

## MEETING SUMMARY

**City of Boulder**  
**Public Participation Working Group (PPWG)**  
**Monday, January 9**  
**4 pm – 7 pm**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>
4:00 – 4:10	<b>Introductions and Agenda Review</b>
4:10 – 4:20	<b>Public Comment</b>
<b>4:20 – 4:30</b>	Google Group Report Out  <b>Desired Outcome: PPWG members will share key items discussed in Google Group</b>
4:30 – 5:30	Subcommittee #1 Report Out – Systems and culture of engagement & Standards and principals for public process  <b>Desired Outcome: Subcommittee #1 delivers a status report in the following form:</b> Roster – who is on the subcommittee Problem Statement Topic Areas Key Questions Strategies (potential) Data Gaps and Evaluation
5:30 – 5:40	Break and Public Engagement
5:40 – 6:40	Subcommittee #2 Report Out - Issue Identification & Case Studies  <b>Desired Outcome: Subcommittee #2 delivers a status report in the following form:</b> Roster – who is on the subcommittee Problem Statement Topic Areas Key Questions Strategies (potential) Data Gaps and Evaluation
6:40 – 6:50	<b>February Agenda Suggestions</b>
6:50 – 7:00	<b>Public Comment</b>

## **Introductions and Welcome and Agenda Review**

**PPWG Attendees:** Darvin Ayre, DeAnne Butterfield, Michael Caplan, Carol Cogswell, Sean Collins, Ann Cooper, Sandra Diaz, Lisa Harris, Marjorie Lerner, Claire Riley, Bill Shrum, Kristi Russell

**City Staff:** Jean Gatza, Amanda Nagl, Patrick Von Keyserling

**Facilitators:** Taber Ward

**Members of the Public:** Lydia Reinig, Lynn Segal, Peter Richards

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Google Group Report Out**

PPWG members agreed that the Google Group is working and is a great back-up for communication and an effective way for subcommittees to share information between meetings. Overall, however, face-to-face meetings are more productive and continue to be the primary means of communicating and getting work done.

Using Google Docs has also been helpful so the subcommittee could work on comments together and see the different iterations of the document.

## **Subcommittee #1 Report Out - Culture and Systems of Engagement**

**The Culture and Systems of Engagement Subcommittee led the PPWG members, staff, members of the public and facilitators through a group exercise to determine the Mindsets and Actions related to Public Participation.**

**Subcommittee facilitators put large flip chart paper on the board into the following categories:**

**Mindsets** (attitudes, beliefs, what are our roles and identities)

- **What should we start doing?**
- **What should we stop doing?**
- **What should we continue doing?**

**Actions** (behaviors and how our mindsets and identities are put into practice)

- **What should we start doing?**
- **What should we stop doing?**
- **What should we continue doing?**

Each person in the room was asked to write down words/phrases related to public participation and these categories – what does the group want to exist now or in the future? How do we get there?

As an example:

## Mindsets

What do we want to Start doing?

- Be more inclusive

What do we want to Stop doing?

- Stop overusing having pre-conceived notions

## Actions and Behaviors

What do we want to Stop doing?

- Stop overusing one-way communication
- Decision is already made

What do we Continue to do?

- Develop departmental policies on public engagement so everyone is on the same page re: process

All present at the meeting went through this exercise – pictures of the final outcome below:



Figure 1 Mindsets

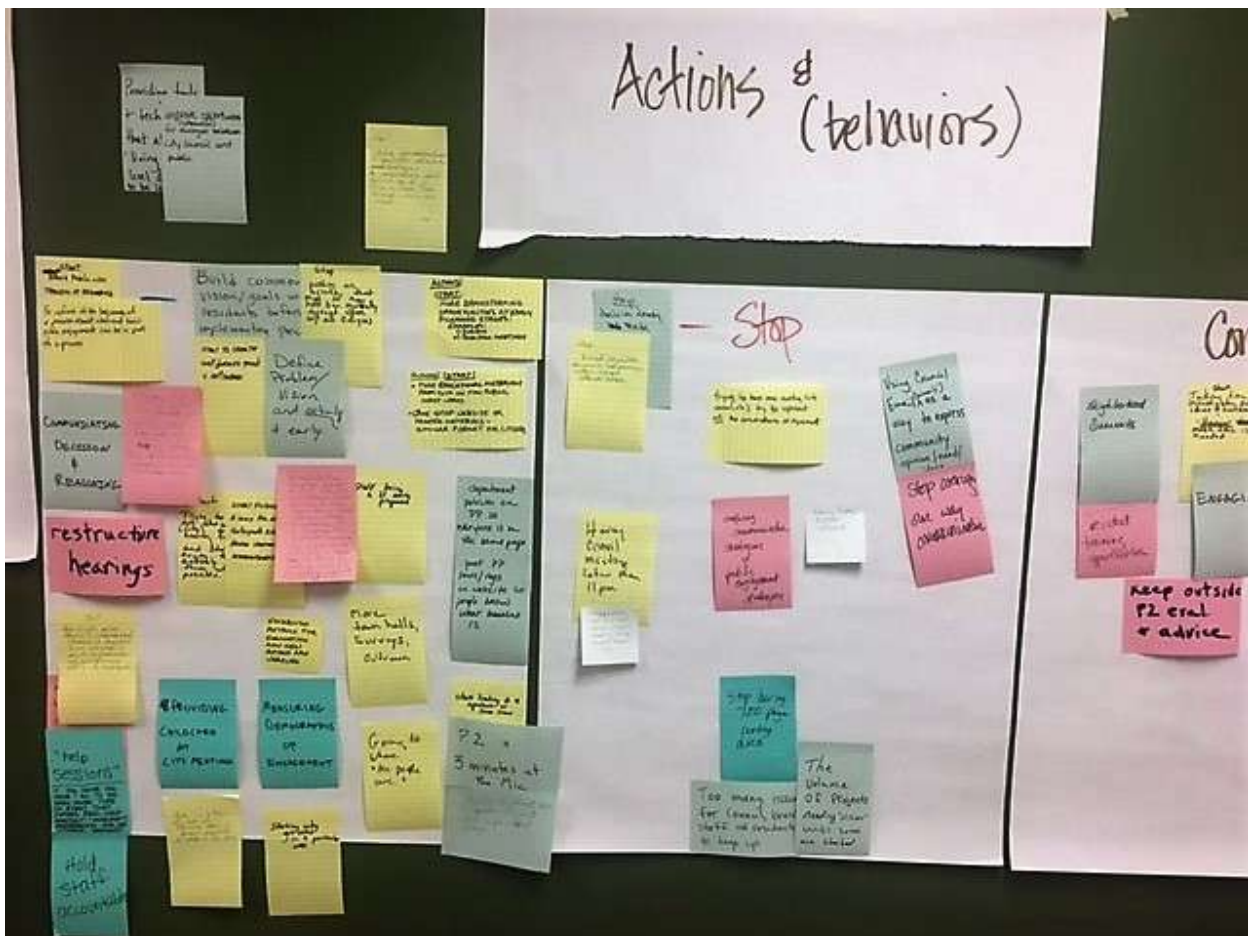
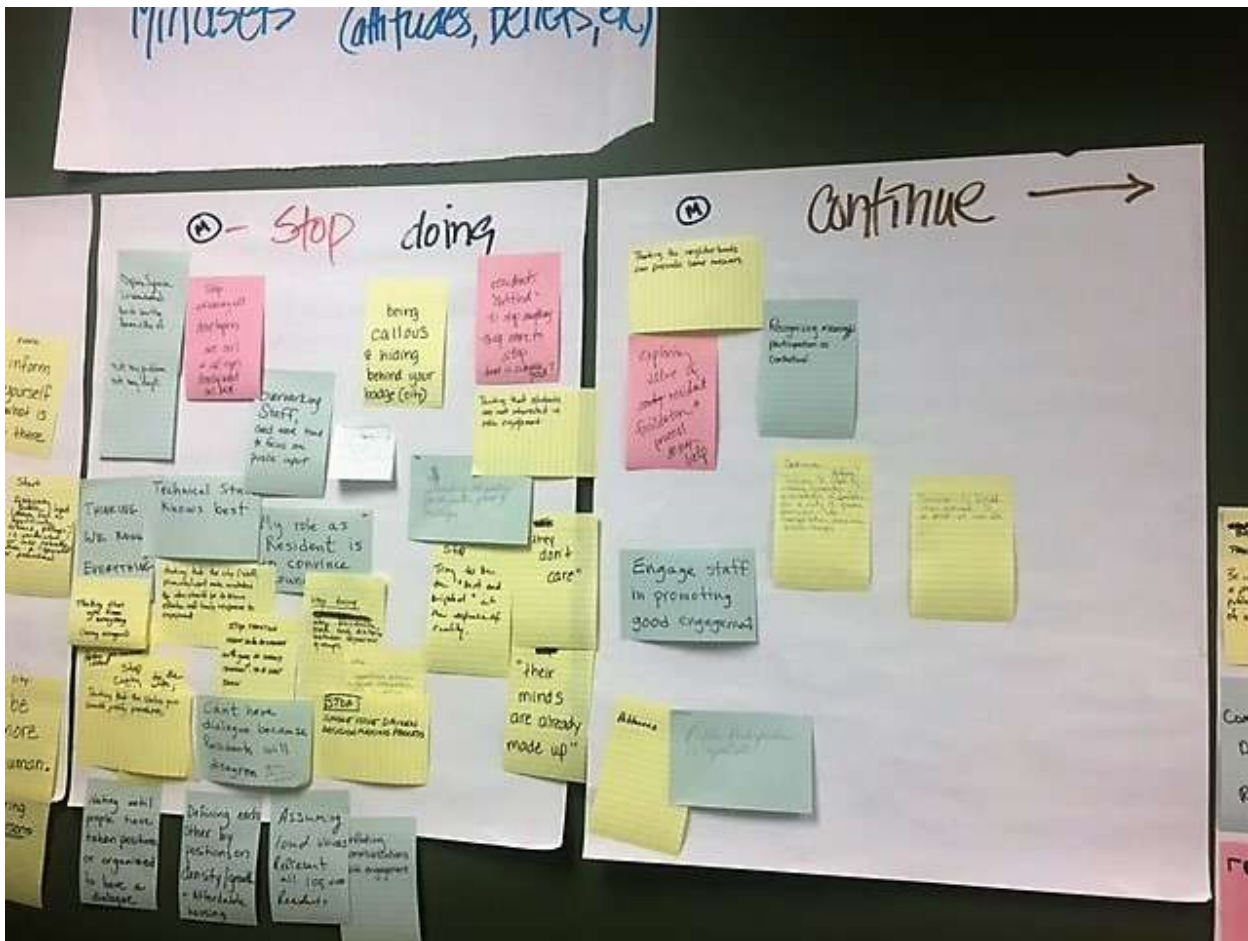


Figure 2 Mindsets

Figure 3 Actions

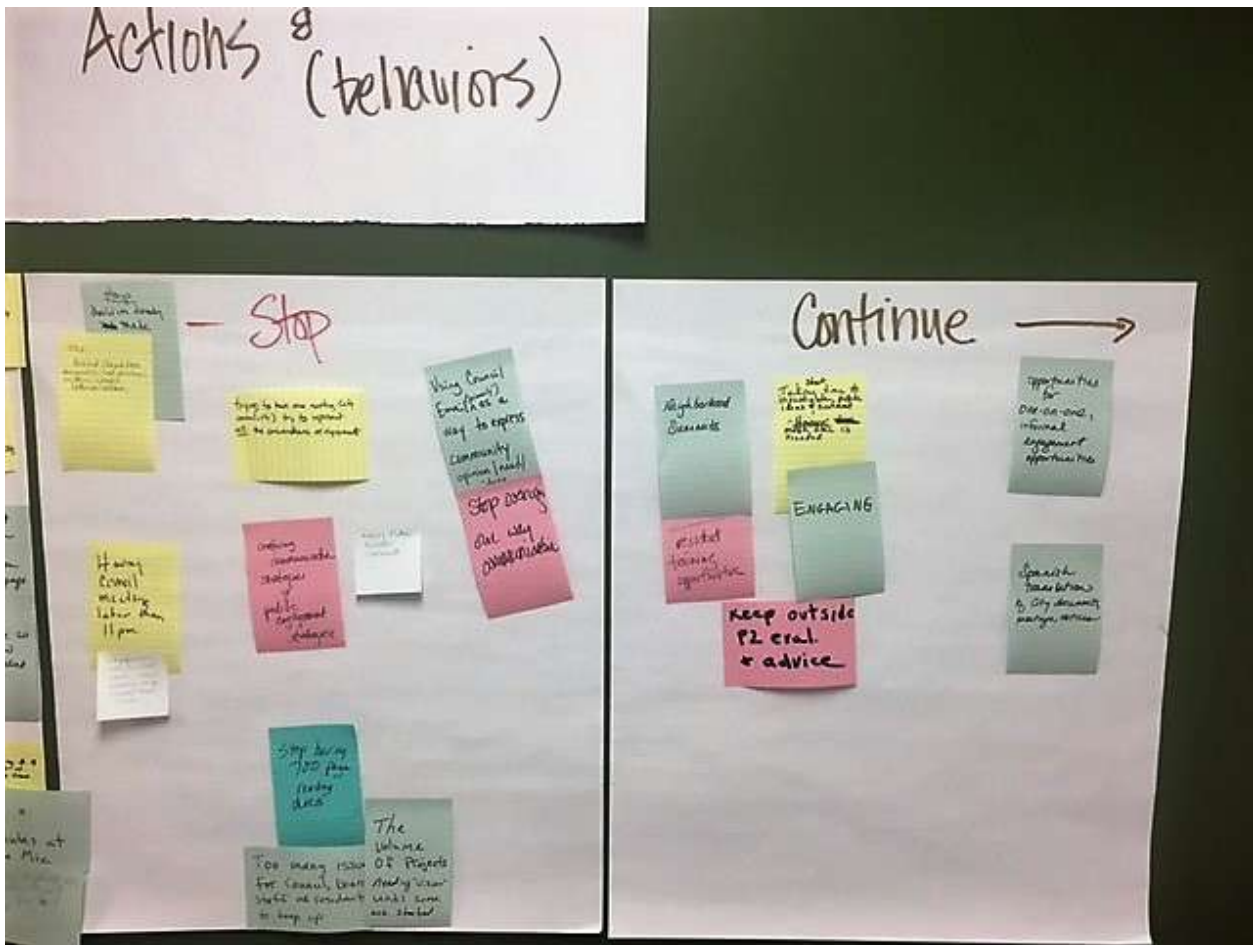


Figure 4 Actions

The Subcommittee Asked PPWG members what they noticed during this exercise:

Responses included:

- Confidence in residents of Boulder.

- This exercise brought the whole group together. As a City, Boulder needs to offer a similar, city-wide interactive experience to bring diverse sets of people with different cultures, ages, backgrounds together. The BoulderBoulder is a good example of this.
- There are lots of different comments. There is not a common vision that immediately appears to represent “good public participation.” Very diverse perspective.

### **Subcommittee Report Out:**

The group asked: What does good PP look like?

The group then took the 7 National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) Core Principles and worked their statements on what would be good PP into these categories.

The 7 NCDD Core Principles and Subcommittee comments are below:

#### ***Collaboration & Shared Purpose***

*Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.*

- There is a satisfactory and productive relationship between residents and the City. More people are involved and feel their participation is relevant. There is a high level of trust among officials, staff and the public (this seems like an overview statement--the following are the ‘how?’)
- Residents consider their own needs and preferences through a lens of the common good and strive to inform themselves of the whole issue beyond their own experiences
- Trusted, neutral organizations help convene discussions that help define issues, needs, concerns and constraints.

#### ***Careful Planning & Preparation***

*Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.*

- Start with agreement on the nature of the issue, the problem to be solved. Then, bring in data and information before starting to promote solutions. Understand “why” before debating “how” or “whether”
- Levels of engagement are appropriate to the issue. Larger, complex and long-term issues that affect more people engage begin at the big picture level to identify and build common big picture goals, with intensive outreach to all residents to participate. Implementation details are then developed with opportunities for narrower and more detailed participation by those directly affected.
- Incorporate public engagement activities into project planning up front to match timing, outreach, information, participation with policy development (“Planning to Plan”)
- Residents are engaged and informed in a timely fashion, as early as possible

#### ***Sustained Engagement & Participatory Culture***

*Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.*

- There is clear understanding, with involvement of the public, of the decision process, responsibilities, expectation, accountability and limitations (time, legal, financial, scope)
- All stakeholders---staff, Council members, residents, business representatives public understand and agree to ground rules and roles to have ownership in the process.
- There is back and forth, meaningful, informative, timely dialogue among all who are interested—City officials and staff, business, interest groups, community organizations, neighborhoods, residents. People listen to each other and allow for different perspectives to inform them
- A professional office of community engagement - working with the city and the public. This is a proactive, not responsive, office that acts as advisor and consultant as well as helping develop process.
- Sometimes it isn't a burning policy question, but rather ongoing improvements in how City programs are conducted; this is engagement too

### ***Inclusion & Demographic Diversity***

*Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.*

- There are a variety of opportunities to exchange experiences, ideas, viewpoints and perspectives among a broad range of interests about the topic at hand. Residents are reached out to for issues that may affect them and can participate at levels and in ways that fit with their intensity of interest and their life situations. Opportunities to be involved in ways work for them.

### ***Transparency & Trust***

*Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes and range of views and ideas expressed.*

- Residents have easy access to current, thorough and accurate information about the issue and decision process through a variety of ways. Uncertainty or mistrust lead to fear which leads to opposition.

### ***Openness & Learning***

*Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options and rigorously evaluate the process.*

- People have opportunities to practice dialogue, where appropriate, in less charged situations
- Start with agreement on the nature of the issue, the problem to be solved. Then, Bring in data and information before starting to promote solutions. Understand “why” before debating “how” or “whether”
- Participation is evaluated against goals and ‘lessons learned’ are welcomed without punishment

### ***Impact & Action***

*Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.*

- Engaging in City issues is exciting, a place of curiosity, respect, education where people want to be involved because their involvement makes a difference.

**The Group also offered these follow-up questions:**

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the City Council, boards and staff and what are the roles and responsibilities of the public? This is a big picture question: Is Council just the “decider”? Is the public just self-interested? Are we all in this together?
- Can we identify the different “levels” of issues the city and the public engage about, and what level of public involvement may be appropriate for each level, and when?
- Should we spend time further defining a difference between “public participation” and “public engagement”? How important is this?
- We don’t need to “create” solutions, we can use successes from other places, will case studies inform this? Inquiry with other local entities?
- Ideas must be Boulder-specific and reflective of Boulder’s culture and community

The PPWG members broke into small groups to discuss the Report-Out and these questions.

**PPWG Member Responses to the subcommittee report-out:**

Is it our job to say “how” these things change, or just “what” needs to change?

These themes are very integrated with themes identified in the Issues and Case-Studies’.

How integrated the themes of cultures are with specific issues and chronology

IAP2 will not be used as the “HOW” to do this – IAP2 provides options to borrow from for strategies of how to get to these aspirational principles.

Communication – would like to see more of a rationale for how Council/Staff makes decisions. For example, Bob Yates, City Councilmember, sends out a rationale of why he voted a certain way. This will get to the problems of trust, transparency, accountability and preparedness.

Identify actions and systems that concurrently address different mindsets. How do recommendations address different mindsets and fulfill different needs/agenda?

Standardization of procedures leads to transparency.

**Data gaps identified:**

- Talk to past and current council members about what leadership means to them and their role with staff and the public? Where is Council’s mindset around PP right now? Need to know this now, not down the road so we can understand how our recommendations fit in?
- Measurement – There needs to be a way to measure what we are talking about in terms of engagement, how do we build in evaluation?
- Boulder is a very particular town with its own history and past – would like to see how communities interact and behave together. There is research of how different groups/cultures work together in



Boulder. CU has this research and have taken a look at what the Latinos brought and still bring to Boulder.

## Subcommittee #2 Report Out - Issues and Case Studies

Subcommittee #2 had narrowed a large range of issues down to 4, and asked the PPWG members to give suggestions for addition issues, i.e. areas of concern and/or friction. This exercise resulted in the following list:

1. Lack of Trust
2. Public needs adequate time to share their thoughts with City. **Reframe** this issue: This isn't about time, it's about opportunity or structure of public participation.
3. Public process design needs the public - also, this doesn't happen all the time. For many issues there IS NO process design, its ad hoc depending on the process.
  - a. This dovetails with culture, focusing on expectations so public knows what to expect. Cost-benefits of doing the process
4. Skills and training for the public. **Reframe** this issue: All sides need to build skills around PP; e.g. staff, boards and council, to communicate effectively with each other. Need to know what training the City already has.
5. Demographics – does the community who is participating reflect the community at large? Who are the engaged and unengaged? How can this be measured and optimized?
6. Need to be other modalities for people to engage? Information to people.
7. Are there more informal ways for people to have conversations? Does it always need to happen in a very formal mechanism – what do these systems/formats and structures?

### Suggested next steps:

1. Eventually, both subcommittees need to come together to identify overlap and dovetailing themes.
2. Integrate case studies into issues.
3. Determine if what the City identifies as a concern matches up with what subcommittees have identified as a concern. This could help with context.
4. Get 3-4 examples of projects/case studies from the City that they think went really well and two that didn't go well. Interesting to see why these went well or didn't go well.
5. Need to integrate staff perception and working group perception.
6. Involve the Council in our process – better than at end of the year giving 15 pages of Recommendations
7. Meeting one-on-one with Council members? Talking to councilmembers as individuals.
8. Need to identify assumptions, i.e. this is what good looks like from our perspective, vs good from their perspective.
9. Need more points of view in case study chronologies. Integrate City and public perspectives.
10. When case study chronologies are done, send these to staff, council.

## Summary of Data Gaps and Next Steps

### Need more information from City:

1. Determine if what the City identifies as a concern matches up with what subcommittees have identified as a concern. This could help with context.

2. Get 3-4 examples of projects/case studies from the City that they think went really well and two that didn't go well. Interesting to see why these went well or didn't go well.
3. Talk to past and current council members about what leadership means to them and their role with staff and the public? Where is Council's mindset around PP right now? Need to know this now, not down the road so we can understand how our recommendations fit in?
4. Need to integrate staff perception and working group perception.
5. Involve the Council in our process – better than at end of the year giving 15 pages of Recommendations
6. Meeting one-on-one with Council members? Talking to councilmembers as individuals.
7. Need to identify assumptions, i.e. this is what good looks like from our perspective, vs good from their perspective.
8. Looking at lessons learned – does council see the same? Is this a question or did they learn something else?

**ACTION ITEM:** All PPWG Members to contribute a few questions for Staff/City/Council by Friday at 6pm. Send questions to Kristi, she will compile on Google Doc.

### **Subcommittees-Specific Work**

1. Integrate case studies into issues.
2. Measurement – need to say how, do we measure what we are talking about in terms of engagement,
3. Get all the information on case studies/issues and integrate a more objective view from multiple perspectives.
4. Measurement – There needs to be a way to measure what we are talking about in terms of engagement, how do we build in evaluation?
5. Boulder is a very particular town with its own history and past – would like to see how communities interact and behave together. There is research of how different groups/cultures work together in Boulder. CU has this research and have taken a look at what the Latinos brought and still bring to Boulder.

### **February Agenda Suggestions**

Inquiry to Council members, Staff and Boards

### **Public Comment**

#### **Lyn Segal:**

People talking through each other. There are long standing issues in the community with history. Good luck trying to understand everything. Some people have been watching this for 25 years. I wish there would be more direct dialogue and debate. Community is stressed out and antagonistic. Instead, we need to be together more than ever. Get together and fight it out. Talk about the issues and have people there to assist. Space-time continuum. Allow it to be ugly.