



MEMORANDUM

DATE June 2, 2017
TO Livermore Downtown Steering Committee
FROM David Early and Carey Stone
SUBJECT Preliminary Ideas for a Downtown Public Engagement Plan

This memorandum makes a preliminary proposal regarding a Public Engagement Plan for the Downtown Planning Process. The purpose of this memorandum is to allow the Downtown Steering Committee to understand the options for outreach and input, and to provide feedback to staff and consultants, who will then create a formal draft Public Engagement Plan for Steering Committee and City Council review. The Steering Committee will review the items in this memo at its June 6 meeting.

This memo describes a Public Engagement Plan that would include two main components:

- **Public Outreach** intended to “get the word out” about the process, and
- **Multiple Channels for Participation** to allow as many members of the public as possible to learn about the downtown and provide input on downtown development alternatives.

These two components are described in sections 4 and 6 of this memo. The remaining sections of the memo describe the target audience for the Public Engagement Plan, methods to engage underserved communities and youth, the public input process, and the final synthesis of the results of the public engagement when it is complete.

1. Target Audience

The target audience for the Public Engagement Plan includes everyone who lives or works in Livermore, with a particular goal of engaging the broad community who might not otherwise participate in civic engagement processes. This memo presents a variety of outreach and input strategies, with the understanding that multiple avenues for both outreach and input will provide greater exposure and participation.

2. Engaging Underserved Communities

Several Downtown Steering Committee members have emphasized the importance of reaching out to all demographics of the community, especially to marginalized communities. To engage underserved

communities, PlaceWorks recommends a variety of strategies that can be applied to all forms of both “getting the word out” and “public input channels” that are described below:

- **Special Outreach.** PlaceWorks recommends in-person outreach at local venues where underserved communities congregate, including churches, ethnic markets, and other community gathering places.
- **Ethnic Media.** The City could place ads and news articles about the project in ethnic newspapers such as El Observador, a bilingual weekly newspaper that serves the nine Bay Area counties.
- **Translation and Interpretation.** PlaceWorks recommends that all or most materials be translated into Spanish and that Spanish interpretation be available at all meetings where Spanish speakers may attend¹.
- **Childcare.** Members of underserved communities often have young children, and lack resources to find care for these children if they want to engage in a civic process. Therefore, childcare should be available at any meeting or event as a means to serve underserved communities.
- **Food.** Offering substantial food can be a draw to bring people to a meeting or event, particularly if they are coming straight from work or just need an impetus to attend. Some of the most successful meetings involving underserved communities began with serving a full (but simple) meal.
- **Raffles.** Giving away goods and services through a raffle can be an effective way to entice community members to attend a planning event, and can also provide advertising for merchants who donate prizes.

3. Engaging Youth

It may be important to emphasize not only engaging underserved communities, but also engaging Livermore’s youth. The Public Engagement Plan might identify several means to emphasize involvement, which might include:

¹ At the April 27 Steering Committee meeting, a Steering Committee member suggested that there might also be a need for translation and interpretation into languages from the Indian subcontinent. To determine the extent of this need, PlaceWorks called the Livermore Shiva-Vishnu Temple to ask about the congregation’s language preferences. We learned that there are too many languages spoken by congregants to allow for translation into a single Indian language. Moreover, we were told that the vast majority of congregants also speak English, so translation into Indian languages is probably not necessary.

- **Social Media.** Since youth are particularly high users of social media, the social media strategy could be created with youth in mind.
- **Pop-Up Events.** Events such as Back to School Night or school sports events might be particularly important as venues at which youth could be engaged at pop-up events, which are described in more detail in Section 6, below.
- **Youth Workshops.** The City could hold special workshops that are particularly oriented at youth, particularly by holding them at schools or in conjunction with youth events.
- **Class Credit for Participation.** The City could encourage teachers to give class credit to youth who participate in a downtown planning event.

4. Getting the Word Out

To ensure the community is aware of the downtown planning process and to spread the word about project updates, the Public Engagement Plan might recommend using:

- **Project Website.** The recently created project website (yourlivermore.org) could be maintained and expanded to provide background information, updates, and information about how to become involved.
- **Social Media.** The City has already reserved Facebook and Twitter accounts for the project, and Instagram and nextdoor.com could also be added. Staff and consultants could make regular posts on these accounts to update the public about the project. Visibility could be “boosted” through paid advertising on these sites.
- **On-Site Display Boards.** Display boards could be erected on the project sites on both sides of Livermore Avenue to provide background information and a link to yourlivermore.org.
- **Library Display.** A display board could also be installed at the Livermore Public Library.
- **Downtown Kiosk.** A display board could also be installed in the Downtown kiosk.
- **Posters and Flyers.** Posters and flyers could be printed, posted in shop windows and distributed at stores and restaurants.
- **Earned Media.** Press releases and interviews could lead to publication of unpaid news stories in *The Independent* and *East Bay Times*.
- **Paid Print Advertising.** The City could place paid advertisements in *The Independent* and *East Bay Times*.

5. Public Input Process

The main focus of the proposed Public Engagement Plan will be gathering public input regarding potential downtown development, with an emphasis on review and evaluation of the alternatives being developed by the Steering Committee.

In order to properly review and evaluate the alternatives, participants in the process would complete three steps:

- **Education.** Participants would learn about development issues in the downtown, based on a summary of key points of information that have been presented to the Steering Committee.
- **Alternatives Review and Evaluation.** Participants would learn about the alternatives developed by the Steering Committee and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- **Comment, Selection and Refinement.** Participants would have a chance to comment on the alternatives, select their preferred alternative from those presented, and/or refine one or more alternatives to show their preferences.

This three-step process would be the same for all participants in the process, regardless of the “channel” they use. Potential public input “channels” are described below.

6. Public Input “Channels”

This section describes five separate public input “channels” that could be implemented as part of the public engagement process. Providing multiple channels is intended to give members of the public multiple opportunities to participate, thereby increasing the number of people involved in the process.

Downtown Tours

Downtown tours would allow participants to see first-hand the issues and opportunities of the downtown sites. Participants could either join an organized group, or take a tour on their own using a handheld device. As part of the tour, participants could learn the background information about the plan, see the alternatives, comment on them, select among them, and refine them as desired.

Neighborhood or District Meetings

At Steering Committee Meeting #2, a Steering Committee member suggested hosting neighborhood meetings to share information and hear ideas. Although nextdoor.com identifies 56 neighborhoods in Livermore, PlaceWorks recommends merging these identified neighborhoods into districts and holding perhaps 5 to 7 district meetings in various parts of the city. Each district meeting could follow a similar agenda, with a chance for participants to learn the background information about the downtown, see the alternatives, comment on them, select among them, and refine them as desired.

Community Workshops

Community workshops could provide an opportunity for face-to-face interaction among community members who hold a range of opinions and expertise. The City could hold a sequential series of community-wide workshops, with the first workshop oriented at exploring background information, a second workshop oriented at alternatives review and evaluation, and a final workshop intended to select and refine a preferred alternative. Alternatively, each workshop could include a complete process of explaining background information to the participants, introducing the alternatives, and providing opportunity for comment, selection and refinement.

Pop-up Events

Steering Committee members emphasized the need to go out to the community to solicit input. The Public Engagement Plan might include “pop-up” events at various community activities. Each pop-up event could be structured to allow people to stop by while attending the main event. While visiting the pop-up station, participants would be able to learn background information about the downtown, see the alternatives, comment on them, select among them, and refine them as desired. They could also obtain a link to the on-line engagement website described below if they preferred to participate on line.

Pop up events might occur at:

- Downtown Farmers’ Market
- Taste of Downtown
- Witches Night Out
- Local churches.
- Livermore library.
- Lions’ Club, Rotary Club and other service organizations.
- P.T.A. meetings
- Livermore Chamber of Commerce and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Athletic events such as soccer games
- Back to School nights

On-Line Engagement

In addition to live, person-to-person interactions at tours, meetings, public workshops and pop-up events, the City could create a website to allow the public to engage in the downtown planning process via the internet. The project website (yourlivermore.org) could be augmented to include online engagement tools that would allow participants to learn background information about the downtown, see the alternatives, comment on them, select among them, and refine them as desired. The website is already being set up with audio-visual presentations that replicate all of the technical presentations



made to the Steering Committee. PlaceWorks could use its on-line civic engagement platform to add a module on the website that would allow viewers to view the alternatives, comment on them, modify them, or build their own solutions for downtown development.

7. Final Synthesis

After all selected public input channels have been implemented and input has been garnered, PlaceWorks recommends that staff and consultants summarize all input received in a single report. If appropriate, the consultant team could also create a draft preferred alternative that synthesizes public comments received.