POE

PUBLIC OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

EFFECTIVENESS INITIATIVE

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The San Francisco Planning Department is conducting a **Public Outreach & Engagement** (POE) Effectiveness Initiative in an effort to better serve and work with the San Francisco community at large. The initiative, with technical and financial support from Friends of City Planning and the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership, involves three general phases: a) assessing and documenting our current POE practices through surveys, interviews and focus groups; b) creating guidelines and tools for effective POE; and c) developing staff capacity through a training program for POE. This report summarizes the results of the first phase, which took place in summer 2011, and will inform the next steps, including the prioritization of recommendations.

Goals

The Department intends to accomplish the four goals identified below. This initiative is the first step toward achieving these goals. Implementation is key to actually achieving them.

1	**INCREASE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION AND WORK**
2	**ACHIEVE MORE EFFECTIVE AND BROADER ENGAGEMENT OF THE CITY'S RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES**
3	**DEVELOP MORE COLLABORATIVE AND POSITIVE WORKING-RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PUBLIC**
4	**ENSURE THE DEPARTMENT IS AN ADAPTIVE ORGANIZATION THAT USES THE LATEST METHODS FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

What is Outreach and Engagement?

It is important to define what outreach and engagement mean in the context of the Department's work:

Outreach: the efforts to reach out and contact the public. Its goals: 1) to disseminate information about plans, services, events and projects; and 2) to form working relationships and recruit participants in the planning process, regardless of the nature of participation.

Engagement: the various ways in which staff involve the public in plans, events, and projects once the public has been reached through effective outreach. It is the activities and avenues for input, involvement, and collaboration between the public and the government agency.

Summary of Assessment Methods & Key Findings

In summer of 2011, staff conducted an assessment of our baseline practices to catalogue the Department's current practices, to identify strengths, challenges and areas of improvement, and to develop recommendations. Both staff and community were surveyed through online surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews.

The data collected was evaluated through a framework that looked at:

- The depth of public involvement

- The breadth of public involvement

- The transparency and accountability of the Department's POE efforts

- The Department's current level or organizational resources for POE, and

- Overall effectiveness and satisfaction with the Department's current POE practices

Since the community survey respondents, the focus group and interview participants for this assessment were a small subset of the City's population (not a randomized, representative sample); the findings are not necessarily a precise measurement of the Department's performance across all of its community outreach and engagement activities. Rather, the generalizations and key findings outlined in this report are intended to determine some of the most common practices and community impressions of the Department, and to shed light on areas where the Department can focus on improvements. In summary, some of the key findings are the following:

- Staff and community participants rank the best way to disseminate information slightly differently: staff members rank 1) website, 2) email, 3) social media and 4) presentations at community organizations as most effective, whereas community respondents rank 1) email, 2) presentations at community organizations/meetings and 3) mailed letters as most effective.

- Staff and community participants agree that a vocal few tend to dominate the entirety of the public process.

- Community participants would like to see more culturally-relevant engagement, as well as participation opportunities in venues in which community members are already engaged (neighborhood meetings, local organizations, etc), in addition to the traditional public meetings hosted by the Department.

- Staff and community respondents generally agree that the role of the public process should be to inform, involve and collaborate with the public. They agree that the role of community involvement should vary according to the type and phase of each project.

- A few community respondents believe that a 'lead role' may be an appropriate role for the community at times, such as for implementing local projects, and that the Department should make greater efforts to empower the community.

- The majority of both staff and community respondents (77% and 54%, respectively) feel that the Department is "Somewhat Effective" with its POE efforts, but a higher percentage of community than staff (32% vs. 4%, respectively) believe the Department is "Not Effective".

- Community respondents as well as Commissioners feel more mechanisms are needed to increase accountability, transparency and trust in the public process.

- Community respondents, Commissioners and staff feel that more education about the Department's work is important, and that the Department would benefit from building stronger relationships with key community stakeholders.

- Staff members feel there is a need for enhanced communication systems, guidelines and tools, as well as training for planning, implementing and evaluating POE efforts.

Recommendations & Implementation Objectives

The report includes a range of recommendations to improve the Department's POE practices, many of which were suggested by community members. They are included in the appendix as a working document to be refined and prioritized. Based on the findings, the following six strategic objectives for improvement were identified to help prioritize implementation of the recommendations and focus the Department's POE efforts:

1. Guidelines & Resources
create guidelines, policies and systems for planning, implementing and evaluating POE efforts

2. Communication
improve and upgrade contact databases and communication systems, and continue the process to make notices and information accessible, clear and streamlined, including to limited English-speaking persons (LEP)

3. Participation
broaden public participation in planning efforts by ensuring POE efforts are varied, culturally sensitive and accessible, in particular to underrepresented and LEP groups

4. Relationship-Building
improve existing and build new working relationships with the public.

5. Education
focus on community education to increase understanding of the Department's work and opportunities for public participation in the planning process.

6. Capacity Building
increase staff capacity (including cultural sensitivity and staff diversity) to carry out the recommendations of the POE assessment

Next Steps

The next steps in the POE effectiveness process include:

1) Reviewing the recommendations to determine which most effectively support the Department's POE goals

2) Prioritizing those recommendations for implementation

3) Completing the second phase of this initiative, which entails developing a customizable set of Guidelines for planning and carrying out POE and setting up a library of tools and best practices

4) Planning the first training, led by Davenport, of the Department's training program series

Introduction

BACKGROUND

In an effort to better serve and work with the public for the benefit of the City, the San Francisco Planning Department is conducting a Public Outreach & Engagement (POE) Effectiveness Initiative to improve its public outreach and engagement practices. A major component of the San Francisco Planning Department's work is to provide information and services to the public, but also to engage the diverse San Francisco community in an ongoing dialogue about the future development of the city. To this end, the Department notifies residents about Code, General Plan, development projects and other proposed plans and policy changes, and runs public meetings and other activities with the purpose of soliciting input about projects and plans. While outreach and community engagement activities are facilitated by planning professionals trained and experienced in CEQA, Planning Code, and land use policy and practices, the Department does not have established principles and standards to guide the design and implementation of all these activities. The result is that POE practices may vary widely from one plan or project to the next, and individual planners are often tasked with conducting these activities without clear expectations or institutional resources.

This POE effectiveness initiative resulted from:

- desire from staff to evaluate these challenges and divergent experiences in conducting POE,

- requests from former Planning Commission President Olague and the community to improve and broaden public participation, especially to better include historically underrepresented groups, and

- recognition, arising from our Department Action Plan/Process Improvement efforts, to develop a more proactive Department-wide communications strategy.

Over the past few years, the Department has taken steps to address and implement some changes in how staff communicate and interact with the public. These include: improving the website and incorporating social media, standardizing notice templates, conducting more lunchtime forums with community speakers and guests, using varied engagement tools such as walking tours and videos, and planning informal shadowing activities with youth. Beyond these efforts, this effectiveness initiative is the first systematic attempt to address the Department's POE work.

This initiative involves three general phases:

1. Assessing current POE practices and their effectiveness

2. Creating guidelines and tools for effective POE

3. Developing staff capacity through a POE training program.

This report is the result of the first phase, completed in fall 2011, and will guide the Department's efforts in developing a vision and priorities for guidelines, procedures, and capacity building for improved POE. This effort is supported with technical and financial assistance, as well as training services from the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership. It is also partly funded by a Friends of City Planning (FOCP) grant. An informal Department staff team called the Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET) is also supporting this effort, under the lead of the Communications Manager. The role envisioned for the POET is to serve as a resource and support to staff/project managers in POE efforts, to help maintain the POE guidelines and tools, and to help prioritize and implement the recommendations of this initiative in order to institutionalize this effort.

Goals

This is the first step in achieving the following four Departmental goals:

1 | INCREASE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION AND WORK

- Advance education about the planning and policy issues that affect the city and the region.

- Promote technical knowledge in the communities the Department works to ensure residents can fully participate in the public process.

2 | ACHIEVE MORE EFFECTIVE AND BROADER ENGAGEMENT OF THE CITY'S RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

- Identify effective strategies for engaging a more diverse public in the planning process; this includes tools to better articulate and facilitate public engagement and participation as well as best practices for working with community groups, dealing with controversial projects, reaching hard-to-engage groups, and other issues that arise during the public process.

- Clearly define the Department's POE model/practices and institutionalize some principles and guidelines by training planning staff and implementing the guidelines. The aim is to develop adaptable guidelines for POE efforts in order to have a more effective process and better outcomes.

3 | DEVELOP MORE COLLABORATIVE AND POSITIVE WORKING-RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PUBLIC

- Foster respectful, effective and trustworthy relationships, partnerships and communication with community stakeholders and the public.

4 | ENSURE THE DEPARTMENT IS AN ADAPTIVE ORGANIZATION THAT USES THE LATEST METHODS FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- Stay an adaptable, efficient and modern organization by, for example, scaling up and learning to better manage Web 2.0, new technologies, improving the Department's communication systems, and facilitating open government.

Purpose: Why is Effective Community Outreach & Engagement Important?

Effective public outreach and engagement is important because it makes government work better. It results in better process and better outcomes. According to the vast literature on public participation [1], decision-making based on effective community engagement may be beneficial for all parties by being:

- **More legitimate** - Decisions are arrived at fairly, through an open, equitable and inclusive process, and reflect the broadest public good.

- **More informed** - Decisions are made with the best information, through authentic and good faith "give and take" exchanges of ideas and opinions, and reflect reasonable choices made from among the considered options.

- **Consensus-based** - Decisions represent a shared view of the problem and the solution, are appropriately detailed given the process and the problem addressed, and often result from a transformation of participant attitudes and opinions.

- **Supportable** - Decisions generate (or will potentially generate) broader support for their implementation beyond those who are directly involved.

In addition to these specific benefits for policymaking, successful community engagement is generally an essential feature of democratic government. "Effective processes create a more knowledgeable and active public, and encourage political participation, trust in government and greater enthusiasm for the political process." [2] The literature on civic engagement emphasizes that clarity about the purpose of the public process is the first step in achieving these beneficial outcomes.

A focus on community engagement is also required by law. Open government laws promote civic participation to ensure that City's residents have an opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways to the success of the City. The Planning Department is required to comply with the San Francisco Language Access Ordinance (LAO), which requires providing equal access to city services to all San Franciscans, including to limited English-speaking persons (LEP). Language access for LEP individuals is also mandated by federal and state law as a civil right and a key path to meaningful and full participation in a democracy. Therefore, access to information, services and to equal participation also requires an assessment of the Department's POE capabilities, using the LAO lens to meet the intent of the mandate.

---

1   *Planning Public Forums: Questions to Guide Local Officials*, 2007. Institute for Local Government; and *Deliberative Public Engagement: Nine Principles*, 2008, National Consumer Council.

2   Ibid.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This assessment uses a framework[3] to evaluate the Department's POE practices. Survey and interview questions were developed based on this framework to address current practices, strengths, challenges, perceptions of effectiveness, and recommendations for improvements. The elements of the framework include:

- **Depth:** the role or purpose of involving the public and the degree to which they are involved, characterized by the Public Engagement Spectrum on the following page.

- **Breadth:** the quantity and diversity of stakeholders involved – the level of representation of the community, e.g. from community-based and advocacy organizations and associations, local businesses, public agencies, and individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

- **Transparency/Accountability:** clarity with the public, through on-going communication, on their role in the planning process and how their input is used in decision-making.

- **Overall Effectiveness:** public satisfaction and staff assessment of the Department's POE efforts.

- **Organizational Capacity:** the existing level and degree to which organizational and staff resources are sufficient to meet current POE needs as well as to accomplish the goals and recommendations of this report.

3 Developed by Julia Salinas, MPA, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington.

Public Engagement Spectrum*
Characterizing "Depth" of Public Engagement

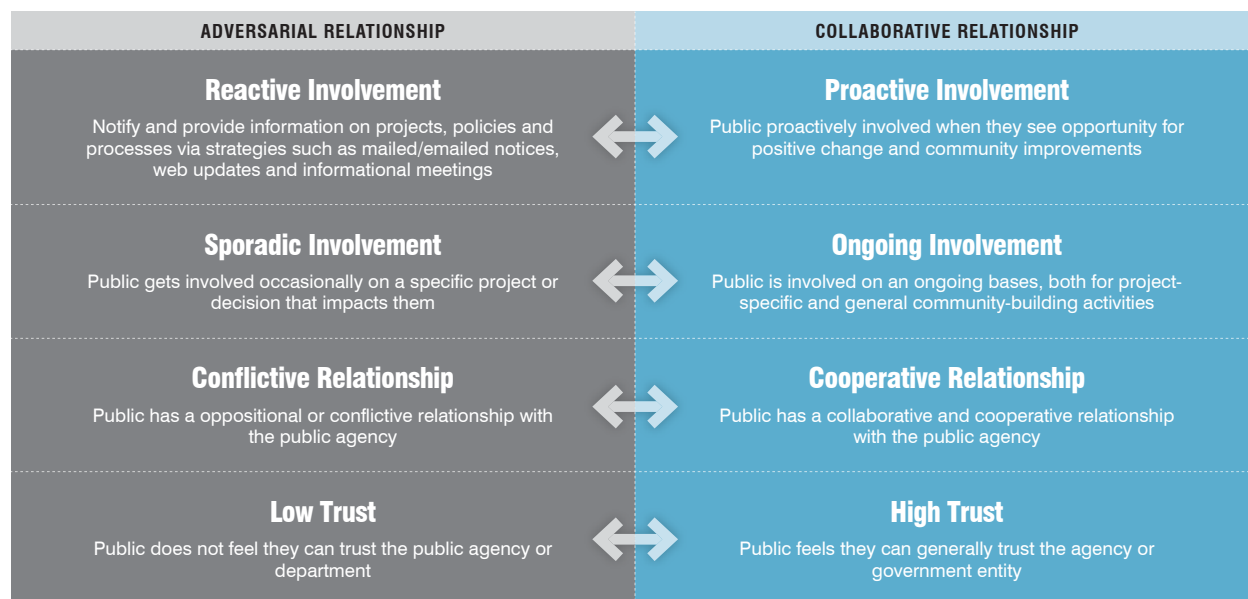| Inform	Consult	Involve / Collaborate	Empower
Notify and provide information on projects, policies and processes via strategies such as mailed/emailed notices, web updates and informational meetings	Seek feedback from public on plans and policies via strategies such as public meetings and hearings, surveys, and written comments	Work with the public to develop plans and policies together via strategies such as design charrettes, advisory committees, and community dialogue and consensus buildings	Guide the public in leading the development of plans and policies, including all final decision-making. e.g. task forces and ballots

Increasing Level of Public Participation and Public Impact

* Based on the International Association for Public Participation Spectrum of Public Participation *http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf*

These elements help inform the quality and experience of participants with the Department's public process as well the Department's relationship and with the public. The relationship between government and the community is particularly important. Successful community engagement is generally associated with higher levels of trust in government, and a greater sense among the public that public participation has an impact on government decisions. The chart below summarizes some characteristics of potential relationships between government and community. For the purpose of assessment, this report assumes that successful POE efforts should display more features of the right hand end of the spectrum. This evaluation can help illuminate where the Department falls on this spectrum, why, and determine how to best move towards a more collaborative model.

Government and Public Relationship Spectrum*

ADVERSARIAL RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP
Reactive Involvement Notify and provide information on projects, policies and processes via strategies such as mailed/emailed notices, web updates and informational meetings	**Proactive Involvement** Public proactively involved when they see opportunity for positive change and community improvements
Sporadic Involvement Public gets involved occasionally on a specific project or decision that impacts them	**Ongoing Involvement** Public is involved on an ongoing bases, both for project-specific and general community-building activities
Conflictive Relationship Public has a oppositional or conflictive relationship with the public agency	**Cooperative Relationship** Public has a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the public agency
Low Trust Public does not feel they can trust the public agency or department	**High Trust** Public feels they can generally trust the agency or government entity

* Developed by Julia Salinas, MPA, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington.

ASSESSMENT METHODS AND AUDIENCES

Staff and a subset of the community were consulted through online surveys, focus groups and interviews. Questions were reviewed internally and by the Davenport Institute consultant. The community online survey and data collected were synthesized according to common themes, focusing on the description of current practices, the evaluation of those practices (e.g. strengths and major challenges), and recommendations for improvement. Surveys and interview results are available in the Appendix.

It is important to note that the community survey respondents and the interview participants for this assessment represent a small focused subset of the City's population (not a randomized, representative sample of the San Francisco community), given the limitations of online surveys and the limited resources for interviews. The findings of this report are therefore not necessarily a precise measurement of the Department's performance across all of its community outreach and engagement activities. However, those consulted for this assessment tend to be highly active in their community and have a history of participation in and familiarity with Department activities. Their experiences and impressions, if not strictly representative from a statistical standpoint, are an informed snapshot of the Department's practices, and focus attention on areas for improvement. These initial findings are presented as a valuable starting point from which the Department can monitor and evaluate its POE efforts to have more accurate performance measures and to supplement these initial findings with additional data overtime.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Since the survey was online and in English[4], interviews and focus groups were used as additional strategies to try to reach a more balanced cross-section of voices and to complement the survey data with more qualitative information:

- Community: 3 focus groups, 2 interviews (9 participants total)

- Participants: community-based organizations, merchants, developers, neighborhood association member

- Staff: 2 focus groups, 14 interviews (24 participants total)

- Divisions: all

- Commissioners: 1 focus group; 1 interview (3 participants total)

Online Surveys

We conducted an online survey for community and one for staff. The online community survey was disseminated to over 4,400 people from project lists and was open for three weeks. It was publicized to media contacts, the Mayor's Office (MONS), the Neighborhood Empowerment Network (NEN), the Board of Supervisor's aides and other agency partners, and on our website and social media venues. The online staff survey was promoted internally by senior managers.

---

4 The survey was translated to Chinese but no responses were received, which provided us with some lessons on what works and what doesn't work for delivering translated information and receiving feedback.

Survey Snapshot

230
TOTAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS*

99
TOTAL SURVEY RESPONDENTS

91%
LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO

67%
WORK OR STUDY IN S.F.

70%
ARE HOMEOWNERS

21%
ARE RENTERS

28%
OWN A BUSINESS

22%
OWN PROPERTY

**STAFF RESPONDENTS
BY DIVISION**

AGE
OF RESPONDENTS

2%
AGES 18-24

AGE UNKNOWN

32%
AGES 25-44

65%
AGES 45+

31%
CITYWIDE PLANNING

13%
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

36%
CURRENT PLANNING

20%
OTHER:
ADMINISTRATION/
ZONING ADMIN./
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS/
ETC.
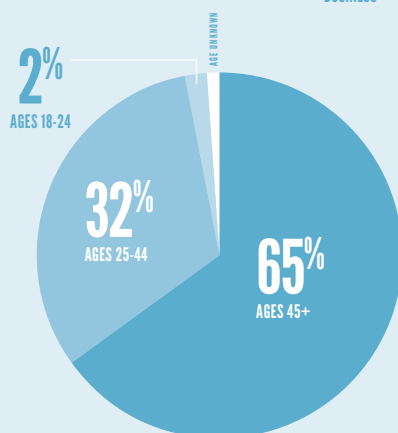
37%
HAD HEARD ABOUT DEPARTMENT PROJECTS OR RESOURCES

64%
HAD PARTICIPATED IN A DEPARTMENT PROJECT OR RESOURCE

16%
HAD NEITHER HEARD ABOUT OR PARTICIPATED
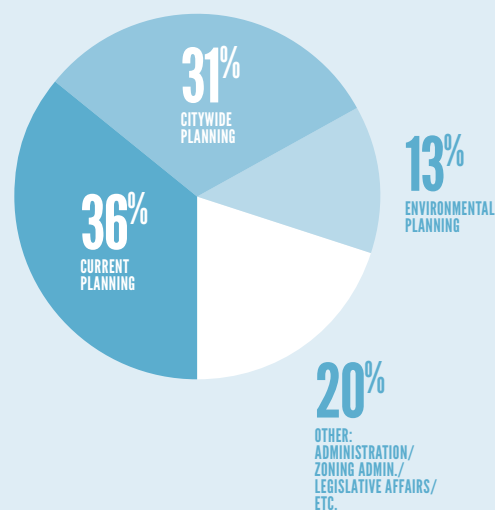
* Some partial responses due to non-applicability - 250 people started the survey, 175 answered questions through to the end of the survey.

WHERE SURVEY RESPONDANTS LIVE AND / OR WORK

141 RESPONDENTS WHO LIVE IN SAN FRANCISCO

105 RESPONDENTS WHO WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO

PRESIDIO

NORTH BEACH

MARINA

RUSSIAN HILL

CHINATOWN

PACIFIC HEIGHTS

NOB HILL

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

PRESIDIO HEIGHTS

DOWNTOWN CIVIC CENTER

SEACLIFF

WESTERN ADDITION

INNER RICHMOND

OUTER RICHMOND

SOUTH OF MARKET

GOLDEN GATE PARK

HAIGHT ASHBURY

CASTRO / UPPER MARKET

INNER SUNSET

POTRERO HILL

OUTER SUNSET

MISSION

TWIN PEAKS

NOE VALLEY

PARKSIDE

DIAMOND HEIGHTS

BERNAL HEIGHTS

WEST OF TWIN PEAKS

GLEN PARK

BAYVIEW

LAKESHORE

OUTER MISSION

EXCELSIOR

VISITACION VALLEY

CROCKER AMAZON

Current Practices

In order to evaluate the Department's current practices and identify challenges, the first step in this assessment was to catalogue baseline POE practices.

CURRENT ROLE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT – EXISTING GENERAL PRACTICES

The Department currently works in various capacities to inform and engage the public regarding development projects, environmental analyses, neighborhood and citywide plans, land use policies, and Planning Code changes.

- Public outreach varies by division, based in part on legal requirements, type of project and resources, but anyone who requests to be on a project notification list is added to it.

- All divisions seek to inform the public of projects, meetings, new policies, Code changes, etc., especially at the Planning Information Center (PIC).

Also, information about projects is always available on the Department website (including through our new Property Information Map). Translated information is available by a block notice on most mailed notices, through Google translation on the website, and by request through a translation line and designated staff.

- More extensive community engagement is generally only conducted by the Citywide (CW) division, the Historic Preservation Survey (HPS) team (under the Current Planning division), and sometimes the Legislative Affairs division (depending on the project issue – e.g., Bird Safe Legislation), with each project manager/team planning the POE resources, purpose, goals and strategies. In addition, Department-level policy initiatives, changes and process improvements (e.g. Discretionary Review reform, the Universal Planning Notification process) often entail more extensive community engagement. Translation is part of the process, depending on the project and community involved.

CURRENT PUBLIC OUTREACH &

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Following is a more detailed overview of the Department's current **outreach** and **engagement** practices. Currently, the Department uses a vast array of outreach and engagement strategies (see Appendix A: Graph 1 and Graph 2) from mailed and electronic notification to going out to the community for meetings. The following is a summary of each division's practices provided by staff:

Table 1
Summary of Department's POE Activities by Division

DIVISON	OUTREACH (information dissemination)	ENGAGEMENT (community participation)
Environmental Planning (EP)	Follows outreach requirements according to State CEQA Guidelines and the SF Administrative Code Chapter 31: Mail is sent to applicable government agencies/departments and the State Clearinghouse, individuals who have requested notice, owners and occupants within 300 feet of the project site, public libraries, and neighborhood organizations within the vicinity (using Department's Neighborhood Notification List). Also posts announcements via newspaper, website, PIC, and posters at project site. Environmental documents are always available online.	Staff host public scoping meetings and hearings according to legal/CEQA environmental review requirements for projects (public and private); receive public comment via meetings, mail, and email, and incorporate comments into analysis for environmental review. EP cannot require that sponsors do additional POE, but can encourage it if the sponsor is amenable and the project is significant. Typically, EP does not conduct any additional POE beyond what is legally required but planners individually may field calls, emails or in-person questions or comments about the process or project.
Current Planning (CP)	Most outreach is done via public notices as required by the Planning Code. All public hearings require notice depending on the type of project. Refer to summary table of all required noticing produced by Scott Sanchez, in Appendix, as a part of the Universal Planning Notification (UPN) project. Project sponsors (e.g. private developers) are required to hold public meetings to inform the public and hear concerns if required by the proposed project. Beyond legal requirements, project sponsors determine how they wish to additionally inform the public. CP planners do some additional, informal outreach (such as being available for phone calls) beyond legal requirements depending on how large or significant the projects are.	Staff field questions by phone, at the PIC, during project review and intake meetings, as part of the notification period, as well as during outreach meetings hosted at the Department or with community groups. Staff respond to questions and comments at public hearings, and provide information and guidance on the Planning Code. Certain projects require that project sponsors host public meetings to hear from the community but staff do not engage the public at these meetings. Any additional engagement is up to project sponsors.
Zoning Administrator & Code Enforcement (ZAC)	Information about how to file or to find out about specific complaints is now available on the website. Beyond information on the website, there is a limit on outreach that is possible because the team is already over capacity with the number of complaints they are able to process. However, some staff members have conducted informal outreach to educate the public about their work. The ZA provides information on zoning interpretations and clarifications of the Planning Code. Public outreach/notification is not required for most activities other than variances, but generally all documents and decisions are available online.	The ZA and staff mostly distribute information, primarily conducting outreach and not community engagement due to the nature of the work. ZAC also serves as technical resource for both internal and external clients – answering staff questions and issuing determinations in response to requests from the public.

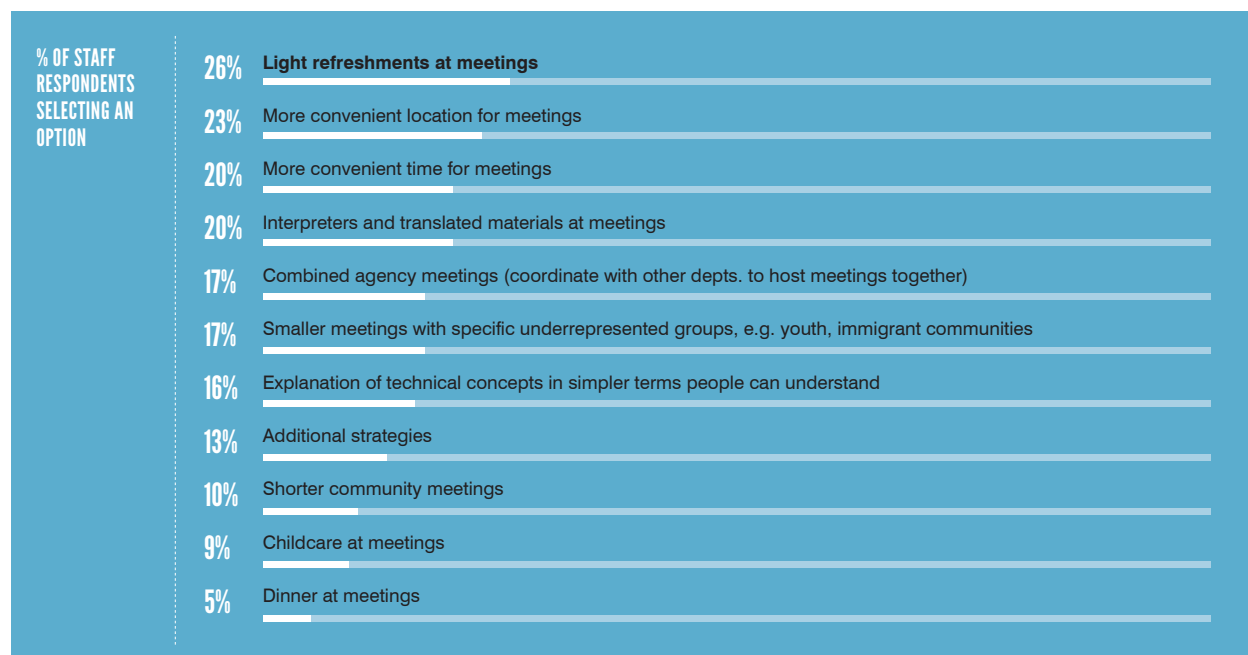| DIVISON	OUTREACH (information dissemination)	ENGAGEMENT (community participation)
Historic Preservation (HPS)	Outreach regarding proposed Landmark designations includes: meeting flyers mailed to all residents, property owners, and selected organizations from neighborhood and preservation mailing lists, emails to meeting attendees, flyers posted in community kiosk and on poles within the proposed Districts, door-to-door distribution of flyers for all community meetings, door-to-door commercial tenant outreach, neighborhood group newsletter article, staff-guided walking tours of proposed Districts, frequent website updates, and verbal promotion (at the PIC or other related meetings) of information available on the website at meetings. Historic survey outreach in the past has typically occurred after completion of the survey and consisted of required neighborhood notification and placement of newspaper advertisements, mailing to affected properties, emails to project lists, and translated posters.	Staff engage the community in the Landmark designation process through guided neighborhood walking tours, self-guided walking tour maps, a series of community meetings and Ask-A-Planner nights, presentations at neighborhood group meetings, tabling, etc. Staff also inform and involve the public using interactive workshops and other similar activities, as needed, to inform affected property owners about the incentives, process, and implications of Landmark designation and other historic preservation surveys. Several recent survey areas (e.g., Market/Octavia and Japantown) have included community update meetings and/or more intensive community engagement in coordination with the Citywide division's Area Plan efforts. Informally, some staff members occasionally hold "Ask a Planner" nights (office hours tied to a project with a planner) or similar activities.
Citywide Planning (CW)	Does postcard mailings, contacts media (including ethnic/local media, radio interviews, local TV), and goes through community organizations and associations to post on their listservs, present at their meetings or to conduct outreach/interpretation. Coordinates with District Supervisors to access their databases. Also, some staff use Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr (although this is not consistent yet). When a project is adopted there are some required notification steps outlined in the Planning Code that staff follow.	Staff primarily hold large public meetings; including use of various formats such open houses, design charrettes, and break-out groups. Staff also meet with individual groups and organizations, and have used some online participation tools, surveys, and storefront spaces, although less commonly and depending on the project. It is up to each project lead/team to plan and design the engagement strategy and to balance community input with the broader public interest, city policy, and technical expertise. The level and format of POE depend on factors such as the project type, project scale, and available resources.
Legislative Affairs	Most outreach is done via public notices as required by the Planning Code. All public hearings require notice depending on the type of legislation. The Department provides outreach on legislation to neighborhood organizations, non-profit advocacy groups and city-run commissions, and uses traditional media press releases as well as Twitter and YouTube. Prior to the adoption of planning ordinances, hearings are required before both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.	For legislation sponsored by the Department, the Department seeks the engagement of appropriate neighborhood organizations, non-profit advocacy groups and city-run commissions. For legislation sponsored by elected officials, the Department reviews the proposals but asks the sponsor to conduct their own community engagement.
Commissions (PC & HPC)	Some Commissioners do outreach informally, varying from member to member.	Commissioners receive inquiries, comments and concerns from the public. They weigh public comment in decision-making during public hearings - another primary way people directly provide input on projects and policies that are in the review process.

The figure below shows additional strategies used specifically to outreach to underrepresented groups and non-English speakers. It shows the percentages of staff, across all divisions, who use these strategies.

Outreach Strategies Used to Reach Underrepresented Groups

% OF STAFF, ACROSS ALL DIVISIONS, WHO USE THESE OUTREACH STRATEGIES		
64%	**Staff who speak other languages**	
50%	Informally ask community-based organizations that work with these groups	
44%	Paid interpreters	
44%	Translated fact sheets	
34%	Staff who speak other languages	
32%	A translation phone line	
24%	Formal partnerships (e.g. MOUs, contracts) with community-based organizations that work with these groups	
16%	Ethnic and local media	
10%	Information tables at ethnic community events	

Staff also use a variety of incentives and accommodations to encourage participation at in-person meetings and activities. The figure below shows the percent of staff in all divisions who indicated they use each of the strategies.

Incentives and Accommodations to Encourage Participation and Attendance

% OF STAFF RESPONDENTS SELECTING AN OPTION		
26%	**Light refreshments at meetings**	
23%	More convenient location for meetings	
20%	More convenient time for meetings	
20%	Interpreters and translated materials at meetings	
17%	Combined agency meetings (coordinate with other depts. to host meetings together)	
17%	Smaller meetings with specific underrepresented groups, e.g. youth, immigrant communities	
16%	Explanation of technical concepts in simpler terms people can understand	
13%	Additional strategies	
10%	Shorter community meetings	
9%	Childcare at meetings	
5%	Dinner at meetings	

Vision & Evaluation of Current Practices

VISION FOR ROLE OF PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

This assessment primarily seeks to identify the baseline practices, major challenges and strengths, and an approximate measure of the Department's effectiveness in conducting POE. However, this assessment can be most helpful in focusing the Department's improvement efforts if it is also accompanied by a clear and overarching vision of the purpose and goals of effective public outreach and engagement. Therefore, using the Public Engagement Spectrum (page 5) described earlier to classify their answers, both staff and the community were asked what they feel the ideal role of the public should be in the planning process. Responses between staff and the community were very similar as shown in Figure 3 and summarized in the bullets below:

Figure 3 shows the following side by side: the pale blue bars represent current staff practices or how staff currently involve the public ("Current Role"), the white bars represents what staff believe is the ideal

role of the public ("Staff Belief"), and the black bars what community feels is the ideal role of the public ("Community Belief").[1]

The following points regarding the proper role of public engagement stand out from this figure (Note: percentages do not add to 100 percent – respondents could choose as many or a as few options as they thought appropriate):

- Staff and community participants generally agree that the role of the Department's POE should be primarily to inform, consult, and collaborate/involve the public. In other words, both groups checked off the left participation end of the spectrum choices as more appropriate roles than last choice/end of the spectrum (a lead/empower role).

- Current practice involves more emphasis on consult and involve/collaborate than either staff or community identify as desirable.

1   **Analysis Note:** Involve and Collaborate were merged into 1 category because they are very similar. "All of the Above" was not given as an option for staff for how they believe the public should be involved (staff thought it was implied), thus it is not shown on the bar graph but it is discussed in the points below.

Figure 3
Current and Desired Roles of Public Engagement*

ROLE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

INFORM

CONSULT

INVOLVE / COLLABORATE

EMPOWER

CURRENT ROLE   STAFF BELIEF   COMMUNITY BELIEF
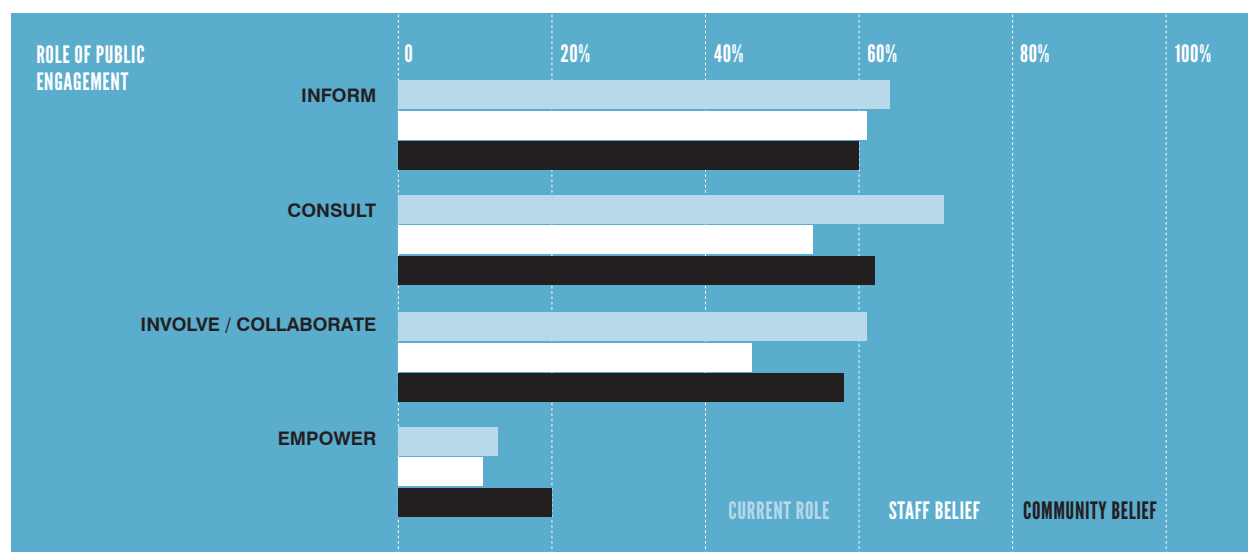
* Percentages reflect percent of respondents selecting an option.

- Staff members seem to believe (white bar) that they should be doing a bit less of everything than their current practices (yellow bar).

- The amount of staff selecting the choice for an increased role for the public declines as the spectrum moves from less to more whereas the community responses do not trend downwards.

- The community respondents prefer a greater role for engagement in general than staff does (consult, involve/collaborate, empower).

- Relatively few staff and community believe the proper role is empowerment (where community leads development of plans and implementation), but community is almost twice as likely to want empowerment as staff.

- Both community respondents and staff believe the level/role of engagement should depend on the stage or the kind of project, but a higher percentage of community members than staff believe that the role should vary depending on the project. For

example, community members suggested that a "leading / empowerment" role is appropriate during the design or implementation of highly local projects, such as parks an open spaces, suggesting that staff might consider a changing role for the public during different phases (assessment, design, etc) of some projects.

From the open-ended answers to the survey and the focus groups the vision was articulated as follows:

Community respondents' vision is for the Department to inform the public early and frequently, using effective means that reach them "where they are" – both online and on the ground – rather than adding too many meetings to their already busy schedules. They desire more accessible and streamlined information and communication about our work such as "cheat-sheets," definitions and FAQs. The community also feels that once information is synthesized more effectively, regular updates and a central place of information would also help those who want to stay involved.

Community members also wish to be engaged proactively, where their input is sought and genuinely used in decision-making, and via more easily accessible and creative means beyond the traditional, large public meeting. They emphasized the desire for increased communication from the Department, providing clarity about the opportunities for engagement, the potential impacts of projects (i.e., "What does this mean for me?"), the ways in which public input is used, and the constraints on acting upon public input or suggestions.

Staff's vision across the board, like the community's, starts with improved notification and access to clear information in the most efficient channels for reaching people, with the acknowledgment that this results in improved trust and public perception of the Department. There is clear sentiment that education about the Department's work is critical:

> *"Improvement in public understanding of the Department's [functions] is essential in order to serve the members of the public in San Francisco effectively. Proactive education on how we serve the community, and speaking as one unified Department, will start to dismantle the pervasive mistrust and hostility towards the Department, and build a more positive, trusting relationship."*
>
> – CP staff comment

In addition, staff from the different divisions expressed that more does not mean better, and that the focus should be on more effective and efficient POE strategies. Both EP and CP staff reiterated that beyond notification, POE is up to the project sponsor, not the Department, and that the Department can only encourage it. CW and HPS are the teams with more leeway in directly implementing engagement strategies. More specifically, staff from each of the divisions expressed the following:

EP: Staff feel it is sufficient for them to comply with CEQA requirements, that legal constraints prevent more proactive POE, and consequently the necessity is to err on the side of caution.

CP: Staff feel current outreach is sufficient and the focus should be on streamlined and accessible noticing. There is some hesitation that going "above and beyond" legal requirements could turn current courtesies into more stringent requirements. Alternatively, some staff expressed desire to increase proactive outreach or, more specifically, to allow those staff members who enjoy public contact and have good customer service skills to serve on educational initiatives.

CW: The priority for staff is creating the strategic framework and tools to most efficiently and effectively reach and engage the public. Ideally, this results in strengthened relationships, increased participation beyond the typical players, higher staff impact, and lower burnout for all. Broader participation would allow planners to gain a better representation of diverse perspectives to guide policymaking. It is also important to find effective strategies to engage "the vocal few" in constructive ways.

Legislative Affairs: Because the work of this group is unique in that it is primarily not the sponsor of the proposal and because by law the Department has only 90-days to bring the proposal to public hearing, public engagement is primarily the responsibility of the sponsor while the Department's obligation is weighted towards outreach.

EVALUATION OF OUTREACH STRATEGIES

The goal of *outreach* strategies is to inform, educate, and alert a broad population of San Francisco residents about projects, policies, services and opportunities for involvement, simultaneously improving public trust of the Department by having streamlined and clear processes and standards. Following is the evaluation of the effectiveness of *outreach* strategies.

Appendix A: Graph 1 shows current strategies used by staff, the community's experience with how they have been reached, and both staff's and community's opinions on the most effective strategies. As illustrated, the major findings, ranked from greatest to least, are:

- Community currently hears primarily from the Department via: 1) mailed notices, 2) posted notices, 3) emails;

- Compared to how they primarily hear from us, of current strategies the Department uses, the community prefers to be reached via: 1) email, 2) presentations at local/existing organizations' meetings and 3) mailed notices/postcards;

- There were no significant differences between owners and renters on how they prefer to be

reached (other groups – students, developers, etc. – were too small a subset of survey respondents to show any conclusions), however owners prefer mailed notifications more than renters (see Figure 4)

- Ranked slightly differently than by the community, staff believe the most effective methods to reach people are as follows: 1) web announcement, 2) email, 3) social media, and 4) presentations at community organizations' meetings;

- Staff believe that mailed postcards and printed/ legal newspaper notices are less effective, but the community does prefer mailed postcards/notices as a way to find out about projects;

- The top three strategies the community prefers that are not frequently used by the Department are: 1) online newsletters, 2) hyper-local sources (e.g., cafes, Laundromats, local news sources, etc.), and 3) more online methods (beyond email and website posts for example, blogs and online news);

- Community hears about Department projects second-hand through: 1) word of mouth, and 2) neighborhood organizations' listservs.
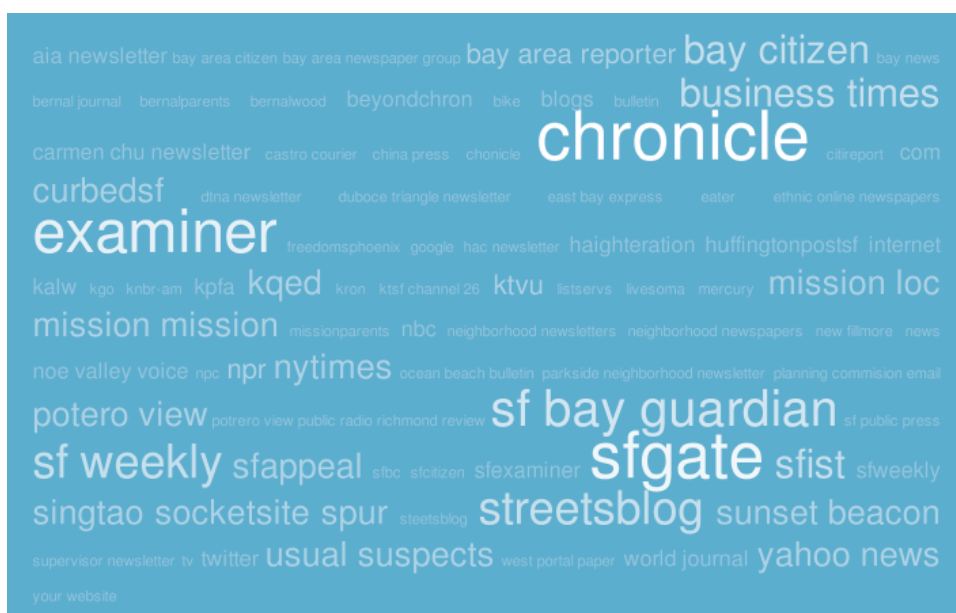
Word Cloud
Sources the Public Reported they Most Use to Get Their News

Figure 4
Which Is the Single Most Effective Way To Inform You?

Figure 4

No. of survey respondents:

121 HOMEOWNERS

38 RENTERS
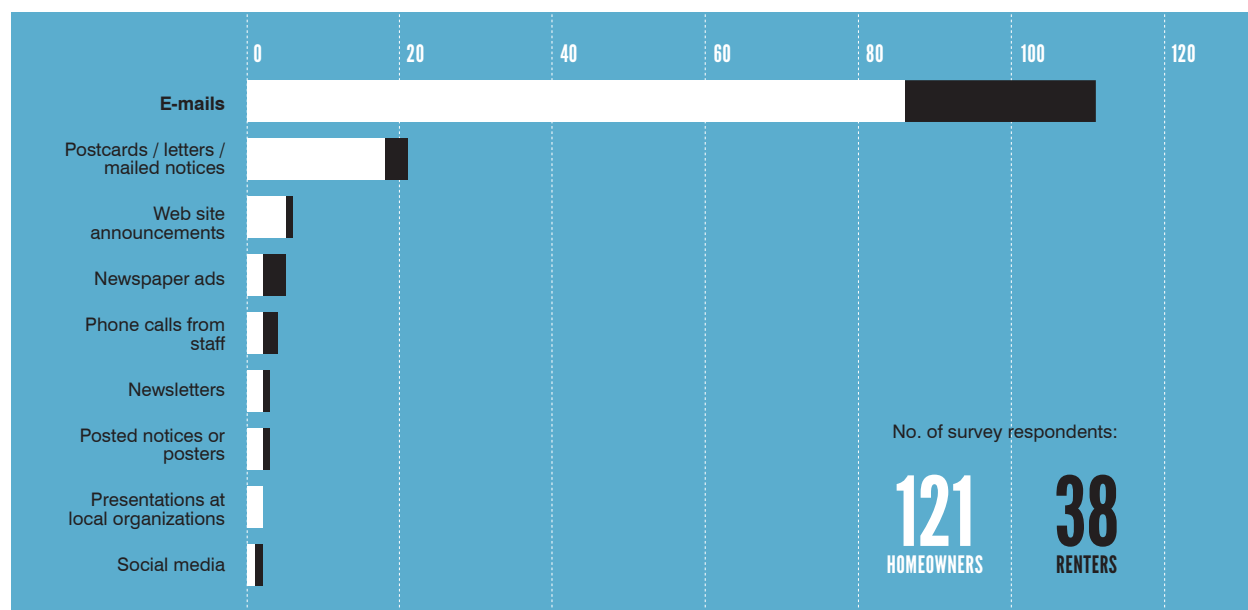
While the traditional method of mass mailing notification for standard public meetings does not result in getting more people involved beyond the same few voices that typically participate (because staff can't possibly ensure people read and act on it though improvements to language accessibility can be made), staff believe that this form of notification remains a basic, important way to contact people. Consistent with this view, community members identify mailed notifications as a preferred strategy, especially for those without access to computers and the Internet. It is also required by the Planning Code in certain instances, such as when changes of use or certain zoning and General Plan changes are proposed. However, traditional newspaper notices in legalese may be worth re-considering, given their cost and lack of effectiveness.

Community members also reported that not knowing about a meeting was the primary reason they did not attend (see Figure 10). Some staff also reported large amounts of returned mail from third-party vendor mailing lists and are frustrated by outdated mailing lists. Public agencies and organizations also reported receiving mail with outdated contacts. All findings point to the need for vastly improved communication systems.

Additionally, staff indicated that the current translated one-liner ("*For info in X language call #*") and short paragraph that accompanies some mailed notices is insufficient and often inaccurate. The same problem exists with relying on literal online translations for our web content such as Google's translation tool. Therefore, this language needs to be standardized and improved to meet the intent of the LAO ordinance and the Department's goal of accessibility, accuracy and clarity of language.

EVALUATION OF CURRENT ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

The purpose of *engagement* is to provide opportunities for meaningful participation. Following is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department's *engagement* strategies. Generally, the community states:

- Engage people early in the process;

- Small group discussions are more productive than large group discussion;

- Meet people where they are as much as possible (physically and otherwise – language, accessibility, cultural competency, etc.);

- Facilitate understanding, meaningful dialogue and neutral deliberation;

- Know the community, be responsive and appreciate participants efforts;

- Recognize existing inequities, use community expertise and communicate impacts;

- Accountability – follow-through on what happens in the process – is needed;

- Balance and synthesize the voices of those who cannot attend meetings and those that do attend (the vocal few).

Community members prefer a variety of venues for engagement beyond the large public in-person meeting, including online methods - such as surveys and discussion forums - and smaller group settings such as focus groups and affinity groups. All interviewees had a strong preference for smaller group

discussions in particular. The community generally likes public meetings as a venue but often finds it hard to go to other locations for meetings and would like to have more opportunities to participate where they are already engaged, such as their own merchant and neighborhood association meetings. The public also feels public hearings (at the Commissions) are not the best venue for participation since most participation should occur prior to a hearing, especially for citywide planning projects and for other large or significant projects. They would also like to engage as early as possible in the process, especially those who receive (but also those who are subject to) notices for Conditional Uses.

On accountability and follow through, the Commissioners and the public expressed a desire for on-going communication, and for clarity on their role and the stages of the public process and on the use or lack of use of public input in decision-making / final outcomes. They would especially like clarity on impacts and on the pros and cons of alternatives presented to them. Community participants would also like to see more neutral facilitation and dialogue, responsiveness to their comments, and appreciation for their time and effort. Participants also suggest using creative participation formats and avoiding cookie-cutter approaches.

Staff observe that the traditional method of holding standard public meetings sometimes does not result in getting broader involvement beyond the same few voices that are typically heard. However, public meetings are essential avenues for engagement and

therefore staff members recommend complementing them with improved outreach methods, variations on meeting formats, use of alternative venues and partnerships, and enhanced facilitation techniques to broaden participation and improve engagement. Differentiating between 'process' and 'content/outcome' (staff believe the public react more to the latter) of a project and therefore focusing on good process would also help staff conduct more effective POE, simultaneously resulting in more supportable outcomes.

As noted above, the community, Commissioners and staff all agree and consistently communicated being frustrated with the fact that the vocal few often dominate the process, which also turns off other participants from staying involved, especially newcomers. Therefore, learning strategies to manage situations in which this happens and to provide more room for more voices is critical to having a diversity of voices in the process. Two key aspects of broadening participation – a major goal of this initiative– include:

- **Engaging the "silent many"** – the average hard-to-reach and less-engaged person (renters, workers, families, etc.);

- **Engaging historically underrepresented populations** – socioeconomic and other groups that have been historically left out of decision-making and public process, including youth, low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrants/non-English speakers.

It is also important for staff and community that the Department adapt and increase use web 2.0 technologies for participation so people can have access to engagement opportunities from the their home and on their own time. Posting tutorial videos on the web would be a good resource.

In addition, staff and the community feel that people who attend public hearings have more influence than those who give input online or at public workshops, resulting in an imbalance of community perspectives when decisions are made by Commissioners. Commissioners also feel staff should not sacrifice substance for brevity and can highlight all POE that was done and feedback collected, even for individual projects. Therefore, it is important for staff to highlight and synthesize the voices of those who cannot attend formal hearings for the benefit of Commissioners, and for Commissioners to give weight to these voices in their deliberations.

Overall Effectiveness & Key Challenges

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Staff and community members were also asked about the Department's overall effectiveness in informing and engaging the public. Following are their general responses, summarized in the graph Figure 5:

- Staff has an accurate perception (light blue bar) of the public's view (black bar). – About 69% of the public believes the Department is "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective" and 71% of staff guessed that would be the public's evaluation of the Department's effectiveness.

- Staff believes the Department is much more effective than the public does. – Fully 96% of staff believe the Department is "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective" compared to 69% of community members.

- There were no significant differences between how homeowners and renters rated the Departments' effectiveness (see Figure 6)

- A much higher percentage of community respondents than staff evaluated the Department as "Not Effective" – 32% compared to 4%, respectively.

In addition, community comments collected from the survey, interviews and focus groups range greatly but some observations are as follows (see attached survey and notes for full responses):

- A number of respondents feel the Department's POE efforts are generally sufficient, given the challenges (legal, systems, time, etc.) inherent in trying to reach people and get them to engage.

- Some respondents trust the Department to lead the public process, given the challenge of the "vocal few" sometimes co-opting the process, but they also appreciate improvements and opportunities for partnerships and meaningful involvement.

- A respondent suggested the Department should encourage the public to participate early and not wait until the last minute through creative messaging or slogans – e.g., "Have a Say Before it is Okayed!"

- Some respondents feel the Department does not genuinely engage the public because they feel that the outcomes of plans/projects are already deter-

Figure 5
Public and Staff Perception of the Department's POE Effectiveness

PERCEPTIONS OF DEPARTMENT EFFECTIVENESS

NOT EFFECTIVE

SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE

EFFECTIVE

STAFF PERCEPTION

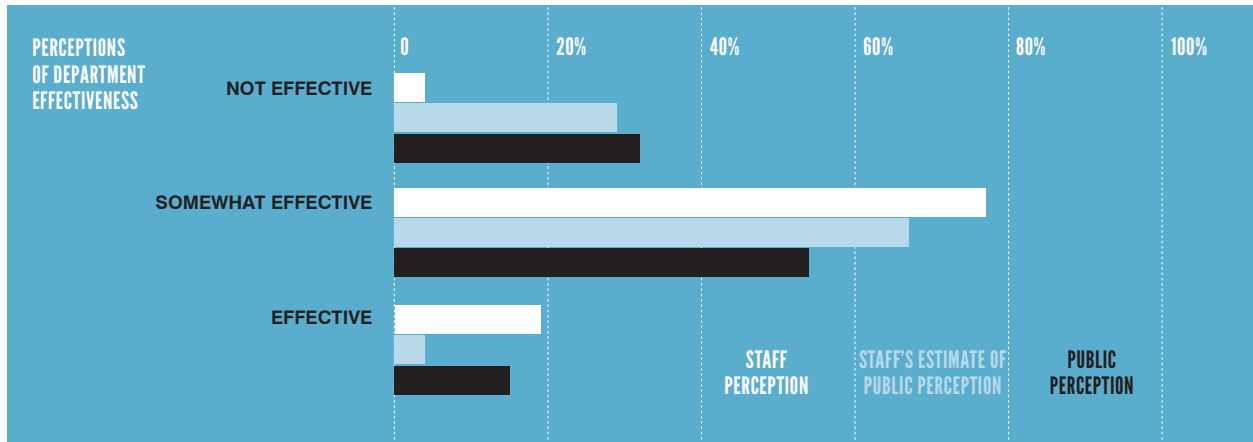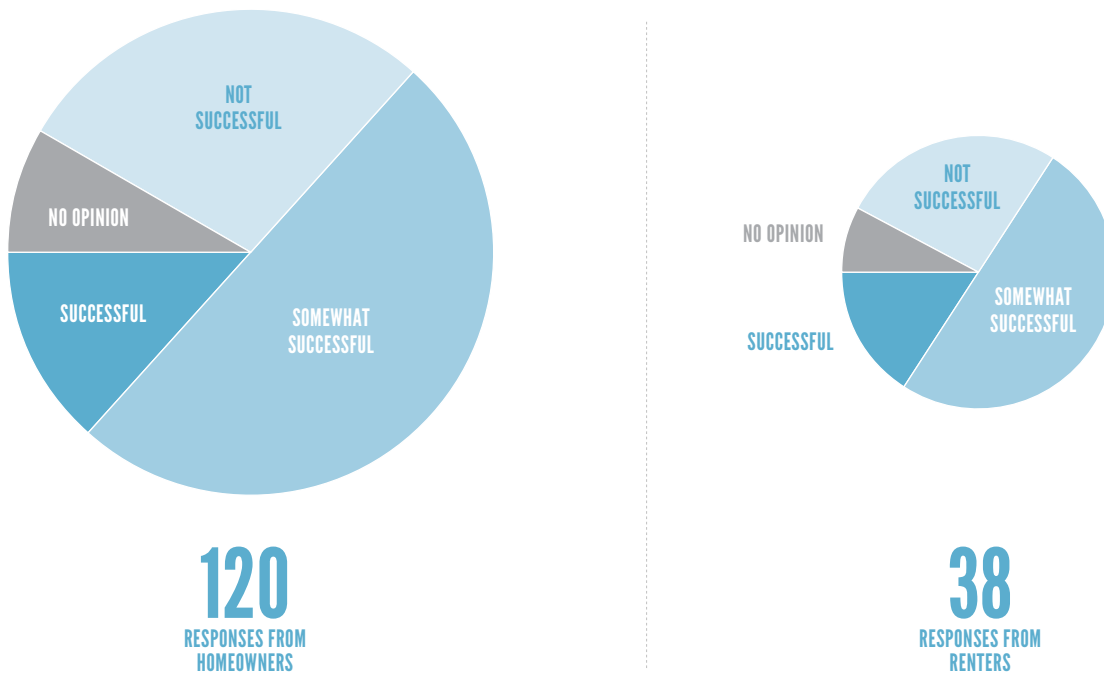STAFF'S ESTIMATE OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Figure 6
Overall, how successful do you feel the Planning Dept. is at informing the San Francisco community about projects, activities, and services?

NOT SUCCESSFUL

NO OPINION

SUCCESSFUL

SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL

120
RESPONSES FROM HOMEOWNERS

NOT SUCCESSFUL

NO OPINION

SUCCESSFUL

SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL

38
RESPONSES FROM RENTERS

mined by the time they come before the public, and that decisions are based on politics rather than community needs. They want clarity on the objectives of both the public process and the project as well as early involvement. This view was shared by both community members who participate in community planning processes as well as those who provide public comment on specific development projects. However, there is a slightly higher level of frustration with ability to give input on specific development projects in advance of when neighbors receive the official notification of entitlement hearings, especially if no pre-application meetings are required.

- Some respondents also feel the Department is ineffective at notifying people, using some arcane methods of notification. They would like the Department to pay more attention to where people already get their information.

- Some respondents believe better inter-agency coordination and continuing to strengthen the website (better organization of information such as letters of determination) would improve our effectiveness.

- Some participants feel the Department often lacks cultural competency (language and otherwise) and this results in not being able to connect with and effectively engage certain groups.

Staff comments on the Department's effectiveness can be summarized by the following sentiment:

Staff believe they provide extensive noticing and opportunities to get involved, but they know these efforts still do not result in reaching everyone, with only the "vocal few" dominating the public process. As a result, the input the Department receives often reflects only a small portion of the public's perspectives, as the "silent many" remain uninvolved. The main challenge for the Department is therefore to improve its POE strategies to successfully reach, inform, educate, and engage a broader representation of the community so that the public understands the planning process, and planning outcomes reflect a balance of diverse perspectives.

One challenge that affects effectiveness and the Department should examine is that for many projects, the time between completion of the community process and consensus and completion of the environmental review is far apart and often times this results in community consensus being lost. This should be addressed to minimize both community and staff burnout. Also, it is harder to engage participants in projects that are citywide in nature versus those that are more neighborhood-specific.

In sum, what likely accounts for some of differences in how the staff and community participants rated the Department's effectiveness is because the public is frustrated with: 1) the Department's notification 2) the lack of opportunity for early involvement, particularly for individual development projects, and 3) the lack of clarity about their role and how their input is used. Staff members, on the other hand, recognize there is public frustration but feel there is sufficient notification (though express a need to upgrade and modernize our systems). However, staff believes that modifying and varying our outreach and engagement practices, as well as monitoring and evaluating our efforts with the help of tools and guidelines, could help broaden participation and improve participants' experiences.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING WITH THE PUBLIC

Relationship-building – a key ingredient for building trust with the public – is a theme throughout the findings and recommendations. Currently, there is a feeling of strong mistrust and skepticism from many of those who answered the survey and participated in the focus groups regarding the Department's authenticity in engaging the public. This view is based on the following perceptions:

- A feeling that the public isn't well-notified or notified with sufficient time to be involved in the decision-making process in a meaningful way;

- A perception that the public is consulted primarily as an afterthought (role unclear);

- A lack of clarity on when and how input is used;

- A feeling that there is lack of timely and clear communication about certain Code and policy changes.

The following graphic illustrates the public's level of agreement with a series of statements reflecting the level of public trust in the Department. Public trust relates to how accountable, transparent, and communicative the Department is with the public. Among those respondents who finished the entire survey, homeowners rated the first statement higher than renters did, and similarly renters rated the "follow through" and "communicates openly with the public" lower than homeowners, suggesting that renters' experiences with the Department are slightly more negative (see Figure 8). This may be due to the fact that homeowners are more likely to file applications with the Department and therefore are more familiar with our process and experience being our clients and doing their own outreach for their projects, whereas renters may be more likely to be in the role of reacting to a development project or proposed plan and therefore may feel they tend to have less influence.

Figure 7
Community Perception of Effectiveness

80%
THE ACTIVITIES I HAVE PARTICIPATED IN HAVE GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUFFICIENTLY UNDERSTAND A PROJECT.

61%
STAFF LISTENED AND TOOK NOTE OF A CONCERN OR IDEA I RAISED AT A PUBLIC MEETING.

52%
THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT SEEKS TO DEVELOP A STRONG, COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY.

45%
THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT FOLLOWS THROUGH ON INVOLVING THE PUBLIC.

44%
OVERALL, I AM SATISFIED WITH MY EXPERIENCES PARTICIPATING IN PLANNING DEPARTMENT PROJECTS.

38%
THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATES OPENLY WITH THE PUBLIC AND EXPLAINS HOW PUBLIC INPUT IS USED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS.

43%
I UNDERSTOOD HOW MY CONCERN OR IDEA WAS ADDRESSED OR CONSIDERED IN THE FINAL PROJECT OUTCOME.
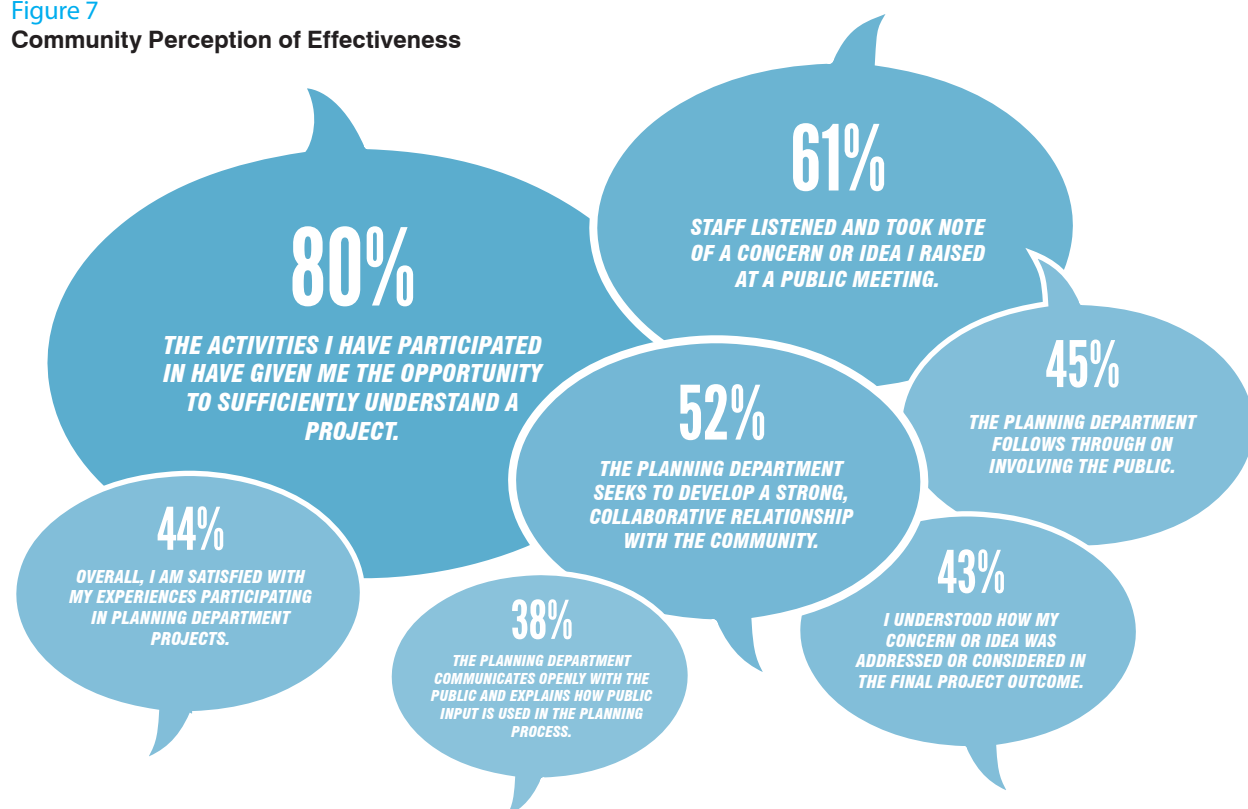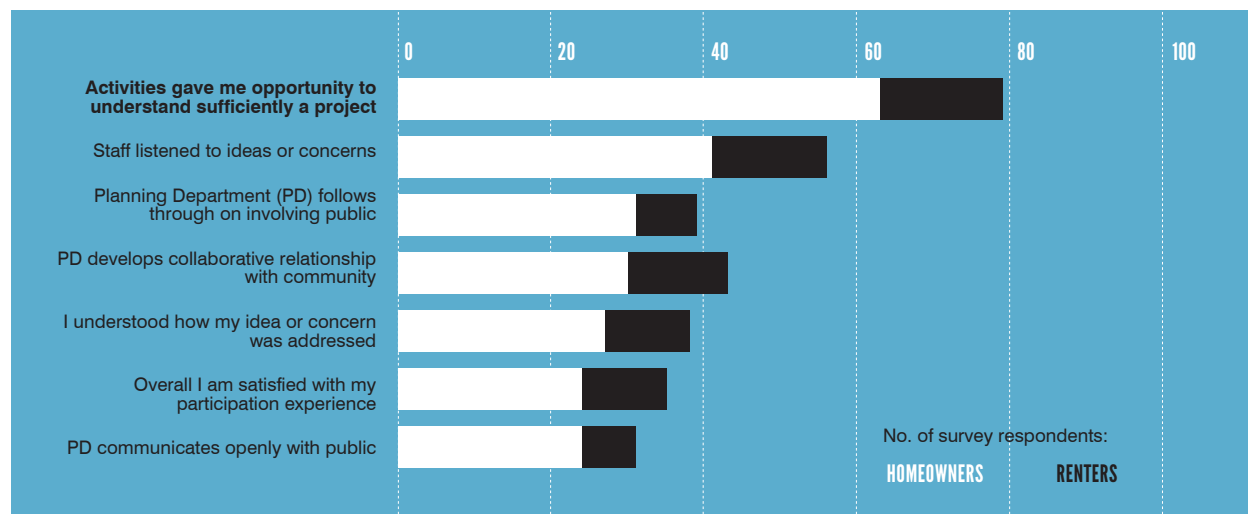
Figure 8
My Experience Participating in Planning Department Activities and Projects

Staff and interview participants also revealed that the majority of people are not involved in Planning Department efforts and the "vocal few" who are often have adversarial relationship with the Department. This can manifest as hostility and a lack of respect at public meetings, which then discourages other first-time participants from staying involved. Planners' attempts at engaging the vocal few stakeholders, through one-on-one efforts or at public meetings, are often unsuccessful, leaving staff feeling disillusioned and doubtful that a collaborative relationship is possible.

Such a conflictive relationship – a reflection of low trust on both sides – can be addressed proactively by the Department's efforts to improve its communication, transparency, accountability as well as to diversify its engagement practices. With these improved efforts and more positive, collaborative experiences, and by raising awareness of and participation in the Department's activities among broader segments of the community people's perceptions of the Department will start to shift

Along with specific practices, the Department can begin to build greater public trust by strengthening relationships in the community through traditional methods. Some community members identified this as the most important step to improve outreach and engagement. With personal relationship-building, key stakeholders become available to help with outreach, sharing their contacts and encouraging their constituents to participate in Department activities. For groups that represent large segments of the community, particularly populations that have limited time to participate (e.g., small merchants, working families), this is an absolutely essential aspect of POE. Formal partnerships with community groups would also help relationship-building, though actual facilitation is best done by neutral and professional facilitators, as much as possible, to ensure objective and good process.

Despite the challenges of building public trust, it is important to note that this is not necessarily the primary barrier to participation. The survey results suggest that the main reason people did not attend meetings was not that they thought their input would not be valued (only 17% respondents said this– see Figure 9 below). Rather, the most common reason for not participating was personal time constraints or not knowing about a meeting in advance (for both homeowners and renters – see Figure 10) –a major challenge of a different nature. However, community

members "not knowing about a meeting" also suggests that improved relationships and communication can help address this challenge.

Moreover, about 20% of respondents also stated that they did not attend meetings because they were generally in favor of the project so they didn't find it necessary to get involved. Therefore, some lack of participation is due to general support and highlights the reality that "perfect" participation is not feasible.

Figure 9
Why Respondents Have NOT Participated in Planning Department Efforts

60%
I DIDN'T KNOW A PROJECT OR COMMUNITY MEETING WAS HAPPENING THAT I COULD HAVE ATTENDED.

51%
I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO ATTEND BUT HAD TIME OR OTHER CONSTRAINTS (E.G. CHILDCARE NEEDS, LOCATION).

I HEARD ABOUT A PROJECT OR MEETING BUT DIDN'T THINK IT WAS RELEVANT TO ME.
17%

21%
I HEARD ABOUT A PROJECT OR MEETING AND WAS GENERALLY IN FAVOR OF IT, SO DIDN'T SEE THE NEED TO GET INVOLVED.

17%
I HEARD ABOUT THE PROJECT BUT DIDN'T THINK MY OPINION WOULD BE ASKED OR USED, SO DID NOT GET INVOLVED.

15%
I HEARD ABOUT A PROJECT OR MEETING BUT DIDN'T REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS ABOUT.

Figure 10
My Experience Participating in Planning Department Activities and Projects

	0	20	40	60	80	100
Didn't know about meeting						
Time constraints						
I was in favor of project						

No. of survey respondents:

HOMEOWNERS   RENTERS
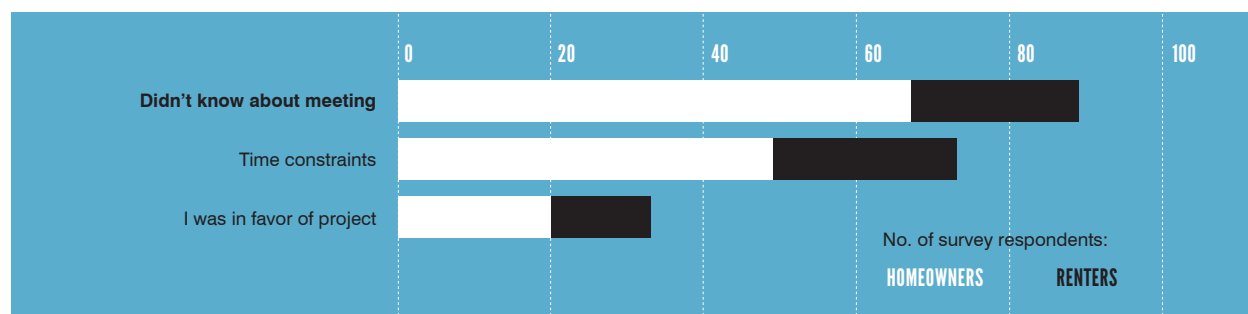
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY FOR POE

The POE assessment shows that resources for POE vary by division:

- CP and EP conduct POE as required by law and funded by permit fees and environmental review fees. CP conducts some outreach beyond legal requirements, though few resources or guidelines exist. EP does not perform POE beyond legal requirements due to the litigious environment.

- In CW, POE varies drastically based on available resources (e.g. grant or other funding, staff availability, the discretion of the project manager). Few guidelines exist, although staff members follow some best practices and resources created informally.

Figure 11 is a snapshot of some resources that are generally available to staff for conducting POE. The responses are the percentage of staff, across all divisions, who state that these resources are currently available to them when doing POE for their projects. It shows that technology and staff time are the most available but staff members report 50% or less availability for the other resources.

CP and CW staff reported a lack of staff time and budget to dedicate to POE beyond the basic requirements or standard practices.

Staff in all divisions also reported a lack of guidelines and tools for conducting POE above current practices. Specifically, they expressed interest in creating outreach guidelines to help guide staff on what to do and how to do it. CW further expressed the desire for tools and guidelines for both outreach and engagement. All staff also desire more opportunity for sharing POE experiences and best practices internally and to help each other think strategically about POE.

Staff expressed interest in building skills in a variety of areas related to POE. Community members also suggested skills they consider need strengthening in some cases, such as customer service skills.

Currently there is little or no monitoring and evaluation to measure the success of POE efforts. A common example includes using meeting evaluations for participants. Currently, the Department tracks webpage hits, and the Language Line and a regular voicemail in a telephone line are monitored for messages by two designated bilingual employees.

Based on this assessment, a number of elements related to the organizational capacity of the Department are necessary to implement the vision and goals for achieving effective POE strategies. These elements are outlined below and recommendations for each are included in the recommendations matrix in the appendix:

- Resource Allocation

- Internal and Inter-agency Communication and Coordination

- Management Support

- A Toolkit – POE Guidelines, a Library, other Tools and a Forum for Sharing Experiences

- Training & Education

- Monitoring and Evaluation

Figure 11
Reported Level or Resources for Planning, Implementing & Evaluating POE

CURRENT RESOURCES FOR POE		
92%	**Staff time, including support staff**	
72%	Technology (e.g. online capabilities)	
54%	Updated contact lists	
46%	Translation and interpretation guidelines and technology	
39%	Budget for materials, food, venue rentals, etc.	
26%	Consultants with POE expertise	
23%	Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. evaluation forms at public meetings)	
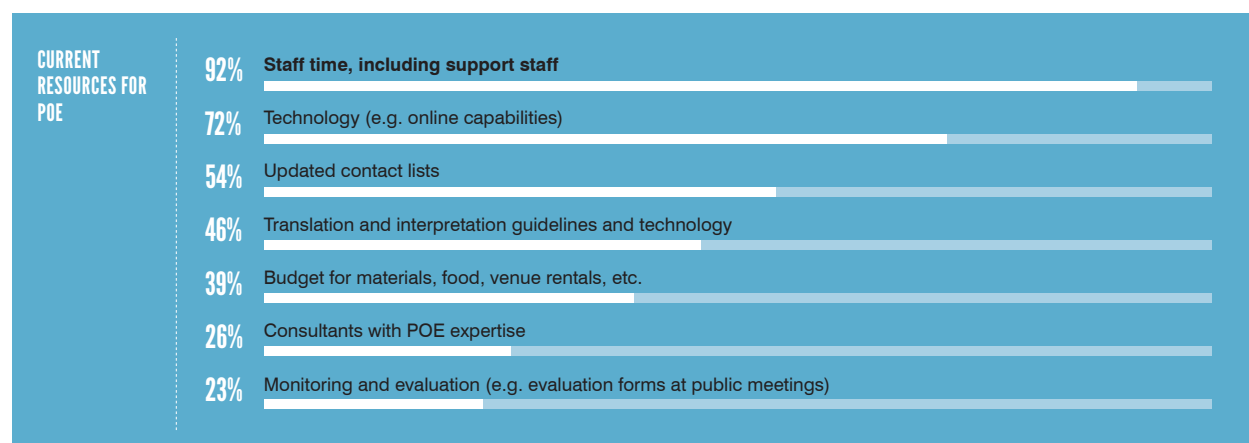
SUMMARY OF KEY CHALLENGES:

In sum, the main challenges for staff and community participants regarding the Department's POE efforts can be summarized below.

Community:

1. Lack of clarity on purpose of participation and how public input is or is not utilized;

2. Difficulty attending too many meetings and participating in large meetings;

3. Lack of on-the-ground opportunities for involvement (or knowledge of them);

4. Need for more culturally- and context-appropriate and creative engagement activities;

5. The vocal few dominate the process;

6. Contact databases are outdated and language is often not clear, inaccessible and too technical, especially for Limited English Proficiency populations.
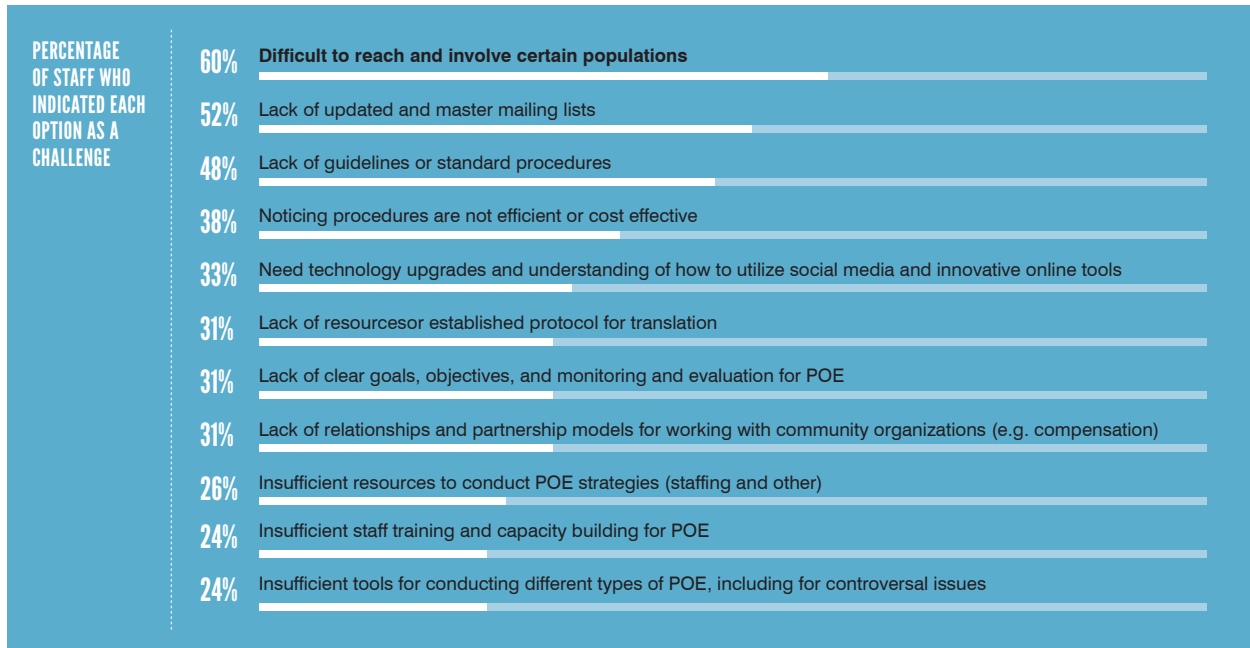
Staff:

1. The vocal few dominate the process

2. Difficult to reach and involve certain groups;

3. Lack of effective and modern communication systems;

4. Lack of guidelines and support systems;

5. Need some staff training to stay current and add skills to the Department's toolkit;

6. Lack of understanding by the public about the Department's work.

The figure below illustrates the range of challenges for staff:

Figure 12
Summary of Top Challenges for Staff in Planning and Conducting POE

PERCENTAGE OF STAFF WHO INDICATED EACH OPTION AS A CHALLENGE		
60%	Difficult to reach and involve certain populations
52%	Lack of updated and master mailing lists
48%	Lack of guidelines or standard procedures
38%	Noticing procedures are not efficient or cost effective
33%	Need technology upgrades and understanding of how to utilize social media and innovative online tools
31%	Lack of resourcesor established protocol for translation
31%	Lack of clear goals, objectives, and monitoring and evaluation for POE
31%	Lack of relationships and partnership models for working with community organizations (e.g. compensation)
26%	Insufficient resources to conduct POE strategies (staffing and other)
24%	Insufficient staff training and capacity building for POE
24%	Insufficient tools for conducting different types of POE, including for controversal issues

This assessment of the Department's baseline practices, evaluation of effectiveness, key challenges and level or resources helps determine strategic areas and recommendations for improvements, included in the appendix, and for next steps in this initiative, described in the following section.
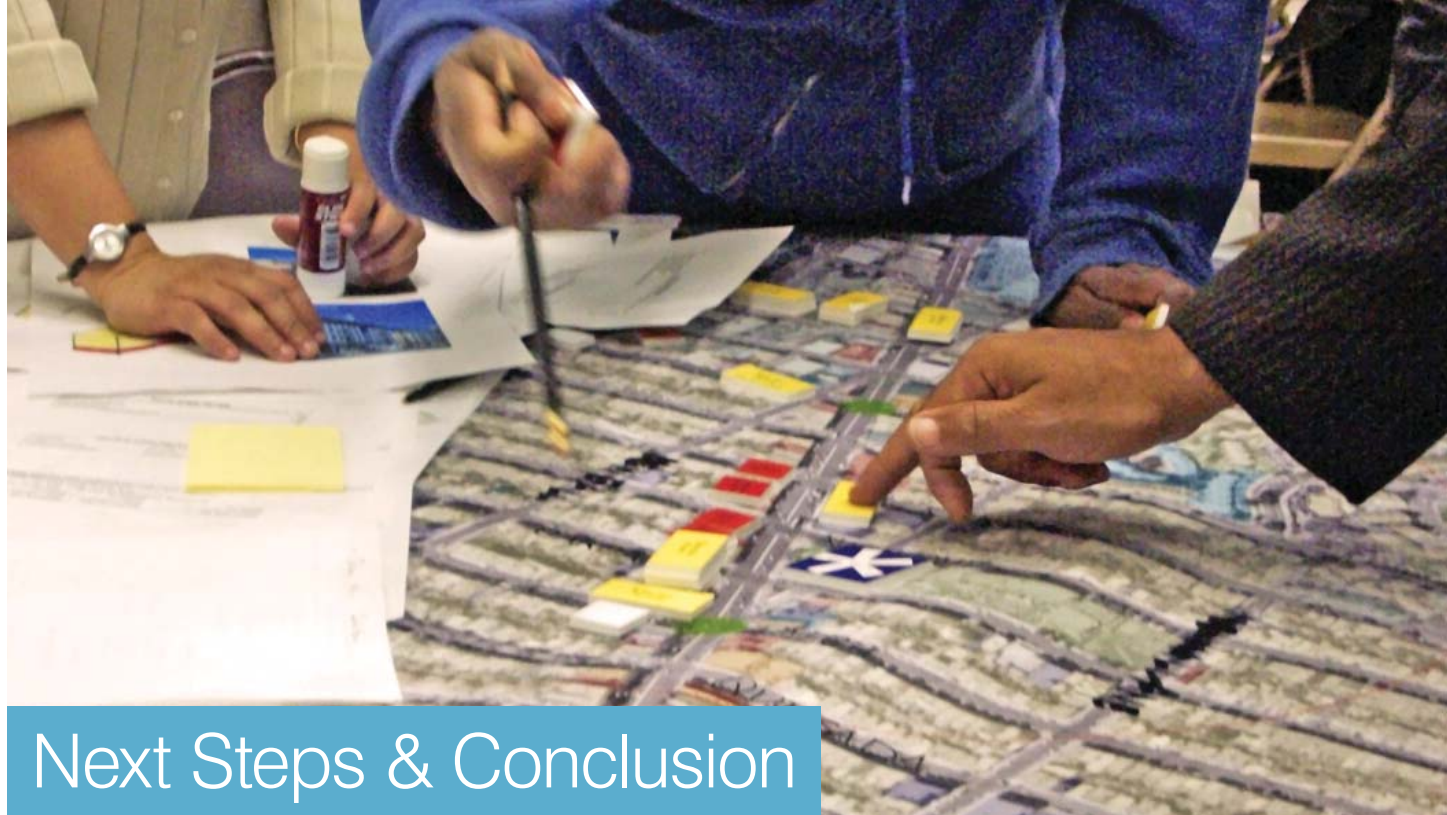
Next Steps & Conclusion

NEXT STEPS

This report is the first step of a much longer process of POE improvements for the Department to pursue. Next steps include:

01

Reviewing the recommendations to determine which most effectively support the Department's POE goals

02

Prioritizing recommendations for implementation

In prioritizing the recommendations for implementation the Department will consider the following:

- The Department's POE vision and goals; and

- The financial, organizational, and general feasibility of each recommendation.

Based on this, relevant recommendations will be translated into an implementation strategy

03

Developing a customizable set of Guidelines, with Davenport's technical assistance, for planning and carrying out POE, and setting up a library of tools and best practices

The POE Guidelines – part of the toolkit of resources and a library – are envisioned as resources to help guide staff in POE planning (toolkit) and a resource for tracking and sharing POE practices internally (library), for which staff expressed a desire. This first tool will be developed with the support of the Davenport Institute, under the guidance of the Public Outreach and Engagement Team (POET).

04

Planning the first staff training, led by Davenport, of the Department's training program series

Staff, Commissioners and the community suggested the need for more training and education. As part of the staff training program, the Davenport Institute is developing a tailored POE training session/program. The goal of the staff training is to build a common understanding of the benefits and challenges of public engagement and provide specific tools for carrying out a POE strategy. Commissioner training would be separate based on Brown Act considerations, but would train Commissioners on general POE philosophy and strategies, including reflection on their role in public engagement and decision-making. Commissioners expressed an interest in receiving this training along with other training (CUs, Code, etc.).

The goals of any community training component, if feasible to implement, are to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the Planning Department's role in city planning, help the public navigate the Department and larger city bureaucracy, and help the public engage in city planning in a positive, collaborative way with the Department. The following were general considerations and ideas from the various participants we interviewed about different trainings the Department may consider:

Staff & Commissioners Training

- Cultural awareness and diversity training;

- Customer service training;

- Presentation/public speaking skills, including how to make an emotional connection with people (e.g., storytelling vs. technical presentation);

- Facilitation and mediation training;

In CP division: to help planners act as a mediators when needed, helping neighbors work together to find win-win solutions so as to avoid the time and expense of DRs.

In CW division: to facilitate community meetings of varying formats and purposes (e.g., visioning, prioritizing, break-out groups, focus groups, etc.). Also skills focused on controversial meetings (e.g., how to manage an angry public or handle complaints);

Community Education

- Encourage project sponsors to be proactive with POE (CP & EP) and share resources (POE Guidelines/toolkit) with them.

- Consider providing Planning Code basic education at developers' public meetings (by fee for service). Developers expressed an interest in having planners to help answer basic Code questions during their POE meetings. If this role is appropriate, the Department would need to consider and communicate the role of the planner as neutral educator at a developer-required meeting.

- Consider a periodic "ABC's of Land Use Planning" training session for the public to explain the public process for planning, including how to provide CEQA comments. Provide an online version to increase accessibility.

- Consider a "Planning Academy" – a 12-week training program on how to engage in planning issues and become leaders in the community (possibly partnering with other departments).

CONCLUSIONS

The following are the significant conclusions of this assessment:

- The Department needs to better align how we get information out about services, projects, event and plans with the way the public feels it is best to reach them.

- Focusing on building public trust and relationships can help improve dynamics with the "vocal few" and help encourage a broader segment of the population (the "silent many") to participate.

- Interacting with the community in spaces where the public is already active and using context-appropriate ways to engage hard-to-reach groups can result in broadening participation and demonstrating the authenticity of the Department's efforts to reach and engage the public in meaningful ways.

- Making clear the role of the public from the earliest stages of a plan or project can help both staff and community understand and have a more positive experience with the public process.

- Clearer and frequent communication about how public input influences planning, projects and policy-making are needed to increase accountability and transparency of the public process and can ultimately result in greater effectiveness and better, more supportable outcomes.

- Community, Commissioners and staff feel that more education about the work of the Department is essential to establish trust, make the Department's role clear, clarify the limitations of our tools, and facilitate public feedback and participation.

- In addition to generally enhancing staff capacity in facilitation and other related skills through training, attention should be paid to the diversity (linguistic, age, etc) of San Francisco's communities through cultural-sensitivity training, to bolster staff's ability to engage communities in culturally and context-appropriate ways.

- The Department currently needs a comprehensive system to design, monitor and evaluate POE efforts.

In sum, this systematic effort to look at the Department's POE effectiveness revealed six strategic objectives that will help the Department prioritize recommendations:

1. *CREATE GUIDELINES & RESOURCES*

2. *IMPROVE COMMUNICATION*

3. *BROADEN PARTICIPATION*

4. *IMPROVE RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING*

5. *EMPHASIZE EDUCATION*

6. *INCREASE STAFF CAPACITY*

Meeting the goals and objectives of the Public Outreach & Engagement Effectiveness Initiative is a significant undertaking that will take time as the Department more clearly articulates its vision and improves its strategies. However, completing efforts already underway, prioritizing "low-hanging fruit," and creating one positive interaction with the public at a time will be key in slowly improving public trust of the Department, creating more collaborative relationships, and becoming more effective. Through this evaluation – a reflective inquiry by staff and community on how best to inform and engage the public – the Department is well poised to move forward in an iterative process of learning and adapting to achieve its goals. The Department is committed to this work and believes in the importance of better public process. We will continue to work towards improving POE practices in order to meet local law and open government mandates, and to ensure that community members have opportunities for meaningful participation in constructing the future of San Francisco.

Implementation Objectives

1. Guidelines & Resources

create guidelines, policies and systems for planning, implementing and evaluating POE efforts

2. Communication

improve and upgrade contact databases and communication systems, and continue the process to make notices and information accessible, clear and streamlined, including to limited English-speaking persons (LEP)

3. Participation

broaden public participation in planning efforts by ensuring POE efforts are varied, culturally sensitive and accessible, in particular to underrepresented and LEP groups

4. Relationship-Building

improve existing and build new working relationships with the public.

5. Education

focus on community education to increase understanding of the Department's work and opportunities for public participation in the planning process.
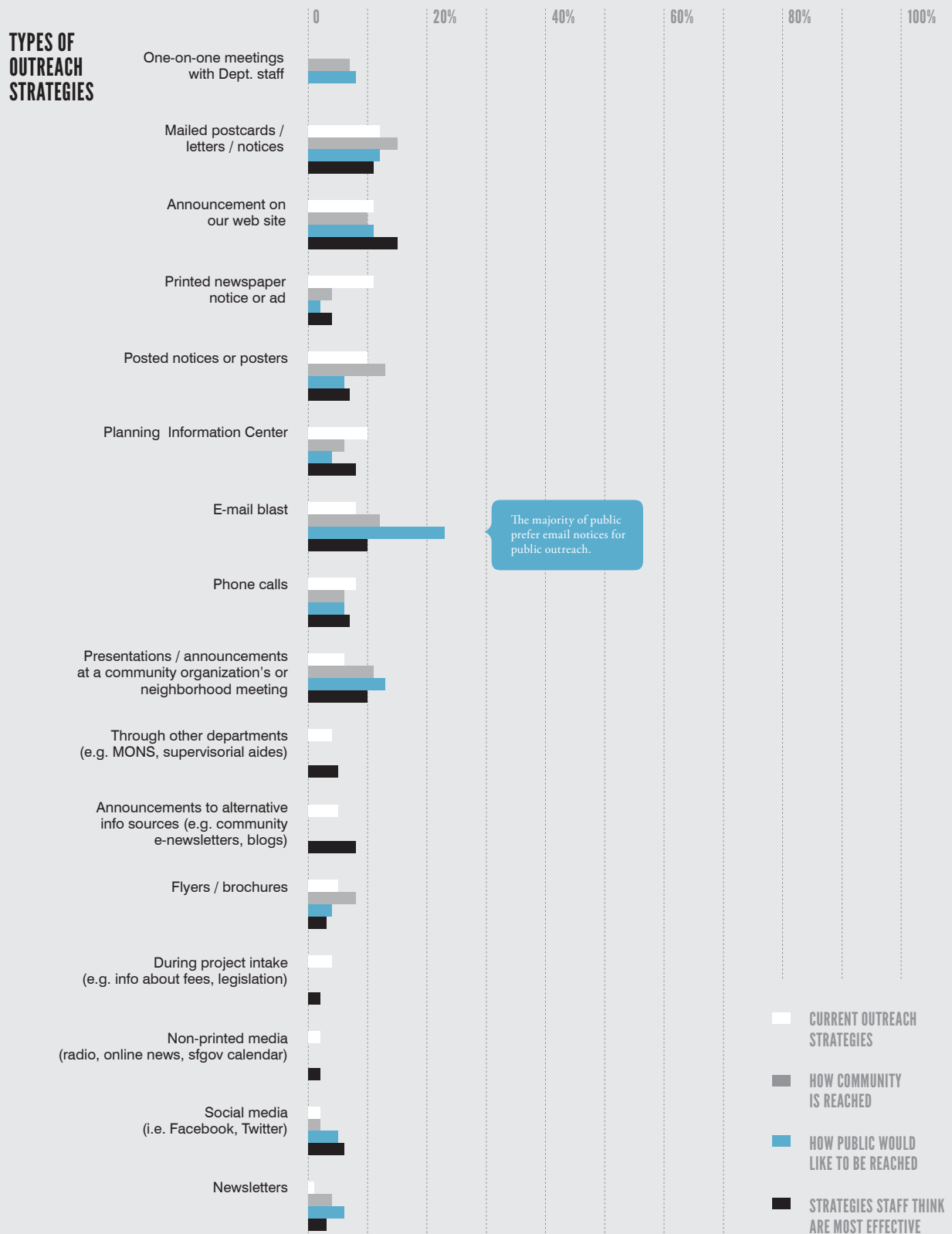

6. Capacity Building

increase staff capacity (including cultural sensitivity and staff diversity) to carry out the recommendations of the POE assessment

CURRENT OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

TYPES OF OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Scale: 0 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- One-on-one meetings with Dept. staff
- Mailed postcards / letters / notices
- Announcement on our web site
- Printed newspaper notice or ad
- Posted notices or posters
- Planning Information Center
- E-mail blast
- Phone calls
- Presentations / announcements at a community organization's or neighborhood meeting
- Through other departments (e.g. MONS, supervisorial aides)
- Announcements to alternative info sources (e.g. community e-newsletters, blogs)
- Flyers / brochures
- During project intake (e.g. info about fees, legislation)
- Non-printed media (radio, online news, sfgov calendar)
- Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)
- Newsletters

The majority of public prefer email notices for public outreach.

Legend:
- CURRENT OUTREACH STRATEGIES
- HOW COMMUNITY IS REACHED
- HOW PUBLIC WOULD LIKE TO BE REACHED
- STRATEGIES STAFF THINK ARE MOST EFFECTIVE

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

VENUES USED FOR ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

- Focus group
- Community survey
- Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) or a Project Area Committee (PAC) to advise a project long-term
- Design workshop or "charrette"
- Public meeting using break-out groups, small group dialogue, and report backs
- Formally or informally work with community-based organizations to reach out to and engage the community
- Guest presentation and input at a meeting hosted by a neighborhood or merchant association or non-profit group
- Opportunities for public to submit written comments (for CEQA)
- PPA, Project Review, and Pre-Application meeting held by a Planning Dept. staff (for construction of a proposed building)
- One-on-one phone or in-person conversations with community members (i.e. to clarify something or to get comments)
- Public meeting to inform and get input from public on a project (e.g. EIR scoping meetings, open houses, town halls)
- Public hearing to get comments (at Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, or for an EIR)

Staff and community seem to believe public meetings as the most effective venue for public engagement.

Legend:
- CURRENT VENUES REPORTED BY STAFF
- MOST EFFECTIVE VENUES (STAFF)
- VENUES USED BY COMMUNITY
- MOST EFFECTIVE VENUES (COMMUNITY)

APPENDIX B: *ACRONYMS*

CAC Citizen Advisory Committee: Planning Department CACs are central community advisory bodies charged with providing input to City agencies and decision makers with regard to all activities related to implementation of Area Plans. CACs are generally established for the purposes of providing input on the prioritization of Public Benefits, updating the Public Benefits program, relaying information to community members regarding the status of development proposals in the Plan Areas, and providing input to plan area monitoring efforts as appropriate.

CBO Community-based organization

CEQA California Environmental Quality Act: It is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

CP Current Planning Division: Planners in the CP division help shape the physical development of the city. They are responsible for reviewing building permit and land use entitlement applications for compliance with the San Francisco Planning Code, San Francisco's General Plan, Zoning regulations, and relevant design guidelines. Also, Current Planning staff process all Neighborhood Notifications for changes of use and residential expansions.

CW Citywide Planning Division: The CW Division develops planning policy to preserve and enhance San Francisco's quality of life. Citywide Policy Planning maintains the city's General Plan which provides guidance to all city agencies and departments regarding urban design, land use, transportation, housing, open space and a variety of other issues. Citywide Policy Planning also develops permanent controls–zoning, planning code controls and other regulations that implement the General Plan, both through community-based planning efforts and citywide initiatives.

DR Discretionary Review: The Planning Commission has discretion over all building permit applications. Normally, this discretion is delegated to the Planning Department, which approves applications that meet the minimum standards of the Planning Code, including the priority policies of Code Section 101.1. From time to time the Commission will review a permit application. The Commission may determine that modifications to the proposed project are necessary in order to protect the public interest. The Department will disapprove the application unless the required changes are made. This process of Commission consideration is commonly known as "Discretionary Review" or simply "DR".

EP Environmental Planning Division: The EP Division of the Planning Department reviews projects for potential environmental impacts on the City of San Francisco and its residents, a process known as environmental review. Reviews are conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Chapter 31 of the San Francisco Administrative Code, which provides guidelines for implementing the CEQA process. The reviews identify any potential adverse environmental effects of proposed actions, assesses their significance, and proposes measures to eliminate or mitigate significant impacts. Only certain smaller-scale actions identified by the state, known as Categorical Exemptions, are exempt from environmental review.

HPS Historic Preservation Survey team, under Current Planning Division: Historic Preservation program staff are responsible for a variety of tasks, including project review, environmental review, Historic Preservation Commission support, and historic and cultural resource surveys. To facilitate preservation efforts, the Planning Department has established the Comprehensive Citywide Cultural and Historical Resource Survey (Survey Program) to manage and conduct historic and cultural resource surveys.

LAO San Francisco Language Access Ordinance: The LAO, formerly known as the Equal Access to Services (EAS) Ordinance, was enacted in 2001 to provide "equal access to city services to all San Franciscans, including those with limited proficiency in English."

LEP Limited English proficient individuals

Leg. Afrs. Legislative Affairs Division: The Leg. Afrs. Division of the Planning Department reviews proposed legislative changes to the San Francisco Planning Code to ensure the Code is updated in a concise, logical, and coherent manner. The division analyzes all proposed changes to the Planning Code that are introduced by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's Office.

PIC Planning Information Center: The Department's first stop for information to assist citizens in understanding the Permit process and applying to their property or to project proposals the policies of the General Plan and provisions of the Planning Code that might affect them.

POE Public Outreach and Engagement

ZA Zoning Administrator: The ZA administers and enforces the Planning Code of the City & County of San Francisco. Duties and responsibilities of the ZA include: hearing and making determinations on variance applications; providing written interpretations and clarifications of the Planning Code; advising the Director of Planning and Planning Commission on amendments to the Planning Code; monitoring and maintaining data related to the ongoing implementation of the Planning Code; and appearing before the Board of Supervisors, Board of Appeals, Planning Commission and other bodies on Planning Code matters. The ZA also manages the Planning Department's Zoning and Compliance Teams.

ZAC Zoning and Compliance Team: Zoning & Compliance staff are responsible for interpretation and enforcement of the Planning Code.

UPN Universal Planning Notification: a Department effort to develop a draft proposal to consolidate, simplify and improve the Planning Department's public notification processes, which

APPENDIX C: *GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS*

▶ Formally acknowledge Public Outreach and Engagement (POE) program and adopt goals.

    Place POE under the Department's communications function

    Secure staff support and develop employee performance metrics for POET

    Develop and adopt POE principles

▶ Create training program for staff which may include: facilitation skills, mediation, cultural awareness, customer service, public participation techniques, and public speaking.

▶ Create guidelines and tools (resource library); and monitor and evaluate POE efforts.

▶ Diversify POE venues (online, social media, and facilitation techniques)

▶ Develop a long-term communications plan, inclusive of public outreach and engagement, employee communications, media relations, marketing, website and intranet management.

▶ Monitor and evaluate communications initiatives.

▶ Create general best practices and templates for use of plain language.

▶ Coordinate and confirm compliance with Language Access Ordinance.

▶ Investigate opportunities to improve department notices and public information.

▶ Develop a Planning 101 program for Supervisors, Commissioners, community members and stakeholders.

▶ Secure additional staff for communications support.

APPENDIX D:
UNIVERSAL PLANNING NOTIFICATION SUMMARY

Existing Notification Standards (10/5/09)
Note: This summary is not definitive. The Summary includes Planning Code Standards that may differ from Department practice.

Building Permit Application (BPA)/Discretionary Review (DR)

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	*Length*	*Type*	*Recipients*	*Radius*	*Length*	*Type*	*Length*	
BPA notice in NC District	PC §312	[per ZA requirements] practice is 11"x17"	30 days	notice along with plans [practice is 8.5x11"; no specifications; no floorplans]	owners and ocupants	150'	30 days	none	none	Western SoMa subject to Section 312 controls per 803.7. uncodified practice is to use orange paper?
BPA Notice in R District	PC § 311	[per ZA requirements] practice is 11"x17"	30 days	notice along with 11"x17" plans (inc. floor plans)	owners and ocupants	150'	30 days	none	none	uncodified practice is to use orange paper
DR - Standard Hearing Notice	PC § 311(d) and 312(e)	30" x 30"	10 days	notice	owners and ocupants	150'	10 days	none	none	longstanding practice has been to notify only adjacent neighbors via mail
DR - Mandatory Hearing (MCD)	PC § 217(k), 312(e), 790.141 and 890.133	notice [unspecified]	30 days	notice	owners and ocupants	300'	30 days	none	none	Subsequent DR hearing notice under Section 312(e) required.
DR - Staff-Initiated Hearing with 311/312	PC § 311(d)	30" x 30"	10 days	notice	owners and ocupants	150'	10 days	none	none	Regular DR Notice performed after completion of Section 311/312 notice.
DR - Staff-Initiated Hearing without 311/312	PC § 311(d)	[per ZA requirements] practice is 11"x17"	30 days	notice along with 11"x17" plans (inc. floor plans)	owners and ocupants	150'	30 days	none	none	
DR - Mandatory Hearing	PC § 317 and 311/312 (if required)	30" x 30"	10 days	notice	owners and ocupants	150'	10 days	none	none	Regular DR Notice performed after completion of Section 311/312 notice (if required)
Sutro Tower	PC § 306.9	none	none	notice	owners (and occupants?), neighborhood organizations and interested parties.	1,000'	none specified	none	none	

Environmental Review

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	Length	Type	Recipients	Radius	Length	Type	Length	
MEA - Notification of Project Receiving Environmental Review (all but Class 1 or 3 catex)	Not required - Department policy	none	none	notice	owners	300'	14 days	none	none	practice is to include adjacent occupants and nbhd groups as well
MEA - Notice of Availability of NegDec	Admin. Code Chapter 31.11, CEQA	11x17 onsite	20 days	notice	owners	300'	20 days	notice	20 days	practice is to include adjacent occupants/ nbhd groups as well
MEA - Notice of Availability of NegDec Involving Regional Agencies & State Clearinghouse	Admin. Code Chapter 31.11, CEQA	11x17 onsite	30 days	notice	owners	300'	30 days	notice	30 days	practice is to include adjacent occupants/ nbhd groups as well
MEA - Notice of Preparation of EIR	Admin. Code Chapter 31.11, CEQA	11x17 onsite	30 days	notice	owners	300'	30 days	notice	30 days	practice is to include adjacent occupants/ nbhd groups as well
MEA - Publication of DEIR	Admin. Code Chapter 31.11, CEQA	11x17 onsite	45 days	notice	owners	300'	45 days	notice	45 days	practice is to include adjacent occupants/ nbhd groups as well
MEA - Notice of Appeal of PMND	Admin Code Chapter 31.11	none	none	notice	owner, appellant and interested parties	none	up to 30 days	none	up to 30 days	practice is to include adjacent occupants/ nbhd groups as well

Preservation

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	Length	Type	Recipients	Radius	Length	Type	Length	
Certificate of Appropriateness (LPAB Only)	PC § 1006.2	none	none	none	none	none	none	none	n/a	
Certificate of Appropriateness (with CPC Review)	PC § 1006.3	none	none	notice	applicant, owner of subject property	subject property	10 days	notice	20 days	
Certificate of Appropriateness (with CPC Review) AND in Historic District	PC § 1006.3	none	none	notice	applicant, owner of subject property AND all property owners in historic district	subject property	10 days	notice	20 days	
Historic Survey	Policy	none	none					none	none	
Landmark (District)	PC § 1004.3	none	none	notice	all property owners in district	district	10 days	notice	20 days	
Landmark (Individual)	PC § 1004.3	none	none	notice	owner of subject property	subject property	10 days	notice	20 days	
Notice of Designation	PC § 1104	posting "in a conspicuous place"	not specified	notice	owner of subject property	none	not specified	"publication" pursuant to California Government Code 6064	not specified	
Notice of Change of Designation	PC § 1106	none	none	notice	owner of subject property	none	not specified	none	none	

Public Hearing for Project Entitlement

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	Length	Type	Recipients	Radius	Length	Type	Length	
B - Office Allocation Hearing	PC § 322, PC § 306.8	notice 30" x 30"	20 days	none	none	none	none	none	none	
C - Conditional Use (CU)	PC § 306.3	30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
CU for Planned Unit Development (PUD)	PC § 306.8	30" x 30" must include map	20 days	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
CU for PUD in NC or SoMa District	PC § 316.3	[size not specified] must include map	20 days	notice	owners	300'	20 days	notice	20 days	
CU in NC or SoMa District	PC § 316.3	[not specified] practice is 30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners	300'	20 days	notice	20 days	
CU for Wireless Telecommunications (WTS) Facility (within C-3 & RC-4 Districts)	WTS Guidelines	30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners AND residential tenants of subject building AND residential tenants within 25 feet of subject building	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
CU for WTS Facility (all other Districts)	WTS Guidelines	30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners and occupants	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
Gas Station Conversion	PC § 228.4	[unspecified]	20 days	notice	owners	300 feet	10 days	none	none	
V - Variance	PC § 305, PC § 306.3, PC § 306.8	30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners	300'	10 days	none	none	
X - Downtown Project Exception Hearing	PC § 309, PC § 306.8	30" x 30"	20 days	notice	owners	300'	10 days	none	none	
X - Hearing on Downtown Project Proposed Approval (no exceptions sought and sponsor accepts any additional requirements)	PC § 309(g)(2)	none	none	notice	owners and any person who has submitted request for additional requirements	adjacent properties	none specified	none	none	

Text/Map Change

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	Length	Type	Recipients	Radius	Length	Type	Length	
General Plan Amendments	PC § 306.3	none	none	none	none	none	none	notice along with map, if applicable	20 days	
Map Change Greater Than 1/2ac but Less Than 30ac	PC § 306.3	none	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
Map Change Greater than 30ac	PC § 306.3	none	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice along with map	20 days	practice is to include a map in mailed notice if appropriate
Map Change Less Than 1/2ac	PC § 306.3	8 1/2" by 11" posting at every street intersection w/in 300' radius of subject lot(s)	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice along with map	20 days	
Text Change	PC § 306.3	none	none	none	none	none	none	notice	20 days	

Other

PROJECT TYPE	CODE REFERENCE	POSTING		MAILING				NEWSPAPER		COMMENT
		Type	Length	Type	Recipients	Radius	Length	Type	Length	
BBN	PC § 351(f)	none	none	not specified	BBN Requestor	not specified	not specified	none	none	Practice is 10 day notice, signature on plans or phone call.
Child Care Exaction Determination Notice	PC § 314.4(a)(2), PC § 306.3	none	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
Coastal Zone Application Filing	PC § 330.6	none	none	notice	California Coastal Commission	none	10 days	none	none	notice to CC given within 10 days of filing.
Coastal Zone Determination	PC § 330.6	none	none	notice	California Coastal Commission	none	7 days	none	none	notice to CC given within 7 days of decision.
Coastal Zone Appeal (to Board of Appeals)	PC § 330.6	none	none	notice	California Coastal Commission	none	10 days	none	none	notice to CC given within 10 days of appeal filing.
Coastal Zone	PC § 330.7	none	none	notice	occupants	100'	none specified	none	none	notice of coastal zone permit application
IMP Hearing Notice	304.5, 306.3	none	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	Practice is to include 20-day posted notice (30"x30"). Mailed notice may also be of longer duration per ZA discretion.
Jobs-Housing Exaction Determination Notice	PC § 313.4(b), PC § 306.3	none	none	notice	owners	300'	10 days	notice	20 days	
X - Downtown Project Application Filing	PC § 309(c)	none	none	notice	owners	adjacent properties only	none specified	notice	none specified	
X - Downtown Project Proposed Approval (no exceptions sought and sponsor accepts any additional requirements)	PC § 309(d)	none	none	notice	owners	adjacent properties only	10 days	notice	none specified	

Equal Access to Language Services Ordinance legal requirements staff summary:

Premise:
- Language Access for LEP (Limited English Speaking Person) individuals is mandated by federal, state and local law.
- It is a civil right and a key path to meaningful and full participation in a democracy.
- In SF, about 13% of HH are linguistically isolated!

Definitions:
"Substantial Number of LEP" =10,000 City residents or 5% of those persons who use the Department services

"Public Contact Position"= a position where the primary job responsibility consist of meeting, contacting and dealing with the public in the performance of the duties of that position.

Requirements:
1. Determine annually whether 5% or more of the population we serve/use our services are LEP (through surveys and other methods explained in ordinance).
2. Utilize sufficient Bilingual Employees in Public Contact Positions to provide information and services to the public in each language spoken by a Substantial Number of LEP (implement the hiring requirements through retirement and normal attrition, not dismissal of other employees).
3. Inform LEP, in their native tongue, of their right to request translation services [in a way that provides enough context about what the services are].

Translate the following:
4. Applications or forms to participate in a program or activity, to receive its services/benefits, written notices of rights to, determination of eligibility of, award of, denial of, loss of, or decreases in benefits or services, including the right to appeal any Department's decision; notices advising LEP of free language assistance;
5. Materials explaining a Department's services or programs, complaint forms, any other documents that have the potential for important consequences for an individual seeking services from or participating in a program of the Department.
6. Post notices in public areas of their facilities [e.g., PIC, reception desk] in the relevant language(s) indicating that written material and staff who speak the languages are available;
7. Ensure that translated materials are accurate and appropriate for the target audience – should match literacy levels of target audience
8. Designate a staff member w/responsibility for ensuring translation meet accuracy and appropriateness standards [including through external translators and through community groups whose clients receive services from the Department]
9. Oral translation if requested at least 48 hours in advance, meeting minutes if requested

FULL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

available separately/by request due to length

Acknowledgments