

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

Public Participation Ordinances, Processes, and Policies

- Public participation - also called “community engagement”, “public engagement”, citizen engagement” – are ways that municipalities make sure that community members have a voice in what happens in their municipalities. Public participation is important to increase the trust and transparency between locally elected officials and the citizens that elect them.
- All municipalities have state laws that require it to follow the bare minimum, these laws are called Sunshine or Open Meeting laws. These require a minimum level of transparency. For more details on your state’s Sunshine Laws, see [Community Democracy River – Downriver – “Hold Decision-Makers Accountable to Public Discussion and Debate”](#).
- Many municipalities view public participation as an essential way to create new policies and solutions. Look at the chart on the next page to see the range of ways that municipalities can invite and welcome participation. Are there areas your municipality is doing well in? Are there decisions you wish could look different?
- Public participation can take on a variety of forms. There is no perfect format for public participation, but a good method will be one that hears and includes a wide and diverse group of community members – especially those that are most impacted by decisions – and ensures that their needs and solutions that are heard, meaningfully considered, and acted by the municipality.
- Strong public participation practices take time, trust, and authentic relationships between decision-makers and community. Strong public participation ordinances, policies, and practices can help give a process to develop that trust and ensure that community voice is brought into local decision-making.

River point: Upriver– it is easier to develop and implement public participation methods before any large decisions are made.

- Public Participation Methods will be strongest if levers are also pulled up- and midriver. Specific levers that build relationships, change local laws to proactively require public participation, and catch decisions early will be helpful for stronger Public Participation Methods. These levers include:
 - Authentic relationship building
 - Co-create Community Vision
 - Learn about your municipality
 - Learn about your community’s health and wellbeing
 - Vote in local elections
 - Become part of your local municipality
 - Update municipality’s comprehensive plan
 - Engage your relationships + community
 - Attend meetings, public meetings
 - Develop strategic messaging
 - Make verbal and written comments on issues you care about

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Strengths & Skills that can pull lever:

- Relationship Building & Feeling
- Influencing & Motivating
- Thinking & Strategy
- Doing & Executing

The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership¹

Look at this chart and think about where your community is. Are there some types of decisions that your community owns? Are there others that community feels tokenized or ignored? When do you think that a more collaborative or involved type of engagement would be helpful?

Stronger engagement is more important when the decision is complex or controversial, or the decision will impact a large group of people.

Stance towards community	0 IGNORE	1 INFORM	2 CONSULT	3 INVOLVE	4 COLLABORATE	5 DEFER TO
Impact	Marginalization	Placation	Tokenization	Voice	Delegated Power	Community Ownership
Community Engagement Goals	Deny access to decision-making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process and inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions	Foster democratic participation and equity by placing full decision-making in the hands of the community; bridge divide between community and governance
Message to Community	<i>"Your voice, needs, and interests do not matter"</i>	<i>"We will keep you informed"</i>	<i>"We care what you think"</i>	<i>"You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue"</i>	<i>"Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue"</i>	<i>"It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions"</i>
Activities	Closed-Door Meetings Misinformation Systematic Disenfranchisement Voter Suppression	Fact Sheets Open Houses Presentations Billboards Videos	Public Comment Focus Groups Community Forums Surveys	Community Organizing & Advocacy House Meetings Interactive Workshops Polling Community Forums	MOUs with Community-Based Organizations Community Organizing Citizen Advisory Committees Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling	Community-Driven Planning Consensus Building Participatory Action Research Participatory Budgeting Cooperatives
Resource Allocation Ratios	100% systems admin	70-90% to systems admin 10-30% to promotions and publicity	60-80% to systems admin 20-40% to consultation activities	50-60% to systems admin 40-50% to community involvement	20-50% to systems admin 50-70% to community partners	80-100% to community partners and community-driven processes that ideally generate new value and resources that can be invested in solutions

¹This tool was developed by Rosa González of Facilitating Power, in collaboration with Movement Strategy Center, in part drawing on content from a number of public participation tools, including Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and the Public Participation Spectrum created by the International Association for Public Participation. Additional credit to: From Community Engagemnt to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Case Studies of Four Municipal Community-Driven Environmental & Racial Equity Committees

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Public Participation Strategies²

There are many new strategies a community can try to strengthen their public participation laws, processes, and policies.

Guidelines for more productive meetings	Strategies and practices to make meetings run more smoothly can help more people get involved. This could include: using small groups for certain topics; holding the meetings in different locations (not just city hall); changing the room layout; using a facilitator; providing education on the topic; being clear about the purpose; and follow-up afterward.
An engagement committee or commission	Many municipalities create a short committee that reports to the mayor, city council, or a department, to provide recommendations and oversight of community engagement activities.
Resources for revitalizing grassroots groups informing community conversations	This includes giving funding, training, and support to local nonprofits and groups who are well-connected and can help be a bridge between their participants and the municipality.
A public engagement protocol	This can help leaders decide what, when, and how they should be engaging the community in decision-making.
Guidelines for working with online forums	Guidelines can help the municipality create basic ground rules and policies to ensure the online platform is helpful and safe.
A public participation ordinance	This is a local law that defines engagement, describes the principles that make it productive and meaningful, and gives public official the backing to try new forms of engagement that live up to those principles. It can also help hold the municipality accountable to follow-through with these public participation principles.
A public engagement resolution	This is a formal statement by government officials to state their support and commitment to productive public participation.
Job descriptions for professionals supporting engagement	Some municipalities have a dedicated person whose job it is to seek and gather community input. An even stronger idea is to integrate community engagement into all municipality staff's job descriptions. This can help make sure that everyone has some responsibility for engaging with the community within their capacity and role.
Participatory budgeting	Participatory budgeting is a type of engagement in which citizens work together to decide how to spend public money from a special fund.
Citizen advisory boards that engage, rather than simply represent	Community Advisory Boards give recommendations to decision-makers. An even stronger idea is to make sure the advisory board members not only see their role as representing the community, but actually engaging directly with citizens to get their input and thoughts on important issues.

² Adapted from “Strengthening and Sustaining Public Engagement: a Planning Guide for Communities” by Public Agenda. <https://www.publicagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PublicAgenda-StrengtheningAndSustainingPublicEngagement-2018.pdf>

This resource is part of Fair Shake Environmental Legal Service’s Community Democracy River.

For more information and additional resources, tools, and levers, visit: <https://www.fairshake-els.org/community-organizing-resources>.

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

Public Participation Examples

The goal of this worksheet is to help you see possibilities and how other towns have used ordinances to create more green spaces and trees. You can use these ideas to figure out what solutions will work best in your town. It's important to know that most ideas will not get rid of the issue completely, sometimes getting your decision-makers to agree and pass your ideas will take time and advocacy, and the final idea needs to align with standards and other local, county, state, and federal policies.

The following ordinance examples show different ways that towns and cities have used local laws to protect the environment and work toward environmental justice.

All five are assessed for:

Practicality	Equitable	Resiliency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ease to create and enact. ● Affordability to municipality. ● Has clearly defined measures of success ● Potential preemption issues from state and/or federal laws. 	<p>Builds toward equity and social or political determinants of health. Includes addressing past harms and changing the future for racial, economic, LGBTQ+, immigrant & refugee outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical and mental health and wellbeing. ● Jobs & economic security. ● Healthy and affordable housing. ● Positive neighborhood environment. ● Food security ● Neighborhood safety. ● Ongoing community input & participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protects the environment through healthy air and water, green spaces, and heat index. ● Opportunities for youth ● Opportunities for community connection & togetherness

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Example One: Community Advisory Committee

Larimer County, CO	
The Larimer County Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Board bylaws demonstrate how a citizen advisory committee can prioritize participation and equity.	
Practicality	<p>The measures of success of this advisory board are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be individuals of diverse backgrounds with connections to or knowledge of equity issues. See below for how they defined this. • Members will consult with the Board of County Commissioners and other departments to ensure that programs and initiatives are meeting standards of justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity. This board has advisory power, but no actual decision-making power. <p>The advisory board will consist of 9 citizens who each serve three-year terms.</p> <p>New board members receive training so they understand their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Board members with lived experience are eligible for a stipend of up to \$500 per year.</p> <p>The board may create subcommittees to focus on specific projects.</p>
Equitable	<p>The purpose of this board is to promote public participation and equity in all county departments.</p> <p>The advisory board does not create any jobs.</p> <p>This advisory board may promote health and well-being by ensuring that impacted communities are consulted before any large changes are made.</p>
Resiliency	<p>The advisory board does not directly contribute to environmental protection or youth involvement, though it may advise county departments on these issues.</p>
Highlights	<p>This an advisory board, which is made up of community members to give their expert recommendations to decision-makers. This board analyzes and assesses how various decisions could impact equity within their community.</p>

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Example Two: Participatory Budgeting Process

<p>Greensboro, North Carolina Greensboro, North Carolina had its first public budgeting process in 2016. Citizens were able to vote on projects that they wanted to have funded.</p>	
<p>Practicality</p>	<p>The citizens pushed to be included in budgeting for four years before the city began its participatory budgeting.</p> <p>The process was accomplished in three phases: Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens shared their ideas; • The city council created a steering committee of community volunteers; • Seven training events were held to teach about the process of public budgeting. <p>Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers turned ideas into proposals; • Citizens served on five budget delegate committees that were formed to focus on Parks and Recreation, Safety and Environment, Streets, Sidewalks, and Transportation, Arts and Culture, and Special Projects. <p>Phase 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens (aged 14+) voted on the spending proposals <p>There were 46 total proposals and 26 winning proposals, including new crosswalks, murals, bus shelters, and a bus tracking app.</p>
<p>Equitable</p>	<p>The five budget delegate committees focused on issues that the community cared about, including parks, public art, and walkability.</p> <p>The public budgeting process did not directly create any jobs.</p> <p>Data show that the participants in the idea-generating and voting processes reflected the diversity of the city. This is because the original advocates for this idea also reflected the diversity of the city.</p>
<p>Resiliency</p>	<p>Citizens aged 14 and older were allowed to contribute ideas and vote on final projects.</p> <p>The 2016 budget proposals focused on environmental justice through walkability and public park access.</p> <p>The process of advocating for participatory budgeting, generating ideas, and voting on ideas helped to create community connection.</p>
<p>Highlights</p>	<p>Citizens helped to allocate spending from the General Fund, which gave them more flexibility and access than accessing funds in a “special projects” fund.</p>

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Example Three: Citizen Participation Plan

Ashland, Oregon	
Ashland created a public participation plan that creates a 'menu' of choices to include the public in decision-making.	
Practicality	<p>This plan creates clear phases for implementing public participation, including a reflection phase to help make public participation better next time.</p> <p>The plan lays out clear metrics for successful participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public has a clearly defined role; • Citizens can participate in a variety of ways (which will vary depending on the project or issue); • All sides and opinions will be heard; • The public good will be considered as the main perspective. <p>The 12 phases of the plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues arise (can be brought up by new laws and ordinances, or raised by citizen concern). • Issues are identified. • Issue is evaluated to see if public participation is helpful. (Specifically, they look for preemption or safety issues). • Decision- makers are identified. • Goals and timelines are established. • Citizens participate through comments, notification, discussions, committees, or workshops (depending on the issue and its needs). • Information is gathered. • The solution process begins-- solutions are implemented and tested. • The solution process is completed. • Decision- makers review outcomes and determine next steps. • Next steps are implemented. • The process is evaluated for success
	<p>This plan has a lot of potential to be equitable, but it does not include specific ways to include citizens who are not often included in public participation.</p> <p>The plan does not create jobs but may create opportunities for citizens to participate on committees or commissions.</p> <p>The plan can apply to a variety of issues or projects and requires that any stakeholders (affected or interested individuals) be identified in each project or issue. Who is considered a stakeholder can be different depending on the project. It is not directly stated how the stakeholders are identified.</p> <p>The plan requires that the decision-makers are clearly identified at each stage of a project, so that the community knows who is responsible for decisions.</p>
Equitable	<p>This plan does not specifically address the environment or create opportunities for youth.</p> <p>The plan can help create opportunities for connection by clarifying the public participation process and making it easier for citizens to engage.</p>
Resiliency	<p>This plan is broad and can easily be implemented and applied to a variety of situations and municipalities.</p> <p>This plan also states what strong participation should result in, which gives the opportunity to measure success.</p>
Highlights	

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Example Four: Model Public Participation Ordinance

<p>Citizen Advocacy Center</p> <p>This is an example of a Public Participation Ordinance that a city may pass to help clarify the role of public participation in local government. This ordinance may not apply perfectly to every community but could be adapted to a variety of municipalities.</p>	
<p>Practicality</p>	<p>The ordinance creates clear definitions for public participation and policy process.</p> <p>The ordinance states that it is necessary for citizens to deliberate and act on public issues that they are interested in.</p> <p>The ordinance creates 10 principles and fully defines each principle. Public participation should be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive 2. Authentic 3. Transparent 4. Equitable 5. Informed 6. Accessible 7. Appropriate 8. Informed by public input 9. Relational 10. Evaluated for success <p>The ordinance also creates a role called a “Public Participation Specialist” that is a staff member to help include citizens and promote public participation.</p>
<p>Equitable</p>	<p>This draft ordinance does not specifically address the environment, youth opportunities, or connection in the community.</p> <p>Municipalities adopting an ordinance like this one may wish to include specific considerations for these issues but may want to leave the ordinance broad.</p>
<p>Resiliency</p>	<p>This draft ordinance does not specifically address the environment, youth opportunities, or connection in the community.</p> <p>Municipalities adopting an ordinance like this one may wish to include specific considerations for these issues but may want to leave the ordinance broad.</p>
<p>Highlights</p>	<p>The ordinance has clear principles for public participation that are broad and helpful for evaluating the success of public participation.</p>

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES



Example Five: Community Development Forum Requirement

<p>Calabasas, CA</p> <p>This ordinance requires two community forums for new, large developments. The goal is to inform and engage the community before and during large developments are seeking local permits. The forum requires the developer to hear and consider the ideas and concerns of citizens during the initial design process and permit review process.</p>	
Practicality	<p>The ordinance requires large developments (larger than 10,000 sq. ft. or requiring a zone change, variance, or other modification) to host two community development forums. Forum #1 is required before submitting a development application to the municipality. The forum must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be scheduled Monday through Thursday and starting at 6 or 7pm. • Be held close to the development project site, at one of two community centers. • Be widely publicized. The ordinance spells out the different way the developer needs to notify the public, including direct mailing to all residents who live in that city zone, and ways the municipality will help notify the public, including notifying homeowners’ associations, the media, and to develop an email/mail list of people who request notice around this development. • Provide all pertinent information, including a detailed list of information that must be shared, such as preliminary plans, zoning and arial maps, contact information. • Provide an opportunity for the “public to engage with the project’s design team and other subject matter experts. The proper may, at their option, use a “hands on” or interactive design process. <p>Forum #2 is required after the review committee has met and is considering the project application. This forum is intended that the applicant tells the public about the project proposals and updates after the first forum and tell the public about the benefits that the project will contribute to the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be scheduled Monday through Thursday and starting at 6 or 7pm. • Be held at council chambers or one of two community centers. • Be widely publicized like forum #1. • Provide all pertinent information, including an updated project plan, renderings or models, a written narrative about issues like traffic, parking, potential environmental impacts and mitigations. • Include municipal planning staff to answer questions; • Host small-group discussions with members of the project’s design and engineering teams and answer specific questions from members of the public. Additionally, “the city anticipates the public will have specific questions regarding project impacts such as traffic, noise, or grading of concern... thus the applicant is required to have...members of the project team qualified to answer questions regarding those...” <p>The developer is required to submit a written summary after the first and second forum to the municipality which includes a summary of public comments, suggestions, and concerns, and how those comments, suggestions, and concerns will be addressed.</p>
Equitable	<p>This ordinance enables early and proactive community engagement, and could help marginalized communities participate and ensure their ideas and concerns are heard and considered because it requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public input before the initial development proposal is submitted; • Stronger notification than traditional notices (that are only found on the development site and in a local newspaper); • The developer to hear and answer questions from the community; • Small group discussion to give additional ways for community members to ask questions; • The developer to submit questions and concerns, and how they will address those questions and concerns.
Resiliency	<p>This ordinance knows that environmental concerns will be brought up during the forums and requires the developer to discuss environmental impacts and strategies, and also to have experts on-hand to answer environmental questions.</p>
Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This ordinance requires small-group discussion as part of an official public participation process, which can provide additional avenues for community to participate in decision-making processes. • This ordinance also puts the onus on the developer to engage, hear, and integrate community ideas and concerns early into their design plans.

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

Common Elements of Public Participation Methods:

A Committee, Board, Commission, or other Decision-Making Body that Includes Community Members:

Many of the examples above include volunteer community members in groups that give recommendations or make final decisions as part of the municipality. These boards can be a great way for community to get involved, however, if they aren't set-up in ways that give the community power, these boards could turn into a slush-fund or giving automatic approval to pet-projects.

Having a structure with 'teeth' can give community members more power to help drive decisions. There are some state laws that impact how a decision-making body can be created, but there is often a lot of room for municipalities to meet those state requirements and add still create the structure to serve the needs of the community.

First, identify the goal of the decision-making body. With that in mind, look at the chart below for additional things to consider when trying to create a body with 'teeth':

Questions to Plan For:	Requirements to Think About:	Options
Who gets elected or picked, and how?	How people are chosen to be on the board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor nominates. • City Council or other governing body nominates. • A community group or another person nominates. • Self-nominated – anyone can apply. Example #1 shows a relatively easy application form.
	Composition → representation from different neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One member who lives in each ward/zone – but doesn't specify if they are an elected official or a community member. An example is the United States Steel Corporation Community Benefit Trust which states: "One member from each of the Adjacent Communities...". Read this NPR Article for an analysis of the impact of this structure. • One non-elected community member from each ward/zone. • 1 person who lives in each ward/zone, plus 1 additional person in those ward/zones which are identified as Environmental Justice census tracks as defined by (X mapping tool). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This could help give more influence to those communities most impacted by environmental burdens.
	Composition → diverse skills, experience, and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse educational and professional backgrounds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example: "Members must fairly represent different areas of interest, knowledge and expertise, including, but not limited to, education, healthcare, environment, nonprofit, business, industry, labor, government and other relevant disciplines." • Example #1 is a great example of how to promote equity and diversity in public participation and other municipal initiatives and programs. They made sure that their board was diverse by specifying that members must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Belong to communities that have a history of underrepresentation or marginalization;

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring a connection to, relationship with and advocacy for specific communities, particularly communities that have a history of underrepresentation or marginalization; ○ Have a professional background, community leadership, or other relevant experience in equity issues; ○ Know how to impact institutional change in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion; ○ Have experience across multiple dimensions of diversity. ○ The board will give priority to maintaining a ratio of (4) members representing organizations with a relationship and/or history of advocacy for specific communities and five (5) members with individual lived experience.
	Additional supports to help recruit and engage board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment requirements to make sure a diverse portion of the community learns about the board openings. ● Training for community to understand how to do their job. Example #1 provides an example of the types of training provided to new members so they understand their role. ● Stipend for member time. Example #1 provides a stipend of up to \$500 for volunteer board members with lived experience who complete an application and check on the application “that failure to receive such stipend may prevent them from participating as a volunteer board member.”
What processes do those people use to make decisions?	Discussions and Debate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every member has a vote. ● Certain members have a vote, and other members are there to consult and advise but do not have a vote in the decision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, many bodies have at least one elected decision-maker on the body whose role it is to advise, consult, and provide important municipal context to the members. Some boards specify that the volunteer members each have one vote but the decision-maker does not have a vote in the decision or recommendation.
	Decision-Making Process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective criteria by which to make decisions (for example, a checklist or scoring rubric). ● Majority vote (most people agree). ● Unanimity (everyone agrees). ● Consensus (everyone collaborates to reach a decision they are all, or mostly, in agreement with).
	The power to make recommendations versus final decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give recommendations to the mayor/city council/other decision-making body. ● Have the final say.
How does that group interact with the larger community?	Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold in locations other than city hall. Example #5 shows how meetings can be held in community centers or other locations, especially when decisions are made that will impact a certain neighborhood. ● Held at times that are accessible for many in community. Example #5 shows how they scheduled meetings are more accessible times and taking the community calendar into consideration. ● Accessibility needs are considered (people in wheelchairs or strollers can easily join; closed

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

		<p>captioning for online meetings; handouts with large-size print are available, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The room layout considers power dynamics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instead of classroom style with decision makers at the front and sitting higher, community sitting and watching, the body has the power to change the setup so that the body isn't removed from citizens, which can impact perceptions of power. • Translation and interpretation services available.
	<p>Transparency.</p> <p>(Note: all official governing bodies are required to follow their state's Sunshine Act/Open Doors Laws.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust public notices of meetings and important discussions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example #5 shows a variety of ways they notified the public. • Agendas are shared both on an accessible website and on social media as early as possible – especially about discussions are complex or controversial, or the decision will impact a large group of people. • Open to the public for observation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Example #1: “The advisory board meetings will be advertised and open to the public for observation. The board will not take public comment at their meetings but may invite guest speakers to interact with the board on specific topics.” • Open to the public for commenting and/or discussion. • Notes and/or meeting recordings are uploaded quickly after the meeting. • Education is provided about complex issues, including having expert speakers provide information about the topic. Example #5 requires subject matter experts at some municipal meetings. • Meetings are televised.
	<p>Engagement efforts the body must take.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe “why” public participation is important for the body. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Example #3: “It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the active public participation of community members to offer comments, ideas and recommendations, both individually and collectively, on public challenges, problems and opportunities is a public good and will be pursued in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety, and welfare of the community, and in the pursuit of effective and trusted governance.” • Ensure engagement is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The city shall treat public engagement as an integral part of effective and trusted governance, not just as an occasional process or activity” (Page 55 in the Model City Charter). • Describe the types of engagement required of the body. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The city shall treat engagement as a “multi-channel” endeavor that includes face-to-face meetings, virtual interactions, and other online communications” (Page 55 in the Model City Charter). • Describe the process or principles the engagement can take: look at Examples #3 (department process) and Example #4 (engagement principles) and Example #5 (small group discussion requirements) above for some ideas.

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

	Ongoing measurement and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in transparent measurement requirements as part of participation activities. For example, “Establish new institutional structures or adapt existing structures to oversee, support, coordinate, track, and measure engagement on an ongoing basis.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Requiring planners and commissioners to issue reports elucidating the results of public participation and the planners’ and commissioners’ responses to those comments serves as an important documentation role... Planning and zoning laws should require planners and commissioners to explain their decisions rather than simply say that members of the public supported or did not support a particular choice. If an explanation is not required, there is no protection against the possibility that a proposal simply lost a public hearing popularity contest” (page 1145 in Overparticipation: Designing Effective Land Use Public Processes).
--	-------------------------------------	---

Youth Involvement Opportunities:

Each of these examples of public participation may include opportunities for youth involvement. It is up to citizens and lawmakers to explicitly include language that requires opportunities for engaging young people. For example, the participatory budgeting case study in North Carolina allowed children ages 14+ to submit ideas and vote on final projects.

Improving Environmental Conditions:

Much like youth engagement, these methods of public participation can be great ways to promote environmental protection. [Example five](#) has ways that people could learn about, ask questions and get answers, and share ideas and concerns about developments that could impact their environment early in the design process.

The Role of the Municipality:

For public participation to be effective and meaningful, the municipality must be supportive of the citizens who wish to participate. It is important that trust is built between elected officials and the citizens who elect them. The municipality must play an active role in encouraging and promoting public participation. Some of our favorite resources about how municipalities can build trust to foster strong public participation are:

- [Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement](#)
- [City Leader Guide on Civic Engagement: Designing Pathways for Participatory Problem-Solving](#)
- [From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Case Studies of Four Municipal Community-Driven Environmental & Racial Equity Committees](#)

References:

- Example #1: Larimer County, Colorado; Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Board: <https://www.larimer.gov/boards/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-advisory-board>
- Example #2: Greensboro, North Carolina; Participatory Budgeting Commission: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/budget-evaluation/participatory-budgeting/participatory-budgeting-commission>

Community Democracy River

CREATE OR UPDATE ORDINANCES

- Example #3: Ashland Oregon, Citizen Participation Plan: <https://www.ashland.or.us/page.asp?navid=116#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20Citizen,and%20involved%20in%20shaping%20decisions>
- Example #4: National Civic League, Making Public Participation Legal: <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/resources/making-public-participation-legal/>.
- Example #5: City of Calabasas, CA Municipal Code, Chapter 17.60.055: Community development forum requirement: <https://www.ashland.or.us/page.asp?navid=116#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20this%20Citizen,and%20involved%20in%20shaping%20decisions>.
- The United States Steel Corporation Community Benefit Trust, 2020: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23822171-us-steel-community-benefit-trust-agreement?responsive=1&title=1>

Research, Guides, and Resources:

- Bloomberg, “City Leader Guide on Civic Engagement”: https://content.cityleadership.harvard.edu/BHCLI_CivicEngagement_0000CG.pdf
- Facilitating Power, Movement Strategy Center, and the National Association of Climate Resilience Planners, “From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Case Studies of Four Municipal Community-Driven Environmental & Racial Equity Committees”: https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/community_engagement_to_ownership_-_tools_and_case_studies_final.pdf
- Fordham Law Review, (Singh, L. A.), “Overparticipation: Designing Effective Land Use Public Practices: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5899&context=flr>.
- Kirwin Institute, (Kipp), “The Principles for Equitable and Inclusive Civic Engagement”: <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2016-05/ki-civic-engagement.pdf>
- National Civic League, “Model City Charter”: <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/resources/model-city-charter-9th-edition/>
- National Civic League, “Making Public Participation Legal”: <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/resources/making-public-participation-legal/>
- Public Agenda, “Strengthening and Sustaining Public Engagement: A Planning Guide for Communities.” https://www.publicagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PublicAgenda_StrengtheningAndSustainingPublicEngagement_2018.pdf