

City of San Diego – Inclusive Public Engagement Guide

Focused Discussion Group Meeting #6: "Engagement Feedback and Lessons Learned"

Meeting Summary Report

Meeting held June 28, 2023

Prepared by:

City Planning Department



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Focused Discussion Group Meeting #6

Meeting Details

June 28, 2023 – 6:00-8:00 PM

Dolores Magdaleno Memorial Recreation Center

2902 Marcy Ave, San Diego, CA 92113

Meeting Overview

In Focused Discussion Group (FDG) Meeting #6 – Engagement Feedback and Lessons Learned – the project team reported on the Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities in Southeastern San Diego, invited members' reflections about the FDG and invited members to provide recommendations on effective outreach. The project team also discussed the Inclusive Public Engagement Guide's next steps and held a closing activity.

Meeting Participants

Focused Discussion Group

- Candice Carr
- Rebecca Egipto
- Tanisha-Jean Martin
- Andrea Schlageter
- Christine Millena
- Andrea Hetheru
- Marry Young
- Ethan Ramirez
- Danielle Knauff Raykowski



Project Team

City of San Diego

- Anisha Gianchandani, Program Manager, City Planning Department
- Cristhian Barajas, Senior Planner, City Planning Department
- Colette Redon, Senior Planner, City Planning Department
- America Aceves, Assistant Planner, City Planning Department
- Helen Weldeghiorgis, Program Manager, Department of Race and Equity

Kearns & West (meeting facilitation)

- Brisa Aviles
- Danielle Berger
- Joan Isaacson
- Jasmine King

Imagine (meeting facilitation)

- Catherine Schrock
- Peter Schrock

Meeting Activities and Input

The project team welcomed FDG members and shared the agenda for Meeting #6:

- Report back on Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities
- Reflection on the Focused Discussion Group
- Effective outreach activity
- Inclusive Public Engagement Guide next steps
- Closing activity

Report-Back on Infrastructure Prioritization Pilot Engagement Activities

The project team reported back to the FDG on the two Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities held in the Southeastern community planning area (CPA)—the Juneteenth festival and the Plan for Your Community workshop—which were intended to capture input about infrastructure needs in the CPA.

FDG member observers who attended the Juneteenth and Plan for Your Community events shared their thoughts about what went well and what they experienced or observed as areas for improvement. Members also provided recommendations to consider when planning future engagement events.

FDG members' reflections and observations on the Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities included:

Juneteenth event:

- City staff and volunteers interacted well with people at the event and demonstrated an engaged and positive attitude.
- Some set-up recommendations included a lounge area for people to interact, visual displays outside the booth to help engage people and showing visuals of before and after infrastructure improvements.
- The input activity was engaging, using colorful comment cards. The City booth stood out from others in the booth area, and people who attended the event shared that they were happy to see the City in attendance.
- Finding available parking was challenging at the Juneteenth event.

Plan for Your Community workshop:

- The Plan for Your Community event in Mountain View was welcoming, participants received handouts for the event, and the photo gallery and visuals were enjoyable.
- Some challenges included seeing more City staff in attendance than community members and staff using jargon during the presentation. Recommendations for future events included using different approaches when responding to Q&A that improve the building of community connections and reassuring people who ask questions by following up.
- There were differences in how people engaged between those who were already involved in the project and people who were just starting to become involved. People who already had experience participating were more familiar with the City's process and technical planning aspects.
- Outdoor events can encourage people to stay longer.
- Holding events at schools would be beneficial.

Reflection on the Focused Discussion Group

The project team invited FDG members to reflect on their experience participating in the six FDG meetings. Members were asked to reflect on whether the FDG was successful and suggest any room for improvement in similar processes in the future. FDG members shared feedback on what they learned through their participation, the value of the group discussions in building community and general growth areas to strengthen the effectiveness of project-specific groups as an engagement technique.

FDG members' reflections included:

- The FDG helped members better understand what the City is doing through the information provided and represented an opportunity to provide feedback.
- FDG members felt heard and were able to learn from others in the group. The project team was intentional about selecting a diverse and representative group, which added value to the process.
- The project team was adaptable to making changes to the agenda and activities to support the group.

- Include more opportunities for follow-up regarding the Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities, lead outreach at more community locations and have a more extended period for group discussions.
- Incorporate more consistent follow-up with FDG members by sharing updates on comments and encouraging comments to be shared through email following meetings.
- Improve labeling of take-home worksheets and handouts to help FDG members understand the connectivity between them.
- During smaller group discussions, limit groups to two or three people for deeper discussion and feedback.
- Consider more diverse gender representation in the future.

Effective Outreach Activity

The project team invited FDG members to provide input on how the City could conduct effective outreach. FDG members placed their comments on visual boards, sharing responses on who is currently missing from outreach, where they would like to see outreach materials distributed (physical and virtual locations) and what outreach methods resonate with them and their community.

FDG members' comments on effective public outreach included:

- More outreach is needed to young people, college students, unsheltered neighbors and non-native English speakers. Additional outreach to families and people who work long hours is also needed.
- Provide outreach materials at community events, fairs, festivals and cultural centers.
- Consider sharing information at bus stops, recreation and senior centers and commercial and social service locations (e.g., grocery stores, gyms, coffee shops, restaurants, public health service facilities, and nutrition facilities).
- Advertise information through digital signage boards at street intersections, share text messages with specific information and advertise in local newspapers and social media. Consider advertising on buses and trolleys.
- Consider conducting street interviews, community events, door-to-door outreach and installing information kiosks in highly visited locations in the community.
- Conduct more meetings similarly structured to the FDG meetings.
- Follow up with FDG members affiliated with community-based organizations for additional engagement.

Inclusive Public Engagement Guide Next Steps

The project team reported back about input themes heard during the FDG meetings and shared the anticipated project timeline and next steps for the Inclusive Public Engagement Guide.

The input themes identified from FDG member comments focused on improving diverse representation in the engagement process, sharing easy-to-understand information and providing follow-up on engagement efforts. In addition, the importance of understanding cultural and social norms in different communities was also identified throughout group discussions.

Project team members previewed the initial online survey from the Inclusive Public Engagement Guide webpage. The project team reviewed the anticipated project timeline and forthcoming additional engagement, such as with other City-affiliated boards and working groups.

Project team members shared that a draft Inclusive Public Engagement Guide was in development and that FDG members would be invited to provide feedback on the draft Guide. The project team reviewed the draft Inclusive Public Engagement Guide outline and shared the Inclusive Public Engagement Guide [video](#) developed by Imagine. The video content was developed based on two pop-up events, interviews with City leadership and a series of interview theatre workshops.

The meeting concluded with a closing activity and acknowledgement of FDG members' participation. Highlights shared by FDG members and the project team included:

- FDG members shared appreciation for supporting the community, learning from others in the group and becoming more knowledgeable about the City's engagement process.
- Education on various engagement techniques was valuable.
- Group discussions felt safe for sharing feedback.
- It was helpful for the project team to adapt to the group and capture the group's feedback.
- It was valuable for FDG members to have personal ownership of the FDG process, take leadership to promote Infrastructure Prioritization pilot engagement activities and share information with other community members.