CCRPC Community Engagement Advisory Committee Meeting

MEETING DATE: October 28, 2026, 5:00 PM
HOW TO JOIN: This is an **in person meeting** with a hybrid option.
ATTENDEES: Deeana Hartog, Lydia Diamond, Mona Tolba, Ralph Perkins, Ragab Mohamed, Urmila Chhetri, Bruce Wilson, Omar Derzi, Amjed Almullah, Madafar Jassim, Elaine Wang, Melissa Heitkamp, Jules Wetchi; CCRPC Staff: Anne Nelson Stoner, Sarah Muskin, Charlie Baker

1. Welcome, Group Expectations, and Group Updates

AN.Stoner welcomed everyone at 5:05 PM. B.Wilson shared information about the Thanksgiving Health-giving event. L.Diamond shared about a fundraiser she is facilitating for Fight for Kids on Saturday from 4 to 9 PM.

2. Environmental Justice Advisory Council Vacancies

AN.Stoner shared that she met with staff from the State's Environmental Justice (EJ) Office. This office has an Advisory Committee to oversee its work. There are four vacant seats on the committee (immigrant community, environmental justice focus population, and a mobile home community representative). AN.Stoner asked CEAC members if they knew anyone who might be interested. She also reviewed the expectations for participation, including attendance expectations and stipend availability. She mentioned that the overseeing committee has to approve participation. She shared that the EJ office is anticipating beginning to do a lot of community engagement work to build out a statewide environmental justice mapping tool and the committee would likely oversee and participate in this work.

3. CCRPC Public Participation Plan Review & Discussion

AN.Stoner shared a list of external partners that have reviewed the draft PPP. C.Baker confirmed that VTrans will also review it. AN.Stoner shared a summary of feedback received:

- Simplify and shorten the document
- Add visuals
- Clarify responsibilities
- Involve communities in designing engagement strategies
- Close the loop
- Be explicit about public influence
- Prioritize relationships
- Provide more guidance for identifying interested and affected parties
- Expand accessibility guidance
- Emphasize childcare as a barrier
- Build engagement into budgets and timelines early
- Don't duplicate engagement efforts

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E.Wang asked if there is a best practice included for documenting who has given feedback. AN.Stoner shared part of the process that has been included in the PPP's Evaluate chapter. E.Wang continued to share concerns about being specific about who is engaged while ensuring anonymity and privacy. AN.Stoner shared CCRPC staff are working to standardize how we track engagement and are wrestling with the question of when to track demographic information for the reason E.Wang raised. R.Mohammed shared that personal information should be kept private. AN.Stoner asked what demographic information CCRPC staff could ask before it became a barrier to participation. The consensus was that it is important to ask for the information, but it should be optional and no identifiable information should be collected. M.Tolba emphasized that information tracking systems need to be secure and CCRPC needs to be transparent about why demographic data is being collected. Distrust is such a big issue with government engagement because people don't trust how their information will be used. AN.Stoner shared that CCRPC will look into what information would need to be shared with the public if a FOIA request were made.

U.Chettri and M.Heitkamp shared a concern about the stage of reviewing previous community engagement efforts, and want to make sure that previous engagement doesn't replace new engagement efforts as community needs change over time. R.Mohammed agreed. M.Heitkamp added that interested and affected parties should be returned to.

A.Almullah encouraged CCRPC to use creative arts-related engagement strategies, such as drawing and painting and mural creation to tell more nuanced stories about what people value about places. AN.Stoner shared some of the edits made to the PPP in response to comments received.

The group split into four groups to review different sections of the PPP. A few takeaways came from these conversations:

- Real world examples would be helpful
- Examples on how to integrate information received into a plan/action would also be helpful
- Less paragraphs, more lists
- Emphasize that project teams should use very plain language when creating engagement materials
- Hyperlinks
- Visuals would be helpful
- Consider breaking the plan apart on a webpage, so people can quickly access, through drop downs or hyperlinks, the sections that are relevant to them.
- Put some effort into presenting this document to the public. It is accessible for CCRPC staff and municipal partners, but dense for a community member. Consider an introductory video, welcome page, or simpler language.

M.Tolba made a motion to recommend the CCRPC Public Participation Plan to the Board of Directors for approval, seconded by K.Orlow. The motion passed unanimously.

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4. Next Steps & Closing

AN.Stoner closed the meeting at 6:32 PM.

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