

#1 There is no such thing as the “general public”.

Know who your community is (demographics, stakeholders, networks) and how they get their information – this knowledge is the foundation for how you will design community engagement activities and communicate about your project.

#2 Keep your “promise” to community members.

Be clear about how resident input will be used and show how that information shaped project results.

#3 Go to the people.

Change up how you gather community input. Go to where people hang out whether it is a physical gathering space, like a coffee shop or community center, as well as online spaces.

#4 Spread the word.

Create a communications strategy that includes project branding, messaging and tactics for talking about your project effectively.

#5 Ask for people’s personal story.

Encourage people to express their experiences and opinions in their own words first. Don’t expect them to understand planner-ese or technical jargon.

#6 Understand local power dynamics.

Design project activities in a way that provides dignity to everyone and where people feel safe talking about their concerns.

#7 Engage around interests.

Sometimes you have to participate in community issues that matter to others before making a connection to your own project.

#8 Think about the details.

When you hold a community event think through how you can make it more inclusive (e.g. time, location, child care, transportation, food, translators, facilitators, etc.).

#9 Use technology...if it’s a fit.

There are many great high tech *and* low tech ways to engage people so pick strategies that are a fit with who you are trying to reach.

#10 Make it fun!

When you bring people together for a project discussion think about how you can make it a social opportunity too.