



To: Equity Steering Committee
Jon Hennington, Equity Program Manager

From: Vera Koliass, Senior Planner
Adam Heroux, Associate Planner

Through: Laura Weigel, Planning Manager

Date: March 15, 2023 for the March 23, 2023 meeting

Subject: Neighborhood Hubs Community Engagement – Draft Strategy

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests feedback on the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the Neighborhood Hubs project. See Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2017, the City Council incorporated Neighborhood Hubs into the Milwaukie Community Vision & Action Plan after a city-wide engagement process that engaged more than 1,000 residents.

Neighborhood Hubs are a critical component of the city’s Comprehensive Plan implementation process: the city integrated Hubs into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and developed recommendations for future Hubs implementation. Outreach in 2018 and 2019 helped the city better understand each Hub, including economic conditions, growth potential, and community support.

This phase of the Hubs project will create an action plan that will help Hubs grow to meet community needs. Community engagement will refine the Hubs community vision, including a focus on identifying the needs of property owners, businesses, and underrepresented communities as they relate to the growth and development of Hubs.

The city is working with a consultant team on this project: Urbsworks as the lead consultant, particularly on the zoning and urban design components, and Cascadia Partners on the community engagement and economic development aspects.

What is a Neighborhood Hub?

Neighborhood Hubs are gathering places where residents have easy access to goods and services close to their homes. They are places where neighbors create meaningful relationships with each other. Hubs will vary in size and intensity, with some as small as a neighborhood tool library and others as large as a cluster of mixed-use buildings with housing above shops and services.

Role of Community Engagement in Neighborhood Hubs

Community engagement was essential to the development of the Neighborhood Hubs vision, and it remains a critical component of successful Hubs implementation. Future engagement will build on a strong foundation of engagement dating back to 2016.

Staff provided a detailed background memo to the consultant team in January (see Attachment 2). That memo details past engagement and proposes future engagement strategies that can help ensure successful Hubs implementation. Many of the project-specific ideas and strategies have been incorporated into the draft community engagement strategy, with the understanding that community engagement is also a city-wide effort that will be accomplished over a longer-term timeframe.

Draft Community Engagement Strategy

The approach to community engagement in the Hubs project is to build upon robust community engagement efforts in 2018-2019 with the following objectives:

1. Develop robust and creative civic engagement to refine the Hubs, which must include discussions with under-represented communities. Although previous levels of participation were very strong, demographic information was not collected as a part of project outreach. As a result, there is no measure of the diversity of participation. New engagement should specifically engage people of color, renters, immigrants, and people with disabilities.
2. Hubs engagement was conducted prior to the pandemic. How people experience and what they need from their neighborhoods may be different than pre-pandemic. Explore what may have changed (or not) as part of community engagement.
3. Reach out to key property owners in Hub locations regarding Hub concepts, supportive city programs, allowed uses and activities, needed development actions, etc.

Outreach during the project will be organized by specific audiences as follows:

- Under-represented communities
- Hubs property owner engagement
- General public outreach, including NDAs
- Planning Commission and City Council

Outreach and engagement will include a variety of activities, including:

- Meetings and interviews
- Fliers and other materials
- Social media
- Surveys (virtual and in-person)
- A hosted event
- Engage Milwaukie webpage
- Regular updates to the NDAs, Planning Commission, and City Council
- Monthly articles in the Pilot newsletter

The Community Engagement Strategy addresses all of the tasks, deliverables, and activities identified in the project scope of work and is considered a working document that will be updated regularly. The purpose and goals of engagement are listed, timelines are identified, as well as responsibilities so that the work plan can be easily navigated and implemented.

KEY QUESTIONS

The draft community engagement strategy is an internal document that establishes the work plan for public involvement during the project.

Staff has the following key questions for the Equity Steering Committee related to the draft community engagement strategy:

1. Are there critical gaps in the approach for community engagement?
2. Are there specific individuals, organizations, or businesses that we should reach out to during this project?
3. Are there specific focus areas or questions you recommend we ask when engaging underrepresented communities about neighborhood hubs?
4. Do you have any equity concerns or additional comments to share about the Neighborhood Hubs project?

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Community Engagement Strategy (last updated on March 7, 2023)
2. Hubs Engagement Memo to Consultant Team (January 27, 2023)