voice Youth Vote, Participatory Budgeting Oregon

Day 2 (North/Northeast Portland Focus): June Key Delta Community Center

- ShaToyia Bentley, Chair of the Ebony Collective Community Development Corp., Executive Director of The Ebony Collective Coalition
- Alisha Howard, 2nd Vice President & Chair of Program Planning and Development Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated
- Ed Washington, Director of Community Outreach & Engagement, Portland State University Office of Global Diversity & Inclusion

Day 3 (Downtown Portland/West Portland Focus—and the future): Portland State University Native American Student Center

- Cynthia Carmina Gómez, Portland State University’s Director of Community & Civic Impact
- Antonio Servín-González, Youth Development Professional & Portland State University Student
- Darlene Urban Garrett, Executive Director, Neighbors West Northwest

Daily sessions ended with an activity that encouraged dialogue amongst the community members in attendance. For example, participants on Day 2 were asked, “What engagement idea that you have heard about here, found in the resources, or otherwise know about excites you the most and why? How does that idea meet Portland’s current engagement needs?” On Day 3, the process included a mural project where participants created graphical illustrations of their vision for what engagement in Portland could look like.

Participants were also provided with a resource document from the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation that is a comprehensive set of models and approaches for engagement.¹⁰ Summit participants touched on some of these models during the discussion.

¹⁰ The NCDD streams of engagement resource can be accessed here:
https://www.ncdd.org/uploads/1/3/5/5/135559674/2014_engagement_streams_guide_web.pdf

PEP Talk Themes

Framing: The Grounding Notion of Intention

Among the major and minor themes that resulted from the PEP Talks Summit, the idea of intention was cross-cutting and foundational. All processes are grounded in intention, whether implicit or explicit, which drives engagement design. Throughout the PEP Talks, the importance of intention was inherent in most, or all, of the discussions. The intention of those seeking input or participation from the community—usually government actors— informs choices related to such things as who should be involved, the attitudes and methods of government, and the role of community members.

While the context and purpose for engagement may vary, in general, Summit participants desired improvements to be made in the three key areas of recognizing and repairing past harm, developing non-transactional relationships, and sharing power. These three areas of improvement can inform the intention behind engagement, including all of the choices made in process design. A clarification of the City's intention for equitable engagement should precede how processes are designed.

Grounding intention in the process demands that all aspects of the process be considered, ranging from how city officials think about engagement work to where a meeting is held. For example, ShaToyia Bentley, spoke about the government approach to engaging with historically underrepresented community members. She noted that a reparative intention would prioritize anti-racism within all aspects community engagement work. This includes the values and attitudes brought to the process by government officials. She called for city officials to “think about your view of the world and places”.

Intention is not so easy to unpack because governments are comprised of people who bring with them individualized beliefs, values, and behavior. Without a guiding framework, or shared intention, civic engagement processes would largely depend on which government official ‘shows up’ to the process. Instead, the City's, as an organization, should offer a clear, consistent, and transparent intention in the form of a framework for equitable engagement. Within this framework of intention, beliefs, values, and behavior should be developed, aligned, and reinforced.

To support the City's engagement framework, each of the themes (people, place, and process) below propose guiding questions. How government officials implementing equitable engagement deliberate on, or answer these questions, may help to clarify the alignment between the City's framework of intention, practice, and process design.

In addition to the guiding questions, Table 1 below presents a non-exhaustive and non-prioritized list of the core values and practices that participants wanted to see embedded in equitable engagement.¹¹ These values and practices are also threaded throughout the larger themes related to people, place, and process.

Table 1: Non-Exhaustive Summary of the Values and Practices of Equitable Engagement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity ● Inclusion ● Accessibility ● Belonging ● Community knowledge ● Relationships ● Anti-racism ● Safety ● Education and learning ● Healing ● Sharing power ● Compassion ● Caring ● Nurturing ● Listening ● Clear communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tolerance ● Celebration ● Creativity ● Innovation ● Fun and play ● Self-awareness ● Self-reflection ● Faith ● Environmental stewardship ● Sense of community ● Futuristic thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliberation ● Patience ● Resilience ● Action-oriented ● Open minded ● Love ● Human rights ● Hope ● Interaction among and between people of different generations ● Diversity of thought ● Humanization ● Collaboration
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¹¹ This list of values and practices is framed in terms of those desired by Summit participants. These should not diminish the feedback from the Summit that there have been painful, harsh, and instrumental actions and values inherent in past engagement efforts.

Theme: People

This section focuses on people and summarizes the key elements of centering people in public engagement, including who to involve and how to engage communities on their terms (in contrast to the preferences of government, organizers, or practitioners).

At its most basic, people are the most critical element to any civic engagement process. Recognizing people are at the center means recognizing the importance of relationships and people in all processes, whether there are two people or two hundred people. During the PEP Talks, Darlene Urban Garrett said, “If you have two people in a room, that’s enough for a meeting”.

“Engagement is simpler than a science. It’s all about humanity... The things we expect from people in personal relationships are the type of things we expect from administrations.” – Felipe Rey

Throughout the PEP Talks, discussions returned to a core theme that the most effective public engagement recognizes the value of people. Centering engagement on people should not be interpreted as a means to an end, but as ends in itself. Good engagement practice decenter power and privilege and embrace engagement through people. This requires careful consideration of who to involve and how to engage people and communities on their own terms.

The Dynamics of Who to Involve

Commissioner Dan Ryan’s kick off to the PEP Talk underscored a common message from other participants. His call for engagement focused on ensuring that representative community voices are heard in shaping policy. Ryan noted that who is involved matters, “it’s neighborhood associations, it’s community organizations, it’s all the sectors in this room.”

Considering who to involve demands that government and practitioners consider whose expertise is assumed to be of value to the process. Summit participants emphasized that equitable engagement recognizes many forms of expertise. For example, while the guest experts offered theoretical and practical knowledge, local storytellers offered context, history, and experience. Participants agreed that honoring technical expertise (e.g. academic background, professional experience, etc) along with other forms of knowledge (e.g., that gathered from one’s lived experiences) offer equal value. Participants noted that city officials, organizers and experts have an important role, which is to facilitate conversations, offer resources, and educate community members for the purpose of informed decision making.

In addition to this, there are several important considerations when thinking about who to involve. These are representation and capacity building.

Representation through Ongoing Reflection

Juila Carboni was interested in exploring the intention behind engagement. In this context, she encouraged Portland to look at its current engagement practices and ask, “Who are we missing?” Echoing this, Bryna Helfer, Arlington County Virginia’s assistant county manager and director of communications and public engagement, suggested that practitioners not wait until the end of a community engagement

process to ask that question, but rather create systems to know “who we are hearing from as we go” so agencies can adjust their engagement efforts midstream.

In some cases, this would imply identifying and involving key members of the communities most affected by a policy; in other cases, this approach would imply more broad-based and open processes. In still other instances, the intention may be reparative work with a community. In all cases, reflecting on who is missing in the context of intention and inserted throughout processes will ensure more equitable, representative, and inclusive processes.

Participants noted the profound importance of considering who is represented in the process. Karol Wai of Participatory Budgeting Oregon, noted that done well, engagement “takes an inaccessible, hidden process and it brings a mic to the community who haven’t had a chance to share their voices.” She also noted the healing aspects of inclusivity. “When we make democracy to fashion it and design it, it does have the capacity to heal,” said Wai. However, the opposite is also true, and poorly planned engagement can repeat past harms. “If these processes are not designed to include, they ultimately exclude.”

PEP Talk participants specifically acknowledged the need to emphasize previously underrepresented community members across different identities. This includes intentional and specific efforts for involving young people, immigrants, elders, members of the houseless community, and others.

Making engagement meaningful for participants is a way to encourage participation. This was exemplified by Antonio Servin-Gonzalez, a youth mentor and Portland State University Student, who shared the importance of showing youth that their voices matter and how their own experiences give them expertise. Servin-Gonzalez commented, “Young people know what’s going on. Youth are not our future, they are our now.”

Wai also noted the iterative nature of involvement where the process itself is important for building the individual capacity of participants.

Capacity Building

Intentionally centering people has the potential to spark increased individual and collective capacity. Andrew Wilkes considered that civics education is a means for capacity building, both as an engagement and democracy-building tool. An example of this was offered by Wai, who shared that a recent participatory budgeting process collected 244 ideas from historically underserved communities of East Multnomah and North Clackamas Counties. This exercise attracted input from people between the ages of 13-25. This process not only collected the voices of young people, but it also exposed many to government deliberations for their very first time.

Technical experts may also play a role in helping community members build skills inside of a process. Felipe Rey suggested offering community members opportunities to learn facilitation skills to ensure a deep bench of talent could be tapped for these important community roles. He suggested that those with technical skills (e.g., academic institutions or other volunteers) work with residents to develop engagement tools, such as survey design or qualitative analysis. This was also expressed in the vision murals where participants offered that training could create sustainability in engagement efforts. Given

that time is often limited for city staff, building capacity throughout the broader community extends opportunities for equitable involvement.

Engaging People on Their Terms

Engaging people on their own terms was discussed throughout the PEP Talks. This theme is less about locational choice (though that matters, too) and more about the need to recognize community traditions and contexts. For example, numerous participants mentioned the power of a meal to foster fellowship or the importance of childcare availability at engagement events. Participants suggested that engagement practitioners ask, “What’s preventing people from participating?” and then solve for that question. To best understand where to meet people “where they are,” participants recommended that community members themselves are good sources of information—especially those who are well-connected within their communities, such as community organizers and faith leaders.

Engaging people on their terms is also about supporting independent and cohesive communities to act on their own behalf.¹² This may be especially important for groups who may be talking to government officials for the first time. Cynthia Carmina Gómez, PSU’s Director of Community & Civic Impact, shared an example of a partnership between the City of Portland and Latino Network, a community-based advocacy organization. Through the City-funded Diverse Civic Leaders Program, Latino Network helped the City to reach Spanish-speaking Portlanders and built a level of trust that some community members may not have previously experienced a government official knocking on their door. As Latino Network noticed many of their respondents would talk to them with their children present, staff started a children’s program to train them from a younger age on how to talk to elected officials and submit public testimony to shape policy. This also requires that government officials and organizers engage as people.

The more government can “allow people to engage in their humanity, sharing their feelings and allowing them to just be people, the more government can foster creativity and elevate new ideas from the community.”

--Dr. Julia Carboni

Considering people, with all of their complexity, implies several recommendations for equitable engagement, including:

Designing processes with people at the center implies some guiding questions:

- Whose interests are represented in the room?
- Whose expertise and/or experience is missing?
- Are other forms of expertise recognized in the decision-making process?
- How can the process amplify the voice of underrepresented groups?

¹² Supporting both independence and cohesion has some overlap with capacity building.

- How does the engagement effort support, or facilitate, the capacity, expertise, and growth of community members?
- How can the process benefit both the community and the individual?
- How can the process ensure that people engage within the context of their own values and environments while sharing and engaging across differences?
- Does this process allow for a discussion of core values and/or the trade-offs inherent in decision making?

Theme: Place

The next major theme that developed out of the PEP Talks was how physical and metaphorical space interacts with equitable engagement.¹³

Portland is composed of many communities that are rooted in a geographical location, like a neighborhood or a faith-based organization. When spaces are accessible and familiar, it is more likely that people will gather. Community spaces are parks, community gardens, community centers, schools, faith-based organizations, libraries, and (sometimes) neighborhood businesses. These places are sometimes referred to as “third places,” which people frequent for the purpose of community, but are separate from home and work. There are also communities that interact in virtual and electronic spaces for shared interest or affinities that go beyond a physical space. In both kinds of spaces, connection remains important.

Places are important because they hold the history of communities, create important venues for interaction among members and generations, and provide a sense of safety or support. In short, places cultivate community and belonging. Nevertheless, there are many instances of disrupting physical communities and place in the city, whether these were a result of planned development or gentrification.

Understanding place and people’s sense of community supports equitable engagement and helps the City understand the many different “Portlands” of Portland. The vision murals produced on Day 3, for example, highlighted the relationship among green space and engagement (see Appendix D). Places provide a unique opportunity for engagement through story-telling where community members may gain a greater understanding of each other. Many of the speakers talked of their Portland and the spaces that support them, as exemplified in the discussion below.

Exemplary Stories of Place

Place took on a particularly important role during the second day of the PEP Talks at the June Key Delta Community Center.¹⁴ ¹⁵At the PEP Talks, three local Black Portland leaders shared personal and professional stories. Alisha Howard, 2nd Vice President at the June Key Delta Community Center, described her childhood Portland as a “Black Portland” in a city that is sometimes referred to as the Whitest in America. She grew up in the Irvington Neighborhood with Black neighbors, Black educators, and Black church leaders. Her neighborhood was easily walkable and bikeable where she felt supported and cared for.

¹³ The PEP Talks design recognized the importance of place by moving locations each day to meaningful places. The PEP Talks was held in three locations; Zenger Farm in East Portland, Portland State University in downtown, and the June Key Delta Community Center in North Portland. These are locations that strongly connect to the identity of Portland and function as community hubs.

¹⁴ The June Key Delta Community Center was founded by alumni of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority as a multicultural community space especially for Black Portlanders.

¹⁵ Linda Robinson, who spoke on Day 1 of the PEP Talks also reflected themes of place, where annexation and diminished resources have negatively impacted neighborhoods.

Ed Washington, civil rights leader and former Metro Council member, shared his notion of place in Vanport. Mr. Washington spent some of his childhood in Vanport. Vanport was a World War II mixed-population housing development where Washington lived in its predominantly Black area. Vanport flooded destroying the community and Ed Washington and his family were forced to relocate. The Vanport Flood was devastating and remains in living history in Portland. Many Black Portlanders who had lived in Vanport during World War II, were now forced to relocate primarily to neighborhoods of Portland including North Portland and portions of downtown, due to redlining. There, in North Portland (and later to include Northeast Portland), Black Portlanders again created thriving communities with supporting small business, entertainment venues, and community networks. The devastation of Vanport caused disruption in the social fabric of the community that was not easily rebuilt. Over time, gentrification has again eroded the social fabric of the North Portland communities.

ShaToya Bentley of the Ebony Collective CDC grew up close to Alisha Howard's childhood neighborhood, however she experienced a very different, much whiter Portland, due to the impacts of gentrification. Beginning in the early 1990's she noted that Portland in present day continues to gentrify, impacting historically Black Neighborhoods like Albina and Alberta. Many of those residents have moved to East Portland where housing is more affordable than the rest of the city. Bentley also found community early on at Antioch Baptist Church influencing her life's direction to be a community leader and focus on equity.

Implications for Engagement in Third Places

These and other stories about place can offer important feedback for the City as it continues to develop its equitable engagement approach. The preservation of neighborhoods and considerations of safety within the context of place can have implications for the intent and outcomes of engagement.

Preserving Place

Place offers important considerations for equitable engagement. The first consideration is that place is fundamental to the social networks that support, extend, and educate for engagement. Disruption of place is more than an economic problem; it is also a problem for the social fabric of the community. This consideration is less about where engagement efforts happen (though that is important as well) and more about how place, social fabrics, community, and engagement are foundationally important to one another.

Engaging in Place

Fostering a sense of place for community members is an important element in equitable civic engagement practice. When an individual has a sense of place and feels a sense of belonging, they are more likely to engage meaningfully. A sense of place contributes to the activation of individuals and grassroots community organizing efforts. For example, Ed Washington's first community organizing efforts occurred because he noticed that his classmates did not have access to engage with nature in the

"People who make these places need to be the ones leading the process." --Ed Washington

area. Linda Robinson's involvement in East Portland was similarly inspired by a place-based annexation effort by the City. Many panelists talked about how important it is to hold spaces for the community to celebrate and share meals.

Julia Carboni stated this in the simplest terms: "Go to where people are." Bryna Helfer recommended that where to engage should be based on the goal of the effort. For example, if one is designing a policy about access to food for people with lower income, going near affordable housing buildings makes good sense. Similarly, looking for input on a new transit line? Go to a nearby bus stop where riders could be affected. Sometimes it's not just about going to where people are, Helfer said, "Go to where it's relevant to what's going on." Going where people are with pop-up spots for input, field hearings, or open houses are all good practices. In addition, engagement ought to increasingly include digital spaces. City officials and organizers may consider the impact of working within the context of place and in celebration alongside communities can build relationships, trust, and connection.

Designing processes with intention implies some additional guiding questions related to place:

- How does intention (or purpose) impact where engagement should occur?
- Where are community members most comfortable in engaging with the City?
- How does the community define their place?
- Who can provide legitimacy to the process within the context of place?
- Can story-telling about place provide opportunities for relationship-building and values exchange?
- Where have City decisions had a significant impact on a place?
- When historical places are disrupted or redeveloped, is there an explicit discussion about the impact on neighborhoods or the social fabric of the community? How might the trauma caused by disrupted communities be acknowledged, considered, or repaired?

Theme: Practice/Process

The practice and process of equitable civic engagement overlaps with earlier themes of people and place. This section focused on the practice and process of equitable engagement; bringing forward the important feedback of building relationships and sharing power.

Equitable Engagement as Relationship Practice

What officials and organizers do, how they prepare, and what choices they make about involvement is often based on the intention behind procedures or processes. In other words, equitable engagement has to be based on the City's articulation of an intention-based framework. This framework is more than what programs are implemented, yet includes a clear understanding of why. For example, Andrew Wilkes, chief policy and advocacy officer at Generation Citizen, describes the practice of facilitating public input as an artform. Wilkes said, "those who facilitate public participation are artisans who bring local democracy to life." Carboni called engagement "the corner-stone of democracy," and said, "it should be done 'with' community and not 'at' community." These comments, and more, emphasize that "doing civic engagement well" requires a commitment to relationship building practices and sharing power.

Considering that relationships and sharing power as the cornerstone of engagement, when designing processes, Carboni and others recommended 'early' versus 'too late' engagement. It is too late to build relationships when a plan, budget, or policy is about to head to a final vote. The most meaningful engagement efforts build relationships early, reinforce them often, and aren't centered on a problem. Carboni reminded practitioners, "don't wait for a crisis [to engage]." By engaging community groups early in a well-designed process, there is also time for greater collaboration that allows community groups to shape how the engagement process could best flow to create opportunity for their constituents to participate. Several times, both the international and local experts emphasized that practicing patience and persistence in collaborating was essential. Relationship building and nurturing is a long-term proposition.

"Center processes instead of problem-seeking"

– Julia Carboni

As components of relationship-building, listening and fostering dialogue, trust-building and transparency, and sharing power were noted as key desirable elements of the practice of equitable civic engagement. These are further articulated below.

Listening and Fostering Dialogue

Community members and guest speakers throughout the PEP Talks and in the vision murals agreed that one of the biggest mistakes governments make is failing to listen to community outside of formal input processes. Central to collaborative and people-centered engagement is the act of listening. This involves a deep commitment, where voices are heard, recorded, valued, and incorporated into a public dialogue. Participants noted that one-way sharing leaves communities feeling like the process is extractive. Instead, they desire a two-way conversation, informed by deliberative engagement

“Listening is an act of love. The only thing we can do is listen to the other person or listen to ourselves. If I listen to you, then I am putting you first, and that is an important act of love.”
– Felipe Rey

processes, that can result in a sustained relationship. As a result, fostering meaningful dialogue between government and community members and among community members is central to building relationships. For example, the notion of dialogue with youth and between generations was clear in the final day of the PEP Talks Summit in the vision murals (see Appendix D).

Creating Trust and Transparency

There was also broad agreement that engagement should be based on trust (or building trust) and transparency. The international experts recommended that government actors be honest with the people who have spent time engaged in a process, even when (or especially when) some aspects of their input are not going to be included in the final decision. Felipe Rey commented that, “many times we [the public] can’t get what we want, but the government should provide an explanation of why not.” Honesty over time about what can and cannot be accomplished or even why the City would engage community members is central to building trust.

Exploring Values

The international guests underscored the importance of people understanding one another’s values and that successful engagement hinged on exchanging values between and among the City and community members. This is a challenge, as Andrew Wilkes recognized, “Sometimes there is a tendency to over tilt

Community engagement is a values exchange” -Bryna Helfer

towards the conversations at hand that can result in focusing primarily in political emotionalism.” Nevertheless, when designing processes, Bryna Helfer noted that officials must be thoughtful about allowing deliberation over different values in the same space. Fostering this kind of dialogue requires mutual commitments to listen to each other. It also requires city officials to communicate its values.

Sharing Power

Finally, a strongly and commonly stated theme among the speakers and participants suggested that the City share power in decision making. The more power sharing that is visible in decision making, the more confidence members of the public will have in future engagement processes. In contrast, when people fail to see their input and action on final decisions, the more they may tire of being asked and will

disengage. Blanca Farfan mentioned that “opportunities for involvement have to be more than taking from community (listening) it has to be sharing power to solve those types of issues.”

Given this risk, the experts recommended that the City build opportunities to share power as opposed to extracting information or support from community groups. In many of the themes discussed at the Summit, sharing power was implicit in as a desirable result of equitable engagement. There were several examples of sharing power noted in the Summit. One was emphasized by Felipe Rey, who centered his comments on the power of citizen assemblies. Citizen assemblies are broadly assembled and representative groups of citizens who turn the model of representative democracy on its head and place community members in charge of policy making. This model places high value on the earlier-mentioned expertise of the community. Similarly, the model and philosophy of participatory budgeting discussed by Blanca Farfan and Karol Wia, places decision making power in the hands of community members. Ideas promoted in the vision murals (see Appendix D) brought forth the notion of shared power with youth representation on city council and participating as equals in decision-making.

Practical Considerations

Finally, engagement efforts are affected by some very practical decisions by the organizers. Below is the feedback from Summit participants related to considerations of the where and when, scope, and communication of engagement. However, while these practical considerations are important, they are not sufficient, on their own, to create the conditions for equitable engagement. In other words, good design of one-off meetings is not sufficient to promote and sustain equitable engagement that is reparative, relationship-centered, and power-sharing.

Space and Time

Among the practical considerations of engagement design are choosing meeting spaces with intention. As Bryna Helfer stated, all spaces of engagement must be designed to be “radically welcoming”. Julia Carboni gave examples of incidents when meeting spaces turned community members off due to their inaccessibility. Alisha Howard pointed out that many processes are designed during times of day when her friends and family are at work. These examples underscore why it is so critical to consider what community members will need to participate. In other words, what are practical and material resources needed to encourage participation? Helfer stated it could be as simple as offering food and childcare.

If in-person events are offered, it is important to design spaces that are physically accessible. Examples of considerations related to physical access that were mentioned at the Summit include:

- Time and day of event
- Accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Availability of childcare at the event
- Accessibility to the event via public transportation
- Availability of food and beverage
- Interpretation services for non-English speakers

Scope and scale

Experts agreed that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to ensuring equitable civic engagement. For example, Bryna Helfer noted that the level of involvement needed to fix a pothole won’t be the same as the public input needed for a large capital project. Still, certain initiatives impact individuals differently and this should be considered when determining what civic engagement processes would be most appropriate and beneficial. One facet of being intentional entails a thoughtful consideration of the level of involvement needed from the public to carry out an initiative.

Communication

While communication is related to important considerations around transparency, there are other additional considerations related to communication. Communication around opportunities for input, the input process, and the outcome of processes are important for creating transparency and trust.

For example, one PEP Talk participant noted that the City should work on its web design to make it more easily navigable. Clear, easy to access, and timely notice is a cornerstone of any engagement efforts. An example of facilitation communication is Arlington's "Engage Arlington." This is a central webpage for community members to learn about community engagement efforts and events.¹⁶ This webpage reduces the access barriers for residents by providing one central place for formal and informal engagement opportunities. Each engagement opportunity explicitly describes the meeting format (or engagement effort) and how the community can be involved in the decision.

Designing processes with intention implies some additional guiding questions regarding the practice and processes of engagement. These questions include the following:

- What are the long-term goals for engagement?
- How can the City focus on building relationships first?
- How can City processes support and incentivize engagement?
- How much time and effort should be required of the community members?
- What type of participation does the City need from community members to make a decision?
- How, when, and in what areas can the City share power?
- How does the City create engagement opportunities to make involvement easy, straightforward, and clear?
- How does the City communicate its decisions and next steps back out to community members?

¹⁶ See: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Engage>

Developing a Framework of Intention: Guiding Questions

When designing the PEP Talks, the organizers considered how the effort could bring ideas from other parts of the country, and even the world, to the city as a way to think strategically about innovative equitable engagement. The result was that the themes of equitable engagement are both small and big; simple and complex; nuanced and obvious.

Guiding Questions

The PEP Talks Summit resulted in a number of thematic feedback and recommendations that the City of Portland might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations are considered as guiding questions, primarily due to that the PEP Talks discussions were largely focused on the intention with which the City engages, rather than on what specific models or activities are utilized. The international and local experts engaged the question about equitable engagement in a way that posed questions for the City to address, rather than different possible solutions that may not work in practice or may not be appropriate or applicable across different situations and contexts throughout the City.

Given that engagement depends on intention, each process may look dramatically different. As a result, a series of guiding questions based on the PEP Talks may have the most impact on engagement as the City considers its framework, models, and approaches. These questions are summarized in Table 2, below, with the thematic categories in which this summary was developed: People, Place, and Practice/Process.

Table 2: Guiding Questions for Equitable Engagement

<p>Cross-cutting questions: What is the goal? What is the intention? How can the City repair and build relationships? How, when, and where can the City share power?</p>		
People	Place	Practice / Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whose interests are represented in the room? ● Whose expertise and/or experience is missing? ● Are other forms of expertise recognized in the decision-making process? ● How can the process amplify the voice of underrepresented groups? ● How does the engagement effort support, or facilitate, the capacity, expertise, and growth of community members? ● How can the process benefit both the community and the individual? ● How can the process ensure that people engage within the context of their own values and environments while sharing and engaging across differences? ● Does this process allow for a discussion of core values and/or the trade-offs inherent in decision making? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does intention (or purpose) impact where engagement should occur? ● Where are community members most comfortable in engaging with the City? ● How does the community define their place? ● Who can provide legitimacy to the process within the context of place? ● Can story-telling about place provide opportunities for relationship-building and values exchange? ● Where have City decisions had a significant impact on a place? ● When historical places are disrupted or redeveloped, is there an explicit discussion about the impact on neighborhoods or the social fabric of the community? How might the trauma caused by disrupted communities be acknowledged, considered, or repaired? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the long-term goals for engagement? ● How can the City focus on building relationships first? ● How can City processes support and incentivize engagement? ● How much time and effort should be required of the community members? ● What type of participation does the City need from community members to make a decision? ● How, when, and in what areas can the City share power? ● How does the City create engagement opportunities to make involvement easy, straightforward, and clear? ● How does the City communicate its decisions and next steps back out to community members?

Concluding Thoughts

This PEP Talks Summit was one example of an engagement process that was designed to center people in conversations and honor their stories. The process attracted international experts, local experts, and community participants; all of whom demonstrated that engagement is an expression of deep democratic values of inclusion and dialogue. The process and organizers are thankful for their participation.

The PEP Talks Summit recommendations show that, at its most basic, equitable engagement is about valuing intentionality through people-centered processes. This was made explicit over the three days where participants continually focused on how important recognizing and repairing harm, building non-transactional relationships, and sharing power are important in any framework. These themes and take-aways were remarkably similar in other parts of the PEP initiative, including the community connector interviews conducted by the Know Agenda Foundation prior to the PEP Talks Summit.

The next steps may be for the City to continue its development of an intentional framework for equitable engagement using the information gathered through all component parts of its PEP initiatives, including this PEP Talks Summit. This will involve continuing its important work in defining and framing equitable engagement, engaging in dialogue and conversation about values and expectations, and designing processes that are consistent with an intentional framework.

Thank You for the PEP Talks!

The PEP Talks Summit was due to the hard work of a large number of people who care about the City of Portland.
Thank you for all that you do.

The City of Portland

City of Portland Residents
PEP Talks Attendees

Portland City Commission

Commissioner Dan Ryan

City of Portland Office of Community and Civic Life

T.J. McHugh, Acting Director
Gloria Harrison
Sandra Lafrancios
Daniel McArdle-Jaimes
Perla Sitcov
Shelby Williams

Oregon's Kitchen Table

Nujhat Ahmed
Sarah Giles
Meaghan Lingo
Roselyn Owen
Damon Isiah Turner
Wendy Willis

Center for Public Service at Portland State University

Dr. Margaret Banyan
Diane Odeh
Kim Hack-Davidson
Neil Simon

...And Many More

Dr. Michael Montoya
PREGAME
Zenger Farm

June Key Delta Community Center

Portland State University Native American Cultural Center

Portland Storytellers / Panelists

Healthy Democracy
Paul Leistner
Missipichief
Open Signal

Appendix A: International Experts Biographies

Dr. Julia Carboni



Julia L. Carboni, PhD, is an award winning, community engaged scholar and leader with expertise in using collaboration and asset-based community development to improve the lives and wellbeing of communities. Dr. Carboni conducts research on organizational collaboration and collaborative philanthropy with an emphasis on veteran serving networks, food systems, and community development. She teaches courses on collaboration, community development, nonprofit management, and fund development.

Dr. Carboni is currently an Associate Professor at the top ranked Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs where she also chairs the Maxwell School Citizenship and Civic Engagement program and serves as the Collaborative Governance Research Director for the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). In these roles, she develops and maintains relationships with community partners to advance community and Maxwell School goals. Notably, she was a Co-Convener of Minnowbrook at 50, a watershed event in public administration that occurs once a generation. Minnowbrook at 50 was the first Minnowbrook to include substantial participation by practitioners in addition to scholars to ensure relevance to the field.

Dr. Carboni serves on the Board of Directors for international, national, and local organizations including the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), the University Network for Collaborative Governance, the Food Bank of Central New York, and the Syracuse Onondaga Food System Alliance. She was a co-Founder of the Indy Food Council, a food policy council for the 15th largest US city. In addition to board service, she has extensive community-based volunteer experience with organizations like the United Way, Girl Scouts of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the League of Women Voters, and the Southwest Center for Economic Integrity. She also regularly mentors fellow BIPOC and female scholars and community leaders on how to navigate academia, community work, and work/life balance.

Dr. Carboni was previously an Assistant Professor in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (now the O'Neill School) and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Prior to academia, she managed programs for Big Brothers Big Sisters and the University of Arizona Eller College of Management.

Dr. Bryna Helfer



Bryna Helfer is Assistant County Manager and Director of Communications and Public Engagement. Prior to joining Arlington County, she was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Engagement for the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). She also served as the Senior Advisor to the USDOT Secretary on Accessibility and Workforce Development.

She has 30+ years of experience initiating, leading, and facilitating interagency coordination, program development, strategic planning, program evaluation, and systems change initiatives. She has a long history of coalition building at the federal, state, and local levels, and is known for her ability to forge partnerships between governmental programs and community based organizations.

Bryna previously served as Senior Director of Civic Engagement for the National Academy of Public Administration, the Manager of Strategic Planning for the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the Senior Advisor for the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility, the Director of Easter Seals Project ACTION, and the Director of the National Traumatic Brain Injury Technical Assistance Center. She began her career working in therapeutic recreation, enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Ohio University, a master's degree from George Mason University, and a doctorate from The George Washington University. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the U.S. Department of Transportation Inspiring Leaders Award and the Secretary of Transportation's Gold Medal Award. She was honored by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials for "Women Moving the Nation."

Bryna has lived in Arlington since 1989 and is active in the Highland Park-Overlee Knolls Neighborhood Association. She has served on the Arlington Aquatics Committee and the Board of Directors of the ENDepence Center of Northern Virginia. She also plays violin with Malarky and the Symphony of Northern Virginia.

Dr. Felipe Rey



Felipe Rey is Professor at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá and founding partner of iDeemos

Felipe Rey holds a law degree from the Universidad Javeriana, where he specialized in constitutional law and a master's degree in administrative law from the Universidad del Rosario. Subsequently, he completed a master's degree in Legal Sciences at Pompeu Fabra University, where in 2018 he received his PhD in Philosophy of Law with a thesis on the representative system. He developed his task as a researcher in the Legal and Political Philosophy research group at UPF, where he focused on the study of theories of democratic innovation and new mechanisms of citizen participation. Throughout his academic career he has taught Public Law and Legal Theory at universities in Colombia and Spain and was a visiting researcher at the Center for Human Values at the University of Princeton. He is also a founding partner and project coordinator at the democratic innovation laboratory ideemos.org, which is part of the international network Democracy R&D.

He designed the Itinerant Citizens' Assembly model (a connected series of citizen assemblies) that took place in 2020 and 2021 in the city of Bogotá, sponsored by the Bogotá City Council and its public innovation laboratory, Demolab. The Itinerant Citizen Assembly is the first model from the Global South to be recognized by the OECD as an institutionalization alternative in the recent report entitled "Eight ways to institutionalize deliberative democracy". iDeemos has developed important projects such as the Mini-Public for Social Dialogue organized by "Procuraduría General de la Nación" in Colombia that took place in 2020 – one of the first deliberations in Colombia using random selection of citizens. iDeemos has signed agreements with the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) to disseminate and strengthen deliberative democracy and participated as a convenor of the Spanish language Cluster in the Global Assembly on the climate crisis in 2021. iDeemos also leads, together with Democracy R&D, the global project "The New Frontiers of Deliberative Democracy", sponsored by the National Endowment for Democracy.

Andrew Wilkes



Andrew Wilkes is the Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer at Generation Citizen.

Andrew Wilkes serves as Generation Citizen’s Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer, where he leads GC’s thought leadership, coalition building, and policy initiatives as a part of the national leadership team. Andrew comes to this role with nearly ten years of experience in public policy, advocacy, and community organizing, particularly among congregations and community-based organizations. Prior to joining GC in 2017, he served as the executive director of the Drum Major Institute, a social change organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In that capacity, he executed public affairs events in Dallas, TX and Washington D.C. to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act; established the Beloved Community Initiative, a national resource on spirituality and social justice for faith communities; and relaunched the nationally renowned Marketplace of Ideas Forum – a forum for bringing policy ideas to an audience of changemakers, policy professionals, and nonprofit leaders.

As a Senior Grants Manager at The American Red Cross of Greater New York, he worked with elected officials, public agencies, and community stakeholders to administer a \$45 million budget for Superstorm Sandy recovery in New York state and Connecticut. Before that, he worked at Habitat for Humanity – New York City, where he mobilized 140 faith communities across the city to serve, donate, and advocate for affordable housing.

Andrew is a graduate of Hampton University, Princeton Theological Seminary, the CORO public affairs fellowship, and is a doctoral candidate in political science at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He also serves on the board of directors for the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State and Habitat for Humanity – New York State.

Appendix B: Local Experts Summary

Day 1 (East Portland Focus): Zenger Farm

Blanca Gaytan Farfan, Policy & Communications Director, Participatory Budgeting Oregon

Blanca Gaytan Farfan began her involvement early on and by building her skills through her family and her understanding of place as a resident of Gresham. She shared that a lot of the work that she does now with younger people was educating about the role of the city or the county and building skills, such as building an agenda for a meeting or how to give testimony. Blanca shared that opportunities for involvement have to be more than taking from community (listening) it has to be sharing power. Moreover, she shared that engagement needs to be human-centered, fun, accessible, and not boring.

Linda Robinson, East Portland park advocate

Linda Robinson began her involvement in the 1980s when the City annexed East Portland and the area didn't have a vote. Robinson became activated around issues, such as Multnomah County Sheriff no longer providing policing and a mid-County sewer project that would cost low-income homeowners a lot of money. Eventually became involved through organizations and other planning efforts for bicycle safety and the East Portland Action Plan. Shared strategies, such as bringing new people into the process, collective action, advocating for engagement outside of city hall, and asking community groups to nominate people to join a commission (rather than the City selecting members).

Karol Wai, Youth Leader for Youth Voice Youth Vote, Participatory Budgeting Oregon

Karol Wai shared that, as an immigrant from Myanmar where liberty and freedom are not granted, she and her family have a history of protest and involvement. Growing up in Portland she would feel othered due to her name and background. Nevertheless, she tapped into Participatory Budgeting Oregon as a way to engage youth from the ages of 13-25. She provided examples of the process that taps into and acknowledges the people who live, work, play, pray here (in Portland) and have a pulse on what needs to be fixed in our communities. She also advocated for continued action with a dose of patience, as the process of making change can be slow.

Day 2 (North/Northeast Portland Focus): June Key Delta Community Center

ShaToya Bentley, Chair of the Ebony Collective Community Development Corp., Executive Director of The Ebony Collective Coalition

ShaToya discussed how she was motivated to get an education to get involved in her community. She shared that she was able to use her “formal” knowledge gained through college and combine it with her experiential knowledge to serve her community. ShaToya was primarily motivated to “teach and uplift” her community by pondering what it means to have “great engagement”.

Alisha Howard, 2nd Vice President & Chair of Program Planning and Development Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Alisha underscored the importance of place by discussing how “her Portland” was “very Black” as she was surrounded by Black individuals who were teachers and other community leaders in her neighborhood. Alisha was motivated by her elders to continue traditions of community engagement despite exclusion from the government. To Alisha, engagement and outreach go in tandem: you cannot engage with communities if you do not have a commitment to building a relationship with them.

Ed Washington, Director of Community Outreach & Engagement, Portland State University Office of Global Diversity & Inclusion

Mr. Washington discussed how his commitment to civic engagement started early on as a Boy Scout. His engagement was fostered by community leaders in his area who empowered him to build programs that helped his classmates see nature during the summertime. Through this example, Mr. Washington underscored the importance of engaging with youth early and often.

Day 3 (Downtown Portland/West Portland Focus—and the future): Portland State University Native American Student Center

Cynthia Carmina Gómez, Portland State University's Director of Community & Civic Impact

Cynthia shared stories regarding how she engaged Spanish-speaking residents of Portland. She approaches civic engagement with the goal of empowering others to change the systems impacting their communities. Her relationships with Spanish-speaking communities has been built on high levels of trust.

Antonio Servín-González, Youth Development Professional & Portland State University Student

Antonio shared the story of how he became involved with youth commissions while in high school. As a current Portland State University student, Antonio continues to be an advocate for why youth voices are so important in the City of Portland and left us to ponder: “is it that it cannot be done, or has it just never been done before?”

Darlene Urban Garrett, Executive Director, Neighbors West Northwest

Darlene's experience in community organizing contributed to the success of a forum on the topic of homelessness that was attended by 200+ individuals including business owners, City residents, and City officials. This forum started as a meeting of a small group of people; with Darlene emphasizing how important it is to engage in civic processes even if you have a group of a few individuals.

Appendix C: Daily Agendas



PEP TALK
Thursday, April 27
3:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Zenger Farm

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

STORIES FROM THE FIELD FEATURING GUEST EXPERTS

Julia Carboni, Chair, Maxwell School Citizenship and Civic Engagement Program, University of Syracuse

Felipe Rey, Professor at Pontificia Universidad, Javeriana, Colombia

Bryna Helfer, Assistant County Manager & Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Arlington, VA

Andrew Wilkes, Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer, Generation Citizen

STORIES FROM PORTLANDERS: EAST PORTLAND FOCUS

Linda Robinson, East Portland Park Advocate

Blanca Gaytan Farfan, Policy & Communications Director, Participatory Budgeting Oregon

Karol Wai, Youth leader, Participatory Budgeting Oregon

Zenger Farm (Speaker TBA)

REFLECTIONS FROM GUEST EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS

DINNER

TABLE REFLECTIONS AND IDEA GENERATION

WHOLE ROOM REFLECTIONS

ADJOURN

PEP TALK

*Friday, April 28
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
June Key Delta
Community Center*



WELCOME ACTIVITY AND RECAP

REFLECTIONS FROM GUEST EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS

Julia Carboni, Chair, Maxwell School Citizenship and Civic Engagement Program, University of Syracuse

Felipe Rey, Professor at Pontificia Universidad, Javeriana, Colombia

Bryna Helfer, Assistant County Manager & Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Arlington, VA

Andrew Wilkes, Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer, Generation Citizen

STORIES FROM PORTLANDERS: NORTH/ NORTHEAST PORTLAND FOCUS

Ed Washington, Community Liaison for Diversity Initiatives, Portland State University

Alisha Howard, Vice President, Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

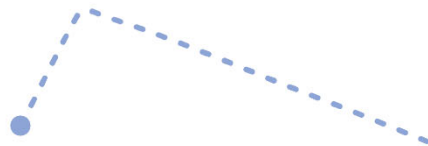
ShaToyia Bentley, Board Chair, Ebony Collective CDC

TABLE DISCUSSIONS

CLOSING AND INVITATION FOR COMMUNITY LUNCH

COMMUNITY LUNCH

ADJOURN



PEP TALK

Saturday, April 29

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

PSU Native American

Student & Community Center



WELCOME ACTIVITY AND RECAP

STORIES FROM PORTLANDERS: PSU, YOUTH, AND FUTURE FOCUS

Cynthia Carmina Gómez, Director of Community & Civic Impact, Portland State University

Antonio Servin-Gonzalez, Youth Mentor, Portland State University Student

Darlene Urban Garrett, Executive Director, Neighbors West-Northwest

TABLE VISION MURALS & LUNCH

GALLERY WALK

REFLECTIONS FROM GUEST EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS

Julia Carboni, Chair, Maxwell School Citizenship and Civic Engagement Program, University of Syracuse

Felipe Rey, Professor at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia

Bryna Helfer, Assistant County Manager & Director of Communications and Public Engagement, Arlington, VA

ADJOURN

Appendix D: Vision Murals

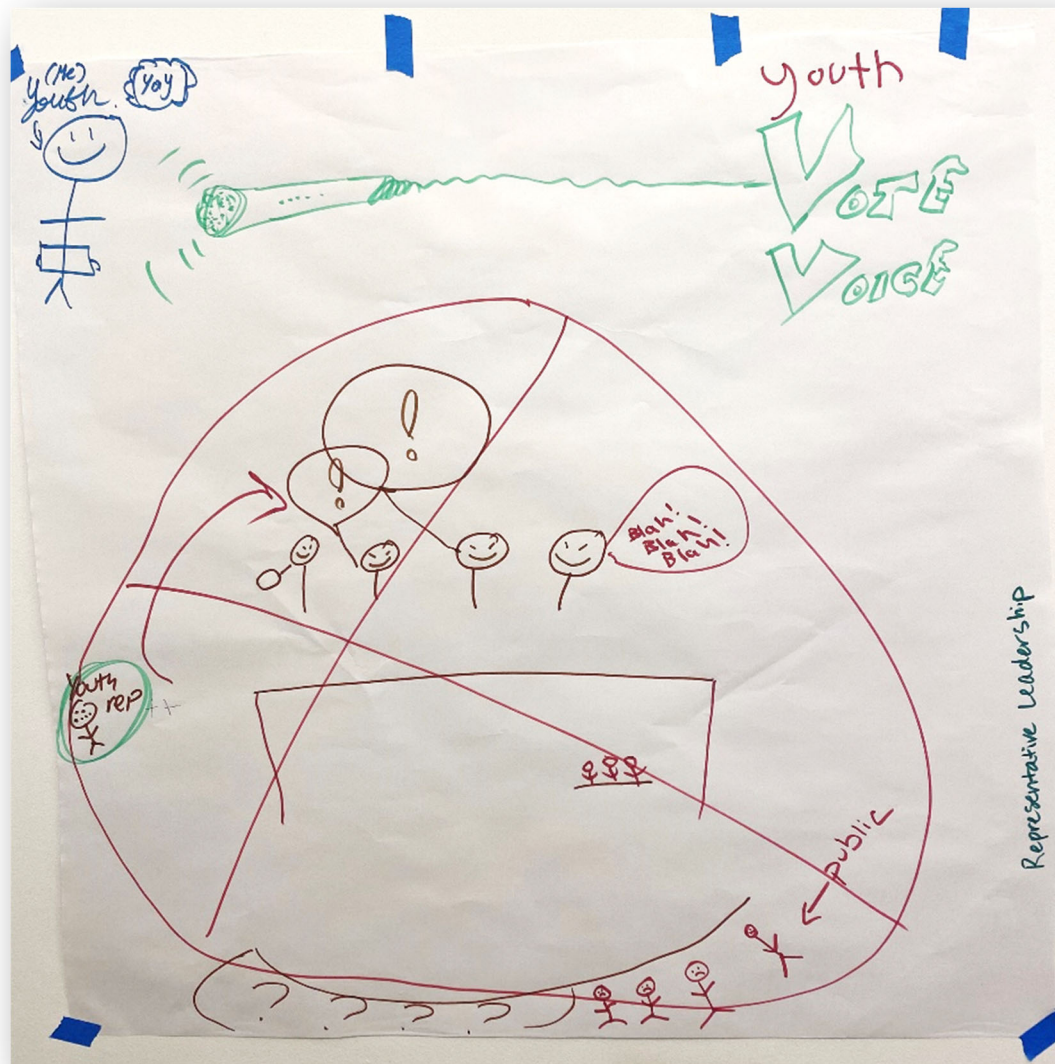


Figure 2: Vision Poster

The vision poster in Figure 2 envisioned a future where the traditional hierarchical structure of engaging with City officials is dismantled, which is represented by the “NO” sign crossing out the traditional dais structure. In its place, a power-sharing structure where youth voices are incorporated into decision-making processes is present. Participants remarked this vision includes more youth participation than present-day.

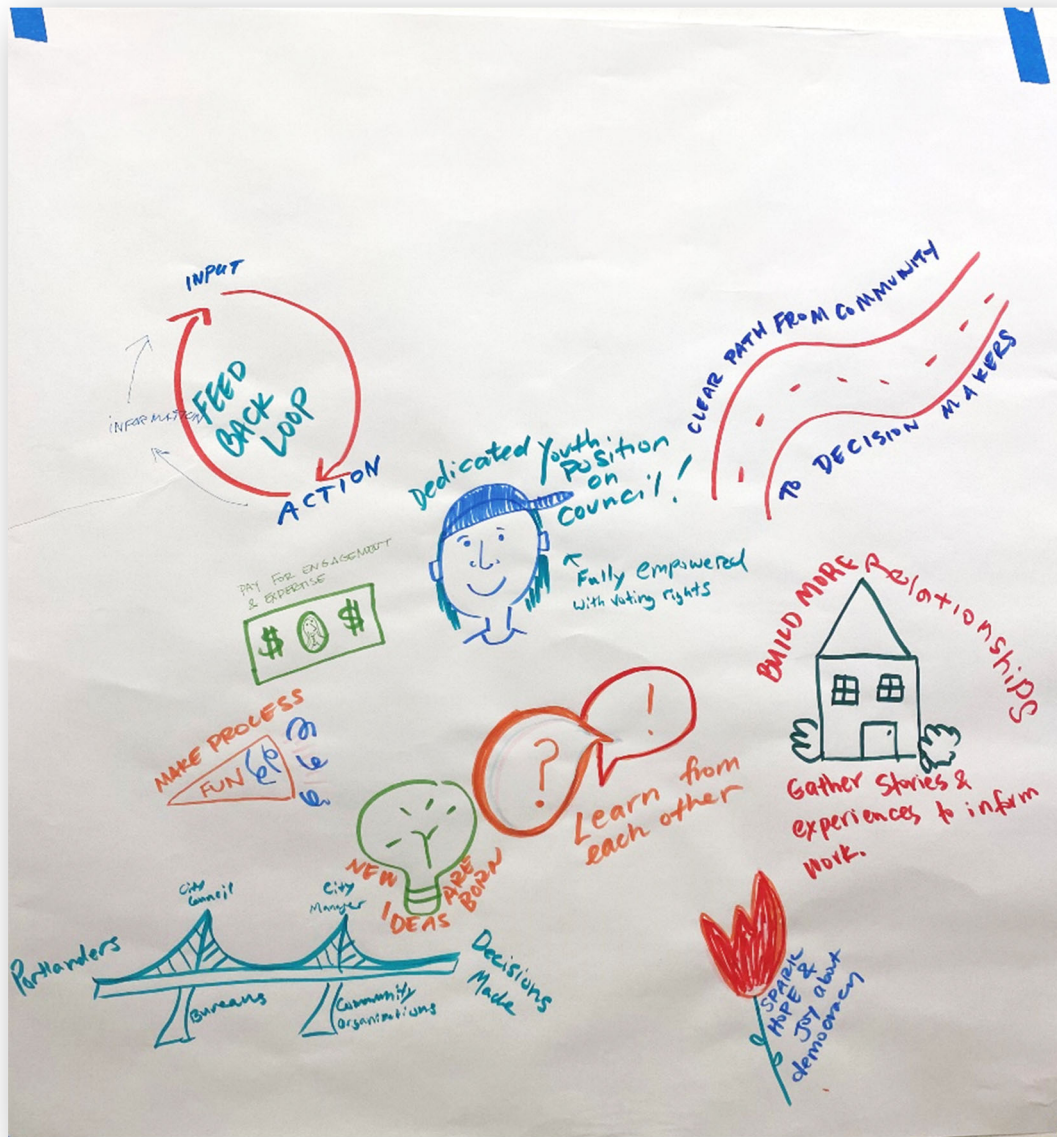


Figure 3: Vision Poster

The theme of power-sharing with youth was clear in the vision poster represented in Figure 3. The participants envisioned a City Councilor who is a youth themselves and is engaged in issues in a highly collaborative atmosphere. Other key elements of this vision include high amounts of collaboration amongst community members and City offices where story and knowledge sharing is a common practice; along with consistent feedback loops to keep communication flowing.

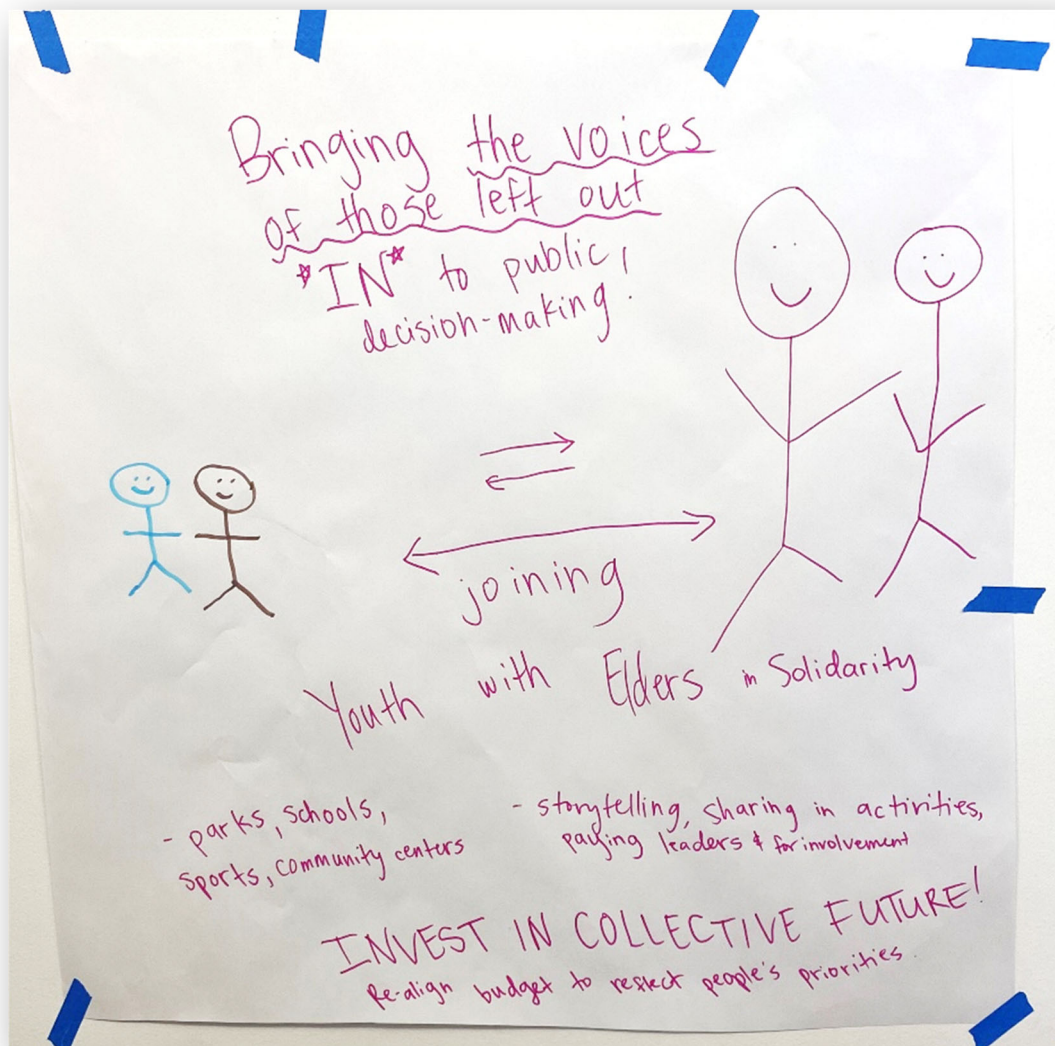


Figure 4: Vision Poster

The creators of the vision poster in Figure 4 believed in the power of communication and collaboration among different generations. They underscored the importance of intergenerational cultural exchange and conversations between the youth and elders in the area. Their future vision also entailed sharing power with those who have been historically excluded from civic processes.

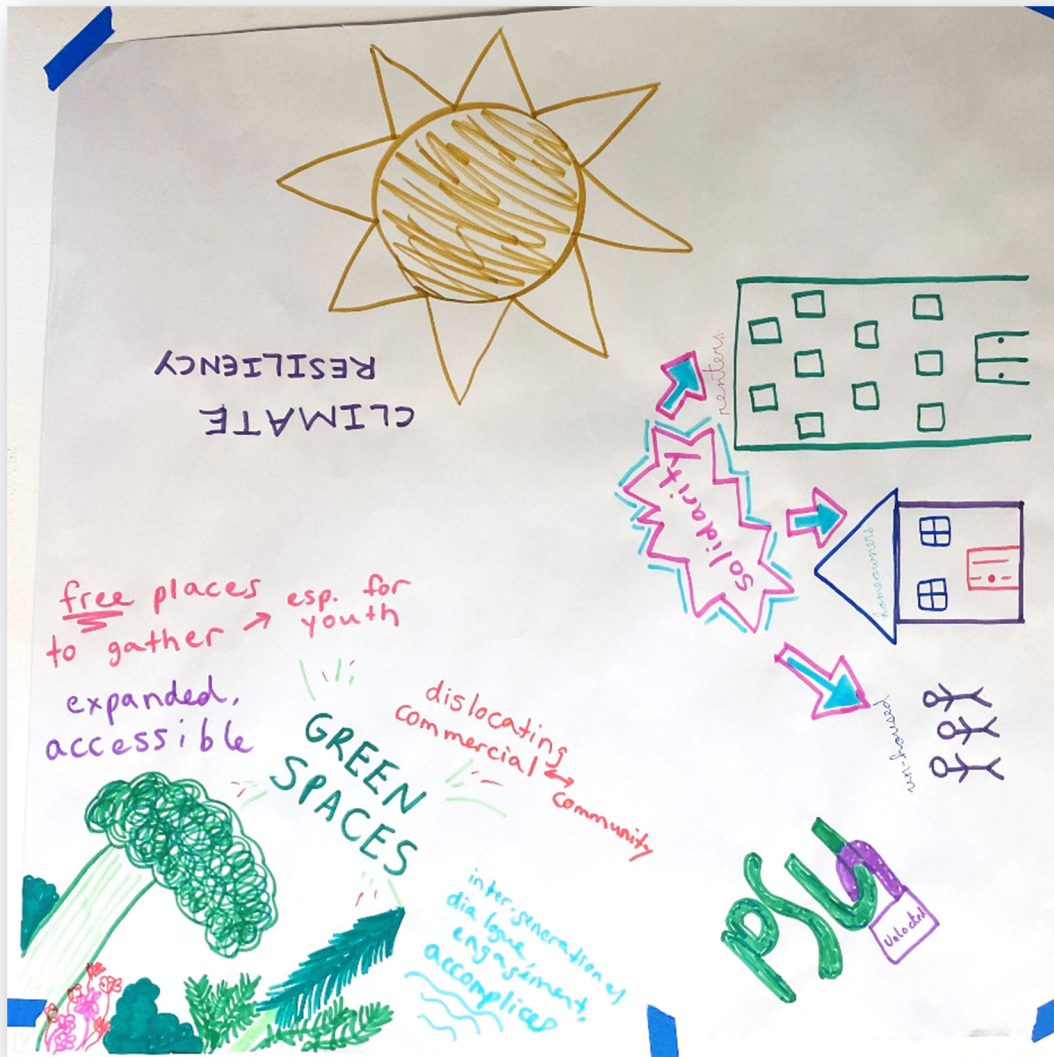


Figure 5: Vision Poster

“Green spaces” were emphasized in the future vision that appears in Figure 5. These spaces would be designed to be climate resilient and foster community. One example of a green space was the establishment of community gardens throughout the City to foster relationships amongst community members. This future would also entail investment in East Portland for more shade to increase climate-resilience.

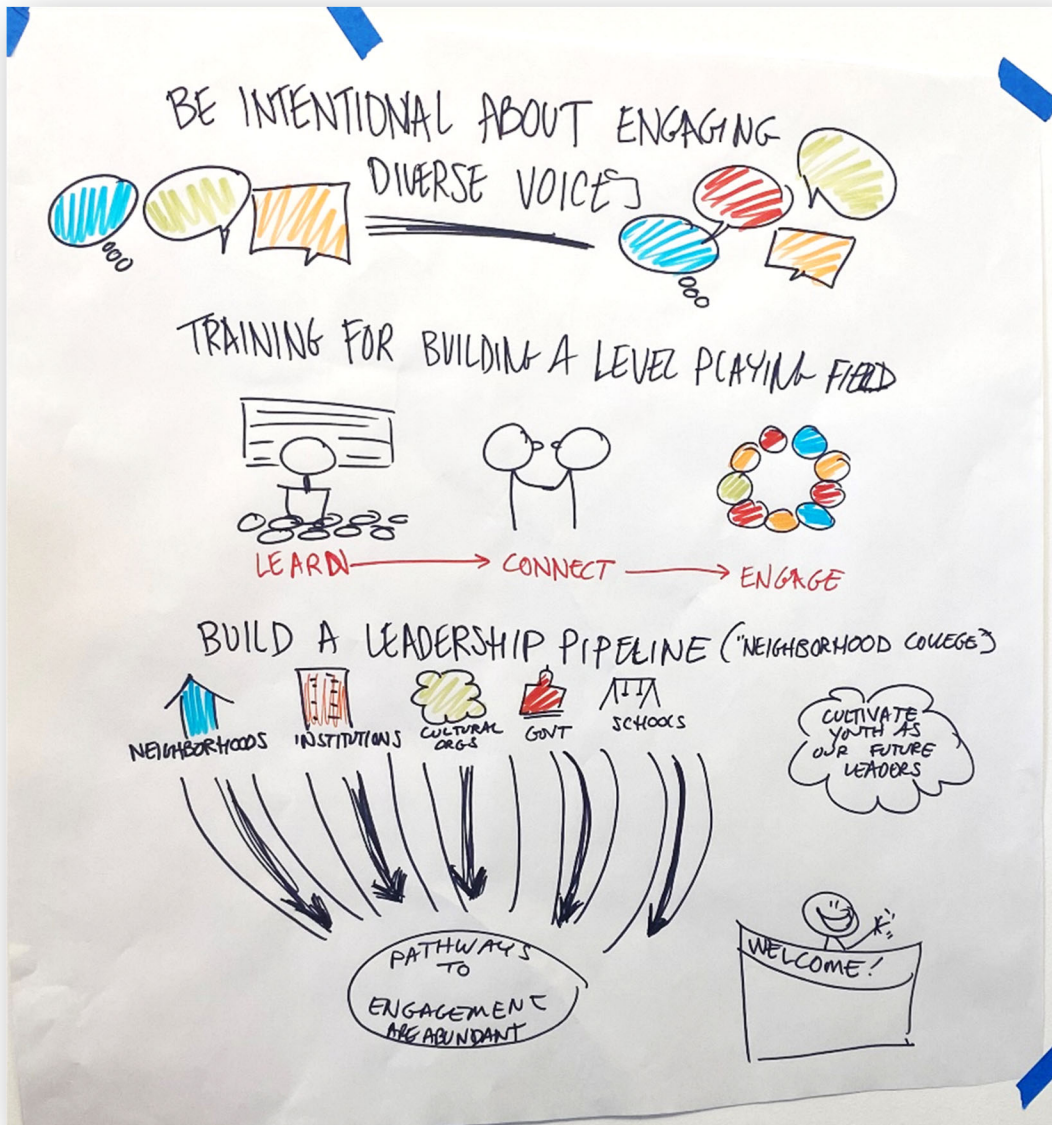


Figure 6: Vision Poster

The role of the City of Portland in building a more equitable future was the theme of the vision poster that appears in Figure 6. The creators envisioned a future where the City helped facilitate the learning of others who want to be civically engaged. Barriers to participation are reduced and a “level playing field” is created as civic leaders are supported “from cradle to grave”.

Appendix E: Community Connector Interviews



- Know Agenda Foundation -

Public Service Management: Parity Initiatives | Program Strategy | Fiscal Sponsorship

Summary Report: Community Connector Interviews **- Portland Engagement Summit -**

BACKGROUND:

In 2022, the City of Portland Office of Civic Life launched the *Portland Engagement Project* to provide the opportunity to hear from all Portlanders to learn about how the City of Portland can build upon existing successful engagement practices and improve civic processes for Portland residents. As part of that effort, the Office of Civic Life has partnered with the National Policy Consensus Center's (NPCC) Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT) and the Center for Public Service (CPS) - two programs in Portland State University's (PSU) College of Urban and Public Affairs, to hold a Summit that will bring together thought leaders and practitioners locally and from around the world to share and learn from one another in regard to best engagement efforts. Through the Summit, the aspiration will be for participants to learn engagement practice case studies from other locales that will help build a strong engagement practice throughout Portland amongst local government, neighborhoods, community-based organizations, and residents.

Beginning in Fall 2022, the Office of Civic Life, OKT, and CPS began designing the three-day Portland Engagement Summit to be held from April 27 to April 29, 2023. Concurrent to the planning of the Summit, the planning team sought assistance in obtaining feedback from Community Connectors in Portland who are highly interested in civic and community engagement, to inform both on the Summit and on approaches that benefit their communities.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Community Connector Interviews:

There were 11 Community Connector interviews that were conducted with individuals that represented Portland Neighborhood Associations, community-based organizations, elected officials, and additional non-affiliated residents who are interested in civic engagement, community engagement, and community organizing. The Community Connectors interviews were conducted over Zoom from February 9 through February 28, 2023.

The Community Connector interviews were not intended to be exhaustive feedback from every neighborhood association, community-based organization or interested party throughout Portland. The interviews were intended to inform on: 1) community interests and hopes for the Portland Engagement Summit; 2) identifying potential content experts and topics related to civic and community engagement for the Summit; and 3) receiving authentic, qualitative data from an array of community stakeholders on how to enrich the Summit's content and inclusion throughout the planning process, as well as to include community based participatory input towards creating best practice efforts for civic and community engagement processes that includes early input, communications throughout a process, and shared decision making.

Demographic Professional Breakdown:

The professional breakdown of the Interviewees was the following:

Neighborhood Association Directors	–	2
Non-Profit Professionals	–	4
Government Elected Staff	–	1
Government Agency Professionals	–	2
Unaffiliated Community Members	–	2
<hr/>		
Total:		11

Themes:

Interviewees expressed broad interest in learning about best practices for community engagement. The importance of having municipal leaders “show up,” “being willing to listen and engage” were stressed. Interviewees were also interested in opportunities to network and learn from peers at the Summit. Some participants expressed an observation of some community members often feeling “dismissed and not being listened to” by City leaders. There was also an emphasis on the need for municipal leaders to learn specific, community engagement models from which “two-way” strategies between government and community could be realized. Collectively, interviewees expressed wanting to experience a Summit that supported engagement examples where traditionally disenfranchised communities were part of both community engagement processes and the decision making that impacted outcomes from those processes. Mentioned across interviews was the importance of specifically engaging immigrant and refugee communities, Brown, Black, youth, and those who do not speak English. Suggestions for the Summit additionally included: time to network and ensuring accessible location access by public transportation. Additional desired themes for a Community Engagement Summit included:

- **Learn How to connect engagement to public policy**
- **Provide Case Studies**
- **Learn Best Practice Efforts**
- **Diversity of Attendees & Panelists**
- **Hear from local & national institutions**
- **Inclusion of vulnerable community members**
- **Desire to learn from experts**
- **Examples from other locales**

Report:

This report is a segmentation of the feedback that was received during the Community Connector Interviews. Each interviewee was first invited to share about their background in regard to their community engagement interests prior to answering questions 1 through 6 below. Each interviewee was given the questions one week in advance of their Community Connector Interview. Note: responses with a “+” indicate multiple interviewees stating the same.

PARTNER ORGANIZATION(S) CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS:

Oregon’s Kitchen Table partnered with the non-profit organization, Know Agenda Foundation and one of its managers – Damon Isiah Turner to conduct the interviews. (Damon is also a Project Consultant with the National Policy Consensus Center). In addition, Meaghan Lingo, of the Center for Public Service and Oregon’s Kitchen Table, coordinated the note-taking and recording of the Community Connector Interviews.

Civic and Community Engagement Feedback & Suggestions

Question #1: What does community engagement look like to you and how does it show up in your community in ways that speak to you?

“When community engagement is done right, it invites everyone who does care, and should care - to come to the table and have conversations about a topic.” - Interviewee

- **Approach:**

- Allow for epiphanies and grace to shift the process, questions, themes, styles of administration, facilitation and shared leadership of the community engagement process gatherings – especially if there is a specific purpose for the particular community engagement process with an anticipated outcome
- Anchor in core values, principles, and agreements among the gathered
- Build upon the establishment of relationship with an individual, community, or organization by asking them to connect you to additional stakeholders; “Community engagement is like a spider web
- Engage with intention with your “worst critics”
 - “Sometimes people just need to be heard”
- Ensure the transparency of the community engagement process for stakeholders
- Explore how a community engagement process has echoed through time and in other cultures, before this contemporary iteration of this particular outreach
- Focus groups, communities, and audiences on tangible, realistic outcomes for the community engagement process
- Honor the lived experiences of participants as a form of participatory expertise
- Meet people “where they at” and offer resources that their community will benefit from
- Provide evidence behind the institution’s decision making to build trust
- Share the management of, leadership of, and the power within a particular community engagement process, in order to also allow for communities to share in the ability to shape the project and to bring their potential solutions forward +
- Think about all the different layers of people that a particular governmental decision may affect
- Utilize outreach before and prior to key decisions are made by government institutions
- Welcome other terms, metaphors, and imagery for similar processes that may have been held in the past that defined or described what communities now know, value, and experience.
- Work with people of all opinions and all levels to create something positive
- Work with people who need resources the most

- **Communication:**

- Assess communication throughout the process to ensure that it is working and that everyone is staying connected; re-evaluate communication approach if needed
- Define public service and community engagement jargon (e.g. acronyms, terms) in ways that are accessible to all audiences

- *Keep* in touch with those connected with after the process is complete
- *Make* it clear where ultimate decisions from the process are coming from
- *Take* good notes and ensure that recordings of those conversations are accessible
- *Utilize* languages for non-English speakers (translation)
- **Data:**
 - *Give* participants information to be able to make informed decisions (both qualitative and quantitative)
- **Equity:**
 - *Build* capacity for communities to take care of themselves
 - Example: Teach communities how to get through “government red tape”
 - *Determine* how to demonstrate the value of community input by compensating those asked about their perspectives and opinions in the capacity of having community-based expertise; this also would demonstrate that more people are listened to, given that their time is valuable
 - *Eliminate* any perceived and real barriers to participation
 - *Provide* stipends for childcare and transportation
 - *Provide* visual approaches for the qualities and characteristics for the invitation and participation of various communities and sectors that may not be mutually exclusive, but where claims and identities are multiple and cross-referenced, and where some enduring relationships emerge and continue, including:
 - Accessibility
 - Age
 - Civil/ Government Sectors
 - Gender Identities
 - Language
 - Literacy
 - Location
 - Political Identity & Perspective
 - Profession
 - Racial & Ethnic
 - Region
 - Religion
 - *Utilize* engagement throughout and after a civic and community engagement process +
- **Geography:**
 - *Document* where people are located, in regard to how they may identify - neighborhood wise and social group identity wise
 - *Hold* hearings/meetings/events closer to where constituents live - preferably in buildings they are familiar with and are comfortable going to
 - *Understand* that decisions, policy, etc. may affect and impact various neighborhoods in different ways
- **Humanity:**
 - *Incorporate* creative techniques to process wisdom, ideas, feelings, techniques that emerge from various cultures, the arts, methods to assure participation of

differently abled people; utilize emerging technologies that overcome barriers of space, time, and language; when gathered, there are dynamics and personal senses to take into consideration for the form and function of community engagement that offers connective experiences for the senses of thinking, feeling, hearing listening, sensing, speaking, and silence

- *Show up* in the places and spaces where communities naturally and organically gather (e.g. tabling at festivals, community based events, community based institutions, etc.)
- *Uplift* the community in messaging and during the ongoing engagement processes in affirming what those communities have historically brought to the process
- **Government Institutions:**
 - *Develop and maintain* a Toolkit for bureaucrats on how to conduct civic engagement
 - *Ensure* that the engagement process is a “two-way street” and not for government to simply plan the community engagement process with pre-conditions and pre-determinations of what the results should be
 - *Gather* in spaces where communities are already holding existing community events and building culture
 - *Utilize* and “pay attention to” the information that government receives from public and community engagement processes; if that information is not utilized in informing decisions, then explain why to the community so that they do not feel that the information that they shared was simply ignored
- **Timing:**
 - *Hold* meetings at various times to offer day time, early evening, and weekends
 - *Start* the community engagement early in the process; “Public loses trust when you do not reach out to communities ahead of time.” +

What Civic & Community Engagement Is Not:

- When folks are invited to a party or event as names on a check list simply for “check list sake” +
- When an invitation to a particular community engagement event is missing or not clear on:
 - what the purpose of the event is
 - logistical details
- When folks arrive at the event and are not introduced, welcomed, misnamed, heard, seen, understood, and are disrespected
- When there is lack of courtesy, and the community engagement entity is no longer in contact or connected to the constituents after the event

Question #2: Who (individuals, organizations, institutions) would you want to learn from locally in regard to community engagement?

"It is important to meaningfully engage- not just check off a box, but make sure these communities are able to impact and guide outcomes." - Interviewee

Institutions:

- **City of Portland**
 - Bureau of Sustainability
 - Office of Equity & Human Rights *Black Male Achievement Initiative*
 - Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R)
 - Portland Police Bureau (PPB)
 - Question: "How does the City of Portland engage with faith communities?"
- **Consulates**
 - Mexican
- **METRO**
 - Master Recycler Program
 - Note: *As an agency, METRO was noted to have a history of engaging diverse communities effectively*
- **Multnomah County**
 - Multnomah Youth Commission +
- **Portland Public Schools (PPS)**
- **Washington County**
 - Office of Equity, Inclusion & Community Engagement
- local government entities and municipalities in addition to the City of Portland
- elected officials and bureaucrats should be invited

Organizations:

- **Adelante Mujeres**
- **African Youth Community Organization (AYCO)**
- **Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) +**
- **Central City Concern**
- **Centro Cultural (Cornelius, Oregon)**
- **Coalition of Communities of Color +**
- **Division Midway Alliance**
- **El Programa Hispano Catolico**
- **Hacienda CDC**
 - Interviewee expressed interest in learning more about how Hacienda CDC set up the Portland Community Fund and the implementation of it

- **Healthy Democracy**
 - Programming includes citizen review assembles; has experience in engaging community members with different life experiences in civic processes
- **Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) +**
- **Latino Network**
- **Metropolitan Family Service**
- **Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA)**
- **Next Up Oregon** (formerly The Bus Project) +
- **Organizing People Activating Leaders (OPAL)**
- **Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)** (Woodburn, Oregon)
 - English Translation: Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United
- **Portland Audubon**
- **Portland DSA**
- **REAP**
- **Rotarians**
- **Self Enhancement Inc. (SEI)**
- **Somali American Council of Oregon +**
- **Together Lab**
- **Unite Oregon +**
- **Urban Greenspaces Institute**
- **Verde**
- **Western States Center**

Subject Areas & Communities:

- **Artists**
- **Asian Communities** (including Southeast Asian Communities)
- **Community Organizers** (e.g. Black, Brown)
- **East County Community**
- **Faith Based Communities**
 - **Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice**
- **Indigenous Communities & Tribes**
- **Less Resourced Groups**
 - Question: How do less resourced groups conduct Community Engagement?
- **Political Elected Officials**
- **Resource & Knowledge Experts**
 - **Community Engagement Tools**
 - **Funding Sources for Community Engagement**
 - **White Nationalism**
 - Speakers that are experts in knowledge on the threat of this subject
- **Rural Communities**
- **Somali Community**

- **University and Colleges (with the following programs:)**
 - **Political Science**
 - **Public Administration**
- **Visual Note-Takers & Photojournalists** (e.g. Laura Lo Forti of Story Midwife)
- **Young Adult Focused Civic Engagement and Leadership Organizations**
 - **Black & Beyond the Binary Collective**
 - **Passion Impact**
 - **University and College Student Unions** (e.g. Black, Latinx, LGBTQ, Indigenous, Asian-Pacific Islander)
- **Youth**
 - **Generation Z** - especially in regard to how technology influences community engagement for them) +

Question #3: Who (individuals, organizations, institutions) would you want to learn from nationally and/or internationally in regard to community engagement?

“Community engagement is a way to learn about where to find information, what your rights are, and how to access resources.” - Interviewee

Institutions:

- **City Governments** (their associated City Managers to learn about their City Charters)
 - **Boston, Massachusetts**
 - **New York, New York**
 - **Seattle, Washington**

Organizations

- **Burns Institute** (Oakland, California)
- **Development Dimensions International** (Bridgeville, Pennsylvania)
- **Democracy Beyond Elections** (there are coalitions throughout the United States)
- **Fair Elections Center** (Washington D.C.)
- **International Association of Public Participation** (Denver, Colorado)
- **Participatory Budgeting Project** (Brooklyn, New York; Oakland, California)
- **People Powered** (Brooklyn, New York)
- **PolicyLink** (Oakland, California; New York; Washington D.C.; Los Angeles)
- **Public Citizen** (Washington D.C.; Austin, Texas)
- **Vote Save America**

Subject Areas & Communities:

- **Community Organizers**
 - Chicago, Illinois (that are facing similar issues as Portland relative to Housing and Homelessness)
 - Flint, Michigan (that specialize in Water Rights)
 - Seattle, Washington
 - Georgia
 - Texas
- **Elder Groups & Associations**
 - Residential Retirement Groups (e.g. Leading Age)
- **Faith Based Communities**
 - Florida Council of Churches (State Ecumenical Group or Committee)
 - West Virginia Council of Churches
- **Rural Communities** (beyond Oregon)
- **Sherry Arnstein’s “Ladder of Citizen Participation” +**

Summit Feedback & Suggestions

Question #4: For you, how would you utilize a summit or symposium focused specifically on community engagement?

"Trying to get people involved is very important in civic engagement practices." - Interviewee

- *Cross reference* community engagement insights with examples from **other countries**
- *Gain* insight into **how others approach and what their process is for making their plans and reporting out for community engagement**
- *Invite* all of their work team (and organizational staff) to attend the Summit
- Learn about/ how/ to / from:
 - Best practices of community **engagement from other government and municipal entities** about what is work for them (and what is not)
 - Best practices **from people and organizations that engage with government and municipal entities**
 - **Community members who have served on advisory bodies and commissions** for them to address:
 - Are these Commissions actually meeting their mission?
 - Is it worthwhile for participants?
 - Can Government Commissions and Committees with community membership influence decision making?
 - **Create goals and plans on how to address more abstract issues** impacting communities (as opposed to only being connected to one specific policy issue)
 - **Different models of community participation**
 - Do you **avoid making more noise** as opposed to being engaged and responding?
 - Do you **message if the civic or community engagement process is not solved at the end of the process?** vs. **Trying to engage the community more broadly over time in building relationship?**
 - Do organizations utilize the **"Ladder of Engagement" Model?**
 - The **ethics** around community change
 - **Hand the conversation to someone else or another institution or organization**
 - **Maintain momentum in community engagement and organizing**
 - **Support one another with colleagues who are doing similar work**
 - **Translate advocacy efforts to actual public policy (learning what are the legal limits and possibilities of advocacy with government)**
 - **What are opportunities for nonprofits to educate legislators about their causes?**
 - **What are the goals and objectives of a community engagement process?**
 - **What the limits of policy advocacy for non-profit organizations?**
- *Network* with attendees; *share* information about professional networks +

Question #5: Logistically, what circumstances would be important for you to be in place in order to attend a summit focused on community engagement?

- **Child Care**
- **Clarity**
 - about what the Summit will be and what the some of the takeaways will be for learning within the advertising and promotional materials and in facilitation
- **Food**
- **Follow Up**
 - Check-In with participants after the Summit to create a network of interested civic and community engagement
- **Language**
 - Utilizing plain language “that does not speak over people”
 - Translation services
- **Location**
 - **Accessibility** of Location (e.g. ADA compliant, Wheelchair access, etc.)
 - **Keep it at one location +**
 - **Nature Surroundings** (for breaks, sessions, etc).
- **Parking**
 - Clear Instructions
 - Free or comped +
- **Participant Attendees and Panelists** need to include representation from:
 - African-American Community
 - Houseless Population
 - Immigrant Communities
 - Youth
- **Stipend**
 - for gas and/or transportation +
- **Stream Summit Sessions**
 - Utilize either Facebook, YouTube or Zoom +1; include instructions on how to utilize the Streaming option
- **Summit Days**
 - Agenda: Do not overload
 - Each day potentially could have a separate theme in regard to community engagement
 - Make agenda/schedule available in advance
 - COVID Protocols in place (including well-ventilated spaces)
 - Inspiring Keynote Speakers
 - Incorporate innovate methods of engaging participants

- “Make it fun!”
- Needs to not just include “talking heads”
- Opportunities to connect with other government entities
- Opportunities to engage with young people
- Outcomes for learning
- Provide preparatory documents prior to Summit - hope for the event, agenda, documents to prepare learning +
- Sessions focus on one specific question or aspect of community engagement
- Think broadly about the commitment of three (3) days for the attendees and ways to honor that within the context of the summit
- Record sessions so that they can be watched and referenced later
- **Transportation** Accessibility +
 - Easy access by MAX, Tri-met
- **Values of:**
 - Courtesy (people are thanked and welcomed for participating)

Question #6: Do you have any recommendations for a good space to hold a summit focused on community engagement from Thursday April 27, Friday April 28, & Saturday, April 29, 2023?

Public Institutions

- Centennial High School
- David Douglas High School
- East Portland Community Center +
- Floyd Light Middle School
- Mt. Hood Community College
- Oregon Convention Center +
- Parkrose High School
- Portland Building
- Portland Community College (SE Campus)
- Reynolds High School

Organizations & Businesses:

- Alberta Abbey (old Mallory Church)
 - has 2nd Floor Balcony, large seating area in Auditorium
- Asian Health & Service Center
- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)
- Boys & Girls Club (Wattles)
- Center for Native Arts & Cultures Building
 - www.nativeartsandcultures.org/cnac-rental-space
- Doubletree Hotel (Lloyd Center)
- Ecotrust
- Hacienda CDC
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) +
 - Gym + break out rooms
- June Key Delta Center
- Latino Network
- Meyer Memorial Trust
 - Conference Room Space
- Rockwood Market Hall
- Self-Enhancement Inc.
 - has Auditorium, Break out Classrooms

Private Institutions:

- Adventist Health Portland
- University of Portland
- Warner Pacific College

Faith-Based Locations:

- Imago Dei Church
- Life Change Church

Oregon's Kitchen Table

Oregon's Kitchen Table was created as a piece of permanent civic infrastructure to engage all Oregonians in the decisions that affect them, with a particular focus on reaching, engaging, and hearing from Oregonians that have been left out of traditional engagement processes. Oregon's Kitchen Table is dedicated to helping Oregonians share their ideas, opinions, beliefs, and resources in improving Oregon and its communities. Using culturally specific and targeted outreach, as well as community partnerships, we work with organizers, translators, and interpreters to assure that materials and online and in-person engagement activities are available for everyone. We honor and value the wide range of values, ideas, and lived experiences that community members share with us and with public decision-makers. Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University.

Know Agenda Foundation

Know Agenda Foundation (KAF) assists community groups, non-profit organizations (without 501(c)(3) status), and unaffiliated organizational community members in conjunction with institutional stakeholders, in supporting community capacity building efforts in the facilitation of the creation of sustainable solutions that address critical community needs within under-served communities.

KAF's programs include:

1. Fiscal Sponsorship of public service projects and organizations serving underserved communities with community based missions
2. Strategic Advising for organizational development, grant fundraising, and donation servicing
3. Facilitation regarding equity and human rights processes and democratic processes

KAF has local offices in both Portland, Oregon and Wilmington, North Carolina and has the capacity to serve Fiscal Sponsored Projects in any locale within the United States.

Center for Public Service

The Center for Public Service provides individuals and public sector and non-profit organizations access to the intellectual resources and practical experience of the Hatfield School of Government in order to improve governance, civic capacity and public management locally, regionally, nationally and around the globe. Through the integration of theory, scholarly research and practice, the Center enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of public service institutions and democratic governance. We do this through:

- Training, education and other talent-building programs, which are custom-tailored for the specific needs of public service professionals and organizations
- Research and consulting services that help leaders and citizens better understand and solve key challenges through leadership and innovation
- Academically-grounded, practice-centered knowledge created through research, real-world application, and publication
- A strong grounding in living by and promoting the values of the Hatfield School of Government

Public service professionals and organizations that partner with CPS will acquire knowledge and skills that will tangibly and significantly improve individual performance and leadership and organizational public service capabilities.