

Ann Arbor Comprehensive Plan

Community Engagement Plan

October 2023

Communication & Outreach Strategy

Engaging the Ann Arbor community in a comprehensive and inclusive manner is a priority for this project. Interactive online maps, information sharing, and survey tools will supplement workshops (in-person or virtual, COVID-depending) and communications to form a holistic pandemic-era hybrid outreach strategy. Engagement using these methods will vary depending on the following audiences.

Core Team

The core team is responsible for managing the process and scope of the project and producing specified deliverables and documents. The core team consists of the following:

- **The City of Ann Arbor staff** will be primarily responsible for coordination with the consultant team, city staff departments, City Council, and Planning Commission. They will also be responsible for the identification of stakeholders, meeting logistics such as reserving meeting rooms, and the timely return of comments on drafted engagement materials.
- **The Consultant Team** (Interface and SmithGroup) will be primarily responsible for generating engagement materials, coordinating agendas, facilitating meetings, summarizing findings, and regularly updating engagement channels such as the project website.

The core team will meet on a bi-weekly basis to coordinate work tasks (Task 1.10).

Steering Committee

Once assembled, the steering committee will be responsible for vetting engagement strategies, technical recommendations, and implementation ideas before sharing them with broader audiences (Task 1.3). They will attend up to 9 sessions, up to 6 of which will be virtual and up to 3 of which will be in person. For one of these in-person sessions, select Steering Committee members will lead neighborhood tours.

The core team will update the steering committee on the planning process at a bi-monthly cadence through a combination of virtual and in-person meetings (Task 1.8). The Consultant team will provide agendas, facilitate, and prepare meeting notes.

Planning Commission and Council

Aside from City staff, the Planning Commission and Council are often the groups who rely the most on the information found in these plans to guide decision-making. We want Commission and Council members to remain informed and actively involved throughout this process. There will be three key touchpoints with the Commission and Council (Task 1.9).

- **Touchpoint 1.** Following initial data gathering and public input, the core team will conduct a joint meeting with the Commission and Council to report back on key findings and themes. This session will be a virtual work session, with an open public

comment period and the recording will be made available after the meeting, however no formal decisions will be made or adopted.

- **Touchpoint 2.** Following the second round of public input, the core team will meet with the Commission and Council to review the draft values, goals, and preliminary recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan. This session will be a virtual work session, with an open public comment period and the recording will be made available after the meeting, however no formal decisions will be made or adopted.
- **Touchpoint 3.** At the end of the Comprehensive Plan process, the core team will meet with the Commission and Council to review the draft Comprehensive Plan and begin the public comment period. This will be a formal public hearing.

Ann Arbor Community

The process includes several in-person, virtual, and hybrid methods of engagement to allow for continuous feedback. Each engagement strategy is focused on facilitating honest conversations, engaging community members in their respective spaces, and making these plans feel approachable and fun. Along with community wide events, there will be opportunities to dive deeper into specific topics with interested community members and stakeholders.

Engagement Strategies + Tasks

Strategy	Details	Roles
Project Page on City's Website (Task 1.10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial landing page for the project, with a link to the project website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City staff – update the page following the close of the project to include the completed Comprehensive Plan and related materials, which will be provided by the consultant team.
Project Website (Task 1.10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary landing page for the project, with overview content and contact information • Provides commenting and feedback tools • Any surveys posted on the site throughout the process will use the City's standard demographic questions. • Platform does not require the public to register in order to provide feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant team – SmithGroup and Interface will develop preliminary materials for the website. SmithGroup will develop the site using ArcGIS Applications and update the site at a monthly cadence as needed throughout the process. • City staff – send needed website updates to SmithGroup by close of business at the end of each month to be incorporated by SmithGroup.

Strategy	Details	Roles
<p>Major Communication “Cycles” (Task 1.10)</p> <p>Major communication cycles are used to advertise citywide engagement opportunities for this effort.</p> <p>Communications will direct traffic to the project website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Website updates (monthly)¹ • Website Blog Posts (also referred to as conversation starters) (bi-monthly)¹ • Press Release (1 for draft plan review and 1 for adoption)² • Social Media Post language and images (2 per project phase, 1 for draft hearing and 1 for adoption)² <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NextDoor, Facebook, Reddit* • City communication channel pushes using the language generated for the website blogposts (community newsletter, GovDeliver)* • Flyers (also referred to as pamphlets or postcards) which can be distributed at city events, made available at key locations such as city hall, public libraries, or shared with organizations such as Meals on Wheels for distribution (up to 2 per phase)^{2*} • Stakeholder / Organizational mailing list (contacts in the toolkit list of stakeholders)^{2*} • Boards & Commission Updates (e.g. Transportation Commission) using materials created for Steering Committee Meetings^{1*} • Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) Notice in superintendent e-mails (1 for each survey)^{1*} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant team – develop materials and collateral (provided minimum 2-week lead time from desired posting date for digital media, minimum 3-week lead time for desired print media). • City staff – review and approve language and graphics before printing and posting (maximum 5 business day turnaround). <p><i>(*) Items where Ann Arbor Communications will distribute the materials.</i></p> <p><i>(¹) Items where SmithGroup will coordinate the development of materials.</i></p> <p><i>(²) Items where Interface will coordinate the development of materials.</i></p>
<p>Surveys</p> <p>Surveys are a useful tool to gather data across a larger group of people with accurate tracking. The team has a goal to meet at least 500 survey responses total.</p>	<p>Ann Arbor’s standard demographic questions will be included in all surveys to track who is currently represented through these channels and inform future engagement to reach other community groups. There will be several surveys involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey #1. Vision and Values - identify how community members want to define affordability, equity, and sustainability for Ann Arbor • Survey #2 Key Stakeholder Survey (Task 3.4) – This 15-20 question survey will approach key topics for the plan such as housing, transportation, and business to get resident and stakeholder opinions as experts of their neighborhoods. The goal will be to obtain specific feedback about their 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interface will collaborate with the steering committee to develop questions for surveys 1 and 2. • SmithGroup will post surveys on the website, through the stakeholder email database, and train the neighborhood outreach team on how to collect results. • Interface will develop print copies of the surveys. • City staff will print copies of the surveys, keep copies at city hall, and share with other city departments to promote using their communications channels.

Strategy	Details	Roles
	experience and needs which can be directly tied to future recommendations.	
Study Area Tours (Task 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit 4-5 steering committee members to give tours of different neighborhoods in the city. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These areas are meant to prioritize harder to reach individuals and under-engaged or rapidly changing neighborhoods. These tours will be for city staff, commission, council, and other steering committee members to attend and share real-time insights and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SmithGroup will help identify the designated areas and routes. SmithGroup will create the invitation for the tours. Interface will create guides of the route and packet materials for attendees City staff will coordinate times for the tours with city schedules and send invitations.
Neighborhood Outreach Team (Task 3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neighborhood Outreach team will be 5 dedicated community members from diverse, often underrepresented stakeholder groups in Ann Arbor. They will commit to about 15-20 hours per month over 12 months with an understanding that some months will require more or less time depending on the engagement and tasks required at that point in the process. The team will be responsible for promoting and executing surveys, staffing pop-up events, hosting neighborhood roundtables, and hosting meeting-in-a-box sessions with stakeholder groups as identified by the consultant team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff to identify candidate neighborhood outreach members (5 total can be paid, although more can volunteer if interested) SmithGroup to create outreach communications to recruit neighborhood outreach members SmithGroup to provide neighborhood outreach training SmithGroup will regularly meet with the Neighborhood Outreach Team to coordinate tasks, schedules, and execution of contract.
Stakeholder Interviews (Task 3.3) The team has a goal to host between 75-100 stakeholder interviews.	<p>Stakeholders could include real estate representatives, business owners, non-profit organizations, city leadership and more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder interviews will be conducted via a mix of in-person and virtual calls. While some will be conducted by core team members, team experts will be brought in as appropriate for more topic-specific conversations. The neighborhood outreach team may also conduct some of these conversations using the “meeting-in-a-box” tool to reach specific community groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff will begin a stakeholder list. The first task for the Steering Committee will be to review the stakeholder list and make additions. The consultant team will assign the best conversation facilitator to each group throughout phases 2 and 3 of the process. Interface will compile a summary report of major findings from these interviews.

Strategy	Details	Roles
Collaborative Map (Task 3.5)	The collaborative map will give community members a way to share location specific ideas and insights with the core team. Both print copies at public spaces and pop-ups as well as a virtual option will be used during Phase 2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SmithGroup will create an interactive online map for people to provide feedback and embed it on the project website. • Interface will create a print copy of the map and materials for an activity to be used at Pop-Ups. • City staff will print the map, keep it at city offices, and coordinate bringing the materials to pop-ups.
Open Houses (Task 3.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open houses will be a pop-up installation to share key findings and initial recommendations with community members. • There will be one open house per ward, with City Staff, steering committee members, and the consultant team staffing booths. • Stakeholders, Commission, and Council members will be encouraged to attend and promote the events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interface will create open house materials. • SmithGroup will coordinate event staffing with the technical team and neighborhood outreach team. • City staff will coordinate facility rentals, location, and promotion of event on city channels.
Workshop in a Box (Task 3.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our team will create a package of materials that can be taken across the city or downloaded from the City's project website. • This package will include a "meeting-in-a-box" kit that residents can use to talk with their neighbors about their neighborhood and the city. Instructions would clearly stipulate how to use the materials and how to record the feedback to deliver it to the team. • To help jumpstart this process, the Neighborhood Outreach team will begin by using the package along with City staff at pop-ups. Stakeholders, steering committee members, and council will also be encouraged to voluntarily host sessions. • Developed throughout Phase 2, meeting in a box materials will be deployed through Phase 3 in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The core team will collaborate to generate the questions and theme for the meeting-in-a-box before sharing with the Steering Committee and Neighborhood Outreach Team for feedback. • Interface will develop the meeting-in-a-box materials. • SmithGroup will provide a training on the use of meeting-in-a-box materials.

Strategy	Details	Roles
	Spring. The meeting-in-a-box will focus on gathering responses related to ideas and recommendations for the plan.	
Neighborhood Roundtables (Task 3.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 5 Neighborhood Outreach Team members will be responsible for a minimum of 6 neighborhood roundtables with different outreach groups, selected in partnership with the core team. The groups selected for these neighborhood roundtables will be focused on traditional marginalized groups, those who have not shown strong participation to date, or groups with a depth of knowledge that needs to be further explored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SmithGroup will coordinate with the Neighborhood Outreach Team to select their respective locations or invitees for roundtables and confirm with the core team. SmithGroup will coordinate training and deployment of materials for the Neighborhood Outreach Team
Pop-Ups (Task 3.8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultant team can help facilitate survey responses, activities, or meeting-in-a-box responses at up to 5 pop-ups, which are smaller stands at existing events throughout Phases 2 and 3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A2 Green Fair – <i>complete</i> Recommended campus pop-up during homecoming week Recommended transportation pop-up in coordination with a bike tour for the A2 Downtown Circulation Study Recommended one Ann Arbor Weekend streets pop-up OR farmers market pop-up Recommended one neighborhood-specific pop-up to be selected by the Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City staff will confirm with the consultant team which pop-up events they would like to have the consultant team present at with a minimum of 3 weeks advance notice to ensure there is time to coordinate staffing and materials. Consultant team will coordinate materials and staffing for pop-up events. <i>*Note city staff will have the Meeting-in-a-Box for their use during other city events and that the Neighborhood Outreach Team could host one of their roundtables at a pop-up instead if preferred.</i>
Working Groups (Task 3.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Groups are an opportunity to dive deeper into the three values of the plan, affordability and housing, equitable economic development, and sustainability. These 3 working groups will meet 2 times each during the process. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> after the initial rounds of engagement to reflect on the values and themes related to their topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interface will coordinate invitees, meeting agenda, and meeting facilitation for these 6 virtual sessions

Strategy	Details	Roles
	<p>and explore pros and cons of preliminary ideas and approaches</p> <p>2. before the plan is drafted to refine the recommendations</p>	
Focus Groups (Task 3.10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups are meetings of about 10 people to have deep discussions. Up to 5 total focus group meetings will be hosted during this process. Topics could include the following and will be selected in partnership with the steering committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood organizations Unhoused and vulnerable populations Youth Seniors Economic development Developers College students Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultant team will work with the steering committee to select 5 groups and draft invitation language, meeting agenda, and meeting summaries.
Public Involvement Documentation (Task 3.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation will include a summary of results to date at the end of each project phase. This will be focused more on graphically sharing the broad insights gained. A more detailed summary of the engagement process, timeline, and findings will be included in an appendix of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SmithGroup will sort engagement results into key findings and post on the website as part of regular updates. Interface will create infographics of key findings. SmithGroup will create a detailed summary of findings for the appendix of the final plan

IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION MESSAGING

Shared definitions are important to maintain clarity, consistency, and plan direction. Defined terms include the following.




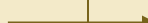
- **A Comprehensive Plan** is a plan document, adopted by city council, that establishes a vision and priorities for the future of the city, guiding the evolution of the city for the decades ahead. This includes a determination of future land uses across the city, desired policy changes, and priorities for public spending and capital projects.

Other key definitions, specifically the three core aspects of the Comprehensive Plan will be further refined through initial engagement. For now, these terms are defined as follows.

- **Affordable.** The City recognizes the challenge of innovation and advancement, and how it relates to community accessibility. An equitable, sustainable community cannot establish in an economically segregated place.
- **Equitable.** The City has contributed to racial and related segregation through decisions and investments over time. This work will acknowledge and accept this, and focus on reparative measures and policies that will seek to not only minimize such outcomes in the future, but undo damages of the past.
- **Sustainable.** The City has adopted the A2 Zero Living Carbon Neutrality Plan, which aspires to a carbon-neutral City by 2030. The Comprehensive Plan process will consider and integrate these community goals into the Comprehensive Plan.

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

	2023		2024		
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
Ongoing Communication Cycles					
Bi-Weekly Core Team Meetings	1	6	6	6	6
Bi-Monthly Steering Committee Meetings		2	1	2	2
Monthly Website Updates	1	3	3	3	3
Bi-Monthly Blog Posts	1	2	1	2	2
Social Media Posts		2	1	2	2
Neighborhood Outreach Team					
Phase 1. Getting Started					
Initial Kick-Off Visit	Completed				
Initial Technical Stakeholder Interviews (up to 25)					
Website Development					
Phase 2. Inventory & Analysis					
Collaborative Map		OCT →			
Planning Commission + Council Touchpoint 1. Initial Findings + Themes		OCT			
Survey #1. Public Survey on Vision + Values		NOV			
Study Area Tours		NOV			

Phase 2 Technical Stakeholder Interviews (up to 25)					
Neighborhood Outreach Team					
<i>Recruitment</i>		OCT-NOV			
<i>Training</i>		DEC			
<i>Neighborhood Roundtables (6 for each of the 5 Team Members)</i>					
Ward Open Houses			FEB		
Workshop in a Box			Develop JAN + Deploy		
Pop-Up Events (5 total, recommend a bi-monthly cadence)					
Working Groups First Session (up to 3)			MAR		
Phase 3. Vision & Strategies					
Survey #2 Key Stakeholders Survey			FEB		
Planning Commission + Council Touchpoint 2. Draft Values, Goals and Recommendations			MAR		
Phase 3 Technical Stakeholder Interviews (up to 25)					
Focus Groups (5 total, recommend a focus group week)				JUL OR AUG	
Working Groups Second Session (up to 3)				JUL	
Phase 3. Vision & Strategies					
Press Releases					2
Planning Commission + Council Touchpoint 3. Draft Plan Authorization for Public Review					
Planning Commission Recommendation for Adoption					
City Council Adoption					
Public Involvement Documentation			Phase 1 Summary in MAR	Phase 2 Summary in JUL	Full Summary