

**City of Boulder**

**Public Participation Working Group**

**October 17, 2016**

**PPWG MEETING # 2**

**SUMMARY**

**In Attendance**

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

**Members of the Public:** Steve Pomerance, Peter Richards, Susan Balint, Richard, Tucker, Lydia Reinig, Mike Marsh, James Duncan, Allie Verburg, Paula Moseley, David Ward

**City Council Representative:** Lisa Morzel **City Staff:** Jean Gatza and Amanda Nagl

**CDR Facilitators:** Jonathan Bartsch and Taber Ward

**Meeting #2 Summary**

**Welcome and Introductions**

All attendees state their names.

**Acceptance of September Meeting Summary**

PPWG accepted the meeting summary from September with the request to add the names of members of the public who attend the meetings to the “In Attendance” section.

**Agenda Review**

The group reviews the agenda and is given an opportunity to modify or comment. The agenda lists the following topics:

- PPWG review of background materials and public comment received on the PPWG email
- PPWG Meeting Framework
- Determine public comment and PPWG response procedures
- Adoption of PPWG Operating Protocols

November Agenda suggestions  
Public Comment Period

\*No additions or changes to the October agenda.

### Discussion of Background Materials and Public Comment Emails

- Suggestion that public participation/comment could happen at the beginning of the meeting instead of at the end. **PPWG members like this idea and we will implement it in the November meeting.**
- Some PPWG members thought that the website could be better at providing information and it is not the best tool for two-way dialogue.
- Some members also disappointed with the Code for America Report. “Code for America is a technology project, not a communication project.” Members express worry that by focusing too much on the use of technology to engage the public, certain populations will be left behind, e.g. elderly people who do not use social media. General consensus among the group that online technology is not enough and public engagement must include newspaper and direct mail.
- PPWG members discuss the importance of understanding what systems are already in place, working with ongoing public engagement projects and filling in the gaps. We must look beyond “push communication.”
- The City has a culture of risk adversity. Instead, the City needs to build a culture where people can take risks and fail.
- The public engagement process needs to be fair and transparent to build trust. There must be an explanation of how decisions are made.
- Very important to recognize that “We don’t know who we are not hearing from.” Be careful not to assume that we have the answers, instead, assume that we are not hearing from everybody.
- Everyone on the PPWG should attend or watch a City Council meeting as part of being a PPWG member.

### Review of Proposed Meeting Framework

The purpose of the Meeting Framework is to set the context for the PPWG process and gain mutual understanding of the overall sequence and timing of discussions that will lead to recommendations.

The following is a proposed meeting framework based on PPWG discussion. This is a working document and may be changed as PPWG meetings progress based on public input and comments, PPWG findings and subcommittee work.

## Meeting Framework

Date	Topic
September 19, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and introductions</li> <li>• Review and solicit feedback on Operating Protocols</li> <li>• Vision for public engagement in Boulder</li> </ul>
October 17, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information review and discussion</li> <li>• Develop ideas about how to best engage the public during the PPWG process</li> <li>• Develop protocols for public comment at PPWG meetings and response to public emails</li> <li>• Draft Meeting Framework</li> <li>• Update Operating Protocols</li> </ul>
November 14, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine a common set of principles and criteria for what is “good public participation”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Ask the public: What are the principals of good public engagement that we could use going forward.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop public engagement outreach plan</li> <li>• Current City efforts to engage the public –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff presentation on official perspective (perspectives from staff on planning, transportation, housing and OSMP to start)</li> <li>○ How are current decisions at the city level made and how is the public currently engaged in these efforts? I.e. public comment (in writing and in person), public meetings, planning that involves the public, etc.</li> <li>○ Understand the process of how, when and in what forum the public can influence decision-making.</li> <li>○ What are the principals that staff uses to guide public engagement?</li> <li>○ What does the City’s ideal process look like? What is the City’s perception of the gaps in public process?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Determine who else we need to hear from to ensure a diverse set of perspectives, not just the City’s perspective.</li> </ul>
December 12, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine PPWG public outreach plan – is it working? Make changes as necessary and continue public outreach</li> <li>• Agree on the focus for recommendations, e.g. programmatic level, not project specific</li> <li>• Identify issues/problem statements</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do we prioritize public outreach with limited resources?</li> <li>○ What are the gaps between the current efforts and PPWG vision?</li> <li>● Identify sub-committee topics and form subcommittees</li> </ul>
January 9, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide examples of best practices for public participation</li> <li>● Sub-committee reports</li> <li>● Begin Draft Recommendations</li> </ul>
February 13, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Subcommittee reports</li> <li>● Draft Recommendations</li> </ul>
March/April	Draft, Narrow, Prioritize and Refine Recommendations
May 8, 2017	Refine and Finalize Recommendations
June 12, 2017	Finalize and Prepare to Present Recommendations

### Discussion on how to conduct Public Comment at PPWG Meetings

**Big questions: What is the purpose for the public comment? What do we want from the public and what does the public want from us?**

- Hearing from voices that are not represented
- There is no “us” and “them”
- Thinking outside the box – bring people into the conversation, don’t just copy City Council’s methodology

**PPWG meetings – experiment with different public engagement/comment opportunities at meetings and see what works/what doesn’t work**

#### Brainstorm:

1. Continue to leave comment cards in the room for the duration of the meeting
2. Public comment at the beginning of meetings
3. Public comment at the end of meetings
4. In meeting notice and agenda – make sure to let public know that they don’t need to be at the whole meeting to comment
5. Rather than ½ hour at PPWG meetings, consider doing it before official meeting starts and after the meeting ends (as a subcommittee – 3-4 people who will stay and listen).
6. Put an empty chair in the room for people that want to participate in the conversation – what are the ground rules here? The public would follow ground rules

7. If people submit their comments, PPWG could have a subcommittee that meets between meetings and public who comments could meet with subcommittee where comments are read and addressed (comment cards, online, handwritten) and response to those comments.
8. BREAK – use meeting break to talk to people in the public (5 minutes for bio break and then people engage with someone here) need a longer break?
9. Meeting introductions - get intros from everyone in the room – all public get a minute at the beginning to say why they showed up
  - a. Ask people who shows up – ask people who are here, what their experiences are and why they are here – what are their concerns. This is a venue where the public can show up and give us ideas on what are the gaps
  - b. **For November meeting: Ask the public: What are the principals of good public engagement that we could use going forward.**

**Moving forward:** PPWG meeting will experiment with some of these ideas and solicit feedback.

**November Plan for public engagement:**

10 minutes for public comment at the beginning of meeting

During the break, PPWG members engage with public

10 minutes of public comment at the end of the meeting

Topically oriented questions will be in the meeting agenda prior to meeting so that the public knows what PPWG is hoping to learn for that meeting.

**Responding to Public Comment**

**When PPWG responds to the public it needs to be consistent; acknowledge receipt and let the writer know that it is the PPWG’s intention and part of the work to find the best way to respond and incorporate comments into decision-making process.**

In the meantime, we will improve auto-response to include meeting info; status. We will include information about intention. Opportunity to communicate honestly about the intention of the group. "trying to do our best and want to hear from people". Hoping for a dialogue and suggest other ways to engage. Transparency about the group's intent.

Ideas on how to properly respond to written comments:

- Create an FAQ
- Start a dialogue, suggest other ways for people to engage.
- Respond in a substantive fashion; guidance on types of comments that are helpful.

- Manage expectations – scan input we are getting and find a way to redirect those comments
- Communicate clear parameters about the PPWG group
- Do not assume what is/isn't important to people who contact PPWG; maybe we aren't the right forum but it is incredibly valuable
- Give it space to be messy

Moving forward: PPWG agrees that group will experiment with some of these ideas and solicit feedback.

### Meeting #2 Action Items:

- CDR – make changes to Operating Protocols based on PPWG feedback – send out to PPWG
- CDR – outline Meeting Framework – send out to PPWG for feedback
- CDR and City – determine best way for the group to work together in between meetings under Open Meeting Law statute
- CDR – send out draft November meeting agenda to PPWG for feedback
- CDR/City/PPWG – send resources and a brief description to [publicparticipationworkinggroup@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:publicparticipationworkinggroup@bouldercolorado.gov) . Review resources prior to next meeting for resource review discussion.
- City – begin identifying a range of public participation processes and staff perspectives to present to PPWG group in November

### PPWG Suggestions for Meeting Agenda #3 in November:

- Internal communication, how we have a better opportunity to have dialogue in between meetings
- Responding to Public Comment
- Send any late October emails in November meeting summary
- Check in to see how well are we doing as a group

### Public Comment Period

**Susan Balint** – This is an issue that is deep and dear to my heart. This Council is the first council that has acknowledged and addressed that there is a disparity between what Council hears and that people are disenfranchised. Worried that PPWG group has NOT attended City Council.

I likes the idea of an open seat in the group.

Concerned about this arrangement – people in the public are in front of group. Not behind group. Public should not be seeing people's backs.

Notice: I would not have known about this meeting without Lisa Morzel's notice. Outreach is NOT STRONG and in people's face. This is a real problem

Ask the people: what is the problem? What would make you feel heard? How can PPWG make tools to solve the problems without knowing the problem?

PPWG solutions need to address all the problems that the public have. Shouldn't be limited to 3-5 recommendations.

Meetings with 15 minutes at the end to talk is not enough.

**Mike Marsh:** I am concerned when I hear about asking City/Staff and boards what is wrong? This is the problem. What the City is using right now isn't working. What you should do is research things that HAVE NOT worked – what broke down and why?

I challenge some of the assumptions

1. Young people that aren't engaged in the city
  - a. I think everyone is not engaged in the City – we should target all groups, plenty of people don't know what is going on
2. Measurement – phone call surveys. Call regular people and ask them what their level of awareness is of the 5 biggest things that Council is working on.
3. Use direct mail – don't just rely on twitter or nextdoor.com. People receive direct mail (IRS, JURY SUMMONS)?
4. Need a one page insert to send to citizens that includes up-to-date things going on in the City re: planning projects, development)

David Ward: I want to support you learning the process. I am a business owner, nonprofit founder and work with businesses around boulder – massage therapist.

Creating a process that you can receive what people have to give. Stay focused on the process. Encourages three empty seats in PPWG circle. One minute three times during the meeting. Give three people choices every time.

WAGON – pull the rest of Boulder with you. Welcome as guest our neighbors. If you leave people behind, you are going to get complaints every time.

“Engage me, I barely know you?” 10 minutes at the end, 10 minutes at the end is not enough. You need more time.