

CITY OF DUBUQUE

Budget Community Engagement

Staff report & recommendations

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This document highlights the process staff took to engage the public on this topic, the results of engagement and what recommendations/changes staff is making as a result of the engagement.

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Project purpose and background

Historically the numbers of community members who participate in the Goal Setting and Budget process have been highest during highly contentious topics like the red light cameras. When highly contentious topics are not present the number of residents who participate in different engagement points of the Goal Setting and Budget process is around ten to twenty.

Now that the city has increased its capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate community engagement the City Manager asked staff to assess the state of resident involvement in the budget process and knowledge of the current FY 2016 budget impact.

Prior to this Community Engagement Plan the following steps were taken by city staff to engage residents in the FY2016 budget:

- Parking Department sent letters to all users to inform of increases and to attend council meetings (individuals and businesses were targeted)
- Public Information Office marketed the engagement opportunities utilizing: city news, news release, website, social media, email to all departments, & TH ads.
- Once the budget was adopted, the following places received a presentation: Chamber, Main Street, Kiwanis, Greater Dubuque Development Corporation board, Washington Neighborhood Development Corporation, Optimist, Landlord Association, and letters were sent to social agencies that receive funding from the city.

Staff created a Community Engagement Plan with the following goals:

- During the gathering participants will
 - A. Provide a minimum of 2 enhancements for the budget input process
 - B. Become aware of the impact by the revenue and expense challenges faced by the city
 - C. Become aware of how laws, council and form of government set the perimeters for the city's budget process
- At the end of the gathering participants will:
 - A. Indicate a higher ability to provide input in the existing budget process
 - B. Be able to name 2 or more ways the city is addressing the impact of the revenue and expense challenges

Staff involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating this project's Community Engagement Plan:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Jacqueline Johnson, Water Plant Manager | • Jenny Larson, Budget Director |
| • Jean Nachtman, Assistant Finance Director | • Tim Horsfield, Parking Supervisor |
| | • Nikola Pavelić, Community Engagement Coordinator |

CE planning and implementation

To meet desired goals within the timeframe staff was provided and resources allocated the following community groups were identified to engage:

- City Life alumni
- Neighborhood Associations
- City of Dubuque Boards & Commissions

Note: Staff chose the above groups because they were part of a larger network of community members.

To engage the identified groups, staff developed the following:

- 5 public meetings at different days, times and locations (see Appendix A for detail)
- Each public meeting had handouts with simple charts and visuals
- The public meeting agenda was a mix of presentation and group work (see Appendix B for detail)
- At the end of each public meeting participants were welcomed to fill out an evaluation sheet for the meeting and provide their demographic information

To make the identified groups aware of these public meetings and invite them to participate staff created a flier. This flier was used to market the public meetings online through social media and email.

This is how staff spread the word using the flier:

- City Life alumni received the flier (84 alumni reached)
- City managers were asked to send the flier to their boards and commissions (100+ people reached)
- Neighborhood associations were asked to send the flier to their listserv and social media (100+ people reached)

After implementing the 5 public meetings staff noticed a low turnout rate. By the end of the 5th public meeting a total of 6 participants were counted. During the conversation with the participants a suggestion was made to go to existing meetings residents were already attending with the North End Association being given as a tangible example. Staff followed up with Jerelyn O’Conner and successfully secured and implemented that additional public meeting.

At the end of all public meetings staff was able to engage 24 community members.

For demographic information see Appendix C & for evaluation results see Appendix D

Themes & recommendations

After looking through the input from all 24 participants, staff noticed these three themes:

- Participants do not feel heard during the existing engagement processes
- Participants were not aware of the existing engagement processes
- Participants feel intimidated by the current engagement processes

After looking over all of the input, staff has come up with the following recommendations to the City Manager:

1. Request that a pilot of key departments fill out the external consultant's paperwork using community input. ***(Begin planning now and implement in FY 2018)***
2. Host the Public Input with City Manager session in different neighborhood locations and move it up to September or October. ***(Begin planning now to implement for the FY2017)***
3. Create a marketing &/or public relations plan for the budget process which explains to the public the process and makes the engagement highly visible to all residents in multiple ways. ***(Begin planning now to implement for the FY2017)***

Note: options for how to implement each approved recommendation needs to be developed once we know which, if any, recommendations are supported by the City Manager and/or Council.

To see how we came up with the above recommendations please review Appendix E

Limitations of the recommendations

The following limitations were identified by staff using the demographic sheet:

- Participants represented mostly downtown community members
- Most participants were above age 50 so little to no youth perspective
- This group represented a low to moderate income with small household sizes
- Majority of the participants were long term residents of 20+ years
- Great majority of participants were white

Even with the limitations above, staff would still make the three recommendations as early engagement in the process, making the input more accessible and increasing our marketing would most likely be a need by the demographic groups we missed or at least there would not be high level of opposition to doing those recommendations.

Cost of implementing the Community Engagement plan

Budget: \$0

Spent:

- \$50 food
- \$20 printing
- \$20 staff travel

The cost was kept low because the staff also filled following roles:

- Host & facilitator
- Scribe
- Marketing
- Analyze data

Appendix A (Meetings)

- 6/15 from 11-1p at Library
- 6/16 from 6-8p at Library
- 6/17 from 6-8p at Multicultural Family Center
- 6/18 from 6-8p at Multicultural Family Center
- 6/23 from 6-8p at Library
- 8/5 from 6:30-8p at North End Neighborhood

Appendix B (Meeting Agenda)

Budget Community Engagement Meeting Agenda - June 16, 2015

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

[5 Minutes]

- 1) City Manager

BACKGROUND, AGENDA & NEXT STEPS

[10 minutes]

- 1) Jean N.
 - a. One time engagement
 - b. City Manager, City Council and Department Managers will use the findings to enhance the budget process in order to get more residents involved in the budget process
 - c. Short and easy to understand report with next steps outlined

SET STAGE/PERIMETERS

[30 minutes]

- 1) Jenny L. – PowerPoint & Handouts
 - a. City Manager Form of Government
 - b. City Council Goal Setting Process – Basis of budget
 - c. State Law to Balance Budget by March 15th
 - d. Source of Income and Explanation
 - e. Explanation of Enterprise Funds
 - f. Explanation of Property Taxes

2016 BUDGET ISSUES

[20 minutes]

- 1) Jackie J. – PowerPoint & Handout
 - a. Go over handout

PARTICIPATION IN BUDGET PROCESS POLL

[15 minutes]

- 1) Tim H. – Directions & Jean N. Scribing
 - a. Work in groups at table
 - b. Have you participated in the City's budget process in the past 2 years?
 - i. If not, why? (5 minutes)
 - c. If yes – what did you like and what would you improve or change about your experience? (5 minutes)
- 2) Jean N. – 3 columns on poster: Not attended, what liked, improvements
- 3) Tim H. – ask each table to report discussions and Jean records it. Sharing 2-3 minutes per table.

TRANSITION TO NEXT SECTION OF MEETING

[3 minutes]

- 1) Jackie J.
 - a. In depth of areas of budget process where public is involved
 - b. Gather your ideas and input to be used to enhance the process going forward
 - c. Some enhancements will happen for upcoming budget year (FY 2017) and others in future budgets.
 - d. Reminder – receiving report showing input heard, which input will be acted upon, which in the future, and which may not be acted on and why.
 - e.

BUDGET PROCESS

[15 minutes]

- 1) Jenny L. - PowerPoint
 - a. Overview of Budget Process

BUDGET PROCESS IDEAS ACTIVITY

[30 minutes]

- 1) Jean N. – Hand-Outs & Flip Chart Paper
 - a. Refer to decision making process handout
 - b. Give each table 1 large sheet of paper
 - c. Handout copy of pillars handout – main milestones of budget
 - d. Walk them through each step on pillar handout
 - e. Work in groups on suggestions for budget process – groups write ideas on paper
 - f. If time – have each table read what they wrote – no need for them to explain

WRAP-UP

[10 minutes]

- 1) Jackie J. – Hand-out Demographic & Evaluation sheets
 - a. How did we do?
- 2) Jean N. – Explain next steps
 - b. If want to stay informed please sign-up.

Appendix C (Demographics)

Basic information on participants

attended sessions: 24

of surveys turned in: 15 out of 24 (62% response rate)

of demographic sheets turned in: 15 out of 24 (62% response rate)

	Responses
# Male	6
# Female	8
Did not complete High School	0
HS graduate	5
College graduate	6
MA degree or equivalent	2
MD, Ph.D. or equivalent	1
Other	1
18-21 years of age	
22-30 years of age	
31-40 years of age	1
41-50 years of age	1
51-60 years of age	2
61 & over years of age	6

Participant self-disclosed Household Income

Family size	Income	Responses
1	\$0-\$13,900	1
	\$13,901-\$23,150	
	\$23,151-\$37,050	1
	Above	1
2	\$0-\$15,900	
	\$15,901-\$26,450	
	\$26,451-\$42,350	3
	Above	4
3	\$0-\$17,900	
	\$17,901-\$29,750	1
	\$29,751-\$46,200	
	Above	1
4	\$0-\$19,850	2
	\$19,851-\$33,050	
	\$33,051-\$52,900	

	Above	
5	\$0-\$21,450	
	\$21,451-\$35,700	
	\$35,701-\$57,150	
	Above	
6	\$0-\$23,050	
	\$23,051-\$38,350	
	\$38,351-\$61,400	
	Above	
7	\$0-\$24,650	
	\$24,651-\$41,000	
	\$41,001-\$65,600	
	Above	
8+	\$0-\$26,250	
	\$26,251-\$43,650	
	\$43,651-\$69,850	
	Above	

Note: some participants chose not to share the above information

Participant self-disclosed ethnicity/race

	Responses
Black/AA	1
White	13
Asian	
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	
Asian & White	
Black/AA and White	
American Indian/Alaskan Native & Black/AA	
Other Multi-racial	
Asian/Pacific Islander	
Other	

Years lived in Dubuque

- 67 years
- 75 years
- 78 years
- 67 years
- 50 years
- 23 years
- 50+ years
- 48 years
- 20 years
- 11 years

Appendix D (Participant Evaluation of Meetings)

Findings

- The process section received the highest average score, followed by preparation, followed by participants, followed by results; all average scores ranged from somewhat agree to strongly agree
- There was no section that scored an average in the somewhat disagree or strongly disagree category.
- There was one written in comment complementing staff on their facilitation skills.

More detailed look

- Low somewhat agree (average score of: 2.1-2.4)
 - 24. I plan to share what I have learned with my friends and neighbors.
 - 23. I am more likely to now participate in the budget process.
 - 22. I now know more about how to participate in the budget process.
 - 20. I would participate in meetings like this again.
 - 19. It was clear to me how decision makers will use the results of this meeting.
 - 18. I believe that this meeting will result in better decisions on the topic discussed.
 - 17. I changed my thinking about the topic as a result of this public engagement process.
 - 16. I was able to understand the information presented.
- High somewhat agree (average score of: 2.5-3)
 - 4. Before the meeting, I believed that my views would be taken seriously by policymakers.
 - 5. Before the meeting, I believed that our collective views or recommendations would be seriously considered by policymakers.
 - 6. The participants in the meeting reflected the diversity of our people and views of the community.
 - 7. The mix of participants was appropriate for the subject matter of the meeting.
 - 21. I would encourage other residents to participate in similar public engagement processes on this or other appropriate topics.
- Low strongly agree (average score of: 3.1-3.4)
 - 11. The agenda and process for the meeting were appropriate for the topic and helped make the meeting productive.
 - 10. I believe that other participants were constructive in their comments.
 - 8. Participants felt comfortable with each other.

- 2. Information about the meeting topic, provided to me before or at the meeting, helped prepare me to participate more effectively.
- 3. The purpose of the meeting was clear to me.
- 1. The notice, advertisement and/or invitation to participate was clear and welcoming.
- High strongly agree (average score of: 3.5-4)
 - 12. There was sufficient opportunity for me to express my views about what I thought was important.
 - 13. There was sufficient opportunity for me to exchange views and learn from others.
 - 14. There was sufficient opportunity for me to develop joint views and/or recommendations with others.
 - 15. The facilitator(s) provided a safe and well-managed environment for participants

Appendix E (Actual Resident Input)

Resident input	Recommendations tied to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open ballot with ideas • Less formal setting • Partner with other city/civic organizations like schools • Citizen survey • Citizen survey should be done to see how people feel on an issue; allows them to send their comments in. Citizens don't want to give comments face to face. • Go to the people • Should have went to a regularly scheduled neighborhood meeting; go to neighborhoods to engage • Do neighborhood level meetings like these 	<p>1. Request that a pilot of key departments fill out the external consultant's paperwork using community input.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open ballot with ideas • Less formal setting • Branch out to meeting in other forums less formal • Hold at other locations in west end (training centers) • Prefer less formal setting (cracker barrel) • Partner with other city/civic organizations like schools • Been to the budget public input meeting- public input meeting needs to move to a different week than the week of Thanksgiving. • Go to the people • Should have went to a regularly scheduled neighborhood meeting; go to neighborhoods to engage • Do neighborhood level meetings like these 	<p>2. Host the Public Input with City Manager session in different neighborhood locations and move it up to September or October.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open ballot with ideas • Less formal setting • Partner with other city/civic organizations like schools • Post fliers at busses; increase the marketing of each engagement opportunity • Explain the difference between this process and council sessions (there is perception that can't talk during budget input sessions like at council meetings) • Advertise beyond the legal area in the TH • Online forum or blog to give input on own time 	<p>3. Create a marketing &/or public relations plan for the budget process which explains to the public the process and makes the engagement highly visible to all residents in multiple ways.</p>

Resident input	Further action/concern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The six public meetings with City Council should be more informal. It is too intimidating to give comments in the current setting. 	<p>Staff needs more clarification</p>

Resident input	Staff analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcast goal setting Non Mediacom options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The city does not have the necessary infrastructure to support broadcasting besides Mediacom. At this time Mediacom provides the infrastructure so the broadcasting is through them. If Mediacom is not an option for a community member they are able to use the internet to watch council work sessions. If internet is not an option for a community member they are able to use the internet for free at the public library.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spread goal setting dates across weeks so public has time to participate 	<p>During goal setting an outside professional consultant is used to organize and facilitate the goal setting process. The cost of spreading the days out would be high because of additional travel expenses.</p>