

PORTLAND ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Listen to City Employees: The Results

[PREGAME]

Listen to City Employees: Summary

A vital part of the multi-year Portland Engagement Project is listening to the City employees who are already engaging with Portlanders every day. They are the Portlanders most familiar with the City's current approach to civic engagement.

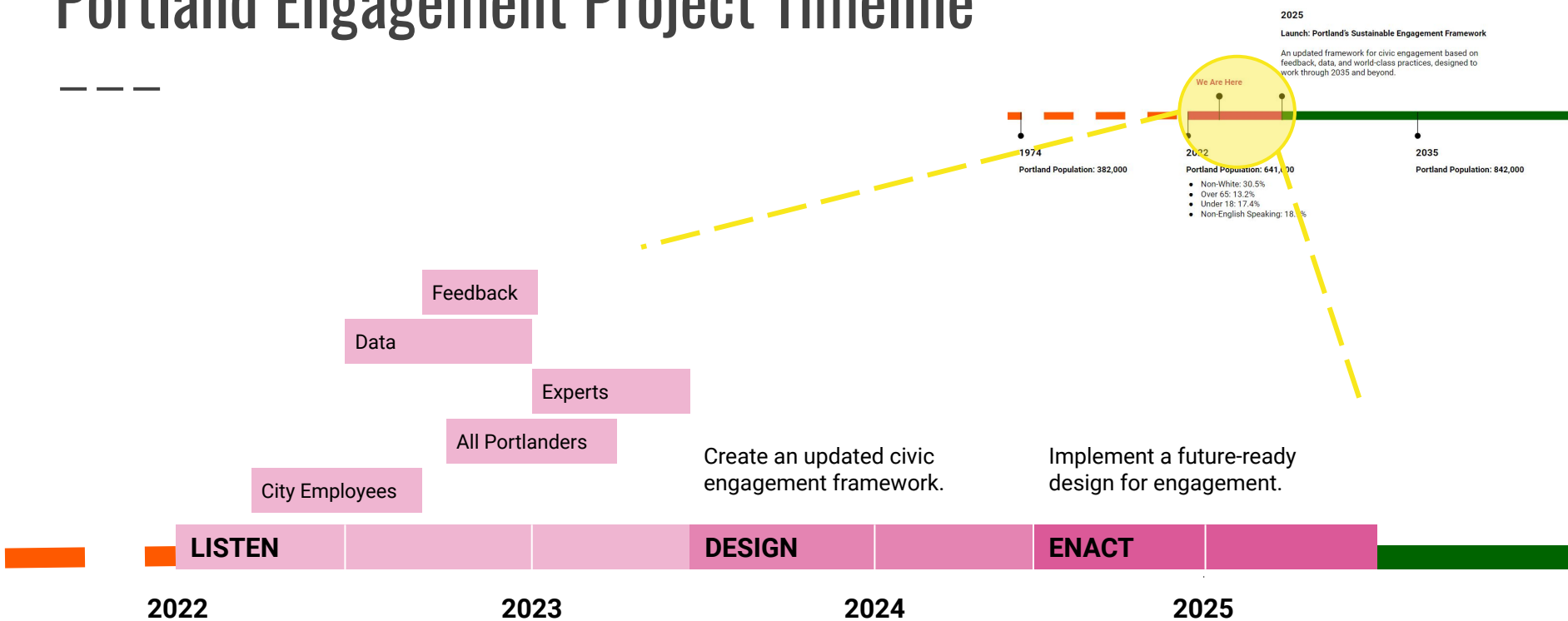
We invited every City employee to participate. Over four months, we conducted 45 listening sessions and deployed a city-wide survey. An incredible list of over 571 actionable ideas for change were generated in this process.

The ideas are synthesized here. We've categorized the ideas into themes, accompanied by subthemes and recurring comments.

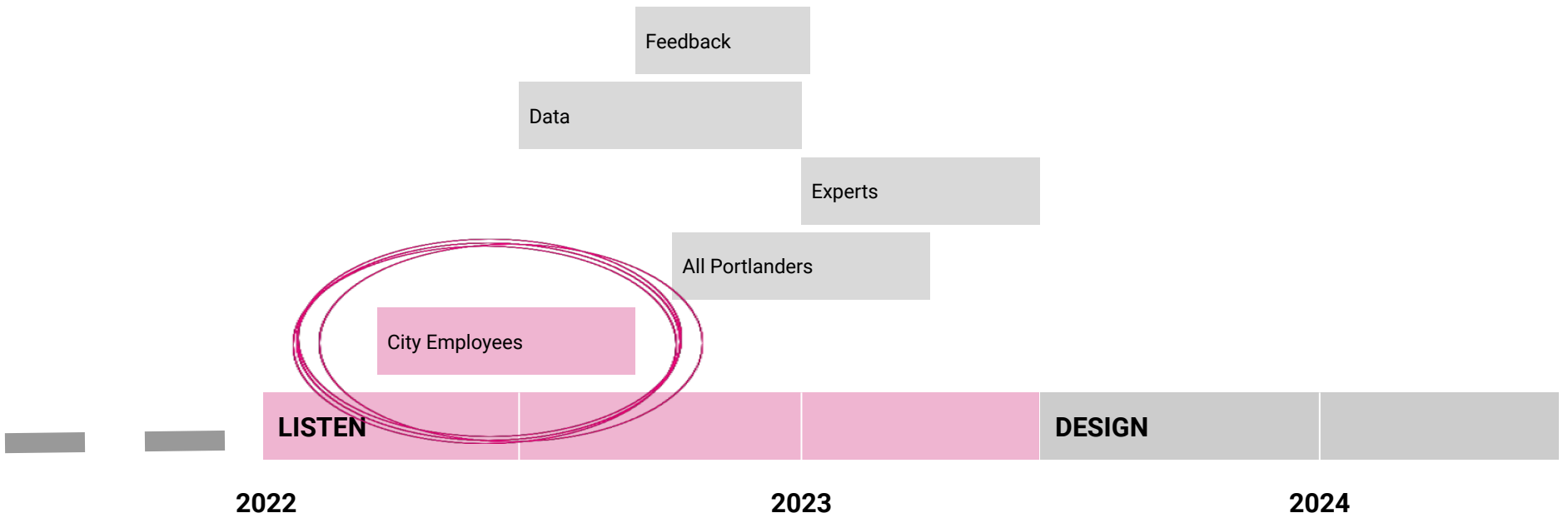
These ideas can serve as a strong starting point for the next PEP phase: listening to all Portlanders. Together with the other parts of the Project, these ideas will support the creation of a community engagement plan and roadmap that works for all Portlanders, today and tomorrow.



Portland Engagement Project Timeline

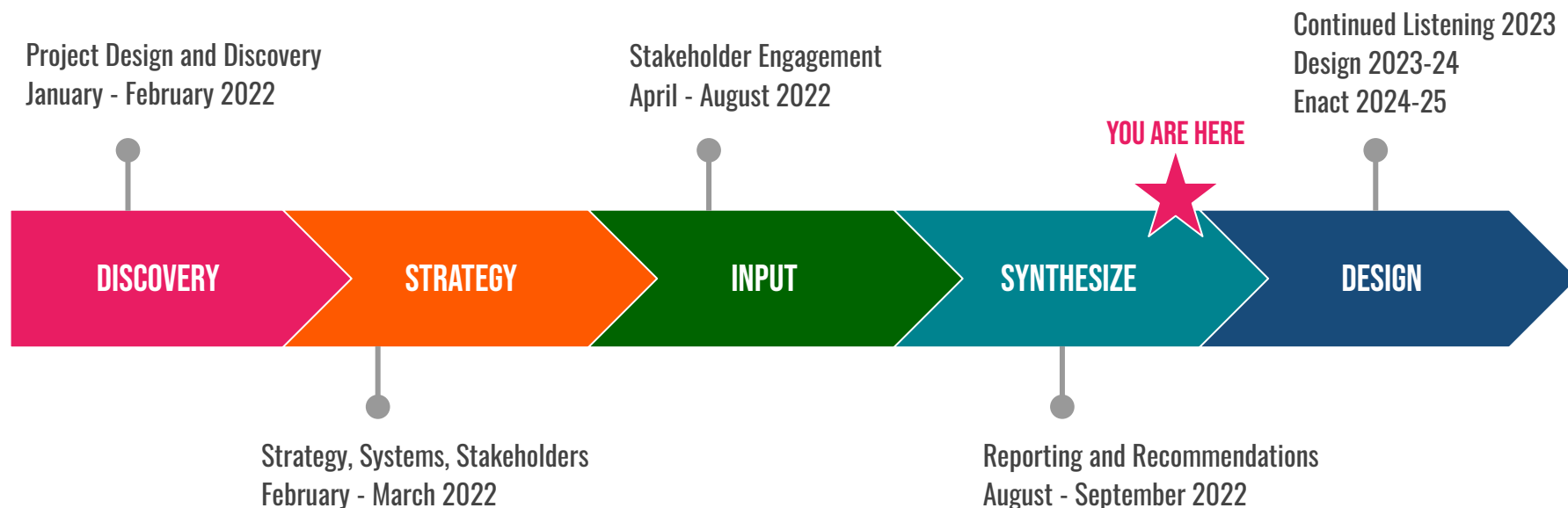


Listening Project Timeline



Internal Listening Process Map

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Project Approach

Guiding Principles

Unifying

Our process conveys a spirit of “we’re all in this together” and reflects Civic Life’s promise to Promote the Common Good.

Future-Ready

Our work is oriented toward the Portland of 2035 and beyond. Our output consistently reflects community needs and feedback.

Inclusive

With cultural humility, we invite as many voices as possible and we rely on trusted methods that respect and reflect the substantive change and progress we are co-creating with our community.

Iterative

We are not starting from scratch; we are evolving to meet the needs of a changing City. We value work, discoveries, and relationships already established at the City and Bureau levels.

Transparent

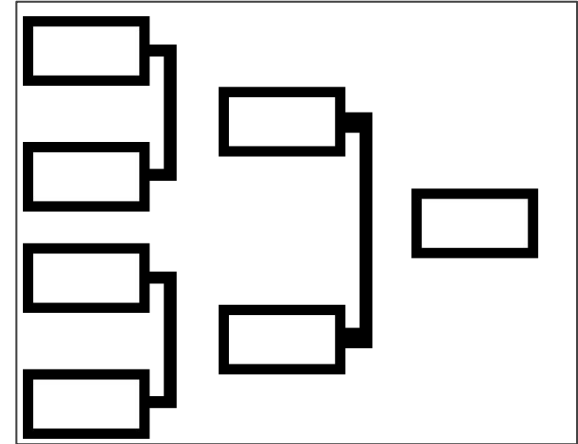
We communicate our process and how to get involved. We proactively inform Portlanders in ways that are accessible by all.

Gamification

Pregame uses the metaphors of sport and games to turn business and organizational principles into approachable, real-world applications.

We've found that turning learning and creation into a game frees the "players" to experiment, collaborate, and iterate.

Our approach takes the game strategy to a new level by guiding the players through a consensus process inspired by parliamentary procedure. Our goal is to transform a potentially formal, restrictive environment into an experience that invites participation, rewards risk-taking, and builds team spirit.



Game Design

How It Works

Object of the Game

Contribute your ideas. Make a motion for a change.

- How would make the Office of Community and Civic Life the most innovative, equitable, future-ready bureau it can be?
- How would you improve the way the City of Portland engages community?

How to Play

1. Make your motion.
2. Attach your questions and feedback to the motions of others to sharpen and improve the clarity of the ideas generated.
3. Amend your motion based on the feedback of others when to do so improves upon the original motion.
4. Put your name on your motion.

Put Your Name on Your Motion

By not allowing for anonymous motions, we increased transparency, created a paper trail, and left room to give credit where credit is due. Our goal was to stay solution-oriented, avoid unproductive vents, and encourage a high level of civility and integrity.

This approach reflects the principles of the Portland Engagement Project:

Transparent

We communicate openly and honestly, on the record.

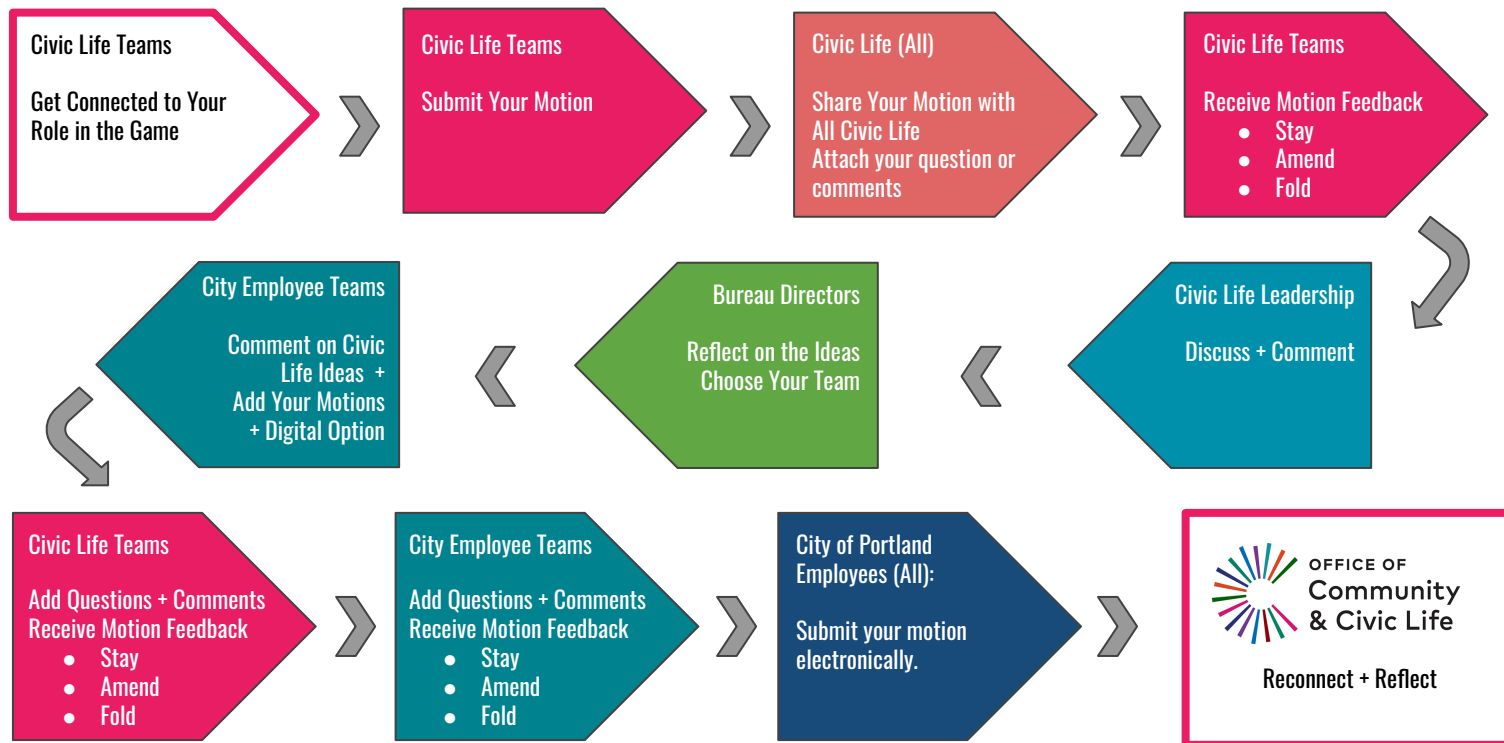
Iterative

Because we are evolving and not starting from scratch, we need to be able to modify suggestions, which includes communicating with the original motion creators throughout the process.

Accountable

Participants shared only what they were willing to stand behind, knowing it would be accessible to all by being included in this listening report.

Game Board



Game Process Breakdown

Level	Team	Goal	Mode
0	Civic Life Teams	The Pregame: Establishing a Personal Connection to the Future Design of Civic Life	Virtual Meeting
1	Civic Life Teams	The Game: Learn the Rules + Start Playing Generate Your Motions	Virtual Meeting
2	All Civic Life	All Star Game: Share All Motions to Civic Life Staff + All Add Questions, Comments, Concerns to Motions	Digital Exercise
3	Civic Life Teams	Make a Move: Receive All Civic Life Comments + Stay, Amend, or Fold	Virtual Meeting
4	Civic Life Leadership	The Refs' Instant Replay: Review and Discuss Motions + Attach Practical Feedback; Give Feedback on the process	Virtual Meeting
5	City Bureau Directors	The Game: Directors' Meeting Huddle Homework: Captains recruit your players	Virtual Meeting

Game Process Breakdown, Continued

Level	Team	Goal	Mode
6	City Employees	The Game: Learn the Rules and Start Playing Comment on Civic Life Motions + Generate Your Motions	Virtual Meeting
7	Civic Life Teams	Civic Life Remix: Respond to City Bureau Team Motions + Stay, Amend, or Fold	Virtual Meeting
8	City Employees	City Bureau Teams Remix: Respond to Civic Life Feedback + Amend Your Motions	Virtual Meeting
9	Advisory Committee	Academic Assist: Receive and Review Motions + Add Big Picture/Academic Feedback	Virtual Meeting
10	Civic Life Teams	Finals= Reflections + Last Minute Amendments	Virtual Meeting
Survey	City Employees	Make a Motion + Give Feedback	Digital Survey

The Results

We asked City employees...

**“What change would you make to improve
the way the City engages with Portlanders?”**



We got 683 answers.

Game Board Before

Bureau Design - Internal Listening Project

Level 1: Post Your Motion

Does this Motion Promote the
Common Good?

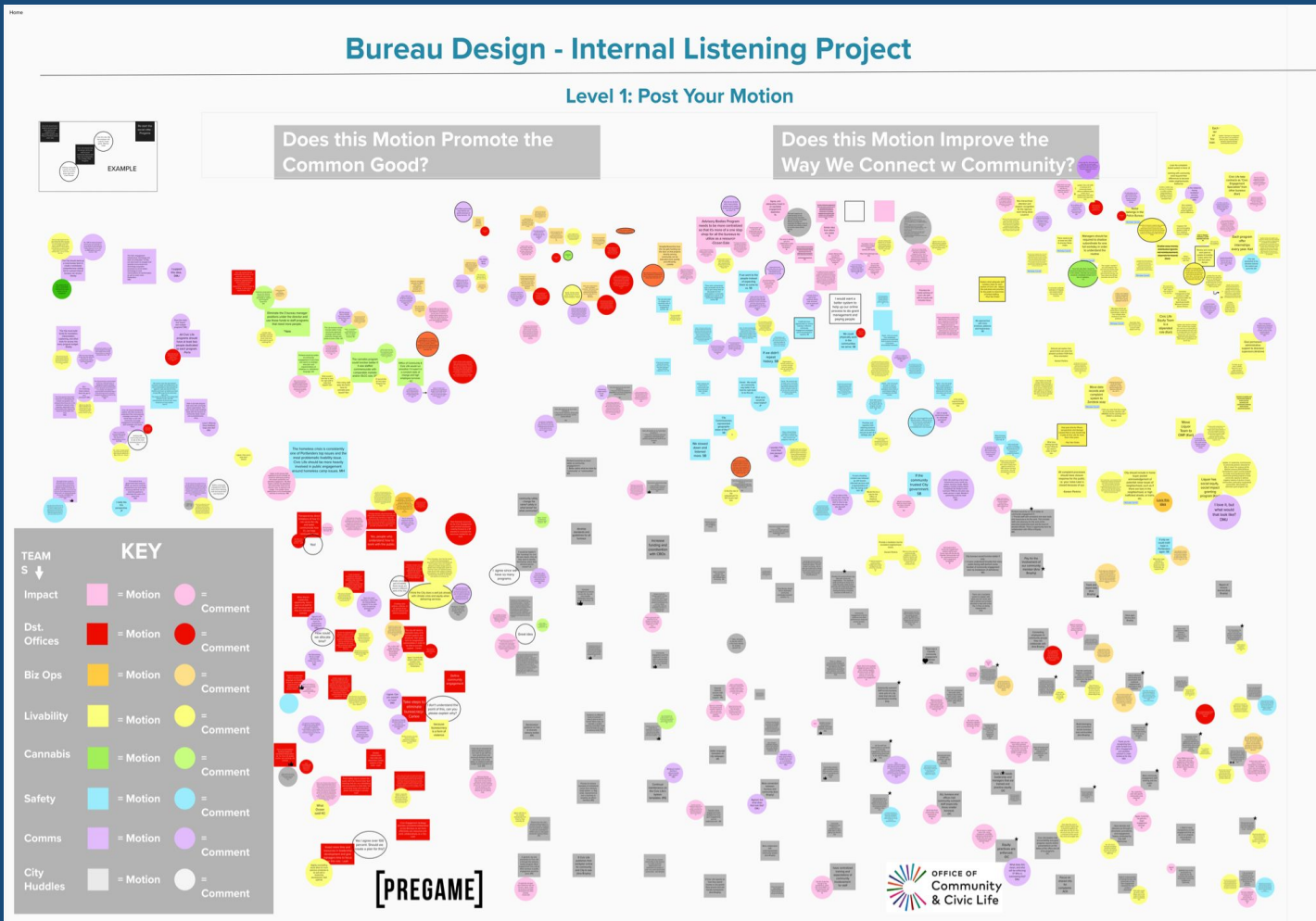
Does this Motion Improve the
Way We Connect w Community?

TEAM S ↓		KEY	
Impact		= Motion	 = Comment
Dst. Offices		= Motion	 = Comment
Biz Ops		= Motion	 = Comment
Livability		= Motion	 = Comment
Cannabis		= Motion	 = Comment
Safety		= Motion	 = Comment
Comms		= Motion	 = Comment
City Huddles		= Motion	 = Comment

[PREGAME]



Game Board After!



Game Board Zoom In

TEAM S ↓		KEY	
Impact		= Motion	 = Comment
Dst. Offices		= Motion	 = Comment
Biz Ops		= Motion	 = Comment
Livability		= Motion	 = Comment
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City Huddles		= Motion	 = Comment

Agreed! When our bureau (and all bureaus) are professionalized and more distance is put between us and the whims of whichever elected official happens to be in charge, then we can focus on our work more without having to worry about political ramifications.
-OE

Improve orientation process for GM to City's grant management process and equirements. IT

What is GM? Grant managers? It seems that we are also needing this about how to administer reimbursements for CBOs, too.
DMJ

GM - grant manager. Can you tell more on what reimbursement we administered for CBO?

Live Session Participants

- 86 participants
- 39 individuals put motions on the board
- 174 total motions generated
- 226 motion comments generated
- 11 bureaus and organizations represented:
 - Office of Community & Civic Life
 - Planning & Sustainability
 - Government Relations
 - Management & Finance
 - Emergency Communications
 - Office of Emergency Management
 - Portland Parks & Recreation
 - Portland Bureau of Transportation
 - Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland
 - Equitable Engagement Practitioners Group
 - Bureau of Environmental Services

Survey Respondents

- 509 participants = 7.5% of City Employees
- 396 participants submitted motions for change
- 33 bureaus and sub-bureaus were represented:
 - Auditor's Office
 - Development Services
 - Emergency Communications
 - Environmental Services
 - Human Resources
 - Revenue & Financial Services
 - City Attorney's Office
 - City Budget Office
 - Commissioner Ryan's Office
 - Commissioner Mapps' Office
 - Development Services
 - Fire & Police Disability & Retirement
 - Independent Police Review
 - Mayor's Office
 - Community & Civic Life
 - Emergency Management
 - Revenue Division
 - Equity & Human Rights
 - Government Relations
 - Management & Finance - Human Resources
 - Management & Finance - Internal Business Services
 - Management & Finance - Revenue & Financial Services
 - Management & Finance - Technology Services
 - Management & Finance - Chief Administrator's Office
 - Planning & Sustainability
 - Transportation
 - Children's Levy
 - Portland Fire & Rescue
 - Portland Housing Bureau
 - Portland Parks & Recreation
 - Police Bureau
 - Water Bureau
 - Prosper Portland

What We Heard

Motions = Actionable, Solution-Oriented Ideas

Motions represent participants' ideas for engagement and bureau organization.

Motions are suggestions put forward by city employees for the enhancement of community engagement in Portland. They are not edicts for action.

Motion creators had direct control of the language used to express their ideas. Although motions were reviewed by peers, Civic Life managers, and colleagues across the city, no modifications were made to the original motions and no qualifying motions were cut.

What Got Cut

A motion is an actionable idea for change. Non-actionable ideas were categorized as comments and not counted in the number of motions, but they remain in the data.

Motions required the creator's name. Fewer than a dozen motions unnamed motions were deleted during in-person meetings. 112 motions from the survey did not have a name. We kept the survey results but did not count them in the motion themes.

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Motions

+ Comments

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Have a formal liaison position to represent Civic Life to connect with other bureaus and programs in the city JP

I wonder if its more than one person?
DMJ

I wonder how much of this is happening but it's invisible? Would be great to develop a bureau partnership/social map of who is connected and repping the bureau/program where. Kari

Themes



The motions generated in the listening sessions and survey fit broadly into the categories of *People* and *Systems*.

In each category were three distinct themes. Those themes are discussed below.

Total Mentions per Theme

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Community Outreach: 144

Accessibility + Equity: 136

Internal Roles + Structure: 66

Community Responsiveness: 53

Engagement Tools: 52

Process Improvement: 42

Employee + Leadership Stability: 31



“I see optimism in places all around the city. How can we pull this together to make it the ‘normal’ we expect? What can the city do to foster this?”

– John Steup

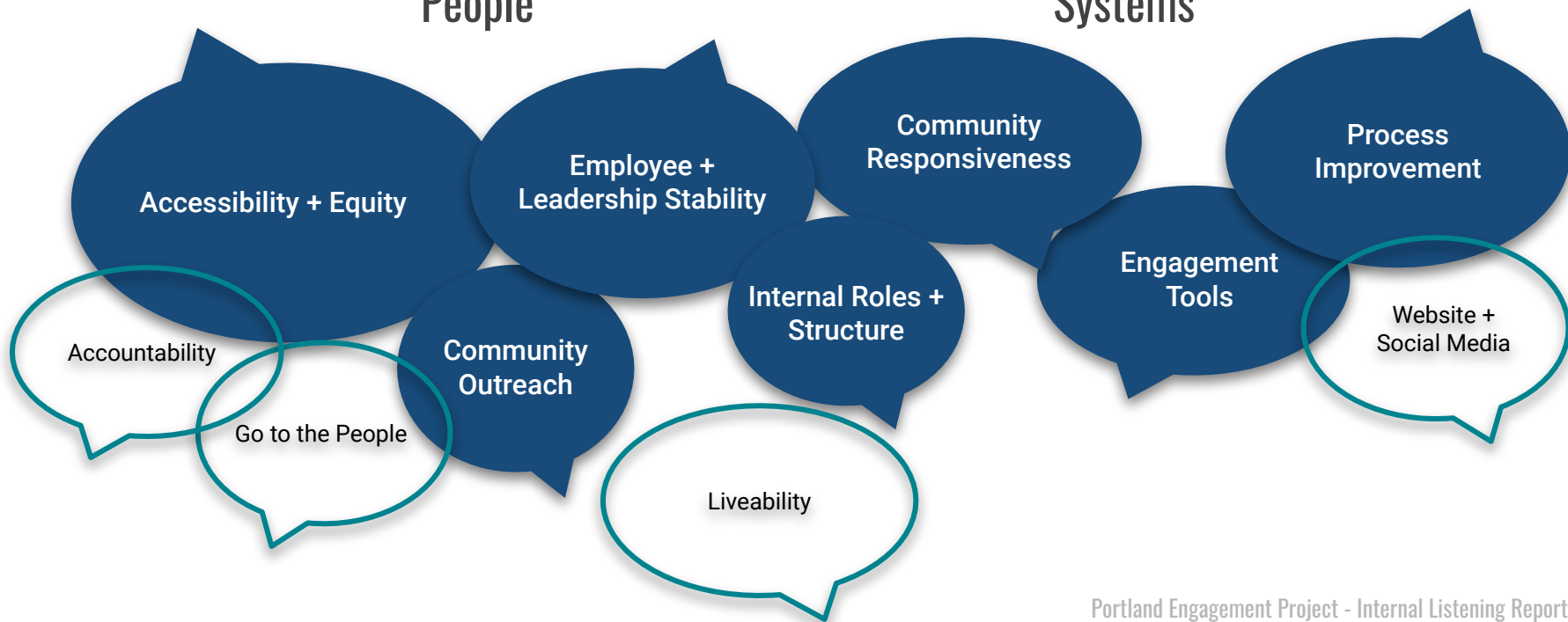
Livability Team, Civic Life

Response Themes

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People

Systems



Community Outreach

17 Motions + 127 Survey Responses

Only engage when you plan to use the input that you receive.

Every shooting incident should be followed up with trauma informed services and a representative of the City doing a site visit.

Explain to the public how the tax dollars collected by the city are spent including projects and timelines.

Prioritize and regularly hold listening sessions with communities, not just as part of a strategic plan.

Accessibility + Equity

32 Motions + 104 Survey Responses

Each staff is required to engage in x amount of equity training each year.

The City must build funds for translation, interpretation, captioning, and other tools for access into every program budget.

Pay for the involvement of Community Members

The City must build funds for translation, interpretation, captioning, and other tools for access into every program budget.

Internal Roles + Structure

41 Motions + 25 Survey Responses

Move Liquor Team
to OMF (from Civic
Life).

Have an engagement
group that is a resource
across city employees
that share best practices
and capacity for projects.

...Fund revitalization
programs and would
lead those programs
through a result-based
accountability
framework.

Have all bureaus' and
offices' community
engagement
professionals work
together.

Community Responsiveness

6 Motions + 47 Survey Responses

The city should hire more staff so that the city can respond to the public's needs faster.

The City should make an effort to send a response to each letter or email sent to the City by a concerned citizen.

Make it easier for Portlanders to talk to a live person, less transferring of calls.

Ensure that the work groups that are public facing are fully staffed and supported so they have the time to meaningfully engage with the public.

Engagement Tools

25 Motions + 27 Survey Responses

More transparency,
data collection,
reporting, a
dashboard.

I would love for us to have a database of all the neighborhoods, in each neighborhood we would have the name of community organizer (not the biggest whiners), any CBOs, rockstar students, teachers, firefighters, nurses, NET volunteers or cops who live there. WE ALL GET IPAD PROS!

Provide a mediation
tool for escalated
neighborhood issues.

Process Improvement

20 Motions + 22 Survey Responses

Formalize a Civic Life participatory budgeting program.

Take steps to eliminate bureaucracy.

The City should engage early enough in the process that public opinions and perspectives can be incorporated into the process or project.

Have more coordinated engagement across bureaus.

Employee + Leadership Stability

29 Motions + 2 Survey Responses

Each program
[within Civic Life] to
offer internships
every year.

Give permanent
administrative support to
directors/supervisors.

...Previously
approved strategic
plans didn't
arbitrarily change
with political power
shifts.

All Civic Life programs
should have at least
two people dedicated
to each program.

Subcategories

Some of the motions shared common secondary qualities: themes within the themes.

The theme of **Accountability, Follow Through, and Transparency**, was shared amongst **Accessibility + Equity**, **Community Outreach**, and **Process Improvement**.

Go to the People captures suggestions of City representatives physically meeting people where they are, and was a theme within **Community Outreach** and **Accessibility + Equity**.

The City's **Website + Social Media** were the most common and specific engagement tools mentioned in the survey.

Accountability, Transparency, and Follow-Through

11 Motions + 70 Survey Responses

Work to give voice to all Portlanders in some way not just those who reach out to you. I hear from many Portlanders at presentations I provide and they feel as if they are not being heard.

By delivering action.

The City should work with community groups and residents to hear specific feedback and put it into action rather than assuming or prescribing what residents of Portland "want".

Listen to Portlander's concerns, and then truly follow through on actions. I don't think people feel they are really being heard.

Go to the People

9 Motions + 42 Survey Responses

We could physically work in the communities we serve.

Hold regular meetings throughout the city to engage with the public on their turf.

Go to where people are - don't ask them to come to us - and listen to what they have to say.

Provide greater access to all our Bureaus (such as in physical offices/spaces)

Website + Social Media

0 Motions + 22 Survey Responses

Make the City of Portland website easier to navigate for all users.

Update the website to provide direct, accessible information.

Invest more time assuring the city's key services and requirements (taxes, etc.) are easy to find, and (crucially!) easy to use - through more user-testing of our website, forms, 311, etc. Hire civic designers to assure all of our services are designed around end-users.

The City should engage more through social media outlets, as a way to be more transparent and to keep Portlanders informed.

Comment Themes

In the context of The Game, a motion is an actionable suggestion for change to improve civic engagement. Within the listening process, there were many comments that did not fit the definition of a motion, yet added important themes.

Houselessness and **Public Safety** are among the top concerns of many Portlanders today, reflected in group discussions and comments. We combined these two concerns into the category **Livability**.

Frequently Commented Topics were largely generated from the survey, although some were also generated in the group meetings. They predominantly had to do with **Accessibility + Equity** and **Community Responsiveness**.

Livability

3 Motions + 30 Survey Responses

The city needs a plan to engage more houseless folks in the community engagement process.


No one wants to hear about promises to be more equitable, sustainable or inclusive when around every turn is a reminder of how this city is failing to keep us safe.

Respond to reported criminal activity for the safety of the public and employees.

The homeless crisis is consistently one of Portlanders top issues and the most problematic livability issue. Civic Life should be more heavily involved in public engagement around homeless camp issues.

Accessibility, Equity, and Community Responsiveness

1 Motions + 124 Survey Responses



Engage in
informed
discussion with
all Portlanders.

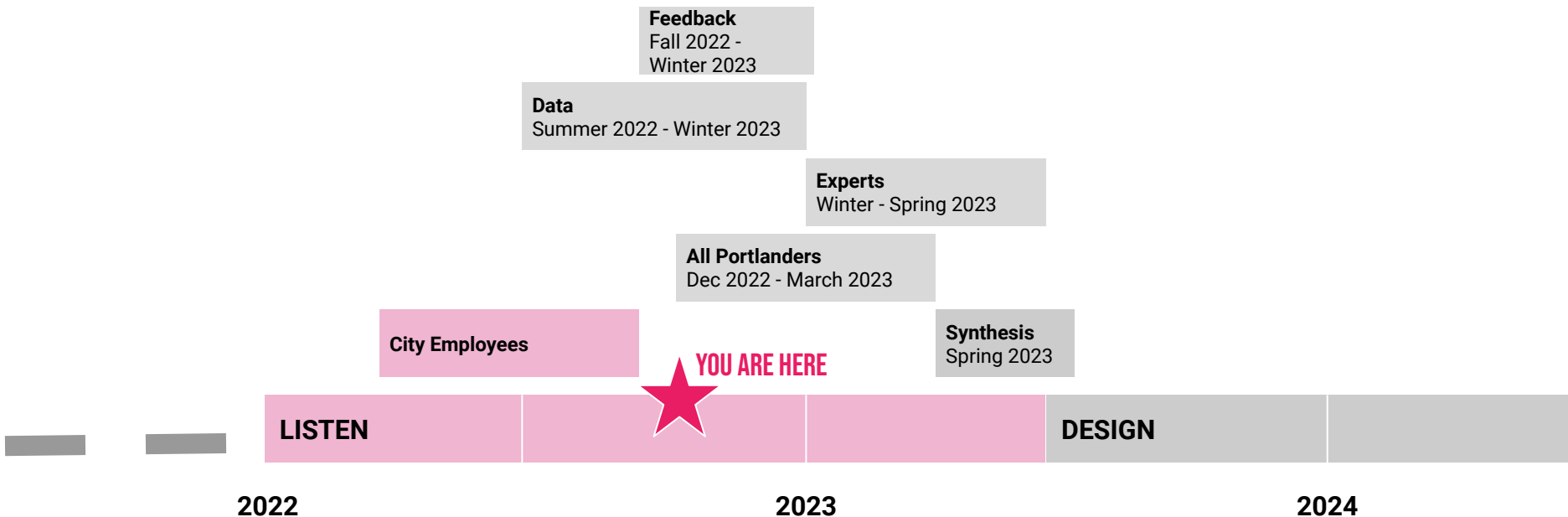
Continue
communication
and transparency.

The City should do a
better job engaging with
BIPOC communities.

Do unto others as
you would have
them do unto you.

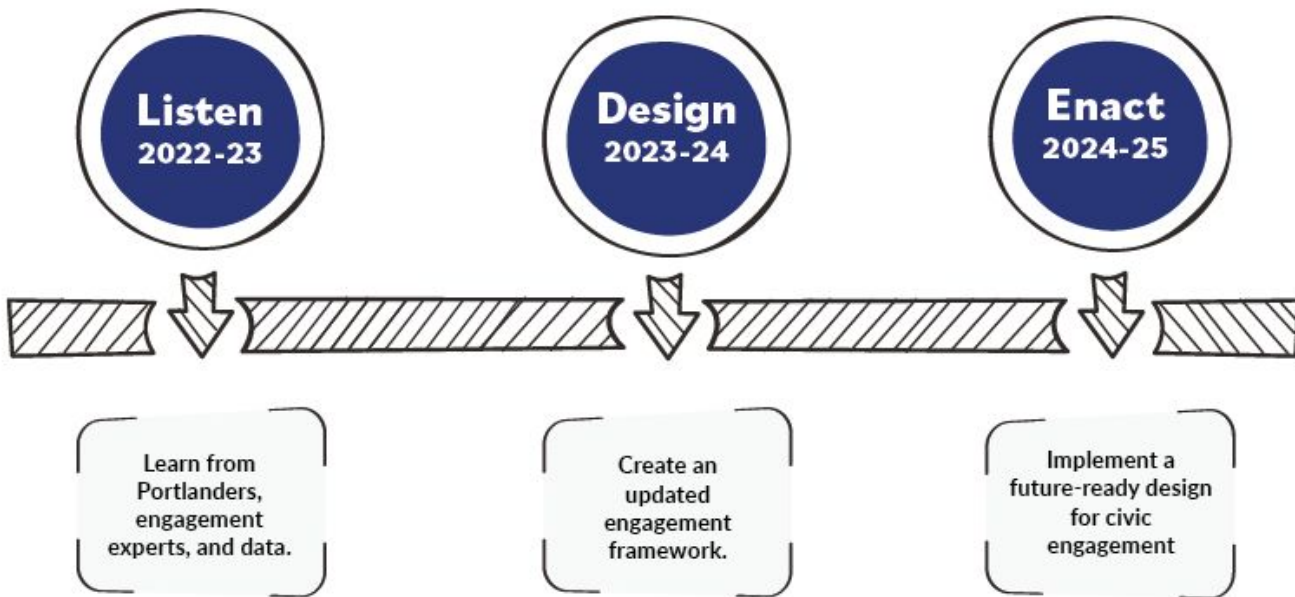
What's Next?

PEP Listening Timeline



Portland Engagement Project Timeline

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What's Next and Why

Listening to City employees is only the beginning. We must generate an inclusive and representative set of motions from Portlanders through the next phase of the listening project. Meanwhile, additional listening is happening with data, feedback, and engagement experts.

Once the listening phases are complete, the ideas and comments generated will be the starting point of developing the Portland Engagement Plan. Motions will need to be stress-tested, evaluated, prioritized, filtered, and studied for real-world feasibility before they are realized in an actionable design.

How that comprehensive work is done is critical to the success of the Portland Engagement Project. By combining works of the past with iterative input from City employees, community members, subject matter experts, and community engagement professionals, we can design the future of engagement together.

The process should be designed to be fun, inclusive, and solution-oriented, from start to finish. The resulting Portland Engagement Plan will be proposed in 2024 and enacted in 2025 and beyond.



Pregame Reflections: Keep the Momentum

We recommend incorporating and iterating on this approach for the next phase, **Listening to All Portlanders**. We received positive feedback from participants and leadership on our approach, style, efficiency, adaptability, and access.

It's important to keep the momentum by moving directly into the next phase - Portlanders have already expressed interest in being part of this process, so let's give them platforms to add their ideas and comments to shape their own future.

Pregame has partnered with Civic Life for the past year to develop its leadership team, launch the Portland Engagement Project, and complete the first listening phase, so we are ready to hit the ground running in order to empower all Portlanders to participate.

It would undermine public trust and the relevance of info gathered during City Employee Listening to delay community engagement. Let's move forward with intention while maximizing the ways Portlanders can engage.



Pregame: Project Success

The Internal Listening Project was a unifying, future-ready, inclusive, iterative, and transparent process that allowed employees of the City of Portland to put forth their best thinking on how the city could better engage their community now, and in the future.

There was a lot of common ground in the ideas generated. Participants motivated each other to sharpen their ideas through the question and comment periods. The lack of redundancy in the final motions demonstrates the power of the live group process (versus siloed suggestions) and cooperation across teams. While motions shared themes, each motion was unique and holds potential for better engagement.

Getting feedback from employees who chose to participate was not enough. The survey further included hundreds of people across dozens of bureaus in a way that was efficient and productive. The clarity, creativity, and consistency of our gamified approach led to the collection of more feedback than expected, in a timely manner, completed under budget.

Ultimately, Pregame owes the success of this project to the hundreds of participants who put their best ideas forward to start reimagining an engagement infrastructure for the future.

Pro Tips: Engaging City Employees

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Participants expressed enjoyment of the process itself, calling it “fun” and appreciating the solution-oriented focus.

Any City team can implement what worked for us in their own meetings. Here is a simple process:

1. At your next meeting, change the agenda to a goal of solving a specific problem.
2. Require that suggestions be phrased in affirmative, solution-focused language.
3. Do one round of generating solution ideas, and then a second round of attaching questions and feedback to each of the ideas generated.
4. Have the idea creator answer questions or modify their suggestions based on the feedback if they believe to do so would enhance their suggestions. If not, have them share why not.
5. End by ranking the solutions in order of preference.



Full Data Links

The Plan that synthesizes all the listening data will be designed in 2023-24 and implemented in 2024-25.

However, any bureau or team could adopt the ideas generated sooner.

City leaders and managers can ask their teams to share the ideas generated through this project, or review the complete data to identify ideas that could benefit them now.

The creator's name appears alongside their idea, so be sure to include them in the implementation or recognize their contribution.



Final Game Board
[\[click here to view\]](#)

Motions Spreadsheet
[\[click here to view\]](#)

How Can We Shape Portland's Future Together?

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The Office of Community & Civic Life is leading this multi-year reimagining of community engagement.

We're opening our process to Portlanders more broadly in 2023.

Our goal is to create a city that's truly connected and responsive to ALL its people.

Together, we'll clarify the needs of our communities and how Portland can improve the way it meets those needs now, and in the future.

Join us!





Does this Motion Promote the
Common Good?

Does this Motion Improve the
Way We Connect w Community?

CHEERS!

Ciara Pressler, Consultant
Marissa Cade, Designer and Facilitator
Barbara Chen, Communications Advisor
Marlo Maroon, Project Manager

[PREGAME]

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