

Equitable Engagement: A Novel Approach to Community Participation

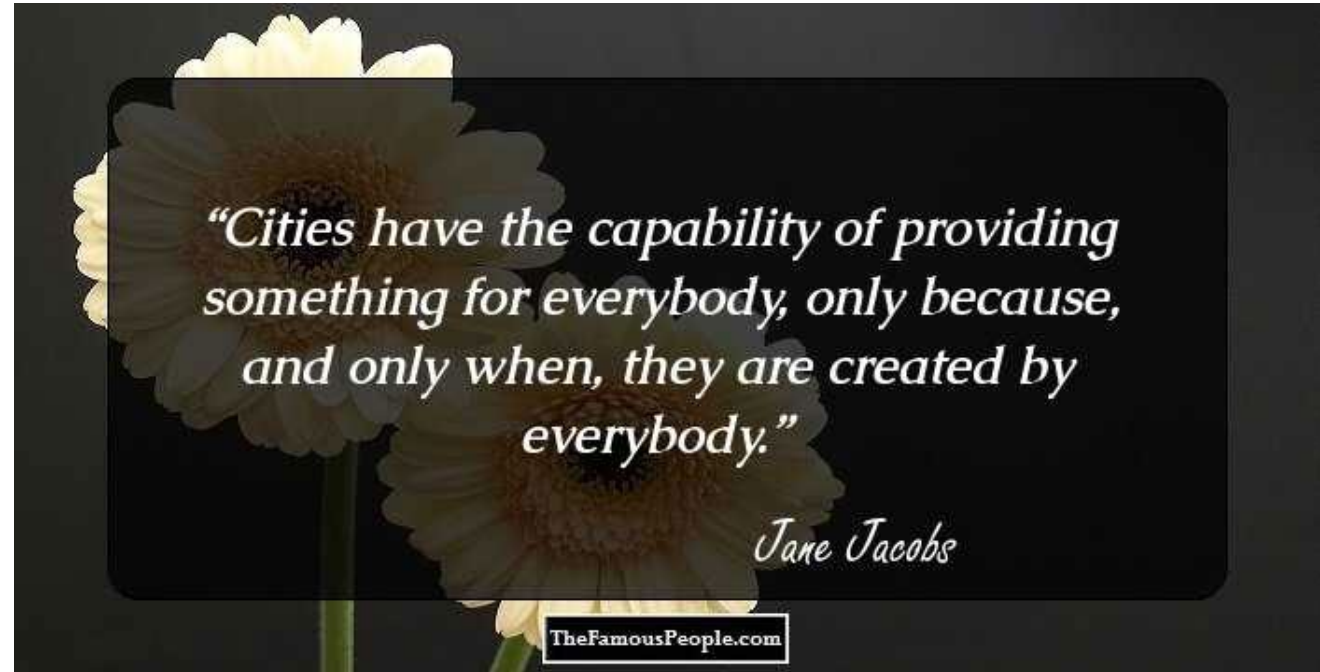


February 16, 2021

What did we set out to do?

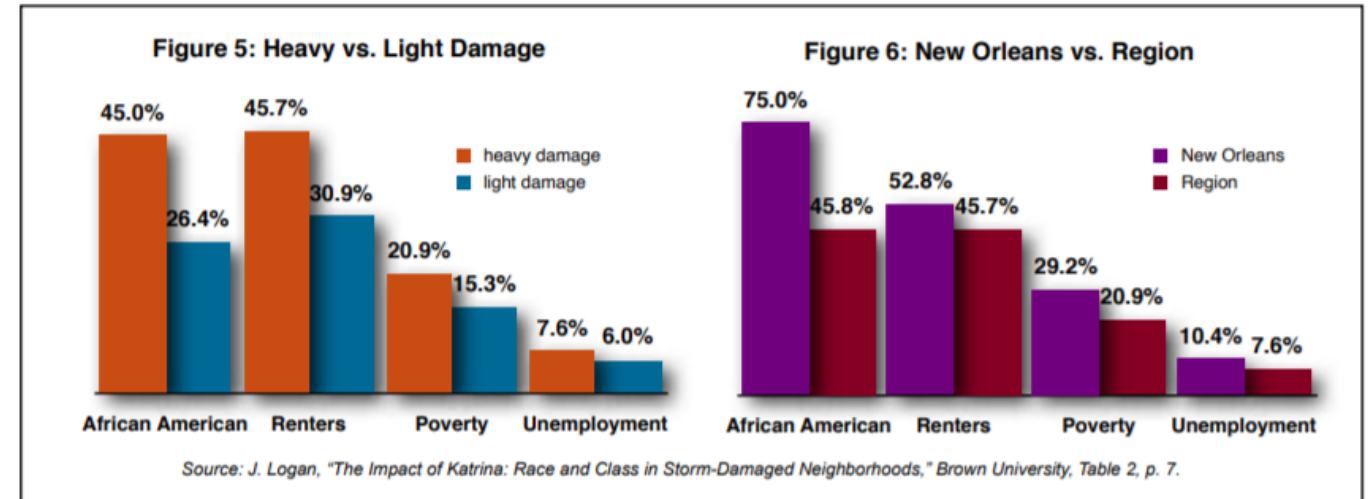
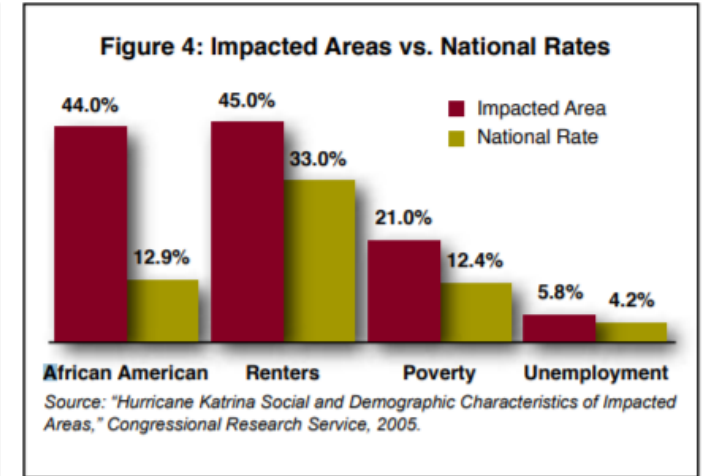
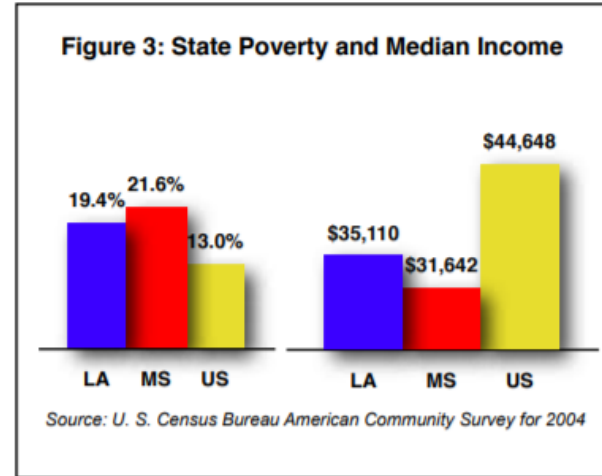
Build Equity Into Community Engagement

- Prioritize the involvement of community members who:
 1. Are most heavily impacted by effort
 2. Historically, not heard from



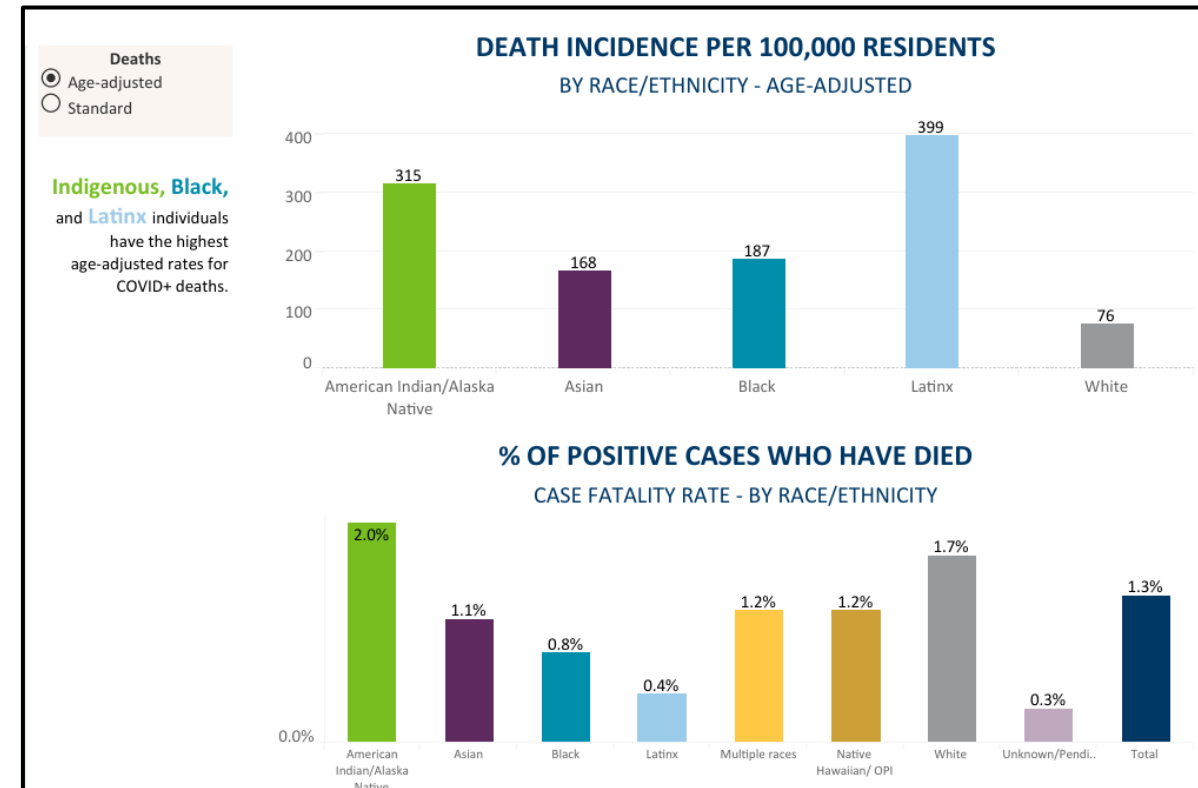
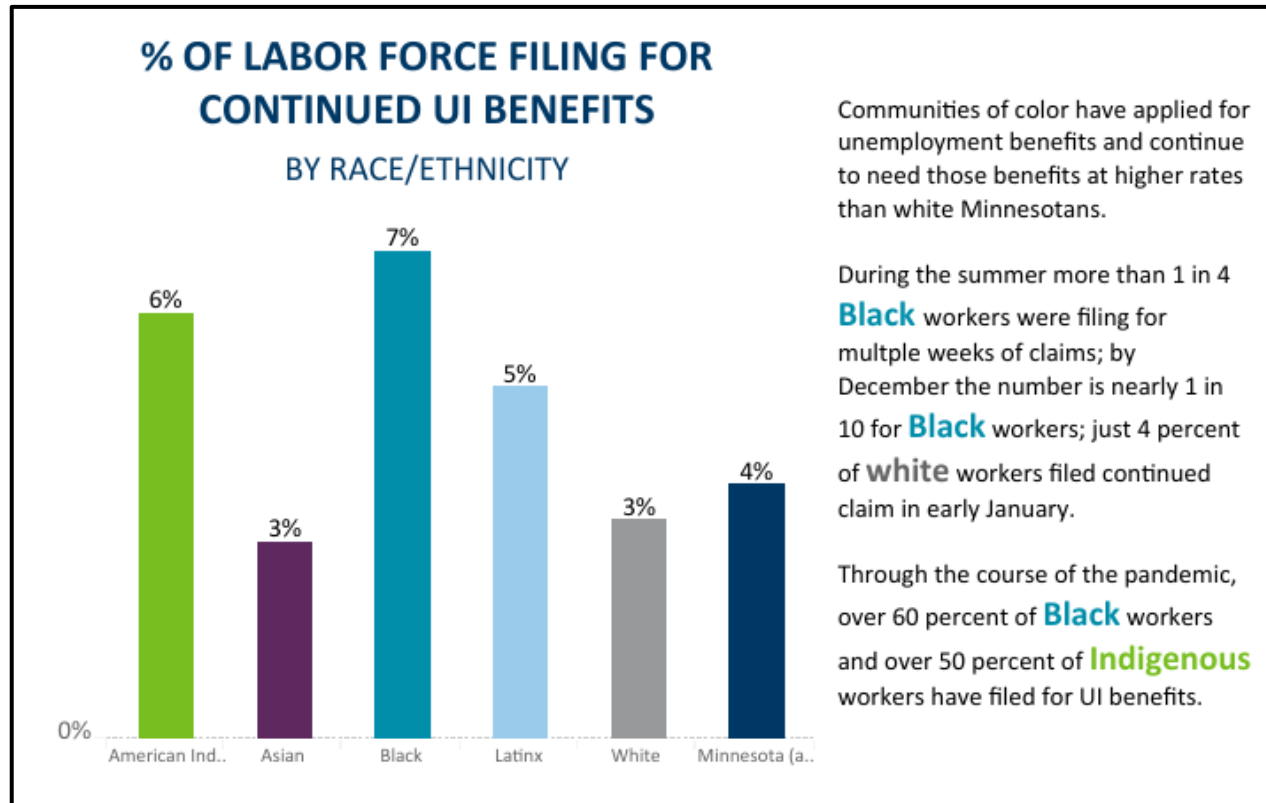
Why is this important?

- Crises, planning efforts, programs, projects disproportionately impact our community
 - In other words, some have more to gain than others
 - Example:
 - American Disability Act design standards
 - COVID-19 pandemic response programs
 - Climate Change Impacts



Disproportional Impacts of COVID-19 in MN

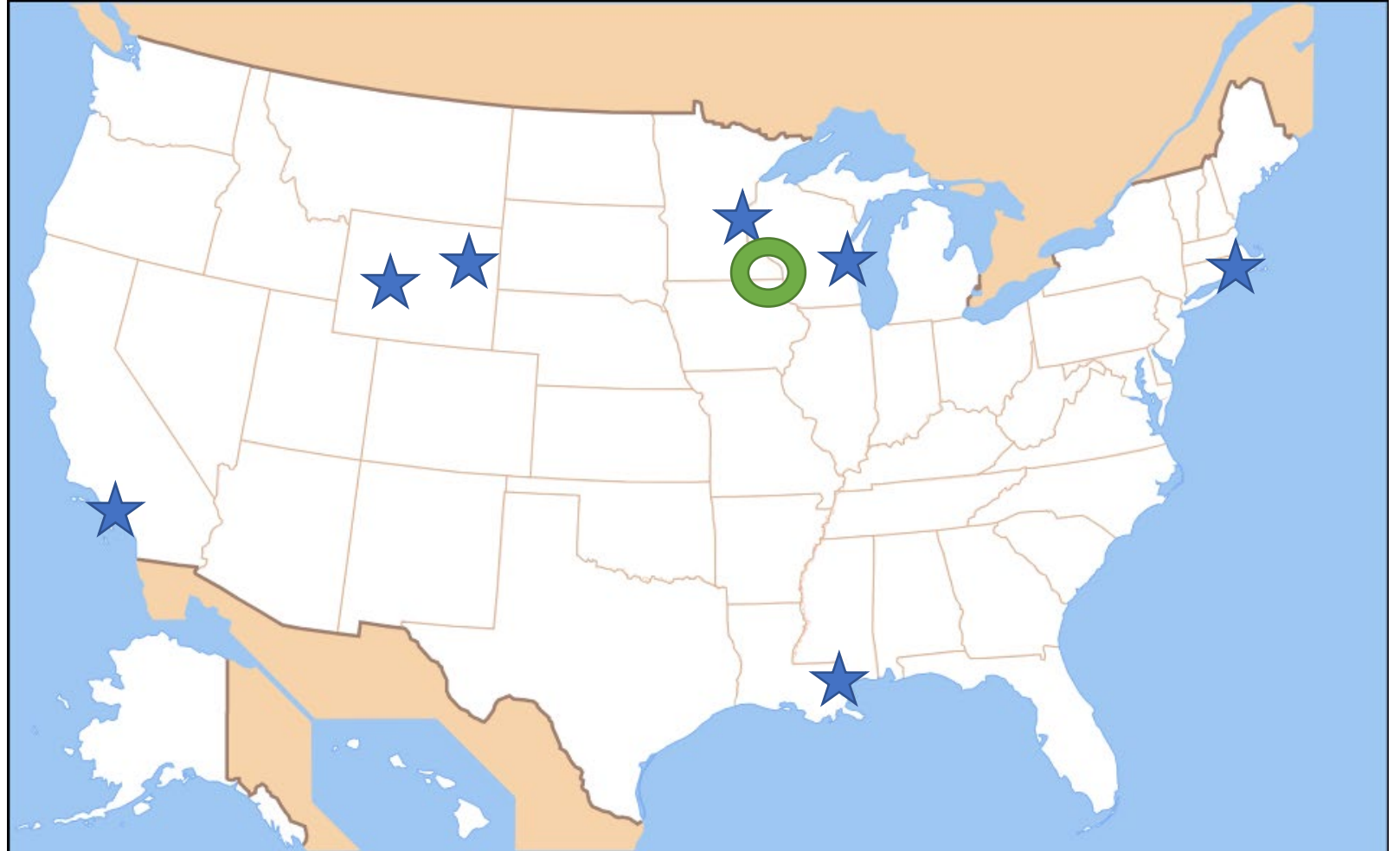
- Shocks to community are disproportionate



How did we do this?

Equitable Community Engagement: Design Process

- Borrowed from examples across US
- Refined to Rochester by City/Community for Health Steering Committee
- Customizable to project
- Continuous improvement for each new project



Traditional Engagement Approaches	Equitable Engagement Approaches
Community responds to developed efforts (late-stage involvement)	Community partners identify and develop efforts (early-stage involvement)
Community expected to volunteer perspectives and lived experience	Community is compensated as partners
Prioritizes learned expertise	Prioritizes lived experience
Making decisions on behalf of community	Decision-making with community – shared power structure
Focus on # of engagements	Focus on depth of engagements
Uncover what people think	Uncover what people feel
Engage most accessible community members	Engage new collaborators as co-designers to access fresh perspectives within communities
Facilitate conversations	Facilitate long-lasting relationships
Promote consensus-building first	Promote diversity and debate first
Engagement is project-based	Investment in building trust and network-building
Project-specific outcomes	Broadly applicable outcomes
Process is managed	Process is facilitated

Barriers that equitable engagement attempts to address:

• Community Barriers:

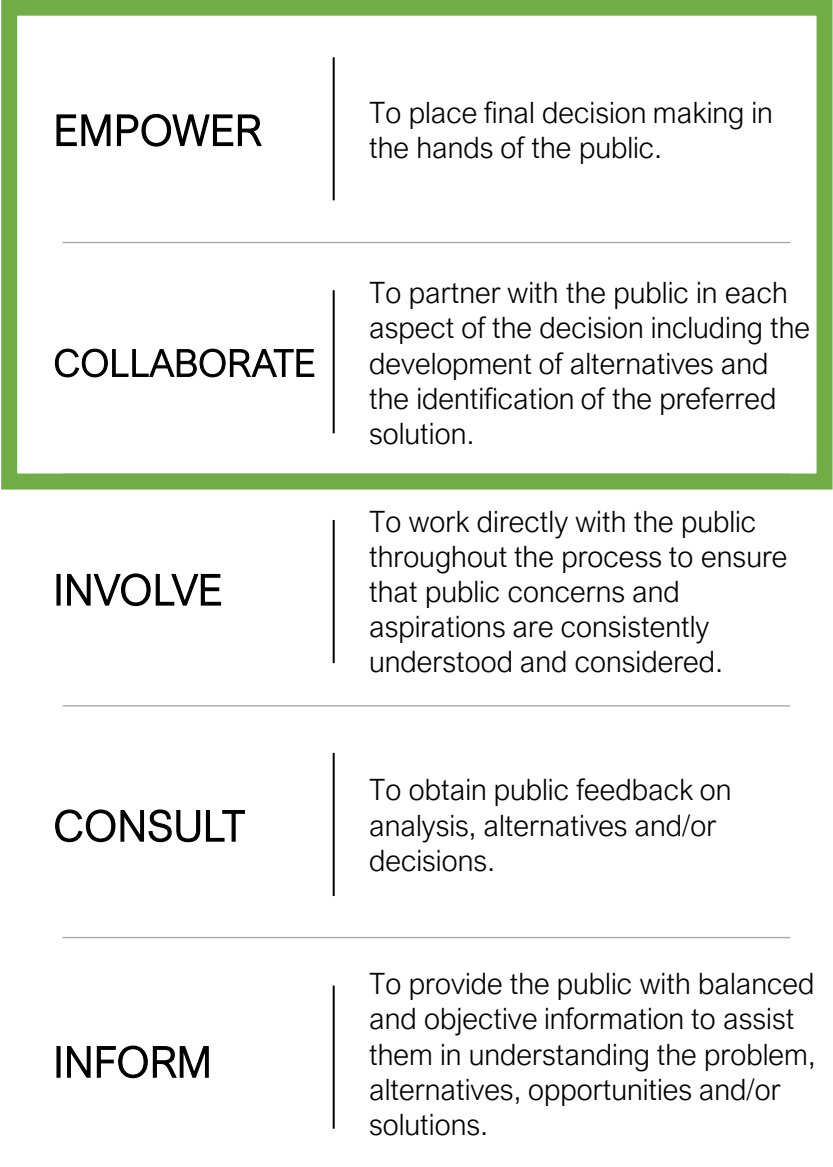
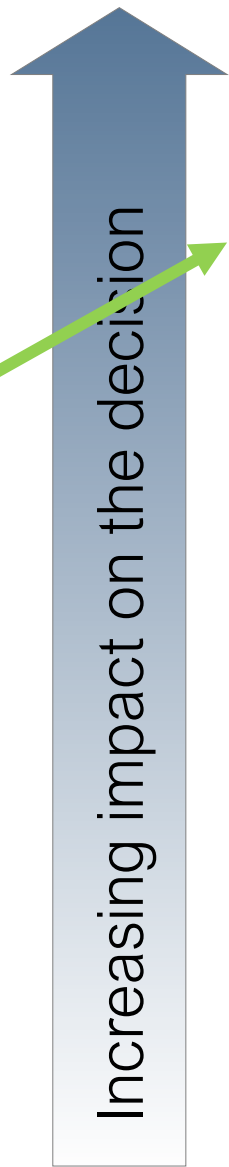
- Power differential and decision-making
- Existing community networks
- Over-value of learned experience
- Lack of lived experience to inform policy, program and project design
- Distrust of government and public processes

• Participation Barriers

- Lost wages
- Language barriers
- Meeting location
- Speak for community / tokenism
- Transportation availability and costs
- Childcare availability and costs
- Time of day

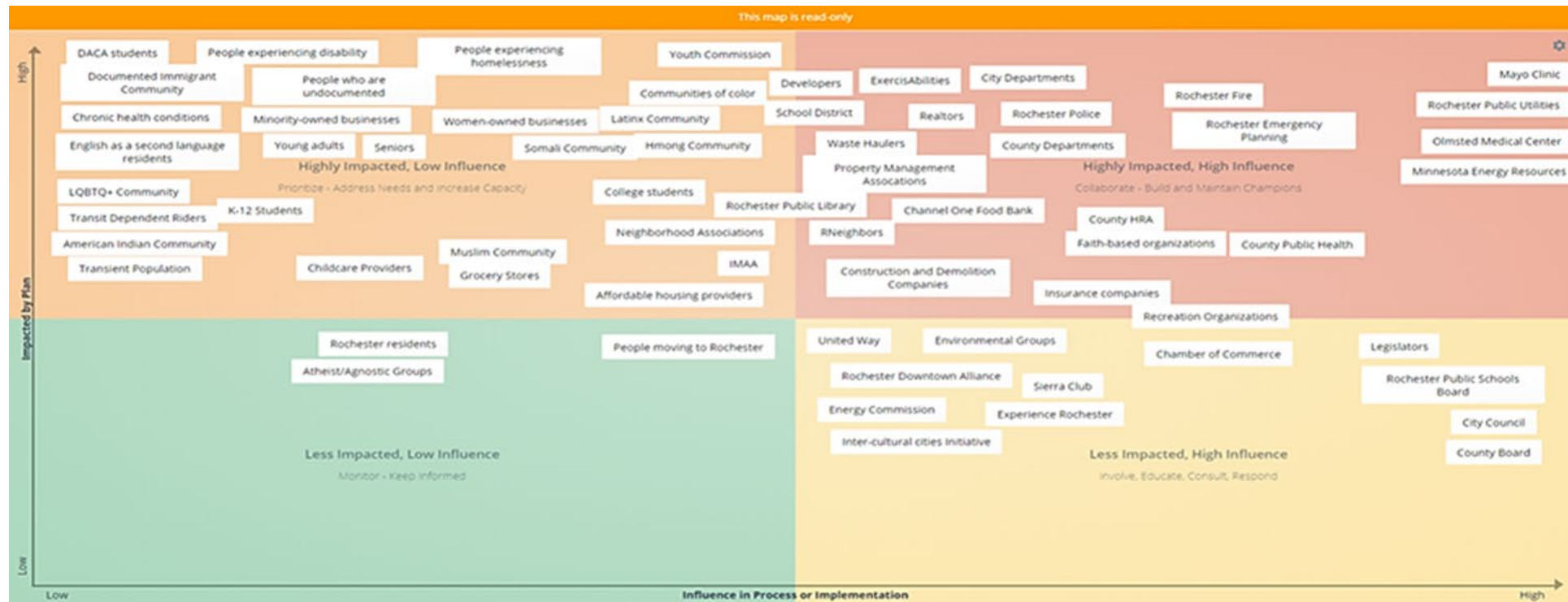
Are you set up for success?

1. Designers / Agency participation
 2. Project timeline allows for approach
 3. Resources in place for participant compensation and to implement outcomes
 4. Underserved will be positively impacted by project, program or policy
 5. Participants drive agenda and discussion



Stakeholder Power Mapping Analysis

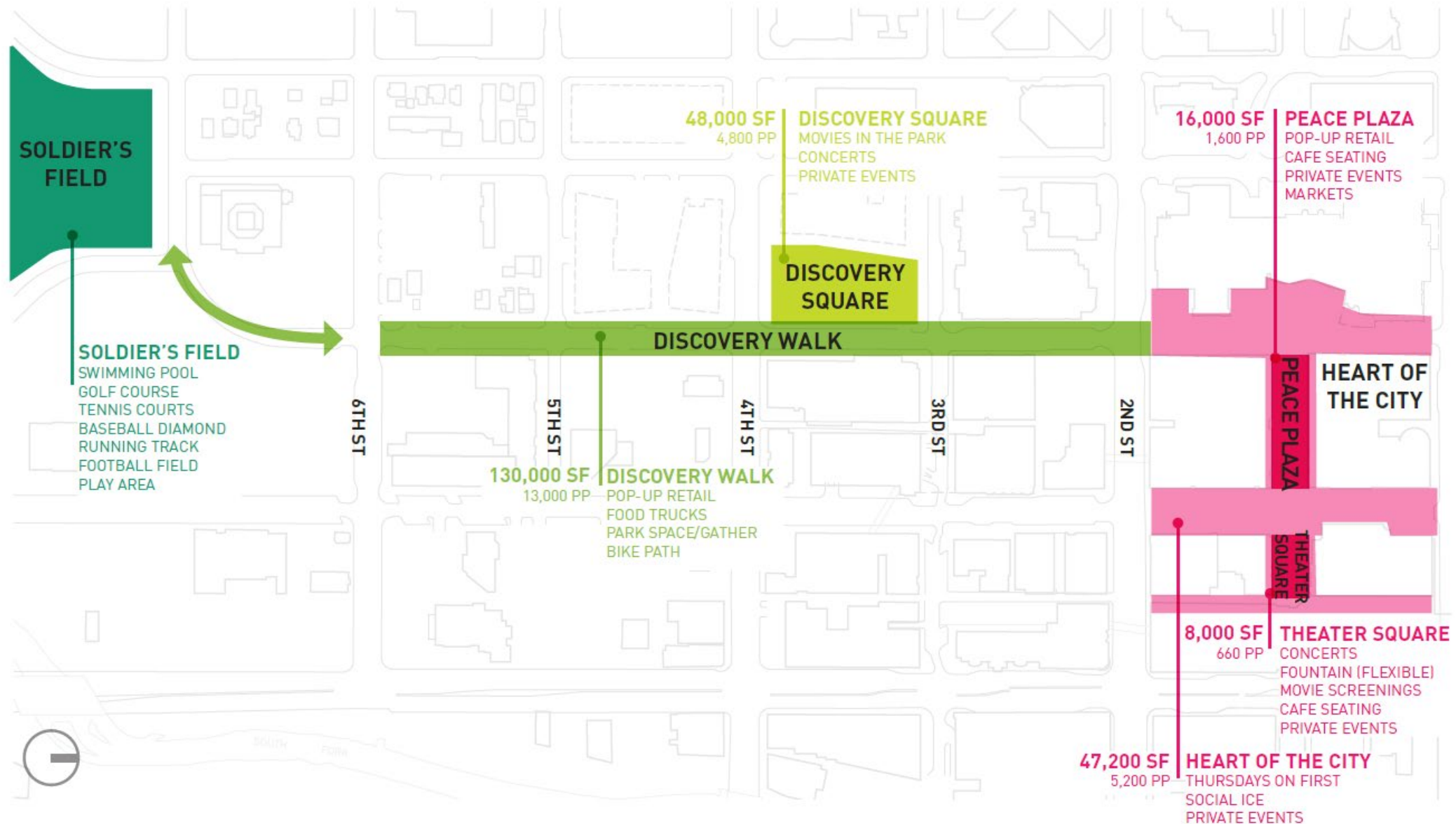
- Who is most impacted by the project?
- Who currently has the most influence in the process or implementation?



Source:
Groupmap.com,
USDN

Project Case Study: Discovery Walk Co-Design

What is Discovery walk?



Discovery Walk – The New Public Realm

The Reality



The Aspiration

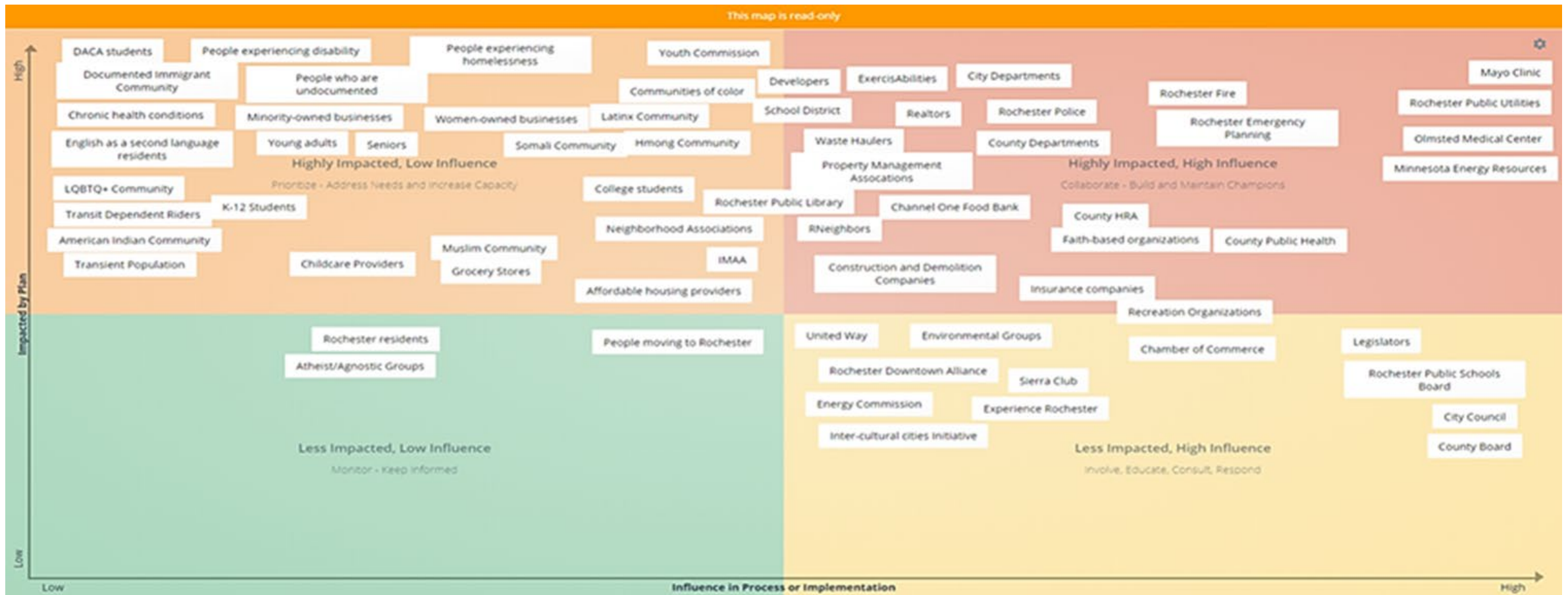


The Design



Stakeholder Power Mapping

- Who is most impacted by the project?
- Who currently has the most influence in the process or implementation?



How did we approach equitable engagement at Discovery Walk?

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS & ROLES

Community Co-Design Concept

Project Team

1. Facilitates the co-design process
2. Ensures the outcomes of the co-design process are translated into meaningful design interventions.

Participants include:

1. Design team
2. Consultant or project team member(s) in charge of engagement effort

Community Partners

1. Offer feedback and insight on the project (throughout the co-design process)
2. Critical in identifying community co-designers within their trusted networks.

Participants include:

1. Community organizations (public and private)
2. Local and regional governmental agencies

Community Co-Designers

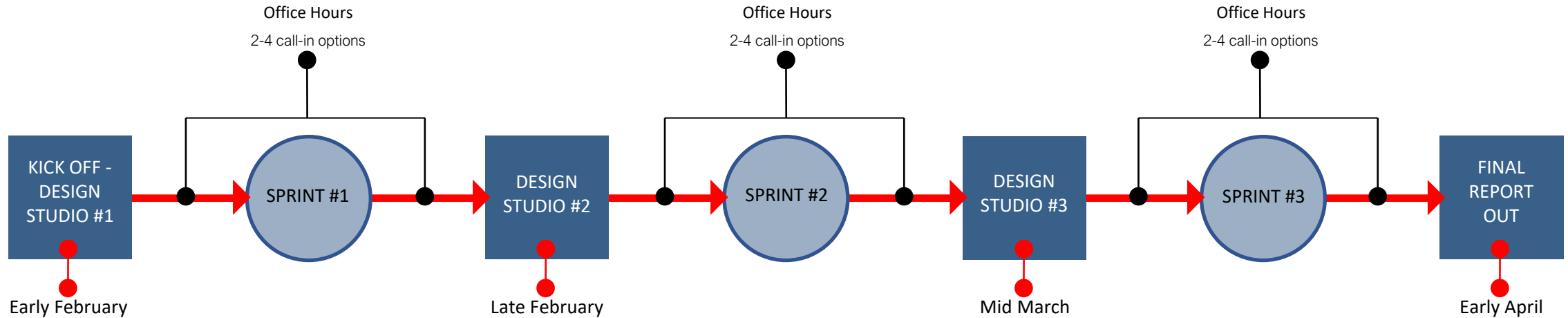
1. Share experiences, facilitate community interviews, and develop and discuss ideas
2. Communicate (with the help of the project team) project outcomes to project and city leaders throughout the co-design process.

Participants include:

1. Individuals that self identify across a diversity of communities (geographically, culturally, generationally, abilities, etc.)

CO-DESIGN PROJECT SEQUENCE: Discovery Walk Example

Expected community member time commitment for project: 18 hours



KICK-OFF

Objectives:

1. Get to know each other and build familiarity with the project, project team and timeline.
2. Participants spend time learning and practicing Human-Centered Design tools and processes that will be used throughout the project.

STUDIOS

Objectives:

1. Collectively interpret information/data, co-develop and test promising solution concepts and to work with decision makers and community leaders to translate vision into action.
2. In-person (virtual) workshops for sharing what participants have learned through the previous sprint, synthesize feedback and co-develop next steps and sprint explorations.

SPRINTS

Objectives:

1. Explore the questions, ideas and community input that arises during the in-person studios.
2. Co-designers have conversations with their communities that aren't accessible to designers and agencies
3. Generating questions, insights and ideas to share at the studios.

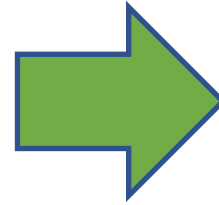
CHECK-IN "OFFICE HOURS"

Objectives:

1. Facilitator will be available for regularly scheduled virtual meeting times to coach co-designers.
2. Opportunity for participants/teams to check in with facilitator on their progress and share any questions or concerns they are having along the way.

What questions did we ask?

1. Where do you go and/or what do you do to feel most healthy? Why?
PROBE: Where do you go and/or what do you do to feel more connected? Why?
2. What, if any, community spaces do you feel contribute most to your mental health? Why?
3. What do you believe are the 2-3 most important characteristics of a “mentally healthy community?”
PROBE: What do you believe are the 2-3 most important characteristics of a “connected community?”
PROBE: If these answers are different, why do you think that is?
4. What, if any, community programs have you found to best support your/your family’s mental health? How?
5. What are the biggest barriers to utilizing community spaces and/or programming in your community?
6. How might community spaces better support mental health and connectedness?
PROBE: How might community programming better support mental health and connectedness?



**Design
Principles**

Co-Designer Tips:

1. The intent is to stimulate stories and ideas from the participant, not to get through the list of questions.
2. Try not to think of solutions during your conversations, instead be curious and ask follow-up questions.
3. Probe deeper (tell me more about that, what was that like for you, can you remember a time when...).
4. Do allow for silence. Your participants may need time to think and reflect.
5. Absorb what participants say and how they say it. Don't think about next question.
6. Pay attention to non-verbal cues.
7. Listen. Be present.
8. Be curious.
9. Just jot down the most important ideas/comments while talking – you do not need to have a full transcript of the conversation.

What did we learn?

Discovery Walk

Community Co-Designers



Wafa Elkhailifa

Rochester Public Schools
Equity Specialist



Krista Jacobson

connection to communities
with mobility challenges



Laurie Kumferman

YMCA Director of
Healthy Living



Chao Mwatela

City of Rochester Director of
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Lap Nguyen

John Marshall High
School graduate



Jenny Rho

Community Health
Service



Jeremy Westrum

connection to communities dealing
with brain injuries



Spatial:

How does the
park look,
designed or
utilized?

Programmatic:

How might the
park function?

Policy:

Do rules and
regulations
support
healthy
interactions
and spaces?

SPATIAL ELEMENTS

- Year-round function: wintertime
- Warmth and light
- Access to nature, cultural plants
- Healing/reflection space
- Accessibility and universal design
- Spaces for reflection
- Space for activity



PROGRAMMATIC

- Broadly welcoming:
 - Signage in multiple languages
 - Flags and colors
 - Native plantings to different global locations
 - Games and programs native to diversity of cultures
 - Free WiFi and charging stations
- Friendship and connection
 - Interactive elements
 - 'Instagrammable' space and programming
 - Space for groups and multi-generational activities
- Dynamic
- Elements to ensure safety
- Connections to city-wide health efforts



POLICY

- Affordable and accessible
 - Lower rates for cultural events and holidays
 - Reduced event fees
 - Immediately accessible parking
- Community participation
- Non-smoking policy
- Year-round accessibility
- Cultural connectivity
- Role of alcohol at public events



Project Case Study: Rochester Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force



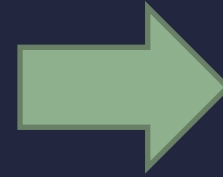
Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force

MISSION & PURPOSE

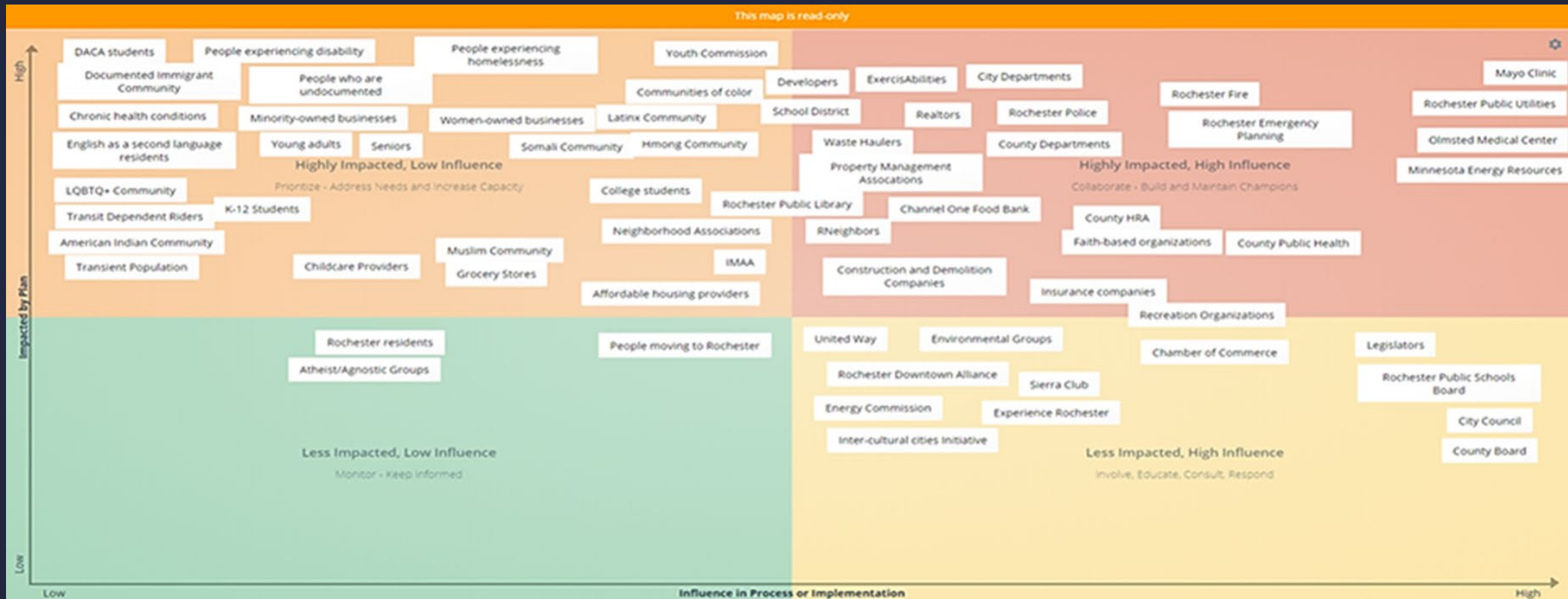
- Develop a Sustainability Plan for the Rochester community
- Guide the Mayor and City to adopt and modify policies, services and practices that help meet the City's social, economic and environmental goals
- Broaden the City's definitions of sustainability and resiliency
- Create goals and metrics that shine a light on environmental justice

STAKEHOLDER POWER MAPPING ANALYSIS

- Who is most impacted by the project?
- Who currently has the most influence in the process or implementation?



- Task Force Membership
- Community Listening Prioritization



TASK FORCE AND COMMUNITY ROLES

Task Force

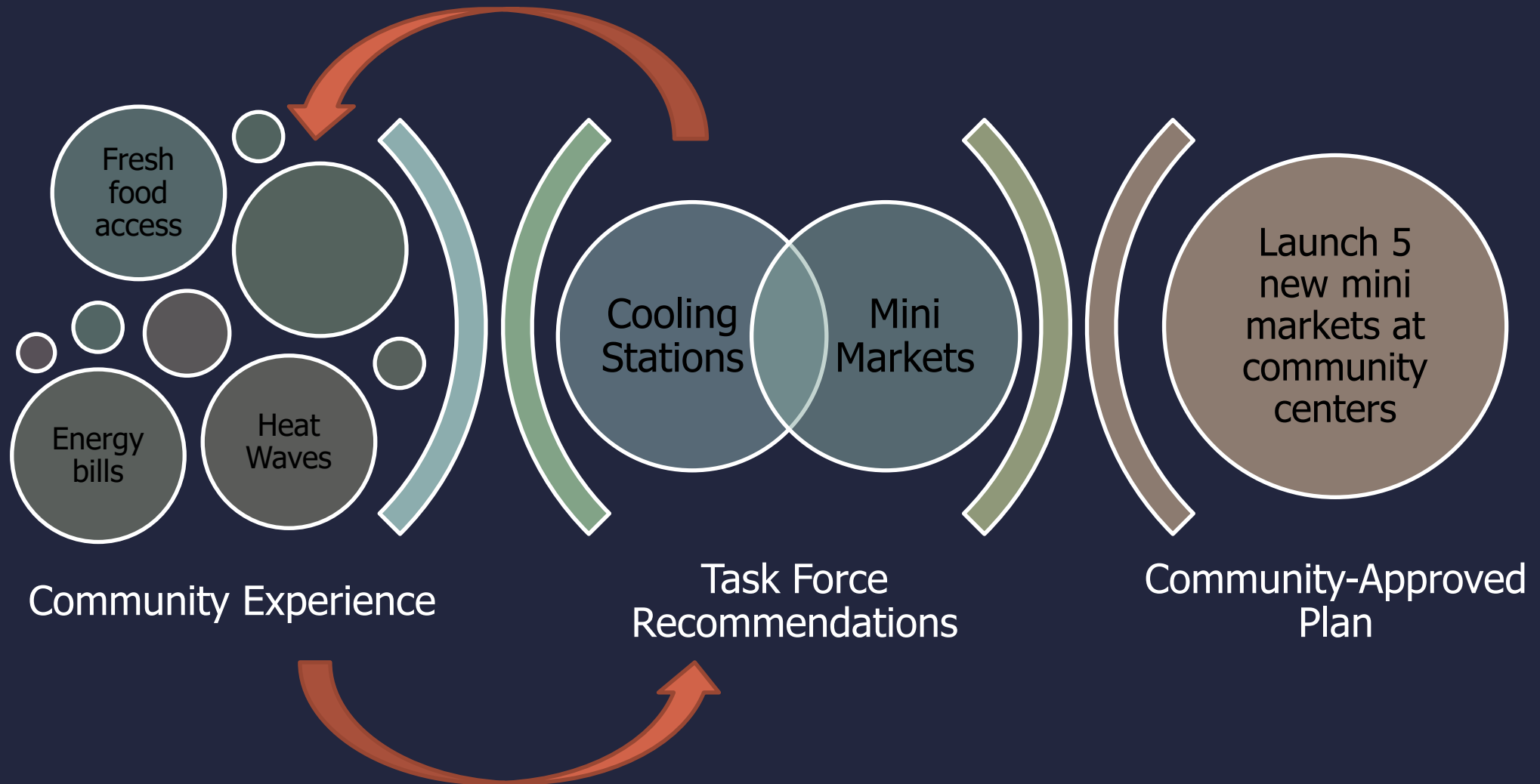
- Provide expertise on actionable strategies, based on task force and community input
- Set goals for progress and accountability
- Participate in implementation of the plan, or complimentary plans
- Nurture partnerships to advance relevant initiatives

Wider
Community

- Share individual lived experiences as Rochester residents
- Articulate personal or community priorities for city action
- Endorse the plan as representative of their community's vision

Plan
Outcomes
and
Priorities

FOR EXAMPLE...



Developing a Community Listening Plan

- Draft plan
 - Large Task Force group feedback
- Small working group of TF members
 - Diversity Council input
 - IMAA Input and Translation



Community Listening
(interviews, community-wide survey)





Community Listening Questions

- How would you define community? How do you interact with the community?
- What would help you connect/feel connected with your neighbors or community as a whole?
- What would make Rochester a great place to live for future generations?
- What is one thing that would support you, your family, or your community's ability to thrive?
- The plan will focus on the following areas, what is important to you of these areas and what is missing?





Community Listening Sessions

- Cambodian community
- Hmong community
- Sudanese community
- Latinx/Hispanic community
- BIPOC communities
- Indian community
- Chinese-American community
- Somali community
- Senior community
- Young adults/high school students
- Low income populations
- Neighborhood communities

- Mayo Clinic
- Rochester Public Schools
- Family Service Rochester
- The Elder Network
- Diversity Council
- Rochester Area Builders
- Families First of Minnesota
- Workforce Development, Inc.
- Rochester Community Initiative
- University of Minnesota Rochester
- Indian Cultural Association of MN
- Olmsted County Environmental Commission
- Rochester Olmsted Youth Commission

- Zumbro Valley Health Center
- Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Compassion Rochester MN
- SE MN Alliance for Legal Defense for Immigrants
- The Village
- Youth sports organizations





Needs & Key Themes

- Affordable housing & living wages
- Community Resources
 - Community resource center
 - Better communication/translation
 - How/where to access them
 - Mentorship/networking systems
- Education system
- Small business/entrepreneurial support
- Accessible transportation; routes, times, cost
- Cultural activities and community events
- Sustainable infrastructure, green jobs, climate change education/engagement, green space
- Diversity in representation – businesses, local government, boards/commissions, etc.
- Job diversity, job assistance, workforce development
- Equity
 - Addressing racial and economic disparities
 - Building a culture around equity and inclusivity
 - Equal opportunity
 - Trusting and welcoming community



What is gained?

1. Deeper level of engagement with communities
 - Cannot be replicated in an open house
 - Cannot be done by a government employee or professional
 - Representatives must be trusted by community
 - Effective and efficient form of engagement
 - Accountability and trust built into process
2. Community cultural, diversity and inclusivity competency
 - Public process engagement and understanding
 - Investment in community – relationships last beyond project
 - Learnings live beyond project and have broad relevance
 - Builds empathy and understanding
 - Community desires this approach and will demand it with future public projects/efforts
3. Unique project insights
 - Lived experience cannot be accessed without directly engaging those living it
 - Engaging under-represented perspectives can offer new and creative design guidance

Outcome: More inclusive and equitable projects, plans and programs that are reflective of Rochester community



Community Capacity Growth

- After participating, two of the Discovery Walk Co-Designers accepted community racial equity-focused positions

“I would like to share with you a personal decision that I made. I decided to accept an offer from the Rochester School District to work as an Equity Specialist...I have to let you know that one of the things that helped with me receiving this offer is being part of the Discovery Walk project and my new position will allow me to devote more time to families and students from underserved communities.”

- Community Co-Designer on Discovery Walk

Questions?

Email: kevinbright@dmceda.org

Phone: (507) 424-9152