

STAFF REPORT

Date: May 7, 2025

To: Mayor and City Council

Through: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

Subject: Presentation on current City of Reno public engagement practices, and updates regarding the launch of a public process to strategically prioritize engagement methods and practices. (For Discussion Only)

From: Cynthia Esparza, Community Engagement & Services Director

Department: Community Engagement & Services

Summary:

The City of Reno is committed to transparent and inclusive public engagement that reflects community voices and builds trust. Public engagement remains a priority, with multiple ways for the community to stay informed and involved. To strengthen this work, the City will assess current engagement methods, explore best practices, and develop a unified framework to better serve evolving community needs. Stakeholder input will guide this effort and help identify community best practices and enhance service delivery by making it more responsive and aligned with today's needs.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- Governance and Organizational Effectiveness

Background:

In November 2024, Council directed the City Clerk to examine the structure and function of boards and commission. In a strategic approach to better engage the community, assess current practices, and identify gaps and opportunities, the Community Engagement and Services Department will be working in partnership with City departments, Council, City leadership, and community stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive public engagement review process.

Public engagement is a collaborative process where the City, organizations, community members, and stakeholders are informed, partake in processes, and have the ability to influence policies, decisions, and projects that impact daily life. Effective and intentional engagement

fosters a more informed and connected community, builds public trust, and leads to lasting outcomes. Most importantly, effective public engagement also strengthens accountability between the City and its residents.

The City of Reno is committed to meaningful, transparent, and inclusive public engagement as the cornerstone of a community shaped by its residents' voices, values, and needs and staff continues to develop innovative approaches to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Discussion:

Currently, Reno offers multiple ways for the public to connect with Council and local government via multiple channels for the community to stay informed, provide input, and share concerns with the City of Reno.

Understanding our community's changing needs, advancements in technology, the public's desire to stay engaged, and in an effort to elevate this work, staff will commence a public process to strategically prioritize engagement methods and practices. This will include:

- **Analysis:** A comprehensive assessment of our organizational engagement efforts and processes, examine best practices, and explore additional tools that will redesign what best practices work for our community needs and identify an engagement framework to provide citywide uniformity for efficiency and impact.
- **Engagement:** A public input process with stakeholders, including but not limited to, Council, City staff, community members, businesses, and non-profits. This effort will gather information on how the public prefers to interact with their government and how they feel heard, assess current boards and commissions practices, and identify gaps and opportunities.
- **Service Delivery:** Through these efforts and ongoing engagement, the feedback will also support service delivery by ensuring government services are better aligned with current needs, priorities, and experiences. This will support improving responsiveness, foster greater trust and transparency, and community-centered problem solving.

Staff will bring forward additional updates and policy decisions on this effort to as we build capacity to not only be a responsive government to community needs, but also a proactive, collaborative, and trusted partner.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications associated with this item.

Legal Implications:

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends Council accept this staff presentation.

Proposed Motion:

I move to accept the staff presentation.