

Downtown Public Restrooms

A Public Health & Shared Infrastructure Model

September 30, 2026

Meet The Team

Project Team



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Overview

The study is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee through the 2026 Downtown Public Safety Grant, which includes funding for resources dedicated to public health, sanitation, and community livability improvements.

The study is evaluating a public-private implementation model for providing public restroom access in Downtown Nashville. This evaluation of how public restrooms can be integrated into the mission of creating a clean, safe, active, and attractive downtown will be guided by an inclusive and transparent engagement process.

The engagement process will be ongoing, and summaries will be compiled into a final report. Our report will include recommendations informed by community input, operational considerations, and proven practices from peer cities with public restroom programs.

As the project partner and property owner, Metro Nashville will make the final decisions regarding the implementation and locations of public restroom facilities.



Engagement Updates

Engagement Snapshot

Public Meetings / Presentations

Survey

Popup Events

Stakeholder Interviews

Site Visits

Survey

- Gained perspective from downtown business owners, public officials, advocacy organizations, and downtown residents

Stakeholder Interviews

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Site Visits (Precedent Research)

- Evaluated public restroom facilities in 5 different cities:
Washington D.C., Austin, San Antonio, Cincinnati, Columbus
- Sites selected based on similar access to entertainment districts, proximity to a major riverway, usage of Portland Loo facilities, and facilities in parks and urban streetscapes

Previous Engagements

First Public Meeting:

Tuesday, August 11th at Downtown Presbyterian Church



Pop up Engagement Event:

Saturday, August 29th at Riverfront Park



Public Survey Data

128 Total Respondents (9/28)

- Average rating of public restroom availability downtown: **2 out of 5 stars**
- High percentage of respondents using the restroom at restaurants, bars, and coffee shops while downtown.
- Cleanliness and regular maintenance, safety and security listed as top priorities to consider for new public restroom facilities.

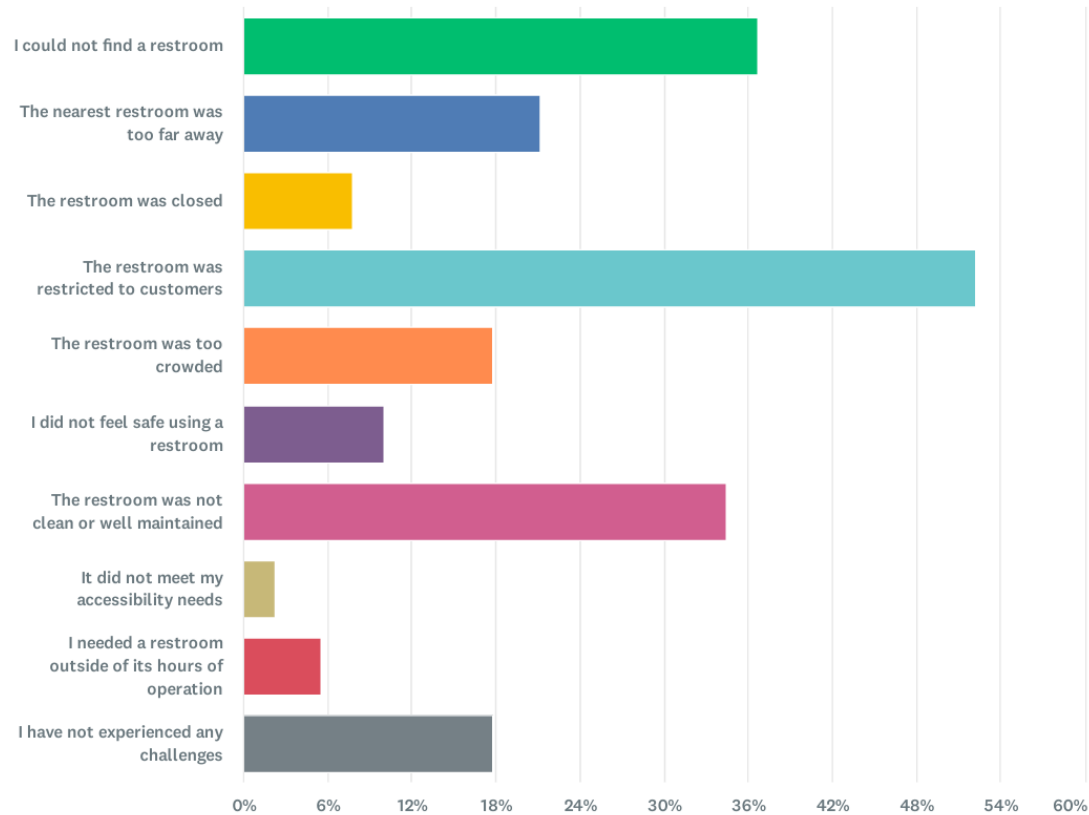
- “Once more bathrooms are installed, I would provide a clear map or downtown restroom app.”

- “More readily available restrooms in the most congested areas”

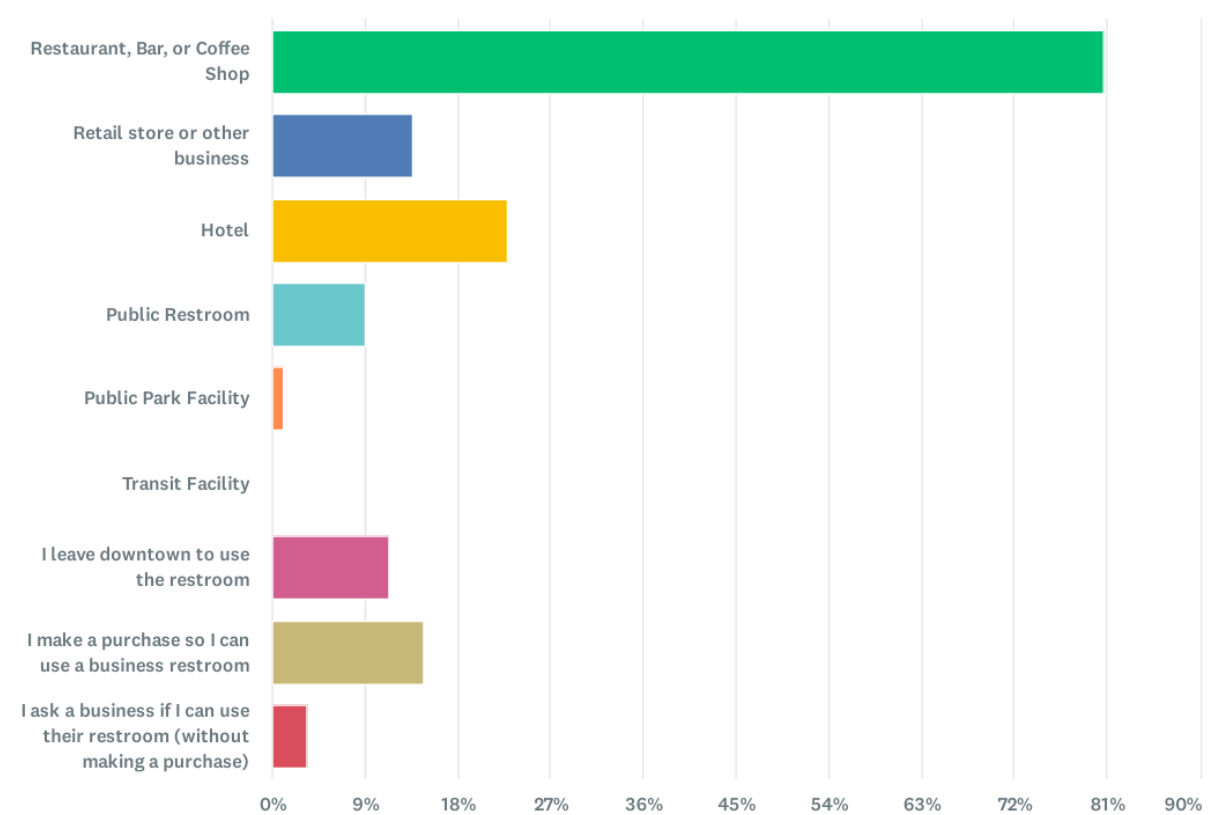
- “More bathrooms with clear signage”

Public Survey Data

What challenges have you experienced when trying to find or use a restroom downtown? Select all that apply.



When you need to use a restroom downtown, where do you typically go? Select all that apply.



Site Visits

Site visits included visiting five different cities with Portland Loo restrooms and analyzing them.

Key Takeaways

Park Space vs Urban Streetscape

- San Antonio has most restrooms placed in local parks throughout the city, while Cincinnati, Columbus and Austin each prioritized restrooms in urban areas adjacent to major thoroughfares

Restroom Designs/Amenities

- Columbus prioritized having visually appealing restrooms, with art and plants included in the design. They also had tampon and paper towel dispensers in the restroom facility.

Maintenance

- Most restroom units were in good condition, but some were closed for maintenance without signage to indicate how long they would be out of order.



Stakeholder Interviews

Downtown Business Owners

- Businesses concerned with having public restrooms placed too close to their storefronts; concerns include safety and smells
- Businesses see the need for public restrooms and would rather not have the responsibility of being the default restroom option downtown
- Recommend placing public restrooms in well-lit, pedestrian-heavy locations; ideas include Broadway corridor, Riverfront Park, the pedestrian bridge area, and Walk of Fame Park

Advocacy Organizations

- Believe that consideration of dignity and basic human need are essential to the plan; public restrooms should be welcoming to all
- Longer hours and more overall access is necessary – mention that existing public restrooms are locked, have inconsistent hours/availability and are often restricted to certain populations
- Encourage gathering input from the unhoused population downtown or people with lived experience

Public Officials

- Express the importance of a contingency plan if a public/private partnership goes awry; ensure that operational responsibility is clear
- Prioritize safety, cleanliness and accessible locations

Lessons Learned Thus Far

Oversight Responsibility

- Important to delineate responsibilities between NDP and Metro when it comes to restrooms placed in parks, contingency plans if restrooms are moved/gotten rid of once grant funding runs out

Visible Locations

- More consensus around having public restroom facilities in higher-traffic, well-lit areas for both safety and ease of access purposes
- Consensus that Riverfront Park is a good option for a restroom location
- Additional signage for where new and existing restrooms are is important to consider

New Facilities vs Updating Existing Infrastructure

- What percentage of the grant funding should be allocated to new restroom infrastructure vs. existing restrooms in place (Ex. Bridgestone Arena, Containers by the pedestrian bridge, etc.)?

Unhoused Population Access to Restrooms

- Important to consider how to balance their needs with safety/security concerns

Current Restrooms Downtown

Public (Listed by Metro Nashville)

- Nashville Farmer's Market – 900 Rosa Parks Blvd
- Visitor's Center at Bridgestone Arena (often locked)
- Public Library
- Wasioto Park (often locked)
- Bicentennial Mall
- Riverfront Park (locked)

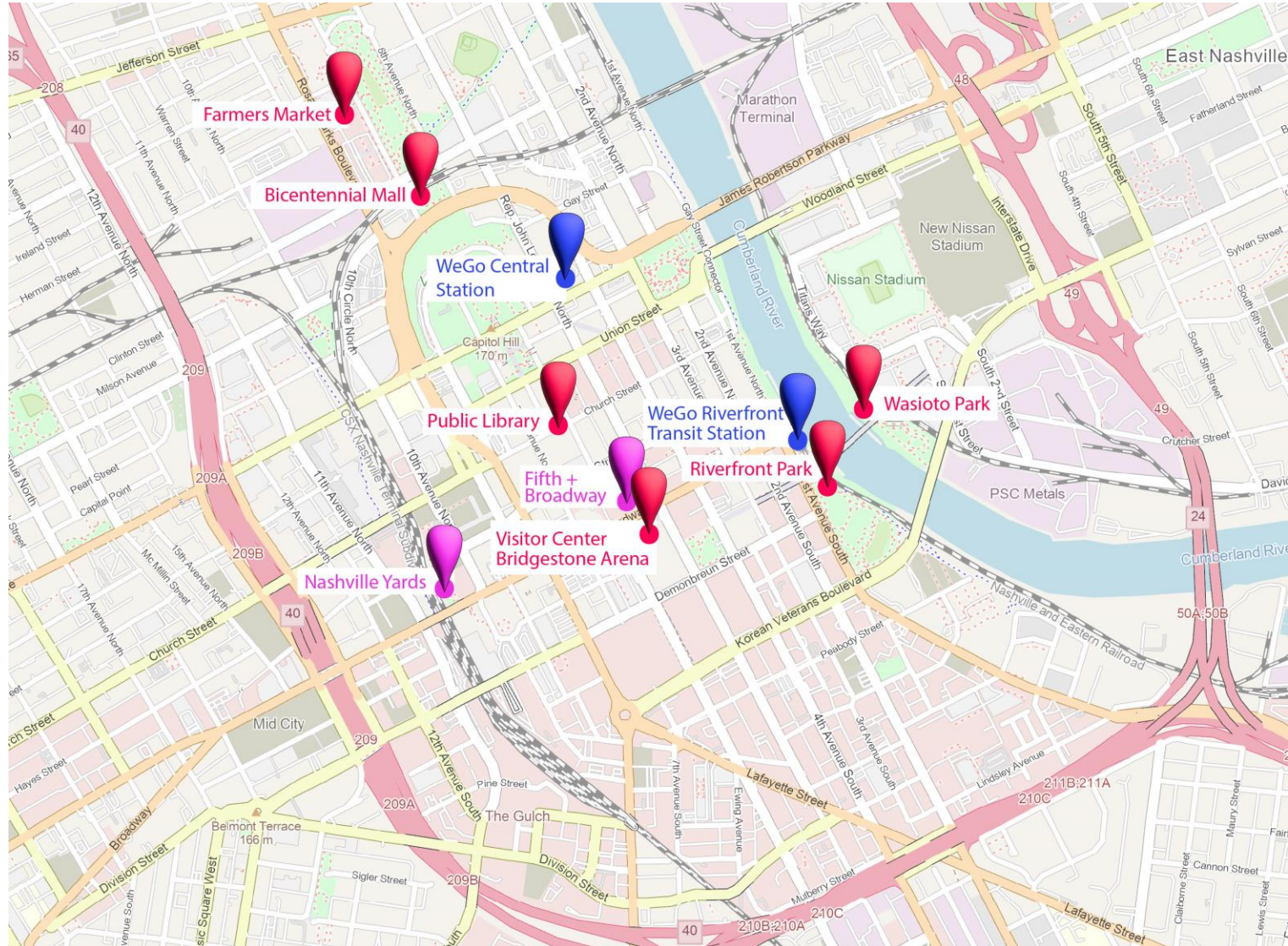
Semi-Public (WeGo, MDHA)

- WeGo transit stations
- Bridge building (owned by MDHA)

Private

(Still available for public use)

- Fifth and Broadway
- Nashville Yards



Project Timelines

Study Elements

Baseline Analysis & Community Kickoff

Community Engagement & Guiding Principles

Site Visits

Plan Development

Present Insights

Review & Revise Plan

Draft Report & Recommendations

Revise & Finalize

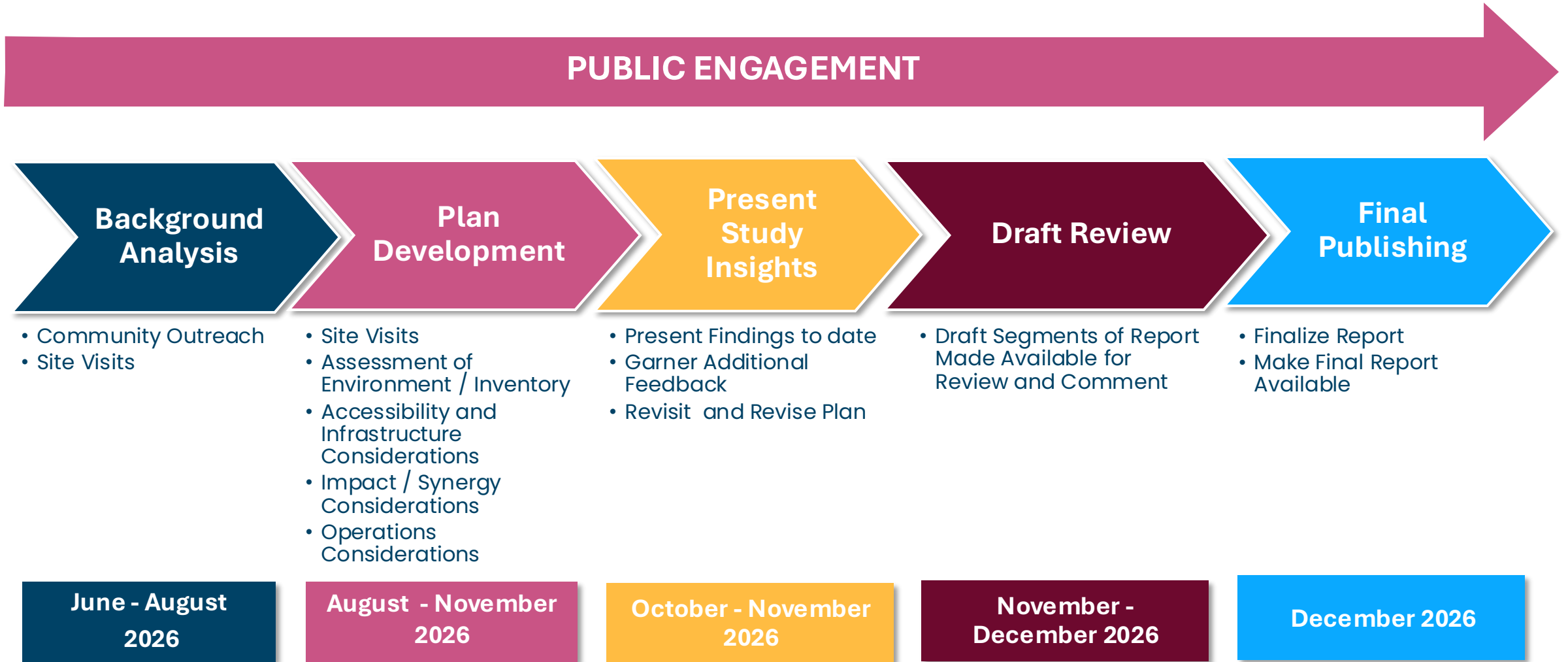
Publishing

Data Gathering &
Guidance Phase

Analysis &
Recommendation Phase

Publishing Phase

Schedule



Questions?

Next Steps

- Continuing **Public Engagement**
 - Sign in if you haven't already
 - Visit each of the stations this evening
 - Share any comments with us
- Collecting Feedback in the **Online Survey**
 - Complete the survey if you haven't already
 - Please share with your network and encourage others to complete the Survey



Scan the QR Code to go to our Project Website

Get Involved!

Variety of ways to participate and give input:

- Public Meetings
- Community Events and Popups
- Traditional Media
- Social Media
- Project Website
- Online Survey

