

# City of Austin Surveys and Standards

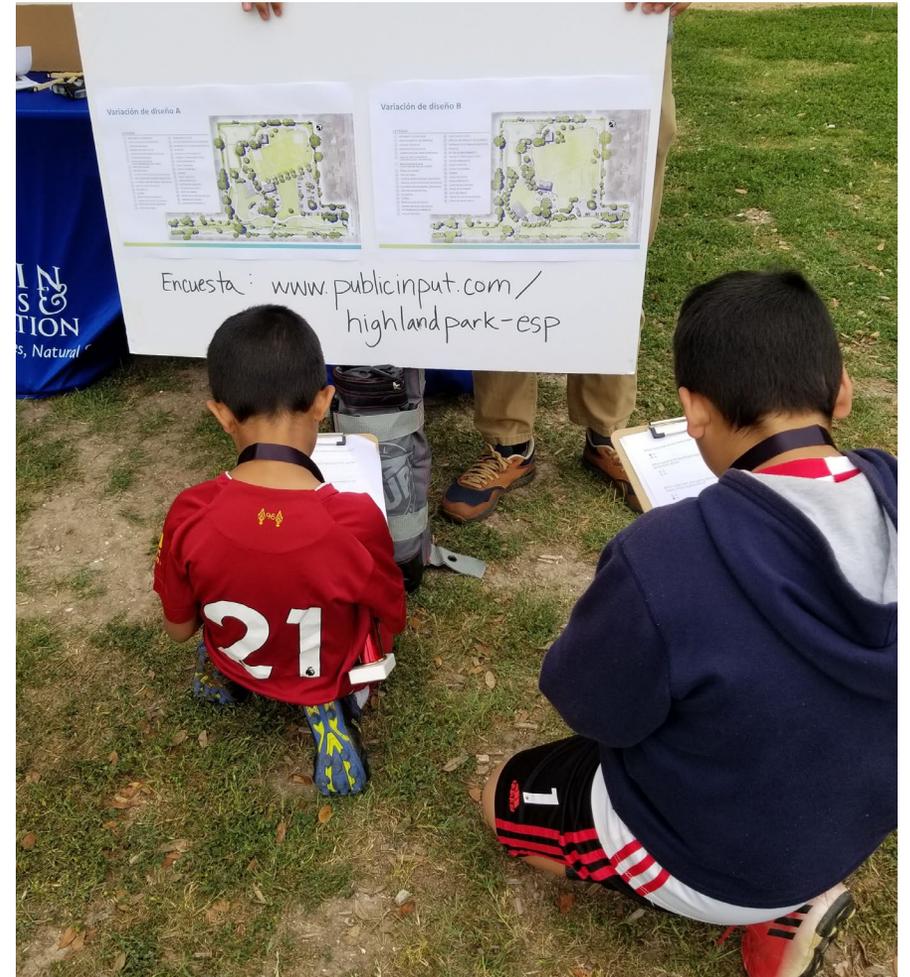
Tools and Processes for surveys in the City of Austin



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# Outline

- Introductions
- Parks and Recreation Board Questions
- General Community Engagement planning process
- Community Engagement Tools and Techniques
- Survey Platforms
- How we use surveys
- Ongoing challenges



# Marión Sánchez

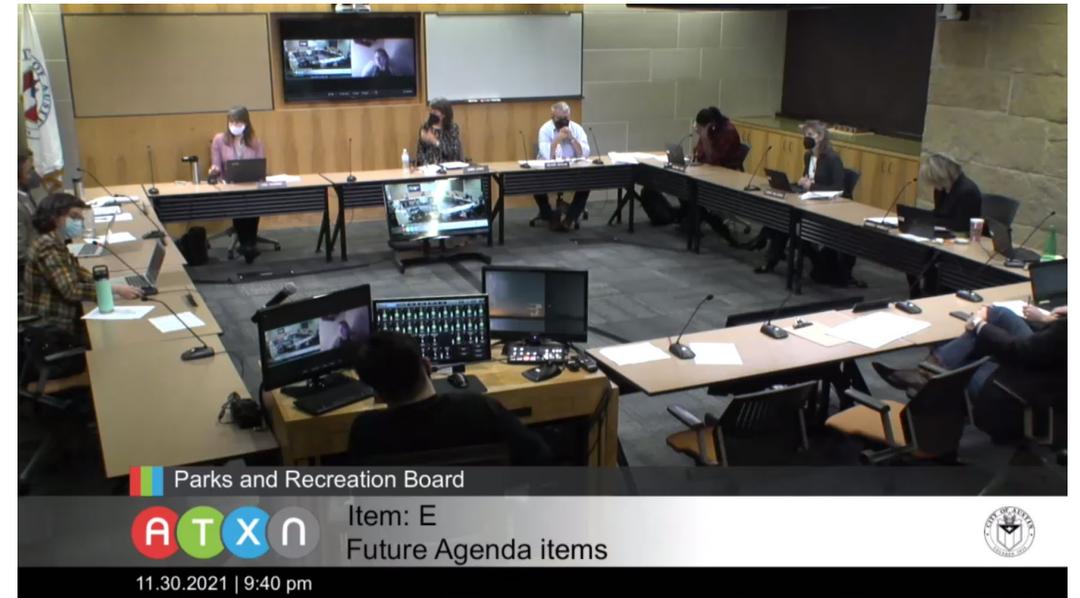
Corporate Manager of  
Community Engagement

City of Austin Communications  
and Public Information Office



# PARB Questions

- What are the standards for City of Austin community surveys?
  - Which platforms does City of Austin use?
  - What are the standards for evaluating input?
  - What are the standards for presenting to boards on results?



# Community Engagement Planning

1. Who are the communities most affected by the decision? And who are the ones having the most difficult time engaging?
  - City of Austin Public Participation Principles
  - International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)
2. Spectrum of Participation: How much influence does the community have on the decision?
3. Research question for the engagement
  - What questions do we need answers to?
  - What possible answers can we get?
4. Develop research instruments
5. Review from perspectives of cultural and language access and readability
6. Test the tool
7. Choose media and modes of tool

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

# Engagement Tools and Techniques

- Surveys are one of many tools available
- Equity principle: Provide multiple opportunities through multiple media and multiple locations
  - Also produces higher quality data
  - Able to identify consent and differences of opinions
  - Creative tension: The struggle with the answer
- Standard is still the Community/Public Meetings, but standard was set by those in power
  - Diversity of tools provides opportunity to expand meeting
- Avoiding standardization can allow for better answers to primary question: Who should be at the table? Who is missing?



# Survey Platforms

- Speakup Austin (60+ active City projects)
- PublicInput.com (80+ active City projects)
- Surveymonkey.com
- Microsoft Forms
- Poll Everywhere, Zoom, other surveys in meetings
- Austin Energy Data Analytics and other statistically valid surveys
  - Hancock Golf Course (AE, 2021)
  - Our Parks, Our Future Long Range Plan (ETC Institute, 2018)
  - Citywide Survey



**SPEAKUP** *Austin!*

# How We Use and Evaluate Data

- Data for the research comes from all points
- Polling is not about voting
- Aiming for representative data
- Demographic questions allow for disaggregating data
- Evaluation depends on resources available
- Examples
  - Asian American Quality of Life Initiative





# Ongoing Challenges

- **Covid Pandemic:** Greater reliance on surveys due to restrictions for in-person gatherings.
- **Underrepresentation:** The demographics who are underrepresented are consistently underrepresented but are also constantly sought by everyone.
- **Quick Creation:** Surveys may require fewer resources for creating but suffer issues of access.
- **Equity Efforts:** Expectations by those with power who can shift the process as benefits them.





# Questions