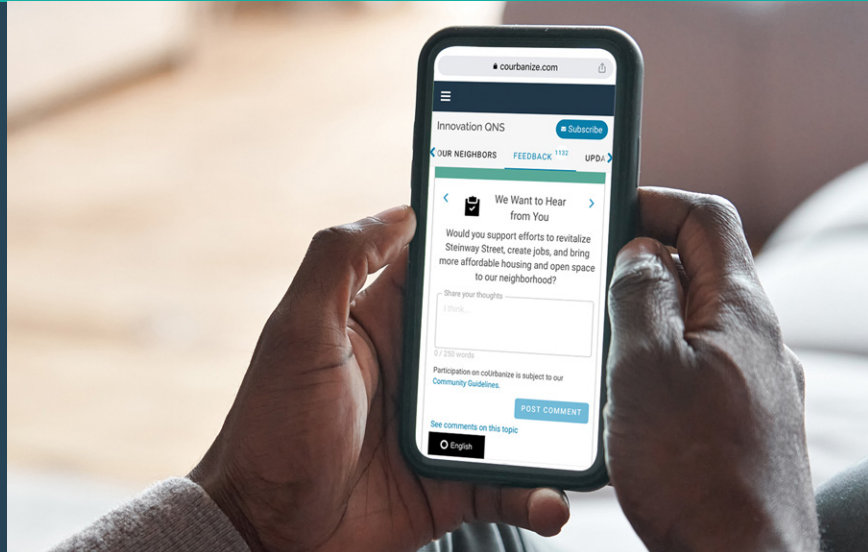


Inclusive Community Engagement Checklist



Last year, we started to see an important sea change in the development community: community engagement is finally being recognized as a valuable investment, not just a checkbox in the project plan. Many developers are thinking deliberately about equitable development and how current residents should play a central role in shaping the projects and programming that will impact communities.

Cultivating an inclusive community engagement strategy is a crucial step in building projects that will improve our neighborhoods. Is your community engagement strategy inclusive? Although this is far from an exhaustive list, here are a few considerations to help you get started.

1. Have we provided a safe place to share feedback?

Public meetings and forums often become echo chambers for the loudest voices in the room. Those with different opinions and ideas often don't feel welcome to speak up. Allowing community members to share feedback outside of speaking up at in-person meetings – or even virtual meetings – will help ensure that all feel invited to participate.

2. Do we know the neighborhood?

Nearly 22% of U.S. residents speak a language other than English at home. What languages are spoken in the community in which you're working? Ensure all project-related information and meetings are available in those languages. With coUrbanize's Language Equity Plan, the coUrbanize platform and all printed materials used to promote coUrbanize (SMS text messaging signs, door hangers, mailers) will be translated into the threshold languages for that project as part of the standard package – aka with no additional cost.

A language meets the Language Threshold for translation when at least 5% of the population in the project's zip code or Census tract speaks that language at home, as determined by most recently available US Census American Community Survey estimates.

3. Have we reached out to neighborhood groups and community leaders?

Reaching out to community groups can help to build trust. Established groups and leaders already know where and how to reach pockets of the community. Collaborating with existing organizations is an important component of inclusive outreach, and can help generate more engagement from community members.

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4. Have we made it easy to participate?

Most people can't (or don't want to) sit through a community meeting - even if it's virtual. While some would assume that being able to attend a meeting from the comfort of home eliminates logistical problems, anyone who has attempted a Zoom call while simultaneously providing child care understands that a three-hour meeting is still not feasible in many cases for families with young children or those who may be working during meeting times. Provide community members with multiple ways to participate that aren't limited to a single moment in time.

5. Have we tried to reach community members where they are?

If you know where your audience spends their time, you can reach them more easily. Once you've created a platform to collect community comments, share it wherever they'll find it: post on social media, share it with neighborhood groups, and include the information on mailers and flyers. Does the area see a lot of foot traffic? Consider posting SMS text messaging signs inviting pedestrians to text in their feedback. Cater your strategy to the neighborhood and you'll see better results.

6. Have we provided multiple ways for community members to participate in the conversation?

Online engagement works for many, but other options are needed for those without internet access. The digital divide is real, but by providing multiple ways to share feedback (including via SMS and voicemail) you'll be sure to gather more representative feedback. With coUrbanize, feedback submitted via text message can be featured on the project site in real time, where community members can show their support and respond.

Successful, inclusive engagement means that all voices are heard. This requires meeting people where they're at - which includes communicating with them in their native language. When working in diverse communities, a thoughtful strategy is essential for gathering more representative feedback and ultimately building a better project.

When you work with coUrbanize, you'll gather representative community feedback and spend less than 15 minutes a week on the platform. If you'd like to learn more about how our community engagement experts can help you execute an inclusive digital engagement strategy, [request a demo here](#)