LOUDER NOW: ELEVATING MARGINALIZED VOICES IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Autumn Scott
Regional Planner

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Senior Communications & Outreach Planner
One of nine regional planning commissions in NH also designated as an MPO and EDD

Work with 18 communities

Regional population of 156,145

Outreach essential in all planning process

Guiding Documents:
EQUITY & OUTREACH THROUGH THE YEARS

- Outreach at Turkey Donation Day
- Booth at COAST Bus Terminal
- Planning for different audiences
DOVER EQUITY PROJECT

Partners:

This project was funded, in part, by NOAA’s Office for Coastal Zone Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program.
Communities who are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, more susceptible to climate risks due to social factors (such as age, socioeconomic status, race, health, language proficiency, and access to transportation), and historically underrepresented in political decision making and public investment.

- Engage residents & stakeholders in meaningful conversations around climate change impacts and adaptations.
- Develop participation opportunities and improve access among historically underserved communities in Dover.
- Promote strategies that consider historically underserved communities at the core of planning practices.
### Project Process

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tract Number</th>
<th>Minority Populations (&gt;15%)</th>
<th>Disabled Populations (&lt;15%)</th>
<th>Median Household Income (&lt;$60,000)</th>
<th>Low Income (&gt;25%)</th>
<th>Renters Occupied (&gt;50%)</th>
<th>Age Under 5 (&gt;6%)</th>
<th>Age Over 65 (&gt;20%)</th>
<th>No Vehicle Access (&gt;8%)</th>
<th>Linguistically Isolated Households (&gt;3%)</th>
<th>No High School Diploma (&gt;7%)</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
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**Data Development**

**Stakeholder Engagement**

**Recommendation**

**Evaluation**
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
Some populations may be more burdened by temporary changes to traffic flow, public transit, water/electric shutoff, etc. due to City projects, storms, or other hazard events. Ensure advance notice is provided to populations that will be affected by temporary burdens, and address lack of inclusivity surrounding linguistically isolated households.

Address how to assist people without vehicle access as well as those living with a disability during a hazard event in the Hazard Mitigation emergency services section.

Expand the transit-oriented development subdistrict to areas with higher concentrations of vulnerable populations (see Map Set).

Provide incentives to developers such as density bonuses, reduced fees, expedited permitting, or zoning exemptions where appropriate when they include shelters and benches at transit stops and near businesses, recreation or social areas, and residential developments, so long as the design plans do not indicate any hostile architecture.

Avoid relying on participants to follow up with requests for information or clarity, questions and concerns themselves. Provide follow-up information and/or convenings to assure participants that their input was valued and incorporated into the next steps of the project and/or recommendations.

Ensure that meetings and other participation opportunities like Master Plan focus groups are accessible. This may include providing childcare, providing meals, engaging ASL interpreters, translating materials, meeting people where they are, allowing Zoom participation (i.e. conducting hybrid meetings), and/or varying meeting times to accommodate work schedules. If an assessment has not already been conducted, conduct an assessment to evaluate which disability accommodations are needed most by residents to make meetings accessible.

Work with and expand upon existing coordination groups and use the Outreach Network Contact List to form a diverse committee of HUC serving partners to address the recommended actions listed here. Ensure that municipal staff and community partners are aware of existing coordination efforts.
Recommendation #3: Some populations may be more burdened by temporary changes to traffic flow; public transit, water/electric shutoff, etc. due to City projects, storms, or other hazard events. Ensure advance notice is provided to populations that will be affected by temporary burdens, and address lack of inclusivity surrounding linguistically isolated households.

Action(s):
1. Engage in direct outreach to affected individuals to provide advance notice when there are temporary burdens to daily life due to City projects or hazard events.
2. Provide emergency response information (shelter locations, evacuation routes, notifications, etc.) in multiple languages on all distribution platforms.

Priority Level: High

If there was an opportunity to implement some of these recommendations in a Phase II of the project, would you consider being involved?
6 responses

Feel the city does a good job of utilizing those electronic options, even separate from the weekly newsletters. Also, noted on the city website and social network platforms.

Related to Item #2: how to improve that process better. Reaching folks who don’t have ready access to online platforms. Home in on that to even improve the process the City already does.
Effective outreach and engagement requires defining your most vulnerable populations and collaborating with trusted service providers.

Consider the ideals and identities of decision-makers and people in positions of power, and how that influences their perspective.

Avoid making assumptions. Listen with intention. You can be an expert in your field and still have gaps in your understanding of peoples' real-world experiences.

Engage in trainings and workshops that cover topics such as equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion. Be aware of your personal biases.

Meet people where they are physically, mentally, and emotionally, Create safe spaces for vulnerable interaction.

LINK TO FINAL REPORT
"An [organization] has a soul if...an authentic community exists, where healthy human connections are strong, facilitated and nourished by social structures, policies, mechanisms, and programs."

Dr. Hubie Jones
Inaugural Address, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, 2003