

# Charting the Course

Now that instruments are calibrated, you should be ready to start making your map. The map metaphor is particularly useful in this section as it explores identifying where you want to go and how you're going to get there. And importantly, it explains how you're going to talk to people about your trip when it's all said and done.

There are many ways of evaluating a project, from hiring a professional external evaluator, collaborating with a university researcher, or simply documenting and measuring a process. Unfortunately, even though there is an increasing amount of pressure to represent outcomes of public engagement, there are typically no additional resources available for evaluation. But there are ways of identifying and measuring value that can be meaningful for hitting internal metrics of quality assurance as well as communicating with the public in the all important feedback loop discussed above.

## *Drawing the Roadmap*

The first thing to do when starting a new public engagement project in government is to consider your goals, objectives and where you want to end up (i.e. getting input into policy, building support to empower underrepresented communities, etc.). The next step is locating where you are currently, and then, of course, how you want to get to your destination.

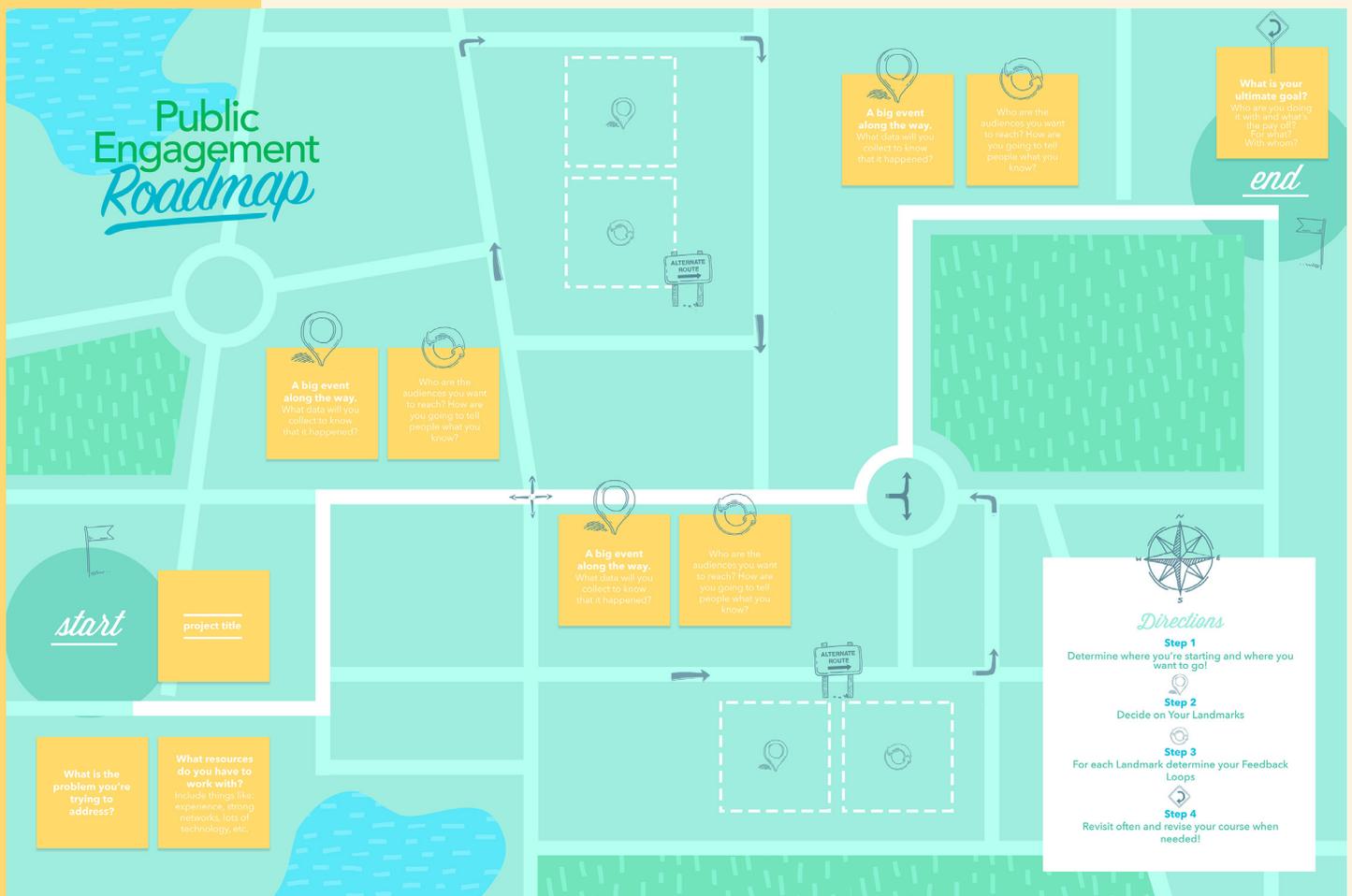
Determining your route is essential. While many of us have become dependent on algorithmic mapping, where Google simply spits out the most efficient way of getting to our destination, in public engagement, the experience and reflection of the route is absolutely essential. Charting your course towards public engagement should include meaningful stops along the way, landmarks that will allow you to take stock of your progress and perhaps reassess how you want to get to your destination.

The next several sections are meant to help you fill out the roadmap (Appendix xx). The roadmap should be printed and hung in a prominent location and used as a reminder of your destination and how you're going to get there.

PROJECT GOAL	ROUTE (Method)	IMPACT (Inform, Consult, Involve, Empower)
Master plan of city neighborhood	Town Hall Meetings	Inform, Consult
Data collection on use of busy street corner	sensors placed within street furniture and street lights to measure pedestrian use patterns.	inform
Encourage people to invest in the health and wellness of their communities	Appoint health ambassadors that can work with people in accessing and using health care	Inform, consult, Involve, empower

Table 6: Mapping Project Goals with Methods and Impact

Figure \_\_\_\_: Public Engagement Roadmap



## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Engagement is not linear.** It's important to have a map in front of you. Too often, people get lost in the details of public engagement and lose sight of the larger goals.

### *Destination and Landmarks*

Your destination is where you want to go. In public engagement projects, this isn't always that easy to identify. It is easy to conflate the policy or service delivery goals (i.e. create new affordable housing policies in the city or craft better ways of delivering primary care to residents) with the engagement destination (i.e. effectively enable voice and listen to communities or empower communities to identify useful services relevant to their needs). While policy and service delivery should always be the backdrop for engagement, it is imperative that public engagement is treated separately and considered carefully.

The best way to achieve this is by mapping not only destinations (i.e. co-produced policy) but landmarks (i.e. enhanced attention to local events, increased responsiveness to debates discussed on online forums, etc.). In traditional evaluation processes, outcomes are documented in what's called a "logic model" and they're described as short term, intermediate term, and long term. The objective of a logic model is to map particular activities to their desired outcomes at various stages of a process. This can be a useful exercise, but it tends to be very linear in orientation - one activity leads to one outcome, which leads to another outcome, and so on. In the world of public engagement, things are rarely so linear or logical. A roadmap (think of the paper fold-out kind) shows how things connect and suggests multiple ways to get from point A to point B.

Landmarks are clarifying sites that help you understand that you're making progress towards your destination. They should be understood as things along the way, but they don't need to provide direct access to the destination. The most important thing about landmarks is that someone, somehow, identified them as important and placed them on the map. It is, of course, important to consider the kind of process you are adopting, and the kinds of tools you are deploying (See figure xx). Ideally, identifying landmarks happens at the beginning of a project to help you know where you're going, to help you talk about the journey, and to help others reproduce the route in future engagement projects.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Plan a course.** Articulate your destination and identify at least three landmarks along the way. Landmarks should factor in resources and time required to accomplish them.

**Identify your starting location.** What are the current conditions? What is your current budget and deadline, if any? State the problem.

**Landmarks do not need to provide direct access to your destination;** sometimes you drive out of your way to see something, and those are the most meaningful parts of a trip.

## *Feedback*

**N**ow that you have a map, filled with landmarks, you have to figure out how you know you're making progress towards your destination. What kind of data can you collect and how do you make sense of it? (These are the feedback loop spaces on the map.) In public engagement work, the landmarks are often nebulous. You're looking for changes in attitudes, increases in the amount and kind of attention paid to a topic, participation in events, specific online actions (retweets, likes, etc.), the quality of stories told, and the list goes on. So how do you identify what's important?

Even though you set out with good intentions to measure what's important, often reality gets inverted, and you start to think only that which is measurable is important. It's good to recognize this bias early on in order to correct for it. Once you've done that, you can figure out how to make sense of it all.

Start with your destination and work backwards to all the places you'll have to pass through before you get there. For example, in order to accomplish a change in policy, you have to generate greater attention to the topic that can lead to an increase in social media activity about the topic, high-level influencers talking about the topic, and perhaps an increase in people attending related events. Once you have these things identified (in no particular order), then start to think about metrics. Are there things you can count? Do you have the tools you need to count them? If not, can you get them?

If there is nothing to count, is there something to describe? Have the quality or style of images people are using in online conversations changed? How do you know? Are more people showing up to meetings? Are meeting organizers describing their process more clearly? Are communities using the resources you've made available to them?

In addition to the things you can count and describe, can you create opportunities for more feedback? That is, if one of your landmarks is a change in people's attitude about a topic, can you ask people questions? Can you circulate a survey online? Can you distribute a paper survey? If so, what kinds of questions will you ask to gain insight on people's attitudes?

The key is to define the landmark and then figure out how you will describe it.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Metrics matter.** With each landmark on your map, determine how you're going to measure progress towards reaching it. Does the data exist? Will you have to make it?

**There are many ways to see the landscape.** Consider all mechanisms for collecting data, including online and paper surveys, interviews, or online metrics (i.e. Google analytics)

**Don't wait until the end to analyze your data.** You should be narrativizing and evaluating your data throughout a process.

## *Coming to Terms with Failures*

**A** runaway success in public engagement is difficult to achieve. You're likely not going to achieve 100 percent buy-in or remove all structural barriers to participation. Whatever process you choose may not always be accessible or available for some people, and at worst, it may alienate others. For this reason, it is even more important to measure progress towards landmarks and not be concerned with only reaching your destination. Even if you fail to get to your destination, there are always places along the way you successfully reach. Understanding this is important not only for the project you're working on but for the potential success of all the projects that will come after yours.

This idea of landmarks builds off the study and method of systemic organizational change called "appreciative inquiry,"<sup>17</sup> which sets out to build constructive pathways, not diagnostic results, from evaluation. In public engagement work, the only appropriate description of failure is when it describes a lack of productivity and inability to deliver. But even then, failure is rarely total or catastrophic. If a project fails to reach its destination, it likely accomplished something along the way and through important landmarks. This is why, outside of outcomes evaluation, it is important to describe landmarks in detail and to put them in the context of systemic change. And if you failed to reach a landmark or got completely off track towards your destination, then use this occurrence as an opportunity to explain what happened and how you might be able to prevent it in the future. Remember, public participation work is iterative. It's not about the destination, but about improving and learning from the journey

<sup>17</sup> Cooperrider, D., & Sekerka, L. E. (2006). Toward a theory of positive organizational change. In Joan V. Gallos (Ed.), *Organization Development: A Jossey-Bass Reader*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Reframe failure** in terms of appreciative inquiry by considering failure as an opportunity to learn and surface useful information for future iterations. Failures should be small, cheap, and temporary. Often burnout can be mistaken for failure.

**Document process.** In what ways can failure to reach a landmark translate into lessons learned? Documenting failures actually produces additional value, and may even have a bigger impact than immediate success.

### *Identifying Value*

**V**alue is a slippery thing. While the value of achieving the goal of the project may be clear, the value of the individual outcomes, or landmarks, are less clear. So who cares that people are paying more attention to a particular topic? Who cares that more people are attending events? The answer is, people care for different reasons, and that should be captured in your process. Creating a bigger Facebook following, for example, may not only have value for the project and its goals but also for government by building capacity and support for future projects. And while more creative use of social media has value for the project, it also can motivate participants to care about what they're doing, build social networks, and make them feel more empowered to address community-wide concerns.

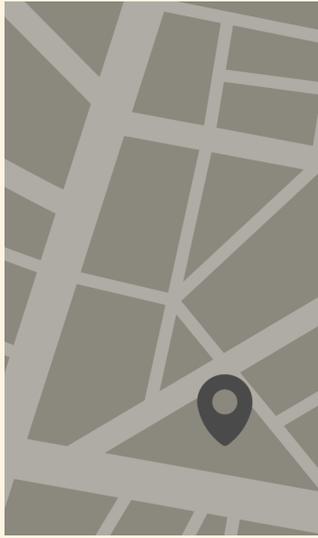
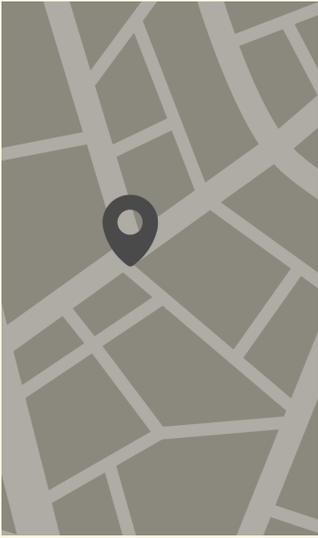
Part of what it means to effectively identify the value of a project is to consider the motivations and rewards for every person involved, from decision-makers to supporters and staff. How does arriving at a particular landmark motivate diverse participants and address their interests, especially underrepresented individuals or groups? Often, these things can't be figured out at the beginning of a project, as stakeholders or particular value propositions will inevitably emerge throughout a project. The best approach is to keep landmarks flexible and understand that they may increase or decrease in value as you talk to more people and gain a deeper understanding of their motivations. Remember, you're not making a logic model as there is nothing linear about a public engagement project. You should be able to add and subtract landmarks and their connections to one another throughout a project.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Clear statements of value and defined outcomes are important to manage expectations of funders and communities.**

**Communicate value in public reports.** This may need to include numbers and goals/outcomes for transparency.



## Documentation

**D**on't document everything, but document everything you can. Get in the habit of writing stuff down and organizing your documentation. If you can't count it, describe it. Try to explain what's happening or what your thoughts are on why someone said what they said. **Impact is 20 percent evidence and 80 percent storytelling.** So encourage people to tell stories and then figure out how to record them. Public engagement processes are affective; they are experiential. People engage in them because they care, but more importantly, they care because they've engaged in them. Capturing this sentiment is not science, it's art, and it requires attentiveness and deep reflection. Make sure that someone on your team can spend the appropriate amount of time doing this work.

**"People engage in them because they care, but more importantly, they care because they've engaged in them."**

### THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Document whenever possible and use thick description** to capture nuances and details. Cultivate a spirit of project ethnography throughout the team.

**The archive is the raw material of history.** It's not just about archiving what's important, but archiving so things can become important.

**Process can be an outcome.**

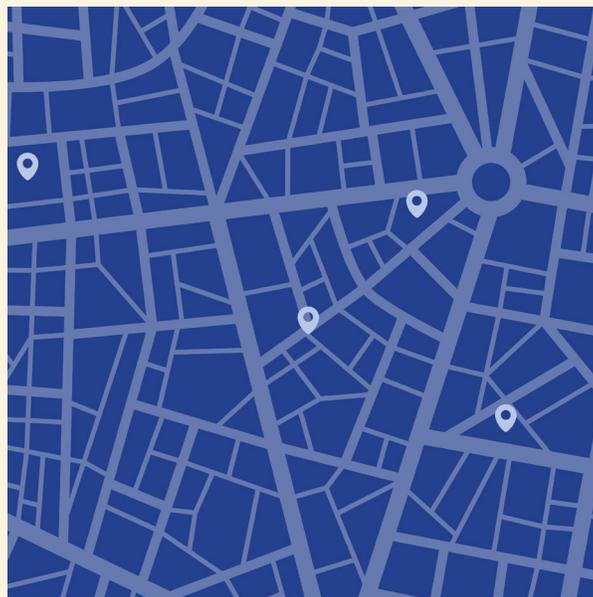
**Conduct interviews or focus groups** where possible to get more feedback. If there is time available, diaries are a useful tool for tracking findings and insights.

## *Counting in Context*

Numbers matter. People tend to believe them when they see them. While that's great, it can also be a problem. When you count things, you have to be aware of the context in which you're counting. When reporting on participants in an online campaign, there is often an expectation that it happen at the scale of the Internet. In other words, a local campaign online should reach millions, because it can. Of course, sharing cat videos is different than sharing news of a community event. Understanding this difference is key. Describe the context in which people get online, why they would gravitate to this particular campaign, and what kind of actions can be reasonably expected as a result of the campaign.

All participation is not equal. Liking something online is different than commenting on something. And commenting on something is different than creating and sharing something. Likewise attending a meeting is different than attending a block party or writing your representative. It's important to understand not just what platforms people are using to participate, but the quality of interactions taking place in those platforms. Depending on your landmarks, discussion may be more valuable than transactions. Make sure this is clear at the outset.

Communication is complicated. In any given conversation, there might be humor, sarcasm, hostility, love. Understanding a range of responses that result from engaging in public process is key. You can gain deeper insight by looking closely at individual contributions or by talking to people and asking them about their motivations. Remember, every story you get from someone is part of the overall story you need to tell about your project.



## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

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**Identify things that are countable.** It is equally important to understand that the same number can mean vastly different things in different contexts.

**Put effort into marketing and spreading your message.** Just because actions take place online does not mean that they occur at the “scale of the Internet.” In other words, you don’t have to reach 1 million people for online engagements to be effective.

**Discussion is more valuable than statements.** Replies and comments can say more than lone posts. Look for sentiment, emotion, and counter narratives.

**Meaningful action is about relationships not transactions.**

**Consider the motivation of the user/community.** Recognize the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Paying someone to participate may not be as meaningful as self motivated participation.

**Recognize barriers to participation** and use that to define the value of action.

## *Engagement Modalities*

There is no shortage of strategies for creating effective co-production processes in government. The goal is to find the right technology and method that creates a communication system that both enables voices and facilitates listening. Below is a number of engagement modalities<sup>18</sup> you can consider deploying. Each has its own affordances and weaknesses and is best applied in specific circumstances. When designing public engagement processes, it is important to understand a range of possible methods and choose the one that is most appropriate to help you reach your destination.

<sup>18</sup> Learn more about civic media approaches in *Civic Media: Technology, Design, Practice* by Eric Gordon and Paul Mihailidis (MIT Press, 2016) and [www.civicmediaproject.org](http://www.civicmediaproject.org)

MODALITY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE PROJECTS
<b>Data Literacy</b>	The skills and knowledge needed to use and access data to enable inclusive public engagement	Data Therapy  City Digits: Local Lotto
<b>Design Thinking</b>	Design-thinking is a participatory, and problem-based approach involving experimentation and testing.	The Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP)  The Market Street Prototyping Festival
<b>Face-to-face</b>	Face-to-face methods are opportunities for meaningful learning, connection, and dialogue to build trust and relationships.	Marketplace Nights
<b>Online Deliberation</b>	Deliberation is a generative exchange of ideas that can occur in digital spaces such as forums, platforms, and apps.	Next Door  Community Plan It

## DESCRIPTION

## APPLICABILITY

Researcher Rahul Bhargava supports community organizations in data visualization and presentation through workshops, webinars, and writing for creative data stories.

In 2013, high school STEM students investigated the social implications of state lotteries by interviewing their neighbors, analyzing citywide data, and using their findings to weigh the inequalities and benefits of the system

Participants select budget delegates who are tasked with researching community needs and submitting community project proposals for residents to vote on. More than \$80 million have been allocated through this process on capitol city projects in over 10 cities.

In response to feedback from citizens for a more vibrant and positive experience on Market Street, San Francisco organizes an annual festival for interactive artistic installations that are used to reimagine public spaces.

Marketplace nights have a ritualized structure for neighborhood exchange circles facilitated by Bill Trayvnor. Participants can make offers, requests, or announcements to broker exchanges. Advice, gifts, and favors are frequently shared. Popular, regular marketplace nights have seen the exchange of thousands of dollars worth of valuable stuff, information, advice, tips, wisdom and favors.

Next Door is a social network for neighborhoods to share local announcements and requests.

Community Plan It is an online deliberation game focused on community planning. Over the course of a month, participants answer trivia and discussion questions while communicating through a forum to debate planning ideas and compete for prizes.

Government can take an active role as an aggregator of big data in supporting an informed citizenry. Creating data visualizations, opening data sets, and facilitating data literacy workshops are all ways government can engage through information-sharing.

Cities can plan a variety of creative engagement activities that encourage ideation, such as design charrettes, game play, art festivals, and hackathons or design days.

Face-to-face methods include town hall meetings, community workshops, ambassador programs, leadership trainings, community liaison opportunities, steering committees, clubs, affinity groups, and many more.

City governments can invest in digital engagement strategies that allow for meaningful conversations to occur. These tactics include virtual townhalls, Twitter chats, and social media campaigns as well as polls.

MODALITY	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE PROJECTS
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**Play**

Play is any activity where the means are more valuable than the ends. Play suggests discovery, learning, and exploration.

Boston Coastline:  
Future Past  
  
Race to the White  
House



**Sensing**

A "sensor" can be broadly defined as any node of interaction in an environment that collects data and connects to a network.

Array of Things



**Storytelling**

Storycorps

Your Story Goes  
Here

## DESCRIPTION

This interactive art performance that entailed walking through the City of Boston to imagine how climate change will impact the City's social and physical landscape.

Over the course of a summer, youth played this treasure-hunt inspired game for civic learning and navigated a specific set of GPS coordinates. Upon attempting to find geocaches (containers) hidden at that locations, youth learned about electoral topics.

The City of Chicago has launched an initiative of technologies and programs to provide real-time, location-based data about the city's environment, infrastructure and activity to researchers and the public. It encourages collaborations between experts, researchers, lay people to take specific actions to address urban issues like transportation and climate change.

By enabling people to tell and record stories, Storycorps enlists the activity of storytelling (not the content of the stories) to engage publics. A small percentage of these stories are broadcast on National Public Radio, but Storycorps maintains a much larger archive of stories.

This online digital media teaching kit is created to help people craft, share, publish and ultimately discuss their stories about cities, places and people - building confidence and capacity for non-professional citizen planners. The framework introduces concepts like physical and critical site audits, effective storytelling through language, keywords, and animation as well as platforms for publishing stories.

## APPLICABILITY

Play is not about motivating or incentivizing people to do things, but it's about providing the space for learning and interaction. Play can be encouraged through games, interactive displays, meme-inspired social media campaigns, among other tactics.

Governments can explore how to leverage the Internet of Things (IoT) for meaningfully interpreting data from sources such as traffic lights and GPS on municipal busses. For instance, governments can help people deploy sensors for citizen science and hacking projects.

From public rallies to immersive virtual reality documentaries, government can facilitate storytelling to garner and sustain interest in a topic. For any public engagement process, governments should consider face-to-face and online platforms for people to tell their stories.

## Going Places

Public institutions are struggling for legitimacy. Ours is a moment defined by a technological shift that is producing massive amounts of digital data and increased demand to produce more of it. As a result, there is an increased expectation of transparency, and real need for public institutions to “open up” and become more responsive. This is why there has been such an emphasis on increasing public participation and instantiating community engagement efforts in cities: it’s not just because it’s the right thing to do, but also a veritable necessity for institutions to weather major technological, social, and cultural changes.

We can understand this moment as being comprised of two opposing forces: on one hand, an extraordinary bounty of data and the compulsion to create smarter and better analytics for more efficient and responsive institutions, and on the other hand, deep and resounding community connections, rising of oppositional voices (i.e. Black Lives Matter, Occupy Wall Street, etc.), and people-centered processes. As a result, cities and town in the United States have been grappling with the demand for increased technological efficiency and transparency, just as they have been struggling to make institutions “more human,” “more relatable,” more meaningfully inefficient.

But here’s the problem: the institutional language of engagement has been defined by its measurement: chief engagement officers in corporations are measuring milliseconds on web pages, and clicks on ads, and not relations among people. This is disproportionately influencing the values of democracy and the responsibility of public institutions to protect them. Too often, when government talks about engagement, it is talking about those things that are measurable, but it is providing mandates to employees imbued with ambiguity. Departments are rewarded for quantifiable efficiency, not relationships. Just because something is called engagement, this fundamental truth won’t change.

This document is informed by the work of teams in five cities: Atlanta, Albuquerque, Baltimore, New Orleans and Seattle. Each of their efforts reflects a tension between the mandate for measurable public engagement, on one hand, and meaningful relationships on the other. Ultimately, each produced a bit of both: numbers to recount and relationships fostered and nurtured by local government that have the potential for lasting, but likely immeasurable, impact on people. While both of these things matter, chances are any given department is going to focus on increased efficiency and measurability, while downplaying relation and meaning-making.

At the end of the day, who is going to care about government? How do you get people to care about the services that government provides? How do you get people to care about the health outcomes in their neighborhoods? How do you get people to care about ensuring accessible, high-quality public education? These are the questions that matter. What is laid out in this document is a roadmap to caring. When government talks about civic engagement, it should really be talking about caring.

But let me take it one step further. When someone cares about something, they make a decision to be attentive to that thing. But “caring about” is one end of what we might call a spectrum of caring. On the other end, there is “caring for,” when, as described by philosopher Nel Noddings, “what we do depends not upon rules, or at least not wholly on rules--not upon a prior

determination of what is fair or equitable--but upon a constellation of conditions that is viewed through both the eyes of the one-caring and the eyes of the cared-for.”<sup>19</sup> In short, caring-for is relational. When one cares for another, the outcomes of an encounter are not predetermined, but arise through relation. If government is truly to adopt an ethic that is inclusive and responsive, it needs to be cautious of the language of engagement, which implies attentiveness, but also, as it is used so commonly in the private sector, a kind of captivity. To engage customers is to grab them, to assimilate them into a system, and make them compliant. In the public sector, the goal should be to care for communities, and to nurture outcomes based on relations, not pre-conceived ideals. There is a reciprocity that is important to achieve - if government in the American ideal is of the people and for the people, then the challenge of government institutions is to develop programs, services, and opportunities for people to “care for” and feel “cared about” by the people.

This is caring for civics. I mean this in two ways: First, civic life, and the public institutions that mediate it, is in transition. It is going to require organizational and thought leadership to care for it. And there is need to think beyond engagement as a matter of market efficiency. Second, we need to instantiate a “caring-for” civics. This is an approach to civic life that is fundamentally relational, where public institutions create value systems and metrics that support long term relationship building in addition to short term attention. If we consider the work of government as operating within this spectrum of caring, from caring about to caring for, then we can better understand the tensions presented by our particular moment. It is important that people care about government and their community; it is more important that people care for their communities, where their attention is transformed into responsibility and connection. Caring for civics is the guiding value for 21st century governance.

<sup>19</sup> Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013, p. 12.

### **Pull Quote**



# Chart

the **Course**



character cards

tactic card  
1

tactic card  
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3

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4

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5

**Character**  
Card

*Chart*  
the Course

**Tutorial  
Character**  
Card

*Chart*  
the Course

**Character**  
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<p><b>Youth Sports League Coach</b></p>	<p><b>Small Business Owner</b></p>	<p><b>Real Estate Developer</b></p>	<p><b>High School Teacher</b></p>	<p><b>Elderly Homeowner</b></p>	<p><b>College Student</b></p>
<p>Software engineer and volunteer coach with local youth soccer league. New homeowner with one child in elementary school. Parents and most relatives live abroad in Asia. Strong social ties to other families with children who play sports.</p>	<p>Family owns a cafe struggling through its first year of operation. No children. Concerned with cost of living and how to provide fair wages &amp; benefits for employees.</p>	<p>Converts underutilized spaces into multi-use developments with greenspace. Emphasis on sustainable design and construction. Questionable hiring practices. Strictly interprets laws for supplying affordable housing units.</p>	<p>Teaches biology and algebra at a local high school. Married to same-sex partner with no children. Avid outdoor enthusiast and urban farmer. Went to college in the area and stayed to start career.</p>	<p>Long-time resident and local activist with deep social and community ties. Raised three children in public schools who now have kids of their own. Self-reliant, independent. Stays in touch with local officials by email.</p>	<p>New to town and concerned with larger issues affecting the community like the environment, gender equality, immigration &amp; economic justice. Bilingual, second-generation. Politically active online. Volunteer tutor to low-income local students.</p>
<p>Inclusivity: 3</p>	<p>Transparency: 2</p>	<p>Creativity: 2</p>	<p>Creativity: 3</p>	<p>Inclusivity: 3</p>	<p>Inclusivity: 3</p>
<p><b>Local Union Leader</b></p>	<p><b>Local Merchant</b></p>	<p><b>Immigrant with young family</b></p>	<p><b>College Professor</b></p>	<p><b>20-something single renter</b></p>	<p><b>Bob from Accounting</b></p>
<p>Strong local family and social ties. Homeowner with two children in public school and one in college. Politically active, with focus on workers rights.</p>	<p>Owens a boutique clothing &amp; gift store. Homeowner. Active on Facebook but mostly to stay in touch with distant friends and family. Landlord of a multi-family residence in an emerging neighborhood.</p>	<p>Struggling to make ends meet with two part-time jobs. Spouse is an unemployed construction worker. Rents in a low-income neighborhood with little access to fresh food. Children in public school. No local family ties. Active in church. Speaks little English.</p>	<p>Teacher of political science at local private college, active member of local church. Homeowner in outlying suburbs. Two children in private school, 8th and 10th grade. Spouse is an attorney and both write regularly to the Opinion page of the local newspaper.</p>	<p>Young creative professional. New to the area without a big local social network. Stays up-to-date on current events through Twitter and SnapChat. Commutes by bike and transit.</p>	<p>Mid 40s accountant with a wife and two kids, both in high school. Conservative, and prone to starting political arguments. Usually not invited to after-work events, unless it is a company-wide party.</p>
<p>Transparency: 4</p>	<p>Transparency: 3</p>	<p>Inclusivity: 4</p>	<p>Transparency: 4</p>	<p>Creativity: 5</p>	<p>Creativity: 5</p>

This turn, you may put the character you draw back in the bottom of the deck and draw a new card. You must use the new character, if you decide to do so.

This turn, draw two characters. Choose one, and put the other on the bottom of the deck.

Place an extra token on Creativity for each blue card selected this round.

Add one token to Creativity.

For the rest of this game if you draw a character that has Creativity as their highest priority, bank one extra piece.

Choose a character in the discard pile who was not totally satisfied after roleplaying. Place 2 bonus tokens on their primary concern.

If you use online polling or reach out with social media later in this game, place a token on those Tactic cards. Bank that token during those actions.

After looking at the character card, you may reallocate one of your tokens. If your plan includes connecting with a university researcher, you may reallocate any two tokens.

If you have at least two tokens placed in Creativity, you gain two tokens to place anywhere.

Add one token to Creativity and one token to Inclusivity.

If you use a turquoise card in your plan, add one token to all categories.

Gain a bonus token to place anywhere for each orange card you've selected

**Character**  
Feeling

**Character**  
Feeling

**Character**  
Feeling

If you already have two tokens in Inclusivity, gain two free tokens to place anywhere.

Add two tokens to Inclusivity.

Add two tokens to Inclusivity.

If you used a teal card before this one, add one token to all categories

 <i>Feedback Loop</i>	 <i>Feedback Loop</i>	 <i>Feedback Loop</i>
Create a project website (Red, Blue, Yellow, Green)	Hold follow-up meetings (Red, Blue, Yellow, Green)	Regular project updates on social media (Red, Blue, Yellow, Green)

A central, digital resource can be a useful place for sharing project updates, photos, and contact information.

Connecting with stakeholders can keep them engaged and informed about new information.

Social media content can reach a younger and wider audience as viewers comment and share.

 <i>Group Event</i>
Happy Hour

Invite co-workers out for a drink after work.

**Tutorial Tactic**

 <i>Collect Data</i>	 <i>Collect Data</i>	 <i>Collect Data</i>
Connect with local university researcher	Conduct Focus Group	Use online polling

Meeting with university staff could help you interpret data

Hold an information-gathering session with people from the target groups affected by the project

Unscientific but more widely distributed data-gathering method.

 <i>Build Community</i>	 <i>Build Community</i>	 <i>Build Community</i>	 <i>Build Community</i>
Reach out to youth	Reach out to community leaders	Organize neighborhood block party	Reach out via social media

Engage with youth groups or schools to involve young people in the process

Meet with trusted community leaders to understand their priorities

Help organize and provide resources for block party in effected neighborhood.

Connect with online influencers through social media channels.

 <i>Collect Data</i>
Use existing open data

Access open data from previous research and use the findings to shape your engagement strategy

 <i>Gauge Public Opinion</i>	 <i>Gauge Public Opinion</i>	 <i>Gauge Public Opinion</i>	 <i>Gauge Public Opinion</i>
Hold a Town Hall Meeting	Meet with Community Groups	Door-to-door Canvassing	Man-on-the-street Polling

Hold large meeting to discuss issues in community space.

Attend meetings of existing community groups

Knock on doors and talk to people about the project

Set up a booth on a busy corner to solicit opinions about the project

 <i>Better!</i>	 <i>Worse!</i>	 <i>The same!</i>
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## Debrief Questions

*Congratulations- you've charted a course for public engagement!*

*Once you've finished playing the game, take some time to reflect on your experience. The questions below are suggestions for productive conversations. The first set of questions relates to how you played the game, the second set of questions reflect on public engagement.*

### Strategy and Mechanics

1. How did you decide where to post your pieces? Were you able to formulate a strategy? If so, what was your strategy?
2. Did you play differently towards the end instead of the beginning? If you were to play again, would you play differently?
3. What did you enjoy the most? What was not as fun?

### Public Engagement

1. How do you feel this game corresponded to real-life engagement? How is it the same or different? Why?
2. What do you think this game is saying about public engagement?

City officials and practitioners are tasked with conducting public engagement- an often messy, non-linear experience with many steps for creating a thoughtful, creative, and inclusive process. We created this game for planners to practice investing their resources into competing but equally important themes of creativity, transparency, and inclusivity while contending with diverse constituent responses. We hope that you enjoyed flexing your civic planning muscles and have gained some insight and confidence for your future projects!

To learn more about playful approaches to public engagement and inquiry-based design, visit [www.elab.emerson.edu](http://www.elab.emerson.edu).

*thanks for playing!*

## Environmental Sustainability

With a major storm recently brushing the edges of Capital City, there is growing political support for long-term climate change planning. You know that the City's climate plan will include:

- A reduction in Capital City's carbon impact
- An increased investment in green infrastructure (such as parks and pathways)
- An effort to incorporate climate science and adaptation into school curricula and infrastructure

In planning your public engagement campaign, you have to consider that climate change is still a sensitive political issue on the national stage, and that there is a significant unevenness in knowledge and perceptions about how climate change will impact Capital City.



## Affordable Housing

Capital City is facing a housing crisis, as evidenced in heated debates at local town-hall meetings. In three vulnerable neighborhoods, rents have increased at an historically high rate over the last 5 years. You've been tasked with creating a public engagement process that focuses specifically on those three neighborhoods to better understand local needs and fears. You've been asked to do the following:

- Bring together multiple stakeholders, such as residents, realtors, community development organizations, and lenders
- Listen to local neighborhood groups
- Communicate the complexity of affordable housing and development costs

While this process will focus only on three neighborhoods, the entire City will be impacted by its outcomes. Keep that in mind as you develop your plan.



## Public Safety

After a recent spike in city-wide crime and recidivism rates, your department is tasked with engaging the public in a conversation about public safety. Your process should consider the following:

- Desire from affluent neighborhood groups to be heard
  - A goal of including all neighborhoods in the city
  - An increasing public perception that the police are engaged in racial profiling

The goals of your department are to reduce crime rates (ideally by 15%), to enable more community representation in decision-making, and to promote more reliable relationships between Capital City and the public it aims to serve.



## Economic Development

In its efforts to support economic inclusion and equity, Capital City is planning an economic development revitalization campaign to support small businesses and entrepreneurs. You want to create a city-wide public engagement campaign to gather input and secure support for new policies. You already know there's a desire for:

- More accessible resources for business licensing and permitting
- Extra support for businesses owned by minority groups and women
  - Opportunities for professional development- such as financial literacy and marketing

In your public engagement efforts, you need to ensure that you're hearing from as many people as possible, that all communities in the city feel "listened to," and that you appropriately document and process input.



## Arts & Culture

Every day there are thousands of tourists who pass through the City and experience its art and culture. The City recognizes that there is untapped creativity and storytelling talent scattered throughout the neighborhoods. You've been tasked with developing a public engagement plan that gets input from the widest group of people, not just current patrons of the arts. You are particularly interested in the following:

- Engaging youth
- Expanding access to the arts
- Assuring that the City continues to be recognized for its unique contributions to arts and culture.

You want to engage as many people as possible in a conversation about how the City should be investing in and supporting art and artists. There is a growing divide between the traditional arts (the Modern Art Museum, the Opera House) and community-based art. You want to hear from all people without creating greater political rifts.

*Chart*  
the Course

# Chart

## the Course

### First Time Playing?

*Use the purple Tutorial Character and Tactic card for a sample round of play. In this tutorial scenario, your team wants to build community among colleagues. Your goal is to find the best way to do this - although, in this sample round, there is only one Tactic card option for you to use.*

- 1.** The player with the orange token goes first.
- 2.** Read the purple Tactic card.
- 3.** Your token represents the time and energy you will be investing in this element of the plan. The player with the orange token is the first to decide whether they will invest in Creativity, Transparency, or Inclusivity. Each player, going clockwise, then places a token on one of the three categories and explains their rationale for their approach.
- 4.** If there are only four players, each player should take their individual turns and then come to a consensus about where to place the fifth token (be sure choose a different color).
- 5.** Flip over your Tactic card. Read and apply the instructions on the back.
- 6.** Next, draw the purple-colored tutorial Character card. Flip it over and read the description.
- 7.** On the bottom of the card, there will be one of the three categories: Transparency, Inclusivity, or Creativity. Next to that category is a number. Compare that number with the number of tokens in the corresponding section of the gameboard.
  - a.** Did you put tokens on the area that meet or exceed the character's desire? Put those tokens in the bank.
  - b.** If you did not meet the character's desired level of investment, you have to role play in order to bank any tokens.
    - i.** Use the Peeve-O-Meter on the gameboard to determine the intensity of the character's dissatisfaction by subtracting the number of tokens on the relevant section of the board from the number on the card. The net difference determines the character's level of dissatisfaction. Use this as a guide for role-playing.
    - ii.** Hand the Character card to the person on your left. The person whose turn it is will play a public engagement planner, while the person sitting to their left will play the member of the public on the character card.
    - iii.** Character takes one minute to express your reasons for dissatisfaction with engagement process. The Public Engagement Planner takes one minute to respond to these concerns.
    - iv.** Now the person playing the member of the public decides if the official response made them feel "Better", "Worse," or the "Same" and places a Feeling card face-down.
    - v.** Was the character's dissatisfaction allayed or exacerbated by the staffer's response? Each player shares their thoughts on why they think the response was or wasn't effective, then the group comes to a collective decision.
    - vi.** If the table guesses correctly, they may bank any tokens in the relevant approach category.

# Chart the Course

## Game Overview

Chart the Course is a cooperative role-playing game for 4-5 players. The object of the game is to create a public engagement plan that sufficiently meets the community's needs, in order to build trust with them. You are on a team of Capital City public engagement planners tasked with developing an engagement strategy for a project. Public engagement can be a "messy" and evolving process, with necessarily limited resources of time, energy, and funding. You must decide whether to invest in approaches that emphasize Transparency, Creativity, or Inclusivity. Along the way, you will encounter feedback from members of the public, variously satisfied with your approach. Your ability to anticipate and respond to the public's needs will earn their trust and allow you to bank points in the game.

## Winning the Game

Bank 10 or more tokens by the end of your 5th turn. This is represented by moving tokens into the Trust Bank.

## Game Elements

**Context Cards:** These set the stage for the issue your engagement process will address, such as public safety or affordable housing.

**Character Cards:** These are members of the public in Capital City. They vary in age, professions, as well as particular needs based on Transparency, Creativity, and Inclusivity.

**Character Feeling Cards:** Better, Same, or Worse. Characters will indicate if they feel Better, Same, or Worse by placing this card face-down after listening to one of your team members respond to their engagement feedback.

**Tactic Cards:** Elements of your engagement strategy can include tactics from the following themes:

**Teal cards** emphasize gauging public opinion

**Orange cards** emphasize building community

**Blue cards** emphasize collecting data

**Green cards** emphasize establishing communication feedback loops between you and the public

**Tokens:** The time, energy, and resources invested in your plan are represented by these tokens. Your resources are successfully transformed into trust with the community when you meet their engagement needs.

## Rules for Play

- 1.** To start, select a Context card and read it aloud. You'll be playing through the first year of this project and devising the public engagement strategy.
- 2.** Now, you'll need to decide your ideal strategy!
  - a.** Lay all of the Tactic cards out with the name of the tactics face-up on the table. Set a timer for five minutes for all players to discuss the Tactic cards. As a group, select the five most important Tactic cards you'll take in your first year. **DO NOT** turn the cards over. The tactics you select will be the core components for your public engagement process.
  - b.** Remove any unused Tactic cards from the table.
- 3.** The player with the orange tokens goes first.

### Order of a Turn

- 4.** Player whose turn it is makes a decision about which Tactic card to use in the plan, placing it in the corresponding slot on the gameboard. They may consult the group before making their decision and should explain why they think it is the best option in this phase of the process.
- 5.** Now, each player takes one of their tokens. A token represents the time, attention, and people-power you're going to invest in achieving the goal. Each player places a token on one of the three categories (Creativity, Transparency, and Inclusivity) and explains their rationale.
  - a.** For example, if you used "focus group" as your Tactic you might explain, "I'm placing my token on Inclusivity, because our focus group should bring together diverse opinions about our project from the community."
  - b.** Or you could say, "I am placing my token on Transparency, because we need to spend time ensuring our focus group is transparent. Too often focus groups just collect data, and we need to make sure our participants understand what this data is for and the impact they're having in their city."

## FAQ

Q: If the Character feels Better after the role-play, but the rest of the team does not guess their reaction correctly, can we still bank those resources?

A: No, you may only bank of the resources when your team correctly interprets the outcome of the interaction.

Q: Can the role-play include a dialogue?

A: No. The exchange is limited to one minute of speaking for each person. First the member of the public gives feedback, then the public official responds. After this exchange, the player representing the member of the public decides if they feel better, worse, or the same. Please do not engage in a back and forth dialogue.



# Playing Chart the Course: Sequence of a Turn

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- 1 The player whose turn it is picks a Tactic card from the five selected cards and places it in the next available slot. As the player places the card on the board, they should explain why they chose it.
- 2 Starting with the player immediately clockwise, every player places a token on the board on the TRANSPARENCY, INCLUSIVITY, or CREATIVITY areas and explains why resources should be invested in that approach.
- 3 The player whose turn it is flips over the Tactic card and reads it out loud. Follow the directions on the back.  
  
The player whose turn it is draws a card from the top of the character deck and reads it out loud to the group. Then, they read the category and number at the bottom of the card (this represents what the constituent expects from government processes). If the constituent's interests are met (if the number of tokens, i.e. resources, invested in a category are greater than or equal to the number on the card), bank the tokens in that category and remove the other tokens from the board. If expectations are **NOT** met, continue to next step.
- 4
- 5 Look at the Peev-O-Meter. How far away were you from meeting the character's expectations? This will determine how upset the constituent is (refer to the Peeve-O-Meter).
- 6 The player whose turn it is then takes on the role of the character and explains to the person on their left why they are upset. This should take only 30 seconds.
- 7 The person on their left then takes 30 seconds to respond to the character as a city official charged with public engagement planning.
- 8 The player who enacted the character's position decides whether they were BETTER, SAME, or WORSE.
- 9 The players who did not roleplay come to a consensus and vote on the outcome of the exchange: BETTER, SAME, or WORSE.
- 10 Reveal the face down card. If the outcome was guessed correctly, bank the invested resource tokens as community trust. If not, no tokens are banked and the turn is over.