Compilation of consensus recommendations of Task Force on Community Engagement
Draft dated 2/15/16

Consensus Recommendations for Theme #1: **Make information clear, relevant and easily accessible.**

A. Implement a website redesign that includes the following:
1. mobile friendly
2. multi-lingual with professional translation [Open question remains about what pages and what languages] with attention to limited English proficiency users for pages that deal with city services, events or that seek engagement.
3. accessibility for those who are visually impaired
4. an enhanced search function that works and search engine optimization.
5. a centralized community calendar with filters by topic and/or district. Examine the criteria for inclusion of events on the calendar.
6. Use analytics to develop the home page and use a User Experience professional for the redesign.
7. Dynamic, timely content on the home page
8. Prominent invitation to engage on the home page.

B. Publish content in a standardized machine-readable format to a data portal in real time.

C. Recreate the Community Registry to:
1. create an easier way to ensure it stays current.
2. Allow people to use the registry to choose what they want information about.
3. Link the Registry to other City communication channels with ways to opt in and out.
4. Consider moving management of the Registry to the Neighborhood Assistance Center.
5. Include information about the type or category of each group (e.g. neighborhood, non-profit, etc.)
6. Include a way to find groups that operate in your area.
7. Use a map-based interface as well as a list.

D. Aspire to effective, useful, consistent accommodations for those with disabilities.
1. Provide onscreen closed captioning for all videos on ATXN (both published and streaming).
2. Include closed captioning during presentation (i.e. slide show) portions.
3. Include a scroll function on the website for transcripts.
4. Review ADA requirements and ensure that the City meets them.

E. Create an Austin 101 to provide high-level information about how the City works.
1. Expand City Works Academy to include online and virtual classes and modules that are available to everyone.

F. Implement a content-creation policy that helps ensure:
1. Clear communication in everyday language across all media types.
2. Improve the clarity of legal public notices regarding land use cases.
3. Create explanatory pieces (e.g. glossary) about the topics being discussed.

G. Create better ways for people to curate/filter information they want from the City.
1. Filter AustinNotes by District.
2. Periodically remind people of the options they have to choose specific topics.

Consensus Recommendations for <u>Theme #2</u>**: Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them.**

   (A) Encourage Council Members to have regular localized contact with groups and individuals (e.g., office hours in District/Mobile Office, Town Halls)

   (B) Create designated meeting space that is accessible to all in each District. Accessibility includes: public transit availability, ADA, physically accessible, ability to access meetings virtually or by phone.

   (C) Systematically work to engage and partner with community based organizations that have existing community relationships, community trust and community engagement expertise.

   (D) Experiment with non-traditional methods of community engagement, e.g.,
1. Mobile "Engagement Bus" (dedicated bus, with graphic/logo wrapping); regular routes, times, days
2. Input kiosk (mobile or stationary) where people gather. If mobile, schedule regular routes, times, days

   (E) Ensure engagement methods are designed in a simple, welcoming format, including:
1. Language
2. Ease of use
3. Accessible reading level
4. Minimize use of jargon and acronyms
5. Provide mechanism for people to stay informed

   (F) Sufficiently fund, prioritize, and implement during FY2017 on-line agenda commenting system for community members to give input to Council, Commissions, Boards, and Task Forces on city issues.
1. Can be organized by district for Council members by issue – including "for," "against," "neutral"
2. Input can flow up to Council through task forces, town halls, etc, and through other city entities
3. Collected from various sources
4. Organized information is provided in advance of decision-making meetings
5. Dedicated staff are assigned to monitor the site(s) and maintain system(s).

   (G) Sufficiently fund, prioritize and implement during FY2017 an online engagement platform that has the following capabilities (*See as a best practice example Salt Lake City: Open City Hall - http://www.slcgov.com/opencityhall and Peak Democracy*)
1. An open-data plan
2. Simple descriptive information on top
3. Recent developments on topics
4. Ability for reader to subscribe to issues, including options under consideration and policy tools that are available
5. Specific questions to elicit feedback
6. Ability for user to review others' feedback, their demographics and location
7. Robust search function
8. Generates "word cloud" of comments
9. Access to other input channels

   (H) Use innovative meeting practices that enable online or virtual participation during live meetings. (This should include meetings of the City Council, Boards and Commissions, town hall meetings, and other City engagement activities.)

Consensus Recommendation for <u>Theme #3</u>: Explain how input will be used and show how that input had an impact on the decision made.

   (A) When the City designs an engagement opportunity, provide feedback in a timely manner to participants on what was heard and how the input is being used to inform future decisions. Also make this information easily available to the general public.

      1. Follow up by email or text with all participants who provided such contact information. Thank them, advise them what's happening and invite them to receive updates and/or participate in future engagement opportunities.
      2. Ensure that plain language is used when describing decisions made.

   (B) Use technology more effectively to provide feedback to those who gave input.

      1. Use electronic voting for all Council votes in order to push real-time results on such decisions.
      2. By doing electronic voting at Council, it would allow information to be pushed out using other platforms.