

# COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



## GOAL

Community Workshops create a wonderful opportunity to bring a large group of people together, share updates about the process, and engage in a variety of activities to collect feedback on the project. These sessions elevate the voices of the community and offer a chance for the project team and community to engage in a dynamic dialogue that allows ideas to build off of one another, share and validate concerns, and collaborate over solutions together.



## OPPORTUNITIES

The strength and opportunity within Community Workshops is collaboration. When a variety of perspectives come together in one space, the process can facilitate partnership building, increase transparency, accelerate the path to shared ownership, and cultivate a sense of unity around the effort.



## LIMITATIONS

When you invite a large group of people to share ideas, it is easy for a few people to dominate the conversation. A Community Workshop can also become a stage for people to push forward their own agenda to captivate an audience of people who came to listen. The success of Community Workshops depends on allowing all voices to have an equal opportunity to participate in the conversation, and have facilitators prepared to manage multiple personalities. Workshops are also one time, meaning comment members have one shot to attend and miss giving their opinion if they miss it. Be sure you have additional opportunities for people to share their thoughts, such as surveys with the same questions as your event.

## INTENDED OUTCOME

- Hear from a large group of people during one session
- Create camaraderie, community pride, and engaging dialogue between community members and the project team
- Provide space for both project updates and meaningful engagement around a specific topic or project component
- Build a sense of unity around project decisions

## CLOSE BUT NOT QUITE?

- **Worried people won't come out for a workshop?**  
Start by making sure that you are hosting the event in a place that meets the community where they are and is accessible. Give yourself a few weeks before the workshop to advertise with paper flyers, social media announcements, or ads in the local newsletter. Consider giving community members incentives to come like raffles to a local business or food at the event.
- **Still not sure it will work?**  
You can also try having a pop-up at an existing community event, block club, neighborhood organization meeting, or local festival. Many of the same materials you could use at a workshop could be re-used for a pop-up, but require less printing costs.

## Included in this Toolkit:

### DESIGN THE DIALOGUE WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to help your Project Team design and prepare for a successful Community Workshop.

### FIND OUR ROSES, THORNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Community Workshops can cover many topics and tackle many design decisions. This worksheet is a template for a Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities exercise with which to engage the community.

### ASSESS YOUR SUCCESS

Use this worksheet to evaluate your Community Workshop after it is completed. By understanding where you were successful and where you could improve, you can adjust your strategies and outreach before the next Community Workshop.

**TOOL 3**

## DESIGN THE DIALOGUE

**Define the Focus**

Every successful Community Workshop has a direct and clear objective it is trying to achieve with the community. Use the questions below to help you decide what the focus and purpose of your workshop is and what the outcomes of the session will be.

**What do you want to learn from the community?** Are you gathering feedback on challenges the community is currently facing? Are you looking for feedback on a new specific design decision? Do you need the community's help choosing the program or a future development? Write a few sentences to describe what you want to learn. The topic should be specific enough and measurable that it can impact the project in a meaningful and authentic way.

**What is the desired outcome of this session?** Are you at a phase in the process where you need open-ended qualitative responses? Do you need the community to vote on ideas? Think of a specific decision priority that, if agreed upon, approaches that the community must deliver in the end of the session.

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**TOOL 4**

## FIND OUR ROSES, THORNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW

Thank you for joining our workshop! We are excited to have your participation today to help us understand what is working well in your community, what is not working well, and where there are opportunities for improvement and dreams for the future.

Our project will be focused on:

**Roses**  
Let's start by talking about your community's strengths and assets!

**What is already great?**  
List three things that you like or think work well in the project area right now.

**Why does it work well?**  
Briefly describe the aspect of the strength you listed that is being done together, or name one key factor that

**Thorns**  
Next, let's focus on your community's weaknesses and challenges you are currently facing.

**What do we currently struggle with?**  
List three things that we face together that community is facing.

**Who is most impacted by these challenges?**  
Briefly describe the aspect of the weakness and challenge you listed and who is impacted by them.

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**TOOL 5**

## ASSESS YOUR SUCCESS

Whether you are at a key milestone in your project or your plan has been completed, it is important to evaluate the success of your engagement to help you learn, grow, and adapt for future engagement. Take this opportunity as a Project Team to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of your Community Workshop experience.

**WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE**

How many people attended your Community Workshop?

How many people were you anticipating would attend your Community Workshop?

What percentage of people actually attended compared to what you prepared for? Calculate this by dividing the number of people who attended your workshop by the number of people you were anticipating would attend.

Less than 25%  
 25-50%  
 50-75%  
 75-100%  
 Over 100%

Who attended your Community Workshop? Check all that apply.

Young people under 18  
 Students  
 Elderly over 55  
 Families  
 Single Parents  
 Barbers  
 Homeowners  
 Unhoused  
 Business Owners  
 Non-Profits  
 Neighborhood Organizations  
 Book Groups  
 Diverse People Groups  
 Diverse Economic Status  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

If you had 75% or above of your anticipated attendance at your Community Workshop, consider this a success! If you had less than 75%, write down what you think went wrong or how you could improve attendance in the future.

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# DESIGN THE DIALOGUE



## Define the Focus

Every successful Community Workshop has a direct and clear objective it is trying to achieve with the community. Use the questions below to help you decide what the focus and purpose of your workshop is and what the outcomes of the session will be.

What do you want to **learn** from the community?

*Are you gathering feedback on challenges the community is currently facing?*

*Are you looking for feedback on a few specific design decisions? Write a few sentences to describe what you want to learn. The topic should be specific enough and measurable that it can impact the project in a meaningful and authentic way.*



What is the desired **outcome** of this session?

*Are you at a phase in the process where you need open ended, qualitative responses? Or do you need the community to vote on ideas? Think of a specific decision, priority list, or agreed upon approach that the community must deliver at the end of the session.*



# Identify the Audience



Who you engage in your process is equally as important as the questions you are asking. Take a moment to write down who you want to participate in your session.

List the **people** you would like to engage with.  
*Think of the stakeholders, organizations, or demographic groups in your project area.*

What **questions** would they have for you?  
How could you address them?  
*E.g. A group of residents from your local biking group are likely to attend so you have a station about biking routes in the study area.*

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## Solve Your Logistics

Now that you know the purpose of your Community Workshop and who you would like to be in attendance, bring your workshop to life by identifying the meeting flow and resources needed.

What is the best day and time to maximize attendance?

What venues would meet your workshop needs and be most accessible to the community?

What is your workshop format?

An open house where people can arrive at any time

A sit down event with a presentation where everyone has to arrive at the same time

What will be your engagement activity?

*Try to focus on just 1-3 activities.*

What is the schedule for your workshop?

*Outline the time needed for the prep, doors open, presentation, activity, and next steps, question & answers, and clean-up.*

What materials will you need to execute your engagement successfully?

- Presentation Screen
- Projector
- Microphone
- Tables and Chairs
- Pens and Markers
- Large Easel Pads
- Easels

- Printed Informational Boards or Maps
- Sticky Notes
- Stickers
- Clipboards
- Facilitators (Number \_\_\_\_\_)

Other Materials

# Propose Strategies for Outreach

You've put so much time and effort into structuring this session - now you need your participants to collaborate with! Use this section to outline your outreach strategy.

Identify strategies for how you can best reach these groups of people to get them involved.

*Some groups might require targeted outreach strategies, so write down those specifics next to each strategy if you need to.*

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Printed Flyers                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Emails                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Knocking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Campaign                | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mailers                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Announcement in the Local Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Ad on the Local Radio/ Local-Access TV |  |

## CONCERNED ABOUT ATTENDANCE?

Design specific outreach strategies and meeting accommodations to minimize barriers and maximize participation.



### Barrier: Logistics & Time

- Provide on-site childcare or activities for children
- Offer bus passes/transit vouchers
- Ensure free, accessible parking
- Provide food

*Tip: While we recommend doing a meal if your event is during dinner/lunch time, it could be something much more simple - and cheap - such as snacks or ice pops.*



### Barrier: Finances

- Offer incentives for participation (raffles for gift cards to local businesses, spots in a parks and recreation summer program, or swag such as stickers and water bottles\_
- Provide a raffle drawing for engagement activity completion



### Barrier: Outreach

- Combine digital and print outreach strategies
- Consider the generation and target your outreach to them. *Struggling with youth? Try targeted ads on gaming systems or spotlights in the school newsletter. Struggling to hear from seniors? Consider sessions at senior centers.*
- Ensure language and visual accessibility



# FIND OUR ROSES, THORNS, AND OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW

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Our project will be focused on

Use this to help guide your responses and focus your strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities on things this project will tackle or embrace in the future!



## Roses

Let's start by talking about our community's strengths and assets!

### What is already **great**?

List three things that you like or think work well in the project area right now.

### Why does it work well?

Briefly describe the impact of the strengths you listed (ex: it brings people together, it makes me feel safe, etc.)



## Thorns

Next, let's focus on the weaknesses and challenges our community is currently facing.

### What do we currently **struggle** with?

List three things that are challenges our community is facing.

### Who is most impacted by these challenges?

Briefly describe the impact of the weaknesses and challenges you listed and who is impacted by them.





## Opportunities To Grow

Our goal is that this project will be able to address many of the challenges we are facing and celebrate what is already going well in our community. Let's use this section to identify a few creative and practical ideas that are opportunities for this project to solve our community's concerns and uplift its successes.

What potential solutions and strategies would you like to see this project explore?

Choose the top three solutions you've discussed from most impactful to least impactful. Keep in mind, these could be your ideas or you could be inspired by someone else's ideas!

Idea #1	Idea #2	Idea #3
What roses or strengths does it use to its advantage?	What roses or strengths does it use to its advantage?	What roses or strengths does it use to its advantage?
What thorns or weaknesses does it solve?	What thorns or weaknesses does it solve?	What thorns or weaknesses does it solve?

# ASSESS YOUR SUCCESS

Whether you are at a key milestone in your project or your plan has been completed, it is important to evaluate the success of your engagement to help you learn, grow, and adapt for future engagement. Take this opportunity as a Project Team to evaluate the successes and shortcomings of your Community Workshop experience.

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- 25-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%
- Over 100%

Who attended your Community Workshop?  
Check all that apply.

- Young people under 18
- Students
- Elderly over 55
- Families
- Single Parents
- Renters
- Homeowners
- Unhoused
- Business Owners
- Non-Profits
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Block Groups
- Diverse People Groups
- Diverse Economic Status
- Other

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### Additional Notes:

What are your key takeaways and lessons learned from this process that will help you implement a better Community Workshop in the future?

## MEETING OUTREACH

What outreach methods did you use to spread the word about your Community Workshop?

- Printed Flyers
- Social Media Campaign
- Announcement in the Local Newsletter
- Direct Emails
- Direct Mailers
- Ad on the Local Radio/TV
- Door Knocking
- Other

## LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Were people well-engaged and participating throughout the Community Workshop?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

## WHAT WAS ASKED

Write a few sentences describing what you hoped to learn and what you asked participants.

## WHAT WAS LEARNED

Write a few sentences listing the key takeaways from the community feedback and where to find full results.

## USING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Write a few sentences describing how that feedback will impact the project.