



Planning for Affordability in CT

Affordable Housing Plan & Process
Guidebook

Council of Small Towns

May 18, 2021

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RPA is a non-profit research, planning, and advocacy organization.

We are dedicated to improving the New York metropolitan region's economic health, environmental sustainability, and quality of life.

for handling coal were also poor, and when caused to leave were unimpaired by the adverse harbor conditions for the delivery of tons here.

Albert Leston, agent conductor of the New York Steamship Company here for the last four weeks, sailed with Mrs. Coates for England, where he will remain only two weeks, going then to Rome. Mr. Coates said that he would return here by next Christmas.

Among others on the Col. were Sir Frederick Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, who has been lecturing in the United States for the last four weeks as the guest of the American Classical League; Colonel T. S. Robertson-Alkman, captain of the Scotch Curling team which has been competing with the leading teams in Canada and the United States, and with him Major An-ty, another member of the team; A. Pottar Jr., Vice President of the Guaranty Trust Company; Charles B. Alexander, Miss Violet Wilder, daughter of General William E. Wilder, on her way to London to attend her sister's wedding, and twelve members of the Japanese silk mission.

Because of illness, twenty-six persons postponed their passages on the Colito.

To take the place of A. C. Boffert, a Vice President of the International Chamber of Commerce, who has been detained here, Lucian I. Thomas, a director of the Standard Oil Company of New York, was a passenger on the Lapland of the Red Star Line which sailed yesterday for Plymouth, Cherbourg and Antwerp. Mr. Thomas will attend the convention in Rome this month.

Others on the Lapland were Haverly Dodge, son of Cleveland H. Dodge, who goes back to the work as President of the American University at Beirut, Syria, after obtaining supplies here during the last four weeks; T. B. Hamilton, traffic manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Chicago, and Frank E. Murphy, Baltimore publisher. The Lapland also took on ten missionaries of the Monmouth Church on their way to Matani, in the Belgian Congo. The party, which is to be composed of three men, is headed by Miss Alma E. Dieting and includes Miss Mera Webb, Miss Emma F. Reichert, Miss Theresa Gustafson, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Weiss, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Valentine and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kuffert.

Among the prominent passengers on the new Holland-American liner Volendam, which sailed yesterday, were, Carroll Van Wright and Mrs. Van Wright and Master Stuyvesant Van Wright, William H. Hare and Mrs. Hare, representative James D. Jerome of Monahan, C. Edward Pocher and Mrs. Pocher and Miss M. R. Pocher, Edward P. R. Vail and Miss Elizabeth Vail, P. C. Hilar, Miss Hilar, both Redburn and Miss Kathleen Scatter Redburn of the Metropolitan Opera Company, Mrs. Lillian M. Welton, Mrs. Rose E. Conston, W. L. Tedford, C. Otto Nelson, Mrs. Joseph Stillewell, Mrs. D. B. van Dine and E. C. Carter.

The Steamship Passenger Mail of the United States Lines from Bremen, Southampton and Cherbourg will dock this morning. The Harding is carrying a large number of large cargo vessels to a radio from Captain Gresham.

Other passengers are: A. Lowenthal, Vice President of the William Fickling Company, Dr. P. E. B. Duggan, London physician; W. C. Thurston of the American Embassy at London, F. J. Grandt-Zschler, American naval attaché at Charles R. Forster, Washington.

The party of the American Club has been advanced from March 8 to March 10 in order that it may be held at the Potts Pan American Conference, which is to be held in Cambridge, Mass., on March 25, may arrive at their destination in

PLAN TO DEVELOP CITY AND ENVIRONS

Six Sector Chiefs Will Study Problem Affecting Area in 50-Mile Radius.

NO GOVERNMENT CHANGES

Housing, Transportation and Industrial Distribution Among the Subjects of Inquiry.

A definite start toward a constructive plan for the development of the metropolitan area within a radius of fifty miles from Battery Park, Manhattan, has been made by the Committee on the Plan of New York and Its Environs, the division of the environs of the city into six sectors and the assignment of an expert to make a study of each sector and submit a joint report, announcement of which was made last week.

It was explained yesterday at the offices of the committee, 180 East Twenty-second Street, that the plan did not contemplate any change in the structure of government of the various cities and other political units in the territory under consideration, but that the committee's intention was to try to bring about development through the co-operation of the various communities instead of permitting growth to come in haphazard fashion.

Men to Survey Six Sectors.

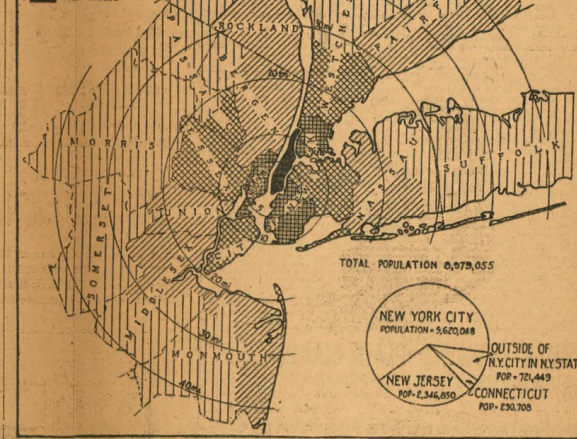
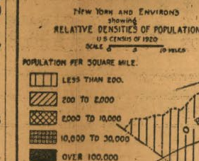
In this particular study the congested center of New York City will not be considered. The sectors into which the outlying territory has been divided and the man named to make the survey of each follow:

1. Nassau and Suffolk Counties and the undeveloped portion of Queens. Survey to be in charge of Frederick Law Olmsted of Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects. Mr. Olmsted has been associated with many city planning projects during the last thirty years.

2. Area north of the city and east of the Hudson River, including Westchester County and parts of Putnam County, New York, and Fairfield County, Connecticut. Survey in charge of Thomas Adams of Adams & Thompson, New York and London, lecturer on civic design at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and town planning adviser to the Canadian Government.

3. Area west of the Hudson, comprising parts of Rockland and Orange counties, New York, and part of Bergen County, New Jersey, and area east of the Hudson, comprising parts of Putnam and Dutchess Counties.

4. Atlantic County and parts of Bergen, Morris, Essex and Hudson Counties in New Jersey and parts of Orange and



Advisory Corporation, city planning consultant and municipal engineer, Richmond County, New York, and parts of Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset Counties, New Jersey. Survey in charge of Edward Bennett of Bennett, Parsons, Frost & Thomas, former partner of Daniel H. Burnham, with whom he took an active part in preparing the plan of Chicago.

Scope of study outlined.

For the guidance of its experts the committee at a recent meeting adopted a scope of study. The six experts were asked to ascertain the character of the regional city planning problems that to discuss possible and desirable solutions of these problems with some indication of their importance and urgency. They were also requested to suggest the

possible uses of land, the densities of population in the different sectors, and the problem of deconcentration. The general question of regional zoning and the distribution of industries, business and residences will be considered, with indications of probable future trends and dangers. As relief from congestion of population is one of the time most sought by the committee, questions relating to deconcentration with observations regarding the location of new industrial areas and business and social centers will receive considerable attention.

The surveys will also include observations concerning present methods of land development and the effect of these on housing conditions generally, and on building development generally, and will in addition include observations on the desirability of control by city or subdivisions outside their boundaries.

Questions regarding railroads and waterways and their respective terminal facilities.

Conclusive proposals for the improvement and classification of rail and circumferential highways of State and regional importance, including questions relating to safety of traffic and transit on such highways.

The surveys will also consider the question of reserving plenty of open spaces for park and recreation purposes in the future developed land in the metropolitan area, and the possible restriction of building in the neighborhood of the city.

Meetings of the sector chiefs of the committee will be held on March 20 and April 8. Meetings to discuss the reports from each sector will be held on May 14 and June 9, and meetings to discuss the final report will be held on June 14 and 15.

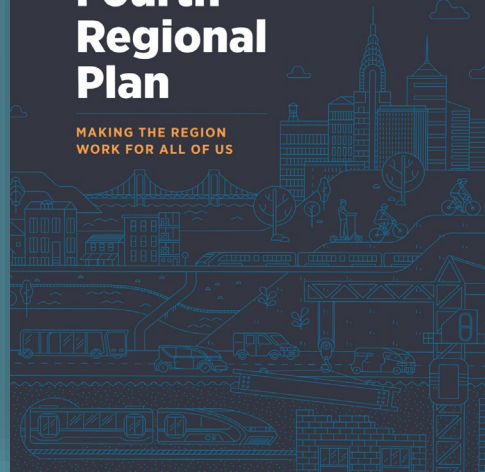
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Our History

Since 1922, Regional Planning Association has prepared long-range plans for the tri-state region.

The Fourth Regional Plan

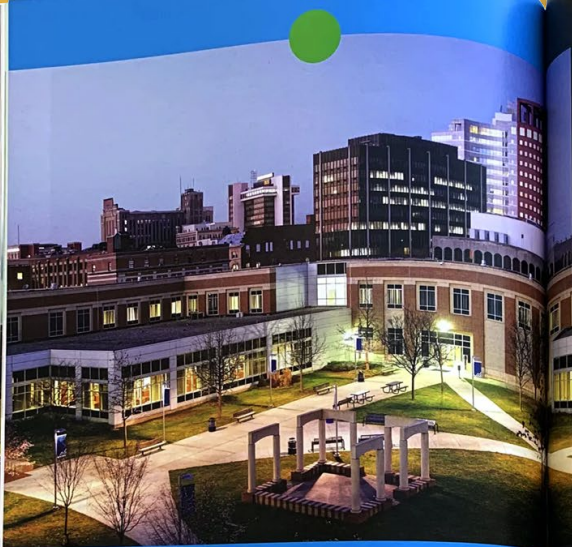
MAKING THE REGION
WORK FOR ALL OF US



Make the region affordable for everyone

Wherever they choose to live in the region, people seek many of the same things: an affordable home, a good job within commuting distance, safe streets, a healthy environment, and good schools. Yet rising housing costs and stagnant incomes are making these qualities increasingly hard to find in one place. More and more, residents must make difficult decisions between an affordable home and a good school, a better job or a safe environment; a community they value or one from which they may get displaced.

We need complete communities that are healthy, welcoming, and enjoyable places to live—as well as affordable. Constructing more new homes, especially near transit stations, is only the first step to make the housing market more stable and affordable. We should also make sure all neighborhoods include homes that are affordable for low-income households, and that fair housing regulations are enforced. We must also encourage diversified job growth in cities and downtowns throughout the region, while maintaining New York City's position as a leading global city and economic powerhouse that offers opportunities for all.



240 Provide affordable housing for all incomes, ages, races, and ethnicities

247 Expand access to more well-paying jobs

246 Support healthy and livable communities

§ 8-30j legislation

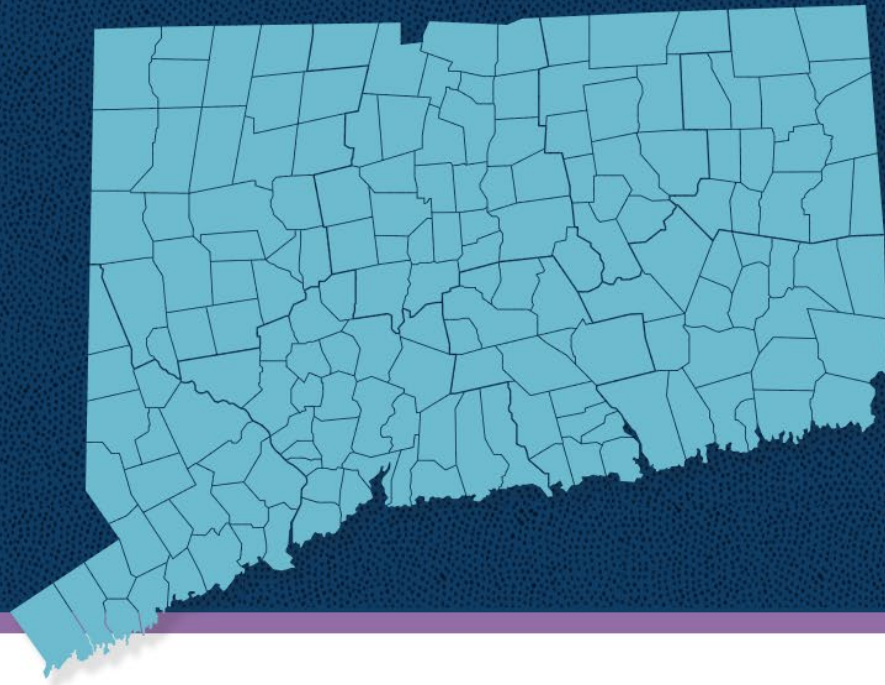
In Connecticut, effective July 2017, with compliance by July 2022

- At least once every 5 years every municipality must prepare or amend & adopt an affordable housing plan
- The plan must specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality
- A chance to talk about your town's history, values, and housing needs

Planning for Affordability in Connecticut



**Affordable Housing Plan and
Process Guidebook**



Stakeholder engagement

What we heard...

- Focus on diversity of housing types and more affordable units in every town
- There needs to be a local affordable housing committee
- Understanding housing need is an important first step
- Need to talk about seniors and young people staying in towns, racial diversity, and history of institutional racism
- Need to know what towns can do to guide development with developers rather than just responding to applications
- There is a tendency to talk about housing in isolation, to be successful, we need to put it in the context of planning
- Need to connect housing to the economy, equity and opportunity

Survey

Affordable Housing Needs in Connecticut

Thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions.

We have an opportunity to pursue housing equity in towns and cities across Connecticut, and we need your help. Connecticut Statute § 8-30j requires that all towns create an affordable housing plan every five years. Each town must submit an affordable housing plan by Spring 2022.

Regional Plan Association and the partners of the Fairfield County Center for Housing Opportunity are working with the CT Department of Housing to create a guidebook that will help municipalities create their own local affordable housing plans. The purpose of this survey is to better understand communities' needs, so that the Guidebook can provide housing professionals and municipal leaders with the tools they need to pursue housing equity through their local affordable housing plan.

Your input is critical to creating a guidebook that will be of value and use to your community. We very much appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

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195 responses

Survey results

The “Affordable Housing Needs in Connecticut” Survey gathered 195 responses from a geographically, racially, and socioeconomically diverse group of Connecticut stakeholders with varying connections to housing.

Stakeholder Diversity:

- ☐ Planning Professionals
- ☐ Government Employees
- ☐ Residents of Affordable Housing
- ☐ Elected Officials
- ☐ Housing Advocates and Service Providers
- ☐ Concerned Citizens
 - college students
 - homeowners
 - renters

Respondents' Connection to Housing

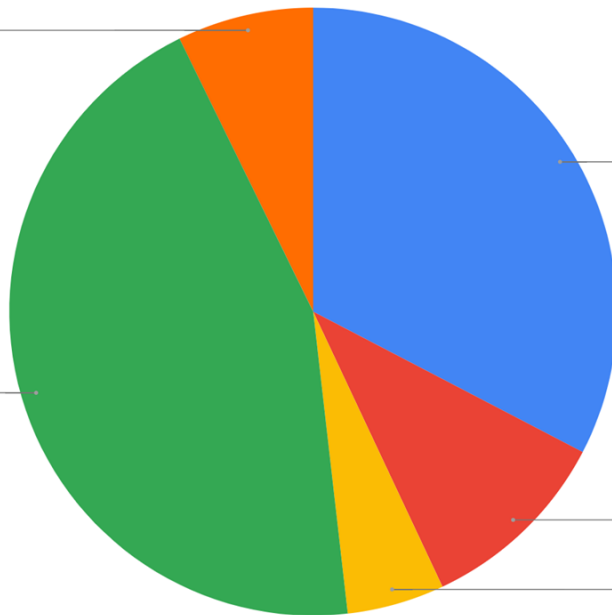
Resident of Affordable Housing
7.3%

Planning or Government Professional
44.6%

Housing Advocate (Non-Profit or Direct Services)
32.6%

Concerned citizen
10.4%

Elected Official
5.2%

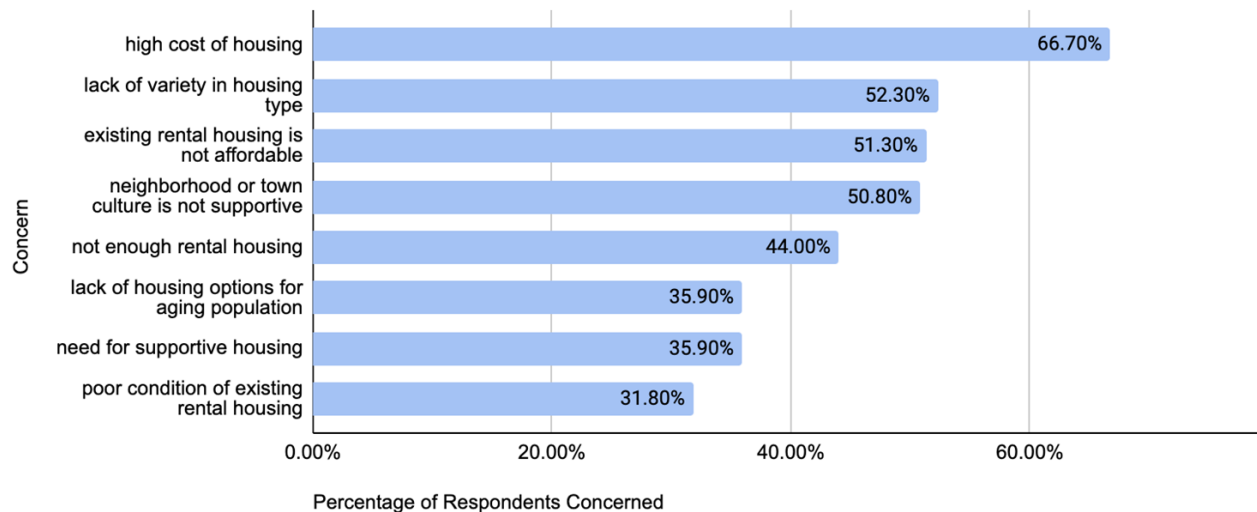


Respondents' Community Size, RPA Survey Results

Survey results

When asked what the most pressing housing challenges were for their community, over 50% of respondents listed high cost, lack of variety in housing type, and unsupportive culture as chief concerns.

Most Prevalent Housing Concerns



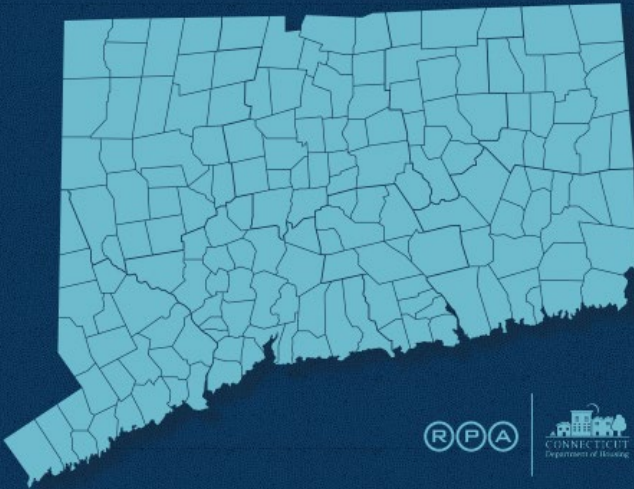
Housing Concerns:

- ☐ 67% concerned with **high cost** of housing
- ☐ 51% concerned that their town's culture is not supportive of affordable housing

Planning for Affordability in Connecticut



Affordable Housing Plan and Process Guidebook



December 2020

Affordable Housing Plan Checklist

Planning Process

- ☐ Establish leadership team/affordable housing committee
- ☐ Design & carry out community engagement & communications strategy

Plan Document

- ☐ Community values statement
- ☐ History of affordable housing in your town
- ☐ Housing needs assessment
- ☐ Land use and zoning assessment
- ☐ Plan principles, goals & actions
- ☐ Implementation strategy

Building support

Creating an affordable housing committee

- Bring together local leaders to proactively plan for affordable housing
- Create a constituency of advocates for more affordability in the community
- Provide support to elected and appointed local officials on decision making related to affordable housing development



How do we create diversity at the leadership table if there is little diversity in the community?

This is a difficult question that many municipalities in Connecticut face. How does a town create a racially or socioeconomically diverse local leadership committee when many people of color are underrepresented in the community? Opportunities to consider include reaching out to advocates and community-based organizations within your town or adjacent municipalities and engaging people who work but don't live in your community by coordinating with local businesses.

Building support

Creating an inclusive communications strategy

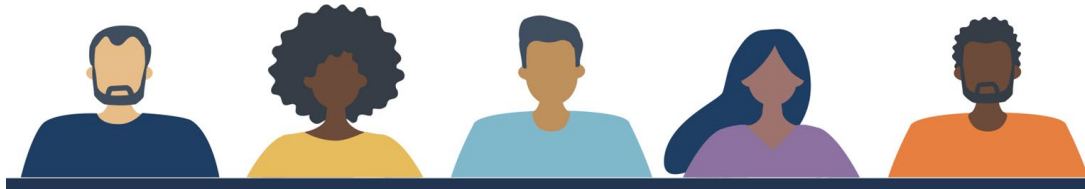


- 1 **Audience:** Who you are communicating with about your affordable housing plan
- 2 **Tools:** The mediums and platforms you will use to reach your audience
- 3 **Engagement Sessions and Public Meetings:**
A tentative schedule, plan, and budget for virtual and in-person community engagement sessions
- 4 **Accessibility and Equity:** Strategies to ensure that your communications and engagement methods reach and are heard by people of different abilities as well as socioeconomic, racial, and cultural backgrounds
- 5 **Content:** The messages and information you share about your affordable housing plan

Audience

Identify your audience and be inclusive

- Community residents
- Business owners
- Elected officials
- Educators
- Local developers
- People who work in your community
- People who would want to live in your community if more affordable housing were available



Tools

Mediums & platforms for reaching your audience

Social media

- *Utilize existing accounts instead of creating new ones-* municipal government, local advocacy orgs, elected officials, etc.
- *Create social media kits-* Draft social media posts & resources like hyperlinks & graphics your partners can share



Best Practices for Social Media Content

- Ensure your goals remain front and center by sharing content that is explicitly related to your affordable housing plan, including but not limited to: surveys, announcements, and educational materials like infographics and relevant news articles.
- Engage your audience by providing a call to action. Most often, this will be a hyperlink, whether it leads to a news article, a sign-up form for an engagement session, a survey, or a website to access further resources.
- Communicate quickly by minimizing the amount of text and using abbreviations where possible. Use active voice and an engaging tone that grabs attention.
- Involve other organizations in your content in order to broaden your reach by tagging the social media profiles of organizations related to your post, like advocacy groups, nonprofits, and/or faith-based organizations.
- Educate your audience by being direct and avoid using jargon, especially when explaining housing or planning terminology.
- Create an attractive, streamlined appearance by ensuring the dimensions of any graphics you share fit the platform you're using. Different social media, particularly Instagram and Twitter, will crop images when they appear in a user's feed. Many online resources can help you identify ideal dimensions for social media graphics.

Tools

Mediums & platforms for reaching your audience

- Digital communications
websites, newsletters, etc.
- News media
- Printed materials
posters, flyers, leaflets, mailers
- Surveys



Survey

☐ _____

☐ _____

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☐ _____

Survey Recommendations

- Limit the length of your survey to about 10 questions.
- Structure questions in ways that will make it easy to analyze responses (i.e., a multiple choice question will be clearer than a free response).
- Avoid using jargon or complicated language that might make your survey inaccessible.
- Be clear and concise about each of your questions, and define any housing or planning terms.
- Provide space at the end for individuals to add extra comments or contact someone with questions.

Community Values Statement

Creating a positive narrative

- Engage your community in **a conversation about values** as a jumping off point for your plan
- Values create and reinforce a **shared sense of purpose**
 - *Examples: equity, opportunity, health and wellbeing, sustainability, inclusivity, prosperity*
- Your values statement will serve as **a north star** as you develop your **affordable housing plan principles, goals and actions**
- As you are working to draft the elements of your plan, you can keep coming back to them, asking ***Does this principle, goal or action advance our town's core values?***

Engagement Sessions & Public Meetings

- Decide on a clear goal for each engagement session.
- Create a clear outreach strategy to attract a diverse group of participants and ensure that your programming will be accessible to all participants.
- Determine up front what you would like to learn from the engagement session. With that end-goal in mind, craft a clear agenda and make it available to participants prior to the meeting so they know what to expect.
- Be efficient and intentional about your use of time. We recommend that events be no longer than two hours. Time of day is also an important consideration, as certain times of day will be more or less convenient for constituent groups such as parents, seniors, workers, etc.
- Use strategies such as sketching, placing dot stickers, or breakout discussion sessions to keep participants engaged and create opportunities for everyone's voice to be heard.

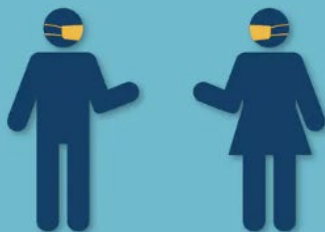
Online Events



Online Event Recommendations

- 1 Facilitators and presenters should complete a trial run of the engagement session ahead of time. This will ensure that the host or organizer understands how to give others the ability to share their screen or present, and keep transitions smooth.
- 2 At the start of each meeting, the facilitator should ask all participants to mute themselves, and be clear about when the floor is open for questions.
- 3 Ask participants to make sure their name is appearing with their image, rather than a phone number, using the “Rename” feature.
- 4 Utilize the “Chat” feature to keep track of questions that may come up during the discussion.
- 5 Use virtual polling tools, such as the poll feature on Zoom, to keep your audience engaged and capture information.

In-Person Events



In-Person Event Recommendations

- 1 Establish ground rules to ensure that everyone's voice is respected and heard and that one person doesn't dominate the conversation
- 2 Provide facilitators for round table discussions to ensure that the conversation moves along and everyone around the table has an opportunity to share their thoughts
- 3 Provide childcare
- 4 Provide refreshments
- 5 Provide for accessibility
- 6 Provide for translation, as needed

Accessibility & Equity

Be intentional

- 1 Who has access to this platform? Who may have trouble accessing this platform?
- 2 Who has time to participate in the planning process? What are barriers to participation, and how can we address them?
- 3 Who has access to *this community*? Who doesn't and why?

Plan for

- Inclusivity
- Differences in ability
- Language barriers
- Availability barriers



Outreach

- ① Young professionals who might be interested in living in your community: Connect with local institutions such as universities, colleges, or hospitals; Provide flyers for display and place notices for engagement sessions in email newsletters.

- ② Older residents who would like to stay in your community, but want to downsize from single-family homes: Connect with places of worship, senior centers, healthcare facilities, and other organizations that serve older residents in your community; Provide flyers for display and place notices for engagement sessions in email newsletters.

- ③ People who would like to live in your community if there were more affordable housing options: Disseminate informational flyers or engagement-session invitations to local employers and business owners to give to their employees; Look for advocacy groups, nonprofits and faith-based organizations in your region that address housing, homelessness, poverty, and other social issues. Send open invitations and information to their leaders and community members; Post public notices in local newspapers.

Elements of an Affordable Housing Plan

Plan checklist:

- Community values statement
- History of affordable housing in your town
- Housing needs assessment
- Land use and zoning assessment
- Understanding your housing market
- Plan principles, goals and actions

Thank you!

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