December 22, 2015

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

HNY
HOUSING NEW YORK

# *What*: A Neighborhood Planning Process

In 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio created a landmark mandate—Housing New York: a 10-Year, 5-Borough Plan. At the core of the Plan are strategies to create affordable, livable, and healthy neighborhoods focused on housing, economic development, and community resources. A vision was set in motion for how all neighborhoods contribute to creating a just, equitable, inclusive, and prosperous city.

Housing New York (HNY) set forth two fundamental objectives:

1. Finance the preservation and development of 200,000 affordable housing units over the next 10 years.

2. Engage communities in comprehensive planning with the aim of stabilizing and strengthening neighborhoods to ensure they are diverse and livable.

This people-oriented approach seeks to transform the role that NYC government has traditionally played in neighborhood planning by fostering a more open and inclusive process for communities. At the same time, the meaningful engagement of communities will require unprecedented levels of collaboration between government agencies, elected officials, community organizations, and everyday New Yorkers.
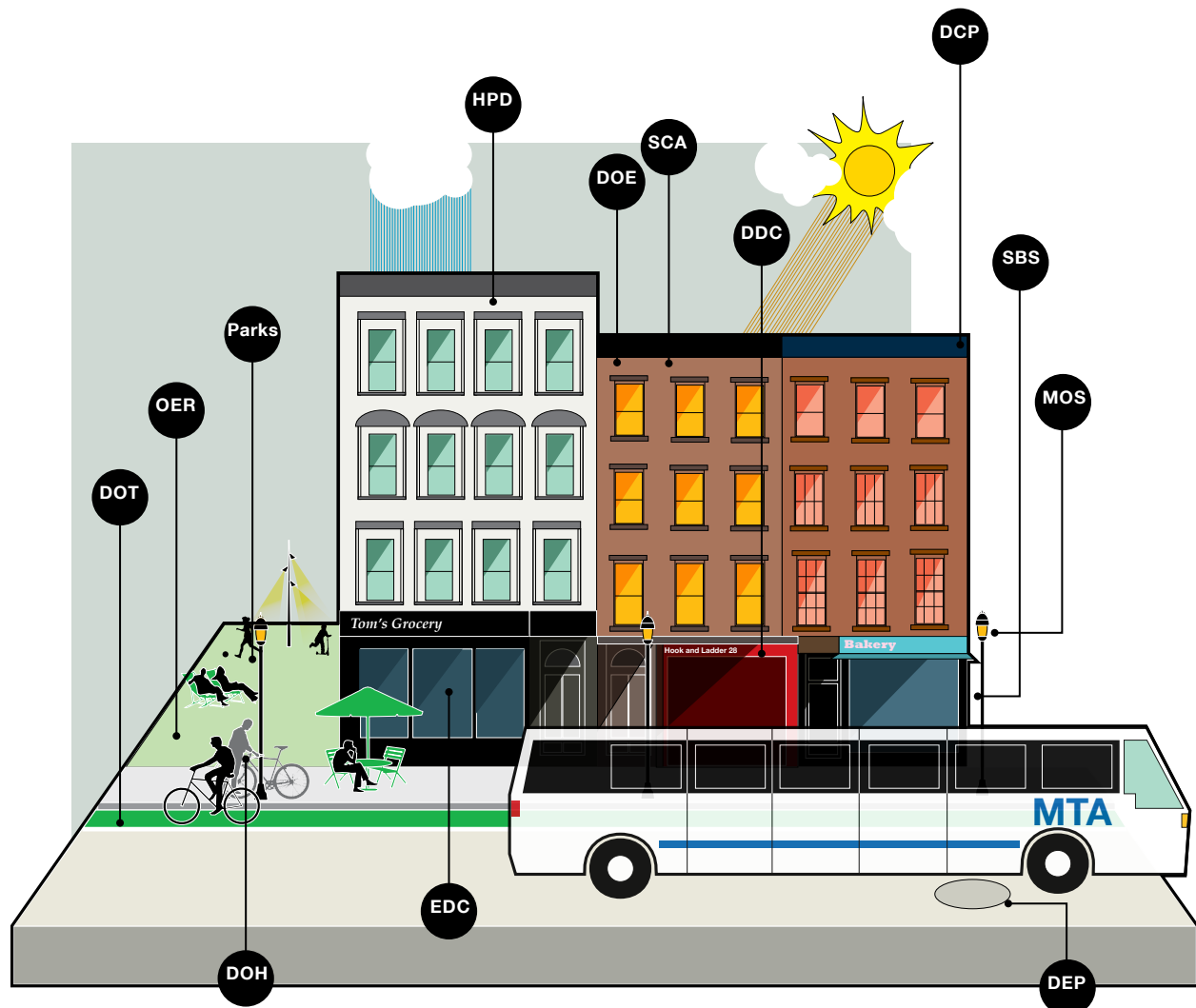
Why: Project Goals

Communities are central to developing solutions for the future of their neighborhoods. In understanding the goals, concerns, aspirations, values, priorities, and vision for a neighborhood, as articulated by the community, the City can more effectively engage with people to refine existing and/or develop new tools to meet community objectives.

To effectively facilitate processes to meet this transformational and exciting mandate, the City enlisted GOODcorps and Gehl Studio—firms that work at the intersection of human-centered design, community engagement, and change management—to develop a Neighborhood Planning Playbook.

The goal of the project was to develop a neighborhood planning process across city agencies with four core elements:

1. <u>Governance</u>. An effective and efficient governance structure for inter-agency collaboration and project management.
2. <u>Planning Framework</u>. A clearly articulated neighborhood planning process and tools to effectively engage the community in the process. To a large extent, the HNY Neighborhood Planning Process reflects and builds upon a planning approach City agencies are already using in different neighborhoods.
3. <u>Neighborhood Analysis</u>. A shared methodology for problem solving based on quantitative data, as well as a qualitative understanding of the lived experiences in neighborhoods.
4. <u>Transparency</u>. Memorializing the process adds clarity and efficiency for staff, as well as transparency and predictability for community members.

Who: The Planning Team

Numerous City agencies were involved in workshops and interviews to develop the Playbook, and a number of community development organizations also advised on certain elements. City staff dedicated time, experience, and professional skills, and they recognized the need for a planning framework in which various other agencies (e.g., DOT, Parks, etc.) would also need to participate to ensure that decisions are feasible and implementable. There is a list of agency staff at the back of this Playbook. Below are the core agencies involved in the City's neighborhood planning efforts, and which collaborated in developing this Playbook.
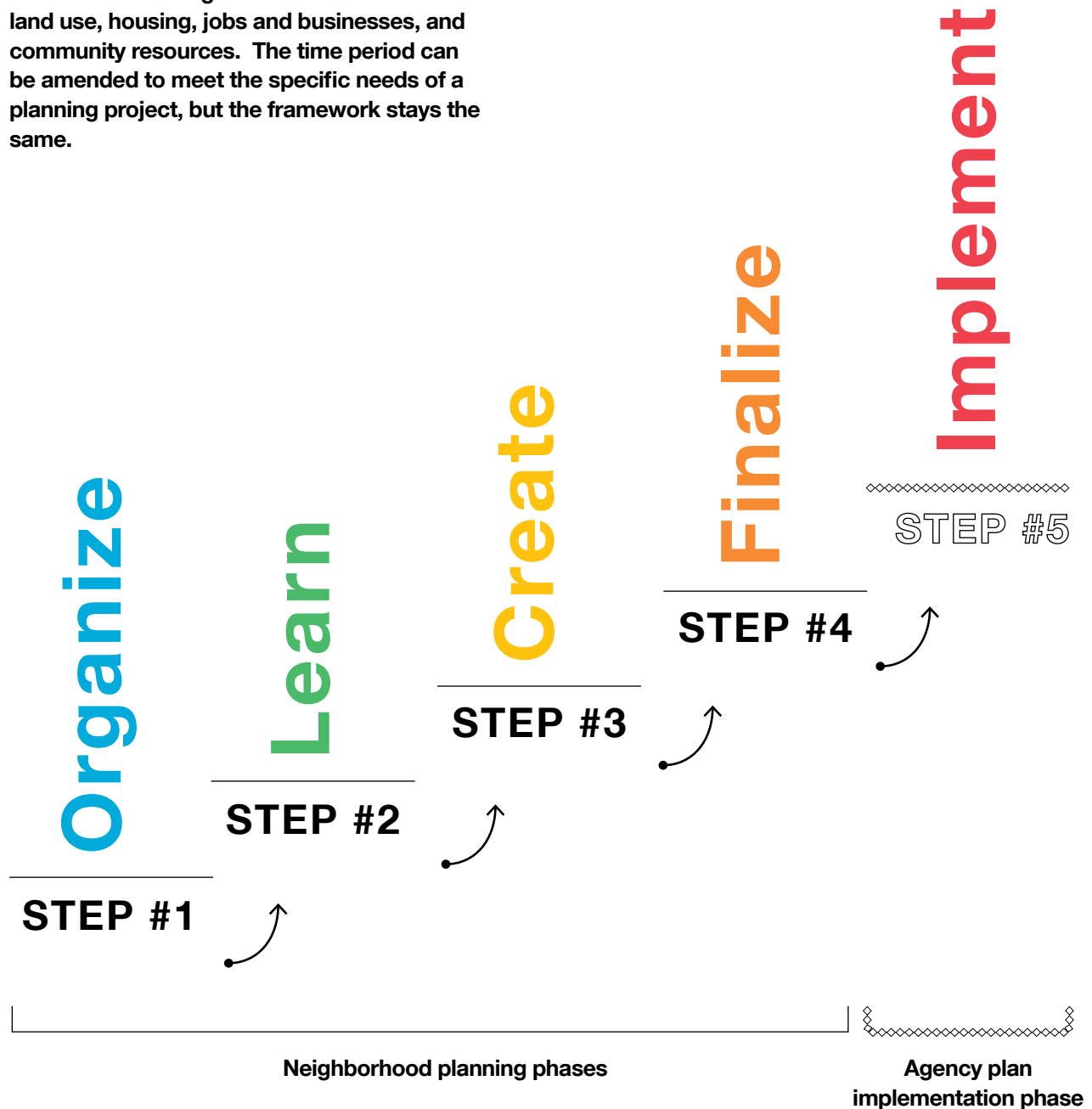
- Department of City Planning (DCP)
- Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
- Department of Small Business Services (SBS)
- Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC)
- Office of the Mayor
    - Intergovernmental Affairs
    - Community Affairs Unit
    - Office of Deputy Mayor Glen

How: Steps to Building a Neighborhood Plan

The five-phased planning process is based on a common problem-solving methodology used by designers, planners, and managers to identify problems and create informed solutions. The Playbook tailors this standard practice to neighborhood planning in NYC.

The planning process outlined below is intended to be used when addressing a complex set of concerns and significant issues related to land use, housing, jobs and businesses, and community resources. The time period can be amended to meet the specific needs of a planning project, but the framework stays the same.

Organize

STEP #1

Learn

STEP #2

Create

STEP #3

Finalize

STEP #4

Implement

STEP #5

Neighborhood planning phases

Agency plan implementation phase

Phase		ORGANIZE			PLAN						IMPLEMENT		
Approximate Duration*				2-3 mos.		2 mos.		2-3 mos.		2-3 mos.			
Approximate Percentage of Resources for Each Phase				30%		20%		25%		25%			

Key Engagement Meetings

		ORGANIZE			PLAN						IMPLEMENT		
Inter-Agency Meetings		X			X		X		X		X		
Stakeholder Meetings (elected officials, CBOs, other)			X		X		X		X		X		
Community Advisory Committee Meetings				X		X		X		X			
Public Community Workshops					X	X		X		X			

Phases & Deliverables

		ORGANIZE			PLAN						IMPLEMENT		
Organize — Project Brief		(grey)	(grey)	(blue)									
Organize — Neighborhood Snapshot		(grey)	(grey)	(blue)									
Organize — Engagement Strategy		(grey)	(grey)	(blue)									
Learn — Workshop 1: Listen and Learn					(grey)	(green)							
Learn — Field Engagement					(grey)	(green)							
Learn — Neighborhood Measures and Trends**					(grey)	(green)							
Learn — Stakeholder Discussions					(grey)	(green)							
Learn — Workshop 2: Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles					(grey)	(green)							
Create — Problem Solving							(grey)	(grey)	(yellow)				
Create — Vetting and Testing							(grey)	(grey)	(yellow)				
Create — Workshop 3: Test Strategies and Actions							(grey)	(grey)	(yellow)				
Finalize — Synthesis of Planning Process									(grey)	(grey)	(orange)		
Finalize — Workshop 4: Confirm and Prioritize									(grey)	(grey)	(orange)		
Finalize — Strategic and Action-Oriented Neighborhood Planning Elements									(grey)	(grey)	(orange)		
Implement — Oversight and Ongoing Engagement											(grey)	(grey)	(red)
Implement — ULURP Certification and Approval											(grey)	(grey)	(red)
Implement — Program and Policy Development											(grey)	(grey)	(red)
Implement — Capital Projects											(grey)	(grey)	(red)

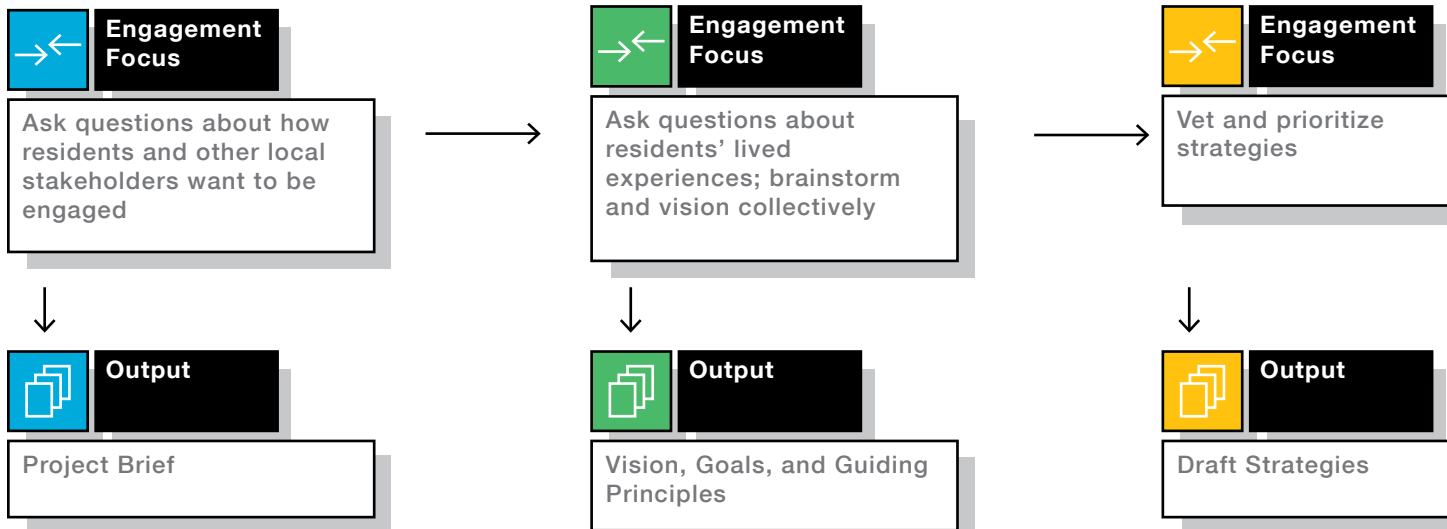*A typical planning process can take 8-10 months. Specif timeframes will vary depending on the project scope.
**Information gathered during the Learn phase can be used to begin developing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents.
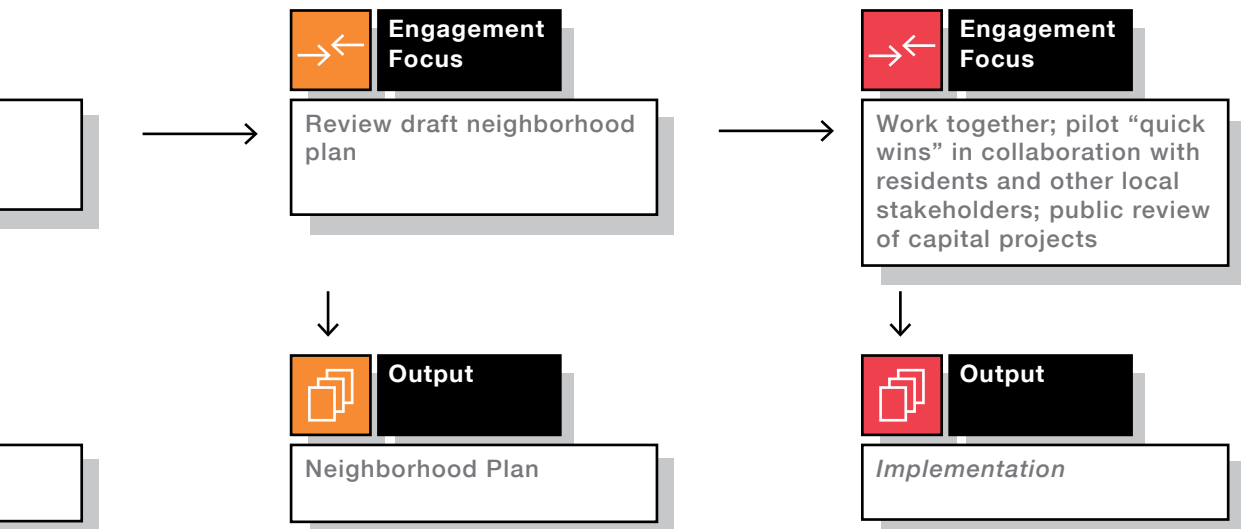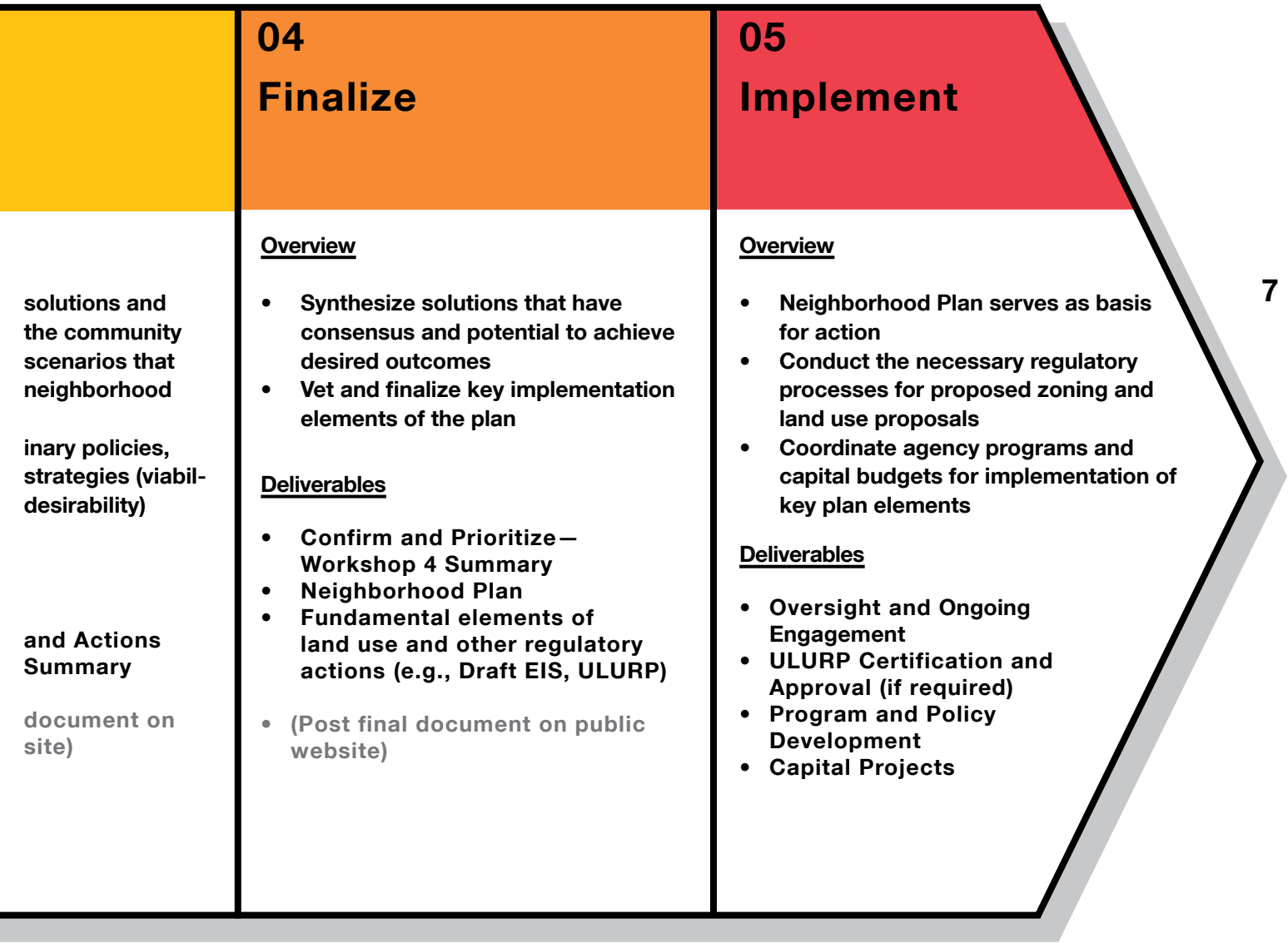
Neighborhood Planning Phases

01
Organize

Overview

- **Define planning area**
- **Develop planning schedule with key dates**
- **Identify and meet with key stakeholders**
- **Begin to identify key community concerns, goals, and values**
- **Coordinate inter-agency project team and governance**
- **Create a Neighborhood Snapshot (data gathering and analysis)**

Deliverables

- **Project Brief**
- **Neighborhood Snapshot**
- **Engagement Strategy**

- **(Post final document on public website)**

02
Learn

Overview

- **Dive deeper in quantitative and qualitative data**
- **Identify measures and trends affecting neighborhoods**
- **Identify challenges and opportunities**
- **Develop a shared community-driven neighborhood vision and set of guiding principles**

Deliverables

- **Listen and Learn—Workshop 1 Summary**
- **Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles—Workshop 2 Summary**

- **(Post final document on public website)**

03
Create

Overview

- **Brainstorm strategies with**
- **Develop address key concerns**
- **Test prelim-projects, and ity, feasibility,**

Deliverables

- **Test Strategies Workshop 3**

- **(Post final public web-**

	Engagement Focus		Engagement Focus		Engagement Focus
	Ask questions about how residents and other local stakeholders want to be engaged	→	Ask questions about residents' lived experiences; brainstorm and vision collectively	→	Vet and prioritize strategies
	Output		Output		Output
	Project Brief		Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles		Draft Strategies

	04 **Finalize**	05 **Implement**

**solutions and
the community
scenarios that
neighborhood**

**inary policies,
strategies (viabil-
desirability)**

**and Actions
Summary**

document on
site)

04 Finalize

Overview

- **Synthesize solutions that have consensus and potential to achieve desired outcomes**
- **Vet and finalize key implementation elements of the plan**

Deliverables

- **Confirm and Prioritize— Workshop 4 Summary**
- **Neighborhood Plan**
- **Fundamental elements of land use and other regulatory actions (e.g., Draft EIS, ULURP)**

- **(Post final document on public website)**

05 Implement

Overview

- **Neighborhood Plan serves as basis for action**
- **Conduct the necessary regulatory processes for proposed zoning and land use proposals**
- **Coordinate agency programs and capital budgets for implementation of key plan elements**

Deliverables

- **Oversight and Ongoing Engagement**
- **ULURP Certification and Approval (if required)**
- **Program and Policy Development**
- **Capital Projects**

Engagement Focus

Review draft neighborhood plan

Output

Neighborhood Plan

Engagement Focus

Work together; pilot "quick wins" in collaboration with residents and other local stakeholders; public review of capital projects

Output

Implementation

Organize Overview

The lead agency will identify a Project Manager who will oversee project logistics and guide collaborating agencies in undertaking the activities in the Organize phase—he or she will then manage the neighborhood planning process. The Organize phase can be time- and resource-intensive, but it is necessary to ensure that the Planning Team has a sound understanding of the neighborhood context and is well-organized and prepared for the project ahead—especially before launching the full community engagement process.

The goal of the Organize phase is to ensure that all stakeholders involved in the planning process:
• Understand the scope of work and required deliverables.
• Have the resources and organizational structure to work collaboratively.
• Are transparent about the planning process.
• Understand the neighborhood context and identify gaps in information to be explored in the Learn phase.

In addition, the Planning Team will provide fundamental neighborhood data—called the Neighborhood Snapshot—to stakeholders so that communities can begin to develop initial principles and goals, as well as articulate values and aspirations, for their neighborhood. The objective is to provide communities with an opportunity to prepare for meaningful engagement once the on-the-ground work begins in the Learn phase.

The Project Manager will establish an inter-agency web-based file system for the project team to share documents and information. In addition, a publicly accessible project website will be created where the City can post drafts and final deliverables. It is a place where communities can access information about the planning process and provide feedback and ideas.

Deliverable

The Organize deliverables include a comprehensive Project Brief document that serves as a project management tool to guide decisions, provide structure, and lay out the planning process. The final Project Brief will provide a preliminary understanding of the "Who, What, When Where, Why, and How" of the planning process. Other Organize deliverables are the Neighborhood Snapshot, which uses quantitative and qualitative data analysis to provide a neighborhood overview, and an Engagement Strategy that describes key stakeholders and how to engage them through various types of outreach.

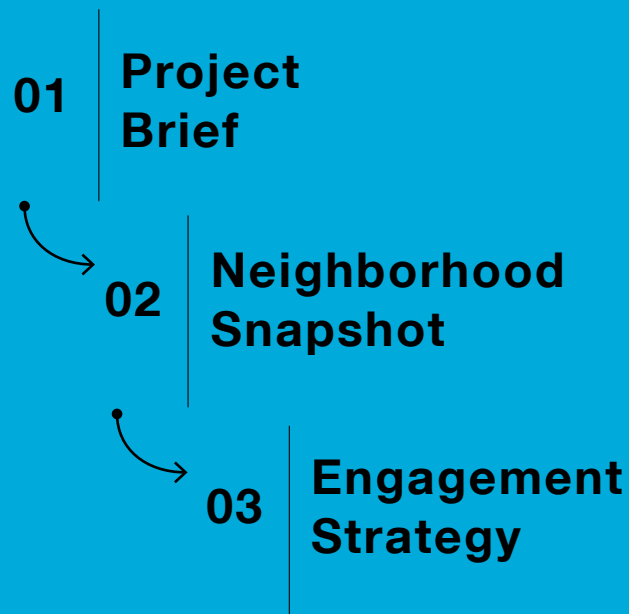(Note: Deliverables are posted on the publicly accessible project website.)

01
Organize

Organizing the team and planning process
Initiating engagement with stakeholders

01 | **Project Brief**

02 | **Neighborhood Snapshot**

03 | **Engagement Strategy**

01 Project Brief

Creating a holistic Neighborhood Plan requires that distinct government agencies, community groups, and elected officials work together in service of a singular plan.

The goal of the Project Brief is to ensure that all of the stakeholders involved in the planning process understand how they will be working together, what they can expect from the process, and what is expected of them. The Project Brief is also a tool that provides clarity on which agencies will be involved and how they will be involved in the planning process.
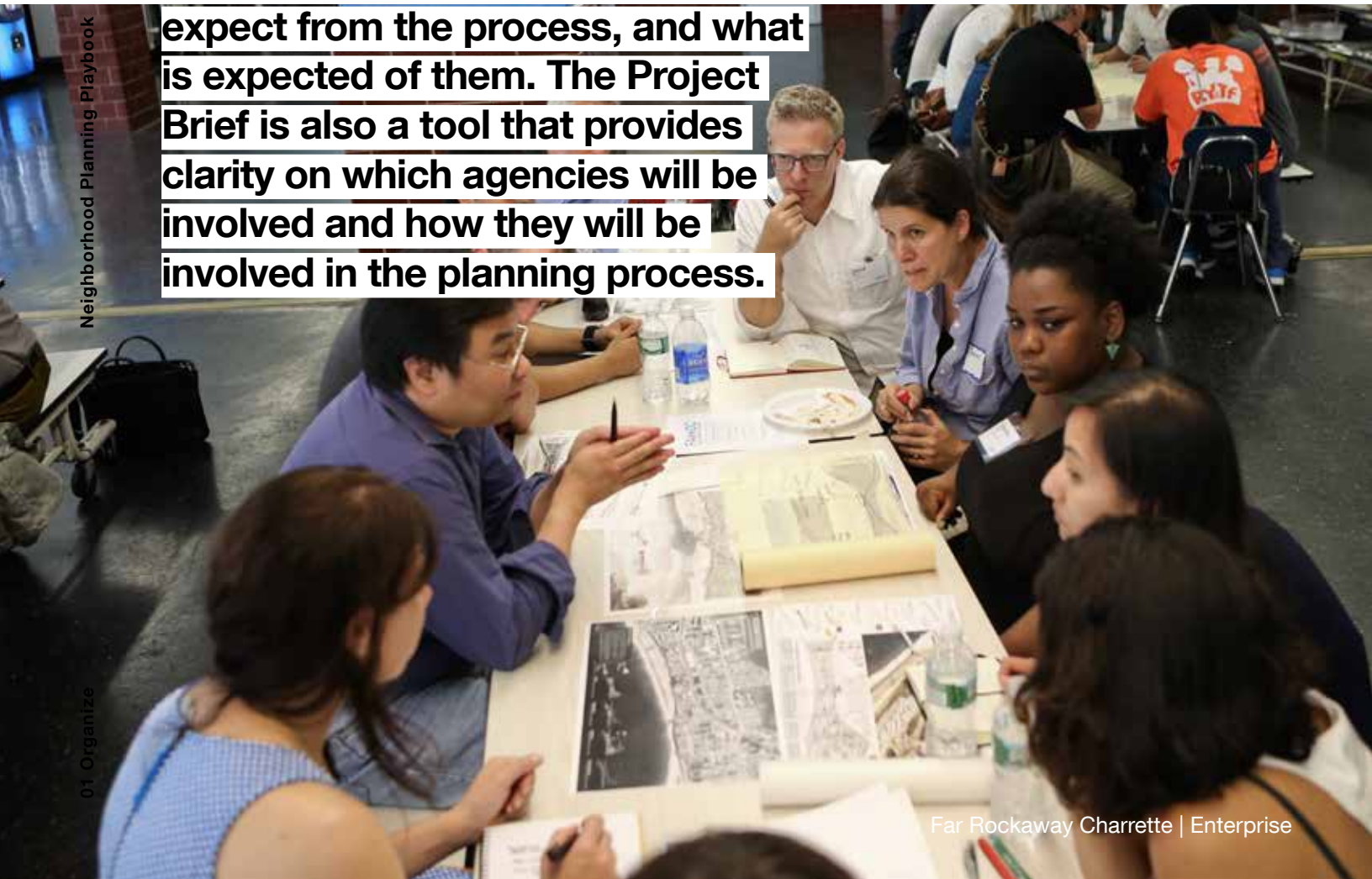
Below is a description of the content that Project Managers will complete for the Project Brief.

A. Project Overview

Project name. It is important to provide a project name that helps people understand the primary intentions for planning in a specific neighborhood. It should also be a name that people in the neighborhood can identify with.

Location. Neighborhood boundaries are hard to define in NYC. Providing the specific boundaries helps planners and residents have a clear understanding of the areas in question. Also, a "neighborhood planning area" is typically broader than a "rezoning area."

Context. Understanding the socioeconomic and physical characteristics of the neighborhood begins to paint a vision for planners and residents, helping to build momentum and excitement for the work.

Public-facing description. A public-facing description of the project is useful for future public presentations and meetings.

Goals. Project goals are critical for giving internal and external stakeholders a sense of what the planning process and neighborhood plan are working to achieve.

B. Project Scope

Key issues. A preliminary understanding of the key issues the plan will address provides boundaries for the planning process and context for communities.

Scope exclusions. Identifying key issues the plan will not address ensures the process does not veer into territory that the neighborhood planning process cannot influence.

C. Team Management

Org chart. Creating an org chart provides clear lines of accountability and a reporting structure for inter-agency collaboration. This ensures that collaborators are most efficiently leveraging their skills, time, and resources.

Roles and responsibilities. Articulating roles and responsibilities ensures that staff and agencies are pulled in at the right moments and understand what is expected of them.

Project management tools. Continually refining project management tracking and communication/decision-making tools helps to reduce the need for excessive meetings and to focus meeting agendas.

D. Timing

Detailed timeline. Timelines help agencies and communities understand when they will have to commit time and resources. Sharing a detailed timeline at the project outset means that people can plan around major milestones and understand the overall approach to building the plan.

Meeting and workshop cadence. Giving folks a workshop schedule, meeting frequency, and topics helps collaborators understand project progression and when they can plug into the process.

E. Budget

Articulating a budget helps planners understand how much they can invest into planning work—particularly around public meeting design and facilitation, which can be enhanced by outside support.

F. Neighborhood Plan Outline

Establishing the standard chapters of the Neighborhood Plan at the outset provides the Planning Team and stakeholders with an understanding of the elements that will be developed during the planning process. The Neighborhood Plan should be based on the following outline:

Sections I and II are generally used in every Neighborhood Plan. Section III is intended to be specific to the neighborhood study area.

I. Introduction
    a. What is a Neighborhood Plan?
    b. What is the purpose the Neighborhood Plan, and how will it get used?
    c. What is the process and who was involved in creating the Neighborhood Plan?
    d. How is this Neighborhood Plan specific to my neighborhood?

II. Governance and Implementation
    a. What are the roles of City agencies and how will they implement the plan in collaboration with the community?

III. Community Vision and Guiding Principles
    a. Vision
    b. Guiding Principles

The following sections are developed specifically for each neighborhood study area, and each participating agency is responsible for its own content. The sections that will be completed by each agency are as follows:

- *Housing (HPD)*
- *Economic and Workforce Development (EDC, SBS)*
- *Community Facilities and Resources (DCP with Parks, SCA, DOE, DCA, DYCD, social service providers, etc.)*
- *Infrastructure and Transportation (DCP with DOT, DEP, Con Edison, National Grid, etc.)*
- *Land Use and Urban Design (DCP)*

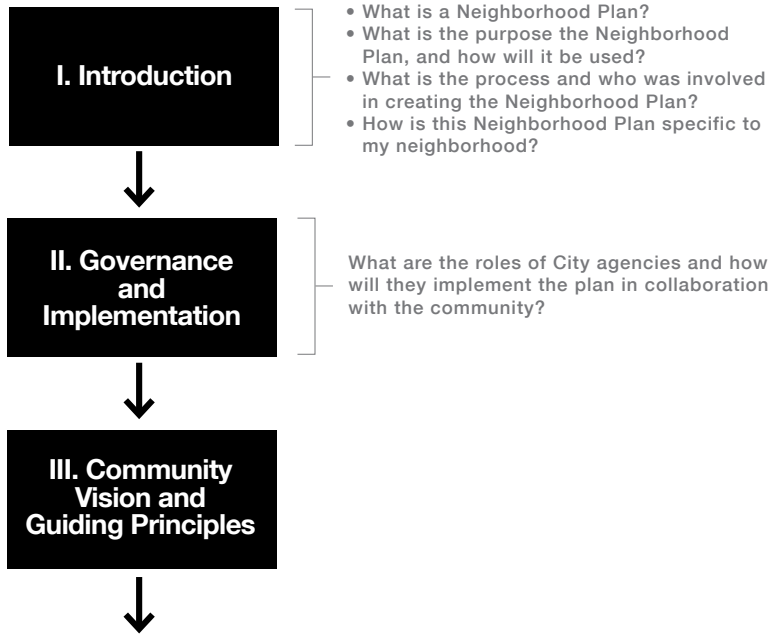### IV. Neighborhood Context: Challenges and Opportunities
    a. Neighborhood Voices—The Lived Experience
    b. Neighborhood Snapshot—Existing Conditions
    c. Measures and Trends—Changing Conditions

V. Goals, Strategies, and Actions
    a. Goal 1
        i. Strategy 1.1 (name strategy)
            1. Action (identify what, how, who, when)
        ii. Strategy 1.2
            1. Action
    b. Goal 2
        i. Strategy 2.1
            1. Action
        ii. Strategy 2.2
            1. Action

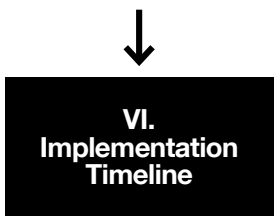### VI. Implementation Timeline

Neighborhood Plan Outline

I. Introduction

- What is a Neighborhood Plan?
- What is the purpose the Neighborhood Plan, and how will it be used?
- What is the process and who was involved in creating the Neighborhood Plan?
- How is this Neighborhood Plan specific to my neighborhood?

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II. Governance and Implementation

What are the roles of City agencies and how will they implement the plan in collaboration with the community?

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III. Community Vision and Guiding Principles

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IV. Neighborhood Context: Challenges and Opportunities

- Neighborhood Voices—The Lived Experience
- Neighborhood Snapshot—Existing Conditions
- Measures and Trends—Changing Conditions

V. Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Housing	Economic and Workforce Development	Community Facilities and Resources	Infrastructure and Transportation	Land Use and Urban Design
HPD	EDC	DCP	DCP	DCP
	SBS	Parks	DOT	
		DOE / SCA	DEP	
		DOHMH	Con Edison	
		DCA	Others	
		Others		

↓

VI. Implementation Timeline

02 Neighborhood Snapshot

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The Project Manager works with the agencies to gather and analyze data needed to make policy, programmatic, capital investment, design, and implementation decisions, and ensures that agencies are sharing data and knowledge with one another early in the process. The data presents an overall perspective of the neighborhood and an introduction to the pressures, challenges, and opportunities facing a community. It helps the Planning Team and the community to identify concerns and create informed solutions. The three categories of the Neighborhood Snapshot are:

• Economic Profile
• Demographic Profile
• Physical Characteristics

Environmental Review

Planners can begin to use information compiled for the Neighborhood Snapshot in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) applications.

Reminder

Given that the data and research each agency provides will depend on the core issues and opportunities for the neighborhood, it will be essential that the Project Manager make clear what is needed from whom—and in what timeframe.

Examples in Practice

Neighborhood Walks
Organize neighborhood walks with key stakeholders to hear their perspectives about community aspirations, values, goals, and visions for the neighborhood. This engagement can occur at various times throughout the planning process and is intended to be both informative and fun.

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

01 Organize

There are two primary reasons for developing the Neighborhood Snapshot:

1. To focus the Planning Team on neighborhood context and the information it will need to make decisions specific to the resources that agencies can deploy in neighborhoods.
2. To provide data upon which stakeholders can begin to formulate principles and goals, as well as values and aspirations, that will help guide the neighborhood planning process.

Data collection begins with Desktop Research for quantitative data and later includes Field Study for qualitative data. The preliminary Desktop Research will be posted for the community to access, recognizing that further information will be obtained during the engagement process, particularly during the Learn phase.

Task 1: Desktop Research

The purpose of Desktop Research is to gather and analyze quantitative data to understand the economic profile, demographic profile, and physical characteristics of a neighborhood. This empirical data is fundamental for City agencies to understand the need for capital, policy, and programmatic investments in neighborhoods. The data typically includes:

• Existing conditions and characteristics
• Measures indicating trends in neighborhoods

Task 2: Field Study

The purpose of Field Study is to gather qualitative data to understand neighborhood dynamics through observation and site visits, which could take place with key stakeholders (e.g., Neighborhood Walks). Documentation may be achieved through photography and summaries of key concerns stated during stakeholder discussions. Surveys and other forms of field engagement will take place during the Learn phase to obtain a deeper understanding of the lived community experience.

Task 3: Planning and Investment Investigations

The purpose of this research is to identify plans, goals, vision statements, projects, and investments previously developed with, or by, the community. This information allows the Planning Team to categorize and comprehend City commitments, as well as key neighborhood objectives developed during previous planning efforts. The investigation typically includes:

Neighborhood Plans and Reports
This research should including previous neighborhood plans, studies, Environmental Impact Statements, and relevant reports completed by the City, community groups, and civic institutions.

Recent and Planned Capital Investments
Agencies should provide the Project Manager with the following information:
1. Historic: Recently completed projects
2. Current: Projects that are funded and in the process of being implemented
3. Funded: Projects that are funded but unbuilt
4. Planned: Projects that have been identified but for which no funding has been allocated

Needs Assessments
The following resources should also be consulted to understand where agencies and community members have already identified needs:
1. Structural Needs: See the Asset Information Management System, School Buildings Assessment, and Bridges and Tunnels Assessment for required upkeep of public assets
2. Agency Programmatic Needs: See the Citywide Statement of Needs for proposals to site, expand, or close municipal facilities; the Selected Facilities and Program Sites database lists all facilities owned, operated, licensed, or certified by the City
3. Community District Needs Statements and Budget Requests: Each year, NYC's community boards provide assessments of neighborhood capital needs, which are used to support capital requests

03 Engagement Strategy

Meaningful engagement with a broad range of New Yorkers will require a tactical shift in the way most citizens are accustomed to interacting with government. Creating a safe, informative, interesting, and fun process can break down barriers of regulated or formal public forums and allow for more personal engagement.

The goal of the Engagement Strategy is to ensure that interactions with stakeholders and communities are linked to a broader strategic purpose and set of outcomes around neighborhood planning.

Template Checklist

Plan the who, what, and when of community engagement:
- ○ Stakeholder Mapping
- ○ Aligning Schedule, Topic, and Engagement Activities
- ○ Outreach and Communications Action Plan
- ○ Design Engagement Interactions

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

01 Organize

There are three distinct types of community engagement in the neighborhood planning process:

1. Public Workshops
2. Field Engagement
3. Stakeholder Discussions

Civic engagement continues during the Implement phase. Most of these engagements are structured around public hearings and additional outreach to inform the design and implementation of specific programs and capital projects.

Task 1: Stakeholder Mapping

Each group of stakeholders will require a different engagement strategy and approach. Developing an upfront, deep understanding of the stakeholder network provides an opportunity to address potential risks, challenges and opportunities, and sensitive topic areas and concerns.

The purpose of Stakeholder Mapping is to:
• Analyze the power dynamics (i.e., facilitators or challengers to productive problem solving).
• Identify key decision makers and stakeholders in the neighborhood.
• Understand core issues and who is facilitating discussions, managing expectations, and advocating for community needs and demands.

Community Stakeholders in NYC neighborhood planning processes typically include:
• Community-based organizations and technical assistance providers
• Elected officials
• Community boards
• Business associations
• Faith-based organizations
• Neighborhood and tenant associations
• Property owners
• Educators and youth organizations

	Organize	Learn	Create	Finalize	Implement
Planning Phase	Organize	Learn	Create	Finalize	Implement
Engagement Focus	Kick Off	Share & Learn	Co-Design	Prioritize	Support
Goal	Identify core stakeholders and local leaders	Obtain insight and feedback on goals and approach in order to understand concerns and aspirations	Partner with the public to develop alternatives and identify solutions	Engage with residents to prioritize strategies and actions	Help local community members take ownership of implementation
Activities	• 1 on 1 interviews • Site walk • Meeting with key community representatives	• Community workshops (x2) • Field research • Observations • Interviews and group sessions • Street and festival tables	• Community workshop • Field research • Identify patterns, themes, and opportunity areas • Brainstorm solutions	• Community workshop • Prioritization sessions	• Public hearings • Workshops to advance/ design programs and capital projects

A note on Stakeholder Coalitions.
Stakeholders typically have many years of on-the-ground knowledge and expertise and can be extremely valuable resources and partners. The Planning Team should engage stakeholders to develop a meaningful and collaborative community and consensus-building process, and to advise on priority issues that are to be emphasized and addressed in the plan. It is important to recognize that not all stakeholders are fully representative of all community voices and views.

As the planning process proceeds, stakeholders may decide to host their own meetings and/or utilize the Neighborhood Snapshot data to prepare themselves and their constituents to engage with government agencies on important issues. Sometimes, parallel community-based planning processes may emerge and lead to the development of a vision plan that articulates values, aspirations, and goals for the neighborhood. This work can be a valuable contribution to the Planning Team's process and could help inform the engagement strategy and outcomes during the Learn phase.

A note on Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committees. Community stakeholders may determine that they want to establish a formal Neighborhood Planning Advisory Committee. An Advisory Committee may be valuable if it brings together and represents a broad segment of neighborhood stakeholders. Communities should self-determine if they want an Advisory Committee and, if so, to define its role. However, it should be noted that the primary function of an Advisory Committee is to ensure an open and meaningful community engagement process.

It is not a decision-making body representing the community or specific stakeholder groups (although stakeholder groups may be consulted separately for their expertise on certain elements of the Neighborhood Plan, such as housing, jobs, etc.). A good rule of thumb is to consult with the Advisory Committee formally at least once during each stage of the planning process—especially prior to hosting a large public workshop—in order to keep the dialogue structured and provide regular opportunity for input at each step of the process.

Task 2: Aligning Schedule, Topic, and Engagement Activities

Each phase of the planning process requires a different engagement approach that moves the community participants up the "ladder of engagement" and toward a final plan—from sharing information to developing alternatives and setting priorities. This sequencing provides transparency in how, when, and about what people will be engaged. Setting a clear calendar outlining the trajectory for building the plan helps the community contextualize, and prepare for, their participation in the process to completion.

Task 3: Outreach and Communications Action Plan

Coordinate with the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community Affairs Unit to create an affirmative, on-the-ground outreach and communications plan. The plan should include strategies for tapping stakeholders who have an interest in an open and transparent community engagement process to get the word out regarding the neighborhood planning

Jerome Avenue Visioning | DCP

How Do I Map Stakeholders?

List out each neighborhood stakeholder:

- Community-based organizations and technical assistance providers
- Elected officials
- Community boards
- Business associations
- Faith-based organizations
- Neighborhood and tenant associations
- Property owners
- Educators and youth organizations

For each stakeholder, list:

- Name
- Occupation
- Affiliation
- Connections to other stakeholders (allies, adversaries, unknown)
- Constituency (i.e., who do they represent?)
- Key issues / areas of concern
- Previous interactions with NYC government and/or planning processes

Stakeholders may have a role in the planning process:

Advisory Committee members: Ensure an inclusive and meaningful community engagement process. Test ideas during plan development.

Consulted: Be consulted before key decisions are made/shared (i.e., decisions are not made without their support).

Informed: Be informed before key decisions are made/shared (i.e., decisions can be made without them, but they need to be kept in the loop).

Advisors: Provide nuanced data/insights at specific points in time. Advise on civic engagement process and logistics.

Participants: Leaders in the community who might not participate in the planning process but who are engaged and have insights to share about their lived experience.

effort. Communications material should highlight the Who, What, When, Where, and How of the planning process, as well as send a message about participating in a community planning effort for the future of the neighborhood.

Task 4: Design Engagement Interactions

Public Workshops. There are four public workshops in the Playbook planning process. These public workshops will likely draw participants who have a strong interest in neighborhood planning and the ability to spend an extended amount of time working on planning issues. During these workshops, engagement activities are designed so that planners and participants take deep dives into issues that are central to the planning work. Workshops are most productive when individual discussions occur around specific topics. Town hall meetings are not recommended for planning in which real work and engagement is an objective. The Planning Team should expect highly motivated participants with opinions, concerns, and beliefs.

Designing Effective Public Workshops*

Foster Inclusivity

Time availability. Hold multiple sessions at various times to be inclusive of those with varying work schedules or other commitments.

Location accessibility. Make sure event spaces are physically accessible and centrally located. Consider providing public transportation vouchers.

Awareness. Consider information channels used by residents. Build awareness using as many different media and languages as possible.

Create an inviting environment. Provide healthy snacks, offer childcare, use name tags and refer to people by name, and offer translation services.

Remove the Stage

Open House. Engage people more directly using an "open house" format, allowing residents to move around a space and hold smaller group meetings with a max of 7 people at a time.

Respect. Create safe environments for honest dialogue. Frame the engagement as building toward a shared goal, and avoid allowing the tone to become adversarial.

Diffuse. Acknowledge and deal with negativity in a calm and professional manner—when people feel validated and their concerns have been heard and recorded, any anger can usually be diffused. Listen and be open to feedback. Do not be defensive; be curious and learn from others.

Maintain Feedback Loops

A good rule of thumb is to spend 10% of the time a participant spends on an engagement doing follow-up with them afterwards.

Provide folks with documentation about how their feedback/participation will be used.

Send recaps of engagements to those who participated, and highlight what has been accomplished—in an ongoing process, seeing milestones completed is motivating. It is important to document engagements in multiple modes—taking notes is important, but videos and photos can communicate outcomes in a more interesting way.

During follow-ups, always reinforce the destination, purpose, and value of the work you are doing together.

Clearly articulate how input will be integrated into the Neighborhood Plan.

*A full list of strategies is available on page 77 in the Appendix.

Favorite Places Workshop | Gehl Architects

Respect Time

Let people know you value their time by acknowledging and thanking them for participating.

Ensure value is there for the participant, even if it is a small task.

Do any heavy lifting for the participant to maximize the efficiency of their action—try to do any laborious or trivial work for them.

Break one large action into several smaller ones, and include milestones to ease fears of participation.

Facilitate Strongly

- Present as a neutral servant of the group.
- Take notes or make sure someone takes notes.
- Select a spokesperson at the beginning of the session.
- Stick to time—people will ultimately respect you for it.
- Lead the process, not the content.
- These interactions are all about listening. Make sure each person gets the opportunity to share.
- Keep questions simple. People may provide false information if the topic is too complex, or they may make up answers when asked questions they do not know how to answer.

Don't be Boring

Language. Write in plain, human language, and avoid acronyms or technical jargon. If you must use jargon, explain it clearly.

Make your materials visually compelling:
- Use high-quality infographics and photography. If you only have low-quality images, do not use them as they will distract from the content in the presentation.
- Balance the imagery, talking points, and text—aim for a visual presentation with enough context to understand key takeaways.
- Use pictures of people who live in the neighborhood.
- Create diagrams and process graphics to visualize more complex ideas.
- Use clear, accessible fonts.

Field Engagements. The vast majority of neighborhood residents do not have the time or willingness to participate in public workshops. Obtaining input from a diverse cross section of the community is critical to the success of the neighborhood planning process. To engage a broader range of community members, activities such as surveys, social media, street fair participation, and other individualized engagement strategies should be considered. Agency staff members who are doing field engagements should also be trained in how to answer questions—one field engagement interaction with a community member could be the only interaction he or she has with the City during the planning process.

Stakeholder Discussions. Stakeholders have specific concerns that are often researched and informed by data and/or based on community input. Conduct regular meetings with stakeholders early and throughout the process to check in, build trust, and identify roles and responsibilities that both parties can play to ensure productive and informed outcomes in the planning process. It is important to remember that stakeholders are not always the decision makers but should be partners in developing an open and transparent process in which their constituents can be meaningfully involved. Some stakeholders will be advocates representing the views of larger constituencies. In those cases, their role should be made explicit, and the agenda for discussions should be prepared accordingly so that the Planning Team and stakeholders are prepared to participate in discussions that may ultimately shape the content of the final plan.

⭐ **Examples of Field Engagement***

01
Physical Surveys / Artifacts

Placing notebooks in physical locations is useful when you want to go to places where the community spends time.

02
Social Media Engagement

Facebook and Twitter are very accessible and widely used platforms where planners can post information and have public conversations. Twitter Chats can quickly be hijacked, so it is important to plan carefully and be prepared for the conversation to go in a variety of directions.

03
Web-Based Engagement

Using web-based tools like Neighborland are appropriate when you want to get responses from a large number of people who may not have time to attend workshops. Websites and social media also provide opportunities for community members to give feedback in a public way, and for planners to acknowledge and respond directly to comments or questions.

04
On-the-Street Interviews

On-the-street interviews provide a quick and easy way of taking the pulse of the community. It also enables you to connect with folks who might not live in the neighborhood but who use it for other reasons (e.g., transportation, work, recreation, etc.).

05
Canvassing

Canvassing is important when you have a project in a politically charged neighborhood that requires 1:1 engagement with a broad swath of the public.

*A full list of strategies is available on page 59 in the Appendix.

Maintain Feedback Loops

The Engagement Strategy should also include opportunities for community members to provide feedback on the outreach strategy itself and on the content of different workshops and events.

Planners can use feedback on the engagement process to improve and strengthen future interactions with the community; compiling feedback on workshops and events is also important to understand where there may be gaps in information and where additional research is needed.

Jerome Avenue Workshop | DCP

Tips for Proactive Inclusivity

The Planning Team should use its demographic analysis and understanding of neighborhood dynamics to ensure that a representative population is able to meaningfully engage in the planning process.

This means proactively reaching out to and lowering barriers for populations that have historically been underrepresented or face specific challenges to full participation. Examples include the elderly, disabled, youth, immigrants, non-English speakers, low-income individuals, and communities of color.

Outreach should utilize existing service and community networks, such as schools, religious institutions, cultural centers, local media, and community-based organizations. Low-technology media, such as flyers, word of mouth, and other traditional means are crucial to reaching isolated communities.

Multilingual materials are important (e.g., flyers, boards, hand-outs, and other literature), as well as providing translation services at public workshops in communities for whom English is not the native language.

Soliciting Feedback to Improve Engagement and Outreach

Community engagement is a constant learning process. The Planning Team can hone its tactics and adjust its engagement strategy by soliciting feedback directly from the community. One way to do this is by distributing a survey at the end of each meeting. Potential questions might include:

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the meeting participants today represented the neighborhood?

2. What populations or organizations in the neighborhood do you think are missing from these conversations that should be included?

3. What might be the best way to reach these groups and enable them to participate? What services or special needs might they have?

The survey can also be used to solicit general feedback about the meeting and ways to improve format, logistics, and overall outreach.

Learn Overview

The goal of the Learn phase is to provide the Planning Team and community members with the opportunity to enliven and enrich preliminary data and field study with a deeper understanding of how neighborhood changes are affecting the everyday life, concerns, and future of the community. Each City agency will provide data to the Project Manager to assemble the content and develop activities for two workshops in the Learn Phase. The Project Manager may identify other City agencies that need to participate in the planning problem identification and solving process based on issues discovered in this phase.

Workshop 1: Kick-Off / Listen and Learn

The primary purpose of Workshop 1 is to inform the community about the neighborhood planning process and to understand critical community concerns and areas for further investigation. During Workshop 1, the Planning Team must be able to clearly communicate to the community:

- *What*: Describe the role of neighborhood planning within the context of Housing New York, the goals of the planning process, and the purpose of the Neighborhood Plan.
- *Why*: Summarize the concerns, challenges, and opportunities identified in the Neighborhood Snapshot.
- *Who*: Describe the City agencies leading the planning process in partnership with stakeholders and the community at large.
- *When*: Provide a clear trajectory highlighting the phased planning process, what happens at each phase, and a schedule of the milestones in the planning process.
- *Where*: Define the study and context areas for the planning effort.

Workshop 2: Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles

The primary purpose of Workshop 2 is to articulate a consensus-built vision for the future of the neighborhood. The goals of the event are to:
- Create and agree on aspirations, values, goals, and vision.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the lived experience of community members.

Deliverable

The first of two deliverables in this phase is a Workshop 1 report that summarizes the community input gathered during the workshop. The second deliverable is a Workshop 2 summary. This document should include the Neighborhood Measures and Trends research, which builds on the Neighborhood Snapshot; a Vision statement that provides a clear understanding of the community's goals, values, and aspirations; and the key concerns and priorities to be addressed by the planning process. Much of this information will be based on data and field research in the Neighborhood Snapshot. However, by the end of the Learn phase, the Planning Team will have taken a deeper dive to further understand critical trends, challenges, and opportunities that are affecting the future of the neighborhood and may have an impact on the community's ability to achieve its goals and objectives.

(Note: Deliverables are posted on the publicly accessible project website.)

02
Learn

Creating a vision
Understanding the neighborhood

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01 | **Workshop 1:**
Listen and Learn

02 | **Field**
Engagement

03 | **Neighborhood**
Measures and Trends

04 | **Stakeholder**
Discussions

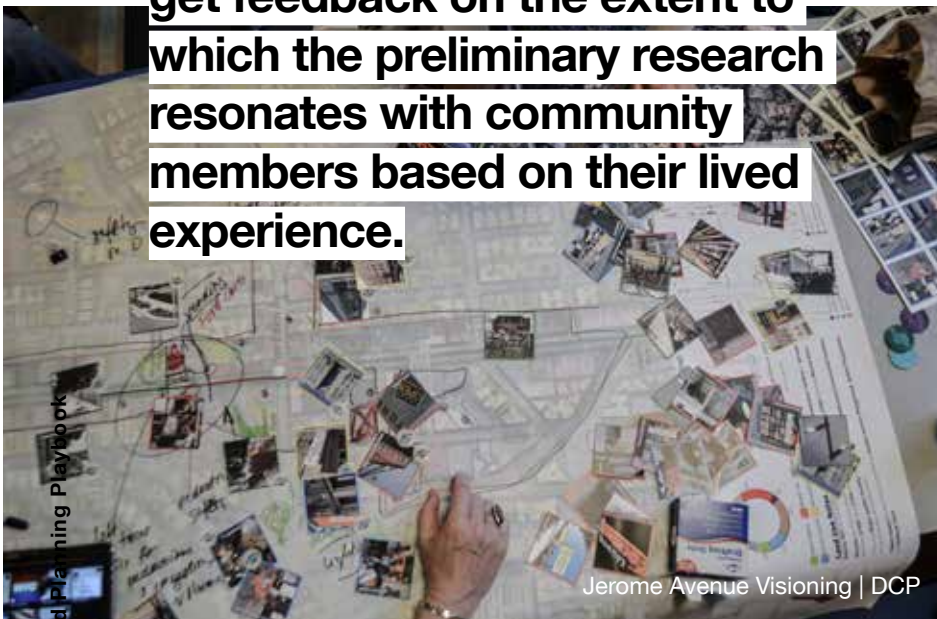**05** | **Workshop 2: Vision, Goals,**
and Guiding Principles

01 Workshop 1: Public Kick-Off / Listen and Learn

The goal of Workshop 1 is to communicate the scope and schedule of the planning process, present preliminary research to the public, and get feedback on the extent to which the preliminary research resonates with community members based on their lived experience.

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

02 Learn

Jerome Avenue Visioning | DCP

Jamaica Action Plan Workshop | MGIS at NYCEDC

★ Logistics & Preparation

Prior to each Workshop, meet with the Advisory Committee if one has been established for the neighborhood planning process. Agree on agenda and other logistics to ensure a well-attended and productive meeting.

Sample Agenda

Share existing plans and research, obtain initial reactions.

1. Video Introduction
Have a video playing on a loop that articulates elements of the Project Brief, including the planning process, timeline, and intended outcomes.

2. Open House
Have each of the relevant agencies set up a booth to share their perspective on neighborhood planning and how it relates to their topic area.

Each booth should have information to present, as well as a board that poses questions residents can answer about their lived experience.

3. Follow-Up
Make sure to sign people into the session, and share back the results of the questions from each booth.
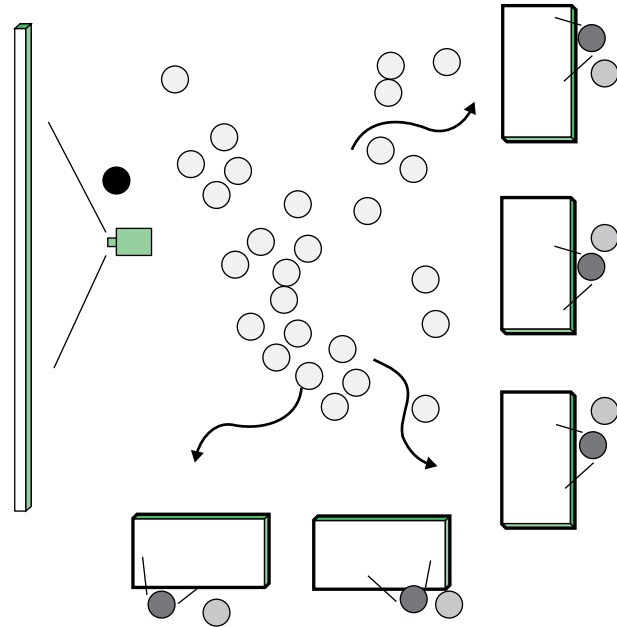
Sample Room Layout

Open House
The room layout for Workshop 1 facilitates an open house feel, and participants can choose their own path and experience. It should feel playful, more like a party than a formal meeting. This sets the tone for the rest of the project.

● Presenter/MC

● Facilitator

● Note taker

○ Participant

Sample Activities

01
Favorite Places Mapping

Ask participants to indicate where their favorite places are on a map:
- Where's your favorite place? Why? What makes it great? Place these on a map.
- Where would you like to see more of these qualities in your neighborhood?
- What routes do you travel in your neighborhood?
- Invite people to tell you where they like to go, and why.
- Create an interactive installation that people can engage with directly.

02
Interactive Games

Define the question that you want participants to engage around. Start the workshop by teaching participants about the issue. Once a baseline of information is shared, community members use an interactive game to negotiate an example comparable to real life. For example, in an affordable housing workshop, participants might examine a number of potential developments to decide how many affordable units would be produced and what incomes those units would serve. At the end of the workshop, participants could come to consensus on the development they think best fits their neighborhood.

03
Photo Booth

Set up a Photo Booth and ask people to answer a question using photographs. Have related (and fun!) props available.

04
Survey Station

Give attendees the opportunity to fill out a survey of relevant questions or provide general comments or thoughts.

02 Field Engagement

Field engagement is critical for introducing a wide range of viewpoints into the planning process—not just from the usual participants who have the time and motivation to attend public workshops. It's an opportunity to use fun and creative tactics to understand how people live their daily lives.

The goal of field engagement is to gain a broad perspective from a diverse cross section of community members, as well as to collect stories that can be fed into the public workshops and ultimately into the Neighborhood Plan. Connecting with a larger audience also has the potential to build a groundswell of support for the planning process and can help the planning team understand people's concerns about their neighborhood and potential changes to it.

Field Tactics

- ○ Physical Engagement (e.g., notebooks or poster boards in public spaces)
- ○ Web-Based Engagement
- ○ Text Messaging
- ○ Twitter Chats
- ○ Instagram Hashtags
- ○ Large-Scale Surveys
- ○ Site Walks
- ○ Crowd-Sourced Proposals
- ○ Canvassing
- ○ On-the-Street Interviews
- ○ Focus Groups
- ○ Pop-Ups
- ○ Parklets
- ○ Tactical Urbanism
- ○ Participatory Budgeting
- ○ Block Parties

See case studies and more information about each tactic in the Appendix.

Neighborland

★ Examples in Practice

Some examples of field engagement include:

01 Neighborland
02 Photo Booth
03 Talking Transition
04 Instagram

See more in the Appendix.

01

02

03

04

03 Neighborhood Measures and Trends

Each agency takes a deeper dive into data now that planners and project managers have a better understanding of the neighborhood from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The static data of the Neighborhood Snapshot goes further to understand the dynamic trends affecting the neighborhood, particularly in ways that create opportunities and challenges in achieving the vision, goals, and aspirations articulated by the community.

The goal of this Neighborhood Measures and Trends research is to begin matching data with possible policy and programmatic scenarios to address concerns that impede or facilitate achieving community and neighborhood objectives.

Guiding Questions

Data research should be complemented by field engagement. Each participating City agency will develop criteria for the type of information to support or inform potential policies and programs.

- What are clear trends affecting community stability and health?
- What measures demonstrate change—positive or negative?
- What data is available to substantiate or tell the story for a certain strategy or approach might be necessary?

Community Health Profiles

Planners should consider how their efforts can improve the overall health and well-being of communities. A health lens in our planning approach would help to address long-standing inequities, such as access to health services and fresh foods, air quality, and other environmental issues. The NYC Department of Health regularly publishes data about the health of residents in each of the city's 59 community districts and should be consulted early on in the planning process.

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

02 Learn

Telling the Story Through Data

Quality of and proximity to open space tells a stronger story than simply mapping where open space is located.

WELL DISTRIBUTED OPEN SPACES

Open space on the historic peninsula: **430,000 m²**

Urban open spaces form **16%** of all open spaces.
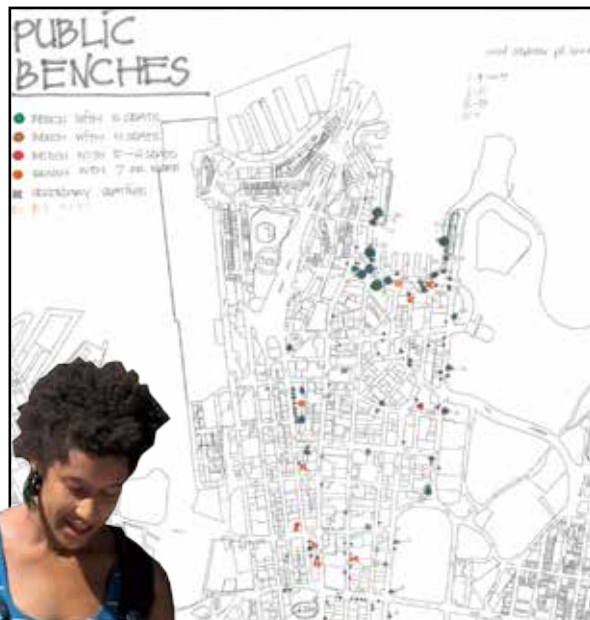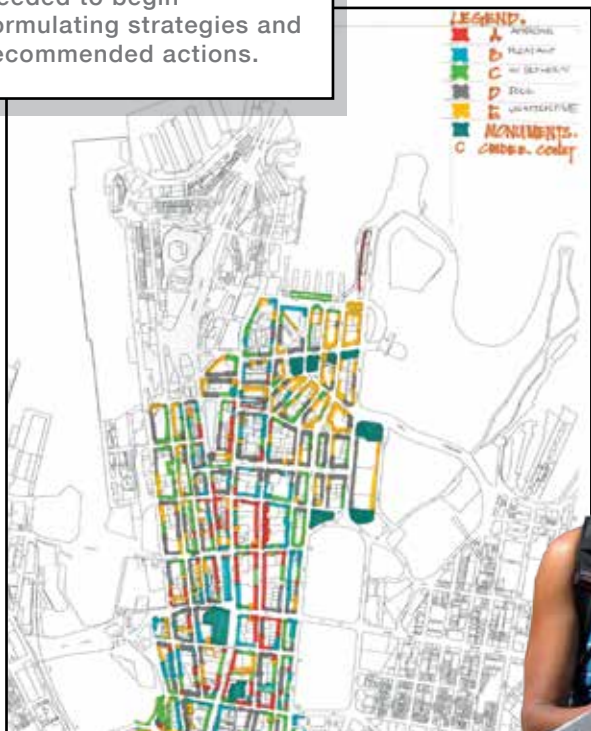

REASONABLE WALKING DISTANCES

Gehl Architects

Observation in the Field

Regular site visits to the neighborhood help build a deeper understanding of the context, conditions, characteristics, and other important information needed to begin formulating strategies and recommended actions.

Gehl Architects

04 Stakeholder Discussions

Planners and Project Managers from City agencies should establish relationships with stakeholders interested in specific elements of the Neighborhood Plan (i.e., housing, jobs, land use, transportation, parks, schools, etc.). The goal of individualized discussions outside of the public workshops is to develop stronger connections to organizations and people with specific expertise working on these issues at the neighborhood level, vet and brainstorm ideas, and learn more about priorities and concerns from the community perspective—quantitative data becomes real life experiences.
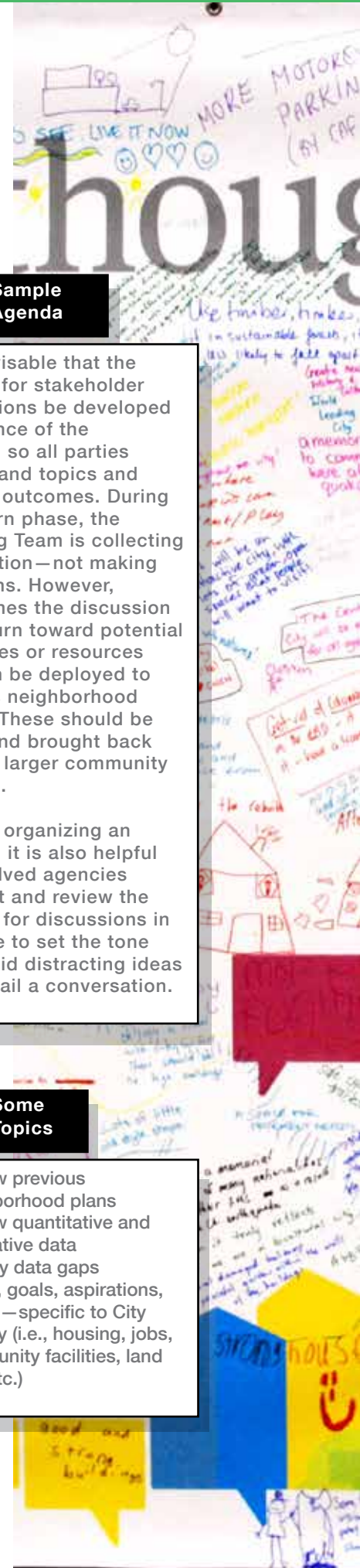
Sample Agenda

It is advisable that the agenda for stakeholder discussions be developed in advance of the meeting so all parties understand topics and desired outcomes. During the Learn phase, the Planning Team is collecting information—not making decisions. However, sometimes the discussion might turn toward potential strategies or resources that can be deployed to address neighborhood issues. These should be noted and brought back into the larger community process.

Beyond organizing an agenda, it is also helpful for involved agencies to script and review the framing for discussions in advance to set the tone and avoid distracting ideas that derail a conversation.

Some Topics

- Review previous neighborhood plans
- Review quantitative and qualitative data
- Identify data gaps
- Vision, goals, aspirations, values—specific to City agency (i.e., housing, jobs, community facilities, land use, etc.)

Public Workshop for Christchurch Urban Planning Framework Plan | Gehl Architects

Workshop 2: Vision, Goals, and Guiding Principles

The goal of Workshop 2 is to create and confirm a consensus-built vision, goals, and guiding principles for the neighborhood.

The focus is on identifying the critical issues that will be significant drivers in the planning process. Discussion topics help to solicit aspirations and values, particularly as they relate to the key concerns affecting the neighborhood.

Sample Agenda

Share draft vision, goals, and guiding principles; obtain initial reactions; refine neighborhood understanding.

1. Opening Presentation
10-minute presentation to re-contextualize the purpose of the work.

2. Small Group Data Share
Present the core findings from the Learn phase. These could be place-based or content-based depending on how the Learn phase unfolded.

3. Small Group Discussion
Use the small group to confirm findings and build a vision and guiding principles that respond to them. It is important to create a list of facilitation questions ahead of the meeting. Participants might be more open or candid if a community leader or volunteer facilitates the discussion.

Sample Room Layout

Small group discussions
Break people up into groups of 7, led by 1 facilitator and supported by 1 note taker.

- ● Presenter/MC
- ● Facilitator
- ○ Note taker
- ○ Participant
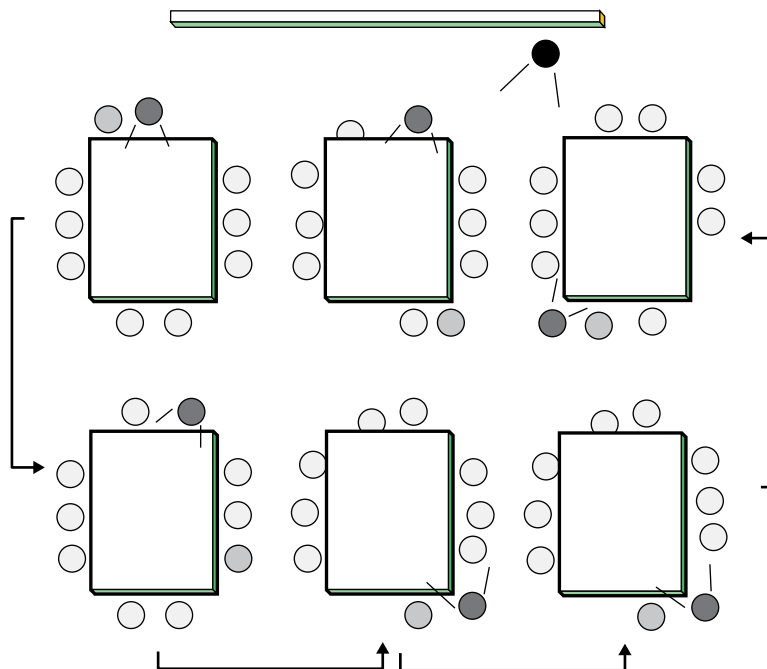
Tips for Productive Visioning

Build on the ideas of others

Stay on topic

Vs

Defer judgment, no blocking

Vs

Encourage wild ideas

Be visual

One conversation at a time

hello Vs Wah wah wah...

Go for quantity

Sample Activities

01
Breaking into Small Groups

Break into small groups based on:
- Areas of a room (random but based on natural clustering)
- Different color dots on name tags corresponding to different tables (random)
- Table numbers on name tags
- Tables based on topics with self-assignment

Keep small groups to a MAX of 7 participants (research shows that groups splinter above 7).

02
Getting Outside

Think about using a site walk to solicit thoughts on the Learn findings and contextualize the conversation physically. This is optional—the same conversation could happen in small groups with the use of photography and/or maps to represent specific places.

03
Visioning Using Imagery

Use inspirational photographs to structure a conversation around the qualities that make a place great. Ask people: "What images jump out to you, and why?"

04
Backcasting

Present a future scenario, and ask people how we got there. For example: "It's 2025, and there are 20,000 new people living in East New York, and they all have affordable places to live. How did that happen?"

05
Affinity Mapping

- Ask a question of participants—place it on a flip chart.
- Have people spend 10 minutes generating answers / ideas on index cards or Post-it notes.
- Collect the ideas and place them on a flat surface.
- Cluster the ideas into themes or categories based on direction from the participants.
- Note: Participants should drive the categorization so planners can see how people understand the content; this can bring out unique perspectives.

06
How might we ...

Present a question that starts with "How might we …"

"We know this neighborhood has very little parkland. How might we think creatively about using existing spaces as recreation areas for both kids and adults?"

07
Nominal Group Brainstorm

- Facilitator poses a question
- Each person in a small group (7 people max) gets to share one idea in turn
- Anyone can say "pass" without skipping a turn the next round
- Idea generation continues until everyone says "pass" twice
- Discussion happens to allow for clarification
- Participants take 5 index cards and write their 5 favorite ideas—one on each card—and rank them
- Each participant then shares the idea with its rank
- The facilitator notes the score for each idea on the wall
- The ideas are now ranked
- Discussion / reflection takes place
- Facilitator takes notes and promises to analyze all ideas—not just those with the most votes
- The small group shares with the larger group

08
Wall Charts / Graphic Guides / Process Charts

Design a workshop activity or list of questions. Format it into a large wall poster that participants can complete.

Create Overview

The Project Manager will lead the Planning Team in creating and vetting planning, program, and project scenarios. Each City agency will be responsible for testing the viability, feasibility, and desirability of proposals. Part of the testing should occur with stakeholders as a way to refine and confirm strategies to meet neighborhood objectives. This way, the engagement process is more realistic, as government and community members learn about the parameters, constraints, and opportunities they each bring to the planning and implementation proposals.

Testing might include questions around the following criteria:

- Is it desirable? Does it meet the community vision? Does it improve the overall health and quality of life in the neighborhood?
- Is it viable? Does it have the political support for approvals or access to other necessary levels of support to implement?
- Is it feasible? Is it fiscally responsible from a public policy perspective? Can it be financed?

The primary purpose of Workshop 3 is to develop and test plausible strategies to meet neighborhood and community goals. During the event(s), the Planning Team will work with citizens to:

- Vet strategies, policies, programs, and projects.
- Develop a better understanding of the priorities, as defined by the community.

The goal of the Create phase is to begin developing strategies and ideas that can solve problems identified within the community, as well as test their ability, if implemented, to meet the economic, physical, and social goals and aspirations articulated by the community.

Deliverable

The Create deliverable is a summary of Workshop 3, which should summarize problem statements, potential solutions and strategies, and constraints and opportunities for implementation. Each City agency can submit additional information to be included in this document to the Project Manager, who will organize it into the chapter format of the Neighborhood Plan, as follows:

- Housing
- Economic and Workforce Development
- Community Facilities and Resources
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Land Use and Urban Design

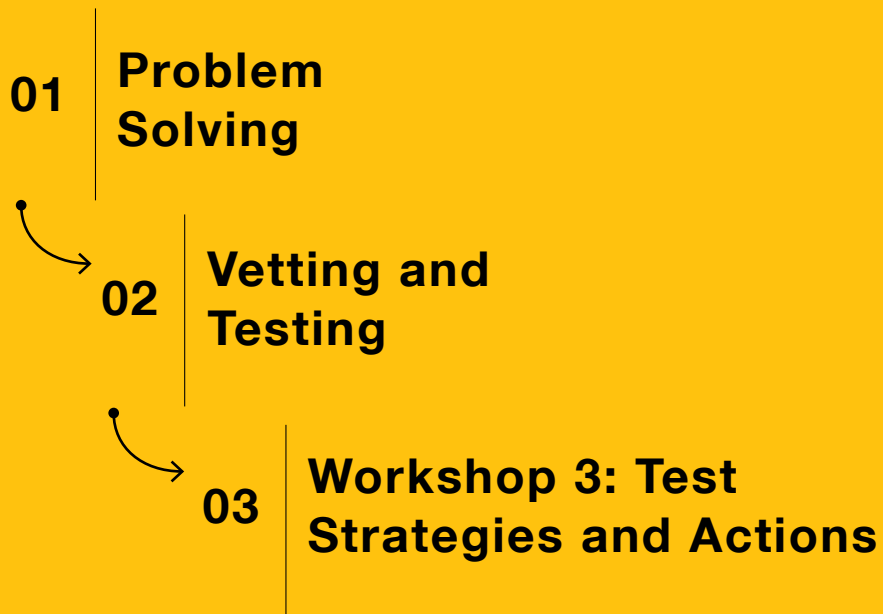(Note: Deliverables are posted on the publicly accessible project website.)

03
Create

**Turning ideas into strategies
Vetting the possibilities**

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01 | **Problem Solving**

02 | **Vetting and Testing**

03 | **Workshop 3: Test Strategies and Actions**

01 Problem Solving

At a basic level, the role of the Planning Team is to interpret data and community input to identify problems and then propose viable strategies to address those problems. Having developed a clearer understanding of the key concerns, aspirations, and goals in a neighborhood during the Learn phase, the process transitions to brainstorming about potential solutions.

Problem Solving

1. Sort and Organize
- Quantitative data
- Qualitative data
- Field engagement and community workshop input

2. Define Objectives
- Develop clearly stated objectives
- Link data to a problem statement and articulate an objective that addresses the problem

3. Brainstorm Scenarios and Alternatives
- Be free to think, generate ideas, and innovate
- Let good ideas rise to the top
- Vet and test ideas for viability, feasibility, desirability

As a starting point, each agency must identify the range of tools it can deploy to address critical issues and achieve specific goals. Not all tools or strategies will be viable, but it is important to test a range of potential solutions before arriving at a proposal. This scenario planning approach involves various levels of participation from within the agency, in collaboration with agency partners, with stakeholders, and with the community. Problem solving for NYC neighborhoods is about the intersection of policy, programs, and capital investments—and how they connect with community values, aspirations, and concerns. City agencies are expected to undertake thoughtful and deep analysis of data and conduct research to develop a range of creative, and possibly innovative, strategies to address current and future projected needs.

Project Managers vet policies, strategies, and projects within their agency to solicit feedback, refine initial proposals, and obtain the required internal approvals. A coordinated inter-agency review of these proposals among the involved agencies should take place before they are tested with key stakeholders or presented to the larger community at Workshop 3.

During the vetting process, agencies are able to test the financial feasibility of ideas, whether they are focused on programs, policies, capital improvements, or other areas of influence. It is critical to obtain feedback from stakeholders—and to ask for ways to refine initial proposals and/or develop alternatives—to ensure that they fundamentally address goals and concerns from the community perspective. Reviewing these ideas first among the agencies allows planners to develop a coordinated and integrated approach.

03 Workshop 3: Test Strategies and Actions

40

The Planning Team comes to this workshop prepared to share a series of hunches and strategies and ready to gather significant feedback on how these ideas can be developed in more depth, or possibly taken off the table.

Be sure solutions are plausible and specific to the neighborhood!

★ Logistics & Preparation

Prior to each Workshop, meet with the Advisory Committee if one has been established for the neighborhood planning process. Agree on the agenda and other logistics to ensure a well-attended and productive meeting.

▤ Sample Agenda

1. Opening Presentation
10-minute presentation to re-contextualize the work and where we are in the planning process.

2. Small Group Scenario Presentation
Present discovery-based scenarios for the Neighborhood Plan.

3. Small Group Discussion
Ask for feedback on the scenarios. Discuss pros and cons.

4. Prioritization
Prioritize ideas and recommendations based on the proposed scenarios.

5. Full Group Report Back
Share ideas and recommendations from each table.

6. Next Steps
Briefly thank the participants; explain how this information will be used and what is the next step in the planning process.

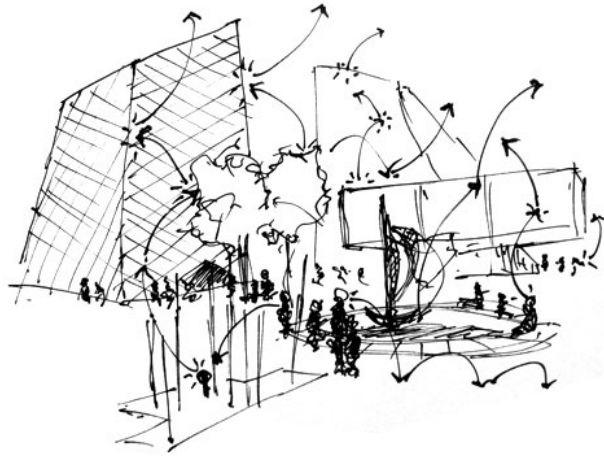Vision Zero Workshop LA | James Rojas

Some Methods

Don't show completed policy strategies, drawings, or programs. Allow for people to respond to initial concepts, provide input, and contribute additional ideas. Use questions, a range of options, or illustrations to provoke discussion on what the plan should include to achieve community objectives.

Sample Activities

01
World Cafe

Split participants into small groups. Each group spends 20 minutes at a series of 5-7 tables. The small group switches tables every 20 minutes, but the facilitator stays put. This enables the facilitator to update each new group, and each new group can build on the work of the last group. Participants can either change small groups or stay with the same group throughout.

02
Scenario Vetting

Present strategies and ask the following questions:
- What challenges might we face in implementing these strategies in your neighborhood?
- What are some unintended consequences that we might not have thought of?
- Which of these strategies should be the priority?
- Which of these options would best meet the vision we co-designed in our last session?

03
Passports

Provide workshop participants with a "passport" to get stamped at the various tables/small group conversations. Participants who get all of the stamps can enter the passport for a raffle prize. Local businesses can donate free dinners or gift cards for the winner(s). This provides incentive to stop by every station or table.

Finalize Overview

The Project Manager leads the Planning Team to integrate the materials developed during the planning process into a comprehensive, holistic plan. Each agency does final testing and vetting at the beginning of the Finalize phase and continues to meet with stakeholders to ensure continuity from previously developed scenarios into final planning solutions.*

Equitable planning solutions should be applicable citywide yet tailored to address the specific concerns of the specific neighborhood.

The primary purpose of Workshop 4 is to present a draft of the Neighborhood Plan and to obtain final input and feedback. During the event(s), the Planning Team will work with citizens to:

- Confirm articulated objectives.
- Prioritize strategies, solutions, and actions.
- Identify immediate next steps.

The goal of the Finalize phase is for the Planning Team to synthesize and combine all of the work completed to date into a single Neighborhood Plan. The Neighborhood Plan is a starting point for implementation. It is a document that serves as the basis for future city investments, actions, and approvals. It will contain next steps (short-, medium-, and long-term) toward implementing strategies that achieve community objectives. When land use actions or regulatory approvals are required, it will contain the fundamental elements of an EIS and commitments for a ULURP application.

Deliverable

The Finalize deliverable is the Neighborhood Plan. The Project Manager will organize the submittals from each City agency into the chapter format of the Neighborhood Plan, as follows:

- Housing
- Economic and Workforce Development
- Community Facilities and Resources
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Land Use and Urban Design

(NOTE: Deliverables are posted on the publicly accessible project website.)

*As discussed in the Implement section, a Draft Neighborhood Plan will be completed before projects enter into ULURP, and the Plan will be finalized at the conclusion of the ULURP process.

04
Finalize

Developing the Neighborhood Plan
Creating the pathway for implementation

01 | **Storyboard**

02 | **Synthesize**

03 | **Workshop 4: Confirm and Prioritize**

04 | **Neighborhood Plan**
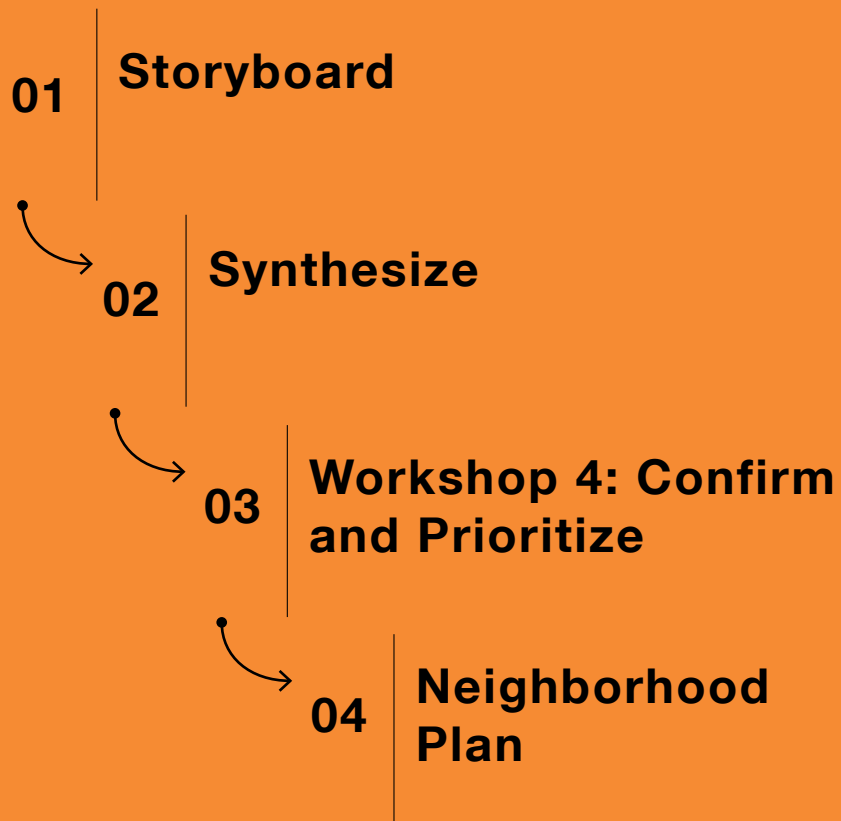
01 Storyboard

The Neighborhood Plan Storyboard outlines the core messages, chapters, and contents that need to be communicated. The Storyboard can be sketchy but should help show where certain content, data, or visuals are needed—and who needs to provide them. The goal of the Storyboard is to make sure that the narrative and flow of the document is right and that all agencies and stakeholders agree. This will lead to a more efficient development of the first draft plan.
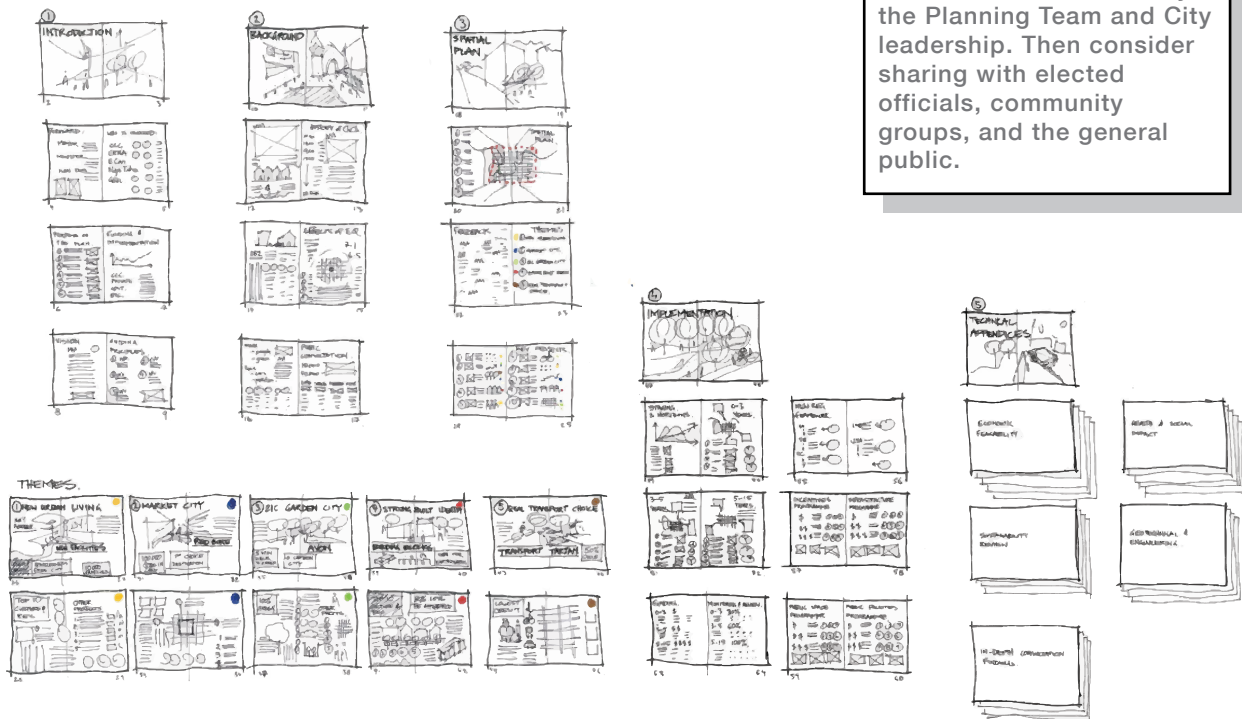
At a Glance

Create an outline of the full plan to review with core stakeholders and the Planning Team, and agree on the themes of the Neighborhood Plan.

Storyboard as a Tool

Confirm the core neighborhood strategy, including major opportunities and challenges, and adapt it into a narrative. This includes an outline of who needs to be involved and a timeframe for completing the document.

Define the internal and external feedback loops that will be used to review and approve the content of the plan. For example, start with an internal review by the Planning Team and City leadership. Then consider sharing with elected officials, community groups, and the general public.

02 Synthesize

As in previous phases, Project Managers vet policies, strategies, and projects within their respective agencies to solicit additional feedback, refine draft proposals, and obtain the required internal approvals. Synthesizing the proposals might be undertaken with key stakeholders to get final input before Workshop 4. This process ensures that a feedback loop is respected and that the different elements of the draft plan are integrated, comprehensive, and interconnected.

HPD Charrette | Gehl Studio & GOODCorps
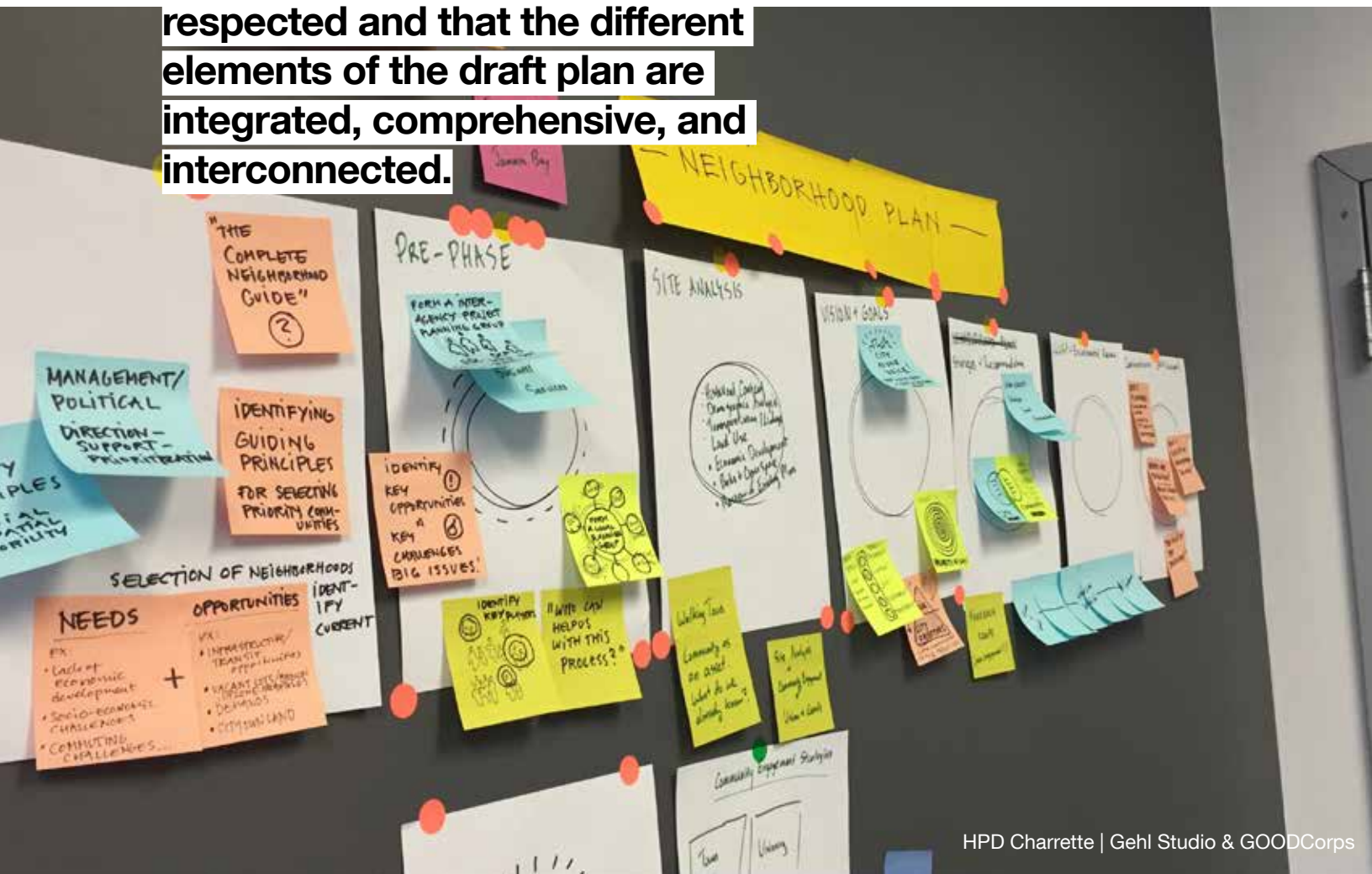
Workshop 4 is when the City presents a semi-final Neighborhood Plan to the community. At this point, the goals and opportunities in the neighborhood should have already been defined and reviewed with core stakeholders. The parameters under which the Plan is being developed have been set and are clear. This session is an opportunity to confirm and prioritize the Plan's contents, but the team will not have an open debate around new recommendations and ideas.

★ Logistics & Preparation

Prior to each Workshop, meet with the Advisory Committee if one has been established for the neighborhood planning process. Agree on agenda and other logistics to ensure a well-attended and productive meeting.

≣ Sample Agenda

1. Video Introduction
Have a video playing on a loop that articulates the vision for planning in this neighborhood, the planning process and timeline, and intended outcomes.

2. Gallery Voting
Participants can walk around the space and review the elements of the draft Neighborhood Plan. Each person will be given five green stickers and five red stickers that they can place to express their approval or disapproval. They can also write in specific comments.

3. Analysis
Workshop leaders will analyze the votes to get a sense of which elements of the plan have the potential to cause serious conflict during implementation.

Sample Room Layout

Gallery
The room is designed to feel like a gallery. Participants can visit different areas of the room to get a sense of the final Plan, and help prioritize where possible.

● Presenter/MC

● Facilitator

○ Participant
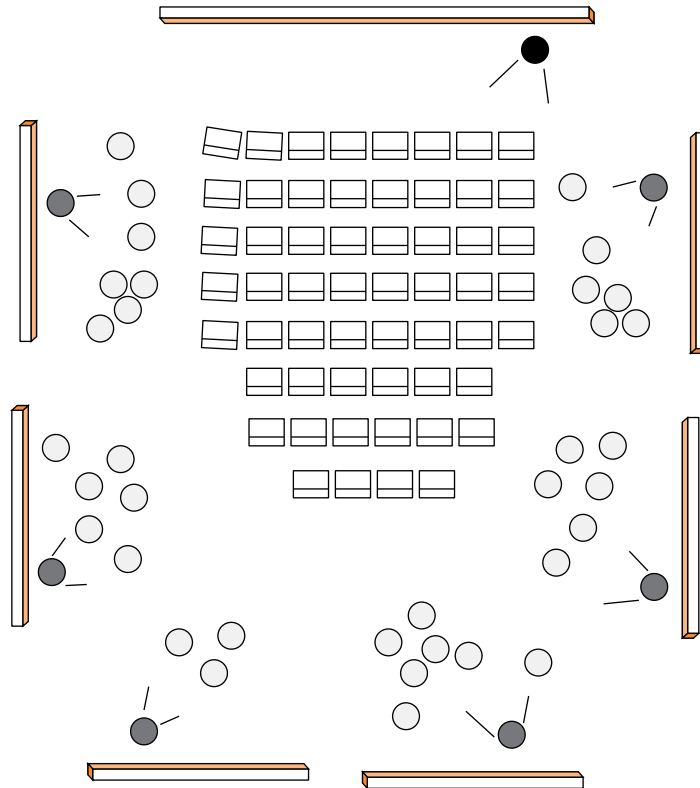
Sample Activities

01
Dot Voting

Ask folks to select among alternatives using dots. Give folks 5 or 6 dots, and tell them they can allocate those dots any way they see fit.

"You came up with some great ideas for how to use this vacant space. Take the dots you've been given and place them next to the ideas you think are best. You can put all of your dots on one idea, spread them out among 6 ideas, or allocate them any other way you'd like."

02
Scale Voting

Create a scale that asks how people feel about a certain idea or policy. Ask folks to place a dot on the spectrum based on their perspective.

"The density and height limit proposed here is appropriate."

○　　○　　○　　○　　○

Strongly　　　Neutral　　Strongly
disagree　　　　　　　　　Agree

03
Point Allocation

Tell participants they have $100 to spend on their favorite ideas and can spend the money any way they'd like. The spread indicates how much they like the idea.

This is more nuanced than simple ranking because it enables you to understand how much more one idea is preferred over another.

04 Neighborhood Plan

The Neighborhood Plan is developed as a synthesis of the entire neighborhood planning process. The goal is to create a document that all agencies and stakeholders are proud to stand behind. It also provides a clear understanding of what might result from the planning process in terms of policy and design changes.

Ideally, it is a document that:
- **Guides implementation**
- **Shares neighborhood needs that are not going to be immediately addressed**
- **Includes commitments from the City and non-governmental organizations**
- **Provides a guiding framework that allows for flexibility during implementation**
- **Contains the fundamental elements of an EIS and commitments for a ULURP application when land use actions or regulatory approvals are required**

Plan Contents

Format
The Neighborhood Plan is a concise document (25-30 pages), highly graphic/visual, user-friendly, and readable but with sufficient detail. It mirrors the content discussed at the public meetings. Contents include:

1. Introduction

2. Governance and Implementation

3. Community Vision and Guiding Principles

4. Neighborhood Context: Challenges and Opportunities

5. Planning Goals, Strategies, and Actions
   - Housing
   - Economic and Workforce Development
   - Community Facilities and Resources
   - Infrastructure and Transportation
   - Land Use and Urban Design

6. Implementation Timeline
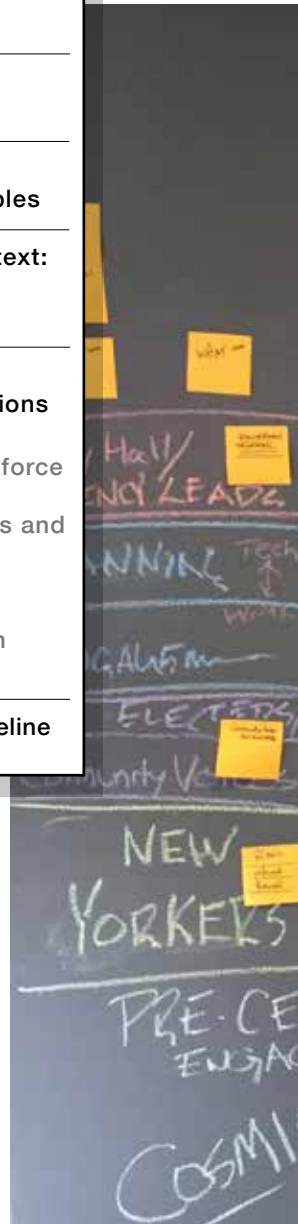
A Neighborhood Planning process focused on sustainability, equity, and diversity is an iterative process.

It requires the willingness to provide factual data for a broad spectrum of citizens to understand and participate in the policy decision-making process, and it requires planners willing to engage in a consensus-building process.

Core characteristics of the process include dissension, sometimes chaos, information sharing, agreements, humility, and a willingness to learn and let go of outdated orthodoxies —or at least update them.

The iterative process allows for ongoing check-ins with decision makers and stakeholders to ensure viability, feasibility, and desirability toward achieving neighborhood and citywide goals and objectives.

Draft Recommendations → Draft Recommendations → Draft Recommendations

Yes! Go ahead! → **Yes! Go ahead!** →

**A
Inter-Agency
Team**

**B
Electeds and
Stakeholders**

**C
Community
Members**

Draft
Plan
**Public
Review**

No, Revise ← **No, Revise** ←

HPD Charrette | Gehl Studio & GOODCorps
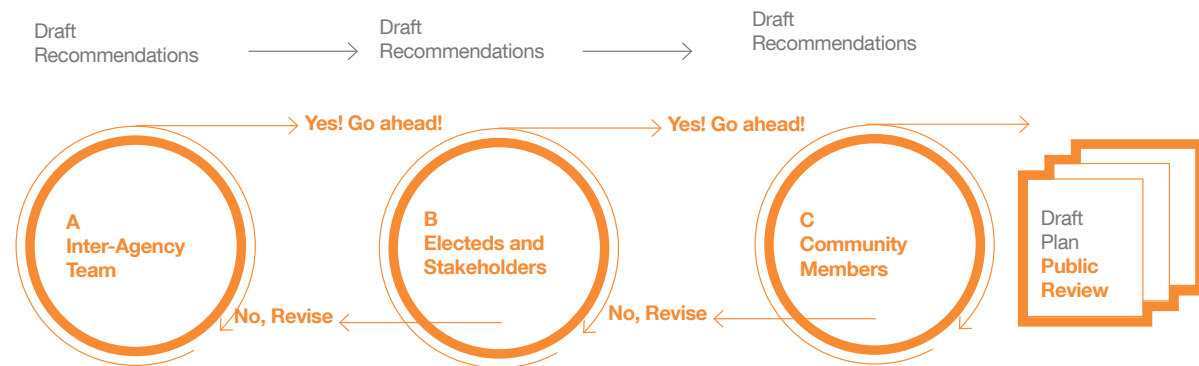
Implement Overview

Once the Neighborhood Plan is finalized, the Planning Team will communicate with the public regarding next steps on projects, strategies, and actions stated in the Neighborhood Plan, as well as how citizens can be involved as specific proposals are developed for implementation.

There are many strategies and proposals put forward in a comprehensive Neighborhood Plan, and each will require a different implementation approach. In general, it is helpful to organize each strategy or action into one of the following three categories:

- ULURP certification and approval (if required)
- Program and policy development
- Capital projects

There are few guarantees in the planning process, as changing demographics, markets, and political ideologies determine budget, policy, and programmatic priorities. However, a Neighborhood Plan can be used to hold City agencies and elected officials accountable to a very specific set of actions. These actions should be clearly articulated in a list or matrix with realistic timeframes for implementation.

05
Implement

Implementing the
Neighborhood Plan

01 | Oversight and
Ongoing Engagement

02 | ULURP Certification and
Approval

03 | Program and Policy
Development

04 | Capital
Projects

01 Oversight and Ongoing Engagement

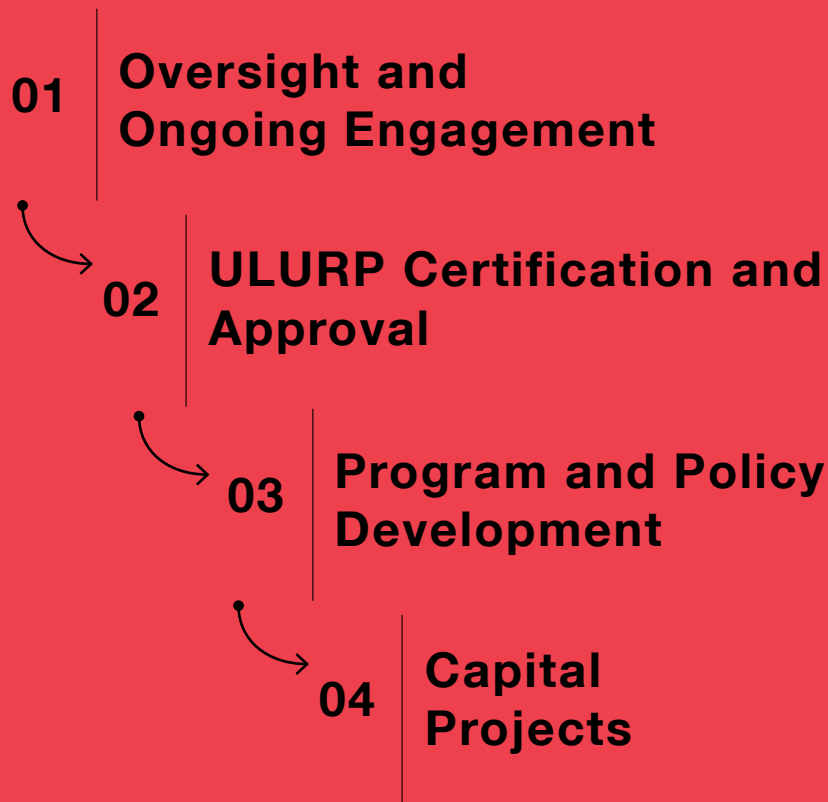**Once the Neighborhood Plan is finalized and the actionable next steps are determined, the Planning Team should establish a formal process for ongoing oversight and management of the Plan's implementation.**

During this process, continued public engagement will be important to not only keep community members updated on the City's progress but also to create a forum for extended discussions and open dialogue about community needs. In addition, by keeping in contact with the community, agencies can test whether the Plan is promoting intended outcomes, or understand whether they need to adapt strategies to meet changing conditions on the ground.

There are different models of engagement and for ongoing oversight and collaboration between communities and government. The establishment of a central governing body or working group that meets regularly and brings together City agencies, elected officials, and community stakeholders is one approach that has been utilized to oversee the implementation of other NYC neighborhood plans. This larger group might meet once or twice per year, while City agencies meet internally, as necessary, to provide updates and coordinate on inter-agency projects.

During implementation, City agencies might also host additional public meetings and workshops to solicit input on and review preliminary designs for capital projects that were committed to as part of the Neighborhood Plan. Alternative forms of engagement, such as through a dedicated website, can also be used to track and communicate progress or ask for resident feedback on plans.

★ **Hunts Point Vision Plan**

In 2003, a task force consisting of business owners, local constituents, elected officials, and government agencies was formed to oversee and guide the development of the Hunts Point Vision Plan in the Bronx. To maintain the dialogue established between government and local leaders during the planning process, the City continues to host bi-annual task force meetings. In addition, the task force has been working with the City to host additional public outreach events related to plan implementation items.

★ **Jamaica Now Action Plan**

In support of the Jamaica Now Action Plan, which was completed in February 2015, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz has created a council of Jamaica stakeholders to provide oversight and evaluation of the implementation process. The City meets internally to monitor progress and makes regular reports to the stakeholder council.

02 ULURP Certification and Approval

If a Neighborhood Plan calls for major land use changes, it must be reviewed and approved according to the requirements of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The ULURP process was developed as a way to ensure that community members have opportunities to provide input on land use decisions before they are approved or rejected.

The local Community Board, Borough President, City Planning Commission, and City Council hold public hearings and vote to approve or reject the application before it reaches the Mayor. The process also ensures that communities have access to information about the proposal and are provided adequate time to review and submit formal comments. Only certain actions enter ULURP, including zoning changes, special permits, and the acquisition or disposition of public property.

A draft Neighborhood Plan should be presented at ULURP certification, and land use changes will continue to be refined until the ULURP actions are officially adopted by the City Council. ULURP can be used to codify land use decisions that are made during the neighborhood planning process, but there are many other strategies and proposals put forward in a comprehensive Neighborhood Plan; these will require a different implementation approach.

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Seward Park | HPD

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

CITY MAP CHANGES / MAPS OF SUBDIVISIONS PLATTINGS / ZONING MAP CHANGES / CPC SPECIAL PERMITS / REVOCABLE CONSENTS FRANCHISE RFP'S MAJOR CONCESSIONS / NON-CITY PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS / HOUSING AND URBAN RENEWAL PLANS / LANDFILLS / DISPOSITION OF REAL PROPERTY / ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY / SITE SELECTION	DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING Application and Pre-Certification	COMMUNITY BOARD	BOROUGH PRESIDENT and BOROUGH BOARD	CITY PLANNING COMMISSION	
	• Receives application and related documents. • Forwards application and documents within 5 days to CB, BP, and CC (and BB, if project affects more than one CB). • Certifies application as complete.	• Notifies public. • Holds public hearing. • Submits recommendation to CPC, BP (and BB). • Can waive rights on franchise RFP's and leases.	• BP submits recommendation to CPC or waives right to do so. • BB (if project affects more than one CB) may hold a public hearing and submit recommendation to CPC or waive right to do so.	• Holds public hearing. • Approves, modifies or disapproves application. • Files approvals and approvals with modifications with City Council. • Disapprovals are final, except for zoning map changes, special permits, and urban renewal plans.	SEE FLOW CHART BELOW FOR THE PROCESS FOR CITY COUNCIL AND MAYORAL REVIEW (Charter Section 197-d)
PROCESS TAKES	No Specified Time Limit (after 6 months, applicant or BP in some cases, may appeal to CPC for certification).	60 Days	30 Days	60 Days	
Clock = 1 Year					
TOTAL DAYS		60 Days	90 Days	150 Days	

AFTER CPC APPROVES APPLICATION	CITY COUNCIL	MAYOR	CITY COUNCIL
• AUTOMATIC REVIEW BY CITY COUNCIL Zoning map changes Zoning text changes (non-ULURP) Housing and urban renewal plans Disposition of residential buildings (except to non-profit companies for low-income housing) 197-a plans** • "TRIPLE NO"—AUTOMATIC REVIEW BY COUNCIL OF ITEMS IN ELECTIVE LIST (BELOW), IF: CB recommended disapproval (NO #1) BP recommended disapproval (NO #2) BP files objection with Council and CPC within 5 days of CPC approval (NO #3) • CITY COUNCIL MAY ELECT TO REVIEW: City map changes Maps of subdivisions or plattings CPC special permits Revocable consents, franchise RFP's, and major concessions Non-City public improvements Landfills Disposition of commercial or vacant property Disposition of residential buildings to nonprofit companies for low income housing Acquisition of real property Site selection	• Can review application, hold a public hearing, and vote to approve, approve with modifications, or disapprove. • Refers any proposed modifications to CPC for an additional 15-day review. • If Council does not act (or does not assume jurisdiction on items it must elect to review), CPC decision is final.	• Reviews application. • May veto Council action. • If Council does not act (or does not assume jurisdiction on items it must elect to review), may veto CPC decision.	• May override Mayor's veto by 2/3 vote.

Action requires majority vote. / Must assume jurisdiction within 20 days. / Action requires majority vote. **50 Days***

5 Days

10 Days

* Does not include 15-day review for proposed modifications.

** Refer to the "Rules for the Processing of Plans Pursuant to Charter Section 197-a" and the "197-a Plan Technical Guide" for 197-a Plan Review timeline.

IF CPC DISAPPROVES APPLICATION, ALL ITEMS ARE DEFEATED EXCEPT
SPECIAL PERMITS, If Mayor certifies as necessary
ZONING MAP AND TEXT CHANGES, If Mayor certifies as necessary
197-a PLANS, If Mayor requests approval**
URBAN RENEWAL PLANS, Per State Law.

Action requires 2/3 vote. Action is final. **50 Days**

Action requires 3/4 vote. Action is final. Law and timetable to be revised.

ABBREVIATIONS:

DCP = Department of City Planning
CPC = City Planning Commission
CB = Community Board
BP = Borough President
CC = City Council
BB = Borough Board

03 Program and Policy Development

Many proposals in the Neighborhood Plan can be implemented through policy or operations—without requiring capital funding or governmental approvals. These include the expansion or streamlining of existing programs, the creation of new programs, the establishment of neighborhood-specific policy positions, or commitments to further investigate specific issues or strategies.

Guidelines for public site RFPs, commitments on affordability levels for new housing, and the establishment of new technical resources for small business owners are all examples of programs or policies that can come out of a neighborhood planning process.

Each initiative will require a different approach and lead time depending on its scope and complexity. Some, such as the creation of a new policy to target specific incomes for affordable housing, can be implemented immediately. Others, such as the streamlining of an existing financing program, may require further research and coordination before they can be put into effect.

Via Verde, Melrose, Bronx | Grimshaw

The City has begun to take a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to capital planning. In May 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced the creation of a $2 billion Neighborhood Development Fund, which will finance the infrastructure needed to support neighborhood livability and new housing creation over the next 10 years. This represents a transformative shift in how the City plans for capital needs—aligning civic infrastructure with critical mandates for community development.

★ **Capital Projects**

Capital projects include investments in streets, utilities, schools, parks, community facilities, housing, and other physical elements of a neighborhood.

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

05 Implement

NYC Playground Program, P.S. 64 Renovation | The Trust for Public Land

Using the Neighborhood Planning Playbook, City agencies are engaging NYC communities to inform the process for how these funds are allocated. Various types of capital needs might be identified in a Neighborhood Plan, but additional work and time is required during the Implement phase to make them a reality. Additionally, not all capital projects will be designed and constructed simultaneously. Some might be prioritized in the early years to address critical needs, while others might be required at a later date as new development comes online and specific impacts are triggered. This type of prioritization can happen with the community during the planning process.

Most capital projects can take anywhere from three to 10 years to study, design, procure, and build, so it is important for the City to be clear about the timing for each capital commitment.

A Note on Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process by which communities engage with the City to make decisions about the allocation of public funding in neighborhoods. It enables taxpayers to work with the City to make the budget decisions that affect their lives.

While PB processes typically focus on capital projects—like improvements to schools, parks, libraries, public housing, and other public or community space—as opposed to policy or program development, the Neighborhood Planning Playbook can be used to create the framework for communities and government to participate in these types of problem-solving and decision-making activities.

More information about Participatory Budgeting can be found here: http://council.nyc.gov/html/pb/faq.shtml
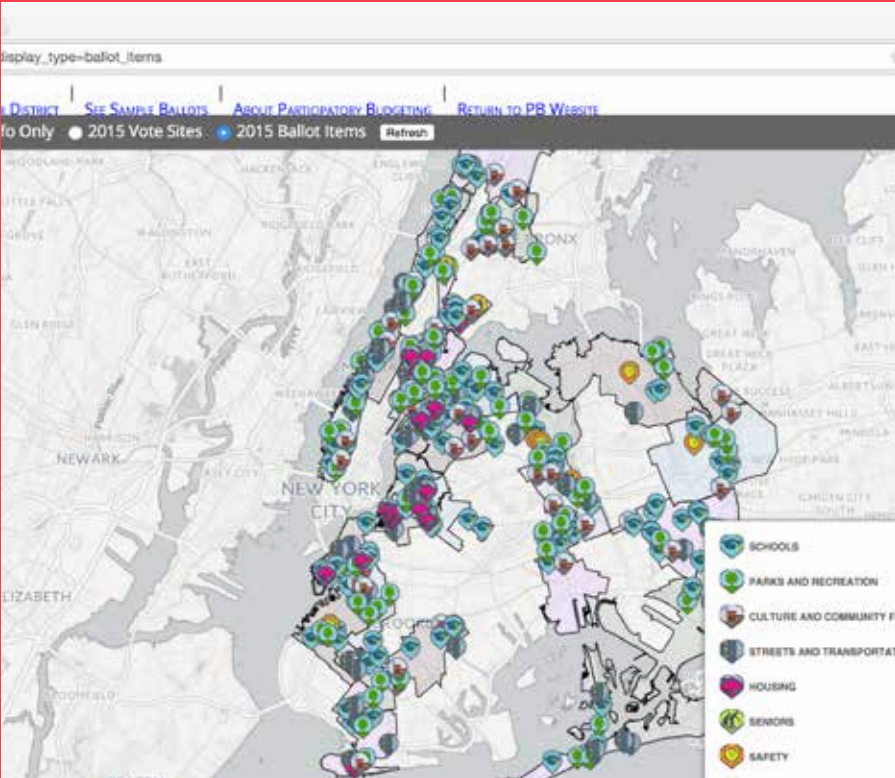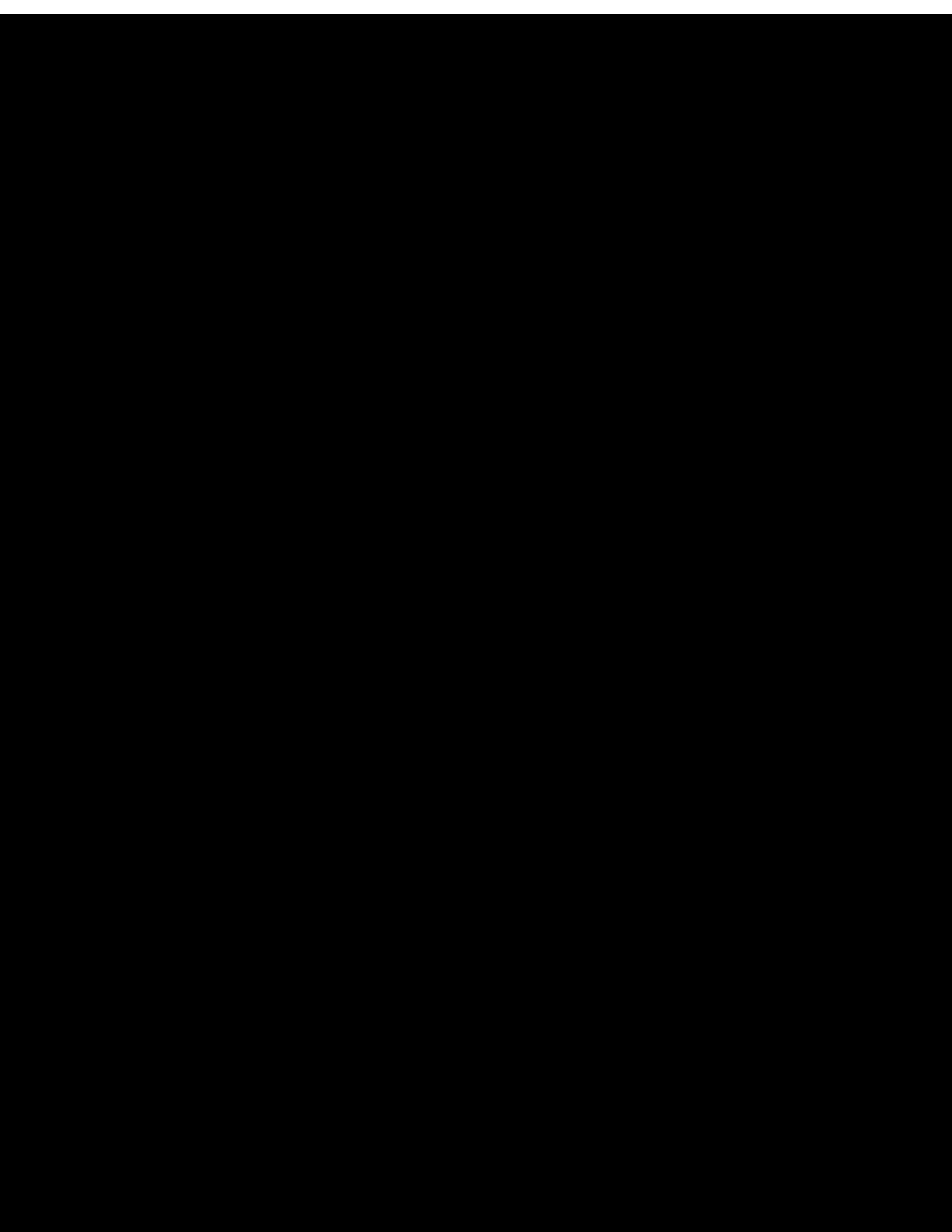
Community Engagement Tactics

Finding the right ways to connect with people who care about their community is important. Not everyone will have the time to attend public workshops. Engaging people in new, creative, and sometimes unexpected ways can help strengthen the working relationship with communities, as well as broaden the range of people that might participate and help shape the Plan.

Neighborhood Notebook
Data Gathering

Placing notebooks at different locations in neighborhoods allows community members to record their ideas about projects taking place in their communities.

This strategy might yield more detailed or honest feedback because community members are able to spend time thinking about the project in the context of their neighborhood.

When/Why/Who
Placing notebooks in physical locations is useful when you want to go to places where the community spends time.

Example
Greening the Gap was a project to create a Green Infrastructure Waterfront Access Plan in East Harlem. Community members recorded their ideas for East Harlem and the Esplanade (in English and Spanish) in nine notebooks throughout the community. The project, completed May 2013, was led by graduate students at Hunter College.

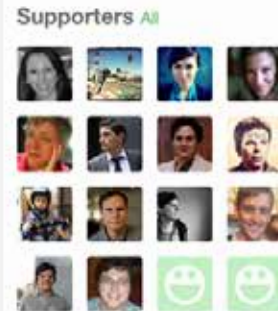Click **Me Too** to show your support for this idea, and we'll keep you updated on its progress.

21 neighbors want a weekly farmers' market in Putnam Plaza in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn.

Supporters All

Web-Based Community Engagement Tools

Interactive websites developed for specific projects enable planning teams to pose questions and receive feedback on a wide range of topics.

Some discussion topics can utilize interactive maps or surveys to collect data, while others can function as open forums for people to express ideas and comment on or "second" those contributed by others.

When/Why/Who
Using this tool is appropriate when you want to get responses from a large number of constituents, including those who might not attend traditional workshops.

Example
Neighborland is an online platform that allows organizations to start projects by asking questions on a number of platforms to collect ideas. The tool also allows community members to vote and provides a framework to put the ideas into action. MindMixer is another tool that provides a platform for community members to engage in an online public process.

Philadelphia 2035 › NE rapid transit

725
responses

latest about 292 days ago

Time of Day

6a   12p   6p   12a

Day of Week

17% 16% 17% 19% 17%
7%   7%
S   M   T   W   T   F   S

Assigned phone
(215) 987-5444
Start date
05/30/2012 at 02:22PM
Status
Inactive

QUESTION 1
Would you use rapid transit along the Boulevard to get to Center City?

Yes ————————————————— 699 96%
No   26   4%

Would you be willing to transfer to the Broad Street Subway to complete your trip?

Yes ——————————— 443 66%
No ——— 224 33%
Unmatched   4   1%

QUESTION 2
What is your ZIP code?

19149 ——————————————— 64 10%
19124 ——————————————— 61   9%
19152 ——————————————— 47   7%
19320 ——————————————— 43   6%
19111 ——————————————— 40   6%
19115 ——————————————— 36   5%
19136 ——————————————— 32   5%

Text Messaging

Using texts to engage with community members gives planners the ability to broaden the scope of interactions and reach people who may be on the go.

Texting can be used to solicit feedback on proposals, conduct surveys, and send event reminders.

When/Why/Who
Text messaging is useful when you want to engage with large numbers of people who might not have access to smart phones. A word of caution: many folks change their phones and phone numbers on a regular basis. Lists of phone numbers can quickly become unreliable.

Example
Textizen is a web platform designed to engage community members through custom campaigns. The tool also visualizes data on a publicly accessible website as people text responses.

TalentCulture @TalentCulture   5h
8 Stages of Career Transformation ow.ly/1KypBW #TChat Wed 4/18 7pET/4pPT Great Leaders Listen & Know #LeadFromWithin #BizForum

Joe Sanchez @sanchezjb   12h
RT @samfiorella The Courage of Passion Brands and Leaders - Sensei Blogs shar.es/rCUdP #leadership #bizforum

samfiorella @samfiorella   12h
The Courage of Passion Brands and Leaders - Sensei Blogs shar.es/rCUdP #leadership #bizforum

Brandie McCallum @lttlewys   13 Apr
RT @seanmoffitt My post on the @MaRSDD blog today-13 meta forces that will affect your entrepreneurial future ow.ly/agkLo #BizForum

Twitter Chats

Twitter Chats are conversations that happen over Twitter using a specific hashtag.

Twitter Chats can be used when you want to have an extended conversation with a large number of people—in public.

When/Why/Who
Twitter is a very accessible and wide-scale platform for when you want to have a public conversation. Twitter Chats can quickly be hijacked, so it is important to plan carefully and be prepared for the conversation to go in a variety of directions.

Example
TweetChat is a social media engagement platform created to allow community members to search by, favorite, and share chats by hashtags.

Instagram
Hashtags

Instagram Hashtags can be used when you want to collect image-based responses to specific questions.

When/Why/Who
Instagram Hashtags can be especially useful when you want to collect images that can be used to tell a story about a neighborhood. Like other forms of social media engagement, the hashtag has the potential to be hijacked and should only be used when you are comfortable with having a very open conversation.

Community Vision Wall | Talking Transition 2013

Large-Scale Community Surveys

Using surveys as an engagement strategy allows researchers to ask and get feedback from a wide range of community members, either via paper or online surveys.

Such large-scale engagement efforts provide an insight into overall community trends and general opinions.

When/Why/Who
Large-scale surveys can be used when you want to take the temperature of an entire community. Folks will expect to see the results of the survey, though, so make sure to ask questions that you really want the answers to.

Example
Talking Transition, a 2013 Mayor de Blasio Transition Team engagement initiative, sought to understand New Yorkers' policy preferences for the newly elected de Blasio administration. Talking Transition administered up to 50 questions to nearly 70,000 community members across the five boroughs.

Jane's Walk NYC | MAS

Site Walks

Site walks are used to visit project sites so planners and community members alike are better able to understand neighborhood conditions, opportunities, and challenges.

By taking community members on walkabout workshops throughout their neighborhood, planners are able to engage in discussions about neighborhood assets and issues and how they relate to the project.

When/Why/Who

Site walks, also known as "walkshops," involve taking community members on a tour of project sites to help them better contextualize the planning work, identify community assets and pain points, and spark conversations about new and ongoing initiatives. Site walks should be used in conjunction with other engagement activities—otherwise they have the potential to be hijacked by advocates looking for a platform.

Example

The Cambie Corridor project included city planner-led walking workshops to help develop land use and development policy along a mixed-use corridor in Vancouver.

Crowd-Sourced Proposal Platforms

These online tools help community members propose neighborhood-based projects and provide a platform to fundraise and implement the projects.

To support local projects, some of these citizen-led platforms allow project leaders to not only crowd-fund their projects but also recruit volunteers; many donors who financially support projects also volunteer for those same projects.

When/Why/Who
Promote the use of user-generated proposals when you have specific elements of a plan that can be truly driven by the community: e.g., public art, temporary installations, pilot projects, community gardens, etc.

Example
ioby is a crowd-sourcing platform for citizen-led, neighbor-funded projects. ioby can be especially useful for community groups that have projects that are part of the overarching Neighborhood Plan.

Rockaway Relief Canvassing | Julie Dermansky

Canvassing

Neighborhood canvassing allows planners to examine a neighborhood by thoroughly covering a specific area to engage with community members, speaking to stakeholders one-on-one about the project.

Canvassing can also increase a project's visibility and citizen awareness of issues surrounding the project.

When/Why/Who
Canvassing is important when you have a project in a politically charged neighborhood that requires 1:1 engagement with a broad swath of the public.

Example
Washington Street, a growing corridor within Boston, has seen multiple proposals for redevelopment since 2014 against concerns from the larger neighborhood, Jamaica Plain, to preserve affordability and neighborhood character. Urban experts canvassed the Jamaica Plain area, speaking with property owners, public agencies, and other stakeholders to inform best land use practices that would serve the interests of both the City and community members.

GOODCorps

On-the-Street Interviews

Spending time on the street interacting with residents helps planners get a sense of the assets and challenges they see in their communities.

Asking questions to those walking by provides instant feedback from the community that helps inform the rest of the participation strategy and project outcomes.

When/Why/Who
On-the-street interviews provide a quick and easy way of taking the pulse of the community. They also enable planners to connect with folks who might not live in the neighborhood but who use it for other reasons (e.g., transportation, work, recreation).

Example
NYC was charged with creating an inclusive and holistic neighborhood planning process. As part of their research phase, designers spent time on the street interacting with residents to get a sense of how and why they receive and share information with the government. This information helped inform the engagement strategy.

Jerome Avenue Workshop | DCP

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide stakeholders with the opportunity to share their expertise, concerns, and ideas with community organizations, local officials, and planners.

Within focus groups, each participant has the opportunity to share the priorities of the population group or sector he or she represents in a non-dominant setting.

When/Why/Who

When you want to engage hard-to-reach populations who would not attend a public event.

Focus groups are useful at the beginning of a project when planners are still trying to learn as much as they can about a neighborhood. They can also be a good way to share ideas and get feedback on specific proposals.

Mother Gaston Boulevard (MGB) POPS | NYCEDC

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Pop-Ups

Pop-up cafes and food carts, pop-up studios, and pop-up town halls are all ways to engage community members on a less formal level.

Pop-ups introduce community members to the project in a fun and memorable way and establish a presence for and connection with planners in the neighborhood.

When/Why/Who
Pop-up interventions help community members feel connected to the project and have in-person interactions with staff in their own neighborhood.

They also give access for groups that might not actively seek to participate in the planning process, like people passing through the area or students and children.

Example
MGB POPS is a pop-up market on a City-owned vacant lot in Brownsville, Brooklyn, that offers affordable rents to local entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Street Seats Program | DOT

Parklets

Parklets (or Pavement to Parks projects) transform sidewalks or portions of paved streets into pedestrian-friendly refuges, often complete with planters and trees, benches, tables and chairs, and public art where community members can sit and relax.

Parklets often provide a fun platform where planners can engage with residents.

When/Why/Who
Strategies like parklets can prompt community members to think differently about their neighborhood and consider non-traditional uses for public spaces.

Example
The NYC Department of Transportation administers the Street Seats program, which allows for any business or institution that owns or operates the ground floor of a building to create seasonal public open spaces.

Pearl Street Plaza | DOT

Tactical Urbanism

Tactical urbanism is a way to test or pilot an idea in real time, as well as show that small changes can create lasting positive outcomes.

Demonstrating how one strategy could be implemented familiarizes the community with the intervention and helps planners and community members understand potential long-term impacts of the project.

When/Why/Who
When you want to show proof of concept of an idea before the permanent project is in place. Planners can also observe and track community response to the project and any of its positive or negative consequences.

Example
New or temporary lane striping, play streets, benches and sidewalk amenities, and traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures (like bulb-outs or flexible guide posts at intersections).

District 39 Participatory Budgeting Event | NY City Council

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) engages community members in a democratic process to decide how public money is spent on capital projects.

PB is an opportunity to complement the planning process by having community members take the lead on designing and allocating funds for capital projects.

When/Why/Who
Providing the opportunity for community members to vote on how money is allocated to projects in their neighborhood can lead to immediate and tangible results.

Example
In the 2014-15 New York City Participatory Budgeting cycle, more than 51,000 New Yorkers across 24 Council Districts voted on how to spend $32 million for local capital projects.

2015 Community Block Party | The Bronx Defenders

Block Parties

Block parties provide an additional way for planners to engage with community members and informally discuss the neighborhood planning process.

Ideally hosted by a local community organization, coalition of community groups, and/or neighborhood association, block parties are also a community-building tool for neighborhoods.

When/Why/Who
When you want to gather community members for an open and fun event. A block party can also be a way to host a community-wide celebration after a Neighborhood Plan is adopted.

Example
Springboard for the Arts Creative Exchange Project designed "Block Party in a Box," which provides community members and groups with the tools they need to plan and hold successful block parties in their neighborhoods.
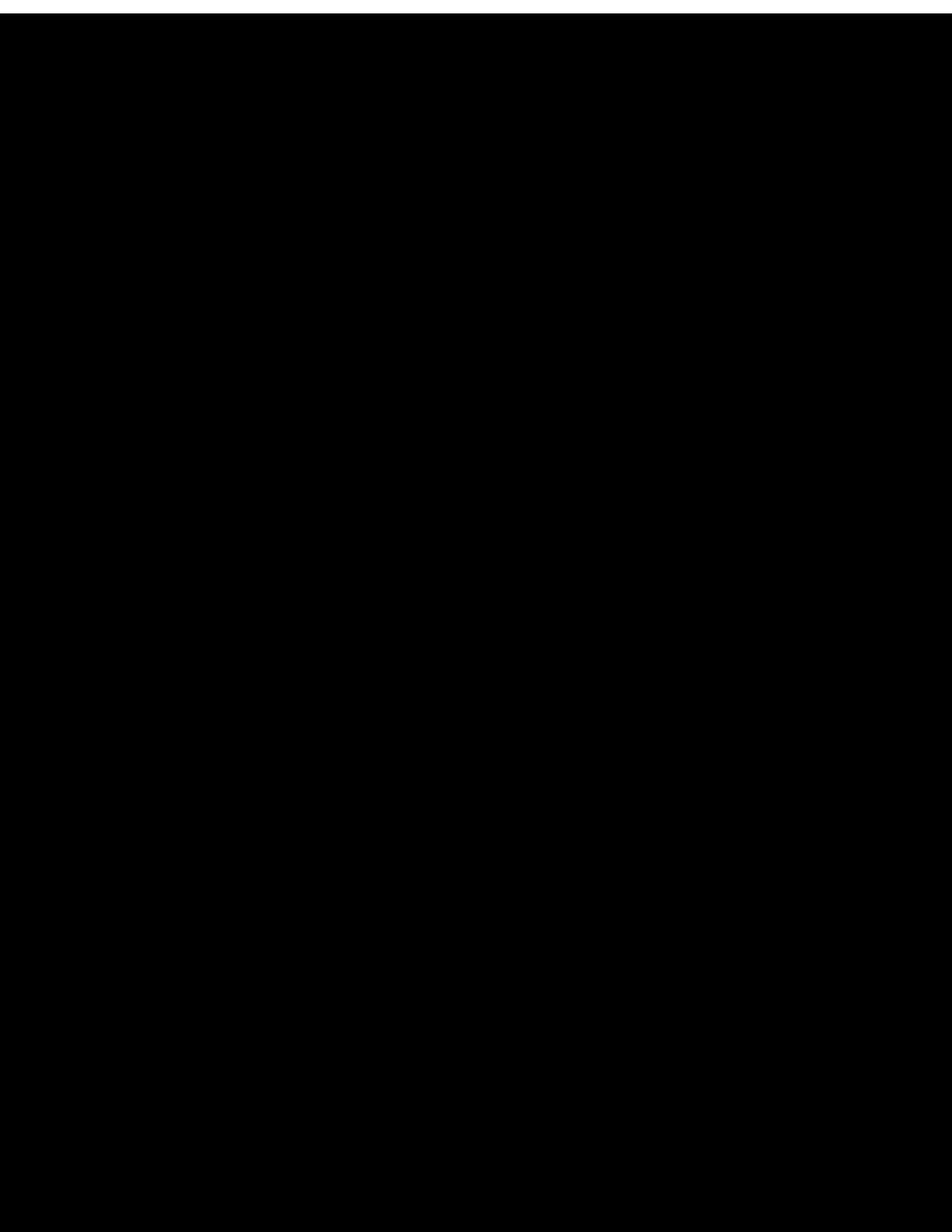
Meeting Facilitation Tips

Even the most well-intentioned process can be derailed when community members feel as if their time is not being utilized efficiently or their comments and concerns are not being heard. Whether designing large public meetings or conversing one-on-one with citizens about their neighborhood, planners can use these facilitation tips to stay on message, show respect, foster inclusivity, and promote continuous engagement.

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From transactional experiences to residents feeling valued.

Some types of engagement will intrinsically require more time of participants than others. This is perfectly fine, but don't allow them to last longer than they need to. Identify and remove extraneous components, and make sure that participants feel their time is being well-used throughout the duration of the event. Communicate that their time is appreciated, regardless of the length.

<u>**Recommendations**</u>

Let people know you value their time by acknowledging and thanking them for participating.

Ensure value is still there for the participant, even if it is a small task.

Do any heavy lifting for the participant to maximize the efficiency of their action—try to do any laborious or trivial work for them.

Break one large action into several smaller ones and include milestones to ease fears of participation.

Start and end on time.

From exclusionary to connected and supported communities.

Inclusivity and accessibility have far-reaching effects. Conducting a formal multi-step engagement process not only leads to a well thought-out plan but also creates stronger communities. Participating residents get to meet officials and neighbors, deepen relationships, and build their civic understanding. This process helps develop individual autonomy and resilience, and is especially important in under-served communities or where people don't have a lot of social capital. None of this can happen on a community-wide scale if participation isn't made easy and accessible for a wide range of people.

Recommendations

Design events to accommodate common constraints, such as the following:

Time availability. Hold multiple sessions at various times to be inclusive of those with varying work schedules or other commitments.

Location accessibility. Make sure the event space is physically accessible and centrally located. Consider providing public transportation vouchers.

Awareness. Consider information channels used by residents. Build awareness using as many different media and languages as possible.

Create an inviting environment. Provide healthy snacks, offer childcare, use name tags and refer to people by name, and offer translation services.

Remove
the Stage

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From grand-standing to meaningful dialogue.

While town halls can work when you have a supportive, well-informed community, they can often exacerbate conflict: residents can confuse frustration over the process and format of engagement with the intended outcomes. Town halls encourage activists to stake out irrevocable positions in front of their constituents. A large audience usually has too many issues to address in-depth, and many people feel uncomfortable asking questions or sharing thoughts in front of a crowd.

Neighborhood Planning Playbook

Citizen Standard

Recommendations

Open house. Instead of a town hall, use an "open house" format, allowing residents to move around a space and hold smaller groups meetings with a maximum of 7 people at a time.

Respect. Do your best to create and maintain an environment of mutual respect. Create safe environments for honest dialogue. Frame the engagement as building toward a shared goal, and do not allow the tone to become adversarial.

Diffuse. Acknowledge and deal with negativity in a calm and professional manner— when people feel validated and their concerns have been heard and recorded, any anger can usually be diffused. Listen and be open to feedback. Do not be defensive; be curious and learn from others.

Don't be Boring

From confusing and jumbled to clear and compelling.

Even the very best and well-intentioned content can suffer from poor communication design. Instead of conveying a powerful and compelling experience, the reader or viewer ends up being bored or confused. All public-facing communication materials are tools that can be used to facilitate a conversation, so they need to be purposeful in their information design.

Recommendations

Write in plain, human language, and avoid acronyms or technical jargon. If you must use jargon, explain it clearly.

Make your materials visually compelling:
- Use high-quality infographics and photography. If you only have low-quality images, do not use them as they will distract from the content in the presentation.
- Balance the imagery, talking points, and text—aim for a visual presentation with enough context to understand key takeaways.
- Use pictures of people who live in the neighborhood.
- Create diagrams and process graphics to visualize more complex ideas.
- Use clear, accessible fonts.

Be clear about who is speaking in the document or presentation—is it the City, specific agencies, or the lead agency? Once you have chosen a point of view, make it consistent throughout.

Make sure that there is a clear, logical place for materials to be accessed, and that residents understand how they can access them.

Maintain
Feedback Loops

From detached and unsure to continuously informed and engaged.

Whether it's formal or informal engagements, everyone appreciates follow-up after they participate. The level of expectation they have about this tends to be roughly proportional to the amount of time and energy they invested. In formal engagement situations, like a presentation or stakeholder group, closing the feedback loop is absolutely critical. In informal settings, it's less necessary—if you're low on resources and time you can skip it, but it's possible you could miss an opportunity to deepen engagement at a later point.

Recommendations

A good rule of thumb is to spend 10% of the time a participant spends on an engagement doing follow-up with them afterwards. For example, if someone spends an hour being interviewed, spend 5-10 minutes on completing the loop with them.

Provide folks with documentation about how their feedback/participation will be used. If the expectation for follow-up is low, like in an on-the-street interview, following up will feel like a bonus to the participant.

Send recaps of engagements to those who participated, and highlight what has been accomplished. In an ongoing process, seeing milestones completed is motivating.

During follow-ups, continually reinforce the destination, purpose, and value of the work you are doing together.

Clearly articulate how input will be integrated into the Neighborhood Plan.

For low-intensity engagements, it's fine to automate. Create a follow-up email template and schedule them to auto-send.

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Gehl Studio is a people first design consultancy. We work with clients to create mutually beneficial relationships between people's quality of life and their built environment.

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Our focus is creating cities for people. People are the starting point for our work; we consider scale, senses, movements, interests, behavior and how people engage with their surroundings.

The observation and analysis of people focused data helps us understand public life, how people use the city, so our clients can make more qualified decisions about how to improve their cities, with outcomes that are beneficial to everyone.

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GOODcorps is GOOD's social innovation consultancy. We partner with the world's most influential companies, foundations, nonprofits and governments to design and implement solutions at the intersection of community engagement and social impact.

Whether it's rapid prototyping that sparks innovation in philanthropy or the architecture of an unprecedented national consumer engagement program, our work is anchored by an agile problem solving approach that brings together best practices from the world of social impact, design and innovation, and management consulting.

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