Collaborative Governance and Community Trust:

Municipal Models for Earning the Trust of Marginalized Communities

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Master in Public Policy Candidates, 2022

Client

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The Issue

Public trust in government in the United States has been in decline for decades.[1] For communities of color and low-income populations, historical and ongoing marginalization, exclusion, and harm inflicted by local governments perpetuates that distrust. This hampers the ability of local governments to enact policy and provide services that best improve outcomes and quality of life for all residents.

This report explores how local governments in the U.S. can repair community relationships and build trust. It investigates specific city programs that have employed participatory or co-governance models—meaning the government sought to bring community members' perspectives and expertise into the program. The report then evaluates the outcomes of these models, including their success in earning the trust of marginalized communities.

Why Trust?

For the sake of this research, we wanted to be precise as to why governments seek to build trust. Distinguishing it from legitimacy, which is the degree to which people see a government's decisions as valid, **trust indicates a community's belief that the government is working in good faith to do 'right' by residents and that it is capable of delivering on that intent**. We focus on trust not as the end in and of itself, but rather as a central component of a relationship between communities and government that enables government to equitably serve and support prosperity in all communities.

Case Studies

To explore these topics, we examined initiatives that incorporated elements of collaborative governance and prioritized equity in Fort Collins, Colorado; Raleigh, North Carolina; Portland, Oregon; and Houston, Texas. These programs span a wide array of policy areas and are diverse in context, geography, scale, and origination. In seeking to understand city officials' intention behind the design and execution of these programs, as well as the experience and perspective of community members who participated, we made observations about the successes and limitations of collaborative governance as a mechanism for trust building. By comparing

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[1] "Americans' Declining Trust in Government, Each Other: 8 Key Findings | Pew Research Center."

programs in various locations, we were able to understand how trust-building work manifests in each unique context and the myriad forms collaborative governance can take.

Findings

In our initial framing of this research, we anticipated that our findings would be technical in nature; that we would outline specific models and methods governments could use to more effectively collaborate with residents, building trust along the way. But community distrust in government is a relational problem, rather than a technical one. Building on our interviews, independent research, and calls that have been made by activists, communities of color, and low-income communities for years, we have distilled our findings into four reflections for local governments to consider as they work to build trust with the communities they serve:

1. **Building trust will require significant time and a holistic perspective.**

2. **Look internally before engaging externally: governments need to prioritize institutionalizing a culture centered on equity.**

3. **Accountability measures and feedback loops are critical to sustaining relationships with communities and building trust.**

4. **Partnerships with third-party institutions can buoy collaborative governance efforts.**

Recommendations: Where to Go Next

As an established and trusted partner to local governments and community organizations with expertise in both facilitating learning and producing original research, CPI is uniquely positioned to carry this work forward. Below are four avenues CPI could explore to strengthen government-community relationships and advance trust building:

1. **Expand the Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort,[2] with a focus on government accountability.**

2. **Partner with local governments to help build institutional approaches to equity.**

3. **Work directly with community organizations to build their capacity for government partnerships.**

4. **Pursue additional research on trust building.**

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[2] See pgs. 6-7 for more details on CPI's Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort.

Introduction

Context

In the United States, public trust in government has been in decline for nearly six decades—and for many communities marginalized by those in power, trust in government has always been weaker. Only 24% of Americans say they can trust the government to do what is right,[3] despite more than half of adult Americans agreeing that low trust in government makes it harder to solve our nation's problems.[4]

The longstanding historical legacy of marginalization, exclusion, and harm inflicted upon communities of color and low-income populations by local governments perpetuates this distrust. Local governments have failed to adequately redress the harm caused by policies such as redlining and systemic disinvestment, let alone confront the continued manifestations of systemic racism and other systems of oppression. This distrust in government, particularly among marginalized communities, is of course, valid, yet it hampers the ability of municipalities to enact policy and provide services that best improve outcomes and quality of life for all residents.

In light of these realities, this report explores how local governments in the U.S. can repair community relationships and build trust. It investigates specific city programs that have employed participatory or co-governance models. The report then evaluates the outcomes of these models, including their success in earning the trust of marginalized communities.

Client Description

Our research aims to support the work of the **Centre for Public Impact** (CPI), a global not-for-profit organization that collaborates with governments and public servants to reimagine government and collectively tackle issues faced by society. In the United States, CPI has worked with over ninety local governments since 2018 in the hopes of fostering innovation capabilities and cultures that focus on "listening to, learning from, and sharing power with frontline public servants and residents."[5]

This report serves to support the work of CPI North America's Government Legitimacy program, and specifically was carried out in parallel to CPI's inaugural Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort

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[3] "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2021 | Pew Research Center."
[4] "Americans' Declining Trust in Government, Each Other: 8 Key Findings | Pew Research Center."
[5] Centre for Public Impact, "Our Vision for Government."

(ELLC). Conducted between September and December 2021, the ELLC brought together cities and counties from across the United States to explore ways that governments can listen to and learn from communities of color, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized communities that have been harmed, disinvested in, or oppressed in the past. More information about the ELLC can be found in CPI's Impact Report.[6]

While the ELLC collaborated in real time to understand and address power dynamics and past harms inflicted within participating communities, our research aims to complement the outcomes from the Cohort with findings from other examples of successful relationship-building in contemporary U.S. history.

Research Questions

The central question we pursued with our research is:

> **What are the essential methods and characteristics of government policies and initiatives that lead to successfully earning community trust in government?**

Through this project, we hoped to examine policies, programs, institutions, and cultures that attempt to strengthen the relationship between local government and communities via collaborative governance. We specifically focused on successes for communities of color, low-income communities, and other marginalized groups to learn more about what practices may strengthen local government relationships with historically underserved residents.

Key sub-questions that we explored include:

- What are the standout contemporary examples of innovative models, policies, and practices for engagement between local governments and the communities they serve?

- What were the outcomes of these models and what was the effect of the models on community trust in government?

- How did the models specifically address the concerns of communities that have historically been marginalized by society and government?

- Were these models successful and if so, what were the key factors (community conditions, systemic conditions) that enabled the success of these programs?

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[6] Centre for Public Impact, "Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort Impact Report."

Background

Overview: What is Trust in Government?

As we embarked on this research, we felt it was important to define precisely what we meant by "community trust in government": How does it differ from "government legitimacy"? What does trust look like in practice—and who does it serve?

In line with the [Edelman trust barometer](#)[7], we see two attributes as central to trust:

1. **Competence:** Is the government seen as capable of delivering on its promises to the communities it serves?
2. **Ethical behavior:** Is the government perceived to be working in good faith to do the 'right' thing for residents?

Together, competence and ethical behavior form the basis for communities' trust in government. Ethical behavior addresses the intent behind the government's actions, while competence speaks to the ability to follow through on that intent. Both attributes are foundational to people's trust in the governments that serve them.

Why Collaborative Governance?

Thinking about how a government can build trust with its constituents means asking: how can government *earn* the trust of the communities it serves? This is a particularly critical question when considering communities that have been historically marginalized and underserved, such as low-income communities and communities of color.

We posit that in order to build authentic, long-term, trusting relationships with communities, cities need to use approaches that incorporate collaborative governance: They must work directly with community members and leaders to both co-define problems and co-develop solutions.

In our conversations with city governments and with community members, we repeatedly heard calls for open dialogue on topics that truly matter to residents and for increased opportunities for community feedback on how government can better serve their needs. We heard how cities are working to build collaboration into their policies and decision-making processes, and how

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[7] "2020 Edelman Trust Barometer."

community members have pushed to have their voices heard and reflected in policy. Based on these conversations and our research, we came to see collaborative governance—or approaches to community engagement that prioritize direct relationships and partnership with community members—as a necessary condition for community trust in government.

This does not mean, however, that there is a one-size-fits-all solution for community engagement and trust building. Deep collaboration between government and communities is not the best fit for every public initiative. Rather, it's important that governments have a vision for bringing community members' perspectives and expertise into their programs and policies as a whole and that they are committed to realizing that vision over time.

Trust Versus Legitimacy

In political science, legitimacy is broadly defined as "the belief that a rule, institution, or leader has the right to govern."[8] When a government is seen as legitimate, people view its decisions as valid, even if they don't agree with the specific decision made. In other words, legitimacy allows governments to make the policy decisions necessary to create public impact.

The Limitations of Trust

Throughout our research process, questions that we repeatedly revisited include: trust to what end? Why are we asking about trust, and who does it serve? We ask this question not because we question its role in evaluating the health of a relationship, but because we recognize that governments have historically failed to equitably serve particular communities. For that reason, a dose of skepticism likely serves to motivate residents to pay attention to government processes, seek involvement, and hold government accountable. Conversely, too little trust can cause the spread of conspiracy theories and disregard for policies intended to keep communities safe, healthy, and prosperous. With this research, we hope to contribute to the conversation about how governments can find the balance between these two extremes.

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[8] The Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination, "Legitimacy."

Overview of Methodology

We used a multi-faceted approach to examine ways in which governments can earn the trust of the communities they serve. Our methodology included three key components:

1. **Background conceptual research**, including a literature review and interviews with academics in the fields of democratic and collaborative governance, participatory democracy, civic engagement, and the politics of inequality.

2. The creation of **case studies** on examples in contemporary U.S. history in which municipal governments involved residents in an initiative via participatory or community engagement processes, with a specific focus on those that emphasized equity.[9]

3. The design of a **collaborative governance framework**, which served as the tool for evaluating the outcomes of the programs described in the case studies.

Our full detailed research methodology, including details on our case study selection process and interview guides can be found in appendix one.

Our Approach to Trust

While we have defined trust in terms of two, neat components, it is, of course, an intangible concept that is both dynamic and difficult to perfectly measure. Many studies exist in which researchers have rigorously measured trust using a variety of analytical methods. Such an undertaking would have been infeasible given this project's scope, timeframe, and resources. Given these constraints, we looked at other factors, including official reports, process design, and anecdotal evidence from interviews to draw conclusions about the outcomes of the programs studied. Acknowledging that there is no perfect proxy for measuring trust, we utilize the lens of collaborative governance as a method for understanding the relationship between communities and the government. Furthermore, a rich body of evidence does exist to support a link between trust in government and collaborative or deliberative processes.[10]

Availability of Information and Case Study Limitations

To develop our case studies, we relied first upon publicly available sources before conducting outreach to request interviews with city officials and community members involved in the program in question. Through this effort, we were able to secure 20+ interviews with

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[9] All case study interviewees were read an informed consent statement and agreed to participate in this research. All those who are named or quoted directly provided explicit consent for us to do so.
[10] Collins, "Does the Meeting Style Matter?"

shortlisted and final case study cites. However, the quantity or depth of interviews was not perfectly equal across all cities. As a result, we gleaned asymmetric information about the programs in question; this asymmetry is accounted for in our analysis. For more details about the depth of information we were able to access in each case, please see the detailed case studies in appendices four and five.

Characteristics of Collaborative Governance

In order to address our research questions, we designed a framework that outlines, in our view, the critical characteristics of collaborative governance. These characteristics are based on a number of public participation resources and tools, notably the International Association for Public Participation's 'Public Participation Spectrum'[11] and Facilitating Power's 'Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership'.[12] Our framework helped us identify target case studies, isolate important variables across the participatory programs we evaluated, and uncover meaningful contributors to trust building.

Description of Characteristics

1. **Level of collaboration with community**: The extent to which a government seeks input from community members and engages in open exchange on priorities and policy.

2. **Inclusion and equity**: How well engagements incorporate a diverse range of voices, particularly from marginalized communities.

3. **Transparency**: The extent to which the government communicates how public input will be integrated into decision-making and implementation processes.

4. **Responsiveness**: The extent to which public input has an impact on government's decisions and policies.

5. **Level of resources**: The money and personnel dedicated to a priority that has been identified with community members.

6. **Participatory culture**: The extent to which a government embeds an internal culture of participation and encourages public engagement and responsiveness.

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[11] International Association for Public Participation, "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation."
[12] Rosa González, "The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Power."

Overview of Case Studies

Our case studies serve as our primary point of investigation.[13] They focus primarily on two initiatives: the process to create the Master Plan for Dorothea Dix Park in Raleigh, North Carolina, and The Art of Belonging Forum in Fort Collins, Colorado. We also draw learnings from secondary case studies in Portland, Oregon and Houston, Texas. These programs vary in their policy area or goal and do not all explicitly list trust building as an intention. However, all four center the value of community input and collaborative processes, and explicitly prioritize equity and the inclusion of diverse voices. To most effectively allow us to identify the factors leading to the observed outcomes, our case studies are diverse across a variety of factors:[14]

	Primary Case Studies		Secondary Case Studies	
	Raleigh, NC	Fort Collins, CO	Portland, OR	Houston, TX
Policy Area	Parks	Inclusion & Culture	Climate	Neighborhood Development
Scale of Program	Citywide	Public Event	Citywide; focus on most-impacted communities	Neighborhood
Program Origination	Community Organizing	City-driven	Joint City-Community	Mayoral Platform
City Population Based on 2020 U.S. Census	468k	170k	653k	2.3M
Geography	Southeast	West	Northwest	South

The next section provides overviews of the programs, the theory of change city officials had in mind when designing them, and our key findings from each case study. Full case studies can be found in appendices four and five.

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[13] Findings throughout this section are based on publicly available information and/or corroborated by interviews.

[14] "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts."

Raleigh, North Carolina: Dorothea Dix Park Master Planning Process

Initiative Overview

In July 2015, the city of Raleigh, North Carolina purchased a 308-acre parcel of land from the state. The land brought with it a rich and complicated history—as Clovis, Woodland, and Mississippian indigenous land, a plantation, a state-run mental health institution, and next, the city and many residents hoped, as Dorothea Dix Park: the third largest city park in the United States. Acknowledging the complicated history of the land and responding to enthusiasm from local community groups, city officials in charge of the park's master planning process, like Planning Supervisor Kate Pearce, knew that they "wanted to take a fresh look at community engagement."[15] What resulted was a two-year, multifaceted community engagement strategy that aimed to lay the groundwork for a Master Plan that would serve as the foundation for, as the park's motto now states, "a park for everyone, built by everyone."[16]

Between 2017 and 2019, city officials carried out the master planning process for the park, which resulted in 65,000 Raleigh residents providing input into the plan. Methods for soliciting community input were diverse and ranged in their depth of engagement, from an online input platform and "park IQ" educational opportunities at city festivals, to a 45-member Master Plan Advisory Committee made up of residents who applied and worked hand-in-hand with the city and design consultants to advise on key plan decisions. The culmination of this process was the Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan, which was adopted by the Raleigh City Council in 2019.

Theory of Change

At the onset of the planning process, city officials felt that if they truly hoped to create a "park for everyone," the approach must address the complex history of the park site, as well as confront the history of harm and exclusion experienced by some communities in Raleigh at the hands of the city. Based on past experiences running public engagement processes, Pearce and her team knew that traditional community engagement efforts would be inadequate at engaging a group of residents that reflected Raleigh's diversity. More importantly, Pearce viewed the engagement process as an opportunity not just to collect input for the plan, but also to build relationships between communities and the park itself. By providing input and subsequently seeing that input incorporated into the plan, Pearce hoped communities would feel a sense of connection to and communal ownership over the park. Especially in light of the history of the site, cultivating relationships from the onset of the Dix Park planning process was viewed as vital to creating a park to which all communities of Raleigh—not only those whose interests had been historically prioritized in municipal decision-making—felt truly connected. In

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[15] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022.
[16] City of Raleigh, "Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan."

that spirit, four principles were adopted to guide the process: "open, inclusive, iterative, and active."[17]

"This place is going to be here forever. The idea of actual relationship-building with the community was really important. It wasn't just engagement for the sake of a planning process, it was engagement to build relationships so that people are connected to this place."

- Kate Pearce, Planning Supervisor, City of Raleigh[18]

Community Opinion

Raleigh community members who participated in this research spoke incredibly highly of the master planning process. Nick Neptune shared, "I think that the Dix Park master planning and engagement process should be heralded as a model for engagement. I absolutely believe that: I lived it, I participated in it, I've seen its results."[19]

In particular, community members spoke highly of the efforts of the city staff responsible for the master planning process. Jacquie Ayala, a member of the Master Plan Advisory Committee shared that, "city staff was very engaged early on and transparent [with us] about what the master planning process was going to look like, and we were exposed to [the design consultants] at every stage of the process. It always felt like we had access to those people. I always felt like I had access to [city officials] Kate [Pearce], Nick [Smith], and Caroline [Lindquist]. They were very available to talk and for questions."[20] Neptune added that he felt like city staff "were actively listening and pushing to ensure that the concerns, hopes, and aspirations that people held for this tremendous greenspace…were being incorporated into the final Master Plan document." As proof, community members say they can point to specific aspects of the final plan that were a direct result of community input, such as the inclusion of the African American Cultural Center.[21]

Importantly, residents also felt like the master planning process did not shy away from acknowledging the past harm inflicted upon certain communities in Raleigh by the government. Speaking about Southeast Raleigh, the historically Black area of the city, Neptune shared, "there are people alive today who remember that in the '90s, their family owned property in Southeast Raleigh, and the city approached them and said, 'you know what, we want to build a greenway here. So, we're just going to take this property. Now, the greenway is for everyone.' Is it? Is it really? Because you're taking away my family's property that they've had since the '40s." Now, Neptune sees Dix Park and the associated public engagement processes as a

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[17] City of Raleigh.

[18] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022.

[19] Nick Neptune, Raleigh resident, interview by author, March 24, 2022.

[20] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022.

[21] Pearce Ibid.

method to address histories like these. Through this process, he says, we endeavored to, "create a space…that acknowledges and celebrates the truth of our history and our culture…If we're going to restore broken trust, it starts by being honest about our shared history. There's no doubt that has been put into practice."[22]

Of course, residents also acknowledge that the process was not perfect. One resident who participated remarked that while the MPAC and those who engaged in the process from the broader community were "exceptionally diverse", those in the highest seats of formal power, namely, the Master Plan Executive Committee, were not. They continued, "I was suspicious of that committee…I wondered, where do our recommendations really go? They are going to this committee that is not as diverse and that is thinking about things in different ways than we, [the community] are."[23]

When asked about the effect that this process had on trust specifically, community members were hesitant to draw a direct connection between their satisfaction with the Dix Park master planning process and trust in government. "This wasn't happening in isolation," Neptune pointed out, "what else have we seen during and since that time? We see a president elected who actively encourages hatred, racism, and xenophobia. You see Black people being slaughtered in the streets by those who are apparently there to serve and protect them. And that doesn't even include more recently the pandemic and economic collapse."[24]

Ayala also shared that rising housing prices in the metro area were of huge concern to residents, and that in particular, the gentrification of neighborhoods adjacent to the park and displacement of residents who lived in those places was top of mind for many people. Even "realizing that the park process wasn't the answer to that problem, necessarily," Ayala doesn't feel like the issues can be separated. She added, "I'm not sure that the average person in Raleigh would have said, 'this is the Raleigh government doing this.' They would say, 'Dix Park, I love Dix Park. It's a park.' And I don't know that there's a connection [for them] between parks and government."[25]

Analysis

1. Level of Collaboration

Where on the spectrum of public participation—inform, consult, or collaborate—did the initiative fall, and was it the best fit?

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[22] Nick Neptune, Raleigh resident, interview by author, March 24, 2022.
[23] Raleigh resident (name withheld), interview by author.
[24] Neptune Ibid.
[25] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022.

Strengths	Opportunities
City officials intentionally made opportunities for different levels of engagement available. The majority of the 65,000 residents who were involved in the process were informed or consulted, providing input to the plan in a minimal capacity, and in line with traditional methods of community engagement. However, the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC), through which residents were able to collaborate with the city on plan priorities and decisions in a sustained manner, provided an opportunity for those who wanted to be more actively involved. Furthermore, residents were asked as early as the RFP process to provide input and help mold what would become the community engagement strategy. This approach has interesting implications for trust building, in that residents of Raleigh were able to see their neighbors actively participate in the process without having to engage repeatedly themselves.	While community members were consulted and had a role in decision-making, authority over the plan ultimately remained with the Master Plan Executive Committee, and the synthesis of community inputs with the landscape architects (Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates). There may have been ways to bring community representation into those two spaces. However, it is important to note that given the technical nature of developing a master plan intended to guide the buildout of the park, a level of deference to technical experts (in this case, the landscape architects) must be weighed. Further research could explore ways of increasing community decision-making in technical processes.

2. Inclusion and Equity

How intentional were officials about involving diverse participants? What efforts were made to center equity and marginalized communities?

Strengths	Opportunities
Inclusion and equity were central priorities: city officials sought diverse representation of different Raleigh communities on the MPAC—the success of which was corroborated by community members. City officials went directly to communities whose voices they hoped to incorporate into park plans, using roundtables, cultural and ethnic festivals, and other means to seek input.	Some residents who lauded the diversity of community input, expressed hesitations about the lack of diversity among groups with official authority, like the Master Plan Executive Committee and the city officials in charge.

3. Transparency

How much access did the public have into the design, decision-making processes, and outcomes of the initiative?

Strengths	Opportunities
Raising "Park IQ" was a central focus of early engagement efforts, ensuring that residents were aware of the park, the planning process, and their opportunity to help shape it. Throughout the process, five large community meetings were held to present drafts of the plan and solicit input and feedback. Furthermore, via the integration of the MPAC into decision-making processes, MPAC members were able to communicate with their communities about the process. This provides an interesting model for cities to share the work of external communication with residents themselves.	Some members of the MPAC felt that visibility into the conversations and decisions made by the Executive Committee could be increased. They noted that the MPAC provided input, but they weren't entirely sure what the Executive Committee did with that input.

4. Responsiveness

To what degree did input provided by residents impact the final outcomes or decisions made?

Strengths	Opportunities
Raleigh residents who were involved in the process point to numerous examples of where they feel their input directly resulted in additions to the plan. The African American Cultural Center, for example, is cited as being a direct result of community input. Additionally, residents point to examples where compromises were made, or city proposals were successfully rejected due to community input.	It is difficult to discern the extent to which some community input was not effectively incorporated into the plan. In some cases, officials and planners deferred contentious decisions to later in the implementation process. In one example, a proposal was put forth to include a hotel as part of the development on the park site under the rationale of revenue generation. Community members strongly opposed this idea. Rather than rejecting the proposal outright, room was left in the plan for future consideration of the proposal.

5. Level of Resources

Did the government commit real resources to the projects and actions identified or decisions made by residents?

Strengths	Opportunities
In 2019, Raleigh's City Council voted to approve the Master Plan, indicating support for the implementation of the plan and a dedication of resources to do so. Complicating this picture is the fact that funding mechanisms are variable and will be tied to different phases of park implementation over time.	If officials want to make explicit their commitment to put resources behind community decisions, a potential next step would be to consider incorporating some participatory budgeting practices into future phases.

6. Participatory Culture

Is a dedication to involve residents in programs and government decisions institutionalized across the government?

Strengths	Opportunities
When considering the realm of Dorothea Dix Park itself, a culture of participation within the Raleigh city government was and remains strong. From the onset of the project, an emphasis was put on building a community and giving residents a say in shaping the future of the park.	Repeatedly, we were told that the Dix Park planning process was novel, even groundbreaking, for Raleigh. While the participatory culture was apparent within the realm of the park, it seems that the culture has not transcended to other areas of the city government.

Key Findings

Takeaway #1: Individual government processes or programs don't happen in isolation.

Raleigh residents cited other public concerns happening outside of the park planning process as having a larger effect on perception of the government: a lack of affordable housing, gentrification, displacement of communities, and the perception that the government was not doing enough to address these issues. While residents acknowledged that the park planning process was not the solution to those issues, they made clear that it's challenging to assess the relationship between a single initiative and trust in the city. Notably, community members listed issues that fall under the purview of state and federal government, as well as larger cultural

forces and current events, as also being inextricable from residents' perception of and trust in government overall.

Takeaway #2: Healing relationships takes time and needs to be made a government-wide priority.

A member of Raleigh's Black community cautioned that government officials should not forget that many residents are carrying with them the systemic exclusion and harm inflicted upon their communities by the government. They shared living memories of the displacement of their community in the name of a past greenspace project in Raleigh, and more gravely, of government-imposed curfews during white supremacist riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Furthermore, they cited ongoing incidents of police brutality against the Black community. In light of these histories and current realities, community members shared that despite the high praise they sang about the Dix Park process, trust is unlikely to markedly improve until the commitment to redress these harms is adopted by the entire city government.

Takeaway #3: Residents may express high satisfaction with engagement processes and outcomes yet remain hesitant to draw a link to trust in government.

Community members that we spoke to raved about the Dix Park master planning process—they lauded city officials, felt that the city was intentional about equity and inclusion, and that they had the opportunity to be genuinely involved and shape the outcome of the process. The individuals on the Master Plan Advisory Committee, in particular, spoke about the process with a sense of accountability that they felt for work on behalf of other members in their community. However, they were hesitant to draw a direct linkage to earning trust. They questioned whether residents make the link between a park planning process, however large, and the city government. These observations point to the fact that cities can employ collaborative governance and execute a process with high satisfaction from participants, but that doesn't necessarily mean it will affect community trust.

Fort Collins, Colorado: The Art of Belonging Forum

Initiative Overview

On April 26, 2016, the City of Fort Collins and Colorado State University's Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) were on the eve of hosting the latest in their series of events to gain public input on pressing public policy questions. These events had always gone by the same playbook: they were discussion-driven, facilitated by CSU students, and centered on three to four topics currently under consideration by Fort Collins' City Council or planning offices. Past topics had ranged from Airbnb regulation to city recycling policy. This forum, however, marked a departure

from previous events: its sole focus was on how to foster community and what it means to "belong" in Fort Collins.[26] They called it the Art of Belonging Forum.

The event was one piece of the city's larger efforts to prioritize diversity and equity. In 2012, Fort Collins created the Social Sustainability Department (SSD), with the mission of fostering "a diverse and equitable community that successfully meets the basic needs of all of its residents."[27] The department took on work that had already existed in other city departments, including funding and policy on community human service agencies, affordable housing, and homelessness. SSD aimed to work in partnership with other departments and community organizations, serving as a "convener, facilitator, catalyst, and consultant."[28]

The event organizers had a very specific objective in mind: gain community members' inputs on two of the goals in the city's new Social Sustainability Strategic Plan:

1. Promote and maintain a welcoming, inclusive community where people feel connected.

2. Expand the city's diversity, inclusion, and equity goals, with an emphasis on internal and external communications, education, and outreach.[29]

However, rather than asking community members for their thoughts on these goals specifically, the forum was designed to be a space to broadly discuss what it meant to belong in Fort Collins. Through facilitated small-group discussion, the forum was intended to "bring people together to continue a larger conversation about what it means to belong in our community."[30] It was a place to understand what belonging looks like, discuss what is already being done effectively to build community, and brainstorm how to make Fort Collins a city where all residents felt at home.[31]

Theory of Change

The forum was intended to catalyze both city and community actions to further Fort Collins' diversity and equity goals. On the government side, the city largely viewed the forum as an information gathering event. The city hoped that by expanding the conversation around belonging in Fort Collins and receiving inputs from a broad cross section of residents, it could take those learnings to "shape future actions and dialogues."[32] On the community side, it was hoped that these conversations would spark future community-driven action around inclusion and diversity.

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[26] Martin Carcasson, CSU's Center for Public Deliberation, interview by author, February 25, 2022.
[27] Jacqueline Kozak Thiel and Beth Sowder, "Fort Collins Social Sustainability Strategic Plan."
[28] Jacqueline Kozak Thiel and Beth Sowder.
[29] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson, "Community Issues Forum: The Art of Belonging."
[30] "Facilitator Guide: Community Issues Forum, The Art of Belonging."
[31] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson.
[32] Ibid.

While 'building trust' was not named as an explicit goal of the forum, it was built into the fabric of the event. The city was directly seeking community members' thoughts on how multiple stakeholders could work independently and in partnership to create a welcoming Fort Collins for all. SSD aims to accomplish its work through partnership and recognized that strong relationships with community members were foundational to those partnerships.

Analysis

1. Level of Collaboration

Where on the spectrum of public participation—inform, consult, or collaborate—did the initiative fall, and was it the best fit?

Strengths	Opportunities
The forum itself falls under 'consult' on the public participation spectrum.[33] The city actively sought public feedback on how to strengthen community cohesion and achieve its equity goals during the event, fostering open discussion of policy ideas and ways in which the city government could better serve residents.	The organizers could have involved community members in the forum planning process, which would have shifted the event more toward the 'collaborate' end of the public participation spectrum. By engaging community members in setting the agenda and priorities for the forum, it's possible that more long-term government-community partnerships would have been established.

2. Inclusion and Equity

How intentional were officials about involving diverse participants? What efforts were made to center equity and marginalized communities?

Strengths	Opportunities
The event was explicitly centered around equity and included a diverse cross-section of Fort Collins residents, particularly along racial lines. The forum also included Spanish translation services and childcare, making the forum more accessible to Spanish speakers and families.	The city received negative feedback from some participants on having a white woman who wasn't fully bilingual open the event in Spanish.[34] This was a learning moment for the city, particularly on the importance of having marginalized communities represented within government.

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[33] International Association for Public Participation, "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation."
[34] Janet Freeman, former Equity and Inclusion Coordinator for the City of Fort Collins, interview by author, March 2, 2022.

3. Transparency

How much access did the public have into the design, decision-making processes, and outcomes of the initiative?

Strengths	Opportunities
CPD released a detailed report after the forum, including all the action steps recommended by the event participants.	While the event report was posted online, it was not actively distributed to event participants or the community at large.

4. Responsiveness

To what degree did input provided by residents impact the final outcomes or decisions made?

Strengths	Opportunities
The city made an active effort to increase the language accessibility of its event and the diversity of city employees after the forum, which appears to be partly due to recommendations received at the event, and also due to other pushes from city employees to increase the city's focus on diversity and inclusion.	While many government and community action items were brainstormed during the event and reported out afterwards, it does not appear that the majority of these items led to action within the city government.

5. Level of Resources

Did the government commit real resources to the projects and actions identified or decisions made by residents?

Strengths	Opportunities
The forum had a snowball effect on the amount of city resources dedicated to equity initiatives. After the forum, the city put more funds toward Spanish language services at public events and dedicated more staff time to equity initiatives, including creating a Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer position. These investments, however, cannot be fully tied back to the forum.	Community members proposed a number of broader city policy changes during the forum, including increasing affordable housing options and public transportation options. While these continue to be areas of focus for the city, it's not clear whether the government directly responded to these issues as a result of the forum–and if they did, these efforts were not communicated to residents.

6. Participatory Culture

Is a dedication to involve residents in programs and government decisions institutionalized across the government?

Strengths	Opportunities
After the public Art of Belonging forum, the city went on to hold an internal version of the event in order to evaluate its own DEI culture and goals. Over time, the city also took on multiple new initiatives to help promote an internal culture that embraces equity, including the Equity Indicators Project.[35]	Based on multiple conversations with current and former city staff, there was skepticism that city leadership had fully embraced a commitment to equity within the government, and a concern that staff of color had shouldered too much of the burden for pushing to prioritize such efforts.

Key Findings

Takeaway #1: Institutionalization of trust-building efforts is key.

Forum participants noted that "Fort Collins has come a long way but has a long way to go."[36] This is a message that the city staff also seem to have internalized and are working to act on. If the forum had a clear-cut lesson on how to build trust, it was that a single event cannot strengthen the government-community relationship in a lasting way—what it can do, however, is help provide the energy needed to continue those efforts in the long term. Government and community members alike seem to have found the forum energizing and were inspired by the existence of "a large community of people who care about [belonging in Fort Collins]."[37] This, in part, helped lay the groundwork for the governmental efforts that followed to build equity into programs and policies.

Takeaway #2: Clearly translating input into action—and communicating that impact—is key for accountability and trust building.

One of the main messages Art of Belonging participants shared during the event was that "action needs to follow productive conversations."[38] While the city was making clear efforts to hear more from communities that had long been marginalized, particularly the Latino community, there was a feeling that much of that engagement was, as one city staff member phrased it, "passive rather than dynamic…Are we just sending out a survey and expecting to get a response? Or do we actually have community connectors that we can train to have a more personalized impact and interaction with some of our underrepresented communities?"[39]

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[35] CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance, "Fort Collins Equity Indicators."
[36] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Member of Equity Office, City of Fort Collins, interview by author, March 4, 2022.

The city has completed numerous surveys on equity-related topics since 2016 and continues to wrestle with how to effectively use that data and communicate it back to communities.

Takeaway #3: The tension between collaboration and community member capacity is a difficult balance to strike.

As the city thinks about taking this work forward, some staff believe it is important to involve the public earlier on in the planning. However, they are also cognizant of the time commitment that a high level of involvement requires. Bringing community members into the planning and making sure it's a collaborative rather than extractive relationship will require thinking about how to best compensate community members for their time and work—whether through monetary compensation, public recognition, or more formal leadership and advisory roles.

Secondary Case Studies: Additional Models for Engagement

Fort Collins and Raleigh provide two distinct models for collaborative governance at the city level. Fort Collins' Art of Belonging Forum is an example of how a public event can become a catalyzing moment that spurs government efforts to center equity and strengthen community. Raleigh's Dorothea Dix Park master planning process demonstrates how involving people directly over a sustained period of time in decision-making processes, including giving them both the opportunity to provide input and see it tangibly incorporated, can help address a larger legacy of marginalization.

Through our landscape analysis, we explored additional models that also provide valuable lessons on government-community trust building. Here, we highlight two projects in Portland, Oregon and Houston, Texas. In Portland, the city convened its first ever Equity Working Group, made up of residents who would be most affected by a changing climate, to inform its 2015 Climate Action Plan. Houston's Complete Communities initiative provides an example of a government handing the reins to community: The city committed to supporting the identification and implementation of neighborhood revitalization programs, and all goals, priorities, and projects were identified and selected by community members themselves.

Given that we conducted fewer interviews with these cities, we have written higher-level case studies that draw upon the design of these programs. We recommend further research into both initiatives to evaluate outcomes in detail.

Portland, Oregon: Equity Working Group for the 2015 Climate Action Plan

Program Overview

In 2013, Portland decided to make a new Climate Action Plan (CAP)[40], a local plan to cut carbon emissions and other climate protection initiatives. Critically, the city decided to shift from its prior approaches to citywide climate plans: it hoped to apply an equity lens to all proposed policies and therefore to ensure the plan directly addressed the needs of communities of color and low-income populations.

Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) received a $20,000 grant to support community engagement for the 2015 CAP. Together with community partners, BPS decided to use those funds to create an Equity Working Group (EWG) to better integrate grassroots leaders—particularly from communities of color—into the climate action planning process. Community organizations were able to apply for sub-grants to support a representative on the EWG. Ultimately six organizations were chosen to participate. Notably, many of the community leaders chosen had not focused on climate work previously, creating space for fresh perspectives and helping to create a new cadre of climate justice leaders. CAP Steering Committee members, BPS, and County Health Department staff were also invited to join the EWG.

Through weekly meetings starting in 2013, the EWG reviewed and provided feedback on the CAP Steering Committee plans and created an Equity Implementation Guide outlining best practices and tools for integrating equity into CAP initiatives.

Theory of Change

Recognizing that equity had been neglected in previous climate action plans, the Equity Working Group was created to ensure that community leaders who were engaged in work with low-income populations and communities of color could provide direct input into citywide climate strategy. By compensating community members for their time and fostering active dialogue between EWG participants and the CAP Steering Committee, the city believed it could (a) effectively integrate equity into the 2015 CAP and (b) build new community leadership on climate change.

What's Notable?

Transitioning to community-driven work: Perhaps most notably, this equity working group has led to community partnership and climate action beyond the official project. Not only did Equity Working Group members volunteer to continue their work beyond the grant period, but multiple community leaders began to build relationships between organizations focused on equity and those focused on environmental issues. It appears that bringing in leaders who had

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[40] "Climate Action Plan | The City of Portland, Oregon."

traditionally focused on other issues helped to spur an uptake of community-driven climate action.

Process flexibility: The EWG also provides a valuable lesson on process flexibility and how to effectively integrate community member feedback. Initially, EWG members reviewed draft sections of the CAP and provided equity recommendations. However, EWG members found this "to be constraining the creativity of the group and creating an imbalanced power dynamic between chapter authors (staff) and grantee organizations (community)."[41] The EWG shifted to providing broader thoughts on challenges and opportunities related to a given topic, which city staff would then integrate into proposals. The city's responsiveness to community member concerns appears to have strengthened the relationship between the EWG and Steering Committee.

The value of time and funding: EWG members were compensated for the time they spent in the group. This funding made it possible for resource-constrained community organizations to dedicate staff time to the EWG. However, this funding did not ultimately cover the full EWG project timeline. While members continued to participate in the work as volunteers, it's a valuable lesson that building community-government relationships and creating processes to effectively integrate community-driven ideas takes time and resources.

Accountability to community: While the EWG and city worked closely together to bring an equity lens to the 2015 CAP, the city did not have indicators or metrics built into the plan to measure progress on equity outcomes. The city also lacked a plan for closing the loop with EWG members once the group finished meeting to communicate the results of their work, including what was and wasn't feasible. Based on a conversation with a BPS staff member, the city now recognizes the importance of having "regular check backs" with community partners and is actively working to build that step into its work.[42]

Houston, Texas: The Complete Communities Initiative

Program Overview

Complete Communities is Houston's first neighborhood-based planning initiative. It was started by Mayor Sylvester Turner in 2017 in an effort to "revitalize Houston's most under-served neighborhoods."[43] The pilot phase was designed and executed in partnership with the Community Design Resource Center, a special project out of the University of Houston that looks to work collaboratively with community to design justice-oriented development

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[41] "Climate Action through Equity: The Integration of Equity in the Portland and Multnomah County 2015 Climate Action Plan | Adaptation Clearinghouse."

[42] Harmonee Dashiell, Sustainable Communities Program Coordinator, City of Portland, interview by author, April 1, 2022.

[43] "Houston Complete Communities: About the Initiative."

strategies.[44] It took place between 2017 and 2018 with five Houston communities: Acres Homes, Gulfton, Near Northside, Second Ward, and Third Ward. The initiative engaged residents and civic leaders in each community, in a six-to-eight-month process to co-define community priorities, prioritize projects, and identify implementation strategies. By mid-2018, each community had co-developed their own Complete Community Action Plan, outlining their vision and goals for their neighborhood across a variety of policy areas, including civic engagement, economy and jobs, education, health, housing, mobility and infrastructure, neighborhood character, parks, community amenities, and safety. Following the completion of the plan, the chosen projects were implemented, funded by the initiative.[45]

Following the success of this pilot, the Houston Endowment awarded the city a grant to establish the Office of Complete Communities, which launched a second phase of the project in 2019, expanding the process in an additional five neighborhoods: Alief, Fort Bend Houston, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia Park-Manchester, and Sunnyside. To support the ongoing implementation of projects identified by Complete Communities, the Complete Communities Improvement Fund was launched in 2019 to "facilitate private support for the high-impact, high-priority projects identified in the Action Plans." The Fund is administered by the Greater Houston Community Foundation. Contributors to the fund include both private and philanthropic organizations.[46]

Theory of Change

This program was started with the central notion that communities themselves know what they need and what investments and projects would best serve the community. It endeavors to have residents and communities themselves drive processes, and to build trust by demonstrating that the government trusts residents to be the experts on their own communities. City officials used civic organization as a key indicator to select the neighborhoods that participated in the initiative. In doing so, they hoped to work with communities that were explicitly organizing and asking for government facilitation of projects, rather than imposing a process upon a community that didn't request it.[47]

What's Notable?

Community identified priorities: Unlike typical city planning or program design processes, Complete Communities does not presuppose a policy area or topic that it then solicits resident input on; in this model, the city acts as a facilitator to provide a neighborhood with the resources and technical support it needs to drive the planning, design, and implementation of revitalization projects. The city engages with the neighborhood presumably without an agenda for the direction the process will take.

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[44] "Office | CDRC."
[45] "Complete Communities: Mayor Sylvester Turner's Plan for a More Equitable Houston."
[46] "Complete Communities: Mayor Sylvester Turner's Plan for a More Equitable Houston."
[47] Anonymous representative of the City of Houston, interview by author, March 2, 2022.

Innovative Whole-of-Community Partnerships: The program serves as an example for a program that uses an innovative partnership and funding model to carry out projects. Due to budgetary caps mandated by local and state legislation, generating new revenue to fund initiatives like this in Houston is a challenge. The Complete Communities initiative serves as a model for how city governments can engage with partners in the private and philanthropic sectors to fund efforts that traditionally would be carried out and funded using public resources.

Findings

In our initial framing of this research, we anticipated that our findings would be clear-cut; that we would reveal the "next" participatory budgeting or outline specific models or methods governments could use to collaborate with residents more effectively. But that is not how earning trust works; community distrust in government is not a technical problem, but a relational one. What we have found instead are recurrent reflections on how to build trust and effectively partner with communities, some of which echo long-standing calls from community activists, communities of color, and low-income communities. These themes came up in conversations with communities in diverse locations across the country, working on different challenges, via a multitude of methods—telling us that governments cannot hear these things too many times.

Governance models that integrate residents into the process are one piece of the puzzle, yet it is important to remember that residents should not *have* to be directly involved in every decision-making process for them to trust that the outcome will serve them. A sizable number of people may not want to participate extensively in government processes; they may merely want the government to do the job it's supposed to do and do it for everyone. Furthermore, the forces that impact trust in government are larger than governance models: they also include things like culture, current events, and community cohesion. The "solutions" to increasing trust require a macro lens and an understanding that this work takes time.

With this complexity in mind, we have distilled our findings into four reflections for local governments to consider as they work to build trust with the communities they serve. While all of these themes came up in various ways during conversations with our four case study cities, we've featured one city under each point to provide examples of these ideas in practice.

1. **Building trust will require significant time and a holistic perspective.**

   Many factors that are outside of municipal government's control impact people's perception of it. History, current public concerns, the actions of state and national government, and the strength of relationships city residents have with one another all feed into people's relationship with their local government. This means that no single initiative or event will be sufficient to build government-community trust.

As we saw in **Raleigh**, while community members involved in the development of the Dix Park Master Plan lauded the government's collaborative planning approach and intentionality around equity, this positive experience didn't inherently translate into greater trust in the government. In conversations with all four cities we highlight here, interviewees noted the legacy of harm to marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, that needs to be addressed. This healing will require explicit recognition of past wrongs and long-term dedication to repair.

2. **Look internally before engaging externally: Governments need to prioritize institutionalizing a culture centered on equity.**

In order to effectively collaborate with communities, governments need to institutionalize a consistent commitment to equity within their own organization. This requires three core actions:

- <u>Ensuring government staff reflect the diversity of the constituents they serve</u>. To effectively serve marginalized communities, it is important for members of those communities to be well represented within government. An emphasis on staff diversity also helps prevent the burden of advocating for an equity focus from falling on the same, small group of staff—often staff of color—time and again.

- <u>Addressing intra-governmental silos</u>. Before embarking on a new collaborative governance effort, it is important for governments to understand relevant initiatives taking place across departments, and to gauge how and if communities have engaged with local government in the past. Interviewees provided multiple examples of how improved communication across departments and programs would have enhanced their collaborative governance efforts.

- <u>Building commitment to the same values up-and-down the organizational ladder and across departments</u>. It's important for all government staff, from leadership down, to share a commitment to applying an equity lens to their work and a joint vision of what advancing equity looks like in practice.

Through trial and error, **Fort Collins** has recognized the critical importance of creating an internal culture around equity. The high frequency of outreach to the same communities was tiring the very residents the city aimed to benefit the most. As one Fort Collins interviewee noted, "when you're a community member, you just see 'local government' – you don't see the layers, and might blend projects together, or think distinct efforts are the same."[48] The city is also working to diversify its staff.

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[48] Member of Equity Office, City of Fort Collins, interview by author, March 4, 2022.

3. **Accountability measures and feedback loops are critical to sustaining relationships with communities and building trust**.

The implementation and communication phases of collaborative governance initiatives are key to long-term success. Interviewees across cities described a similar pattern of governments pouring significant energy into developing program ideas in partnership with residents, but not necessarily communicating the results of those efforts and the rationale behind decisions back to community partners. Transparently communicating both successes and setbacks can help government to maintain the community relationships it has built, as well as help communities to understand the impact of their work.

Additionally, it is important for local governments to institutionalize these accountability measures. Dr. Jonathan Collins pointed out that because initial efforts to transparently communicate can allow people to develop a better understanding of the flaws in government processes, they can also lead to a decrease in trust. However, when those communication processes are institutionalized and residents have faith that they'll have the opportunity to give input again in the future, trust can grow.[49]

In **Portland**, efforts are underway in the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to close feedback loops with community partners. The city learned from the CAP 2015 EWG process about the importance of keeping communication channels open with community partners, even once a project formally closes. As Harmonee Dashiell noted, "the onus is always on us [the government] to explain the 'why' if we can't do something…We're now trying to make sure that piece is happening—wrapping up and saying 'here's what we heard—and we're also trying to have regular checkbacks with community partners."[50]

4. **Partnerships with third-party institutions can buoy collaborative governance efforts.**

It's no coincidence that all four governments in our case study cities partnered with philanthropy or local universities to carry out their initiatives. By definition, collaborative governance requires the co-definition of problems and co-development of solutions across sectors.[51] Through partnership, resource-constrained local governments can gain access to additional personnel and financial resources, expanding their capacity for deep community engagement. Outside partners can also help to balance uneven power

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[49] Dr. Jonathan Collins, interview by author, January 14, 2022.
[50] Harmonee Dashiell, Sustainable Communities Program Coordinator, City of Portland, interview by author, April 1, 2022.
[51] "From Community Engagement to Ownership: Tools for the Field with Case Studies of Four Municipal Community-Driven Environment & Racial Equity Committees."

dynamics, serving as more neutral intermediaries who can work directly with communities, without carrying the government's potential historical baggage.

In **Houston**, Mayor Turner's office has partnered with the University of Houston's Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) to execute the Complete Communities initiative.[52] CDRC, an urban design and community development nonprofit, helped Houston to expand the footprint of its work.

Recommendations: Where to Go Next

As an established and trusted partner to local governments and community organizations with expertise in both facilitating learning and producing original research, CPI is uniquely positioned to carry this work forward. Below are four avenues CPI could explore to strengthen government-community relationships and advance trust building.

- **Expand the Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort, with a focus on government accountability.**

  Participants in CPI's inaugural Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort (ELLC) capped off their work by presenting policy recommendations to their home governments, centered on building legitimacy with communities.[53] Given the critical role accountability and external communication play in local governments' trust-building efforts, CPI could continue to work with the ELLC pilot participants on the follow-through phase of their policy recommendations. For example, CPI could follow up with pilot sites to see if and how their policy proposals are being adopted and implemented, and how those results are being communicated to target communities. For a more intensive option, CPI could actively partner with the pilot governments to design structured accountability and communication measures.

- **Partner with local governments to help build institutional approaches to equity.**

  CPI is well practiced at facilitating big-picture goal setting and ideation processes with local governments. CPI could deploy this expertise to help city government leadership to create roadmaps and strategies for institutionalizing an approach to equity across their governments, perhaps testing out this work by replicating the ELLC cohort model. CPI could center this work on the three key equity areas we discuss in our findings: ensuring government staff reflect the diversity of the constituents they serve, addressing intra-

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[52] Community Design Resource Center, "Complete Communities Round 2 | CDRC."
[53] Centre for Public Impact, "Earned Legitimacy Learning Cohort Impact Report."

governmental silos, and building commitment to the same values throughout the organization.

- **Work directly with community organizations to build their capacity for government partnerships.**

  Time and again, we saw that community organizations' capacity for engaging with government and their understanding of how to navigate municipal bureaucracy played a critical role in the effectiveness of collaborative governance efforts. CPI could pursue work squarely focused on the community side of the government-community trust equation. Potential projects include helping to link and build relationships between organizations that are interested in pushing for similar policy changes or helping to build organizations' ability to effectively advocate for key issues with government.

- **Pursue additional research on trust building.**

  Given its positioning as a thought leader in the fields of government innovation and legitimacy, CPI has the ability to continue contributing to the discourse on government-community trust. For example, CPI could take on further investigation into a diagnosis of the types of public problems and local contexts that are best primed for collaborative governance, versus those where less engagement may be preferred. Additionally, CPI may consider the role of technical experts in decision-making processes, and specifically, how to incorporate community into processes when technical expertise is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed Research Methodology

We approached our research in three steps, using a mix of qualitative methodologies to investigate the relationship between government policies and practices and building community trust in government.

Step 1: Broad overview of the local government legitimacy landscape

- Literature Review: We conducted a literature review to evaluate current theories on how local governments can build trust and legitimacy with its constituents. We identified the primary definitions of and frameworks for trust and collaboration, which served as a foundation for our research and a primary input into our conceptual understanding of the characteristics of trust and collaborative governance.

- Interviews with academic researchers: To complement our literature review, we interviewed experts in the field, with a focus on academics and practitioners who have expertise in the fields of civic engagement, participatory democracy, collaborative governance, or other related fields. See appendix three for details.

- Landscape Analysis: We surveyed the local government landscape in the U.S. to identify promising policies and practices for building trust with constituents. As a starting point, we looked to cities that have made public and explicit commitments to equity and justice, and investigated programs or policies implemented in those cities. Upon identifying a shortlist of seven promising programs via desk research, we evaluated each program and city across a series of criteria and narrowed our focus to four case study cities which we explored in more depth. More information on case study selection is outlined below.

Step 2: Deep dive into promising programs and policies, and their characteristics

- Characteristics of Collaborative Governance: Building upon the conceptual foundation we established via the Literature Review and interviews with researchers, we compiled a set of characteristics that, in our view, are critical to collaborative governance practices. We then used those characteristics to inform our evaluation of programs implemented in case study cities. This set of characteristics is outlined on page 11 of this report.

- City case studies: Upon selecting our case study cities, we completed outreach to both city officials and residents who participated in the selected programs. We held introductory calls with stakeholders to confirm that the program was a good candidate for a case study, and then set up formal interviews with city officials who were involved in designing and executing the target program and community members or residents who participated in the target program. These interviews, as well as publicly available information and documents shared with us by stakeholders, collectively informed our case study analysis and write-up.

Step 3: Develop evidence-based recommendations for building trust between local governments and communities

- Policy recommendations and best practices: We synthesized our findings from the above sources to generate recommendations and best practices that (1) local government officials can reference to build trust with the communities they serve, and (2) CPI can implement in its work with county and city governments.

Case Study Approach

Case Study Selection Process

The case study selection process occurred in three steps:

1. Landscape analysis and shortlist creation: As outlined in the prior section, we conducted a landscape analysis, starting with cities that had made public commitments to equity. Through desk research, we were able to develop a basic understanding of programs or policies that had been implemented in a city. From this baseline, we identified a shortlist of seven promising case study options.

Case Studies Shortlist

Portland, OR
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Equity Working Group to inform 2015 Climate Action Plan

Boston, MA
City's Planning & Development Agency
Co-define -implement citywide plan (Imagine Boston 2030) with city residents

Los Angeles, CA
15th Ward, LAPD
Watts Gang Task Force to reduce violence + facilitate general community problem solving

Fort Collins, CO
Dept of Sustainability
Public forum: co-create action plan to address barriers to belonging in city

Washington, DC
Department of Energy & Environment
Equity Action Group with Ward 7 residents to develop climate adaptation plans

Houston, TX
Complete Communities (Mayoral Initiative)
Collaborating with residents of under-resourced neighborhoods to create "action plans"

Raleigh, NC
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources
Developing "next great" public park through iterative, inclusive process

2. Shortlist assessment: We applied a set of criteria to our shortlist options to ensure that the selected case studies were diverse and would allow for comparison across a thorough set of characteristics (see graphic representation of this analysis below). These criteria include:

o   <u>Level of public participation</u>: Based on our desk research, we made an estimation of where on the spectrum of participation each case study option fell. The spectrum ranges from 'Inform' to 'Collaborate'. Of course, these assessments were updated upon further learning about the program.

o   <u>Scale of program</u>: We evaluated how broad reaching each program was within the city, ranging from a focus on a single neighborhood to citywide programs.

o   <u>Origination of program</u>: We also considered where the program originated within the city—from residents (bottom-up), or from elected officials or other authority figures (top-down).

o   <u>Size of city</u>: We strived to explore case studies from a variety of sizes of cities, recognizing that the size of a city may have an impact on the relationship between government and residents.

o   <u>Geographic diversity</u>: We aimed to ensure that the final case studies selected did not overrepresent some areas or regions in the U.S. while overlooking others.
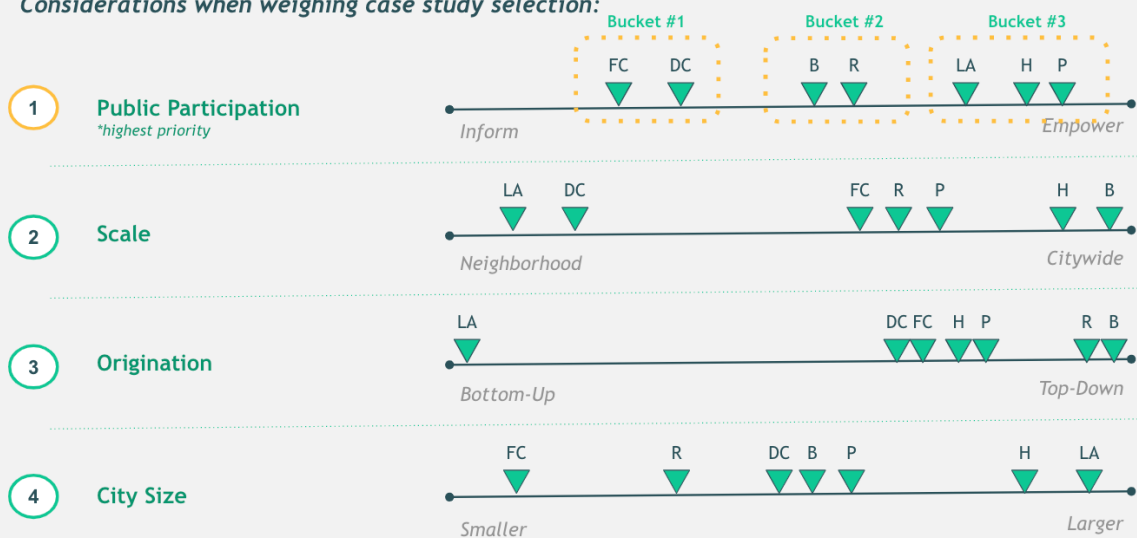
Key: B = Boston, DC = Washington, D.C., FC = Fort Collins, H = Houston, LA = Los Angeles, P = Portland, R = Raleigh

3. <u>Logistical considerations and availability of interviews</u>: Finally, we conceded that the feasibility of completing a case study would depend upon our ability to secure interviews and establish relationships with relevant stakeholders.

Interview Approach

Qualitative interviews comprised the majority of our data collection. We developed a standard Interview format and set of questions across two interview types: (1) city officials or other official stakeholders, such as academics, research center staff, or similar who were involved in designing or executing the program in question and (2) community members, residents or program participants who provided input during public engagement processes or were in some way involved in the programs.

Approach to interviews with city officials or other official stakeholders

Questions were standardized across city officials as well as program participants in each city and were developed to expose information in line with our Characteristics of Collaborative Governance. See appendix two to view our interview guides.

Approach to interviews with city residents, community organizations, or other public participants

Questions for interviewees who participated in public engagement processes were also standardized. They were designed to zero in on the participant's experience with participation in the public engagement process outlined in the case study. We focused primarily on the ways in which they engaged with the process, their perception of it, and how they viewed the government in light of their participation. Please see appendix two to view our interview guides.

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

City Official Interview Guide

The questions we used to guide interview with city officials in case study cities are as follows:

- [Background] What was the central goal of your program and what was your role in the process?
- [Level of collaboration] How were you thinking about integrating public opinion generally?
- [Level of collaboration] What methods or approach did you take to facilitate public participation in the process?
- [Level of collaboration] What level of collaboration or input were you ideally looking for with this program? (Recognizing that different types of engagement are suited for different programs or goals.)
- [Inclusion & Equity] Were there specific communities that you were focused on engaging?
- [Inclusion & Equity] Which communities in [insert city] would you say have been underrepresented in civic processes or marginalized historically?
- [Responsiveness] How did you incorporate the information you collected from the public? How did you communicate the results?
- [Responsiveness/Transparency] Was there a lot of back-and-forth between the City and community members?
- [Responsiveness/Level of Resources] Were there any big shifts in direction as a result of public input or aspects of the final result that were a direct result of public input? Were those implemented?
- [Responsiveness/Transparency] Were there any community groups or individuals who had strongly opposing opinions to decisions that were made? How did you handle that?
- [Participatory Culture] Was this type of public engagement the norm in [insert city]? Or did you feel like you were taking a new approach?
- [General] What do you think were the biggest successes and drawbacks of the program? Of the public engagement processes specifically? What worked?
- [General] What has trust looked like in your city historically?
- [General] Do you think this program had an impact on community trust?
- [General] Do you have any reflections in hindsight about the public engagement processes? What did you learn?
- [General] Is there anything else I should know or should have asked?

Community Member Interview Guide

The questions we used to guide interview with community members in case study cities are as follows:

Context / Involvement

- [Background] Describe your involvement with [program]? How did you find out about it initially?

- [Background] Why did you decide to get involved? What is your involvement like today?

- [Level of collaboration] Can you tell me about the decision-making process for [program]?

- [Level of collaboration] What methods or types of events did the City use to solicit your input? How did you provide input into the process?

- [Level of collaboration] When there were tensions or conflicts around a decision, how were they resolved?

- [Responsiveness/Transparency] Did your input into the process feel like a back-and-forth dialogue or a one-way stream of input?

- [Responsiveness] Did you feel like your input had an effect on the outcome? Can you give any examples?

- [Participatory Culture] How aware of this program would you say the typical resident of [city] was of the opportunity to participate in the program?

- [Responsiveness] How did the government communicate the results of public engagement to you?

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Perceptions or Feelings toward Government

- [Participatory Culture] Was this type of public engagement the norm in [city]? Or did you feel like the government was taking a new approach?

- [Participatory Culture] How aware of the opportunity to get involved do you feel like people in your community were? Did they know about it?

- [Inclusion & Equity] Can you describe how the community that you're a part of has historically felt about the city government? How would you describe the relationship between your community and the government over time?

- [Trust] Do you think this program had an impact on community trust? Yours versus the community more generally?

- [Trust] What has trust looked like in your city historically? Has your trust in government evolved over time?

- [General] What do you think were the biggest successes and drawbacks of the program? Of the public engagement processes specifically? What worked?

Appendix 3: Interviews with Academics

As a part of our literature review and effort to develop a conceptual foundation, we held discussions with several experts in the fields of collaborative governance, deliberative democracy, democracy, and the politics of inequality:

- **Dr. Jonathan Collins, Assistant Professor Education at Brown University**
  - o Areas of expertise: Racial and ethnic minority political behavior, democratic governance, local and urban politics, and public policy - particularly education policy. Dr. Collins has conducted research in which he measured trust as it relates to deliberative democracy.

- **Dr. Jeremy Levine, Assistant Professor at University of Michigan**

  - o Areas of expertise: The politics of poverty and inequality primarily in U.S. cities, participatory democracy. Dr. Levine has published a book on the political role of community-based nonprofits in poor neighborhoods, cultural processes and inequality in participatory democracy.

- **Tovah Wang, Senior Practice Fellow in American Democracy, Ash Center**

  - o Areas of Expertise: Civic participation, political participation among disengaged or marginalized groups, elections.

Appendix 4: Raleigh, NC: Dorothea Dix Park Master Planning Process

Background

Introduction

In July 2015, the city of Raleigh, North Carolina purchased a 308-acre parcel of land from the state. The land brought with it a rich and complicated history—as Clovis, Woodland, and Mississippian indigenous land, a plantation, a state-run mental health institution, and next, the city and many residents hoped, as Dorothea Dix Park: the third largest city park in the United States. Acknowledging the complicated history of the land and responding to enthusiasm from local community groups, city officials in charge of the park's master planning process, like Planning Supervisor Kate Pearce, knew that they, "wanted to take a fresh look at community engagement."[54] What resulted was a two-year, multifaceted community engagement strategy that aimed to lay the groundwork for a Master Plan that would serve as the foundation for, as the parks' motto now states, "a park for everyone, built by everyone."

Context

Providing the backdrop for Dorothea Dix Park is Raleigh, North Carolina—the state's capital. Raleigh, home to North Carolina State University, is one of the cities that make up the Research Triangle, along with Chapel Hill and Durham. In 2020 it had a population of nearly 468,000 residents, roughly 58% of which are white, 29% are Black, 11% are Hispanic or Latino, and 5% are Asian. About one-fifth of Raleigh residents are under the age of 18. The median household income is slightly higher than the nation as a whole, at $69,720.[55]

Notably, Raleigh is growing incredibly quickly. The city itself grew by 16% between the 2010 and 2020 censuses, while the wider Raleigh-Cary metropolitan statistical area grew by a staggering 23% during the same timeframe, making it the second-fastest growing large metropolitan area in the country.[56] In 2018 alone, 70 people per day moved to Wake County.[57] This growth adds an important dimension and complication to life in Raleigh—bringing with it concerns of gentrification and displacement of longtime Raleigh residents, increasing demands for public services, and changes to communities and the prevailing preferences of residents.

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[54] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022
[55] "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts."
[56] "Raleigh Is the 2nd Fastest Growing Large Metro in the US | Carolina Demography."
[57] City of Raleigh, "Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan."

Initiative Background

After the closing of the Dorothea Dix Hospital in 2012, interest in converting the state-owned property into a city park began to emerge among Raleigh residents. Community groups, like the Dix Visionaries and Dix 306 formed to advocate that the land be transformed into a destination, recreational park rather than be used for private or commercial development. The city acquired the land from the state in July 2015 with the intent to carry out the resident's wishes and create Dorothea Dix Park. Soon after, the city convened the Master Plan Executive Committee, made up of city and elected officials as well as individuals from the park conservancy. The city and Executive Committee then carried out a six-month RFP process to select an external team to consult on and create the Master Plan document, ultimately choosing Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), a landscape architecture firm, as the primary partner. Central to this selection process was a shared vision of centering an inclusive community engagement process to inform the direction of the Master Plan.

The resulting planning and community engagement processes took place across 22 months between 2017 and 2019. The Master Plan was adopted by the Raleigh City Council on February 19, 2019.[58] The goal of the process was to create a master document that would outline the high-level vision for Dix Park's design and role in the community. Given that a park of this size would take decades to build, the Master Plan was aimed at laying a foundation to guide future phases of the park build-out, incorporating the hopes and aspirations of Raleigh residents. The city and executive committee outlined four principles for the master planning process:

- "Open—analysis and decision-making steps were organized and shared regularly

- Inclusive—a wide variety of stakeholders were invited to participate

- Iterative—ideas were developed through several rounds of review and refinement

- Active—meetings, presentations, events, and tours were held at a variety of locations, including at the park"[59]

Theory of Change

At the onset of the planning process, city officials felt that if they truly hoped to create a "park for everyone," the approach must address the complex history of the park site, as well as confront the history of harm and exclusion experienced by some communities in Raleigh at the hands of the city. Based on past experiences running public engagement processes, Pearce and her team knew that traditional community engagement efforts would be inadequate at engaging a group of residents that reflected Raleigh's diversity. More importantly, Pearce viewed the engagement process as an opportunity not just to collect input for the plan, but also to build relationships between communities and the park itself. By providing input and subsequently seeing that input incorporated into the plan, Pearce hoped communities would feel a sense of connection and communal ownership over the park. Especially in light of the

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[58] City of Raleigh.
[59] City of Raleigh.

history of the site, cultivating relationships from the onset of the Dix Park planning process was viewed as vital to creating a park to which all communities of Raleigh—not only those whose interests had been historically prioritized in municipal decision-making—felt truly connected. In that spirit, four principles were adopted to guide the process: "open, inclusive, iterative, and active."[60]

"This place is going to be here forever. The idea of actual relationship-building with the community was really important. It wasn't just engagement for the sake of a planning process, it was engagement to build relationships so that people are connected to this place."

- Kate Pearce, Planning Supervisor, City of Raleigh[61]

Initiative Details

Stakeholder Overview

Given the large scope of the park planning process, the size of the park project itself, and the large-scale community engagement they aspired to achieve, the Raleigh city officials in charge of the process intentionally used "different levels of engagement for different purposes," says Pearce.[62] She continued, "first we had to do information sharing. Awareness building was step one…and then [as we got] deeper, we got into…consensus-building and community decision-making. Those were very specific to the governance model of our committee structures and the governance model of the planning process itself."[63]

There were ten primary stakeholder groups impacted by and / or involved in the design and execution of the master planning process:

1. City Council: The Master Plan required council approval, making the buy-in of councilors central to the success of the process.

2. City Officials: A small team of officials from the city, led by Pearce, were accountable for the design and execution of all planning processes including community engagement. Pearce's team were the primary group on the ground, carrying out engagement processes.

3. Master Plan Executive Committee: This committee of eight members was appointed by City Council and included city and elected officials, as well as members of the Dix Park Conservancy. The Executive Committee was responsible for overseeing the planning

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[60] City of Raleigh.
[61] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022
[62] Pearce Ibid.
[63] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022

process, running the RFP process to select Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, and advising on critical decisions.

4. Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA): MVVA, a landscape architecture firm, was selected as the external partner who conducted analysis of the land, incorporated public input, and created the technical plan document itself.

5. Dix Park Conservancy: The Dix Park Conservancy is a nonprofit organization that formally partners with the city to support the build-out, operation, and maintenance of Dix Park. The Conservancy takes part in operational, planning, philanthropic, and community engagement activities. Members of the conservancy sit on the Executive Committee.

6. Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC): The MPAC is made up of 45 members of the Raleigh community who were selected to serve on the committee through a public application process. The committee members were the Raleigh residents who were most actively engaged in the master planning process: They worked with city officials on engagement efforts, provided feedback to MVVA and the Executive Committee on critical decisions via regular meetings, and perhaps most importantly, served as conduits for the process between the city and their wider communities. MPAC communicated informally with their communities about the process, and in some cases, held more formal events to inform and solicit input from people in their networks.

The MPAC Selection Process: City officials designed the application process with an intent to cultivate a group that represented the diversity of Raleigh: "We looked for not only a diversity of background, but a diversity of experience, tied to a number of categories, [including] people with lived experience," says Pearce.[64] The opportunity was advertised widely via multiple media channels in Raleigh. MPAC member Jacquie Ayala, who lived in a neighborhood adjacent to the park at the time, says she found out about the process online and decided to get involved.[65] City officials conducted a blind review process to select applicants and recommended the 45-member committee to City Council.

7. Workgroups: Workgroups were established to advise on specific and technical topics related to the plan. These groups consisted of city officials, technical experts, and members of various committees. Workgroup topics included transportation, the region, the site, buildings, park partners, and park programs.[66]

8. Residents of Raleigh: Residents from the broader Raleigh community were viewed as primary stakeholders of the park, and the primary targets of public engagement efforts. Members of the public had the opportunity to engage with outreach efforts of various forms (described below). City officials describe informing and educating residents about the park, the planning process, and their role in it as the first step, which hopefully would then lead to residents engaging with the process and providing input.

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[64] Pearce Ibid.
[65] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022
[66] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022

9. <u>Raleigh Institutions</u>: Institutions, especially those with geographic proximity to the park like North Carolina State University, Shaw University, and Saint Augustine's were viewed as both a stakeholder group and engagement partners.

10. <u>Visitors</u>: Part of the initial aspiration for the park was that it would serve as a destination in Raleigh that would attract visitors from around the country. While this was considered actively throughout the process, visitors or stakeholders from outside of Raleigh were not engaged directly through the process.

Methods of Engagement

Throughout the two-year planning process, the master planning team facilitated dozens of engagement activities, of varying types, depths, and in locations around the city. Caroline Lindquist, a former Planning Technician who worked on the master planning process, says the team intentionally wanted to "meet people where they were."[67] Through these diverse methods, the final master plan reports engaging 65,000 residents of Raleigh throughout the 22-month process.[68]

Four main channels of engagement were featured through the master planning process:

1. **The Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC)**: The MPAC, the selection process for which is outlined above, served two primary functions. First, monthly meetings were held between the MPAC, the Executive Committee, and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA) to discuss the plan and provide feedback on specific aspects of the plan. This process represents the deepest level of integration between planners and city officials and community.

   Second, the MPAC functioned as "a proxy for outreach," and feedback mechanism with the broader Raleigh community, says MPAC Co-Chair Jai Kumar. He continued, "a 45-person committee can be a little bit unruly at times…but it's important to have that kind of scale…so rather than [the planning phase] being a black box until the final plan, you have a group of stakeholders that get insight into the planning process and then can go back to their constituencies, their neighborhoods, their friend groups, and share what's happening with them and hear people's thoughts. That way, when the decisions are made by those that have the decision authority, [the broader community has] some level of view into those decisions."[69]

2. **Special Events and Activations**: In the spirit of the city's intention to take "a fresh look at public engagement", a central component of the public engagement strategy involved non-traditional engagement activities. Pearce shared, "we spent the majority of our effort doing non-traditional engagement to reach into the communities that don't

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[67] Caroline Lindquist, [former] Planning Specialist, City of Raleigh, February 25, 2022
[68] City of Raleigh, "Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan."
[69] Jai Kumar, Raleigh resident and Co-Chair, MPAC, interview by author, March 23, 2022

have the time or the resources to come to a two-hour meeting after work on a Thursday."[70]

Through these methods, the city solicited public input into the Master Plan via novel and fun activities in various locations and at various events throughout Raleigh. These special events were the method by which the majority of the 65,000 residents who participated gave input into the plan. These events were numerous, but examples include:

- Summer Camps: City officials visited 26 summer camps during 2018 and conducted art activities with children, in which they were asked to draw their vision for the park. All of the drawings were scanned and provided to MVVA for incorporation into the plan. Another similar event occurred in partnership with community members like Nick Neptune and the Contemporary Art Museum.[71]

- Festivals: Numerous festivals take place annually in Raleigh, particularly during the month of September; they are an important aspect of Raleigh's culture. "We were at every festival," shared Pearce.[72] The planning team made informational engagement opportunities at various festivals across the city, like the African American Cultural Festival, Fiesta del Pueblo, ArtWalks, and neighborhood cookouts. In some cases, planners utilized virtual reality goggles to give virtual tours of the park at the festivals and engage in conversations with residents about their thoughts on the park's future.[73]

- Targeted Community Roundtables: Members of MPAC often convened smaller focus groups with different communities or on different issues areas. In one example, Ayala shared, members of the MPAC convened a roundtable with Black leaders in Raleigh, "to talk about the park and have a very specific group feedback session about the Master Plan and its effects and impacts on the Black community, as well as to gather the general thoughts and ideas of that community [for the park]."[74]

3. **Thematic Large Community Meetings:** Throughout the planning process, five large community meetings were held, each one focusing on one to two topics in alignment with the five workgroups: transportation, the region, the site, buildings, partnerships, and programs. Over 2,000 Raleigh residents participated in these meetings. The meetings contained both presentations and information sharing, as well as opportunities for discussion and public comment. The final meeting was a presentation and feedback session on the draft Master Plan.

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[70] Kate Pearce, City of Raleigh Planning Supervisor, interview by author, February 24, 2022
[71] Nick Neptune, Raleigh resident, interview by author, March 24, 2022
[72] Pearce Ibid.
[73] Caroline Lindquist, [former] Planning Specialist, City of Raleigh, February 25, 2022
[74] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022

4. **Online Engagement:** The city partnered with the online citizen engagement platform Neighborland to host virtual conversations about Dix park and provide an avenue for public input from those who were not able to engage in the in-person events.

Post-Initiative: What Happened Next?

Given the scale of Dorothea Dix Park, the master planning process was only the first phase of a process and park buildout that will take decades. Upon receiving approval for the final Master Plan in 2019, the city commenced the first phase of implementation. In the time since, three notable efforts have been undertaken related to public engagement and the topic of trust building:

1. Dix Park Community Committee: With the conclusion of the master planning process, the MPAC's mandate ended. For the next phase, the city and the Dix Park Conservancy established the Community Committee. Similarly to the MPAC, the Community Committee members were selected via a public application process. However, in response to acknowledgement of the historic marginalization of some communities, during the selection process officials intentionally south to overrepresent certain demographics and communities of the city that would be most affected or that have historically been excluded from municipal processes.

2. Dix Area Edge Study: In response to concerns about how the buildout of Dix Park would affect the affordability of neighborhoods that are adjacent to the park or contribute to gentrification, the city has undertaken an effort called the Edge Study. Through this study, carried out between 2020 and 2022, the city is creating a plan and policies "to guide the Raleigh City Council in future legislative decisions like zoning and budgeting…and on issues like affordable housing, transportation, future development, and greenways,"[75] related to areas around Dix Park.

3. Cultural Interpretive Plan: Following the learnings of the master planning process, a plan is being developed to inform "how we tell the story of the space in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way," that addresses the challenging aspects of the Dix Park land's history, says Jai Kumar, co-chair of the Community Committee and former member of the MPAC. The plan will, he adds, "help guide future decision-making on things like what do we keep? What do we change? If we get rid of something [in the plan or on the site], how do we communicate it?"[76]

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[75] "Dix Edge Area Study Orientation."
[76] Jai Kumar, Raleigh resident and Co-Chair, MPAC, interview by author, March 23, 2022

Analysis and Findings

Community Opinion

Raleigh community members who participated in this research spoke incredibly highly of the master planning process. Nick Neptune shared, "I think that the Dix Park master planning and engagement process should be heralded as a model for engagement. I absolutely believe that: I lived it, I participated in it, I've seen its results."[77]

In particular, community members spoke highly of the efforts of the city staff responsible for the master planning process. Jacquie Ayala, a member of the Master Plan Advisory Committee shared that, "city staff was very engaged early on and transparent [with us] about what the master planning process was going to look like, and we were exposed to [the design consultants] at every stage of the process. It always felt like we had access to those people. I always felt like I had access to [city officials] Kate [Pearce], Nick [Smith], and Caroline [Lindquist]. They were very available to talk and for questions."[78] Neptune added that he felt like city staff "were actively listening, actively pushing to ensure that the concerns, hopes, and aspirations that people held for this tremendous greenspace…were being incorporated into the final Master Plan document." As proof, community members say they can point to specific aspects of the final plan that were a direct result of community input, such as the inclusion of the African American Cultural Center.[79]

Importantly, residents also felt like the master planning process did not shy away from acknowledging the past harm inflicted upon certain communities in Raleigh by the government. Speaking about Southeast Raleigh, the historically Black area of the city, Neptune shared, "there are people alive today who remember that in the '90s, their family owned property in Southeast Raleigh, and the city approached them and said, 'you know what, we want to build a greenway here. So we're just going to take this property. Now, the greenway is for everyone.' Is it? Is it really? Because you're taking away my family's property that they've had since the '40s." Now, Neptune sees Dix Park and the associated public engagement processes as a method to address histories like these. Through this process, he says, we endeavored to, "create a space…that acknowledges and celebrates the truth of our history and our culture…If we're going to restore broken trust, it starts by being honest about our shared history. There's no doubt that has been put into practice."[80]

Of course, residents also acknowledge that the process was not perfect. One resident who participated remarked that while the MPAC and those who engaged in the process from the broader community were "exceptionally diverse", those in the highest seats of formal power, namely, the Master Plan Executive Committee, were not. They continued, "I was suspicious of

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[77] Nick Neptune, Raleigh resident, interview by author, March 24, 2022
[78] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022
[79] Pearce Ibid.
[80] Nick Neptune, Raleigh resident, interview by author, March 24, 2022

that committee…I wondered, where do our recommendations really go? They are going to this committee that is not as diverse and that is thinking about things in different ways than we, [the community] are."[81]

When asked about the effect that this process had on trust specifically, community members were hesitant to draw a direct connection between their satisfaction with the Dix Park master planning process and trust in government. "This wasn't happening in isolation," Neptune pointed out, "what else have we seen during and since that time? We see a president elected who actively encourages hatred, racism, and xenophobia. You see Black people being slaughtered in the streets by those who are apparently there to serve and protect them. And that doesn't even include more recently the pandemic and economic collapse."[82]

Ayala also shared that rising housing prices in the metro area were of huge concern to residents, and that in particular, the gentrification of neighborhoods adjacent to the park and displacement of residents who lived in those places was top of mind for many people. Even "realizing that the park process wasn't the answer to that problem, necessarily," Ayala doesn't feel like the issues can be separated. She added, "I'm not sure that the average person in Raleigh would have said, 'this is the Raleigh government doing this.' They would say, 'Dix Park, I love Dix Park. It's a park.' And I don't know that there's a connection [for them] between parks and government."[83]

Analysis

1. Level of Collaboration

Where on the spectrum of public participation—-inform, consult, or collaborate—did the initiative fall, and was it the best fit?

Strengths	Opportunities
City officials intentionally made opportunities for different levels of engagement available. The majority of the 65,000 residents who were involved in the process were informed or consulted, providing input to the plan in a minimal capacity, and in line with traditional methods of community engagement. However, the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC), through which residents were able to collaborate with the city on plan	While community members were consulted and had a role in decision-making, authority over the plan ultimately remained with the Master Plan Executive Committee, and the synthesis of community inputs with the landscape architects (Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates). There may have been ways to bring community representation into those two spaces.

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[81] Raleigh resident (name withheld), interview by author
[82] Neptune Ibid.
[83] Jacquie Ayala, Raleigh resident and MPAC member, interview by author, March 25, 2022

priorities and decisions in a sustained manner, provided an opportunity for those who wanted to be more actively involved. Furthermore, residents were asked as early as the RFP process to provide input and help mold what would become the community engagement strategy.

This approach has interesting implications for trust building, in that residents of Raleigh were able to see their neighbors actively participate in the process without having to engage repeatedly themselves.

However, it is important to note that given the technical nature of developing a master plan intended to guide the buildout of the park, a level of deference to technical experts (in this case, the landscape architects) must be weighed. Further research could explore ways of increasing community decision-making in technical processes.

2. Inclusion and Equity

How intentional were officials about involving diverse participants? What efforts were made to center equity and marginalized communities?

Strengths	Opportunities
Inclusion and equity were central priorities in the planning approach: city officials sought diverse representation of different Raleigh communities on the MPAC—the success of which was corroborated by community members. City officials went directly to communities whose voices they hoped to incorporate into park plans, using roundtables, cultural and ethnic festivals, and other means to seek input.	Some residents who lauded the diversity of community input, expressed hesitations about the lack of diversity among groups with official authority, like the Master Plan Executive Committee and the city officials in charge.

3. Transparency

How much access did the public have into the design, decision-making processes, and outcomes of the initiative?

Strengths	Opportunities
Raising "Park IQ" was a central focus of early engagement efforts, ensuring that residents were aware of the park, the planning process, and their opportunity to help shape it. Throughout the process, five large community meetings were held to present	Some members of the MPAC felt that visibility into the conversations and decisions made by the Executive Committee could be increased. They noted that the MPAC provided input, but they weren't entirely sure what the Executive Committee did with that input.

drafts of the plan and solicit input and feedback. Furthermore, via the integration of the MPAC into decision-making processes, MPAC members were able to communicate with their communities about the process. This provides an interesting model for cities to share the work of external communication with residents themselves.

4. Responsiveness

To what degree did input provided by residents impact the final outcomes or decisions made?

Strengths	Opportunities
Raleigh residents who were involved in the process point to numerous examples of where they feel their input directly resulted in additions to the plan. The African American Cultural Center, for example, is cited as being a direct result of community input. Additionally, residents point to examples where compromises were made, or city proposals were successfully rejected due to community input.	It is difficult to discern the extent to which some community input was not effectively incorporated into the plan. In some cases, officials and planners deferred contentious decisions to later in the implementation process. In one example, a proposal was put forth to include a hotel as part of the development on the park site under the rationale of revenue generation. Community members strongly opposed this idea. Rather than rejecting the proposal outright, room was left in the plan for future consideration of the proposal.

5. Level of Resources

Did the government commit real resources to the projects and actions identified or decisions made by residents?

Strengths	Opportunities
In 2019, Raleigh City Council voted to approve the Master Plan, indicating support for the implementation of the plan and a dedication of resources to do so. Complicating this picture is the fact that funding mechanisms are variable and will be tied to different phases of park implementation over time.	If officials want to make explicit their commitment to put resources behind community decisions, a potential next step would be to consider incorporating some participatory budgeting practices into future phases.

6. Participatory Culture

Is a dedication to involve residents in programs and government decisions institutionalized across the government?

Strengths	Opportunities
When considering the realm of Dorothea Dix Park itself, a culture of participation within the Raleigh city government was and remains strong. From the onset of the project, an emphasis was put on building a community and giving residents a say in shaping the future of the park.	Repeatedly, we were told that the Dix Park planning process was novel, even groundbreaking, for Raleigh. While the participatory culture was apparent within the realm of the park, it seems that the culture has not transcended to other areas of the city government.

Findings

Takeaway #1: Individual government processes or programs don't happen in isolation.

Raleigh residents cited other public concerns happening outside of the park planning process as having a larger effect on perception of the government: a lack of affordable housing, gentrification, displacement of communities, and the perception that the government was not doing enough to address these issues. While residents acknowledged that the park planning process was not the solution to those issues, they made clear that it's challenging to assess the relationship between a single initiative and trust in the city. Notably, community members listed issues that fall under the purview of state and federal government, as well as larger cultural forces and current events, as also being inextricable from residents' perception of and trust in government overall.

Takeaway #2: Healing relationships takes time and needs to be made a government-wide priority.

A member of Raleigh's Black community cautioned that government officials should not forget that many residents are carrying with them the systemic exclusion and harm inflicted upon their communities by the government. They shared living memories of the displacement of their community in the name of a past greenspace project in Raleigh, and more gravely, of government-imposed curfews during white supremacist riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Furthermore, they cited ongoing incidents of police brutality against the Black community. In light of these histories and current realities, community members shared that despite the high praise they sang about the Dix Park process, trust is unlikely to markedly improve until the commitment to redress these harms is adopted by the entire city government.

Takeaway #3: Residents may express high satisfaction with engagement processes and outcomes, yet remain hesitant to draw a link to trust in government.

Community members that we spoke to raved about the Dix Park master planning process—they lauded city officials, felt that the city was intentional about equity and inclusion, and that they had the opportunity to be genuinely involved and shape the outcome of the process. The individuals on the Master Plan Advisory Committee, in particular, spoke about the process with a sense of accountability that they felt for work on behalf of other members in their community. However, they were hesitant to draw a direct linkage to earning trust. They questioned whether residents make the link between a park planning process, however large, and the city government. These observations point to the fact that cities can employ collaborative governance and execute a process with high satisfaction from participants, but that doesn't necessarily mean it will affect community trust.

Appendix 5: Fort Collins, CO: The Art of Belonging Forum

Background and Context

On April 26, 2016, the City of Fort Collins and Colorado State University's Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) were on the eve of hosting the latest in their series of events to gain public input on pressing public policy questions. These events had always gone by the same playbook: they were discussion-driven, facilitated by CSU students, and centered on three to four topics currently under consideration by Fort Collins' City Council or planning offices. Past topics had ranged from Airbnb regulation to city recycling policy. This forum, however, marked a departure from previous events: its sole focus was on how to foster community and what it means to "belong" in Fort Collins.[84] They called it the Art of Belonging Forum.

The event was one piece of the city's larger efforts to prioritize diversity and equity. In 2012, Fort Collins created the Social Sustainability Department (SSD), with the mission of fostering "a diverse and equitable community that successfully meets the basic needs of all of its residents."[85] The department took on work that had already existed in other city departments, including funding and policy on community human service agencies, affordable housing, and homelessness. SSD aimed to work in partnership with other departments and community organizations, serving as a "convener, facilitator, catalyst, and consultant."[86]

Fort Collins is a small city in northern Colorado, about an hour's drive north of Denver. It is home to approximately 170,000 people and is nearly 80 percent white, according to the latest census data.[87] Colorado State University (CSU), the flagship university of the Colorado State University System, is located in the city.

Initiative Overview

Forum Goals

The event organizers had a very specific objective in mind: gain community members' inputs on two of the goals in the city's new Social Sustainability Strategic Plan:

1. Promote and maintain a welcoming, inclusive community where people feel connected.

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[84] Martin Carcasson, CSU's Center for Public Deliberation, interview by author, February 25, 2022

[85] Jacqueline Kozak Thiel and Beth Sowder, "Fort Collins Social Sustainability Strategic Plan."

[86] Jacqueline Kozak Thiel and Beth Sowder.

[87] "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts."

2. Expand the city's diversity, inclusion, and equity goals, with an emphasis on internal and external communications, education, and outreach.

However, rather than asking community members for their thoughts on these goals specifically, the forum was designed to be a space to broadly discuss what it meant to belong in Fort Collins. Through facilitated small-group discussion, the forum was intended to "bring people together to continue a larger conversation about what it means to belong in our community."[88] It was a place to understand what belonging looks like, discuss what is already being done effectively to build community, and brainstorm how to make Fort Collins a city where all residents felt at home.[89]

Theory of Change

The forum was intended to catalyze both city and community actions to further Fort Collins' diversity and equity goals. On the government side, the city largely viewed the forum as an information gathering event. The city hoped that by expanding the conversation around belonging in Fort Collins and receiving inputs from a broad cross section of residents, it could take those learnings to "shape future actions and dialogues."[90] On the community side, it was hoped that these conversations would spark future community-driven action around inclusion and diversity.

While 'building trust' was not named as an explicit goal of the forum, it was built into the fabric of the event. The city was directly seeking community members' thoughts on how multiple stakeholders could work independently and in partnership to create a welcoming Fort Collins for all. SSD aims to accomplish its work through partnership and recognized that strong relationships with community members were foundational to those partnerships.

Initiative Details

Key Stakeholders

Key Stakeholders

- **Fort Collins' Social Sustainability Department (SSD)**: The city's branch dedicated to supporting "a diverse and equitable community that successfully meets the basic needs of all residents." SSD was the primary city department that orchestrated the Art of Belonging forum.[91]

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[88] "Facilitator Guide: Community Issues Forum, The Art of Belonging."
[89] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson, "Community Issues Forum: The Art of Belonging."
[90] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson.
[91] "Social Sustainability - City of Fort Collins."

- **Colorado State University's Center for Public Deliberation (CPD)**: CPD is "dedicated to enhancing local democracy through improved public communication and community problem-solving."[92] They have hosted and facilitated many public conversations in Fort Collins on complex public issues. The center co-hosted the forum with the City of Fort Collins.

- **25+ community organizations in Fort Collins**: The city and CPD reached out to and engaged more than 25 community organizations to help get word of the forum out to as many Fort Collins residents as possible. These organizations ranged from those focused on Latino and Native American communities, to LGBTQ+ rights groups, to religious organizations.

Initiative Deep Dive

The Art of Belonging event was planned jointly by the Social Sustainability Department and CSU's Center for Public Deliberation. In the lead up to the forum, the team reached out to more than 25 community organizations to ensure diverse representation at the event. Ultimately, approximately 100 Fort Collins residents attended. Based on information the participants provided upon arrival, the Art of Belonging was the most diverse public forum Fort Collins had ever held. 22 percent of attendees were Latino or Hispanic and 10 percent were Black. 61 percent of attendees were white (notably less than the percentage of Fort Collins as a whole).[93]

The event was two hours long. Initial remarks were provided by both city and CPD speakers. The first speaker—Civic Engagement Liaison Annie Bierbower—gave her remarks fully in Spanish. The majority of the forum was spent in small-group discussion. Participants broke into groups of six to eight, and each group had an assigned CSU student facilitator. Discussion included five sections:

- Common ground: Participants shared how they define and think about 'belonging.'

- Belonging gaps: Participants discussed challenges to creating belonging in Fort Collins, and who is most impacted

- Community resources: Participants mapped out which organizations are currently working on inclusion in the city.

- Action items: Participants discussed actions that a range of stakeholders—including the city government, community organizations, and businesses—could take to build community and increase belonging.

- Closing reflections: Discussion groups shared their closing thoughts and were able to hear reflections from other small groups.

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[92] "About Us - Center for Public Deliberation."
[93] Kalie McMonagle, Sam Maldonado, and Martin Carcasson, "Community Issues Forum: The Art of Belonging."

Organizers placed an emphasis on making the event accessible to both Spanish speakers and parents. The forum had simultaneous translation services and supervised childcare was provided.

After the event, CPD completed a comprehensive report of event findings. Forum participants were also asked to complete pre- and post-event surveys, including demographic information and evaluations. The CSU student notetakers and facilitators also provided reflections on key themes coming out of the small group discussions.

Analysis

1. Level of Collaboration:

Where on the spectrum of public participation—inform, consult, or collaborate—did the initiative fall, and was it the best fit?

Strengths	Opportunities
The forum itself falls under 'consult' on the public participation spectrum.[94] The city actively sought public feedback on how to strengthen community cohesion and achieve its equity goals during the event, fostering open discussion of policy ideas and ways in which the city government could better serve residents.	The organizers could have involved community members in the forum planning process, which would have shifted the event more toward the 'collaborate' end of the public participation spectrum. By engaging community members in setting the agenda and priorities for the forum, it's possible that more long-term government-community partnerships would have been established.

2. Inclusion and Equity

How intentional were officials about involving diverse participants? What efforts were made to center equity and marginalized communities?

Strengths	Opportunities
The event was explicitly centered around equity and included a diverse cross-section of Fort Collins residents, particularly along racial	The city received negative feedback from some participants on having a white woman who wasn't fully bilingual open the event in

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[94] International Association for Public Participation, "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation."

lines. The forum also included Spanish translation services and childcare, making the forum more accessible to Spanish speakers and families.	Spanish.[95] This was a learning moment for the city, particularly on the importance of having marginalized communities represented within government.

3. Transparency

How much access did the public have into the design, decision-making processes, and outcomes of the initiative?

Strengths	Opportunities
CPD released a detailed report after the forum, including all the action steps recommended by the event participants.	While the event report was posted online, it was not actively distributed to event participants or the community at large.

4. Responsiveness

To what degree did input provided by residents impact the final outcomes or decisions made?

Strengths	Opportunities
The city made an active effort to increase the language accessibility of its event and the diversity of city employees after the forum, which appears to be partly due to recommendations received at the event, and also due to other pushes from city employees to increase the city's focus on diversity and inclusion.	While many government and community action items were brainstormed during the event and reported out afterwards, it does not appear that the majority of these items led to action within the city government.

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[95] Janet Freeman, former Equity and Inclusion Coordinator for the City of Fort Collins, interview by author, March 2, 2022

5. Level of Resources

Did the government commit real resources to the projects and actions identified or decisions made by residents?

Strengths	Opportunities
The forum had a snowball effect on the amount of city resources dedicated to equity initiatives. After the forum, the city put more funds toward Spanish language services at public events and dedicated more staff time to equity initiatives, including creating a Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer position. These investments, however, cannot be fully tied back to the forum.	Community members proposed a number of broader city policy changes during the forum, including increasing affordable housing options and public transportation options. While these continue to be areas of focus for the city, it's not clear whether the government directly responded to these issues as a result of the forum—and if they did, these efforts were not communicated to residents.

6. Participatory Culture

Is a dedication to involve residents in programs and government decisions institutionalized across the government?

Strengths	Opportunities
After the public Art of Belonging forum, the city went on to hold an internal version of the event in order to evaluate its own DEI culture and goals. Over time, the city also took on multiple new initiatives to help promote an internal culture that embraces equity, including the Equity Indicators Project.[96]	Based on multiple conversations with current and former city staff, there was skepticism that city leadership had fully embraced a commitment to equity within the government, and a concern that staff of color had shouldered too much of the burden for pushing to prioritize such efforts.

Event Reflections

Based on our discussions with government officials and the CPD staff, there was a range of opinions on how effective the forum was in building trust and strengthening government-community relationships.

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[96] CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance, "Fort Collins Equity Indicators."

On one hand, there were multiple elements of the event that signaled that the city was serious about working towards its equity goals:

- Third-party facilitators: The city brought in trained student facilitators to lead the small group discussions, making it clear that the event leads weren't simply "there to do the city's bidding," as said by Martin (CPD). Both CPD and government officials thought this was an effective way to help community members feel comfortable sharing their genuine reflections.

- Spanish-speaker accessibility: In addition, the city's emphasis on making the event accessible for Spanish speakers was intended to be a signal of the government's commitment to engaging Latino community members. In multiple interviews, CPD and city personnel noted this was top of mind for them and was a key reason why the first speaker presented her remarks entirely in Spanish.

- Data gathering: The city and CPD recorded participants' inputs and published a full report afterward, including all demographic information, participants' recommended actions to build belonging, and thoughts on how the city could improve. This served as a measure of accountability.

On the other hand, interviewees noted that the Spanish speaking and data gathering were not clean-cut positives. While the translation provided accessibility, the opening remarks had a mixed reception. The speaker was a white woman who spoke Spanish, and some Latino participants felt "erased."[97] And on the data gathering side, once the city started to get serious about equity efforts, Ginny Sawyer of the City of Fort Collins noted that marginalized communities "were suddenly getting hit up regularly…we needed to be more strategic and coordinated." Now, the city is "slowly getting more strategic, efficient, effective" at coordinating its engagement of marginalized communities.[98]

Overall, while government and CPD personnel were unsure whether the Art of Belonging generated trust on its own, it is clear from the other information they shared on the events and city plans that followed that the forum was part of a larger trajectory of the city's increased focus on equity.

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[97] Janet Freeman, former Equity and Inclusion Coordinator for the City of Fort Collins, interview by author, March 2, 2022.
[98] Ginny Sawyer, Policy and Project Manager for the City of Fort Collins, interview by author, February 25, 2022.

Findings

Takeaway #1: Institutionalization of trust-building efforts is key.

Forum participants noted that "Fort Collins has come a long way but has a long way to go." This is a message that the city staff also seem to have internalized and are working to act on. If the forum had a clear-cut lesson on how to build trust, it was that a single event cannot strengthen the government-community relationship in a lasting way—what it can do, however, is help provide the energy needed to continue those efforts in the long term. Government and community members alike seem to have found the forum energizing and were inspired by the existence of "a large community of people who care about [belonging in Fort Collins]." This, in part, helped lay the groundwork for the governmental efforts that followed to build equity into programs and policies.

Takeaway #2: Clearly translating input into action—and communicating that impact—is key for accountability and trust building.

One of the main messages Art of Belonging participants shared during the event was that "action needs to follow productive conversations." While the city was making clear efforts to hear more from communities that had long been marginalized, particularly the Latino community, there was a feeling that much of that engagement was, as one city staff member phrased it, "passive rather than dynamic…Are we just sending out a survey and expecting to get a response? Or do we actually have community connectors that we can train to have a more personalized impact and interaction with some of our underrepresented communities?" The city has completed numerous surveys on equity-related topics since 2016 and continues to wrestle with how to effectively use that data and communicate it back to communities.

Takeaway #3: The tension between collaboration and community member capacity is a difficult balance to strike.

As the city thinks about taking this work forward, some staff believe it is important to involve the public earlier on in the planning. However, they are also cognizant of the time commitment that a high level of involvement requires. Bringing community members into the planning and making sure it's a collaborative rather than extractive relationship will require thinking about how to best compensate community members for their time and work—whether through monetary compensation, public recognition, or more formal leadership and advisory roles.

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