GRANICUS

Transforming Digital Engagement:

Insights from Aurora and Fort Collins

August 20, 2024

Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. EngagementHQ – Expanding our reach (Aurora)
3. Community Engagement and Digital Platforms (Fort Collins)
4. Q &A

Connecting & Interacting Today

Questions

Submit your questions via the Zoom Q&A console.

Chat

Your peers are in the chat. We encourage you to connect there!

Today's Line Up

Julie Patterson

Senior Communications Strategist
City of Aurora

Sara Van Holbeck

Marketing & Communications Senior Supervisor – Parks, Recreation and Open Space
City of Aurora

William Bevil

Communications and Public Engagement Manager
City of Fort Collins

EngagementHQ: Expanding Our Reach

Engage Aurora:
Expanding Our Reach

Julie Patterson
Senior Communications Strategist
Communications and Marketing Department
jpatters@auroragov.org

Sara Van Holbeck
Marketing and Communications Senior Supervisor
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department
svanholb@auroragov.org

Engage Aurora launched in 2021

Why Engage Aurora?

- To unify our public engagement efforts citywide
- To make our public engagement more accessible and robust
- To expand our toolkit for input and analysis

Preparing for launch

- Identified system of management
- Created request system for new project pages
- Developed a planning guide for contributors
- Created a Teams site, which evolved into regular monthly meetings as a group
- Added Google Translate to site

Engage Aurora:
Signs of Success

Ways we promote Engage Aurora:

- Prominent placement on city website
- Project promotional materials
- Newsletters (printed and electronic)
- Social media platforms
- AuroraTV

Our numbers tell the story

Visits since February 2021: 146,699
Contributions: 13,223
Registrations: 1,438

Activity fluctuates depending on the project and how we promote

March 2023: Most activity in one day

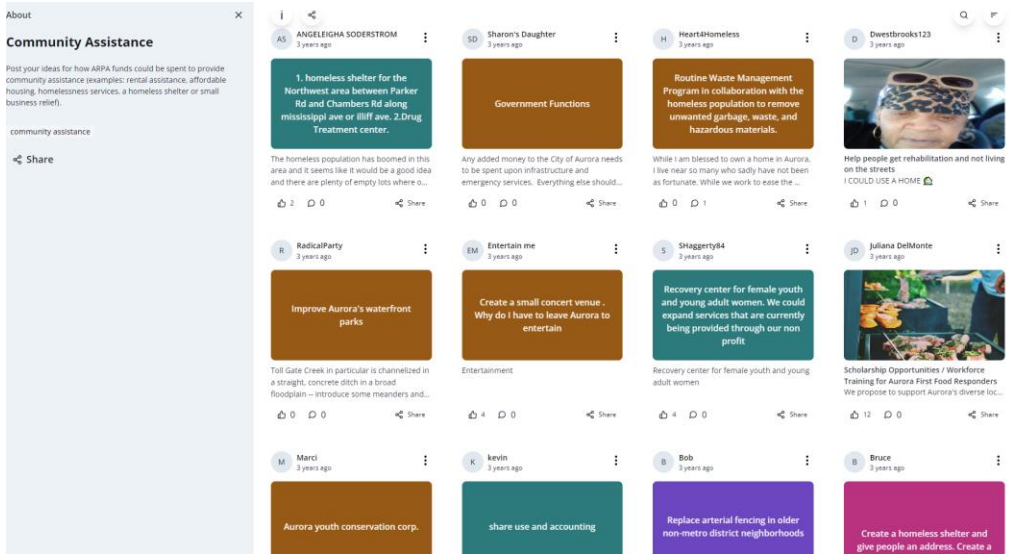
- 6,850 visits
- 2,697 contributions

May 2024: Second most activity in one day

- 5,854 visits
- 1,189 contributions

Projects that worked

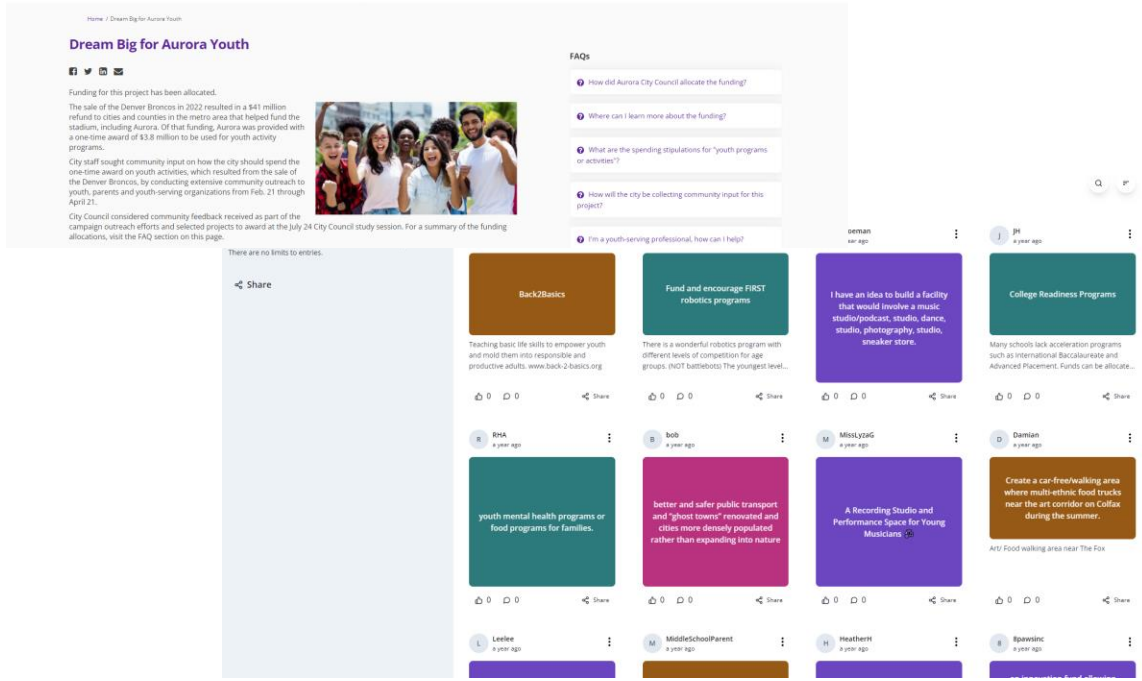
American Rescue Plan Act



- Reached out to community to get ideas on how to spend $65.4 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding provided to us
- Focused ideas on three funding categories (Community Assistance, Infrastructure and Service Preservation)
- Engage Aurora site featured survey tool and the ideas board, which was very successful
- By the numbers: 4,000 aware, 2,100 informed, 911 engaged
- Results helped guide City Council's decisions on spending

Projects that worked

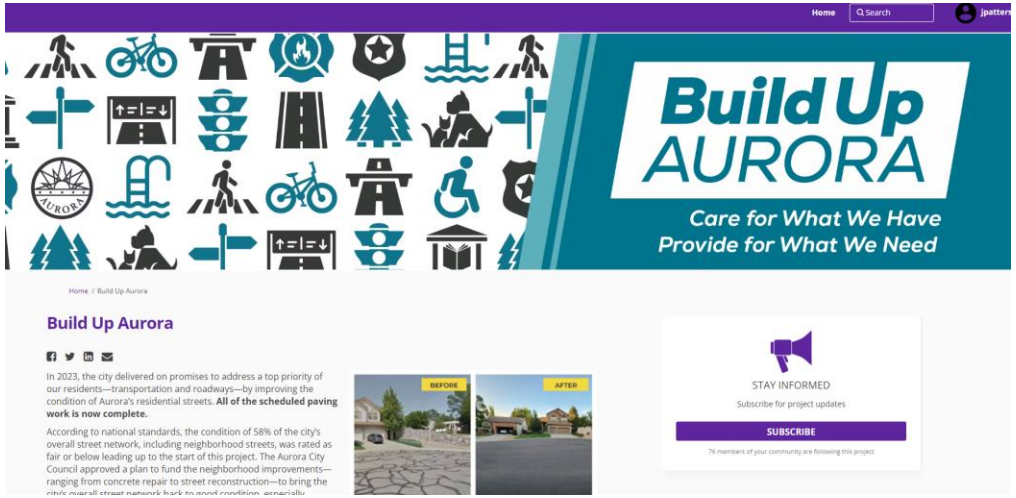
Dream Big for Aurora Youth



- Reached out to youth, parents and youth-serving organizations for ideas on how to spend $3.8 million in Denver Broncos sale funds for youth activity programs
- Engage Aurora site featured survey tool and the ideas board, which was also a very successful approach
- By the numbers: 3,700 aware, 2,200 informed, 1,600 engaged
- Results helped guide City Council's decisions on spending

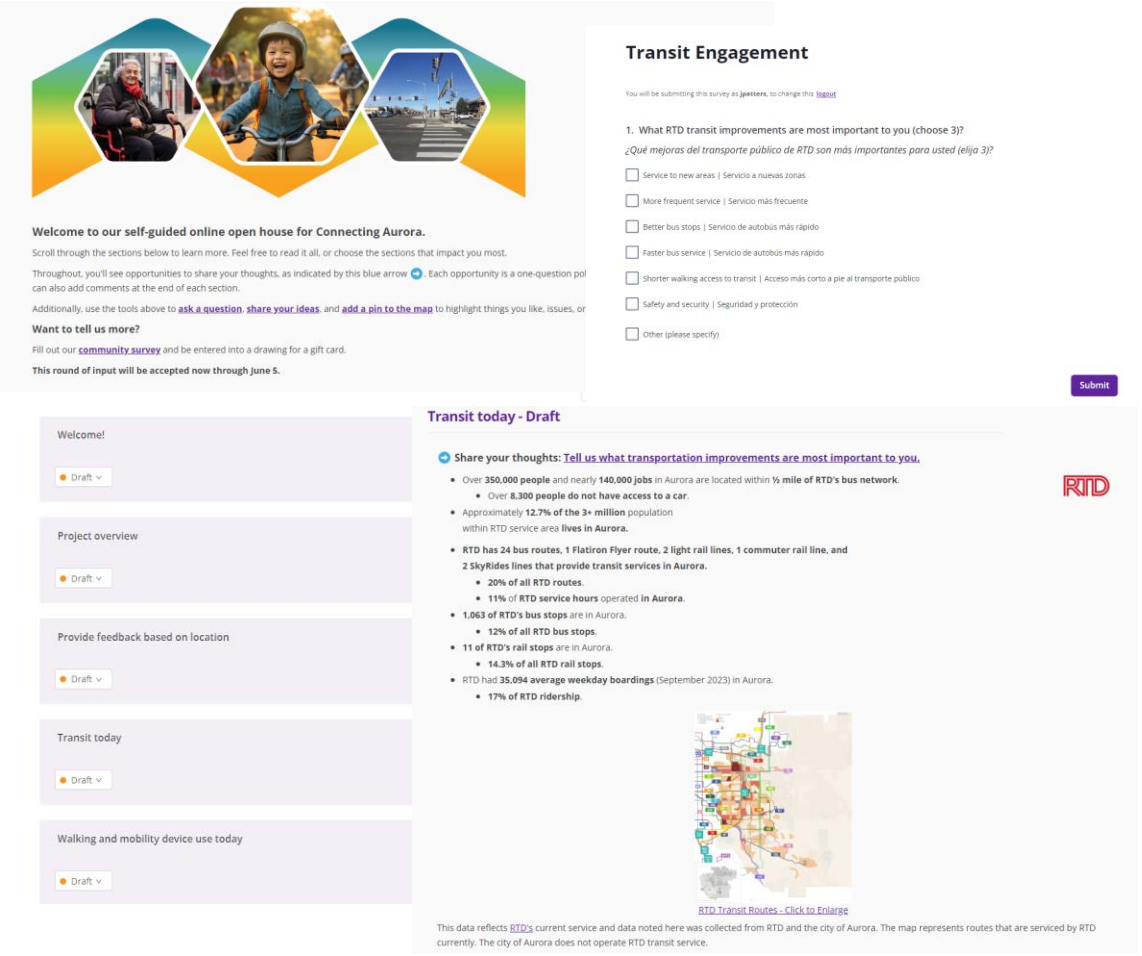
Projects that worked

Build Up Aurora



- Raised awareness regarding city's effort to improve the condition of our residential streets after several years of deferred maintenance
- Goal was to inform and educate
- Engage Aurora site featured the questions tool and an embedded interactive map (external platform)
- By the numbers: 6,100 aware, 3,000 informed, 69 engaged
- We responded to more than 75 questions and residents were able to track progress on work to completion

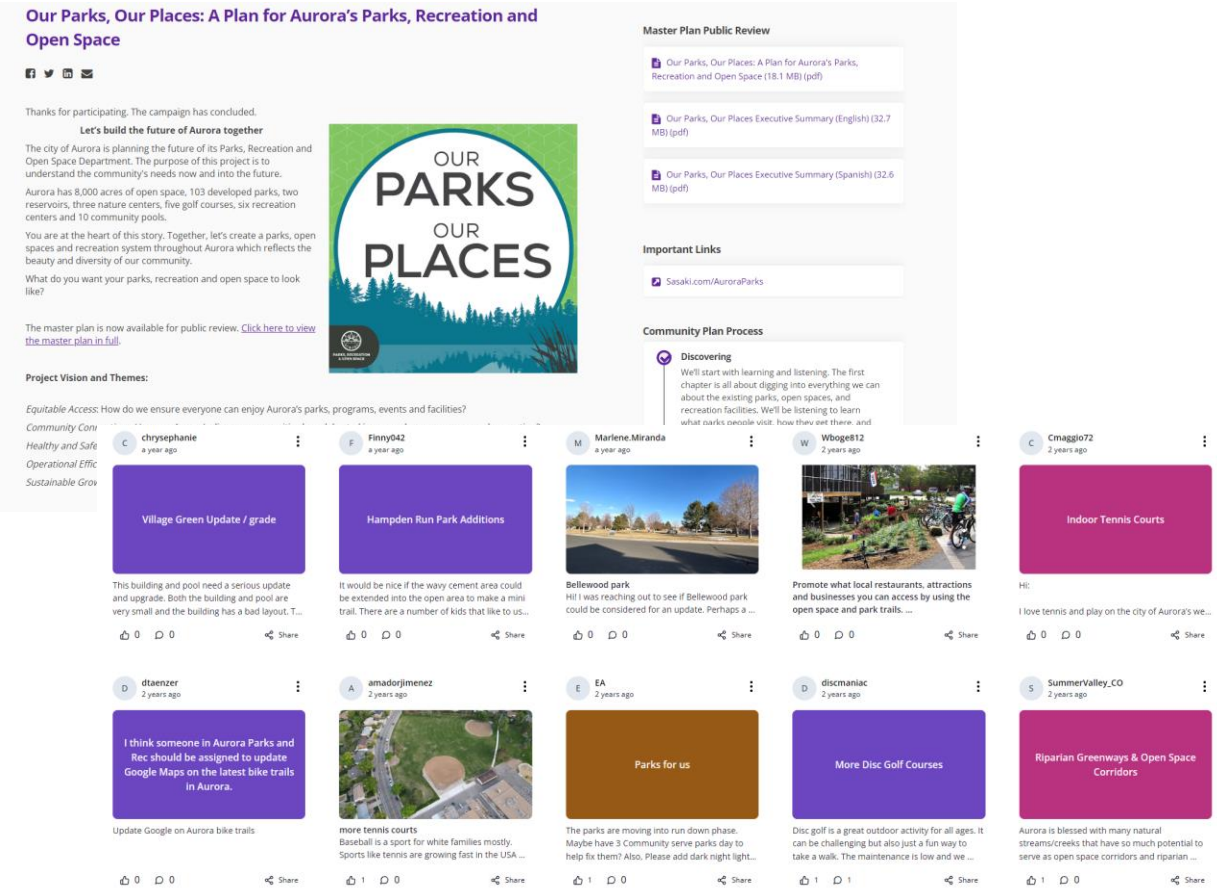
Projects that worked
Connecting Aurora: Our Multimodal Transportation Master Plan



- Goal is to receive significant community feedback as the plan develops to ensure community needs are fulfilled
- Engage Aurora site used the newsfeed tool to create a virtual open house setting; two surveys; places map; one-word response; questions
- By the numbers: 4,800 aware, 2,100 informed, 1,500 engaged
- Evolving page as the project progresses; now features a one-question summer survey

Projects that worked

Our Parks, Our Places



- First ever master plan for Parks, Recreation & Open Space
- Community feedback cornerstone of project
- Project focused on equitable access to PROS amenities, community connections, health and safety, operational efficiencies and sustainable growth
- Combination of in-person engagement and online through surveys, Ideas, Questions, and Forum; the Ideas tool was very popular
- More than 17,000 community touchpoints over a year; 5,300+ aware and 1,200+ informed

Projects that worked

Central Recreation Center Park Site

Central Recreation Center Park Site

The city of Aurora is making plans to design and construct a new park near the Central Recreation Center, located at 18150 E. Vassar Place. This 12-acre park will add to the recreation center project by providing outdoor recreation activities and spaces for citizens. The park design will complement and enhance the existing recreation center. The project is currently in the master planning phase.

Project highlights may include:

- Playgrounds for all ages and abilities
- Open play areas
- Concrete trails with connections to the park, the recreation center and regional trail system
- Picnic areas with shade structures, tables and grills
- Improvements to the nearby irrigation pond and the adjacent Hutchinson Channel greenbelts, up to and possibly including the removal of the pond and converting bluegrass to native grasses along the channel

Aurora Water will partner with PROS at the public mee

The input of the nearby neighbors and residents is des
or materials can be viewed here on Engage Aurora the

Please monitor this page for future events and update

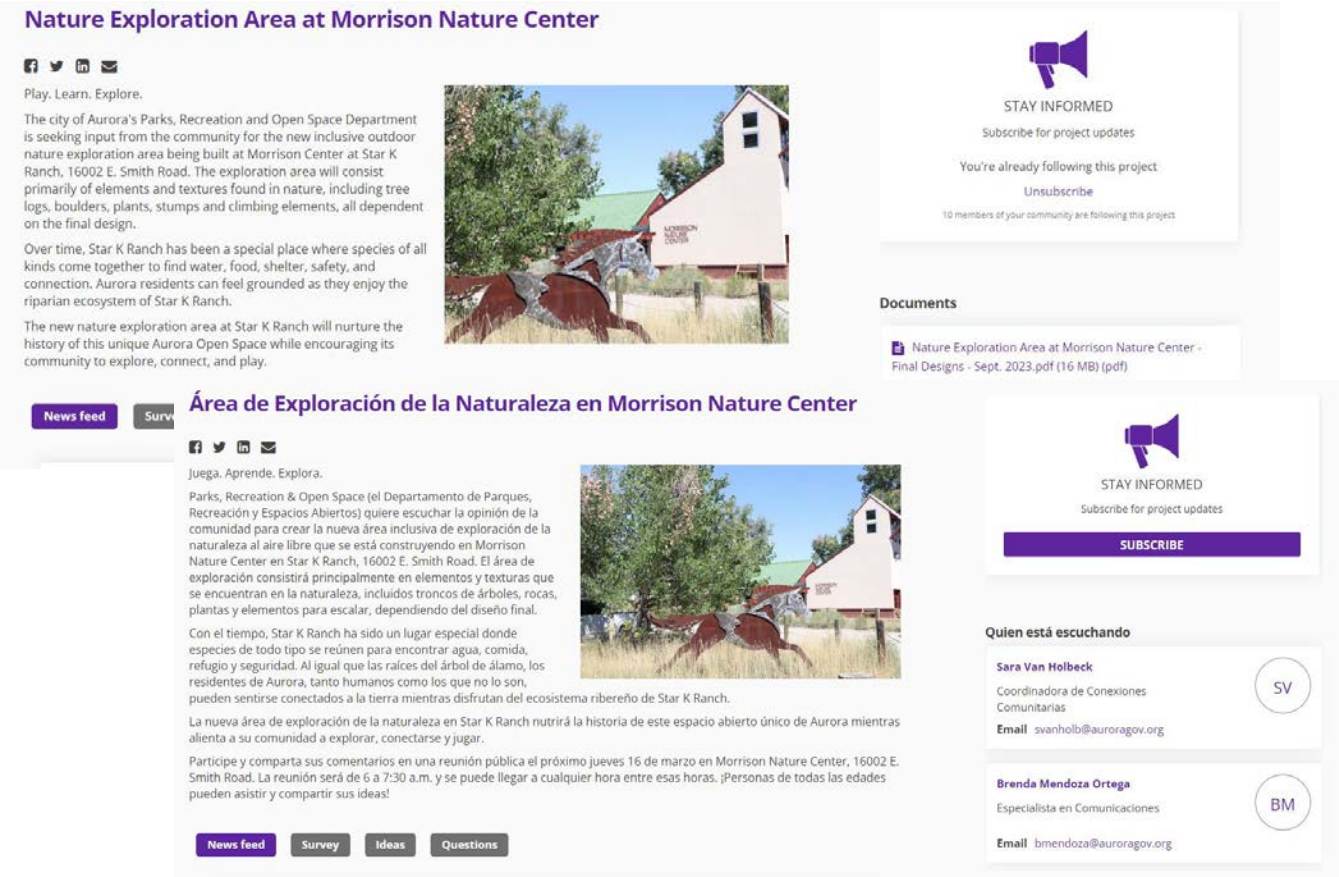
Feel free to contact us directly at mwoolley@auroragov

Thank You!

- Engaging with residents in a two-mile radius of Central Recreation Center for input on development of new park
- Challenge: Project launched in spring 2022 and was on hold publicly until spring 2024; had to get residents re-engaged
  - Mailer sent to 7,100+ residents
  - Emails to HOAs/neighborhood groups
- Page focuses on information, including project concepts, and surveys in English and Spanish
- By the numbers: 2,400+ aware, 661 informed, 151 engaged; 150 survey responses

Projects that didn't work

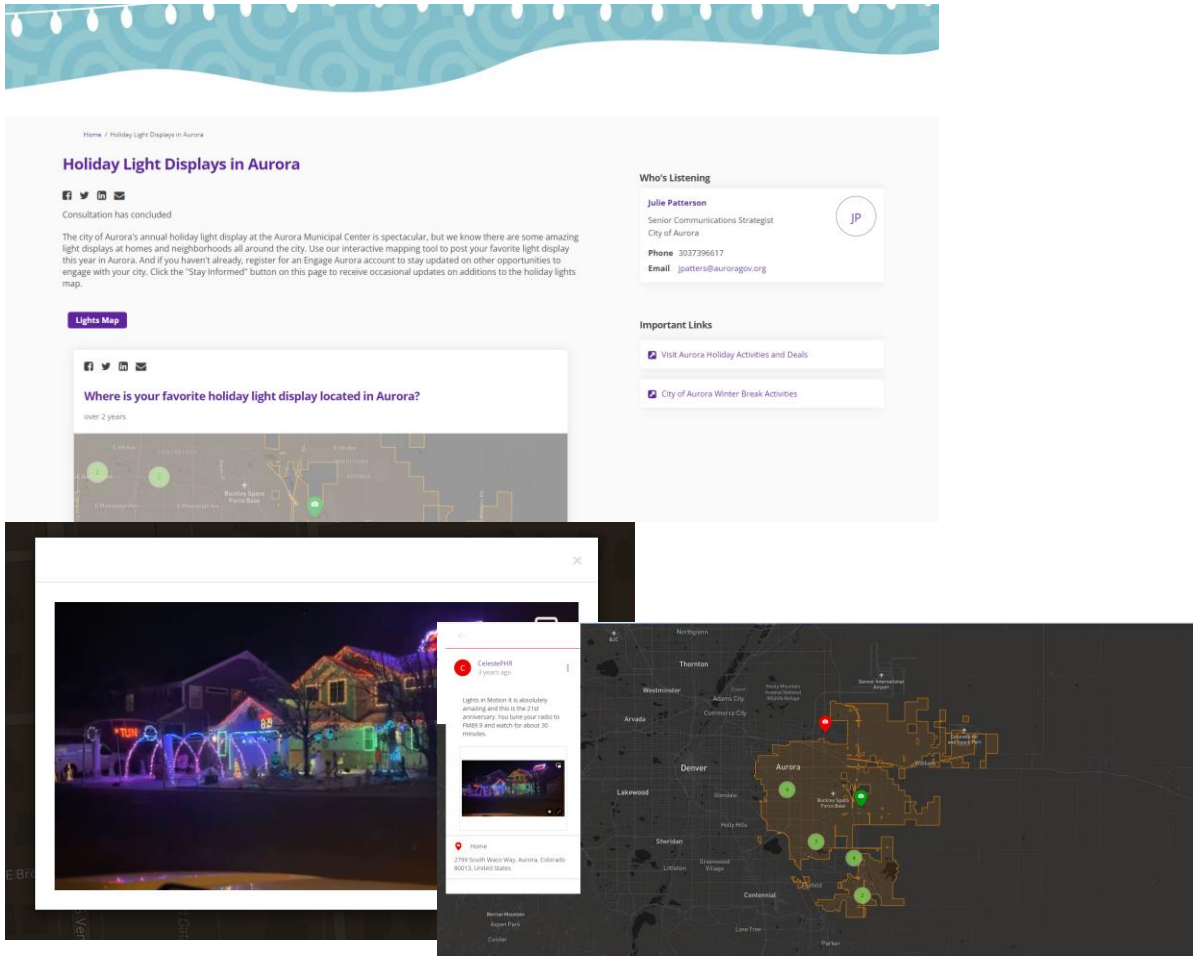
Nature Exploration Area



- Goal to collect feedback for a nature play area being built at the existing Morrison Nature Center
- Created two separate Engage pages, one in English and one in Spanish
- By the numbers:
  - English page: 936 aware, 347 informed and 141 engaged
  - Spanish: 137 aware, 32 informed and 0 engaged
- Unique project compared to many PROS projects; nature center is a destination vs. neighborhood park
  - Feedback gathered successfully in person by users

Projects that didn't work

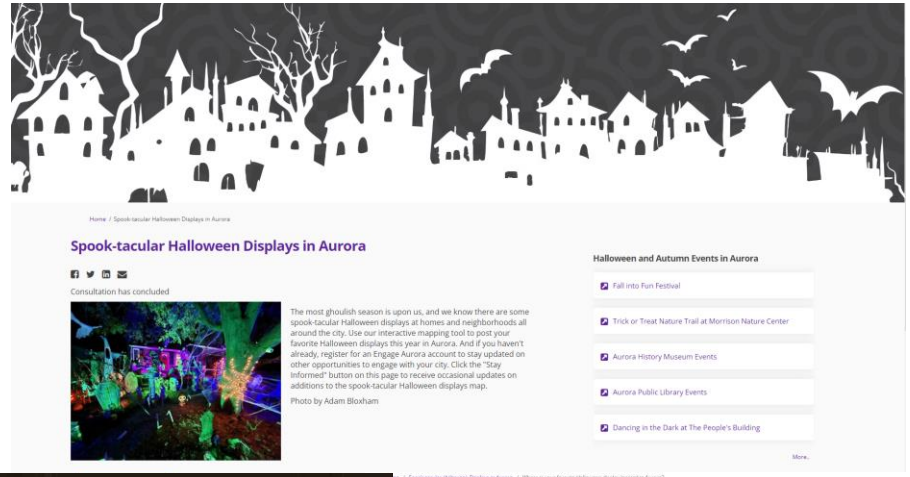
Holiday Lights

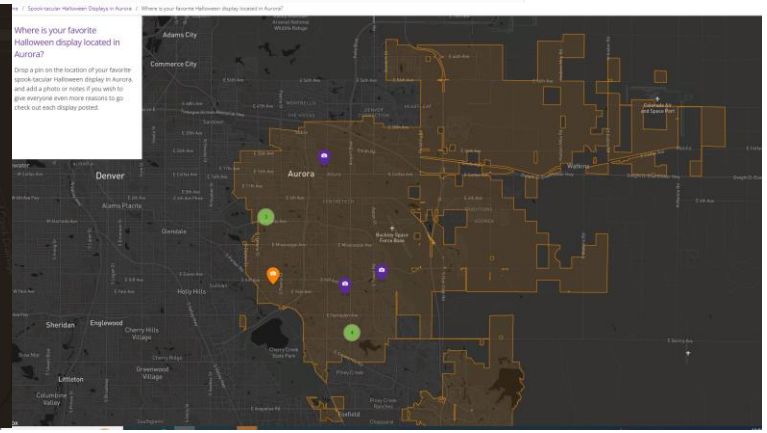


- Goal was to attract new visitors to Engage Aurora, raise awareness about the platform and provide a fun way to interact with the site
- Engage Aurora site featured the places map
- By the numbers: 1,100 aware, 595 informed, 12 engaged
- May attempt again this year with the hope of building interest with consistency

Projects that didn't work

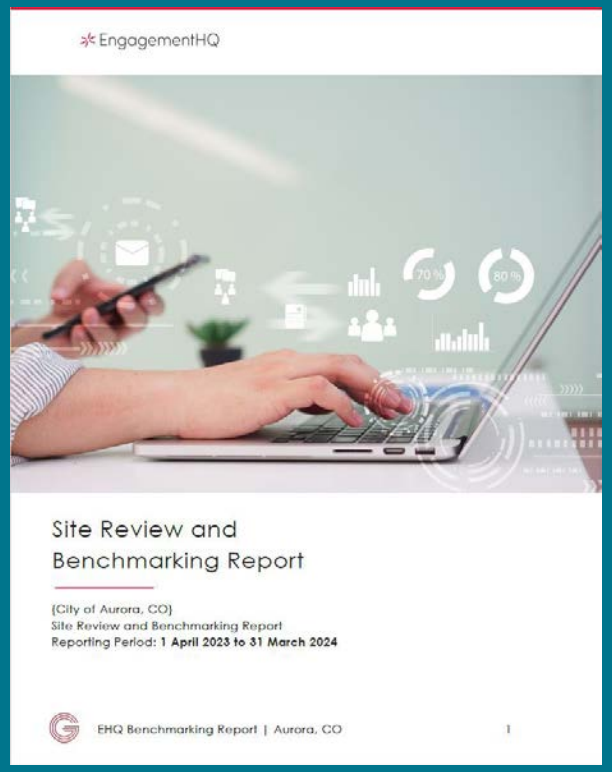
Halloween Displays





- Goal was to attract new visitors to Engage Aurora, raise awareness about the platform and provide a fun way to interact with the site
- Engage Aurora site featured the places map
- By the numbers: 610 aware, 369 informed, 10 engaged
- May attempt again this year with the hope of building interest with consistency

Engage Aurora:
What's Next?



Integrating Recommendations from Benchmarking Report, like:

- Evidence of strong governance and oversight was observed and commended
- Implementing Project Showcase to reduce amount of content on home page
- Add header above project intros
- Establish consistency in how materials in other languages are integrated within project pages
- Adding messages consistently to point users to Google Translate for translation needs
- Use demographic report data to identify areas of the city to target for greater participation

Questions?

Community Engagement and Digital Platforms

William Bevil

Communications and Engagement Manager

wbevil@fcgov.com

Community Engagement @ CoFC

- Hybrid model for engagement staffing and delivery

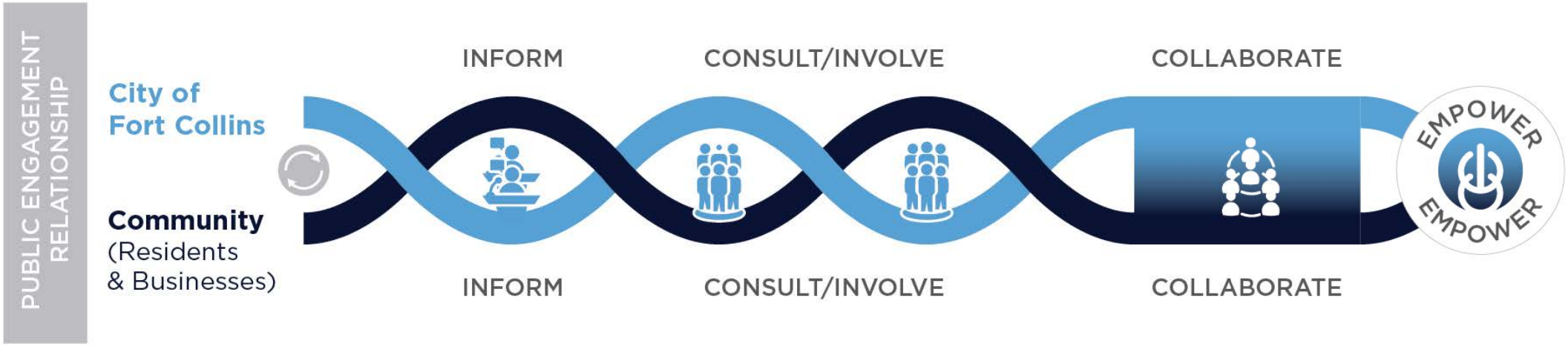
Community Engagement @ CoFC

- Hybrid model for engagement staffing and delivery
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

iap2 international association for public participation

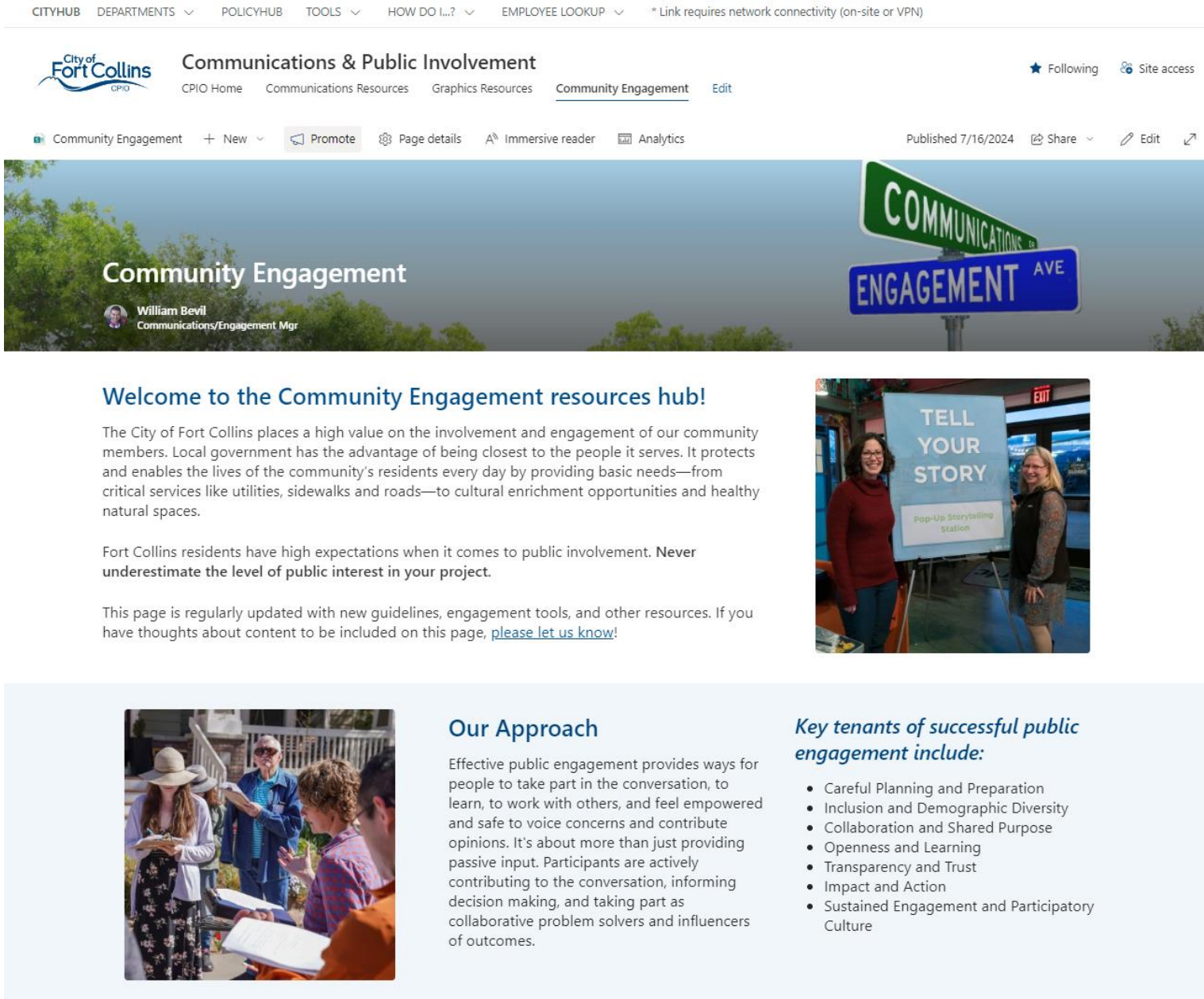
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

INCREASING IMPACT OR PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON PUBLIC



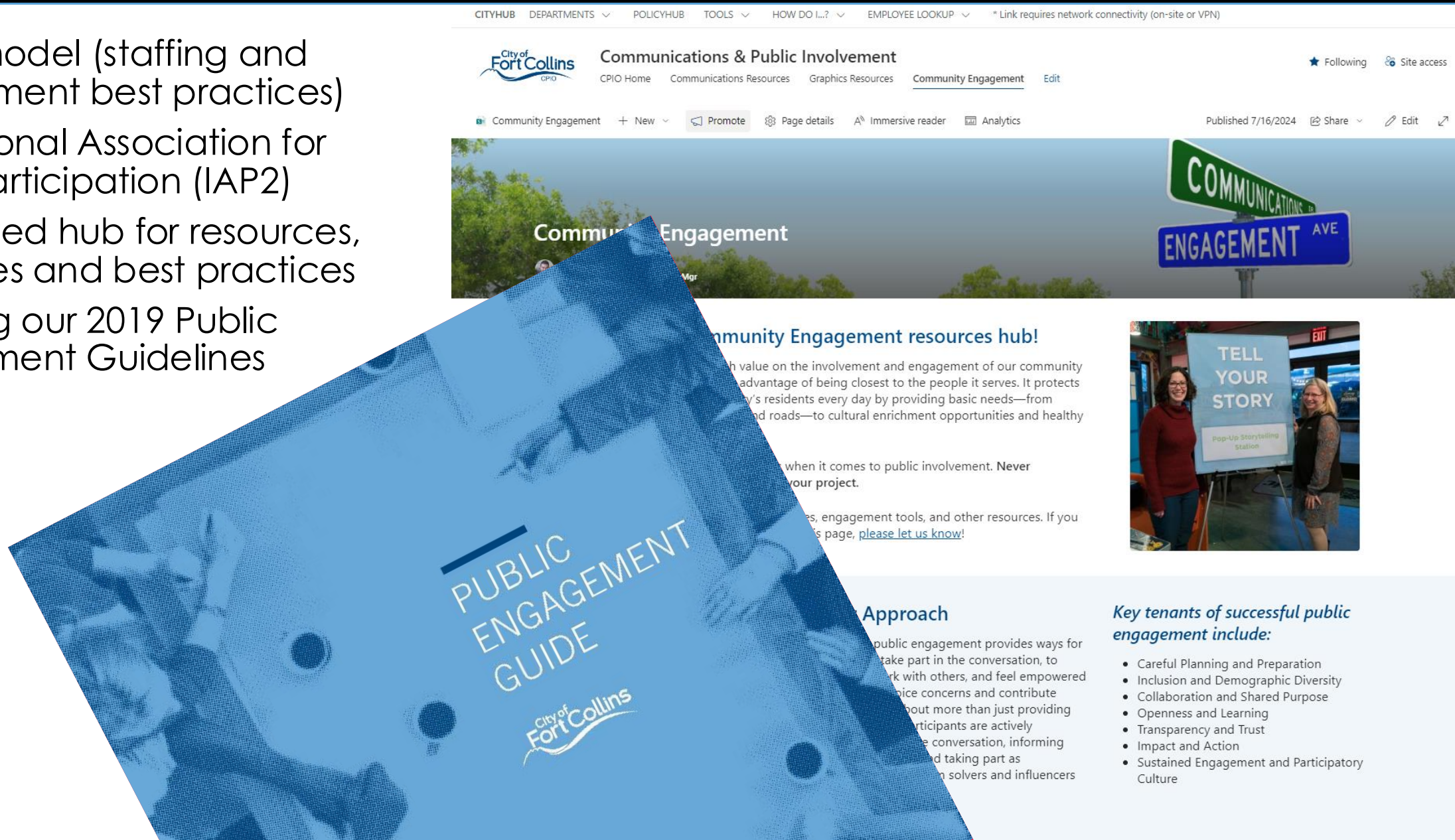
Community Engagement @ CoFC

- Hybrid model for engagement staffing and delivery
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)
- Centralized hub for resources, guidelines and best practices



Community Engagement @ CoFC

- Hybrid model (staffing and engagement best practices)
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)
- Centralized hub for resources, guidelines and best practices
- Updating our 2019 Public Engagement Guidelines

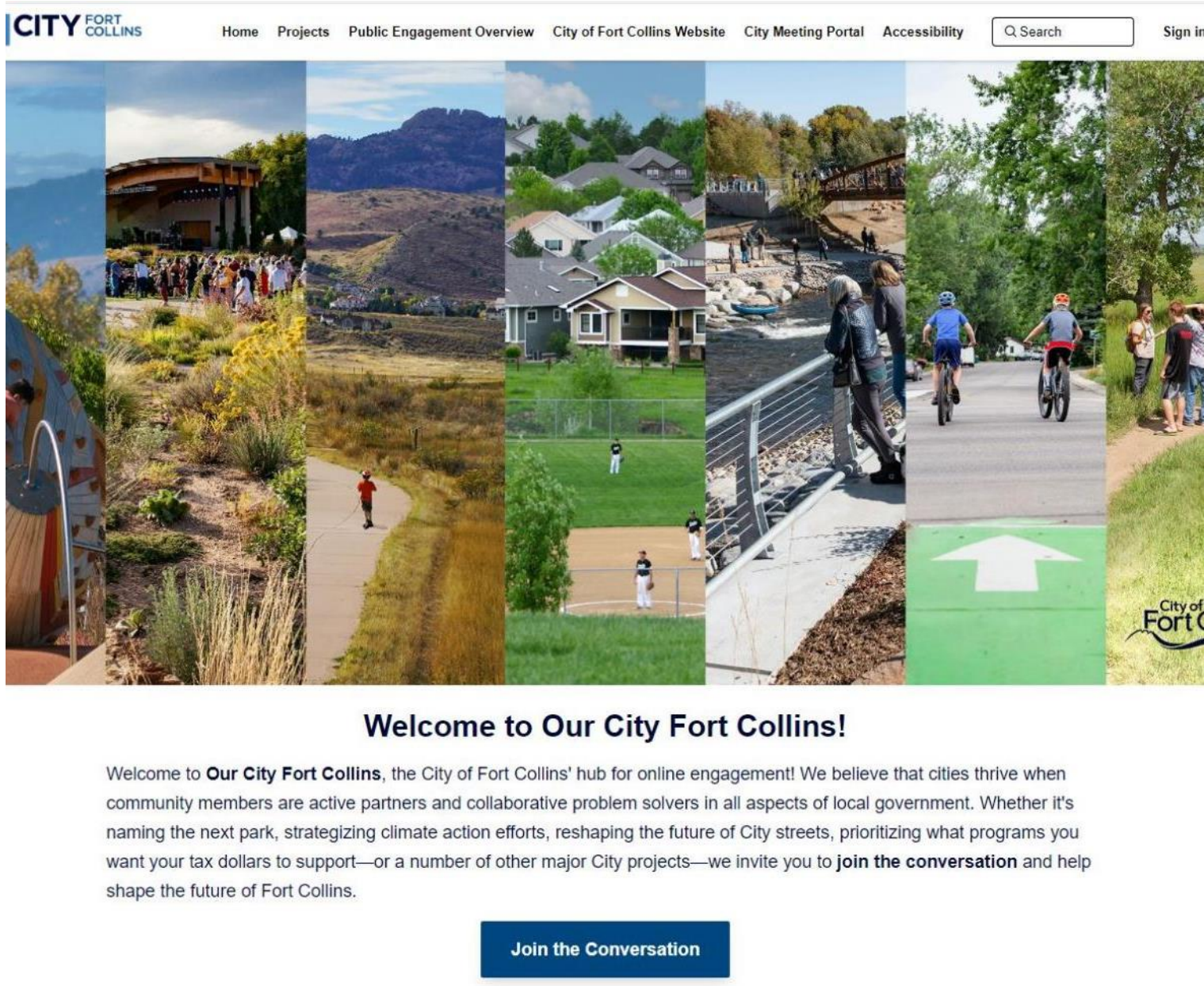


Community Engagement @ CoFC

Engagement HQ ("Our City")

OUR FORT COLLINS CITY

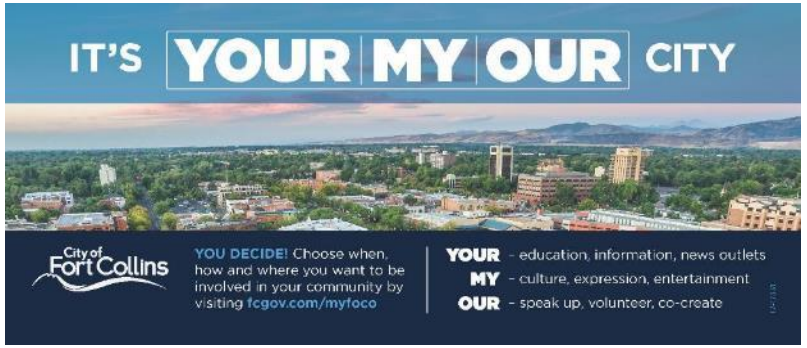
- Launched in 2017



Engagement HQ ("Our City")

Portable photo-op display

Promoting Our City



Promoting Our City

Our City Projects

Fast facts:

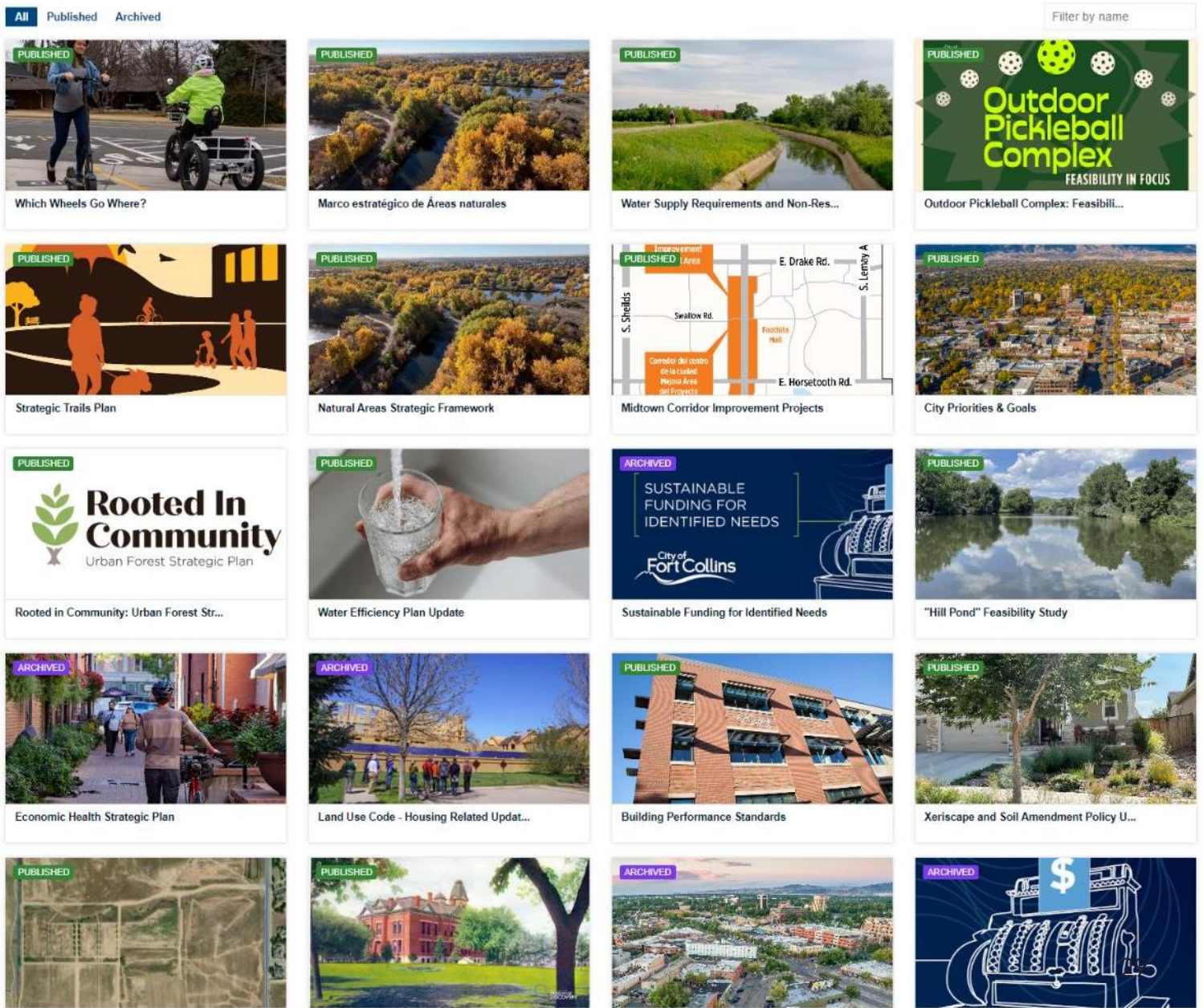
- 102 projects representing almost every City Service Area.
- 337,590 total visitors since launch
- 8,965 registered
- 30,671 contributions

Projects with highest engagement:

- Connexion (HSBB Utility)
- Future of Hughes Stadium
- City Plan

Most commonly used platform engagement tools:

- News Feeds
- Surveys
- Forums / Ideas
- Places



Our City & COVID

Our City – Staff Resources

- Refresh and re-introduction with public engagement staff
- Encouraging use of the platform and assisting with evaluating use of Our City against projects
- Increased training and resources

What is Our City?

Our City is an online interactive public engagement tool using the EngagementHQ platform. It has many tools to gather community feedback and help people engage with and shape City initiatives. Our City can host individual pages for large and small projects. A customizable suite of tools facilitates listening, gathering feedback, as well as analysis and reporting associated with interpreting community feedback.

OUR FORT COLLINS CITY

Watch a 4-minute overview video

What makes a good Our City project?

Use the criteria below to determine which projects are a good fit and to set a consistent expectation of engagement on the platform.

- Project will go before Council and/or is likely to have significant public interest
- Long-term project (at least over three months)
- Public engagement period will be open for three weeks or more
- Project is at the Collaborate level (or higher) on the IAP2 Engagement Spectrum
- Project is multi-faceted and would benefit from mapping, polling, dialogue, etc.
- Public feedback will be used and incorporated in the outcome
- There is capacity for analysis and a report back/conclusion phase of the project
- There is at least one project manager or program lead that can help manage the project on Our City (respond to questions within 48 hours, update information and tools as needed, report back to the community, etc.)

Does your project meet most of these conditions? If so, continue to the next step below. If not, there are other engagement methods. Complete a Communication Request Form and CPIO can work with you to identify other options.

Our City – Staff Resources

- "Project building 101"
- Greater awareness and use of Granicus' University library.
- Linking with and feeding into end products (e.g., engagement reports)
- Developing design and style guidelines specific to Our City.
- Policy guidance around Digital Accessibility and Content Moderation

Self-service Resources and Training

Granicus offers many free resources including webinars, help forums, and online articles. Check out the links before for more information. Generally speaking, the City's user license includes the full array of options that EHQ is capable of. Integrating with other systems and custom code requests involve additional costs. Consult with CPIO if you are in need of additional functionality on an Our City project page.

Granicus University Library

Reporting on your Engagement

Project Building 101

EngagementHQ Help Desk

Our City Resources

The resources below have been curated for those involved with or leading the administration of Our City project pages. Additional training and resources are regularly added to Granicus' website (our vendor/provider for the EngagementHQ platform).

Our City Image Guidelines

PROJECT PAGE BANNERS

- Size: 2560px x 600px
- Banners should not include text. This is for accessibility reasons and because text often gets cut off due to scaling.
- The City brand guide recommends light, bright, and colorful imagery.
- Image should be evocative of your project and help tell its story.

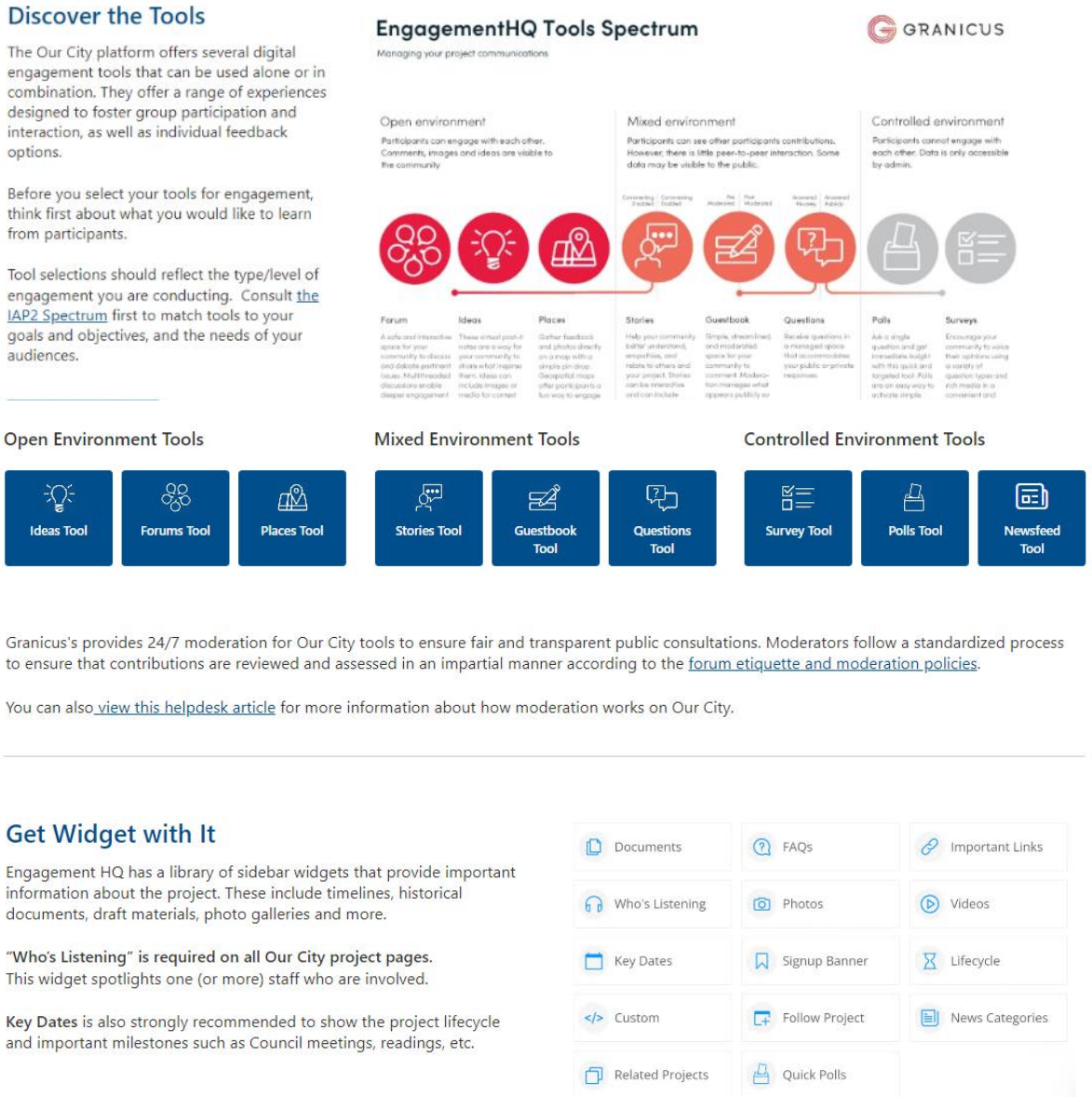
PROJECT TILES

- Size: 2560px x 600px
- Again, do not include text.

Download the full guidelines here.

Our City – Staff Resources

- Increased awareness and understanding the EngagementHQ/Granicus tool kit:
  - Connectivity with IAP2 principles
  - Unique capabilities not available on our existing website CMS
  - Creative applications of the tools
  - Encourage experimentation



Discover the Tools

The Our City platform offers several digital engagement tools that can be used alone or in combination. They offer a range of experiences designed to foster group participation and interaction, as well as individual feedback options.

Before you select your tools for engagement, think first about what you would like to learn from participants.

Tool selections should reflect the type/level of engagement you are conducting. Consult the IAP2 Spectrum first to match tools to your goals and objectives, and the needs of your audiences.

EngagementHQ Tools Spectrum

Managing your project communications

GRANICUS

Open environment

Participants can engage with each other. Comments, images and ideas are visible to the community

Mixed environment

Participants can see other participants contributions. However, there is little peer-to-peer interaction. Some data may be visible to the public.

Controlled environment

Participants cannot engage with each other. Data is only accessible by admin.

Forum | Ideas | Places | Stories | Guestbook | Questions | Polls | Surveys

Open Environment Tools

Ideas Tool | Forums Tool | Places Tool

Mixed Environment Tools

Stories Tool | Guestbook Tool | Questions Tool

Controlled Environment Tools

Survey Tool | Polls Tool | Newsfeed Tool

Granicus's provides 24/7 moderation for Our City tools to ensure fair and transparent public consultations. Moderators follow a standardized process to ensure that contributions are reviewed and assessed in an impartial manner according to the forum etiquette and moderation policies.

You can also view this helpdesk article for more information about how moderation works on Our City.

Get Widget with It

Engagement HQ has a library of sidebar widgets that provide important information about the project. These include timelines, historical documents, draft materials, photo galleries and more.

"Who's Listening" is required on all Our City project pages. This widget spotlights one (or more) staff who are involved.

Key Dates is also strongly recommended to show the project lifecycle and important milestones such as Council meetings, readings, etc.

Documents | FAQs | Important Links

Who's Listening | Photos | Videos

Key Dates | Signup Banner | Lifecycle

Custom | Follow Project | News Categories

Related Projects | Quick Polls

Our City - Learnings

- Follow best practices - identify the level and type of public engagement desired. Match tools to needs/objectives.
- Make EHQ the "home base" for the projects, *including* activities that are not online.
- Drive traffic there to build critical participatory mass; underperforming EHQ projects do not give enough information to be useful.
- Be prepared to explain why registration is required
- Build capacity and governance/management structure for the site
- Leverage the analysis and reporting tools within the platform

Our City – Looking Ahead

Increased awareness and understanding the EngagementHQ/Granicus tool kit:

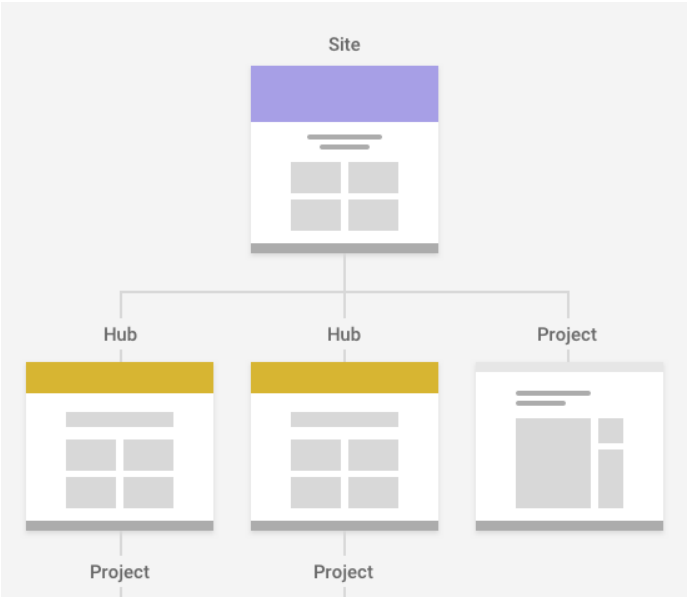
- Among Communications staff
- Connectivity with IAP2 principles
- Unique capabilities not available on our existing website CMS
- Creative applications of the tools

Launching Hubs

- Piloting with larger departments, including Planning & Zoning; ground testing viability to create ‘home bases’ for these content areas.

Language Access & Accessibility

New website w/Granicus affords lots of opportunities for seamless integration across platforms.



Questions?

ourcity.fcgov.com

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Questions?

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Thank you!!

Questions? Contact info@granicus.com