ATTACHMENT 3

Implementation Plan

What's Next Alexandria Civic Engagement Initiative

City of Alexandria

January 14, 2014

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I. Statement of Intent

The Civic Engagement Handbook (handbook) establishes a foundation that sets forth the principles and process for involving the community in the decisions that affect them. Successful implementation of the handbook will depend on fundamentally consistent application of the principles and practices across the various departments and agencies of the City government; sufficient resources, both human and fiscal; and consistent assessment of performance over time. The intent of this document is to serve as an implementation action plan, including recommendations for organizational structure, resource requirements, applicability, training, communications, and performance assessment.

II. Organizational Structure and Resources

An effective organizational structure is necessary to ensure that application of the principles and framework are fundamentally consistent citywide, and the level of effort is realistic and achievable. The City will utilize a hybrid structure, with some elements centralized and others decentralized to ensure both consistency and efficiency.

The City Manager's Office will provide oversight to ensure that expectations are clear, resources are adequate to meet expectations, and staff is held accountable for results. Primary responsibility for overall coordination of civic engagement implementation will be delegated to the Office of Communications and Public Information (OCPI). Working with City department staff, OCPI will coordinate the exchange of information with the community, interactions with the news media, and the activities of staff in support of the civic engagement effort. OCPI staff will work through cross-departmental collaboration to understand the barriers and opportunities to implement our civic engagement strategy and notably to ensure quality and consistency in application of the principles and practices of civic engagement. Specifically OCPI, under the direction of the City Manager's Office will:

- Coordinate the necessary training required for internal and external stakeholders as detailed below in the Training section of this document.

- Develop a communication plan clearly stating the principles, expectations and actions required for successful civic engagement as detailed in the Communication section of this document.

- Manage the overall tracking and assessment of civic engagement performance conducted by the Departments as detailed in the Performance Measures and Evaluation sections of this document.

- Provide guidance and troubleshooting as needed to project managers within the Departments

While City staff has historically and routinely engaged in civic engagement activities, adoption of specific principles and practices, clearly defined expectations for City staff performance in the civic engagement process, and the heightened need for cross departmental coordination, all place additional work responsibility on staff. It is expected that full implementation will require the commitment of additional staff resources. The specific resource requirement has yet to be determined. However, in order to deliver the Civic Engagement effort as outlined and achieve the desired results, staff believes there is a need for organization wide coordination as well as support to key departments. Departments most likely to require direct assistance to provide the level of civic engagement envisioned include Transportation & Environmental Services, Planning & Zoning, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and Project Implementation. These departments are expected to be the most active in applying civic engagement practices.

Individual departments will integrate the new standards and framework into their existing operations. All of the planning efforts included on the City's Interdepartmental Work Program will follow the principles, framework, and guidelines established in the handbook. Having the departments lead the implementation effort in this way, rather than through a centralized administrative function, allows the civic engagement approach to meet the needs of the specific project, and encourages ownership of implementation, speeding the process for internalizing the new civic engagement approach. Because the projects are of different scales, from a Small Area Plan process to a more focused technical study, each project's civic engagement framework will be distinct, but the common threads will be the principles and the agreed upon phases of the process overall.

An interdepartmental working group will monitor civic engagement implementation across departments and provide guidance on refining the organizational structure as needed. This group will review and refine the applicability criteria to serve as a threshold for understanding when a City project requires a civic engagement plan or when the Handbook is simply a reference document for general engagement on smaller projects. Evaluation and performance accountability will be managed by the City Manager's Office following recommendations from the interdepartmental group.

In summary, implementation roles are:

City Manager's Office

- Set expectations: Establish citywide policies and procedures
  Allocate resources for training

Civic Engagement Coordination

- Manage training program
- Ensure consistent application of the principles and framework
- Provide technical support and expertise to departmental project staff
- Coordinate and track projects on *What's Next Alexandria* website

- Manage performance accountability
- Manage internal communication and provide support for external communications and outreach

Departments/Project Management Staff

- Attend training
- Apply the principles
- Use the civic engagement framework
- Manage civic engagement processes

Civic Engagement Interdepartmental Working Group

- Monitor civic engagement implementation across departments
- Provide guidance on refining the organizational structure as needed
- Provide guidance on refining applicability criteria
- Review performance accountability data

III. Training

Facilitation training for staff and members of the community will help embed the City's new approach to civic engagement in a consistent way. While Staff has already begun to implement the principles and framework established in *What's Next Alexandria* in current planning processes, training sessions are expected to begin in Summer 2014 and be offered on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

Civic engagement training will consist of two parts: content and skill building. The content element will train staff and other stakeholders in Alexandria's new civic engagement "way" – what the principles are and how to ensure they are being followed, what the framework is and how to apply it, and how to implement a meaningful and constructive civic engagement process. The skill-building piece will focus on conducting productive meetings, facilitating small group discussions, managing difficult situations, and learning about non-meeting options for engagement.

Training will be required of City staff engaged in public participation work. Key project managers in applicable City departments are required to be adequately represented during the training sessions. City Council members and Board and Commission members involved in work that has a large civic engagement component will also be provided training. Examples of some of the applicable boards and commissions are: Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Waterfront Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Traffic and Parking Board and School Board. The City will also offer training to community members, community and civic organizations and nonprofit agencies. Some training sessions will offer a combined approach with the community and staff together; others will be designed for staff only.

The City will partner with the Alexandria Collaborators and other nonprofit community groups such as Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations and Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) for guidance on curriculum development, and

assistance with outreach and delivering community training sessions citywide.

The City will contract with outside professionals to assist with curriculum development and early training sessions that will be oriented initially toward training staff in those departments that conduct the majority of civic engagement processes. Some of these early sessions will be focused on "training the trainer," to institutionalize the training knowledge across departments. Training session coaches will underscore why this effort is important to the City as a whole and what the benefits are to staff in their work.

Training will be accompanied by a short staff manual outlining the policies and procedures, and will be followed up with regular communication to the departments about expectations and providing support. Training elements will also be recorded as short podcasts for improved accessibility by the widest audience.

Training Sessions

Core (required):

1. **Handbook**: Detailed instruction on civic engagement principles and practices using case studies; instructions and criteria on how and when to apply the civic engagement "Framework," demonstrated through case studies.
2. **Facilitation Skills**: Introductory and 2nd level trainings on how to design and run an effective meeting, facilitate small group discussions, handle difficult participants, and get the most out of a meeting.

Additional sessions for Project Managers:

3. **Workshop - Applying the Civic Engagement Framework**: A in depth discussion of the criteria for when the framework is required, the steps involved in developing the framework, and planning a community engagement process, using current City projects as examples.
4. **Workshop – Engagement Toolbox**: An in depth look at best practices in the civic engagement field of effective engagement strategies (including meeting and non-meeting strategies) and communication and outreach tools.
5. **Workshop – Survey and Activity Design**: A workshop on developing effective questionnaires/surveys and designing productive engagement activities.

IV. Communications Plan

The Office of Communications and Public Information will take the lead on implementing the initial communications plan, with communications ultimately coordinated by the City's Civic Engagement Coordinator in the OCPI and reviewed by the interdepartmental working group.

Each department will identify an initial coordinator in response to a request from the City Manager's Office to Department Heads. This will be someone who can help distribute

materials within the department, not necessarily the position that will be responsible for all implementation.

Adoption of Handbook and the City's Civic Engagement Policy Statement: These communications will notify the public and stakeholders that City Council has adopted the handbook and policy statement, and will explain the purpose and overall implementation plan.

- News Release (all City news releases are distributed to media list, website, eNews, Facebook, Twitter)
- Email from City Manager to all employees
- Update on alexandriava.gov/WhatsNext with further information, including the initial project threshold criteria used to determine engagement
- Email/Letter from Mayor and/or City Manager to all City Boards and Commission members and all participants in the *What's Next Alexandria* process
- Posting the civic engagement principles in Council Chambers and other City meeting spaces

Training Plan: These communications will notify target audiences of training opportunities.

- Formatting and publication of training materials
- Emails to notify internal contacts (employees, department coordinators)
- Emails/Letters to notify external contacts (boards and commissions, civic groups, nonprofits, *What's Next Alexandria* participants)
- Standing calendar at alexandriava.gov/WhatsNext (subset of alexandriava.gov/Calendar)

Project Catalog: The catalog will consist of the checklists required to be submitted and maintained for each project that meets the threshold applicability criteria.

- Establishment of webpage under alexandriava.gov/WhatsNext
- Creation of simple online form for staff to create/submit/update checklists with cross references to their project websites.

Initial Projects: These communications will notify stakeholders of the projects being implemented in the first round of application of *What's Next Alexandria.*

- Emails/Letters/eNews to staff and external contacts
- Updates as appropriate based on project checklist

Branding: Branding is a communication of essential characteristics and values, designed to evoke a feeling or sense of understanding about the brand.

- The communications team should further develop the *What's Next Alexandria* civic engagement brand, and publish brief guidance to help implement the brand. Branding may include logos, taglines, color schemes, font and formatting guidelines, etc., but the brand is the combination of all these things.
- The brand can be extended to include identification of project or process amenities that are designed to encourage engagement. For example, icons could be developed to make it easy to determine that a given meeting will have WiFi, child care, and parking, or that a given document is in draft form and is seeking input through a certain date. These branding conventions would reinforce the idea that all City activities seek to promote and facilitate civic engagement.

V. Performance Measures

In partnership with and oversight by the Office of Performance Accountability, the City shall pursue a program of data collection via participant surveys on the following civic engagement performance measures:

1. Number of participants at each meeting
2. Percentage of Alexandria's demographic population represented at meetings
3. Rate of return of meetings' participants
4. Number of participants involved in online engagement activity
5. Percentage of participants who feel that an unbiased framing of the issues was provided at the start of the process
6. Percentage of participants who feel they had access to the key information regarding the issues before participating in each meeting
7. Percentage of participants who feel the final results of the process clearly highlighted the group's priorities
8. Percentage of participants who feel their input affected the final results of a project
9. Percentage of participants who feel the group's input affected the final results of a project
10. Percentage of participants who have confidence in the civic engagement process

Internal

1. Percentage of City staff trained in civic engagement principles and practices
2. Percentage of trained City staff who understand the civic engagement principles and practices
3. Percentage of Boards and Commissions' members trained in civic engagement principles and practices
4. Percentage of trained Boards and Commissions' members who understand civic engagement principles and practices

Office of Performance Accountability staff will assist with further refining these measures as needed and folding the Civic Engagement effort into the Results Alexandria framework.

Evaluation

In addition to collecting the performance data points outlined above through participant evaluations during a given process, staff project managers will conduct assessment of civic engagement performance at the end of each project, producing a brief summary and evaluation of each project's civic engagement process and outcome using the template provided in the Handbook appendix.

The interdepartmental working group will review the project evaluations completed by departments and develop a proposed plan for future annual review of civic engagement performance, considering the following elements and identifying areas of improvement:

- ***Evaluate use of the Framework***: Is it being used consistently by all applicable City processes? Does it need to be revised?
- ***Evaluate departmental use of the Handbook***: Is it frequently used/referenced when designing community engagement processes? Are certain elements of the Handbook out of date and in need of being updated? Is there anything missing?
- ***Define the process for revising the Civic Engagement Handbook*** when necessary;
- ***Evaluate Communications/Outreach success*** and update the City's understanding of communications networks; Have new communications avenues become more popular? Which organizations and networks are the best up-to-date tools for outreach and communication? How can the City reach into spaces where the public is already active?
- ***Evaluate new and emerging online and digital engagement techniques***: Have new forums for online engagement become popular or free?
- ***Assess the City's implementation structure***: Is there a problem with consistency or has the effort become too administratively onerous? Does the hybrid approach need to be adjusted to gain more consistency or to allow for more flexibility based on workflows? Should the City consider establishing a Civic Engagement Advisory Commission, similar to Portland, Oregon's, to assist with performance assessment and providing input for improvement?

VI. Applicability

Generally speaking, the type of project/public decision to be made will dictate the level of civic engagement required. A small area plan, for example, will require a significantly different approach than a development application. The small area planning process is characterized by a high level of public discretion because it occurs early in the land

development process, and establishes a vision for the area, whereas a development application has private property rights already given in the city's zoning ordinance, and a vision for the area already developed by the community in the small area plan.

The community should reasonably expect that staff is applying the principles of civic engagement in all interactions between City government and community with particular attention focused on major land use plans, significant public policy initiatives, and substantive program efforts. Even among these categories remains a significant degree of subjectivity. Additional clarifying language and a matrix have been added to the handbook and appendix, as well as to this implementation plan. The matrix illustrates general guidance on threshold applicability criteria for the variety of policies, plans and projects typically requiring public participation in the city. The matrix establishes the goals for the different levels of engagement based on the type of project, although the nature of a specific project may require a higher or different type of civic engagement than would otherwise be called for in the applicability criteria. The matrix is accompanied by two graphics that help demonstrate the continuum of civic engagement called for according to project, as well as the relationship between projects.

All of the planning efforts that will utilize consultant support have written a requirement to understand and comply with the *What's Next Alexandria* handbook into their scope of work, including the Eisenhower West Plan, Eisenhower West Transportation Study, Public Arts Master Plan, and the Pedestrian Bicycle Master Plan. When the Stormwater Management Master Plan begins, it too will apply the City's new civic engagement framework and principles.

All projects that meet the threshold criteria for full civic engagement will complete and post a process framework template which provides information about the civic engagement plan for the project, a general timeline, goals for the project, and lead department. Each of these projects will be added to the project catalog on the *What's Next Alexandria* webpage, using an online form adding information on project web address, project manager name and contact information, and members/departments involved in the Interdepartmental team.

Attachment 1: Civic Engagement Applicability Matrix

General Threshold Applicability Guidelines and Criteria for Civic Engagement Process

Type of Project	Geographic Relevancy	Public hearing*	Output	Typical Length of Process	Scope of public input: Does the public decision have a high, medium, or low level of public discretion? How much is on the table that the public can weigh in on?	** IAP2 Level of Civic Engagement Goal: 1 -inform, 2-consult; 3-involve; 4-collaborate (see definitions after spreadsheet)	Description
Citywide Major Public Policy Documents							
City Council Strategic Plan	Citywide residents	Yes CC	Plan	12 months (+/-)	High level of public involvement and discretion.	4 - Collaborate	Civic engagement framework, principles, tools and strategies should be applied. Outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive.
City Budget	Citywide residents	Yes CC	Detailed Budget	12 months	Currently, citizens have the opportunity to comment on the City Manager's proposed budget released in February of each year.	3 - Involve	While application of the framework may not fit with the budget schedule, outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive.
Chapters of the Master Plan, Small Area Plans (SAP) or Special Studies							
Master Plan Chapters: SAPs and Programmatic Plans, such as Open Space Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Citywide Parks Plan, Aging Plan, Housing Master Plan, Public Arts Master Pl.	SAP area or citywide, varies	Yes PC, CC	Plan	18 months (+/-)	Small area plans (SAPs) tend to provide an opportunity for a great deal of public input and discretion because they establish a long term vision for an area, at the beginning of that "long term, " although the plans must be consistent with the City's strategic plan, funding capacity, and developer contributions. Same applies to programmatic chapters of the master plan.	4 - Collaborate	Civic engagement framework, principles, tools and strategies should be applied. Outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive.
Special Studies such as Parking Study, Infill Study; Union Street Corridor Study; Industrial Use Study; Wayfinding Design Guidelines	Varies	Yes/Varies	Report/Study	12 months (+/-)	Generally have a more limited scope than chapters of the Master Plan, but still provide opportunity for significant public input.	4 - Collaborate	Civic engagement framework, principles, tools and strategies should be applied. Outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive.
Transit Corridor Plan, Ped/ Bike Master Plan, Complete Streets Design Guidelines	Varies	Yes/Varies	Plan	18 months (+/-)	Similar to chapters of the master plan above, although may also have some engineering and state/federal mandates constraining options.	2 - Involve	Civic engagement framework, principles, tools and strategies should be applied. Outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive.
Infrastructure Plan, such as Sewer Master Plan; Stormwater Management Plan	Citywide residents	Yes	Plan	18 months (+/-)	Much less on the table compared to SAP because of technical engineering constraints and state/federal mandates. However, where options exist, public should have opportunity to weigh in.	3 - Involve	Civic engagement framework, principles, tools and strategies should be applied. Outreach and request for community input should be comprehensive. as possible given constraints of state/federal mandates.
Infrastructure Projects							
New Facilities (School, firestation, park, etc)	Specific location or citywide	Yes PC, CC	Construction Documents	18 months (+/-)	Constrained by capital funding and specific infratructure requirements, but where options exist, public should have as much opportunity to weigh in as possible.	2 - Consult	Communications and outreach should be thorough and opportunity for comment should be provided, consistent with Whats Next Alexandria guidelines, but the process does not require application of the framework.

General Threshold Applicability Guidelines and Criteria for Civic Engagement Process

Type of Project	Geographic Relevancy	Public hearing*	Output	Typical Length of Process	Scope of public input: Does the public decision have a high, medium, or low level of public discretion? How much is on the table that the public can weigh in on?	** IAP2 Level of Civic Engagement Goal: 1 -inform, 2-consult; 3-involve; 4-collaborate (see definitions after spreadsheet)	Description
Transportation or utility system improvements e.g. horizontal infrastructure, complete streets, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements.	Specific location or citywide	No	Construction Documents	18 months (+/-)	If consistent with/called out in the transportation master plan or other infrastructure utility related plans, then, outside of the manner with which the project is implemented, there is relatively little on the table for discussion. In that case, it would simply be implementation of an already approved community-developed plan. If improvement is in addition to/not called out in a previously approved plan, then the level of community input should be higher.	2- Consult/3 - Involve	Communications and outreach should be thorough and opportunity for comment should be provided, consistent with Whats Next Alexandria guidelines, but the process does not require application of the framework.
Regulatory Ordincance and Code Changes							
Changes to the Code or text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance or similar regulatory changes such as parking ratios, taxis, massage establishments, or outdoor dining, etc.	Specific location or citywide	Generally Yes PC, CC	Zoning Text Amendment	Varies	Should be consistent with already approved city policy and plans, but public can weigh in on details not already established in previous planning efforts.	2 - Consult	Communications and outreach should be thorough and opportunity for comment should be provided, consistent with Whats Next Alexandria guidelines, but the process does not require application of the framework.
Regulatory Review							
Rezoning/Map Amendments	Specific site	Yes PC, CC	Rezoning, Map Amendment	Varies	Property owners or the City can initiate rezonings/map amendments (zone/land use changes and corresponding map changes) to the master plan. Whether initiated by property owner or the City, the level of input by the community would be like that which occurs during the development review process. When a rezoning is initiated by a property owner, the community can weigh in on a project's consistency with the Small Area Plan, zoning, and implications to the adjacent and surrounding areas through community and public meetings. When initiated by the City, the rezoning/map amendment would include a community engagement process from the City.	2 - Consult	Communications and outreach should be thorough and opportunity for comment should be provided, consistent with Whats Next Alexandria guidelines, but the process does not require application of the framework.

General Threshold Applicability Guidelines and Criteria for Civic Engagement Process

Type of Project	Geographic Relevancy	Public hearing*	Output	Typical Length of Process	Scope of public input: Does the public decision have a high, medium, or low level of public discretion? How much is on the table that the public can weigh in on?	** IAP2 Level of Civic Engagement Goal: 1 -inform, 2-consult; 3-involve; 4-collaborate (see definitions after spreadsheet)	Description
Development Application Review	Specific site	Yes PC, CC	Entitlement for property owner; developer contributions/ community benefits for City.	18 months (+/-)	Property owners can develop "by right" or seek approval for additional development rights. With the latter, there is more "on the table" for the community to weigh in on. Development applications have existing property rights for development and an obligation to comply with previously adopted Small Area Plan, which the public has presumably already participated in developing. Community can weigh in on a project's consistency with the Small Area Plan, zoning, and a variety of details, but the major issues such as use, scale, density have already been established by the community in the Small Area Plan.	2 - Consult	Applicants are required to conduct standard community outreach and generally abide by principles of civic engagement. Framework need not be applied.
SUP Review	Specific site	Yes PC, CC	Government approval	3 months (+/-)	Business owners required to comply with existing regulations. Community can provide comment before and at public hearings for Planning Commission consideration.	2 - Consult	Applicants are required to notify adjoining property owners.
BAR Cases	Specific site	Yes OHAD BAR, PG BAR	Government approval	3 months (+/-)	Property owners required to comply with existing regulations and guidance of the historic districts. Community can provide comment before and at public hearings for Board consideration.	2 - Consult	Applicants required to notify adjoining property owners.
BZA Cases	Specific site	Yes BZA	Government approval	3 months (+/-)	Community can provide comment before and at public hearings for Board consideration.	2 - Consult	Applicants required to notify adjoining property owners.

Notes:

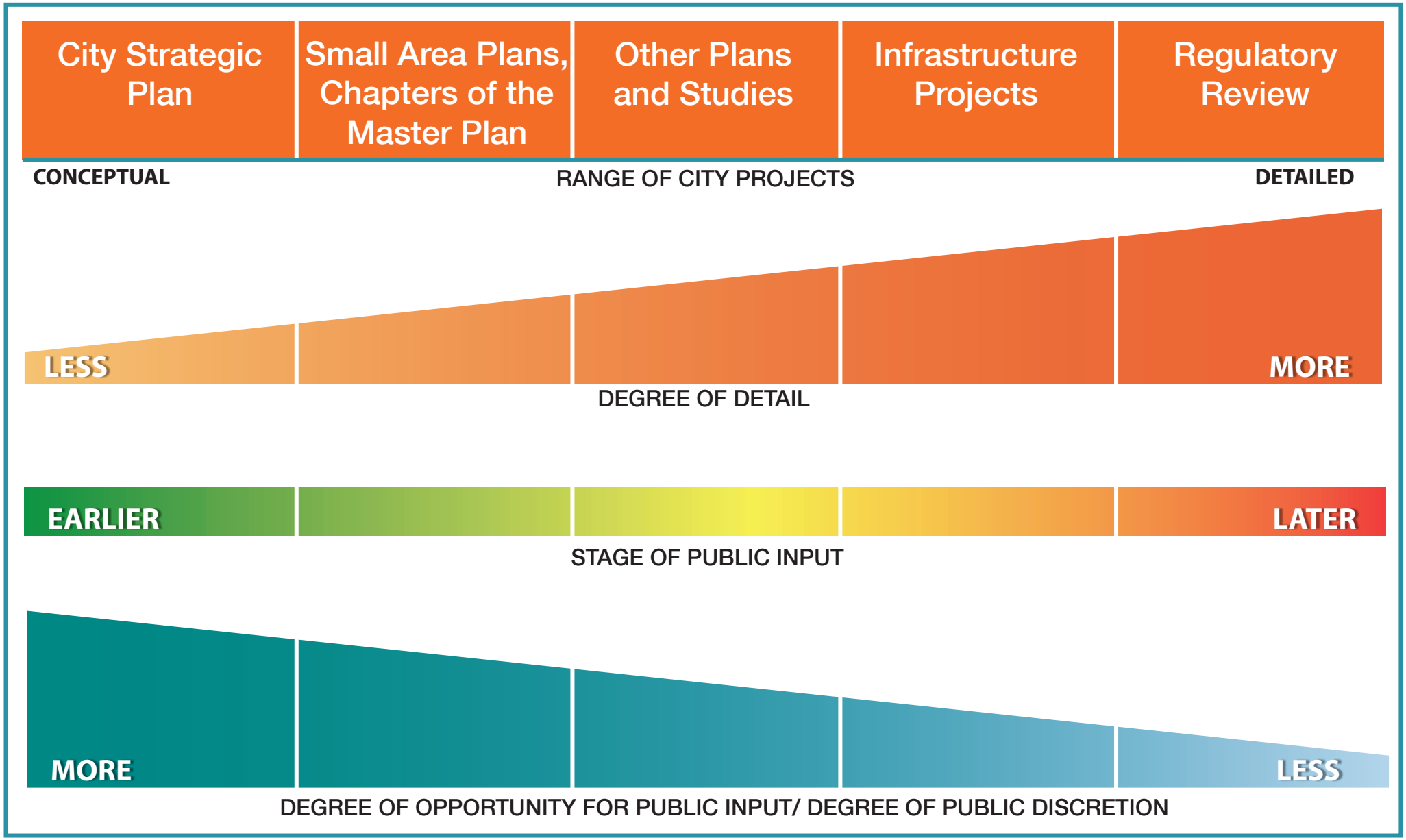
This matrix serves as a guide only. Specific programs/projects/policies may require more or different engagement than shown in the chart. Not all project types may be listed above. Questions about a specific project should be directed to the Department and project manager.

*** There are many more opportunities for public input in advance of public hearings.**

****International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)**

Definitions of Levels of Engagement from IAP2 http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf

1 - Inform: We will keep you informed.
2 - Consult: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision
3 - Involve: We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input shaped the result
4 - Collaborate: We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent


City Strategic Plan
Small Area Plans, Chapters of the Master Plan
Other Plans and Studies
Infrastructure Projects
Regulatory Review
CONCEPTUAL
RANGE OF CITY PROJECTS
DETAILED
LESS
MORE
DEGREE OF DETAIL
EARLIER
LATER
STAGE OF PUBLIC INPUT
MORE
LESS
DEGREE OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC INPUT/ DEGREE OF PUBLIC DISCRETION

City Strategic Plan
Small Area Plans and other chapters of the Master Plan
City Policy/Smaller Plans and Studies
Infrastructure Projects
Regulatory Review