

City of Bridgeport

Plan of Conservation and Development

Steering Committee

Meeting No. 1 Summary

May 17, 2018

On May 17, 2018, the City of Bridgeport Plan of Conservation and Development project team held their first meeting with the Steering Committee. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the Committee to the Plan, present the guiding themes for development, and review potential outreach methods. Specifically, the project team was looking for input on how best to identify priorities within each guiding theme of the Plan.

Presentation

Following a round of introductions, the project team delivered a short presentation to introduce the Committee to the Plan and its themes as well as the proposed outreach strategy.

The project team presented a review of Plans of Conservation and Development and discussed impacts from the 2008 Plan. Dean Mack (City of Bridgeport) explained that the 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development will expand on the 2008 Plan but will comprehensively go further to incorporate health and community resiliency. He noted that the last Plan was heavily focused on redeveloping downtown Bridgeport and the new Plan will derive from priorities decided on as a community. In addition to a formal document, the Plan will have an interactive, narrative portion that provides a snapshot of Bridgeport's character at this time in history.

The project team explained that the 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development will be shaped by the six guiding themes from the APA Sustainability Policy Framework, including: a livable built environment; harmony with nature; a resilient economy; interwoven equality; healthy community; and responsible regionalism. Dean Mack (City of Bridgeport) explained that the Plan seeks to examine how housing, jobs, transportation, etc. all interact on a smaller scale within each of these themes. The Steering Committee then reviewed prompting questions that would allow for thoughtful discussion.

The project team emphasized the importance of community outreach throughout the process of developing the Plan of Conservation and Development as the decisions and policies derived from the POCD are directly dependent on input heard throughout the engagement process. The message "planning with the community, not for the community" will be forefront throughout development. The project team introduced and defined pop-up events, community meetings, school events, thematic meetings, interviews, and virtual public meetings as venues for fostering impactful dialogue surrounding the Plan. The team reviewed various outreach tools that would encourage thoughtful feedback. Social media, virtual tools and a website will be used in conjunction to the outreach strategies to develop an online presence for the Plan. The group discussed branding options for the project.

Discussion

An interactive discussion supplemented the presentation. Committee members were encouraged to share their thoughts on the Plan's approach and identify any key aspects that may not have been emphasized. A summary of the discussion follows:

History and Character of Bridgeport

- The average resident, even those living in the many historic districts of Bridgeport, is not aware of the rich history of the City. The Plan should use the opportunity to educate and empower Bridgeport by reviewing history and looking forward to the future.
- Bridgeport has a rich maritime history that should be highlighted.

POCD Development

- Plan should be marketed towards the average resident; most people would not willingly open and read a Plan of Conservation and Development, so it should be intriguing and readable.
- The final document will be a comprehensive overview of insights heard during the development process.
- History of Bridgeport should be highlighted and celebrated but shouldn't veer into nostalgia; need to have forward-thinking attitude for the next ten years and beyond.

POCD Implementation

- The Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments is the final approval body for the Plan following approval by the State.
- A Committee member asked how action items are prioritized for implementation after the Plan has been developed. Lynn Haig (City of Bridgeport) explained that funding opportunities and level of necessity usually drive prioritization decisions.

POCD Guiding Themes

- Livable Built Environment
 - Accessibility should be prioritized
 - Pedestrian strikes and street safety are a major issue
 - Lack of enforcement on sidewalk cleanups, side parking, and other street level problems
 - Parks connectivity could be improved
- Resilient Economy
 - Bridgeport has lost many of its high-paying jobs that were replaced with low-paying jobs
 - Education system prevents attraction of jobs
 - Improve connections to other regions

Outreach

- Develop goals to track outreach success.
- Greater Bridgeport Transit has robust social media that could be leveraged for meeting announcements.
- Empower students to take ownership of the Plan and their City by introducing workshops and lessons in history classes across grade levels.
- To avoid planning fatigue, incorporate events that are tactile and interactive.
- Collaborate with college students who may be doing summer courses in related fields.
- Coordinate flyer seat drops on buses.
- Coordinate pop-ups at bus stops and train stations. Bus ridership does not diminish throughout the day. Transit Group employees can be on hand to handle questions from disgruntled passengers.

Community Groups and Potential Events Identified

- AmeriCorps
- YouthWorks
- buildOn
- Groundworks Inc.
- Juneteenth Parade
- Puerto Rican Day Parade
- Barnum Parade

Branding

- Committee expressed preference for options 1 and 3, suggesting they be combined, as well as option 4 on its own.
 - Use sketched text for lettering.
 - Incorporate four planning icons but change icons. Preference for bus over subway.
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Attendees

Steering Committee

- Razul M. Branch – Bridgeport Arts & Cultural Council
- Patrick Carleton – Connecticut Metropolitan Council of Governments
- Drew Goldsman – The Nature Conservancy
- Doug Holcomb – Greater Bridgeport Transit
- Natalie Pryce – Pryceless Consulting
- Jacob Robison – City of Bridgeport
- Ludwig Spinelli – Optimus Health Care
- Susan Tabachnick – LifeBridge Community Services

Project Team

- Lynn Haig – City of Bridgeport
- Dean Mack – City of Bridgeport
- Francisco Gomes – FHI
- Ken Livingston – FHI
- Zainab Kazmi – FHI