

PORTLAND ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Listening to All Portlanders: The Results

[PREGAME]

Listening to All Portlanders: At a Glance



Listening to All Portlanders: Summary

A vital part of the multi-year Portland Engagement Project is **Listening to All Portlanders**. How do the people who live, work, study, and play in Portland want to engage with the City?

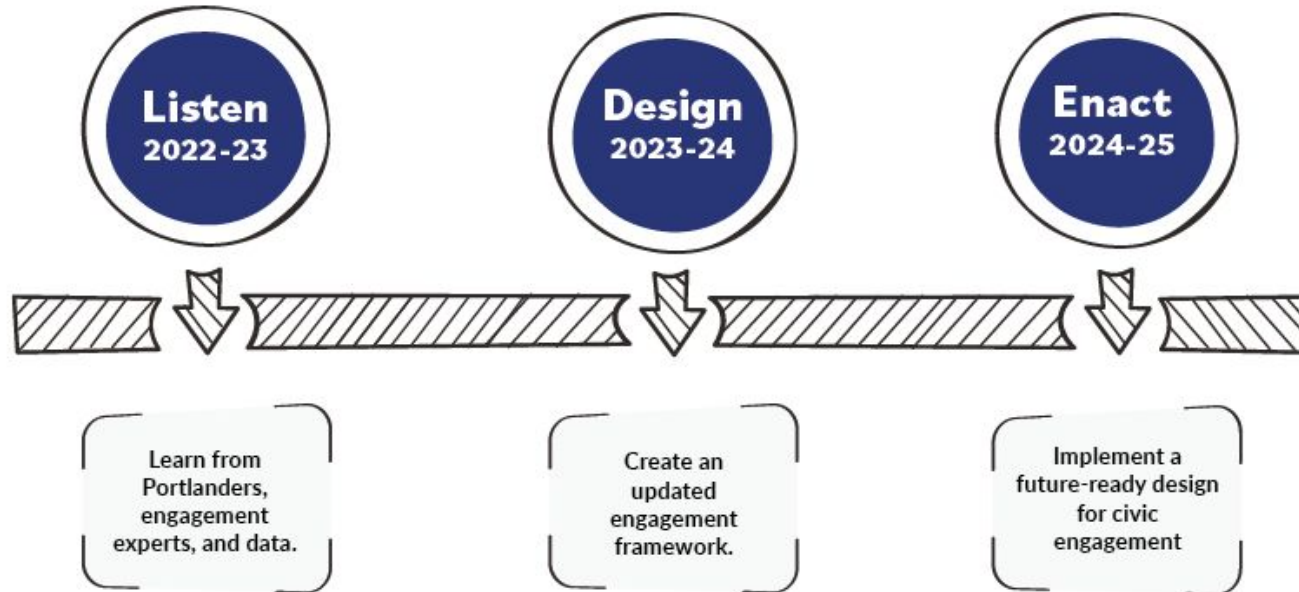
Pregame listened to Portlanders across the city to get their perspective - in their own words - on what's working, what's not, and what might make engagement better.

After inviting City practitioners, District Offices, and youth to influence our approach, we spent three months listening to Portlanders and recording their sentiments. Through Listening Sessions, Pop-Up Events, and an Online Survey, we heard from 677 Portlanders who generated nearly 1,000 ideas. Their ideas are synthesized here into themes and priorities.

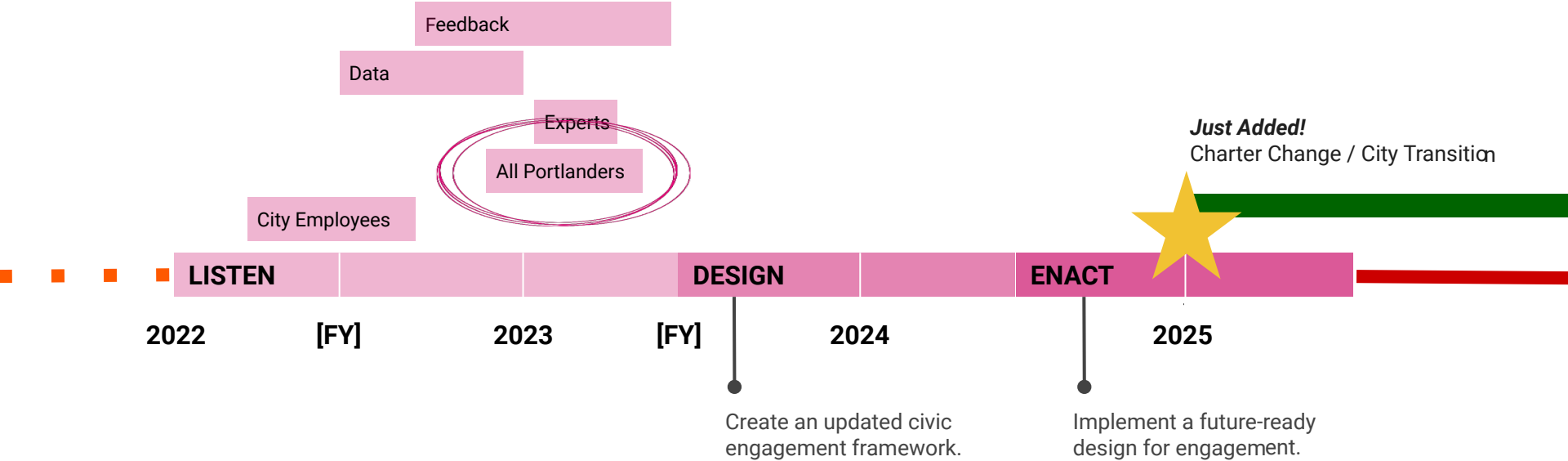
The solutions for effective engagement are already out there. And now that Portland is transitioning to a new form of government, it's the ideal time to put these ideas into action to make the City work for all Portlanders.



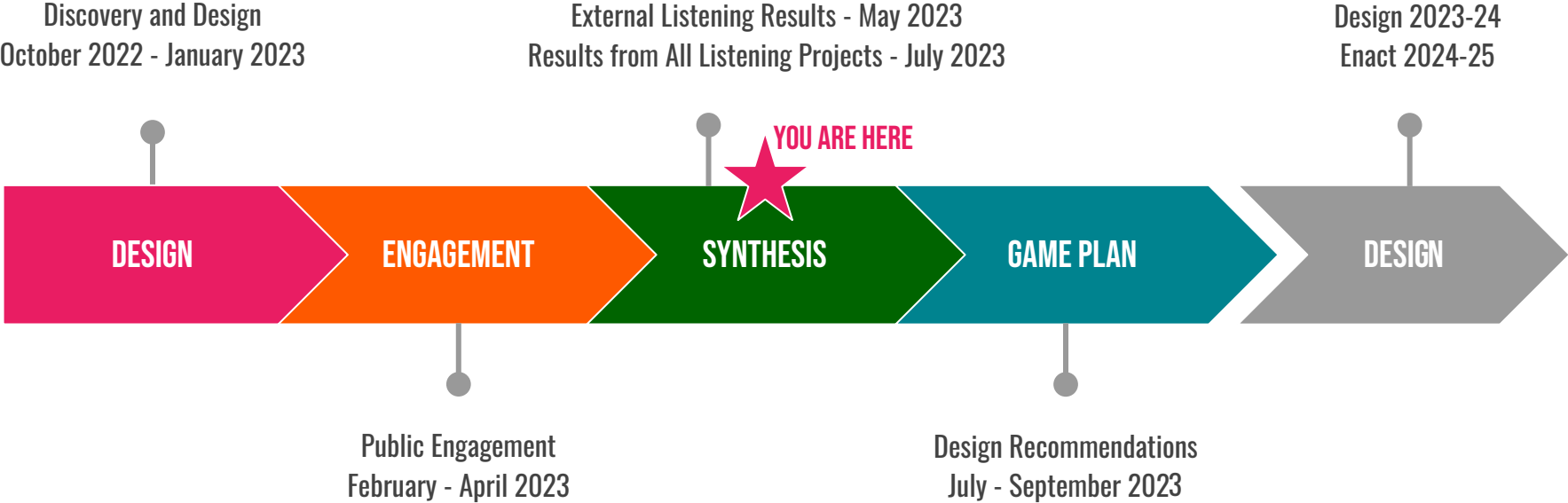
Portland Engagement Project: Overview



Portland Engagement Project: Timeline



Listening to All Portlanders: Process Map



Listening to All Portlanders

Design + Approach

Guiding Principles

Unifying

Our process conveys a spirit of “we’re all in this together” and reflects Civic Life’s promise to Promote the Common Good.

Future-Ready

Our work is oriented toward the Portland of 2035 and beyond. Our output consistently reflects community needs and feedback.

Inclusive

With cultural humility, we invite as many voices as possible and we rely on trusted methods that respect and reflect the substantive change and progress we are co-creating with our community.

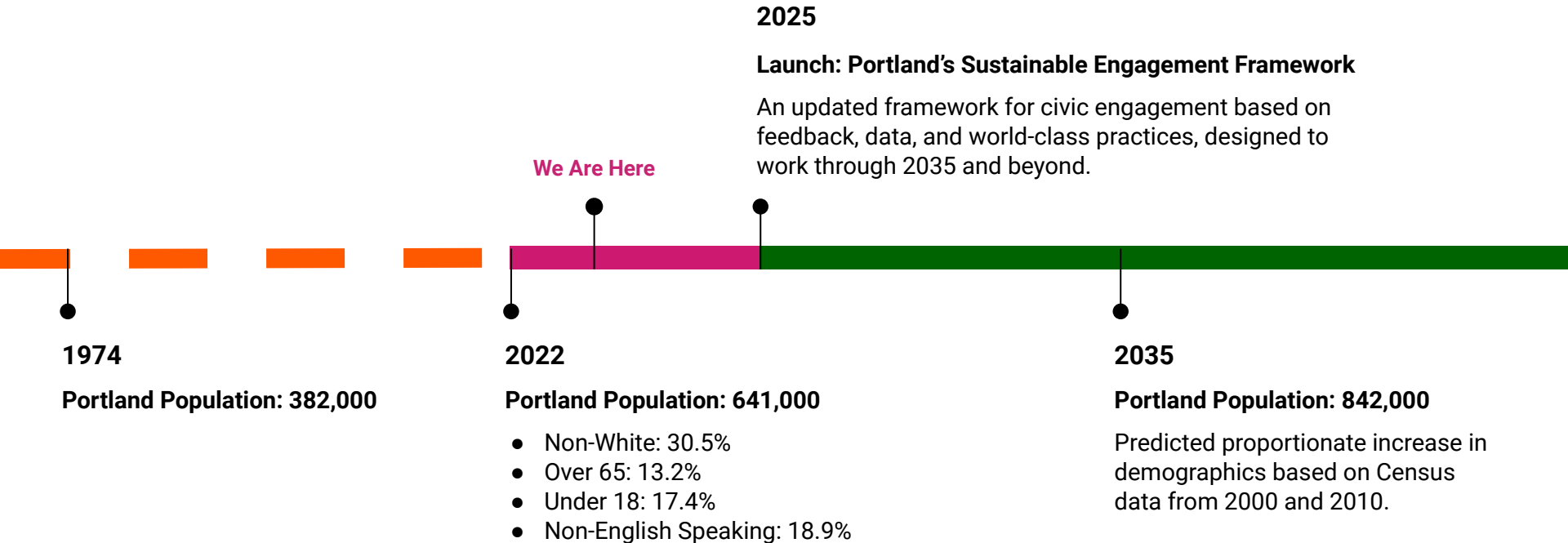
Iterative

We are not starting from scratch; we are evolving to meet the needs of a changing City. We value work, discoveries, and relationships already established at the City and Bureau levels.

Transparent

We communicate our process and how to get involved. We proactively inform Portlanders in ways that are accessible by all.

Planning for Portland 2035



Segmenting “All Portlanders”

Rather than a strict demographic measurement of engagement, we wanted to respect the intersectionality of Portlanders’ identities and lifestyles.

We also wanted to prioritize conversation and immediately build rapport with each participant, and felt that asking demographic questions would undermine that goal.

Our starting point was geography: making sure we were doing outreach in each district. We then contacted over 80 community organizations, in addition to working with Civic Life to contact all 95 neighborhood associations, to invite all Portlanders to participate.

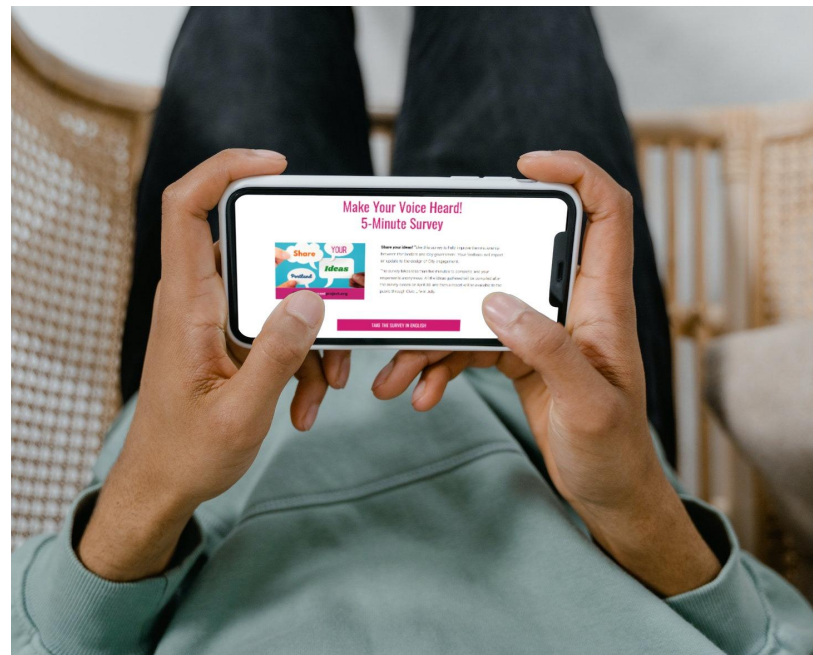
Intersectional outreach included:

- **Demographics:** age, racial identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, education
- **Group Affiliation:** clubs, causes, recreation
- **Unaffiliated:** houseless people, new Portlanders, people without time/inclination to be group members
- **Professional Status:** employees, business owners, freelancers/gig workers, students, unemployed
- **Community Organizations:** neighborhood associations, nonprofits, volunteer organizations
- **Nonresidents** with Portland Interest: workers, business owners, property owners

Spreading the Word

Our approach was to make it as easy as possible to participate. Promotion happened via all available channels, including:

- City Website - Civic Life pages
- Civic Life newsletter
- Civic Life social media
- Dedicated Website: PDXengagementproject.org
- 15,000 Postcards distributed citywide
- QR code
- District Offices and Neighborhood Associations
- Community Partner social media and newsletters
- Pop-Up Listening Booth
- Partner event briefings
- Press release and media alerts



PORTLAND ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Share YOUR Ideas

Portland

How do YOU want to influence the City of Portland?
We're gathering YOUR ideas for improving the relationship between Portlanders and City government.

Make sure YOUR voice is heard, now through April 30:

- ✓ Sign up for a listening session
- ✓ Submit your ideas via online survey
- ✓ See full event schedule + news

Scan the QR code to go to PDXengagementproject.org

[PREGAME] OFFICE OF Community & Civic Life

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Comparte

Portland

TU

punto de vista

Como Podemos Forjar Juntos El Futuro De Portland?

Portland está reuniendo SUS ideas sobre cómo desea influir en las decisiones y la dirección de la ciudad.
Responda la encuesta rápida para compartir sus ideas hoy!

PDXengagementproject.org



Listening to All Portlanders

Goals + Results

Engagement Goals + Results

Category	Goals	Results
Amplify the Often Unheard “Feet on the Street”	4+ location-based community outreach efforts and promo material distribution citywide	5 location-based community outreach events, 15,000 postcards distributed citywide to 100+ locations
Youth Engagement + Empowerment	Create opportunity for youth to participate in facilitating feedback	Activated 8 youth ambassadors in partnership with Multnomah Youth Commission
Community Events	Join at least 4 community or city-sponsored events	12 community or city-sponsored events
Partner with Local Organizations	Partner with 12 local organizations, varying demographics	Partnered with local orgs for 4 Event Briefings + 2 Listening Sessions + 20 Survey Amplifiers
Neighborhood Associations	Invite every Neighborhood Association to participate in focus groups and/or via electronic survey	Invited all NAs via District Offices and Civic Life 4 District Office hosted Listening Sessions + Open Listening Sessions for each of 7 city areas
City-Adjacent Groups	Partner with 4+ local organizations, varying demographics	Partnered with 11 organizations
Online Survey	Distribute survey widely; goal of 50,000+ impressions	Over 100,000 campaign impressions

Engagement Stats

Category	Results
Campaign Impressions	100,737
Engagement Events	38
Survey Responses	258
People Heard	677
Ideas Generated	928
Postcards Distributed	15,000
Project Website Visits	2,200
Virtual Listening Session Registrations	346
DIY Listening Kit Downloads	8



What's a "Good" Result?

We spoke with several engagement experts about numbers: what's an appropriate sample size to accurately reflect the views of all Portlanders?

Experts report that for Portland's population size, talking to at least 400 people would accurately reflect the diversity of thoughts, ideas and opinions of the entire city.

Our conversations serve as real-world grounding to the data collected by the other Listening Projects, akin to journalists interviewing sources to discover the stories beyond the numbers.

Showcasing the words of Portlanders in our report provides an opportunity to understand the *why* behind the what - how the City's engagement - or lack thereof - affects people's lives and the livability and equity of their City.

Listening Sessions + Live Events

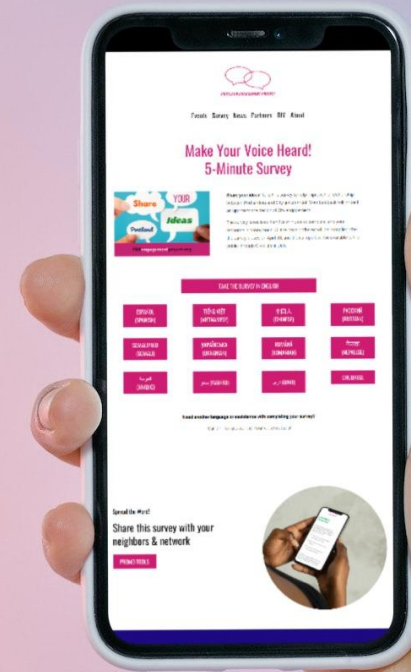
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- 38 live events: virtual, hybrid, and in person
- 26 Listening Sessions
- 419 total participants
- Dedicated session for each of 7 city areas: East, Southeast, Northeast, Central Northeast, North, Northwest, and Southwest
- Dedicated sessions hosted by 4 District Offices
- Complemented by PEP Pop Ups and Briefings
 - Pop Ups at public spaces to increase access
 - Briefing at partner events to drive awareness and participation



Online Survey

- 258 respondents
- Available in 13 languages
- Exact same questions as Listening Sessions
- Survey assistance available via 311
- Shared across Civic Life and other City bureau newsletters and social media
- Shared by 17+ community organizations
- Accessible via QR code on print materials



Pep Rally!

I came into this thinking it was going to be a waste of time, but this has been a really great experience.

Listening Session Participant

Thank you - thrilled with the way the event turned out!

Community Group Chair

Would love to see more of these open feedback mechanisms.

Survey Responder

Thank you so much for reaching out. We feel like an untapped resource when it comes to civic engagement.

PTA Equity Group Parent

Listening to All Portlanders

What We Heard

Synthesizing Qualitative Data

Listening to All Portlanders was intentionally designed to complement the other PEP Listening Projects. Our project was **qualitative**, gathering individual ideas, sentiments, and stories, whereas other Listening Projects, such as the Portland Insights Survey and Neighborhood Maps data, were **quantitative**, synthesizing demographic information.

Participants were invited to share in their own words, style, language, and via the platform of their choice. We collected open responses typed into the digital survey, handwritten on sticky notes, or verbally communicated to a facilitator.

Facilitators collected responses, then those responses were coded by a data analyst. The themes reported are a result of the coding and tallying process, with examples provided in participants' own words that are reflective of the theme at hand.



Engagement Spectrum

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We heard from Portlanders across all seven districts, ranging from people who had never engaged with the City before to people who have been involved for decades.

I don't know. I don't think I've ever called the city for anything, and if I did, I wouldn't know where to start.

I am educated by what to find, but constantly thwarted, links can go to different places or dead ends, it's hard to navigate, not easy to find information.

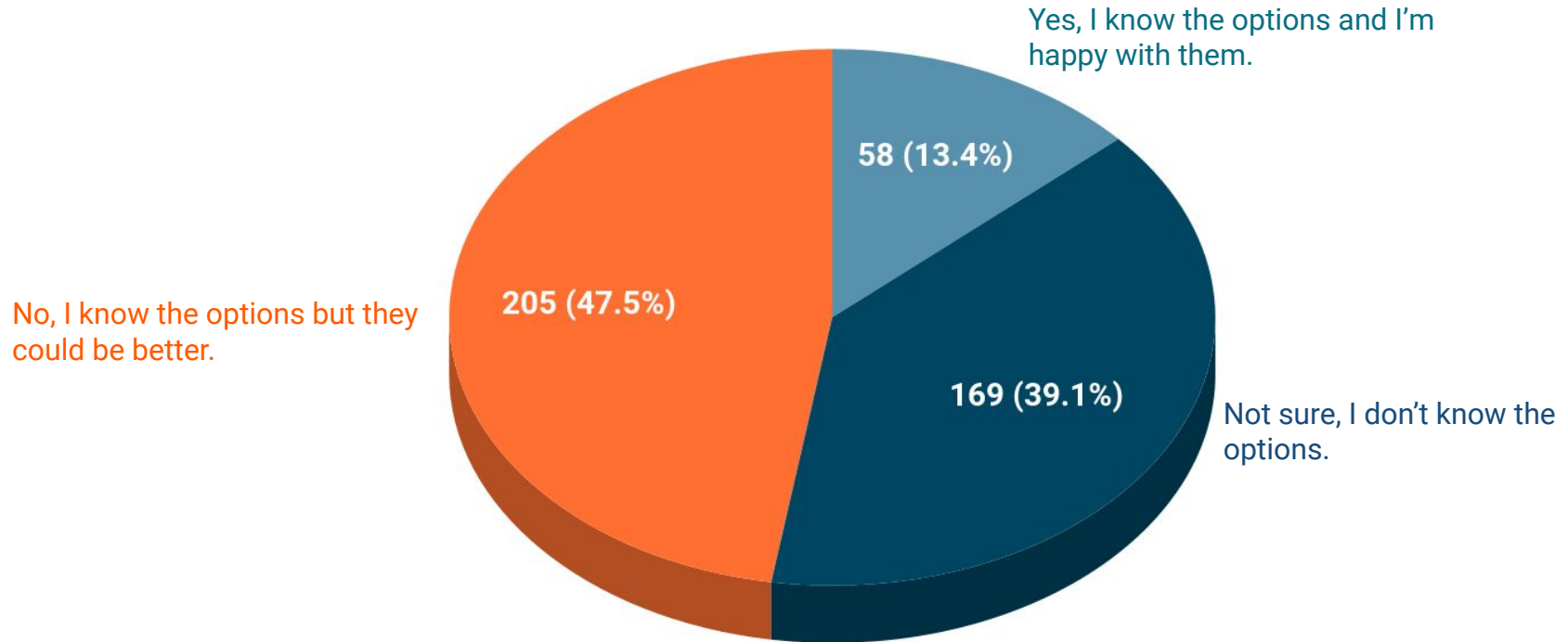
Lots of letter writing, official testimony... trying to navigate the specific bureau it's supposed to go to is difficult to keep track of.

If I know someone, I'll just call them.



**If you need to tell the City something
or get information from the City,
are you happy with your options?**

If you need to tell the City something or get information from the City, are you happy with your options?



If you need to tell the City something or get information from the City, are you happy with your options? Why or why not?

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Yes, I know the options and I'm happy with them.

"City website makes it easy to find numbers to call."

"311 responds quickly."

"Neighborhood Associations inviting me to civic engagement events."

No, I know the options but they could be better.

"People are invited to participate on individual invitation."

"Understand the ways to communicate to the city, but the response is where there can be a breakdown."

"Metro tracks a dashboard for supporting housing services, affordable housing program, money, work, is publicly visible. Opposite of 'black hole.' Can see where taxes and services are going."



What is your idea for how the City could better communicate with you?

Improve Communications Systems

314 Ideas

- Improve customer services via phone and email - case numbers, faster responses, real people responding (64 Ideas)
- Websites with list of resources, where to get info, FAQ, Tech in general, online comments (54 Ideas)
- Improve email (52 Ideas)
- Improve social media (40 Ideas)
- Dashboard to track issues (23 Ideas)
- Text / phone (21 Ideas)
- Improve website search directory (19 Ideas)
- Options to select communication channels, i.e. email, paper, text (13 Ideas)
- Send info tailored to my needs (13 Ideas)
- Create app (10 Ideas)
- Allow users to upload issues / chatbot (5 Ideas)

Engage Locally



192 Ideas

- In person events/meetings (64 Ideas)
- Distribute physical newsletters/mail/posters in neighborhoods (49 Ideas)
- Staff City Reps talk to people in the neighborhood (31 Ideas)
- Create dynamic forums for discussing ideas (25 Ideas)
- Share with the public vision around any project updates (14 Ideas)
- Surveys and polling (13 Ideas)
- Increase info going out via news media (4 Ideas)
- Magnets with contact info (4 Ideas)

Communication Improvement Theme

Empower Intermediaries



105 Ideas

- Utilize Neighborhood Associations (47 Ideas)
- Partner with community specific organizations (26 Ideas)
- Provide other resources to Neighborhood Associations and District Offices (19 Ideas)
- Utilize liaisons or liaison groups by District (13 Ideas)

Communication Improvement Theme

Engagement Empowerment



61 Ideas

- Neighborhood Association training (47 Ideas)
- Welcome packet or toolkits on how to be involved in city process (7 Ideas)
- Understand opportunities to volunteer (4 Ideas)

Shout Outs: What's Working

Water Department does a good job with their newsletter

I very much appreciate the way [one of my elected representatives] has open houses and coffee hours around town.

At our NA board meeting, we talk alot about how development was bottom-up that came from the community working on something together with the city that worked its way up to Council to approve it - KEEP THIS!

Liked when charter was being reviewed, multiple avenues to give input.

The Parks Bureau on the North Portland Aquatic Center is an approach that should be a model

Involved with community group involved with PIMO, a gold star experience.

If they need a decision making model talk to the Bureau of Sustainability they have a great system already in place.

Portland Parks put out a survey to residents who used Creston park and we provided feedback that they were able to incorporate. If they hadn't have asked and listened, Creston playground would not have been such a positive transformation for the whole neighborhood.



**How would you like to be involved in the
City's decisions and direction?**

Community Influence

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Participants indicated that they want to be involved in the process - as long as their involvement was truly influential. They identified three key ways to make engagement more accessible and authentic:

Start With Us

Proactively engage Portlanders before decisions are made.

Centralize

Centralize engagement opportunities so they're easier to find.

Vary Options

Make it easier for people to engage in the way that's best for them.

Community Influence Theme

Vary Input Options

89
Responses

Understand it's difficult for most folks to go to City Hall.

I'd like to have opportunities to share ideas electronically. I don't have the time to attend meetings in person.

I am happy to provide input in any way the city will take it.

More surveys like these, but with follow up that shows us how you are using our input to create change.

Community Influence Theme

Centralize Engagement Opportunities

41
Responses

Lay out ALL opportunities to participate and give feedback in one place, in one central hub.

Break down the silos - one stop shopping of what all the bureaus are doing and how to be involved.

People have to know where to look to engage in the process.

I want places that I can hear other people's viewpoints and advance them up the chain.

Community Influence Theme

Early Stage Input

39
Responses

I'd be more motivated if I didn't feel like the results were already predetermined.

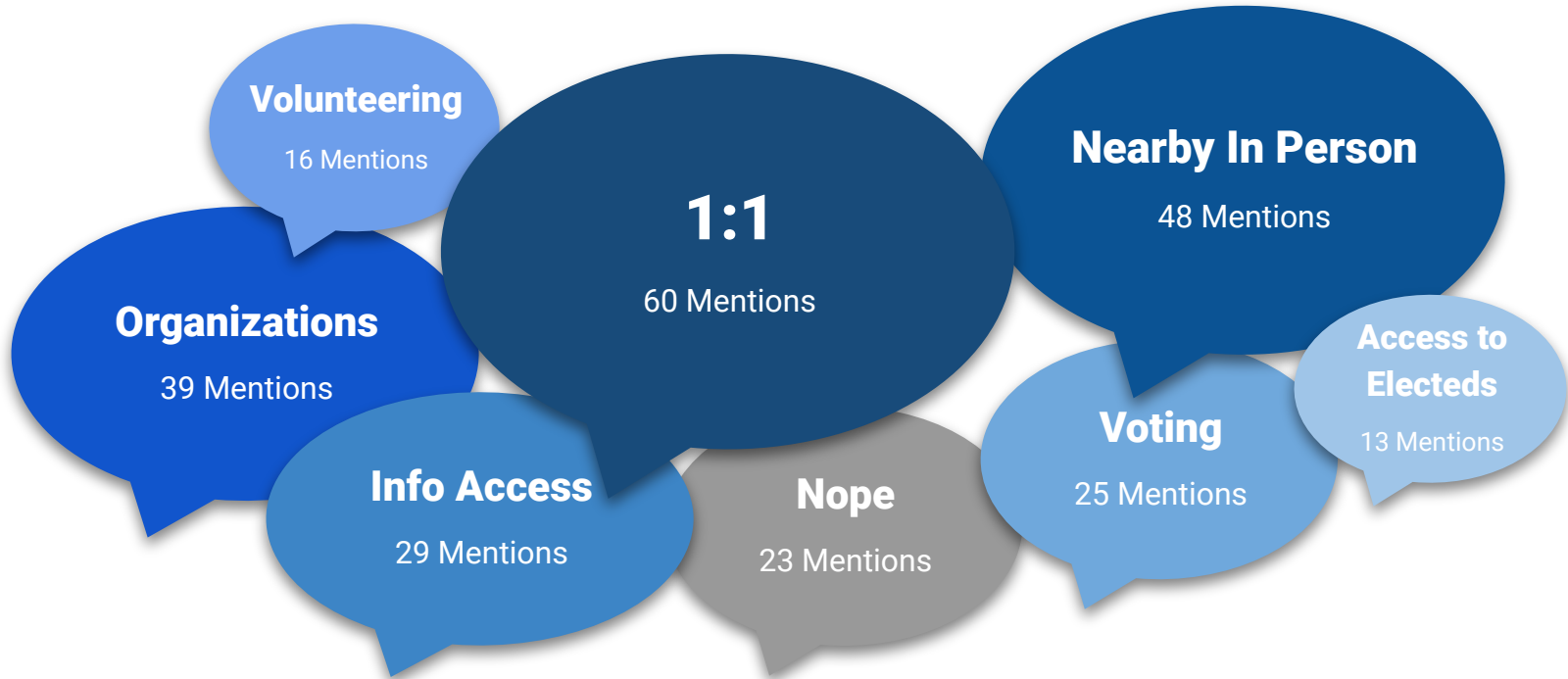
It seems like the city seeks feedback in a very biased way in the hopes of getting community approval not community comments.

Don't underestimate the expertise and creativity of Portlanders to inform good governmental decisions.

Engage the Neighborhood Associations before taking actions that impact property owners and/or renters.

Doing test rounds of a new website with us.

Community Influence: Suggested Methods



Community Influence: Suggested Methods

Subcategory	Includes	Mentions
1:1	Mail / Email / Surveys / Online Forms / Phone Calls	60
In Person Nearby	Events / Listening Sessions / Reps & Activities in the Community	48
Organizations	Utilize Neighborhood Associations / Neighborhood Forums	39
Info Access	Access to Info / Whom to Contact / What is Being Done	29
Voting	Democratic Process	25
Nope	Don't know / Don't want to be involved / Don't have time	23
Volunteering	Volunteer / Board Involvement	16
Access to Electeds	Access to Council Member and City Staff	12

Outlier Examples - 3 or Fewer Ideas

Lottery-Selected
Citizen Panels
(like jury duty)

Office of
Neighborhood
Involvement (ONI)
Standards

Participatory
Budgeting

Youth Voices

Citizen
Committees

Listening to All Portlanders

Transition Insights

Charter Transition

In Fall 2022, Portlanders voted to change the form of City government. This major change will go into effect in 2025, and the transition is currently underway.

As the City and its Transition Team prepare, the following insights can help shape the role of the new City Council, bureau configuration, organizational structure, and communications.

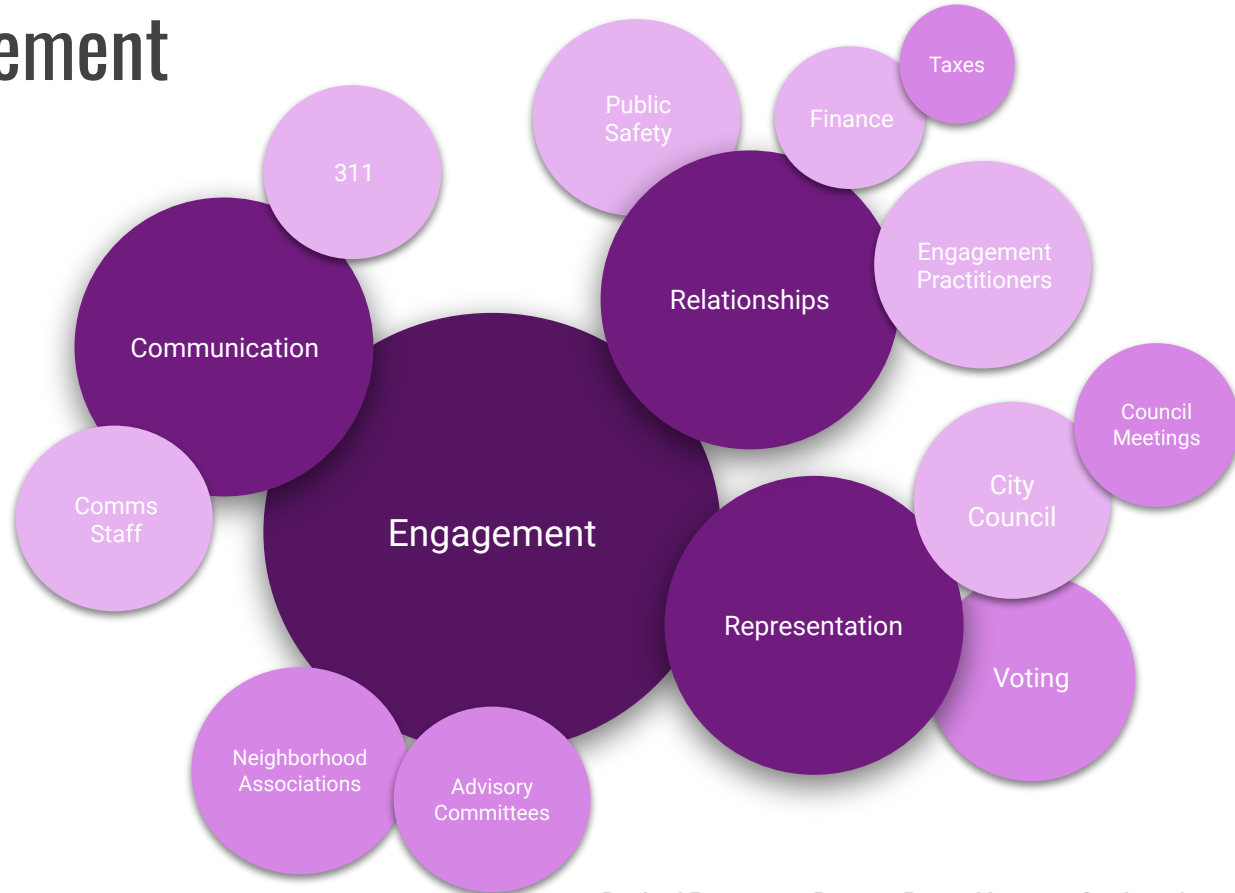
Charter transition is an extraordinary opportunity to evolve the City's engagement framework so it is more efficient, equitable, and effective for all Portlanders.



The Scope of Engagement

Why does this matter?
Engagement isn't just the realm of Civic Life. It's every touchpoint the City has with its people.

- Engagement is also...
- Examples of civic involvement
- Examples of City staff who engage daily



City Communications

Building off neighborhood profile pages - can see public works projects that are happening - great to see all beaurs to use these pages - portland parks doing updates would show up on this website - break down the silos - one stop shopping of what all the bureau are doing

The city is very silo-ed in its communications, bureau by bureau. [They] all have different methods of communicating about projects happening in the neighborhood.

Civic Life newsletters focus on their work and should be more focused on upcoming issues and events that affect us.

Bureau of Planning & Sustainability has a consistent and clear process with the Planning Commission on policy and planning processes. It manages to achieve the project scope and often is more robust following public input.

Do more outreach and engagement: Resource staff members, high-level decision makers, and commissioners to spend more time in the community... This is excellent customer service; properly resource staff members to be present and visible in communities.

City Organization

Change the city charter so that city councilmembers are not running departments. Ah, we just changed that - yeah. Things are going to go a lot better (I hope) after 2024.

I'm actually optimistic about the new form of commissioners.

The consolidation of the executive under a city manager will help with the ability of workers to work across departments and eventually removing the silos to endemic in Portland government.

We need to be told where the money is going to come from for 12 council offices and staff - concerned that property tax will go up. I see a lot of waste and duplicated efforts

Change the city charter so that city councilmembers are not running departments. Ah, we just changed that - yeah. Things are going to go a lot better (I hope) after 2024.

De-siloing bureaus

Transition Sentiments

City Council

The 4 new city council districts must utilize the neighborhoods within each district in a council that will advise the elected officials in meaningful ways.

Councilors can share an office or building, but it needs to be in their district (as well as downtown) - spend 2 of 5 days there; have it staffed all the time.

My NA doesn't have much of a voice now and with the new charter structure, I'm concerned that we'd have less of a voice if we're grouped together with larger neighborhoods, it will be harder to elevate our concerns.

The best idea is to have more and better representation for all neighborhoods. That will be addressed by the charter reform and local offices for council representatives.

Hopeful with change of charter there will be better representation for each different area of Portland.

City Council, continued

Have the city council do listening during non traditional work hours. Have ALL city councilmen visit their different bureaus at their employment sites and talk in small groups with workers... Have the councilmen visit with every one of their bureau advisory bodies during the bodies' meetings at least twice a year. Show they care.

City Council works on a complaints based system. Take this out.

Each Neighborhood give report to Council in person

I lived in 35 years in Washington DC --city almost exactly the same size as Portland. We had 8 commissioners from single member districts and 2 at large and a council chair, about the same number of commissioners per capita. The single member district commissioners had responsibility for local issues and better communication with residents in their districts. Some commissioners put a lot of effort in having a responsive community liaison staff... The multi-commissioner districts may create an even greater incentive for a commissioner to create a strong community liaison staff.

Listening to All Portlanders

What's Next

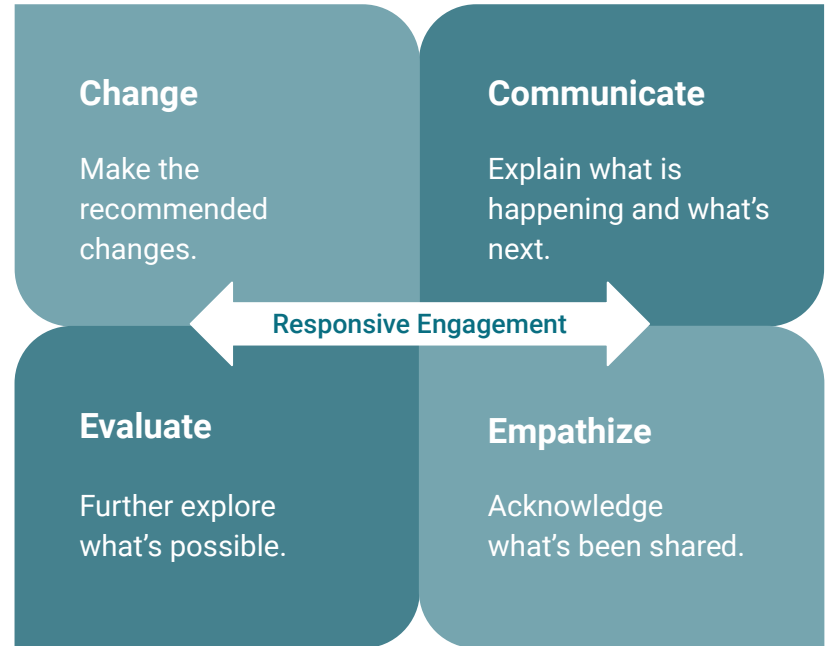
Don't Wait to Respond

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Spoiler alert: the number one complaint we hear when doing community engagement is, “I don’t know what happens to my feedback.”

The speed of life is not the speed of City government. When Portlanders make effort to engage, it’s because their concern is happening now, not two years from now. Even if immediate action isn’t possible, response is always a best practice.

No matter what, it’s vital to promptly tell people what is happening - or what isn’t - and when to expect next steps. Replying with “We heard you, but we can’t make a decision yet because of xyz,” helps people feel heard and respected.



Next Steps

Now that the Listening Projects are complete, Pregame will synthesize results from all projects. By combining what has worked in the past with iterative input from City employees, community members, subject matter experts, and community engagement professionals, we can design the future of engagement together.

Next, we'll recommend a process for updating the design of Portland's engagement structure and systems, including a potential timeline for design and implementation that factors in community engagement across bureaus.

However, any bureau or team could adopt these ideas sooner. Portlanders have told us what they want, and many of their ideas for positive change are well within reach.



[Engagement Recap Report](#)
[click here to view]

[Listening to All Portlanders Site](#)
[click here to view]

CHEERS!



[PREGAME]