Tools and Community Engagement

Group 1:
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Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

Team 1 Members + Advisors

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Cheryll Case

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Ori Abara

Mathieu Goetzke

Melissa Lui

A summary of information we gathered from Curtner participants

8:30 - 8:50

What is meaningful engagement? Where do we want to be?

8:50 - 9:15

5 mins break

Case studies: Identifying what works, what doesn't, defining gaps

9:20 - 9:50

10 mins break

Assessment of cases + survey

10:00-10:10

Power sharing and trust building panel

10:10-11:10

Reflection activity

11:10-11:40

10 mins break

Engagement Scenario

The City of Toronto has received an application for a new residential project which will offer 1500 affordable housing units and 1000 market units in Scarborough Town Centre.

The developer is focused on building a relationship with the community and has engaged in deep research about the future residents of the area. This includes reaching out to existing resident associations and community leaders.

The first of two public meetings has been set from 6.00 pm-8.00 pm on a weekday at the Civic Centre. Participants unable to attend the meeting can join the live stream online. An overview of the project and its impact on the community has been shared through distribution of promotional fliers in the neighbourhood, a project website and social media channels. The public meeting includes presentations by the developer, planning staff, a design charrette by the architects, and some time for discussion and questions.

In order to build confidence in the decision-making process, the developer has assured participants that their feedback will be integrated in the project refinement process. However, how and when this will be done has not been communicated yet.

Goals of Engagement

- Gain **trust**
- **Share information** about the project
- Get to **know the community** and what's happening
- **Build a relationship** between the developer and the community
- Understand **the needs and wants** of the community
- Understand and **determine the broader impact** of a plan or project
- Get **community feedback** about the project

What Worked?

- Consideration for **future residents**, rather than solely focusing on existing residents and community members

- Availability of a **livestream as an alternate** option for attendance

- **Use of different tools** as part of the public event, offering opportunity for **different ways of engagement at a single event**

- Developer has already **reached out to some community members** and is looking to **build a relationship** with the community

- Presenting the plan to **get feedback**

What Should Change?

- **Evening time slot** may not work for all, 6-8pm may be a hit or miss
- Offer **other ways for participation** - public meetings can be intimidating
- Have a **physical presence** in the Scarborough Town Centre (eg: a permanent open house to inform the public who frequent the venue)
- Add a **Community Working Group**
- Think about the **use of different technologies** and how various tools may be used by different demographics
- Use a **tracking system** for community feedback
- Make consultation material **accessible in different languages**
- Providing **timelines and further details** for how feedback would be incorporated. Timelines would set the ground for **accountability**

How to Ensure Equitable Engagement ?

- **Transparency** about the process - be explicit about what the community can/cannot influence
- Account for **social power dynamics** between existing and future residents
- **Invite a cross-section of individuals** that reflect those who currently live and would want to live in the community. This should include tenants and businesses.
- Utilize a number of communication tools. **Consider use of various technologies**, print materials in different languages, reconsider reliance on text/technical content vs. visual content etc
- Use language that is **easy to understand and limit use of jargon**
- Incorporate some form of **'compensation' for attendees** (e.g.: refreshments, childcare on site)
- Set up **smaller community committees** for focused discussions
- Acknowledgment of **engagement bias** (only connecting with people of a particular demographic) and consideration for how to overcome the bias
- Consider who is at the meeting and **who's not in the room** – make a plan to reach out to those who are under-represented in attendees
- **Go to the community**, rather than having the community come to you

Examples - Past Experience

- **Building relationships from the start**, before plan development. Getting to know the community and ensuring solutions address needs
- Being explicit about the roles of stakeholders, planners, developer, etc
- **Youth engagement** - visiting schools and going into classrooms
- Informing the community about the **project benefits for existing and future community members**
- **Community walks** before the public meeting
- Taking a **different approach** to the 'town hall presentation' format
- Use of **accessible materials** for members of the community with disabilities
- Giving **alternatives for attendees** to express their views and the use of interactive tools
- Use of pop-ups and mobile engagement - project team that **goes to the people**

What is Meaningful Engagement?

When we talk about Engagement :

We often refer to many different objectives such as

- Accessibility
- Informing the community
- Transparency
- Equitable participation
- Addressing Systemic Inequities
- Reciprocal relationships with communities

There is an inherent understanding that this is rooted on a set of values

We don't full name these values - and sometimes we just jump into tactics

But it may help to unpack things and understand why we engage to begin with

What is the purpose of engagement?
Why do we engage?

- **Dealing with change and decision-making**
  - Strengthen democratic decision-making
  - Of course, change is assumed
  - Who does this change benefit?

- **Consideration of the impacts of change**
  - Untangling complexities of what will happen

- **Understand the ecosystem**
  - Get a sense of the context: relationships, power structures, purpose, trust

- **Addressing opportunities that might come about because of the change**

- **Understanding human desires**
  - About the change itself
  - If the change happens
  - If the change does not happen

Good Public Engagement...

Informed +
actionable
public input

Public
Engagement
Process

Informed
decisions
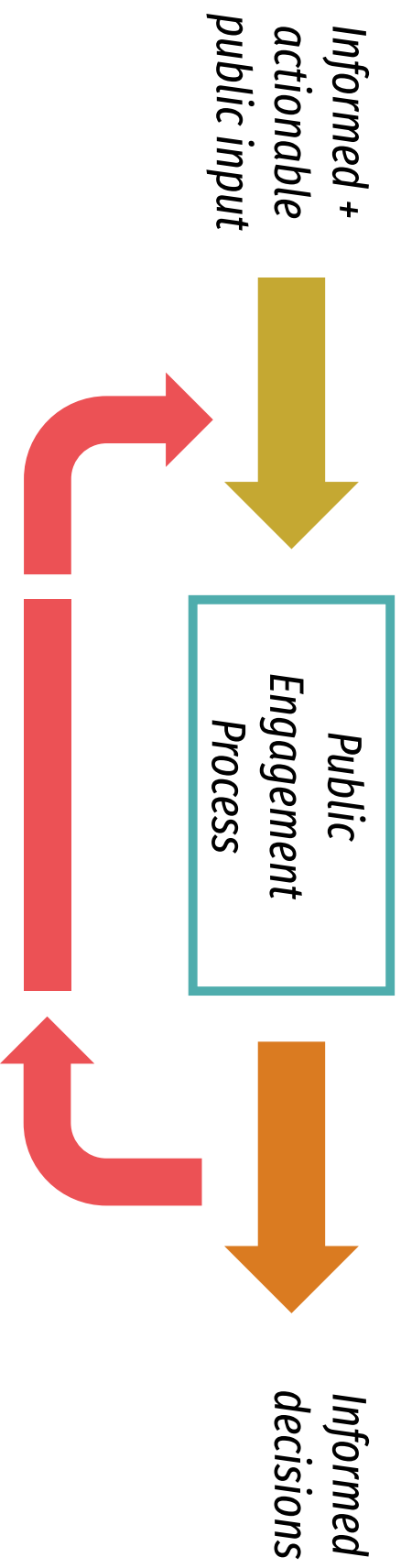
...collects **informed** and **actionable** input from a **large** and **diverse** group of participants to **inform** decision making

Good Public Engagement...

Informed +
actionable
public input

Public
Engagement
Process

Informed
decisions

This should aim to close the circle - going back to the community and illustrating how their input has informed decision making, creating a culture of engagement which can encourage more to get involved

Key factors to Achieve Good Engagement

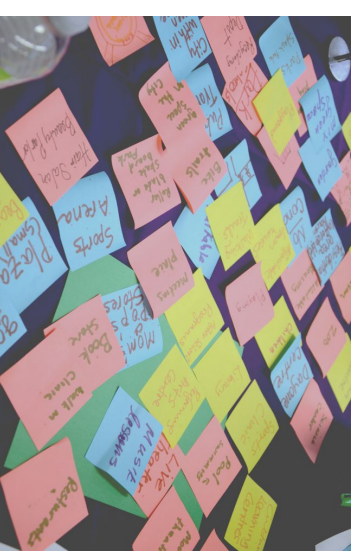Baseline of **shared knowledge and data**

Clear process and **agreed objectives/expectations**

Understanding of the **complexities of a community and its intersections**

Agreed understanding of **how the decision will be made and how change will happen**

Why are these factors important?

We want **Trust.**

We want to build strong **Relations**

○ Part of this is understanding, acknowledging & preserving the story that is there

Uneven **power dynamics** exist that need to be navigated

We want to ensure **Accountability**

○ Before, during and after the change is enacted

○ To maintain the trust and relationships

We want to ensure that we can **managing outcomes and change**

○ Ensuring that desired outcomes are met

○ Responding to unforeseen circumstances

○ Minimizing negative impacts and adjusting to the change

Of course this is all easier said than done!

So, where would we like to be?

Principles for an Ideal Approach

Consistent

- Clear communications and notifications
- Clearly defined processes

Inclusive

- Understands different complexities, identities, cultures
- Accessible to all members of community & lowering barriers to participation

Curious

- Investigative-minded – so as to dive deeper and understand the root causes of issues and desires

Transparent

- Decisions that are negotiated so that they can meet different needs
- Invests in informing the community

Appropriate

- A systemic lens : Understand the power, trust, purpose, relations and the why of the conversation
- Understands the value of story keeping

Safe

- Relationship-minded
- Aims to have safe spaces that build trust

Accountable

- Being held to account for decisions/actions undertaken

We then have choices to make

For example:

- The level of engagement

- The level of contextual framing (how deep do we want to go to understand the story & key players?)

- The level of transparency, accountability and communication

- Etc.

What level of engagement are we promising the public? (IAP2)

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

It's indeed complex!

- This may be a lot to ask of a Planning team – but this is what is always at play when we dive into engagement with any community.

- But the point is we need to really **carefully consider** these factors on any project. When you approach planning engagement, you are essentially **inserting a new desire into an existing ecosystem** which will cause a **disturbance** that will have cascading impacts, seen and unseen.

- We may need to re-orient the entire model of how change and development happens **away from the disturbance itself** but towards **planning for the ecosystem after the disturbance** is enacted at different levels and scales.

- This can lead a clear **framework** for a strategy, from which engagement tactics can flow.

Break – 5 mins

Case Studies

Case Study #1:
HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Case Study #2:
Lower Eastside Action Plan - Detroit

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- Aimed at tackling housing, one of Burnaby's most pressing challenges.

- **Addressing challenges and opportunities** across the entire housing system, including reducing homelessness

- **Identifying specific actions** the City can take to improve housing opportunities for the entire community and guide City decisions on housing for the next 10 years

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

BACKGROUND

- Asking the question **"what are the housing experiences and needs of Burnaby residents and what are their recommendations in terms of Housing policies and programs?**,

- Engaged more than 2,600 residents either in-person or online, bringing forward 42 resident recommendations which directly informed the Task Force's Final report.

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- **Broken up into 5 phases**
- Phase 1 and 2 were under the Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing Which included "Your Voice your Home engagement process"
- While Phase 3-5 were under the HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and focused on looping back the community and assessing their input during first two phases

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- This engagement process provided a unique opportunity for the City of Burnaby to use dialogue-based methods to deepen relationships with the community and continue to build an ongoing **culture of participation**, while at the same time, creating a mutually reinforcing process where both stakeholders and residents are able to **inform decision-making.**

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- The composition of the Task Force was necessarily diverse, including representation from housing advocates, local unions, co-op housing organizations, developers, builders and renters as well as City Council.

- The public's role was to guide and inform the Task Force proceedings and discussions by ensuring that they were grounded in the lived experiences of residents.

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

"Collaborate" on the IAP2 spectrum, engaging with the public to develop different housing priorities and actions. The resident recommendations were presented directly to the Mayor and Task Force members.

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Focused on tailoring engagement plans to involve the most participants

- Prioritized:
  - ○ Leading with the needs of the people
  - ○ Meaningfully integrate stakeholders and resident input; and
  - ○ Closing the loop through reconvening participants to evaluate progress on their own recommendations -

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- stakeholder interviews, ideas survey, targeted community outreach, community ideas workshop, quick starts survey , community walks and community recommendations workshop.

- At the community recommendations workshop, residents worked together to increase their knowledge of housing trends and fact.

- Residents were asked to suggest one member from their table to represent the perspectives of the group at the Resident Reconvening Workshop, which would evaluate progress made by the City of Burnaby on community housing one year later.

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- The mayor task force included two phases of public engagement activities, which moved from idea generation to the creation of actionable recommendations.

- Alongside two online surveys and two large community workshops, a team of 10 Community Student Ambassadors were recruited to engage directly with residents who faced greater barriers to participation, such as low-income residents, newcomers, youth and seniors.

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- While the surveys and the workshops required Burnaby residents to self-identify and **reach out,** Community Student Ambassadors **reached in** to the community to meet and speak with residents directly.

- Leveraging their diverse linguistic and cultural competencies, Ambassadors initiated small, informal housing-related discussions with over 400 residents from their personal networks, through community organizations and in public spaces such as coffee shops and transit stops

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Highlights:
  - Accessible Suite of Engagement Activities to "Meet People Where They Are"
  - Community Student Ambassadors (CSAs) acting as translators
  - Produced a series of background and educational materials to support meaningful resident participation.
  - Building relationships through empathy

Case Study #1:

HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homelessness Strategy

IMPACT

- The largest public engagement exercise ever conducted by the City of Burnaby, BC, engaging over 2,600 residents and utilizing their input in solving Burnaby's Housing problems.

- Integrating Community Engagement and Decision making through a process that effectively deepened mutual understanding of the needs and aspirations of multiple stakeholders.

- 42 resident recommendations, directly informing the Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing Final Report (presented and accepted by Council)

- City action already taken on many recommendations, including: adopting the most robust tenant relocation policy known in Canada and adopting B.C.'s first rental zoning policy

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) – Detroit

- In 2009, the LEAP target community had over 10000 vacant lots and structures with over 50% being publicly owned

- Aim to improve the quality of life in the community and transform vacant land into places that stabilize neighbourhoods that had experienced population loss, property disinvestment, structure demolition and massive vacancies.

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

BACKGROUND

"With the largest amount of contiguous vacant open space in the City, active pockets of dense residential neighborhoods and close proximity to the Detroit River, the lower eastside is poised to reinvent how neighborhoods look, function and thrive." - LEAP III Report

- The area has a large proportion of institutional, commercial and recreational assets, along with a diverse range of residential homes and a few manufacturing assets

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

- LEAP is lead by the Eastside Community Network, in collaboration with residents and technical advisors

- Launched in 2009 with initial conversations amongst community development organizations serving southeastern neighbourhoods of Detroit

- LEAP was created in 2012, and is a community driven response that focuses on engaging with residents in a process of transforming open space and stabilizing the neighbourhood

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

BACKGROUND

When published in 2012, LEAP was designed to give stakeholders and community development practitioners a shared action plan to achieve the greatest collective impact. The 2012 LEAP process had three main products:

1. A land use plan, stipulating a ten-year land use vision for the neighborhood. This realistic, community-driven land use plan was used to let LEAP stakeholders advocate to developers and city government about where and how development resources should be spent.

2. Short-term action projects, prioritized by the community as the projects that should be implemented first.

3. Recommended policy changes, identified by stakeholders and technical assistance providers, that would encourage innovative land use and neighborhood revitalization strategies necessary to the conditions of the time.

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

PHASE 1

Focus on identifying property types

Goal: engage with people in process to transform vacant land and property

PHASE 2
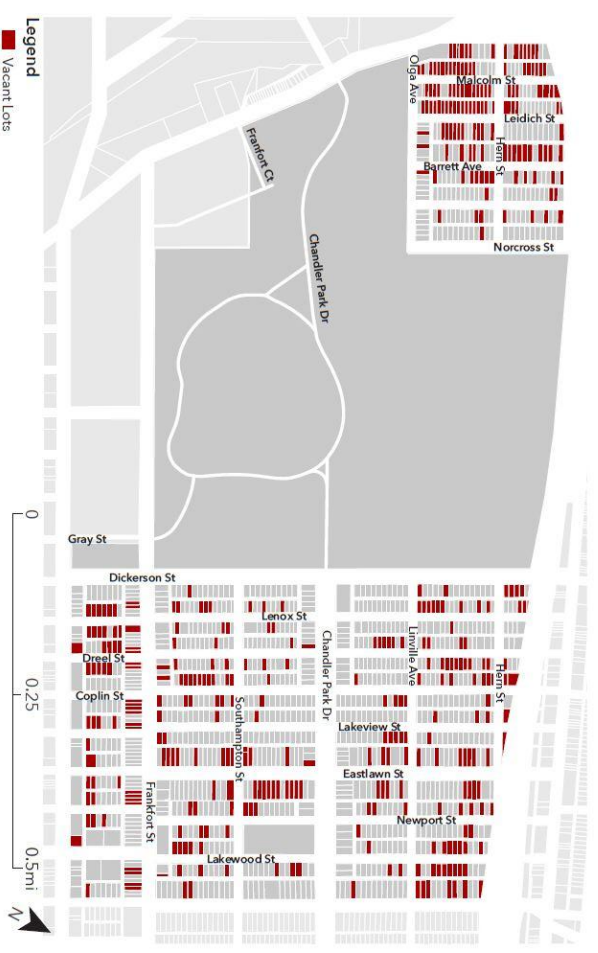
Focus on reviewing, testing and refining strategies

Goal: provide residents with greater opportunities to delve into critical discussions happening around land use

PHASE 3

Focus on further engagement and two goals based on past engagement - Strengthening Chandler Park and Transforming Open Space

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

CHANDLER PARK

Legend

Structure Condition
- No Structure
- Suggested Demolition
- Fair
- Poor
- Good

Streets labeled: Olga Ave, Malcolm St, Leidich St, Hern St, Barrett Ave, Norcross St, Gray St, Dickerson St, Lenox St, Chandler Park Dr, Dreel St, Coplin St, Linville Ave, Southampton St, Lakeview St, Hern St, Eastlawn St, Frankfort St, Newport St, Lakewood St, Frankfort Ct, Chandler Park Dr

Legend
- Vacant Lots

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

CHANDLER PARK

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) - Detroit

GREEN SPACE

Legend

- DLBA-Owned Vacant Lots
- Other Publicly Owned Lots
- Privately Owned Vacant Lots

E Grand Blvd
Van Dyke St
Gratiot Ave
Charlevoix St
E Jefferson Ave
E Canfield St
Kercheval St
E Warren Ave
Mack Ave
St Jean Ave
Conner St
Lakewood St
Alter Rd

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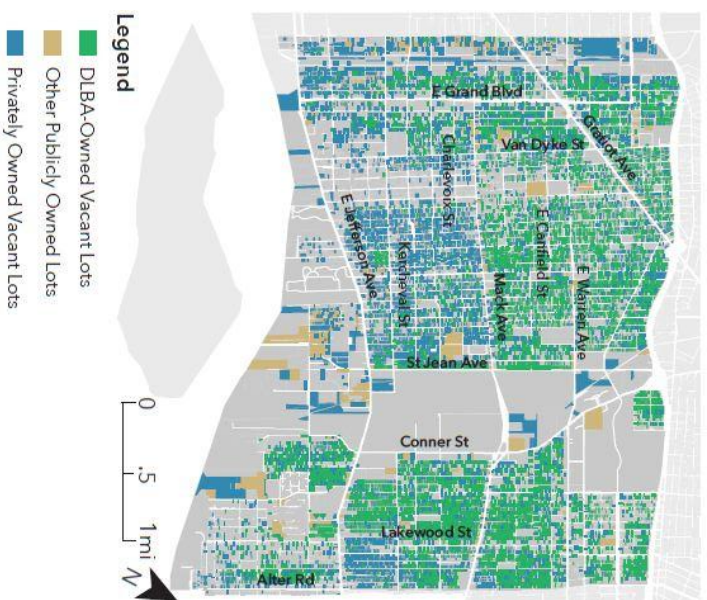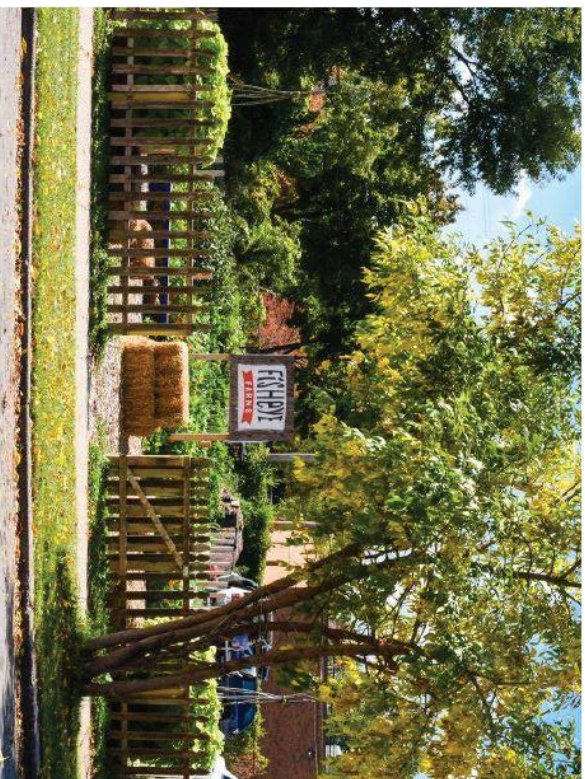
Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan - Detroit

WHAT LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

On the Level of Engagement Scale **Collaborate** (We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.)

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan - Detroit

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Focus on earning trust and establishing meaningful relationships with residents who have experienced generational racial and place-based traumas

- Prioritized:
  - Meeting people where they're at
  - Mutual education
  - Enabling resident leadership

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan - Detroit

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Other engagement tools:
  ○ Having translators at community meetings
  ○ Bi-monthly Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings open to all residents
  ○ Having local coffee hours and porch chats
  ○ Engaging with folks through block clubs and on social media

Case Study #2:

Lower Eastside Action Plan - Detroit

IMPACT

- In 2017, the LEAP Steering Committee engaged 450 residents and the Resident Outreach team canvassed over 16,000 homes

- LEAP focused on capacity building and ensuring meaningful engagement through long-term commitment

Break - 20 mins

Trust Building and Power Sharing

TRUST BUILDING

Our Understanding:

- **Willingness to be vulnerable** based on **positive expectations** of the intentions and actions of the other.

- Rooted in **lived experiences** that are **ongoing and relative.**

- **Takes time** to cultivate and is essential for a **dialogue** between diverse groups.

- Central value that links **organizational transformation, community partnership,** and **problem-solving** together.

LEAP Case Study:

- Harnessing lived experiences and expertise within the community

- Creating opportunities for resident participation in community outreach

- Periodic updates to Action Plan to reflect emergent community needs

HOME Burnaby Case Study:

- Diverse communication channels

Trust Building and Power Sharing

POWER SHARING

Our Understanding:

- **Community knowledge and expertise** lead priority setting
- **Knowledge sharing** and **information symmetry**
- Community members have **distinct roles and shared authority** in decision making
- **Ample resources** to develop community **skills and capacity** to partner and engage meaningfully and long term
- **Intersectional Approach** to shared authority and resourcing
- Clear **channels of accountability** and **mechanisms for iterative improvements**

LEAP Case Study:

- Enabling resident/community leadership of planning process and decision making
- Providing resources and compensation for resident time, knowledge, and participation

HOME Burnaby Case Study:

- Community partnerships in developing home grown and innovative housing solutions

Panel Discussion

Cheryll Case
Founder,
CP Planning

Rosemarie Powell
Executive Director,
Toronto
Community
Benefits Network

Zahra Ebrahim
Co-founder,
Monumental
Projects

Reflection Activity

The City of Toronto has received an application for a new residential project which will offer a combination of affordable housing units and market units in Scarborough Town Centre. The developer is focused on building a relationship with the community and has expressed an interest in contributing resources towards the most pressing community needs.

- What are the key success factors (tools/techniques/mechanisms/governance models) for community engagement based on our discussion today?
- What resources would be required to achieve shared and long term prosperity for the community?

FRIDAY, MAY 28, 2021

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Urban Leadership Program

TOOLS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Quadrangle