

Community Engagement in a Pandemic

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Introduction

Public participation is a vital part of urban planning processes, enabling agencies and advocates to more adequately understand and meet the needs of residents. Planning and other quasi-planning processes assume the responsibility of intervention based on collective concerns (Altshuler 2004; Campbell 2006); thus, the process of defining the collective interest is of significant importance to the field. Good public participation that accurately identifies the community interest requires a level of engagement that facilitates shared learning, a process that increases trust between governments and communities. Conventional wisdom is that trust-building requires human connection including, but not limited to: listening to those who will be affected; substantial staff training in mediation and facilitation techniques; and transparency about the participation process and its outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted many fields and professions, including the world of urban planning, governance, and service provision. In addition to the challenges directly associated with virus suppression itself, good governance practices of citizen and stakeholder participation and community outreach had to pivot quickly to a reality where physical distance between people was required. As many functions as possible shifted into digital form within months, if not weeks. Over the past two decades, a growing subfield of governance and participation – often termed "e-governance" and "e-participation" – has amplified how technology may be used to increase participation and engagement activities; however much remains to be learned about how best to implement user-friendly online platforms for equitable access and use. The pandemic accelerated this process, providing valuable lessons by means of a forced experiment.

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated longstanding inequities within communities, including disparities in public health responses, access to the internet and connecting devices, and access to other resources such as food, shelter, and disability accommodations. Social distancing mandates and guidelines limited the potential for meeting with the public in person, further hampering trust-building and outreach efforts. The extreme disruption of normal processes increased the challenges of public outreach many agencies and advocates had already been facing. Because of this, historical disparities in both participation and community engagement are now at risk of increasing as essential ongoing relationship-building may be relegated to tedious online formats, or worse, completely abandoned.

This report seeks to engage these challenges by grounding our work in the interdisciplinary participation literature and by speaking to the following:

- 1. documenting some of the COVID-19 pandemic shifts in practice to ensure representative public outreach; and
- 2. identifying the lessons and strategies current practitioners have developed to strengthen public outreach during a pandemic.

We aim to offer a vision for outreach as we continue to socially distance during the pandemic recovery process—however long that may be. But we also hope that this report helps identify and strengthen our understanding of the benefits and limitations of online-based

participation methods and their potential role in post-pandemic community outreach and governance.

Our Approach

We developed a two-pronged approach to meeting our objectives. First, we examined the gray and academic literature to explore recommendations and guidelines for community engagement, as well as new limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sources for this review were identified using relevant keywords developed by the research team. These keywords were then used to search for academic literature in databases such as Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar and the grey literature in Google's search engine during early Fall 2020. The goal of the literature review was intended to provide background information about public participation and urban planning during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and so it favored more current sources of information.

Our disciplinary homes include urban planning, public health, and historic preservation. The need for this study became apparent when the development of a cultural asset mapping project slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts. Thus, one strand of this literature explicitly explores the needs of cultural asset mapping, although we did not limit our review to these studies. Instead, the information we present here is highly informed by the participation and community engagement norms in all three disciplines. We believe similar themes and issues are likely to apply to other policy and community engagement strategies.

We also believe that practice has changed even faster than gray literature during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021. To analyze this, we conducted a series of professional interviews with practitioners in planning-related fields to learn how their organizations adapted their public outreach during the pandemic. These interviews—roughly 45 minutes long and undertaken through the winter of 2020 and 2021— included nine U.S.-based practitioners identified in the research team's professional networks. Those contacted worked in fields related to urban planning, historic preservation, and public health, and held positions in public, private, and advocacy organizations. The interviews were summarized and anonymized to protect the professional participants. We then used a basic qualitative analysis approach to code emergent themes to summarize themes seen across the suite of interviews.

Organization of this Report

We have organized our report as follows. First, we briefly describe traditional public participation methods, including participation goals, formats, and limitations; this is combined with a summary of e-participation literature prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We explore factors mentioned in the existing literature that impact participation outcomes, efficacy, and adoption - paying particular attention to sources that promote trust, transparency, and democratic ideals.

Second, we document the changing landscape of participation during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaning on what the emergent grey literature and interviewees reported. Specifically, we discuss how the participation structure and formats changed; how these changes interacted

with some fundamental participation goals; the way leaning on digital formats amplified some participation barriers while creating convenience for others; and how this entire situation impacted professional budgets and staff.

Third, we summarize the lessons, ideas, strategies, and ongoing challenges, providing recommendations for moving through the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, including identifying additional areas of needed research and innovation.

At the end of this document, we have included the original annotated bibliography to summarize references and resources incorporated within this report.

Traditional Planning Efforts of Public Participation

Public participation is an essential component within the planning field. Its purposes and goals are to distribute and collect information to and from community members for decision making; ensure those who will be affected understand and can provide input into the decisions being made; and prevent delays in the decision making and implementation processes by addressing conflicts promptly and avoiding misunderstandings. How these efforts are applied is mission-driven and highly dependent on the situation, policy, location, and magnitude of the impact.

In many cases, public participation is codified in U.S. and state law. Participation is linked to due process for private property owners in urban governance, which is highlighted in the U.S. Constitution under the Fifth Amendment. Racial and environmental justice law and administrative rule also force consideration of the impacts on vulnerable and historically underinvested communities: engaging these communities is now required in many instances. Public participation also serves a normative and pragmatic role in bolstering the democratic political system. By allowing people of the community to exercise their rights to be heard before decisions are made, it is hoped that implementation will be smooth.

Urban planners and other organizers seek to expand and diversify the voices included in decision-making processes, balancing this against the practical challenge and cost of large or protracted engagement efforts. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, participation and outreach efforts were typified by in-person meetings at designated times and locations and augmented by some digital and physical one-way communication efforts. The heavy reliance on in-person conversations remains the gold standard in the development of trust and social learning. However, reliance on in-person public meetings provided fewer participatory opportunities for some community members due to a lack of childcare, work schedules, and other obligations. This was true even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

To provide an adequate framework for the following discussion, we begin by exploring some foundational theories in the structure and role of public participation. We then discuss a few relevant participation formats—including public meetings, focus groups, surveys—followed by an overview of online participation formats before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Participation Structure

Public participation, engagement, and outreach endeavors are highly varied. Models of participation have changed considerably over time, as planning has moved towards a deliberative rather than bureaucratic activity. Public participation within the planning field is thought to increase the information base on which decisions are made. It also helps avoid bad public decisions based on mistaken understandings of public interest(s); increases the civic capacity and autonomy of the public; improves social learning and trust in government; and smooths the ultimate implementation of plans and projects (Taylor 1998). Yet, the "appropriate"

scale and scope of public participation remain contested (Innes and Booher 2014). Further, there is a longstanding tension about participation targets (representative stakeholders or public individuals) and the power dynamics of participation (Dempsey 2009). Moreover, the practices, methods, and tools used may depend on the organization sponsoring the participation, the public's interest in the issue, and the legal context in which the public decision is being made.

One well-known model for public participation that makes power dynamics explicit is Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969). This model (Figure 1) outlines the hierarchy of eight levels of public participation, delineating the extent to which the participants have power and to what degree their input is incorporated into the decision-making process. Lower rungs (manipulation, therapy) and mid-level rungs (informing, consultation, and placation) typically describe participation or outreach methods that transfer information from the institution in power to the public, often with the decision nearly "preordained." This is strikingly different from the higher "rungs" of the ladder, which give more power to participants through jointly defining problems and solutions. These higher rungs are normatively "better" in a democracy; yet much of the mandated public participation in city governance defaults to mid-level rungs.



Figure 1 From Arnstein (1969) Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation

Additional models, inspired by Arnstein's work, have been developed over the years to engage the challenges of equitable and effective participation (Slotterback and Lauria 2019). The International Association of Participation Professionals (IAP2) has a popular participation

'spectrum' that matches participation goals with the level of engagement (IAP2 International Federation 2018). Formats and types of participation and outreach are often analyzed for factors that facilitate effectiveness. For example, while power to decide was the central analytical lens for Arnstein (1969), a public participation process might be analyzed on the extent to which the process:

- Improves and co-produces information (Innes and Booher 2014; O'Faircheallaigh 2010);
- Increases collaboration between people in power by including and engaging those who will be impacted (Quick and Feldman 2011), and;
- Includes social interaction to build trust amongst and within communities (Hussey 2020; Mandarano 2008).

For example, MacQueen et al. (2015) discuss the need for better metrics to define and standardize public participation, especially in health-related fields. Better metrics are essential to establish the success or failure of a particular program and to improve the understanding of objectives when implementing participatory research. While Macqueen et al emphasizes metrics from a data-driven health perceptive, the need to measure the success of participation is no less pressing in planning. Utilizing some quantitative or qualitative metrics could increase transparency in the planning process, garner trust from the public, and allow those performing the outreach to better evaluate and reflect upon their processes.

Definition of Elements

Before exploring the formats of public participation, we define foundational terms used throughout the report.

- **One-way versus Two-way Communication:** One-way communication typically includes information an organization provides to the community. In contrast, two-way communication provides information and incorporates feedback from the community into decision-making.
- Quantity versus Quality of Participants: Quantity refers to an increase in number of participants and/or participation options; quality refers to an increase in diversity of participants.
- Participation versus Outreach: Participation is the general inclusion of community members in decision-making processes or data collection; outreach refers to an organization seeking direct engagement with its residents of interest.
- **Information Exchange:** Organizations providing and receiving information from stakeholders to incorporate into decision making and data collection.
- **Power:** In reference to Arnstein's Ladder (Figure 1), power describes the amount of authority and input an organization designates to its residents in the decision making process.
- Platform versus Process versus Format: Platforms are the tools an organization uses for public participation, while the process is the planned actions it utilizes. Format is a means of execution for public engagement.

Public Participation Formats

While the overarching structure of public participation and outreach highly impacts power dynamics and placement on Arnstein's ladder, the way problems are presented to the public can impact the effectiveness of the structure chosen. For example, when members of the public are asked to help find creative solutions to complex problems, they may have difficulty visualizing either the issue at hand or potential solutions. Stewart and Gelberd (1976) showed the effectiveness of illustrating possible solutions that members of the public could move towards, or away from, or combine. Even if choices modified later, providing choices helped members of the public better articulate solutions and contribute input that was more meaningful. This tradition continues even today with various forms of charrettes and other techniques embedded into participation formats.

Some of the most common formats of public participation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic included public meetings, focus groups and surveys, and crowdsourcing and asset mapping. These formats provide different types and levels of communication, participation, and information exchange. When referring to Arnstein's Ladder (Figure 1), other formats are lower or higher on the rungs depending on who participates; how information distribution occurs; the ability of the participant to provide feedback; and if community feedback is meaningfully incorporated into the decision-making process. Consequently, a government entity or organization may choose from the various public participation formats depending on resources; how much or what types of information and participation is needed or required by the law; and the magnitude of the situation. While there are countless formats for outreach practiced in the past, some common formats are discussed briefly below.

Public Meetings

Public meetings were one of the most common participation formats before the COVID-19 pandemic, and most were held in person. Public meetings generally have to fulfill specific legal requirements in the government context to give the public a transparent way to participate. Public meetings always included a period for public comments and questions, but opportunities to provide input into the decision varied widely. In the non-governmental world, many non-profits preferred in-person meetings; this was particularly true when the focus was on hard-to-reach populations.

A few features of in-person public meetings were taken for granted before the COVID-19 pandemic. Meetings often began with a presentation. Members of the public were able to talk to one another (and to facilitators, planners, developers, and other attendees) officially and informally at in-person meetings. These side conversations facilitated shared understanding of issues, led to more collaboration, and increased community building. Body language—a key non-verbal communication tool—was considered critical in communication between stakeholders and in managing the facilitation aspect of a meeting.

Focus Groups & Surveys

Focus groups and surveys have generally been used as a means for the community to provide feedback or show interest for a particular plan. Focus groups are designed to be smaller groups of community members, allowing for more communication by and between each

individual. In this context, in-person focus groups that allowed for body language were the norm. Surveys, on the other hand, include both paper and digital formats. These are used to get feedback from large numbers of respondents, and participants do not engage each other when providing feedback. Online surveys were starting to be used regularly even before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Cultural Asset Mapping

Cultural asset mapping is another cultural resource management tool that encourages people within the community to identify and map what is significant to them in their neighborhoods, leading to the creation of a foundational database of a community ethos. This information is offered to planners as another way to eliminate barriers between government entities and residents (Baeker 2005). By incorporating professional surveyors and community involvement, professionals can map valued historic resources, share information publicly, and create a source for government planners to access (Bernstein and Hansen 2016). Through cultural asset mapping, smaller municipalities can compete with larger cities by highlighting local culture and identities. It can simultaneously support planning decisions and educate the public (Voigt 2011). Asset mapping can also be used as a public health tool to understand community needs and apply appropriate policies and programs. Research findings can support the initiation of necessary health interventions, and in this way asset mapping can be equity-driven and used in social work settings. One limitation to this approach is that it is time-sensitive, and it requires specialized researchers (Lightfoot, McCleary, and Lum 2014).

E-Participation Before the COVID-19 Pandemic

E-Participation, E-Governance, E-Democracy

E-participation is broadly defined as a digital equivalent of the various formats of public participation previously mentioned. E-participation is only one of many government services provided online as more cities are becoming interested in e-government and e-democracy. "E-governance" usually describes the use of information and communication technologies to provide governmental services, while "e-democracy" refers to broader objectives such as information exchange, education and support building, decision making, and input probing. Both researchers and early adopters were excited about how e-governance could increase convenience and save time for citizens before the COVID-19 pandemic.

One overarching goal of e-participation (and e-governance) is to broaden the ways in which residents and stakeholders can participate in government. The COVID-19 pandemic forced a pivot to e-participation, faster than what might have otherwise occurred in absence of a crisis. This likely made it difficult to match online tool capabilities with participation goals – a critical part in helping ensure a more seamless transition to online governance (Phang and Kankanhalli 2008). The immediacy of the COVID-19 pandemic created situations where agencies were forced to rely on whatever systems or platforms were currently available to transition to working online. The e-participation literature prior to the COVID-19 pandemic also recognized the technology access gap. However, there were no substantial guidelines about improving the experience or participation for residents without good internet service.

Crowdsourcing and E-participation

Crowdsourcing has become a more common method of outreach in e-participation, particularly as access to the internet has become more widely available. Crowdsourcing aims for a diversity of participants by recruiting a larger and more open-sourced group of people into the process. According to Seltzer et al. (2012), these participants are not intentionally selected by organizers, instead focusing on those that are "loosely affiliated" to a project to contribute their competing ideas for ideal solutions. This is most useful when situational problem-solving is necessary and when seeking community input to well-defined and specific issues that do not need expert background to understand. Seltzer et al. (2012) further explains that crowdsourcing encourages diverse responses, avoids "groupthink," and decentralizes social organizations. It also requires strong intent from organizers, preparation, and explanation of intent to the participants to establish comprehension, importance, and the goals of the inquiry. Crowdsourcing can achieve trust while providing a wide range of responses as a participation tool open to anyone who is interested in a specific situation (Seltzer et al. 2012). As van Ransbeek (2020) points out, crowdsourcing initiatives—particularly those online—that cultivate the ability for citizens to contribute to other citizen's ideas encourage more collaboration and are therefore higher on Arnstein's ladder (1969). Yet these methods are sometimes slower to synthesize and report back to decision-making entities (Van Ransbeeck 2020).

Legal & Equity Issues

Access to the internet has become increasingly more common in the last two decades. The Pew Research Center now estimates that more than 90% of Americans use the internet, including more than 75% of those 65 years and older (Pew Research Center 2021). With this increase, many municipalities had websites and online portals for information and services already in use. However, many public participation processes still had not moved to a digital format and most still were struggling with issues around technology gaps and access. As Peristeras et al. (2009) discussed, e-participation was often deemed challenging to incorporate prior to the COVID-19 pandemic due to the range of technological platforms. This made it challenging for multiple levels of government to integrate information and process and offers a rationale as to why e-participation before the COVID-19 pandemic lagged.

There also can be significant legal barriers to implementing e-participation processes. Typically, quasi-judicial processes like public hearings must be held in person according to due process laws established by the U.S. Constitution, state regulations, and city ordinances. To legalize e-participation and deviate from tradition, government entities typically establish ordinances to allow and justify online meetings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, governments of all sizes quickly amended regulations to allow public meetings and other government functions to be conducted online. However, it is uncertain if these legal adaptations will be retained post-pandemic.

The transition to a government online will require dealing with multiple additional issues. Problems of accessibility and information management with greater numbers of participation remained unsolved. Many government files and information exist only in paper formats, with limited ability to query data online. Thus, as we move more of our government online, there is both a greater need and incentive to digitize and organize data across the branches of government. These inefficiencies slow down all branches of government and are especially infuriating because they do not result from a lack of data; they are self-inflicted by poor data management (Peristeras et al. 2009). Better communication and systems between government branches could help alleviate the problem. It is imperative that governments have the right tools at their disposal to move government services online, after all the goal is to make things easier, not more complicated.

Interviews About Outreach During the Pandemic

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations - including governmental institutions and nonprofits - had to adapt to the reality of not being able to communicate with members of the community in person. Through a combination of literature review and personal interviews with outreach facilitators from various fields conducted by our team (urban planning, transportation, public health, heritage conservation), we were able to analyze major effects on public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. We clearly heard that the COVID-19 pandemic was associated with remote communication and online outreach and a distinct shift in exchanging information with the community. With an increase in online participation from new users, the technology barriers that have always challenged disadvantaged community members from participation remained.

In the section below we describe the changes in public participation arising during the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes are organized in major themes that emerged both in the grey literature and in interviews. Specifically, we describe:

- Changes to the public participation structure and format, including the shift towards remote, digital communications; the challenges of matching technology platforms to pre-COVID-19 pandemic participation strategies; and other emerging practices;
- Unique interactions of participation goals with the COVID-19 pandemic participation strategies including information about who participated and how the flow of information changed;
- How some **barriers to participation** were somewhat mitigated by digital convenience even as the tech access gap continued; and
- Implications for professional practice including budgets and increased or changing expectations for participation professionals and facilitators.

In the following sections, we have attempted to organize the overarching themes identified in our interviews. We have acknowledged where each interviewee contributed to these themes ("e.g., (A) or (D)") throughout the text, but we have also randomized the interviewee code to maintain anonymity.

Public Participation Structure & Format

The Shift Towards Remote & Digital Communication

With remote communication becoming essential overnight, resources to support successful online meetings became necessary as early as March 2020. Multiple decisions had to be made quickly. Facilitators had to pick a software platform, e.g., Zoom, GoToMeeting, Adobe Connect (the choice sometimes being limited by what was already available for other business activities). Training and practice was required, both for the facilitators and the participants, and administrators depended heavily on existing (often in-house) technical support even as everyone was stretched by moving all possible tasks to a work-at-home setting. Moving online required facilitators to think differently about in-the-moment software training and the participation process itself. This included providing clear instructions for users prior to the meeting, facilitating in an engaging manner in the online format, and understanding the needs of participants (Bartlett 2020).

For larger meetings that required more stringent organization, agendas, and expectations, facilitators took a more active role to maintain participant engagement and provide a comfortable discourse environment to avoid groupthink (J. Kim 2020). This included utilizing resources such as *Best Practices for Virtual Engagement* provided by the Local Government Commission (Local Government Commission 2020), which explains the limitations of online meetings, guides facilitators to the most appropriate level of engagement given the task at hand, and clarifying what type of event should be put in place. Similarly, organizations such as the International Association of Public Participation compiled user-friendly resources highlighting topics such as the facilitation of virtual work and meetings, online public engagement tools, resources to staying connected and sharing knowledge, and updates on health and the COVID-19 pandemic status (IAP2 USA 2020). Even though some non-profit organizations and internet service providers are offering a wider range of internet services and devices for low-income populations (Leana Mayzlina 2020), there are also still concerns about basic internet access as a barrier to participation.

Matching Technology Platforms to Participation Strategies

One element that permeated our interviews was the need to distinguish between different aspects of technology that impact participation including:

- The **technological platforms** that facilitate or inhibit outreach based on the needs of the program;
- The overarching communication or participation strategies; and
- The specific **format** of the outreach as it relates to information exchange.

This can be tricky because participation strategies typically include both the format of outreach and the techniques built into the meeting or communication. Indeed, the format of meeting facilitation should be strongly related to the desired communication goals. If the goal of communication is to collect community-based comments related to a project (or program or issue), the participation strategy might be designed around an in-person meeting that designed for various types of brainstorming with a community (e.g., collecting information on poster boards; informal voting on strategies, preferences or attitudes; open dialog about issues or concerns). If the goal is information dissemination, the format of outreach might take the form of flyers, video recordings, or public poster board notices. Ideally, this type of matching of strategy to format and platform would occur in online participation as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations to restructure entire outreach and communication strategies, it was common for outreach to be "paused" at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over time, as the length of the COVID-19 pandemic became more apparent, government agencies were forced to reconsider how to meet participation mandates while non-government agencies reconsidered their overall strategies to continue meeting their own organizational missions. In most—but not all—cases, digital platforms that approximated the previously planned strategy and format were considered. Notable exceptions included non-

digital formats such as relying on postcard or mail-out notifications or recruitment; door-to-door canvassing or intercept surveys; or tables and posters at existing outdoor community events.

When digital technology platforms were adopted, we heard little evidence that the specific engagement techniques within the platforms—much less the extent to which those techniques improved participation—were explicitly considered. Instead, organizations shifted rapidly in a much more pragmatic fashion. This may be problematic because when reflecting on Arnstein's ladder (1969), more two-way communication engagement techniques tend to support social learning, build trust, and increase citizen power and control. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, by shifting to existing online formats, the techniques used for facilitation were restricted to those accessible through social distancing guidelines or mandates. Existing platforms may or may not facilitate the desired communication strategy, which was a commonly identified theme of interview participants. As both individuals and agencies went online, many adopted the most readily available platform, accepting with it all the current aspects and functions of the technology.

Throughout our interviews, respondents described a variety of formats for online meetings, organized below in broad terms along the range of participatory formats (sorted from more two-way communication to mostly one-way):

• Online focus groups (smaller groups enabling more two-way discussion);

More Two-Way

One-Way

- Real time online meetings (able to see other participants, no delay in audio/visual);
 - Online webinars or "live events" (unable to see other participants, sometimes with 10-30 second delay added to audio/visual);
- Zoom meeting/virtual events recordings (accessed by community members after the meeting at their convenience); and
- Online informational or "primer" videos (accessed by community members at their convenience, used as one-way communication).

Some of the interviewees expressed frustration about transitioning to participation online, which may have partly been related to the limited suite of platforms available (Interview E, G). One interviewee noted the additional workload necessary to prepare for the Zoom-based public meeting (Interview F). We also heard that certain platforms excel at some, but not all, communication techniques. Digital technologies and platforms typically are often much better at one-way communication, particularly in larger or synchronous applications.

It is not necessarily always true that online platforms limit the ability to facilitate higher degrees of citizen control, but the quick adoption forced by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that thoughtful design, training, and implementation of these platforms may not have occurred. As Savoldelli et al. (2014) have noted, issues with the design of service platforms can effect both transparency of the process and participation itself, impacting citizen trust in the process (see Figure 2). When the design of the services does not support the types of participation needed, there are repercussions such as the dismissal (or rejection) of online formats, long-term transparency, and erosion of trust.



Figure 2 E-governance Model Adoption, recreated from (Savoldelli, Codagone, and Misuraca 2014)

Revisiting Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969), we acknowledge that both digital and in-person formats might help facilitate higher levels of citizen participation. The location higher/lower along the ladder is not contingent on whether the format is online or not, but how information is distributed; who participates (and who does not); the ability for participants to provide feedback or collaborate on solutions; and if community feedback is meaningfully incorporated into the decision-making process. When outreach strategies change, the larger question is whether the change facilitates participation that moves the process up or down the ladder. As we sought to analyze the types of online participation precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we asked a series of questions:

- In the current facilitation format, how does information circulate from citizens to agencies?
- Does the new format make it easier or more restricted for social learning? Does it encourage more representation?
- What do different platforms and formats impede and what do they facilitate?

To explore this further, we begin by mapping strategies (both physical, digital, or both) and identifying ways in which these structures support or impede higher levels of citizen participation and power (see Figure 3).

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)	More Physical <		—> More Digital
More two-way communication Higher on the ladder	 Collecting feedback on posters Intercept surveys Community ambassador programs 	 More agenda time allocated for feedback Crowdsourcing ideas or feedback 	 Open chat Online platform meetings where all participants are allowed Mail-out surveys (open-ended)
More one-way communication Lower on the ladder	 Disseminating flyers Mail-out surveys (closed-ended) Posters or notification boards 	 Less agenda time allocated for feedback 	 Limiting chat functions in online platforms (Zoom, MS Teams) Email blasts Webinar-style online platform while limiting non-panel microphone/camera functions

Figure 3 Mapping Example Strategies Across Means of Communication and Purpose of Outreach

Regardless of the format, all strategies should consider *who* participates in the process (and *who* is left behind). As more people become familiar with additional technology and platforms, some interviewees mentioned shifting platforms specifically in response to better alignment with communication strategies and goals (Interviews A, B, D-H). It is important to qualify and understand how the functionality of existing platforms support the desired communication strategies. The implications of the technology gap in outreach—specifically, reaching hard-to-reach populations and even evaluating how well your strategies are representing different populations—is explored later in a later subsection.

Emerging and Revisted Practices during the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic mandates (for example: stay-at-home orders, social distancing, and mask mandates) have challenged typical public participation practices, thus requiring organizations to discover—or in some cases rediscover—appropriate emerging practices for formal and informal community engagement. In the absence of large in-person avenues for engagement, many agencies have imperatively relied on substitutive online participation, smaller focus groups, and other piecemeal strategies to meet the legal requirements of formal outreach. Additionally, interviews identified a number of practices possibly encouraged by the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Instant and often employment of anonymous "straw polling" during the meeting;
- Online asynchronous polling (occurring outside of meeting times, can be completed at participant's convenience);
- Online design charrettes (meetings between community members, facilitators, designers, and planners that include the community in the design process);
- Increased information added to previously existing websites;
- Increased social media presence and/or communication (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter);
- One-on-one walk-and-talk with block leaders to allow news to spread through community and word of mouth;
- Flyers/informational handouts/written survey sent to homes within project area; and
- Yard signs placed in communities.

Some have adapted to the impacts of COVID-19 by providing multiple outlets online to reach their communities through a variety of meetings, surveying, and informational videos. These formats are being distributed through multiple technological platforms including websites and social media platforms. This suggests an increase in *quantity of participation opportunities* from attempts to spread out over digital spaces. Some of the increase could be attributed to additional preparation, sometimes with the aid of contracted assistance, to develop presentations, pre-recorded videos, and online education (Interviews A, B, E). Interviews also suggested that virtual participation has increased the *quantity of people reached*. Some suggested that the increase in overall participation, particularly by younger people, could be explained by virtual meetings providing a flexible option for attendance (Interview B, G).

There is also some evidence that the *quality* may be improving as well. This crisis appears to have motivated some cities to hire third-party facilitators to conduct public meetings on Zoom to encourage participants to share their ideas on important matters like general plans (Interview C). Other organizations may be keeping participation in house, instead thoughtfully preparing pre-recorded primer videos to set up discussions with participants (Interview C, F). Many are taking advantage of distributing online surveys to get additional feedback after meetings and in cases when they are not able to speak directly to those who will be affected (Interview A, C, I).

In addition to digital meetings, there is a surging trend amongst organizations to utilize online platforms to provide information that can be accessed asynchronously. For example, some organizations are updating their social media pages more frequently to provide convenient video content for their communities; ensuring their websites are up to date; and providing tools like pre-recorded informational videos and Story Maps (Interviews D, I). Many reported heavy use of social media to inform and engage with the public. For example, cities used Facebook Live to tell stories about what was going on at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to ease the concern of residents (Interview D). Organizations are distributing content and news on different social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, in an attempt to reach multiple generations (Interview B, D, I). Interviewees found that these platforms are useful for reaching younger people, but difficult for older people and lowincome due to the lack of access (Interview F, I). Organizations are also revisiting and bolstering older, non-digital outreach techniques, such as increased mail distributions and handwritten surveys, posting flyers in public places and in local newspapers, and relying on both informal and formal "ambassadors" to disseminate information within communities (Interview H, I). Some organizations are making efforts to incorporate local community block leaders, who have diverse backgrounds. Younger generations, like teenagers, are embracing ambassador positions with incentives—like t-shirts and other "swag -" to increase participation through block leaders, such as Neighborhood Associations and other involved residents to increase community engagement (Interview B).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of the digital divide, many organizations are trying to reach communities outside of online engagement - for example they are spending more funds on mailing informational materials to households and providing feedback opportunities using paper surveys (Interviews F, H). Some are increasing their distribution of flyers and signage in communities, and looking to local media sources like newspapers, as substitutes for missing or less frequent in-person meetings (Interviews F, H, I). Many of these are traditional participation techniques; what is notable is that several interviewees mentioned pairing additional traditional means than would have occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic with the newer online meeting formats to reach a broader audience.

With limitations on in-person contact, government organizations have had to find legal ways to hold these meetings by moving accessibility to the public and public comments online. Under the Sunshine Law, there are legal requirements for government entities to engage in public meetings of appointed commissions and of elected officials (Interviews A, E). Because of this, even when shifting online, government entities typically maintained the same format, agenda, and public comments with call-in options and staff assistance to meet legal requirements. The interviewees note that many meetings are have higher levels of total participation, which often includes regular prior participations as well as others who have noted the convenience of online formats. However, there is a recognized need for more staff to assist with all the moving parts of conducting a formal online meeting and possibly shorter comment periods to synthesize the different types of feedback (Interview A), particularly as supplemental, traditional strategies are brought back into practice.

Who Participates?

It is important to remember that during a public health crisis, already marginalized groups – such as youth, elderly, people with disabilities, and other minority groups – become increasingly at risk for economic harm as well. Since many of these communities may already not have easy access to social services and/or technologies (let alone political power), they may have limited ability to adapt to emergency situations. Thus, it is essential to have an inclusive approach to community outreach across gender, language barriers, and diversity of cultures within localities (The Regional Risk Communication and Community Engagement Working Group 2020). The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted different communities in different ways. This highlights equity disparities of at-risk and disadvantaged populations in terms of who are more readily exposed to the virus, and who has access to resources such as

food, shelter, internet or technology, and other necessary accommodations. These types of impacts create significant challenges for municipalities. However, history demonstrates many disruptive events have encouraged cities to prioritize these issues, such as community building, recovery in mobility, housing, food security, strengthening local businesses, and opportunities to pay more attention to marginalized communities (Brail 2020).

Not surprisingly, the shift to disproportionately online participation introduced real concerns about whether online meetings and strategies adequately serve the various missions for public engagement. In many online formats, however, these observations are purely anecdotal and are often impossible to asses. Online formats, particularly those encouraged early in the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., one-way meetings or webinars) left participant screens blank, often with only their initials showing. None of our interviewees had clear methods for assessing the representation of participation more systematically during the COVID-19 pandemic, pointing towards a fruitful area of future research.

Digital Can Be Convenient for Some

Meetings and public participation are often referenced as "more convenient" when held online—reducing of travel time, introducing flexibility (logging on and off, as desired), and easier access for most participants—which may result in increased participation for some. Many of the professionals interviewed said they were getting more attendees for regular planning and participation meetings (Interviews A, C, E, G, I). The interviewees associated the increased turnouts for public hearings or zoning meetings with greater convenience (Interviews A, C-H), but suggesting that participation online did not translate to more diversity in the backgrounds of the participants. Several of our interviewees also indicated that "regular participants" were more frequently in attendance, but there appeared to simultaneously be an increase in new, typically younger participants (Interview A, B, G). However, despite the increase in participation, the digital divide may make participation more exclusive (Interviews B, G).

The Technology Gap Remains

Online participation has been a popular topic in participation research since the late 2000s. Innovation in information and communication technologies (ICT) and online participation software are often lauded as powerful new tools for reaching a wider and more diverse group of participants. There is limited evidence that this has been the case during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. In our interviews, a number of the professionals we spoke with were concerned that—despite the increase in total participates showing up to online meetings—certain barriers to participation for others remain or are exacerbated (Interviews C, F, G). Many of the professionals we spoke to voiced concerns that online participation may not actually be as effective in trust building as face-to-face. The online meeting format severely limited the casual conversations that break out between participants, developing interpersonal connections and aiding in conflict resolution (Interviews C, I). These are the interactions that build trust and a sense of shared purpose and community, and these are not readily translated in online formats given current states of technology.

Barriers to meaningful public participation opportunities, some of which are directly linked to device access, included internet access, language barriers, and personal beliefs and

trust about technology. Interviewees expressed concern that internet service is not available to everyone, particularly low-income households with less money for technology and/or services; those in remote areas where internet can be spotty or completely unavailable; and with older individuals who may have less experience with technologies (Interviews C, F, G, I). In those areas where internet service is available, it may not be affordable to some (Interviews D, F, G). Even in households with internet connections, many people faced issues of broadband and data limits as more people engaged in remote work and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It also became clear that a lack of internet-enabled devices or devices equipped with the hard drive space or software capabilities to participate (Interviews D, E, H). Participants who only have access to meetings and information via their smartphone may have more difficulty reading text and other materials designed for a larger screen. For example, spreadsheets, photos, and larger plan documents that are often shared on paper while in-person or shown on a shared-screen for virtual meetings cannot be seen by participants who call in on their home phones (Interviews E, H). This requires facilitators to share those documents well in advance so that participants have the ability to download and explore them during the meeting.

One interviewee also expressed that strong political affiliations of people from one unaffiliated area of the county led to participation refusal in online formats (Interview I). This may reflect a range from the pioneers and early adopters to the late-adopters and those who never adopt the trend. For online participation, some of the late- and never-adopters are more difficult to convince to join a Zoom meeting. Some professionals we interviewed noticed more young people joining via Zoom (Interview C) and a smaller proportion of older people (Interviews H, F).

Online participation has also required a different set of accommodations to improve the accessibility of non-native English speakers or those with hearing or visual impairments. Language interpreters are often not present at online participation events, and formatting online events to include alternate languages can be difficult. However, English-as-a-second-language participants may have appreciated the real-time closed-captioned translations (albeit inaccurate at times) that online software enabled. Despite most interviews occurring in the Tucson area where 33.5% of the population over 5 years old speak a language other than English (28% of the population speak Spanish)¹, only one of the interviews discussed having a live Spanish interpreter or alternatives for non-English speakers for online meetings (Interview H). Others noted the difficulty of facilitating such events in multiple languages in existing platforms. For example, longer public meetings may require multiple interpreters for one session, the ability to broadcast the interpreters simultaneously, and the need to possibly coordinate a second audio channel for communication.

Professional Implications

The Budget

The onset of COVID-19 precautions has led to some drastic changes in core budget functions for many organizations (interviews A, D, G). Some reported directing more funding

¹ 2019 American Community Survey (5-year aggregation) for the City of Tucson (Table S1601).

and staff toward online operations (Interviews E, F), while other entities were already wellpositioned to transition to online platforms and seemed somewhat unaffected (Interviews H, I). Interviewees indicated that many organizations already doing some remote work or were using online platforms found the transition to fully digital communication smoother and less difficult (Interviews C, F). In comparison, one of our interviewees felt frustrated by the haphazard way that remote operations coordination suddenly became part of their job description even though they did not have a background or training in remote operations (Interview G). New tools that allow facilitators to make virtual public participation available require investment and staff training. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, interest for virtual work was mixed. The professionals we interviewed indicated those with earlier investment and integration of technology had an edge during the COVID-19 pandemic (Interviews C, F).

Not only did more planning organizations shift to invest in technology, but many also revived more old-school participation methods. One interviewee also noted that smaller planning firms or city governments with fewer resources were more likely to feel the impact of a quick transition to virtual, pointing to existing limited operating budgets (Interview F). Others mentioned increased use of printed materials including flyers, yard signs and mailed surveys (Interviews D, E, H), which increased printing budget for certain projects. Notably, interviewees justified the increased use of printed materials, even with the added cost, as the most appropriate given the population and circumstances (Interviews A, F, H). Old school techniques continue to show promise for bridging the technology gap for participants who have less access to the internet or are uncomfortable using Zoom.

It is important to explicitly document that the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with considerable racial unrest in the US. The visibility and discussion surrounding Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd shifted conversations about municipal and government spending. At least one interviewee acknowledged ongoing municipal discussions about re-budgeting police-related expenses towards outreach-driven programs (Interview G). As many local governments have been forced to reconsider spending in light of reduced income revenues (tax revenue, transit fares), concurrent conversations point towards reassessing the relationships local agencies have with different members of their populations.

In a couple of our interviews, city- and county-level professionals explained how they chose to hire outside outreach firms to create plans for their local government (Interview G, I). The third-party planning firms helped bring an outside perspective and expertise and had more experience with online facilitation from having worked in multiple other cities on large projects. In both circumstances, planning consultants were hired to help with producing comprehensive plans and manage online facilitation for local governments (Interviews C, G, I). Yet not all outside planning firms had extensive experience with online facilitation or remote operations, and not all cities struggled with remote planning operations. One of the planning firms that we interviewed explained that they had lots of experience with partially online projects, but they had no previous experience facilitating fully online participation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some more localized professionals we interviewed said their departments were generally low-tech before the COVID-19 pandemic, and in general did not have previous experiences with online facilitation.

It is not uncommon to provide incentives to participants to reimburse them or compensate them for their advice, participation or time commitment (e.g., cash, gift cards, swag, or food) (Interview H). While in-person meetings often have small food or refreshment components, a few interview participants said there was less need to provide refreshments or food for online activities (Interviews B, H). None of the professionals interviewed for this study had been providing food or water for participants as part of any virtual participation activities. Based on our interviews, removing these offerings during the COVID-19 pandemic did not have a noticeable impact on participants to decrease, we question whether removing these small offers might negatively affect development of trust. One area for future research may be exploring how – and under what circumstances - these kinds of incentives for participation in centives of collaboration, and long-term participation in different forms of outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

Online participation could continue long after most risk from the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided. Most of the professionals we interviewed believed online participation was likely to continue in the future (Interviews A-C, E-I). It is likely that municipal and non-profit operational budgets will need to continue to shift toward investing in more (or better) technology and training. It is still unclear how a year of virtual participation may have shifted people's expectations of public participation or if or when the public will even want to go back to mostly in-person participation. Budgets for planning and participation may need to allow for a transition back to in-person events in tandem while continuing to provide the online presence established or developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bridging Information Gaps

A primary purpose of community outreach and participation is to increase information going to and received from the community (Day 1997). While many interviewees described challenges of getting quality information from the community, there was also significant frustration around information gaps created by the evolving guidance about the safe operation of core business functions. Examples brought up in the interviews often centered on understanding translating rapidly changing expectations from funders and government agencies into day-to-day operations both internally and with the community being targeted. Several interviewees stated they looked to local government agencies (city and county), only to be disappointed at the rate and clarity of the information flow, particularly early in the COVID-19 pandemic (Interview D, E).

This information gap was felt most acutely by organizations who provide basic services to vulnerable populations such as those working in subsidized housing. Because information was often not specifically tailored to their field, organizations were left to make tough decisions about a wide range of issues including some related to participation and outreach. For example, one organization described the difficulty in closing the technology gap for low-income individuals because prior solutions—having a community computer available or supplying smartphones to a group of houseless individuals—seemed unsafe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many local libraries, for example, also closed their doors to outside visitors (e.g., public computer users) even after they reopened operations. This was particularly frustrating to these entities because

the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated changes to their service delivery model to meet basic needs during the pandemic. They knew their clients needed more, not less, access to technology.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed governments and nonprofits alike towards widespread digital outreach in new ways, which created some positive spillover effects in closing information gaps. One interviewee connected this digital outreach to increased quality of documentation and transparency of their agency's primary functions. Being forced to hold meetings online incentivized the agency to adopt built-in recording systems and to readily archive and disseminate meeting records. That said, organizing the material in a transparent way for interested citizens still took effort (Interview G).

The Changing Roles and Skills of Facilitators

Public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic forced professionals to take on new and additional roles, many of which could have benefited from additional training and preparation. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitators were able to engage with public participants inperson during events and meetings where they would be able to speak directly to participants, read their body language, and evaluate the social setting and dynamic. This helped decide how to further engage their community at a moment's notice. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of these interactions have been reduced to reading the room on the computer screen; this is an altered skill set in terms of facilitation. Good facilitators have active mediation expertise which includes listening, drawing connections between participants and their body language, and proactively being informative without bias.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged this traditional skill set. Amongst facilitators who were interviewed, the consensus was it required more work to prepare for meetings to ensure smooth participation and verify that the technology was reliable (Interview E). Also, facilitation required even more multitasking, with taking a more active role during meetings instead of allowing community members to drive the discussion particularly difficult (Interview H). There was also a perceived need for multiple facilitators during a meeting: one to present and engage with the public while another monitored the chat box or handled other external factors like call-ins, emails, or outside communication (Interview E). Furthermore, the absence of non-verbal cues in the online format challenges the ability of the facilitator to evaluate the input of participants and draw connections between them and the subject matter (Interview F). Facilitating strategies that worked prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., social environmental awareness and mediation techniques) cannot always be applied in the same way during an online meeting. Those interviewed indicated the need for more preparation and higher degrees of facilitation, as the lack of non-verbal cues challenge a productive online public participation meeting. This suggests more training for online facilitation may be necessary if virtual meetings continue after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Barriers to using technology for public participation exist on both the ends of the participant/facilitator spectrum. Participation professionals are facing barriers in meeting their participation goals. They may sometimes have trouble fulfilling core mission functions and may fall short for providing opportunities for meaningful public participation. Several interviewees discussed ways in which facilitators themselves are dealing with multiple technology issues. The

facilitators have had difficulty accessing devices to continue to fulfill mission goals (Interviews D-G) including cultivating adequate and regular feedback and participation from specific populations or communities. Many cited the steep learning curve in learning to use and select online meeting software appropriate for their corresponding outreach goals. Acknowledging the limitations in sharing materials during online meetings (e.g., phone attendees cannot always see shared-screen documents), most interviewees felt preparing for online meetings has taken more of their limited time. Some facilitators have been pushed to take on remote operations coordination, but noted they felt they did not have the proper tools for the type of participation strategy they required, nor adequate training for navigating group discussions and disseminating information using available software platforms (Interview E, G).

Repeat interactions between members of the public and facilitators can help build trust and make communication easier, but repeat interactions are less likely to happen in a meaningful way online as participants cannot have interpersonal conversations and sometimes cannot even see one another. Even in cases where community members have cameras and/or turn them on, physical cues and body language are lost in the online interaction. The *quality* of interaction with online participation was a concern for almost all of the professionals interviewed (Interviews A,C,E-I) and correspondingly, the thing they often look forward to while returning to in-person participation in the future.

Strategies, Challenges, and Recommendations

As parts of the world recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and other parts continue to deal with increasing COVID-19 transmission rates, some older problems and newer innovations amplified by these trying times are likely to remain. The following sections summarize our previous findings while outline challenges and emerging strategies that are critical as we regroup from the COVID-19 pandemic. We discuss:

- Review how **participation structures and formats changed** and which of these changes are likely to continue long-term;
- What we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic stress test about goals of increased participation and information sharing
- The ongoing challenges of **reducing barriers** to inclusive, convenient participation opportunities, particularly in the face of significant technology gaps; and
- Ongoing implications for budgets and professional practice.

Anticipating Ongoing Changes to Participation Structures and Formats

A major challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic for many organizations included simultaneously deciding which platforms and strategies (e.g., Zoom, social media, mail-ins) would work best for outreach needs without regular in-person interactions. According to many interviewees, this included a rapid-pace adaptation process in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic (March-August 2020). They found that some platforms worked better than others, but that the choice of platform really depended on the goals and needed outcomes of the participation. One example was using a bifurcated strategy that included social media to spread general information, Zoom to host public meetings, and leaning on traditional techniques like posting flyers in targeted neighborhoods within communities with less access to internet, information data, or technologies (Interview A, F).

Findings:

- Organizations had neither time nor resources to consider whether digital technologies matched participation goals and needs.
- Most outreach professionals are using the same set of tools (Zoom-like platforms for meetings, online surveys, videos, primer presentations, websites and Facebook pages with information) but with varying levels of success.
- The choice of platforms cannot be generalized, and possible outcomes must be considered based on the demographics and technology profile of a target community.

Digital platforms need to be evaluated prior to utilization to prevent exclusion of community members who may be affected by the outcomes of such decisions. It is imperative to determine who will be reached, who will be left out, and what effects using an online platform will have on the community as a whole. It is essential to assess the platform's limitations and

advantages and compare these to the goals of the participation to ensure alignment. The use of different platforms is no longer a market-analysis issue for social media and ICT companies; this is now also an important performance measure of online formats for facilitators.

To build on the last points, if outreach professionals do decide to adopt a more digital approach to public participation, it will be important to understand which platforms are most compatible in which situations. It will also be critical to train staff in the chosen software and to develop protocols for use, troubleshooting, and training on how to education the participants in navigating the software(s). This will improve consistency in long-term, successful online encounters for staff and stakeholders. New technology should be evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine if it better meets the needs of the institution's goals.

Recommendations or Future Needs:

- As we exit the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations must re-evaluate the role of digital communication in their community participation and communication strategies.
- Setting participation and communication goals prior to the adoption of digital technologies will better accommodate two-way communication, social learning, trust, adoption, and power shifting.
- Additional staff training with software is needed.
- Develop workflow/prep plan for online meetings, so there is consistency and guides to reference back to later.
- Develop consistency with messaging and across platforms to increase convenience for the public and facilitators.
- Try new things and experiment with existing techniques.
- Ask participants for feedback about issues and preferences for each platform or formats.

Continuing to Examine and Support Participation Goals

The increased total number of participants as organizations moved operations to online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic was somewhat surprising. According to the professionals interviewed, this increase was likely due to improved access and convenience. Some outreach professionals mentioned an increase in the diversity of people who attended, possibly because individuals could participate without commuting, finding childcare, or dealing with tedious scheduling (Interviews A-C, E). Younger people seemed to participate more, and people who did not use online platforms prior to the COVID-19 pandemic began to do so (sometimes for their own work or school) (Interview B, C, G). Given the increase in participation online, it can seem encouraging to utilize these platforms more.

However, other professionals we interviewed felt that while there were higher rates of participation, they questioned whether virtual meetings offered the same or better quality as in person meetings. There was concern about the lack of natural social learning, the development of stronger interpersonal relationships that occurs in person, and the missed opportunities to hear from community members who did not have access to online formats (Interview C-E, H, I).

Findings:

- More people are participating, but through online meetings we may be losing diversity of participants and creating a new kind of gentrification.
- There is a connection between the type of participation event and the type of participants attracted to those events. Online events are more convenient for some, but not for everyone.
- Multiple avenues for participation can be useful to balance online and in-person needs and preferences.

Both of these perspectives must be taken into consideration while determining if the continuation of online participation is appropriate. Data is not yet available to evaluate the quality versus quantity of online participation. Consequently, it is essential to consider community preferences and accessibility prior to planning participation events and to provide alternatives for those who prefer online participation or traditional in-person participation.

Recommendations:

- Post-pandemic participation should still include a blend of online and in-person opportunities for participation.
- Collect respondent information where possible and compare that information with target populations and communities. The assessment and comparison of different platforms and strategies can help assess whether each individual format is helping entities reach the intended populations.
- Social media companies have systems and metrics that social influencers use to better engage with their current and potential followers. Outreach firms and agencies should explore these tools, metrics, and guidelines to better engage on social platforms.
- Create systems of communication. Establishing a plan that creates consistency of uploads and updates can reinforce the most important information. Local health authorities should look to provide as much consistency and clarity as possible with messaging.

Bridging the Barriers to Virtual Communication

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, online practices were often lauded as expanding the ability and removing scheduling barriers to encourage public participation. However, the fast-paced transition to online platforms have unearthed a number of challenges while incorporating e-participation strategies in existing programs. Now that many entities have become more familiar with online technologies, there exists an opportunity to massively expand the outreach for different programs by developing stronger multimedia strategies while addressing the gaps and issues identified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitators and participants both experienced challenges to the sudden online shift. With limited training and access to technology platforms, and facilitators were not always able to provide the appropriate format of outreach to achieve their participation goals. Participants who were challenged by the online shift often were limited by other barriers to participation including access and experience (training), access to materials (limitations of hard ware for shared screens) or information (hearing/visual impairments, non-English speakers). While several interviewees noted the increased participation rates for some participants, there were numerous concerns about who might be excluded on different online-only platforms.

Findings:

- Organizations faced difficulties adapting to changing COVID-19 recommendations and did not always receive clear information from local health authorities to allow them to continue safe and effective operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a result of the difficult transition, more organizations have made more of their information and programs available online, which has helped to close information gaps for some participants.
- Online participation may improve flexibility for some participants and facilitators in terms of scheduling. Online recordings and transcripts provide an opportunity for participation *after* meetings were completed.
- Participants that were challenged by the online-dominate format include: those with limited technological experience or access, non-English speaking or English as a second language participants, or those with hearing or seeing impairments.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public participation has needed to adapt to continue to build relationships with community members including those more difficult to reach. The CDC recommends using a "whole-community approach," which includes: connecting with key partners, staying up to date on local levels of transmission through health departments, and identifying possible barriers like language, cultural, and disability to be better equipped for outreach (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020a). While virtual or internet-based outreach is recommended through virtual meetings and events, social media, and mass emailing, it is also important to reach out through more traditional methods. Advertising or informing through local newspapers, radio and TV stations, sending post mail, getting in contact with local community leaders, and posting flyers at locations where your target audience might visit—for example, grocery stores, gas stations, post offices, food banks, laundromats, or public parks – are all helpful ways to reach those who might not see online outreach (Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence 2020). Preparing early and understanding whose participation you desire is essential for equitable and successful public participation during times where it is more difficult to reach out to communities (Salt Lake City Engagement Team 2020).

With inequities demanding attention during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear community engagement is more necessary than ever. A useful guide is provided by Nelson/Nygaard entitled *Principles for Equitable Public Outreach & Engagement During COVID-19 and Beyond*, which outlines important steps of community outreach with vulnerable populations in mind (Doerner and Techagumthorn 2020). It states how facilitators need to be clear about their intentions with information obtained, how to identify, prioritize, and design outreach methods to the vulnerable communities, such as: targeted outreach, and how accessible and user-friendly their modes of communication are. Some recommendations on how to successfully do this include providing compensation for input and assessment from representative organizations and community leaders, use "analog" strategies: phone banking,

utilize mail postage paid flyers with clear instructions, print signs and posters for targeted areas, host phone and video conferences with focus groups, and ensure "language-accessible information" is available. Also, these recommendations will build trust within the community, which is key for successful outreach strategies.

Recommendations:

- Balance the online components with traditional means of outreach and participation.
- Maintain the added convenience of online participation by incorporating some form of online participation and information dissemination for each project.
- Allocate/request additional staff time and support to prepare materials for dissemination in advance of meetings for those that are not able to see or read shared-screen technologies during the meeting.
- Allocate/request additional time for encouraging feedback after meetings once recordings, transcripts, and other materials are released.
- Incorporate regular information communication and technologies (ICT training for facilitators, including training facilitators to train others (participants, community partners) good practices for different platforms (ICT communications, social media outlets).
- Additional training and multimedia outreach strategies will require additional staff time and effort. Spend some time considering the retroactive impacts to staff budget and time during the COVID-19 pandemic response and recover to better communicate the costs (and benefits) of effective multimedia strategies on outreach.
- One valuable area of technological innovation would be helping a participatory agency or firm's ability to collect, measure, or even track how participation and representation varies across ICT platforms and multimedia strategy.

Regrouping Professionally During Pandemic Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the most disruptive events in modern history for public outreach. One common theme across all of our interviews and literature reviews was that many agencies and firms—particularly those that were not already steeped in information and communication technologies—felt a jarring learning curve while they transitioned (wherever they could) away from in-person formats for outreach. While it is no surprise that many outreach budgets have been severely underfunded in the past, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the ability to do that outreach, pointing to and worsening existing gaps in community/agency collaboration relationships and trust. Coinciding with early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement has shed additional light on the underrepresentation and power of specific communities within our populations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the roles of planners and outreach coordinators, who seem to be at the forefront of evaluating and addressing the needs of their communities through public engagement. The *American Planning Association: COVID-19 Resources* (2020) web page provides an updated guide of planning tools and information to help facilitate planners responding and adapting to crisis situations, such as the coronavirus,

and how to best conduct public participation, and prepare for economic, equity, housing, and infrastructure impacts. This includes recommendations to sources for Planning Methods and Tools, such as ways to boost community service for local resilience, short-term zoning adaptations to offer economic relief, and how to collaborate with public health officials to revive communities from the COVID-19 pandemic moving forward and better plan for uncertainty of the future. They provide informative sources for conducting public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes how to conduct public engagement online, socially distanced outdoors, and legal issues that come with conducting meetings online. Economic resources include navigating their local economies to determine solutions for economic recovery and how to make small businesses more resilient. Some equity sources include guidance on how to utilize planning capital improvements with an "equity-focused approach," how communities are fighting to digital divide in their communities and preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic recovery with social justice and racial strategies, and what cities are doing for the homeless populations. They scarcely dive into how the pandemic has affected the construction industry for building housing and challenges other infrastructure systems, such as water and waste utilities, face with an emphasis on policy adaptations and partnerships. Despite the abundance of information provided by this website, some sources are only available for American Planning Association members.

Findings:

- Budgets were confusing during the COVID-19 pandemic because governments braced for a recession that (at the time of writing this grant) has not yet been fully understood.
- The shift towards new, multimodal strategies often required more staff time and effort dedicated to preparing and aggregating feedback from multiple pathways.
- This experience showed that the public is now relying more on the internet to get important information and participate in planning, but in the current state, online-only strategies are not enough to reach many segments of the population.
- Transition to online facilitation has drastically reduced the number of tools facilitators have at their disposal and has changed the nature of both *facilitator-to-participant* interaction and *participant-to-participant* interaction,

Many agencies are currently re-examining their budget in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is an important moment in our profession for reflection and analysis. In this study, both literature and interviewees point to a need to recognize the cost and effort required to develop trust and strong collaboration/communication lines with communities. Online tactics can shore up some existing gaps in outreach, but even "free" technologies require additional staff effort to train and prepare for facilitation, as well as aggregate and analyze multimodal methods. In a broader sense, many agencies and practitioners seem to have started to recognize and speak out about the lack of support and voice different communities—and black communities specifically—have in existing planning and political structures. Moreover, relationships that were not strong before the COVID-19 pandemic likely got weaker. Now, more than ever, the profession would benefit from deep reflection on the lessons we have learned

throughout the COVID-19 pandemic response and (hopefully soon) the recovery, and how we can move forward to prioritize citizen participation and collaboration across disciplines.

Recommendations:

- While this study has attempted to capture thematic lessons learned about conducting outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic, more reflection, discussion, and action is necessary to ensure that the relationships and collaboration developed before and during the pandemic continue to strengthen.
- Advocate for additional time/training for online facilitators, determining which facilitation techniques are translatable online for different outreach goals, and allocating effort towards facilitating those meetings well before, during, and after meetings.
- There is an ongoing and growing need for evaluating the successes and failures of different outreach formats and multimedia strategies within the context of different outreach goals. Which virtual communications can effectively replace different inperson outreach formats? Where do these methods fit within "normal time" best practices for outreach? What can we leverage from this time to improve upon regular-time practices?
- Planning organizations and researchers should continue to develop and use technology to create more seamless online platforms for people to access relevant information. This might require outreach professionals taking leadership roles in more technology-driven, interdisciplinary projects and grants. Outreach professionals understand the various needs (and existing barriers or issues) they have for their programs. Communicating these needs might lead to technology partnership with more relevant outcomes for the professions.

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Appendix. Annotated Bibliography

(Ahmed and Palermo 2010)

 Ahmed, S. M., & Palermo, A.-G. S. (2010, August). Community Engagement in Research: Frameworks for Education and Peer Review. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(8), 1380-1387.

Summary: This source focuses on how researchers can best engage the public. This source is specifically talking about health-related research and engagement that help researchers to identify interventions that are targeted to work for a given population. They find that at least when it comes to research in medicine, lay people often do not have confidence when presenting their opinions. Also, there is some concern mostly from (doctors) that lay people may not have enough medical knowledge to make helpful contributions. However, is it clear that there is something to be gained from engaging with the greater community and how it may lead to better health outcomes. Additionally, public participation stems from the idea that those who will be impacted by the decision should have a choice in it, this resource seeks to legitimize and encourage use of public participation in health-related fields to help find solutions that are relevant and readily adoptable in their target community.

Evaluation: While this research is somewhat dated it feels very fresh and relevant to today. The article does not cover COVID-19 or asset mapping but contains interesting information about how to incorporate more engagement into health research. In the case of this pandemic, it would have been extremely helpful to tailor the response to the culture and behaviors of most Americans to ensure better uptake of the risk prevention strategies.

Applicability to research: We are in the midst of an emergent health crisis, where our country leads the world in cases. This source brings up new questions about how public engagement could be used as a way to brainstorm and respond to crisis like coronavirus.

(American Planning Association 2020)

 American Planning Association. (2020). American Planning Assiociation COVID-19 Resources Web Page.

Summary: This is a resource provided for planners by the American Planning Association. On this webpage are links to guidance for operating under COVID-19, implications for the future of planning during and after COVID-19 and other resources planners may find helpful. The page includes videos of epidemiologists and tons of podcasts with planners and other experts in their fields speak about the virus and its impacts.

Evaluation: This source has a lot of expert knowledge in one place. Likely to be an asset to the study because it shows how planners are responding to this virus in real time. However, this page does not focus on a single topic but encourages you to browse and view multiple topics. While there is a lot of expert advice here it is more all over the map than what you would see with other sources.

Applicability to research: This source has compiled some information about how different places like Boston, and NYC planner have been dealing with COVID-19. An article about what the role of planner should be during COVID-19 and how rollbacks of regulations can change well established norms of planning and participation.

(Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence 2020)

• Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence. (2020). Creative Outreach During COVID-19. Phoenix.

Summary: This guide provides practical information about how organizations can continue to provide outreach and other services during coronavirus. It provides strategies for continued outreach to people through traditional outreach such as through mail, phone calling, and community flyers, and community resource drop-off zones for basic essential goods. The guide also has recommendations for online outreach which included social media, email blast, and virtual events.

Evaluation: This brochure guide by the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence does not provide much new information that other sources do not have, except as mentioned below. However, this guide gave new insights into how other organizations outside of governments are planning for their public outreach needs during the pandemic. This inspired looking for more sources on public outreach during COVID-19 pandemic outside of the planning field.

Applicability to research: This guide includes a recommendation for resource drop-off zones for the community. This could be a way to help with equity and provide a service to people who provide input through community engagement. Giving people basic goods in exchange for time could have two-fold benefits of compensating community members of r their knowledge and input and help to ease the effects of the pandemic in the community by providing much needed supplies.

(Baeker 2005)

• Baeker, G. (2005). Municipal Cultural Planning: Combating the Geography of Nowhere. Municipal World, 9-12.

Summary: This resource is a discussion of how cities benefit from having a sense of place by being attractive to young workers for their charm and arts scenes; what contributes to a sense of places? A diverse art scene, unique architectural styles, specific local culture, and its own historic development over time. This article makes the case for asset mapping, both because of the way it allows resources to be logged and written down and because it can encourage other locals to visit and experience it allowing the local to "become a tourist in their own city."

Evaluation: While this source is brief and slightly dated, it lays out a solid argument for using asset mapping as a tool to develop and improve our cities, allowing us to catalog and use what is loved, important, and unique as a starting point for city planning.

Applicability to research: This article makes a convincing case for what the role of asset mapping in planning should be and why it is worth doing. For Baeker, asset mapping (and the subsequent managing of cultural assets) asset mapping is a resource and a public service; cultural assets need to be mapped to be used by planners to make better cities. To make the case that asset mapping, cultural resource management and public engagement should be continued even during a pandemic then you probably have to agree with Baeker, that this work is fundamental and essential to planning.

(Bartlett 2020)

 Bartlett, G. (2020, March 18). 10 Tips for Improving Online Meetings. Retrieved from Consensus Building Institute: https://www.cbi.org/article/10-tips-for-improving-our-onlinemeetings/

Summary: this web article has tips for facilitating online meetings. The tips include making sure you have the right software available for meeting, provide instructions/materials beforehand, have an opening activity/introduction, use video, when possible, manage the chat, use online tools for brainstorming ideas with the group, and take breaks and set an end time for the meeting.

Evaluation: This article has a lot of overlap with others but also included some new strategies for online meetings. Overall, this article is slightly less organized and succinct than "7 tips for..." but has some additional information

Applicability to research: Gathering more tools for effective online meetings is important during a pandemic to manage expectations and get the most out of online meetings.

(Bernstein and Hansen 2016)

• Bernstein, K., & Hansen, J. (2016). SurveyLA: Linking Historic Resources Surveys to Local Planning. Journal of the American Planning Association, 82(2), 88-91.

Summary: This project set about mapping historic resources across LA. Through massive investment and effort, professionals were sent into the field to record historic sites, meanwhile the also reached out to the community to find out more. By the end of the project, they were able to map LA's historic resources, gather record and map additional firsthand information from the community and at the end they will be able to share this information for all to access. This will have planning implications and the hope is that the survey is both a resource for the community but also for planners so they can be mindful of historic resources.

Evaluation: This seems like a cool project. It is interesting that they used trained field surveyors instead of finding a way to involve community members more in the process. Based on the use of the field surveyors this could possibly be work that could continue through a pandemic since it could probably be done alone, or in small groups with masks.

Applicability to research: Brings up a question of when it is appropriate to have community members helping with surveying. Is it right to have the citizen do the job of the surveyor?

(Brabham 2009)

• Brabham, D. C. (2009). Crowdsourcing the Public Participation Process for Planning Projects. Planning Theory, 8(3), 242-262. doi:10.1177/1473095209104824

Summary: Brabham argues that as it stands planners are not doing enough to "enlarge" the process of participation and maximize and diversify stakeholder input. Traditional planning meetings that involve public participation can be a challenge for both participants and facilitators, and Brabham says if online crowdsourcing and open-source production can help design superior software, then perhaps it can also produce similar results when applied to planning problems.

Evaluation: The main benefits to crowdsourcing that Brabham sees is its ability to get more people and more diversity into public participation and planning and especially the impact of having non-experts participate. Brabham seems overly optimistic about using the web to crowdsource and the ease in which that type of system might take over participation. Just switching the medium does not necessarily mean that there will actually be more participation or diversity.

Applicability to research: This resource is talking about what the transition to digital participation might look like. When we made the transition to doing mostly online participation for the pandemic, participation took a very similar format as before with facilitator and participants and time for comments. What Brabham is offering is a new way to think about how we format our participation now that its online. We can do anything, including crowdsourcing and other strategies we have not even heard of, so what will we do?

(Brail 2020)

• Brail (2020). Coronavirus and Engaging Cities: Towards Community Recovery with Sally Hussey. Retrieved from International Association for Public Participation.

Summary: This is a brief article that touches on the changes and opportunities that COVID-19 has presented for cities and planning. Hussey argues that while the pandemic has changed a lot of people's daily activities, like mask wearing and social distancing, it has also highlighted a lot of the issues and inequity in cities and in doing so has opened the door to change. Hussey argues that the virus has changed planning because what defines a "livable" city is now in flux for many due to the pandemic changing how we view the role of cities in spreading disease. While it's still too early to gauge the full impact of the pandemic it is clear to Hussey that this is an opportunity for community building and recovery in mobility, housing and food security, local business, and the public realm.

Evaluation: Because this article is very brief and written early during the outbreak of the coronavirus, there is not a lot of information about the ways in which cities have begun to change. However, this article also makes a strong case for the need for public participation in a pandemic and post-pandemic world. The impacts of the coronavirus have exposed a lot of inequity within American cities, how we rebuild vulnerable communities ravaged by coronavirus should probably be left up to those communities.

Applicability to research: This article invites us to think about what opportunities and changes the pandemic map have opened up for planning and community engagement. Post-pandemic there is likely to be a large investigation of what went wrong and what can be done to be better prepared in the future. Taking a look at the cracks that opened up in our society after the onset of the pandemic including lack of food security, healthcare, adequate schooling, and housing would be a good place to start rebuilding.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020b)

 CDC. (2020, May 6). Events and Gatherings: Readiness and Planning Tool. CDC Readiness and Planning Tool to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 at Events and Gatherings.

Summary: This resource is a tool for event planning during COVID-19. It provides a brief summary of information related to COVID-19 and how it spreads. The tool is designed to help event planners set up appropriate facilities and specialized staff for in-person events during COVID-19. The resource advises organizers to keep in mind local levels of transmission, have designated personnel to track any attendees who may become sick and other considerations to allow for lower transmission and easier contact tracing.

Evaluation: This tool is specifically related to planning of in person events during COVID-19 and is not directly related to public participation and asset mapping. However, the CDC recommends organizers of events use to this tool to help implement safety checks and personnel.

Applicability to research: This tool could be used by researchers or community organizers to plan for any community engagement efforts that must be planned in person, although this is not recommended as any in-person event has risk of transmission.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020a)

• CDC. (2020, August 5). Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Summary: This resource is provided by the CDC specifically for homeless service providers and includes guidance, recommended procedures, facility, and staffing considerations as well as additional resources for providers.

Evaluation: while this resource is specifically geared towards homeless providers, there is information about how to communicate and organize for outreach in the community which could also prove useful when thinking about how to possibly conduct public participation during a pandemic.

Applicability to research: This resource does not directly to public participation and most of the text is dedicated to facility and staff considerations for running homeless shelters and other homeless service providers. However, since these organizations do public outreach, just specifically focusing on the homeless population, there is some overlap than new information that could be helpful when thinking about public participation. The CDC advises providers to connect with key community partners, stay updated on local levels of COVID-19 transmission, identify key platforms for communication, and identify and address potential language, cultural and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information.

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020b)

• Center for Disease Control. (2020). Considerations for Events and Gatherings. Atlanta.

Summary: The CDC has provided guidance for community gatherings and events that continue during COVID-19. This guidance is general with the hopes that it could be used to mitigate risk at many types of events. The guidance contains information on healthy behaviors to reduce the spread, maintaining a healthy environment, maintaining healthy operations, and preparing for if someone gets sick. The CDC gives detailed guidance and considerations in each of these categories to help event planners to mitigate risk during COVID-19.

Evaluation: This is one of the most credible sources of COVID-19 guidance that is available. If in-person asset mapping or community participation events must take place these guidelines show what needs to be considered and done ahead of time. However, these guidelines are extremely general, and there are no specifics on the if's/how's/when is of if in-person public engagement events should be attempted.

Applicability to research: This is probably the best guidance available to the public for managing risk at in-person events. This guidance is specifically geared towards lowering the risk on in person gatherings/activities during COVID-19

(Conroy and Evans-Cowley 2006)

• Conroy, M. M., & Evans-Cowley, J. (2005). E-Participation in Planning: An Analysis of Cities Adopting On-line Participation Tools. *City and Regional Planning*, 15.

Summary: Conroy and Cowley suggest that there exists a lack of active participation in traditional participation meetings. Citizens can choose time and location of engagement with internet which removes certain physical constraints and may allow more participation. Many local governments are starting to have websites (this is in 2005) and more people are choosing to visit them to learn about local governments. However, many cities only provide one-way information on their websites and no way to participate in meetings online as they are happening. Conroy and Cowley note that certain cities have been faster to adopt online participation and that they may be some disparities in which places are able to provide these resources to citizens.

Evaluation: This is talking about some valuable stuff. But it is so hard to take much away from something this old that is talking primarily about the internet. Lots has changed in our societal norms around the internet in the last 16 years, however there are a few things that have stood the test of time. People are still thinking in person meetings, and traditional office spaces may be outdated, and we are stilled very concerned about who has access to our online democracies.

Applicability to research: The most relevant part of this article is asking us to visualize a new way for citizens to participate in their democracies and who will have access to it. The less helpful parts are all the parts about what the internet is like because it is not like that anymore.

(Dempsey 2009)

• Dempsey, S. E. (2009). Critiquing Community Engagement. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 1-32.

Summary: public reduction of social spending and increased higher education prices led to universities implementing more community engagement opportunities in their programming. However, Dempsey argues that campus-community projects based on partnerships that are often inherently unequal. University initiatives can often shape the direction of a project, and the "community engagement" efforts can continue to promote problematic social relationships. Additionally, campus agents often have more resources, grant funding and knowledge at their disposal than community members resulting in unequal access to information and decision making, which undermines the goals of the engagement. Dempsey prompts us to think critically about our own definitions of university and community. Typically, people think of universities deciding when to perform "outreach" to the community as if they have no effect on the community already, as if they were not interacting with the community already. Although many treat the two as separate, many universities already have a strong presence and history with surrounding communities.

Evaluation: At the core of Dempsey's research is the ways in which university engagement efforts are rife with oversights that can actually stifle progress and increase divisions between the community and university and within the community itself. This research offers insights on many offenses and mistakes made by schools when doing engagement, showing how communities are often mischaracterized by researchers as homogenous and unified when the community is in fact diverse and not in agreement. Dempsey pays special focus to the power imbalances of university/community engagement efforts including that universities often hold research as proprietary information and do not make research available to participants, holding power and knowledge gained back from participants while extracting the information needed to complete the study, leading to trust issues within the community. An additional point brought up in Dempsey's original research was the issue of the IRB. In Dempsey's case participants were weary that IRB standards are set by the university without participant input and may be more designed to protect the university that the participants in the research.

Applicability to research: While this research predates coronavirus, it remains highly relevant as the issue of community trust has become a flashpoint of the pandemic. Additionally, because of the University of Arizona's history on the land, its impact on neighborhoods, and the local economy in Tucson make its presence has already been felt within the community and university efforts to engage with the Tucson community should be mindful of its historic and current significance already and use these insights to further trust with the community.

(Leana Mayzlina 2020)

• *Digital divide resources during the pandemic.* (2020, March 17). Retrieved from NTEN: https://www.nten.org/article/digital-divide-resources-during-the-pandemic/

Summary: This is another source that points to more pandemic related resources with an emphasis on internet access and digital literacy. The article discusses how roughly 10% of Americans still do not use the internet. This resource encourages readers to think about the programs they offer and make them more accessible to people without internet.

Evaluation: The main takeaway is making sure you use the right technology and staff are trained correctly to use the software. Often time conference calls and mass text messages are better options for those without stable internet. Having staff trained to run online programming and help citizens troubleshoot when needed.

Applicability to research: It was somewhat hard to find resources related to the digital divide. The group of Americans who do not have internet does not get a lot of attention, but it should especially now. As this article points out many municipalities are moving towards offering free Wi-Fi at designated locations, it also highlights some non-profits that work to provide people with internet enabled devices.

(Fredericks and Foth 2013)

 Fredericks, J., & Foth, M. (2013). Augmenting Public Participation: Enhancing Planning Outcomes through the Use of Social Media and Web 2.0. Australian Planner, 50(3), 244-256. doi:10.1080/07293682

Summary: This study uses information about Australia's web and social media trends to identify areas where web and social media can help with participation. They find through their research that 60% of Aussies 18-45 have social media and this group is also less likely to participate in public engagement efforts related to planning. Article present a "toolbox of web and social media options which included information regarding each tool and considerations, possible positive impacts and possible negative impacts. In many scenarios it is noted that people wanting to participate without stable internet may not be able to participate; but in the end no solution is presented for this issue.

Evaluation: Key takeaway: web and social media tools are often better to at helping planning organizations perform mass communication to the public (and especially younger people) about opportunities for public participation in planning than using social media and web tools themselves for public participation. Web based participation was less preferable than traditional participation methods.

Applicability to research: An interesting case study of web-based participation in Australia; provides useful toolbox of public engagement strategies; invokes the importance of widespread public participation.

(Hussey 2020)

• Hussey, S. (2020, September 2). *International Public Participation Models 1969-2020*. Retrieved from bang the table.

Summary: This is a blog post about the 50th anniversary of Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation". The post starts with a discussion of the influence of Arnstein's research and what has changed since then. The remainder of the post is dedicated to a list of the models of public participation that have been published since Arnstein's version, each with a small summary/discussion.

Evaluation: Helpful to those trying to better understand what writing in public participation is about. Shows where public participation has been and where it's going and led to finding a few more sources through additional resources.

Applicability to research: This serves as a sort of first look at public participation frameworks and research over the years.

(IAP2 USA 2020)

• IAP2. (2020). COVID-19 Public Participation Resources. Retrieved from International Association for Public Participation.

Summary: This is a resource for facilitators of public participation. There are many links to other resources on this site, more than other similar resource pages and all resources are tailored to public participation. The resources are on the following topics: virtual work, online meetings, online public engagement tools, resources to head readers stay connected and share knowledge with one another and resources related to health and the pandemic.

Evaluation: Is not really a source itself, but it has a ton of resources, very simply organized by topic, and relevant to public participation efforts. Seems like a helpful resource for any facilitators of public participation.

Applicability to research: This resource page helped lead to a few of the other sources that had the most relevance to the pandemic, like the Salt Lake City engagement plans and some of the blogs that discussed the immediate impacts of the pandemic.

(The Regional Risk Communication and Community Engagement Working Group 2020)

 International Federation of the Red Cross. (2020). COVID-19: How to include Marginalized and Vulnerable People in Risk Communication and Community Engagement.

Summary: This guide provides a list of communities that are at disproportionate risk during public health emergencies and key implications for risk communication and community engagement. While the guide is light on specific community engagement strategies, it does provide a lot of insight into various at-risk communities such as children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, etc. and key considerations for engagement of these groups.

Evaluation: This guide provides a very clear picture of at-risk communities during the public health emergencies, although it does highlight certain groups not necessarily at risk of severe health complications stemming from COVID-19, such as children.

Applicability to research: This shows key differences in approach to engagement of different marginalized groups. For the purpose of our research this also tells us that engagement strategies for vulnerable populations may also require a targeted approach to each group. This could also lead to interview questions or themes of how organization engage different groups during the coronavirus.

(J. Kim 2020)

 Kim, J. (2020, March 8). 7 Best Practices for COVID-19-Necessitated Online Meetings. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed: https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/learninginnovation/7-best-practices-COVID-19-necessitated-online-meetings

Summary: The website Inside Higher Ed posted an article by a staff member about how to facilitate web-based conversations. The article is succinct and a great resource for anyone hosting a larger group meeting online to make the most out of the meeting time. The advice includes having a meeting agenda, doing introductions if members of the group do not know each other, a meeting host to actively facilitate conversation and organize time, creating space for everyone to contribute, and or dissent, and to have a clear start and end time to the meeting.

Evaluation: While this guidance is not groundbreaking or highly academic it provides clear usable strategies for online meetings which are widely considered the safest way to meet during the pandemic.

Applicability to research: Many organizations we have spoken to have pointed to a lack of clear and applicable guidance. While this resource is very limited in scope it provides some ready-to-use tips for conducting effective online meetings which have become essential during coronavirus.

(S. Kim and Lee 2012)

• Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2012). E-Participation, Transparency, and Trust in Local Government. *Public Administration Review, 72*(6), 819-828. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02593.x

Summary: This article focuses on the relationship between public participation and trust with a strong focus on virtual participation. Key findings of this research include that people were more satisfied overall with e-participation when they perceived that their governments had higher transparency. Satisfaction with government was associated with their perceived level of impact on their government's decision making. In many cases they found that perceived level of impact led to people feeling their government was being more transparent and that was associated with an increase in trust in government overall. These findings were based off surveys of people living in Seoul that had used an online public participation portal called Oasis. Participants were surveyed and asked questions about their participation and trust in the local government.

Evaluation: This research is awesome. There have not been as many papers that talk about what impacts e-participation may have compared to traditional methods. In this study we get a clearer picture of the impact that participation online may have on the trust of participants. However, this study is very promising because it shows that the most important factors of citizen participation are trust, transparency, and ability to impact change. These are the metrics by which citizens are judging the effectiveness and level of trust they have in government, not by whether the meeting is held in a community center or an online meeting room.

Applicability to research: This is highly related to our research and leads to another question besides how are we instilling trust in our participants? Instead, we should ask how do we provide more transparency and make sure that the public participation process is respected when the decisions are finally made?

(Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability 2020)

• Leadership Counsel For Justice and Accountability. (2020). Recommendations to Promote Equitable Public Participations in Local and State Government Public Meetings During and After COVID-19. Fresno.

Summary: This is community guidance provided by a policy group from California working to advance, planning, housing, and climate goals. Governor Gavin Newsom of California issued an executive order allowing official public meeting to be held via teleconferencing. The guidance provided is for states and local governments so they can continue to provide meetings that are accessible to all members of the public and seeks to ensure that state and local governments provide proper accommodations for the new on-line format, allot enough time for the public to comment and provide necessary notice and materials about the meeting to the public in advance.

Evaluation: This guidance is clearly meant for local and state governments who hold public meetings, and the recommendations clearly focus on official public meetings and continuing to provide people with ample opportunity to be heard and contribute. This guidance seems like the minimum standards someone would use to allow the public time to engage on an issue.

Applicability to research: This guidance specifically focuses on online meetings and is very specific about providing alternative language options for non-English speakers and flexibility for those without an internet connection. The source homes in on these access issues and lends them special attention. We need access to the teleconference for all.

(Lightfoot, McCleary, and Lum 2014)

 Lightfoot, E., McCleary, J., & Lum, T. (2014, March). Asset Mapping as a Research Tool for Community-Based Participatory Research in Social Work. *Social Work Research*, 59-64. doi:10.1093/swr/svu001

Summary: Lightfoot et al discusses the advantages of using community based participatory research including cultural asset mapping in social work research. She cites that only a handful of studies have used CBRP approach to social work, while noting that the practice is firmly rooted in public health research. She defines the advantages of the CBPR approach as helping to better understand community resources to identify and implement policies and programs that are more effective for the communities they serve. She gives the example of a study based around east African residents living in a Midwestern city. For this study cultural health assets in the communities were mapped and findings from the research helped to implement targeted community health interventions.

Evaluation: Lightfoot notes that while there are benefits to the CBPR approach, major downsides are that CBPR is a time intensive approach that requires specialized trained researchers and oversight. Lightfoot is writing pre-pandemic so it is hard to see how her style of CBPR could continue during the pandemic or in future crises.

Applicability to research: This article highlights the importance of community based participatory research especially as is relating to social work and equity. Lightfoot is for more integration of asset mapping into more types of research. The value of asset mapping is only likely to grow as people try to make more informed decisions on how to allocate resources to communities and continue to provide those services during a pandemic or crisis.

(Local Government Commission 2020)

• Local Government Commission. (2020). *Best Practices for Public Engagement.* Sacramento.

Summary: This is a guide for local governments to refer to when planning for engagement during COVID-19: This material is designed to help inform local governments about virtual engagement options. This resource covers how to make the transition to virtual, the limitations of virtual engagement, when and how to engage the public and what different types of participation look like (e.g., meetings, forums, symposia, workshops, and training).

Evaluation: This is fairly similar to what other organizers have provided in terms of information. Most of the discussion is focused on the logistics and necessary considerations of transitioning to online participation formats. This guide is more practical than others have been, and this seems like a good resource for anyone who may be new to hosting an online engagement event.

Applicability to research: good information about how to coordinate an outreach event, starting with how you determine an event is necessary then identifying your audience, then selecting the type of event and finally the delivery and implementation of the event.

(Macintosh 2004)

 Macintosh, A. (2004). Characterizing E-Participation. 37th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (pp. 1-10). Edinburgh: International Teledemocracy Center.

Summary: Contains definitions of types of e-participation, the policy making process, defining e-enabling and e-empowerment, and critical factors for success. Also includes examples of e-participation initiatives in Scotland and characterizes the level of engagement, the stage in decision making, actors and technologies used of each of the Scotland cases studies to analyze them. This paper defines, and characterizes the types of e-participation, how e-participation methods are conducted and ending with e-participation case studies from Scotland.

Evaluation: This would be a helpful place for someone who did not know much about online participation to begin. It provides relevant definitions, a framework of types of e-participation and information about the processes involved in e-participation. It ends with an analytic look at Scottish e-participation initiative to enable e-participation for elderly residents without internet access. There was no clear resolution for the elderly without access in the case study as the results were still playing out at the time of publication. This source is dated from 2004 and there has no doubt been a lot on change in the available technology.

Applicability to research: Much of this information is presented in by other eparticipation frameworks. This source has a unique emphasis on "e-enabling" which supports those who may not have access to the internet which is also reflected in one of the Scottish case studies. While the source is quite dated there are some worthy issues raised that we are still searching for solutions for today.

(MacQueen et al. 2015)

• MacQueen, K., Bhan, A., Frolich, J., Holzer, J., & Sugarman, J. (2015). Evaluating community engagement in global health research: the need for metrics. *BMC Medical Ethics*, *16*(1), 9. doi:10.1186/s12910-015-0033-9

Summary: This research has a specific focus on health-related research. In health-related fields more so than planning, there is an added emphasis on metrics and data driven solutions. That leads into the topic of the paper which is arguing for people to establish better ethical standards and practices across all of community engagement. With these standards in place, we could then go about defining and then quantifying community engagement. As it stands it can be difficult to tell if community engagement is working or not when you are doing it. Macqueen argues for a better understanding of what health researchers hope to get out of engaging with their communities and better ways to tell if the engagement is successful.

Evaluation: This research is primarily meant for health-related fields, but there are certainly some parallels to be drawn to planning here. Also, since we are in the midst of a public health crisis it seems appropriate to include health related research in participation and engagement as well. However, there is not much information on traditional types of public participation in planning and since it is from 2015 it is well before people were thinking about COVID-19.

Applicability to research: This research and argument is certainly relevant. In planning, there seems to be a lack of emphasis on seeing how well engagement programs are working. If people are able to engage at all that might be considered a success. There could be a parallel argument to be made in planning; planners need better standards on how they should conduct participation and also need better metrics and tests to see if our efforts are working.

(Doerner and Techagumthorn 2020)

 Nelson Nygaard. (2020). Principles for Equitable Public Outreach & Engagement During COVID-19 and Beyond. Retrieved from Nelson Nygaard: https://nelsonnygaard.com/principles-for-equitable-public-outreach-engagement-during-COVID-19-and-beyond/

Summary: This resource's focus is on equity. While this resource was similar to other recommendations for engagement during COVID-19. This resource suggests that facilitators be clear about what impact public input will have, identifying and reaching out to vulnerable communities in particular, design outreach and engagement methods around the project's most vulnerable communities, and weight and prioritize input from vulnerable communities.

Evaluation: This resource although not particularly extensive has a few valuable nuggets, especially for building trust, transparency, and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Overall, some really strong points her about power/vulnerability issues that are more glossed over in other sources. This source emphasizes the importance of equity in participation whereas other sources have not addressed vulnerable communities and how to build participation around that.

Applicability to research: This source is very related to the research at hand, and scores points for focus on equity, the pandemic, and the public process. This source recommends using less digital and more mail-outs, conference calls, posters, and phone banking. Building trust will be especially important during the pandemic.

(Peristeras et al. 2009)

• Peristeras, V., Mentzas, G., Tarabanis, K. A., & Abecker, A. (2009). Transforming Egovernment and E-participation through IT . *IEEE Intelligent Systems*, 14-19.

Summary: Governments are repositories for all kind of information. As more governments have introduced online portals and other digital tools, the need to access digital information quickly between government agencies has grown. Only most agencies are actually terrible at sharing information with each other and that is an issue people should fix. This source is focused on the improvements we might see in e-government and e-participation if we started using the right technology.

Evaluation: This source correctly identifies a major drawback of living in a golden age of internet but not of government. We have been painfully slow to make available to or citizens the wealth of information we have at our disposal that has never seen the light of day. Our government as a whole would run much smoother, and not just for participation but everything, if we would simply prioritize making accessible what we already have.

Applicability to research: This is very applicable to the research in that online participation clearly suffers if you use bad software or the wrong technology. It's imperative that we try to create the best online participation experience possible to enable democracy and the tools we use to do that are essential.

(Phang and Kankanhalli 2008)

• Phang, C. W., & Kankanhalli, A. (2008). A Framework of ICT Exploitation for E-Participation Initiatives. *Communications of the ACM*, 128-132.

Summary: This research is focused on the emergence of e-government and how best to facilitate online participation and "e-democracy", pointing out the obvious advantages of online government and participation has like removing physical factors such as distance and possibly saving people time. This paper goes into how software and technology can best be used to facilitate participation. The paper offers frameworks which ICT tools best fulfill e-democracy objectives such as information exchange, education and support building, decision making, and input probing.

Evaluation: Since the article is dated from 2008, ICT tools have changed a lot. However, this framework is still relevant today because even if some tools have changed the objectives of participation have not. E-government has already been around a long time; the question is now how we make it work for the most amount of people.

Applicability to research: this paper highlights the importance of matching the type of participation with the right tools, and the right overall objectives. It also shows that e-participation is here to stay with many governments around the world investing, so it is worth putting some thought into the approach you take when facilitating e-participation.

(Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Program 2020)

• Research Conservation and Recovery Act Program. (2020, April 24). Interim Guidance for Public Meetings During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. EPA.

Summary: This guidance comes from the Research Conservation and Recovery Act Program (RCRA) under the EPA. This guidance is for EPA staff and their partners. The guidance recommends ending all face-to-face contact with the public, performing outreach virtually until further notice.

Evaluation: This is a very short memo, that essentially says stop everything you are doing and do it all online now. There is no guidance in this memo about what other practices or considerations might be necessary to confront COVID-19, other than a cessation of face-to-face activities.

Applicability to research: This is basically what most organizations are doing during COVID-19. Most organizations are moving toward contactless operations and racing to implement all their programming and work online.

(Rowe and Frewer 2005)

• Rowe, G., & Frewer, L. (2005). A Typology of Public Engagement Mechanisms. *Science, Technology, & Human Values,* 30(2), 251-290. doi:10.1177/0162243904271724

Summary: This article is about defining the terms used in public engagement and characterizing the typologies of the mechanisms (defined as processes, techniques, and instruments to facilitate public engagement). Rowe and Frewer identify 3 types of public engagement: public communication, public consultation, and public participation. Public communication involves the sponsor communicating information to the public. Public consultation is defined as the public communicating information to the sponsor that the sponsor then uses to make a decision. Public participation is when both parties communicate back and forth to make decisions. Frewer and Rowe also show the variety of types of engagement within these categories noting that many types of engagement involve similar processes just performed in a differing order.

Evaluation: This is a formal discussion of the types of public engagement. The goal of this article is to provide definition and analysis to the types of engagement to help further effective engagement in the future

Applicability to research: This article provides context for how public participation research should be conducted to further efficacy. This framework provides a better understanding of how to categorize public engagement efforts and what models work best in different scenarios. This is a good place to start to learn more about public engagement in general.

(Salt Lake City Engagement Team 2020)

• Salt Lake City Civic Engagement Team. (2020). *Practices For Engagement in the Time of Covid.* Salt Lake City.

Summary: This is a guide created by the Salt Lake City Civic Engagement Team to promote continued safe public engagement. The guide includes strategies and tips for how to structure and host meetings for larger groups on Zoom, considerations for equity, and suggestions for other forms of online outreach such as email, websites, and social media. In addition to the information on how to engage online there is also a short discussion of "traditional outreach methods" that are more pandemic-friendly than in-person community meetings.

Evaluation: This guide is on the shorter side and was adapted from meetings and webinars held by the Salt Lake City team. While it offers a fair amount of guidance it would be nice to see something even more in-depth.

Applicability to research: Information like what is presented in this guide would be helpful to most outreach groups. However, if an organization has already been doing outreach during the pandemic up until this point, then most of this information will probably not be new to them. One of the last pages has a full list of "traditional engagement" that may be helpful since some of it may spark new ideas for organizations doing public outreach who are looking for alternatives to online.

(Sanford and Rose 2007)

• Sanford, C., & Rose, J. (2007, December). Characterizing eParticipation. *International Journal of Information Management*, 27(6), 406-421. doi:10.1016/j

Summary: This article presents a literature review of e-participation. The article covers nearly 100 relevant articles then identified motivations for e-participation research, recurring research themes, and the underlying technologies for participation. The paper presents the information at the theoretical level, establishing the framework and intent of e-participation but not providing much guidance about how e-participation is actually performed.

Evaluation: Lays a good foundation for understanding the theory and key definitions of online participation. The article includes important definitions, types of participation, types of facilitation, and participation theories as they have evolved. This is very much an academic's guide to online participation as this paper seems more devoted to the underlying theories of public participation than the actual practicing of it.

Applicability to research: Some things to note in this paper: large number of definitions getting at the nuance of the roles, objectives, and mechanisms of public participation. Takes emphasis away from what technology allows us to do; more emphasis given to how it is used/implemented by people.

(Seltzer et al. 2012)

• Seltzer, E., & Mahmoudi, D. (2012, December 10). Citizen Participation, Open Innovation, and Crowdsourcing: Challenges and Opportunities for Planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 1-16. doi:10.1177/0885412212469112

Summary: This article studies crowdsourcing and open innovation applications to planning. Seltzer compares open innovation and crowdsourcing to other democratic functions spearheaded by planners. As crowdsourcing involves collecting the knowledge of a group of people thinking independently about a problem. Seltzer identifies three main factors necessary for good crowdsourcing: diversity of the crowd, independence of thought within the group (avoid "groupthink", and a decentralized/non-hierarchal social organization. Seltzer argues that crowdsourcing enables planners to think about problems in new ways that can yield wise solutions. For these reasons, crowdsourcing often works best in an online setting.

Evaluation: this source views crowdsourcing in an overall positive light. However, it is also clear that crowdsourcing requires a lot of forethought and preparation to be done well; first and foremost, access to appropriately large and diverse crowds for problem solving is difficult for researchers. Additionally, for crowdsourcing to work well the problem presented to the crowd must be readily understood by the group, otherwise the group will not be on track to solve the right problems.

Applicability to research: Key difference between citizen participation and crowdsourcing is they is no punishment for ignoring the response of crowd, in CP citizens have a stake in the community, the outcome and can vote out elected officials that do not live up to the voters' expectations. Crowdsourcing seems like it could have beneficial impacts for planning and cultural asset mapping. "The best decisions were not the product of consensus and compromise, but of disagreement and context. Gathering the widest possible number of views, expert or not, could result in new combinations of ideas that would yield unexpectedly wise outcomes." Internet based forums almost essential for true crowdsourcing, enables diversity, decentralization, and independence. This could be an advantage during a pandemic where online meetings and discussion boards are safer than meeting in person.

(Stewart and Gelberd 1976)

• Stewart, T. R., & Gelberd, L. (1974, January). Analysis of Judgment Policy: A New Approach for Citizen Participation in Planning. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 33-41. doi:10.1080/01944367608977702

Summary: This article begins by reaffirming the positive impacts that public feedback can have on policy and particularly planning in boulder. In this particular study the researchers surveyed the positions of city councilmen and interest groups that were active in the city councils' meetings such as PLAN Boulder and PURE on new hypothetical budgets for the city of boulder. Additionally, they asked that the city councilmembers try to predict the preferred budgets of the selected interest groups. This study was able to show the desirability vs level of expenditure for each of the budget plans, effectively allowing them to show the maximum desirability of each option.

Evaluation: This article presents an interesting way to measure a group's opinion more accurately about complex policy topics. The idea is to present the group with options and ask them to rate the desirability, allowing people to understand their options and potential tradeoffs.

Applicability to research: This study is interesting because it introduces a way to measure the feeling of the public on policy and planning issues. This type of analysis could be applied to a large variety of decisions communities make and could be a somewhat promising way to measure what options are most desirable to the group especially when those decisions are more complex or difficult to visualize.

(Swapan 2016)

• Swapan, M. (2016). Who Participates and Who Doesn't? Adapting Community Participation Model for Developing Countries. *The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning*, 70-77.

Summary: This study investigates residents of Dhaka, Bangladesh, and their involvement in a local planning process, to better assess why certain groups of people engage in participation and planning and others do not. They surveyed residents about their knowledge of the preparing DAP plan and involvement in the planning process. They found that most residents chose not to participate and their main reason for non-participation when asked was "not informed". The study concluded that there where "6 key factors that affect a respondent's willingness to participate are economic condition, awareness of the planning process, effectiveness of the communication strategies taken by planning agency, trust in planning agency, sense of urgency, and status of social capital. Diminishing levels of trust discourage participation."

Evaluation: This source looks at public participation in Dhaka, where conditions for public participation are probably very different from most of the US. However, looking at Dhaka we can get a sense of what might be stopping our own most vulnerable communities from engagement. There seems to be strong overlap between findings from this study and other that discuss vulnerable communities, trust in planning agencies/facilitators is key to successful and meaningful participation for citizens.

Applicability to research: There seems to be plenty of overlap (ok, mainly TRUST is KEY) between public participation in developing nations and in our most vulnerable communities here at home. Engagement facilitators need to make sure they are following up with their communities and building trust and transparency while ensuring engagement opportunities are accessible.

(Voigt 2011)

• Voigt, R. (2011). Cultural Asset Mapping. *Planning Commissioners Journal, 81*, 1-2.

Summary: In this feature article Voight talks about benefit Cultural Asset mapping can have for communities. According to Voigt, CAM is a scalable model for smaller cities to be able to better compete with big cities for residents. A lot of what draws people to a place is culture, and our maps also tell a story of culture. Mapping cultural elements can help municipalities to make better planning decisions and having the data in one place to access is just what a lot of smaller towns lack.

Evaluation: Cultural Asset Mapping is a model that can lead to better outcomes for planners, preservationists, and residents. Planners need this information consolidated to make better decisions about how to develop in the future. Preservationists rejoice at documentation, and the better documented something is, the more significant, and thus easier to preserve. Finally, this information helps residents because they have better access to their cultural resources in the future and they will be more protected from memory loss or destruction.

Applicability to research: This feature is mostly information we already know, or we would not be doing this project. We know that cultural asset mapping is a good thing overall and we are just here to figure out how it can be done in a pandemic. There is some information here that you could use to help educate the public on what cultural asset mapping is so they might be more likely to think it's worthwhile and important even during a pandemic or crisis.

(Weerts and Sandmann 2010)

• Weerts, D. J., & Sandmann, L. R. (2010). Community Engagement and Boundary Spanning Roles at Research Universities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 632-657.

Summary: Weerts says it is difficult for some research universities to incorporate more community engagement into their research because lack of implementation despite buy-in from top university administrators. For researchers who are new to community engagement research there can be a learning curve of sorts deciding what the role of the researcher is in these types of projects. "Boundary spanning" as Weerts describes it or bridging efforts into the community are often highly influenced by the institution and its mission, history, and location. Engagement effort may be easier by some universities and institutions than by others. There is a strong emphasis on trust and previous integration into the community.

Evaluation: This is a must read for university actors performing community engagement in research roles. This article discusses the successes, pitfalls, and institutional roles of these research universities in community engagement. The result is a detailed exploration research of the universities' effort at community engagement that highlights their strengths and weaknesses

Applicability to research: This is applicable to our research because we are essentially in the position of being a research university doing research in community engagement. The emphasis of the article is clearly community trust as foundational to these types of projects and draws into question the ethics of conducting these projects to further one's own personal academic careers. This article also emphasized the importance of the skills of the researchers and their level of experience in the community.