

Talking Points on Mpls Survey of Neighborhood/Community Engagement Practices in Selected Cities

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- 1) Minneapolis undertook the survey beginning last fall **to help inform our thinking about how to structure our City's community engagement program in the future**
- 2) This summary **is a work in progress**:
 - a. It attempts to capture the *key features* of a city's community engagement programs . . . as a summary document, it cannot fully describe complete program detail and nuances
 - b. The cities we surveyed are those *we view as either peer cities or cities which we understood to have fairly well developed engagement programs*. We hope to add more cities over time.
 - c. Although this information was provided by the cities themselves, *some of them would have preferred to include longer and more complete narratives*, something that was not possible in a short version.
 - d. This information *represents the perspective of city staff*; we made no attempt to check with either local elected officials or neighborhood groups about their perspective, which was beyond our scope.

With these caveats, here are a few observations about what we learned:

Legal Foundation of engagement programs

Most cities do not have a formally and legally defined system neighborhood engagement that is described by charter or ordinance: just 2 cities in this list [Los Angeles and Washington DC] have charter & ordinance language defining their systems of place-based engagement and giving broad advisory responsibilities to a defined network of neighborhood boards or councils. Also, New York City's system of community boards is also defined in charter & ordinance but are not included in today's handout because their other information was still incomplete at the time we had to go to print with this

Many cities **do define some kind of neighborhood review of proposed city development or planning actions in their land use ordinances**

Centralized vs. Decentralized Structure

One continuum that emerged from this survey was to what extent cities had centralized systems of place-based engagement, with formally defined boundaries, roles, and related administrative support vs. cities which took a more laissez faire approach, letting neighborhood self-define boundaries, with fewer defined roles, and little or no administrative support. In the middle of this continuum were cities that defined formal advisory roles for land use or planning review in ordinance, but no broader role.

of cities with **centralized, formal systems** and broad neighborhood advisory roles defined in charter or ordinance: 7

Kansas City, LA, Minneapolis, Portland, St Paul, Seattle, and Washington DC

of cities which provide for **review of land use or planning in ordinance**: 5

Atlanta, Austin, Denver, New Orleans, San Antonio

of cities with **decentralized, less formal systems**, no formal advisory role defined in ordinance: 9

Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Fort Worth, Houston, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh

Financial / Administrative Support

In this survey, *we focused on financial support of the neighborhood infrastructure* [operating/admin] as opposed to admin support for various programmatic efforts, [e.g. beautification, housing fix-up, youth programming, job training and the like.] Also, obtaining consistent information on financial support was challenging for those cities which had engagement efforts spread across several departments, so the \$ amounts listed may not in some cases fully reflect a cities range of financial support across all depts. That said, and using this fairly narrow definition, **we found the range of financial support to somewhat follow the centralized/decentralized continuum above:**

7 Cities with formal place-based systems with broad roles defined: \$0 to \$6 million

5 Cities with formal land use or planning review defined in ordinance: \$0 [all but one] to \$100,000

9 Cities with decentralized, laissez faire structures: \$0 [7 cities] to \$1.6 million [Milwaukee] with one city's \$ allocation spread across multiple depts and not totaled [Philadelphia]

Lead engagement department

There were variations across the 21 cities that reflected in part local city structures and history; one feature we paid attention to was whether there was a dedicated department for place-based engagement. Here is where the 'lead engagement department' was located across this list of cities:

City Manager/Chief Administrative Officer (1)

Fort Worth

City Planning / Community Development (8)

Atlanta, Austin, Charlotte, Chicago, Kansas City [called "Dept of Neigh and Housing Services" but more like CD depts]; Pittsburgh, San Antonio, St Paul,

Stand-alone department (10)

Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, Seattle, Washington, DC

Multiple Departments (2)

Denver, Milwaukee,