



PUBLIC OUTREACH PLANNER

- Typical Project Descriptions
- Suggested Possible Tools
- Project Outreach Tracking

PROJECT NAME: _____

POP SCORE: _____

POP LEVEL: _____

For existing projects, check project folder(s) to determine if a workbook has already been started. When starting a new workbook, save out the PDF into the project folder **BEFORE** filling in fields. Use the PDF version to record project information.

Information filled in through a web browser will not be recorded and cannot be saved.

SAVE NOW





Step 1

Select
Appropriate Track



Step 2

Answer Questions
& Get POP Score



Step 3

Save POP Worksheet
& Descriptions



Step 4

See POP Project
Descriptions



Step 5

Review POP Reference
Guide & Outreach Tools



Step 6

Fill Out & Save POP
Reference Guide & Workbook



This POP Reference Guide & Tracking Workbook is designed to help project teams track and document public involvement activities throughout the life of a project, planning effort or community initiative (commonly referred to as “project” throughout this document).

TYPICAL PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The following table describes common attributes of a City project or community initiative at various POP levels. Review of these tables allow users to refine decisions about the most appropriate POP Level for a project impacts. For example, a Project Manager answered the public works worksheet questions to the best of her knowledge for an upcoming sewer line replacement project and landed on a POP Score of 2.53. The worksheet automatically rounded up to a POP Level 3 but after reading the typical project description, the project manager feels like her project is less complicated and this description does not exactly fit. Because her POP Score fell almost half-way between a 2 and 3, she reads the POP Level 2 description and discovers that this more accurately describes her project and proceeds with a Level 2 recommendation.



POP TIP While simple categorization of outreach need provides the benefit of being able to plan for and better manage multiple projects, project managers and teams should remember that public involvement and outreach is a dynamic process. Adjustments are often required over the life cycle of a project, with corresponding changes in approach, strategy and tasks. Given this, be aware that a project may move from POP level to level on the chart as it evolves from phase to phase, or even within a single project phase. You can never fill out the POP Worksheet too often. If it feels like your project has grown less or more complicated, redo the worksheet and see where you come out.

TABLE 1: TYPICAL PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

POP Level	Score	Typical Project Description
Level 1	0 - 1	The likelihood of political scrutiny is low, and few stakeholders/groups must be coordinated with. The project/effort is likely to be brief in duration and confined to a smaller area. The public is likely to have little interest or be supportive of the proposed project/plan, with little likelihood of controversy. Few if any direct impacts are expected to adjacent properties and the public. If this is being driven by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) this would likely be a Categorical Exclusion (CatEx).

Level 2	1.1 - 2	The likelihood of political scrutiny is low, and few stakeholders/groups must be coordinated with. The project/outreach area is likely to be confined to a single neighborhood or section of the City. The project is either brief in duration with minor impacts to the public and adjacent property owners, or is more lengthy in duration but with little to no impact. Historically, public interest is either low, or the public has been supportive of similar projects. Care should be taken to reinforce the positive relationships that exist with various stakeholder groups. If this is being driven by NEPA this would likely be a CatEx.
Level 3	2.1 - 3	Political considerations are moderate, and the number of stakeholders/groups requiring coordination begins to rise in this level. The project may span more than one section of the City and require more intense stakeholder coordination. For construction projects this is likely to last an entire construction season with moderate impacts to the public and adjacent stakeholders. Given the longer project duration and the rising level of impact, potential for controversy also begins to rise. Public interest levels also increase, as well as the likelihood for political or project detractors. If this is being driven by NEPA this would likely be a CatEx or Environmental Assessment (EA).
Level 4	3.1 - 4	There is a high level of anticipated political interest and multiple stakeholders, groups and organizations may require coordination by and with the project team. The project/plan scope likely covers multiple neighborhoods and a larger geographic region or is a city-wide effort or plan. For public works, utility or construction projects, the project is likely to last one to two construction seasons and present significant delay and impact to the public. The number of adjacent property impacts is significant or the impacts to a lesser number of adjacent properties are more severe at this level. Given the above factors, the likelihood of controversy is high and the public interest may be high and may be primarily negative. If this is being driven by NEPA this would likely be an EA.
Level 5	4.1 - 5	Political implications associated with this study or project are considerable, with policy-level decision makers taking personal interest in project outcomes. Corresponding agency interest is also high, with many government, agencies and special interest groups needing coordination and involvement. The project scope is large, with an extensive project or study area, and duration is likely to span years rather than months. Impacts may be heavy and of a long duration, ranging from extensive right-of-way acquisitions to severe lane restrictions and delay. Again, the likelihood for controversy is high, given the high stakeholder interest and potential for negative Department perceptions. If this is being driven by NEPA this would likely be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUGGESTED POSSIBLE TOOLS

You know your POP level and you have an idea of the project impacts to stakeholders, but how do you actually do the outreach?

The following provides a list of recommended, possible tools and techniques that when done right, have proved successful at effectively involving the public. Public outreach tools listed here are not required, and it is not expected that a project or initiative will exhaust the list for its particular POP Level. It is recommended that project staff work with City Public Information Officers (PIOs) to determine which tools and techniques are most appropriate for your project and affected public.

Please note, engagement of disadvantaged or vulnerable communities should be considered at ALL POP levels. Keep these communities in mind as you work through a project and develop a public engagement strategy. This includes considering translation of materials to support limited English proficiency (LEP) populations. Contact a City PIO for more information on LEP plans and support.

Select the tools you plan on using for this project. Keep in mind that the tools build on each other at each level, so select tools at each level to use for your level of effort.



REMINDER NEPA has specific requirements regarding public involvement. Please refer to [NEPA guidelines](#) to determine if there are specific outreach timelines and tools required for your project.

TABLE 2: SUGGESTED POSSIBLE TOOLS

POP Level	Possible Tools <i>(Check the box of those tools that you plan on using for your project.)</i>
Level 1	☐ Fliers (for construction projects) ☐ Agency notification (if applicable) ☐ City Council Coordination ☐ Letter to key stakeholders ☐ News release ☐ Impacted stakeholder contact and coordination ☐ Website/Mobile App Posting ☐ Social Media posting ☐ City text alerts ☐ VMS signs (for construction projects)
Level 2	Tools in Level 1 with the addition of: ☐ Fact Sheet ☐ Fliers/Door-to-door information drops ☐ Ongoing stakeholder availability and coordination ☐ Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coordination (for construction projects) ☐ Newsletters (paper and electronic) ☐ Ongoing social media

Level 3

Tools in Levels 1 and 2 with the addition of:

- ☐ Local elected official outreach
- ☐ Project information displays (i.e., lawn signs, posters, banners)
- ☐ Project specific website
- ☐ Public meetings/hearing
- ☐ Legal notices/notice of availability
- ☐ Community Advisory Committee
- ☐ Surveys (traditional or online)
- ☐ Media relations
- ☐ Continued key agency/stakeholder coordination

Specific outreach to:

- ☐ Special interest groups
- ☐ Civic/community organizations
- ☐ Economic development organizations

For Level 3 construction projects, you may consider adding:

- ☐ Pre-construction partnering workshop (contractor and City)
- ☐ Pre-construction public open house/"Meet the Contractor" event
- ☐ Transit and school district/busing coordination
- ☐ Trucking and motor carrier coordination
- ☐ Project-specific phone number and email address

Level 4

Tools in Levels 1, 2 and 3 with the addition of:

- ☐ Stakeholder interviews and assessment
- ☐ Site tour/field trip
- ☐ Project graphics/landscape renderings
- ☐ Paid media and advertising (traditional and social media)
- ☐ Online open house
- ☐ Neighborhood association outreach
- ☐ Partnering workshops
- ☐ Attendance/booths at community events
- ☐ Pre-project conflict assessment
- ☐ Right-of-way process support
- ☐ GIS comment map
- ☐ Project conflict resolution/mediation
- ☐ Regular agency/municipal leadership updates
- ☐ Design charrette
- ☐ Kick-off event/Ribbon cutting
- ☐ Virtual Town Hall/ Community Conversations
- ☐ Utility bill notice

For Level 4 or higher construction projects, you may consider adding:

- ☐ Construction Coordination Team (made up of community members, contractor team, property/business owners, City staff)
- ☐ Conflict resolution/mediation support

Level 5

Tools in Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 with the addition of:

- ☐ Video productions and/or graphic animations
- ☐ Custom project/initiative website/webpages
- ☐ Dedicated staffer or consultant support
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Facilitated decision-making
- ☐ Process evaluation/regular after-action reviews of process and outreach
- ☐ Policy-level problem solving workshops
- ☐ Project-specific social media page

POP TRACKING AND RECORD KEEPING

Instructions for POP Tracking:



- 1.** These POP Tracking pages are designed to help project teams track and document public involvement activities throughout the life of a project. The following pages ask specific questions about your project to help current and future projects teams:

- understand project history, trends and public opinions and attitudes.
- easily locate and reference relevant files, documents and collateral.



- 2.** Be sure to check project folders from past phases to determine if a Workbook has already been started for your project.



- 3.** Visit this workbook regularly with your team throughout the project, noting the following as they occur:

- Changes in your POP Score
- Added team members
- Addition of major stakeholders
- Right-of-way impacts
- Major events and milestones that influenced public involvement, including controversies and successes
- Analysis of the effectiveness of tools and techniques



- 4.** Continually save and update the following documents in your project folder:

- This reference guide and workbook
- Completed POP questions
- Other outreach materials: brochures, advertisements, display boards, press releases, photos, graphics, social media, etc.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO RESAVE YOUR WORKBOOK BEFORE EXITING

POP TRACKING AND PROJECT PLANNING

PROJECT MANAGER: _____ DATE WORKSHEET STARTED: _____

CITY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED: _____

PROJECT FILE LOCATION: _____

Most recent POP Score: _____ Most recent POP Level: _____

General Project Description:

1. What project team members participated in answering the POP Questions for this project?

2. As a project team, determine a schedule to re-visit the POP worksheet and this tracking workbook? Please record those dates and POP scores below.

3. If you completed the worksheet more than once, and your score changed, why?

4. What government/elected officials do you believe will have interest in this project, plan or initiative?

5. What agencies do you believe will have interest in this project?

6. Describe any right of way impacts associated with this project.

7. Are there any other major stakeholders in the project area? Please list and describe.

8. Describe specific design, construction and community issues that may cause controversy with this project.

9. Of the public outreach tools check-marked above, which have proven to be effective? Ineffective? Why?

10. Other Notes: