

II. Public Participation

A. EEJ Recommendation: 2021 Investment in Community Engagement

Top Priority Action

Develop and fund a community engagement strategy to inform the 2021 GC3 planning process and implementation, including support in the form of grants for partnering community-based, non-governmental organizations to design the community engagement process, receive training, and co-develop recommendations to ensure meaningful input and equitable approaches to mitigation and adaptation. Both public and private funding should be pursued.

Equitable approaches to policy planning and implementation recognize that communities should have a role in creating plans that affect their well-being. Equity values community perspectives and viewpoints. Moreover, consultation with communities must be iterative and political representatives and the government should be accountable for advancing equity. If policy makers fail to consider equity in the planning processes, not only do their actions risk further exacerbating inequalities, but they also risk losing the good ideas and important perspectives of the people whose lives and futures are most on the line.

Given the limitations of public engagement in 2020, the EEJ Working Group strongly recommends the creation of a robust public participation process in 2021 in partnership with community-based, non-governmental organizations to ensure meaningful input at both a statewide level and, also, at local levels. Public and private funding should be pursued to support a community engagement process that will include training and more sustained involvement in the GC3 process.¹⁶

The Public Participation Subcommittee of EEJ engaged in discussion about a wide range of ways to engage the public on climate change. In addition to the mechanisms described in detail below, the Subcommittee discussed the value of mandating climate change education in Connecticut's public schools to provide the student population with an understanding of climate science so that they might articulate their concerns about impacts on their communities.

The remainder of this section is intended to provide the GC3 with guidance on how to engage the public throughout the entirety of its policy-making and implementation. The GC3 may use the following language to help inform its planning and to reflect on its efforts to integrate public participation into its work.

¹⁶Given the compressed timetable, EEJ was unable to fully vet a number of critical recommendations made by members of the public. Perhaps most notably, a number of participants called for an end to the Killingly Gas Power Plant, arguing that the operation of the plant is in conflict with the state's carbon goals. Others emphasized the need for more interaction between the GC3 – and, particularly, issues of environmental and climate justice discussed in the GC3 process, and other state decision-makers, including the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) and the Connecticut Siting Council. The relationship between the Transportation Climate Initiative and the GC3 is mentioned briefly below but these are issues that should be more fully discussed through public engagement in 2021.

The EEJ recommends the following principles necessary for fair public participation:

Principles for Public Participation		Guiding Question to Hold Ourselves Accountable
1	Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making	Is decision-making open, transparent, and accountable to the public at all stages?
2	Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making	Is the decision-making process accessible to and inclusive of diverse populations? Are we ensuring that members from historically disadvantaged communities – including communities of color, communities that are economically disadvantaged, people with disabilities, and others are fully participating?
3	Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination	Are community members equal partners in decision-making? Are we asking communities for their equal input and creating policies <i>with them</i> rather than <i>for them</i> ?
4	Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation	Is the decision-making process respectful and streamlined to ensure the time and effort of participants is valued?

The EEJ Working Group has developed three documents to guide public participation in the GC3 process: a Public Participation Guidance;¹⁷ Public Participation Checklist,¹⁸ and Public Participation Remote Guidance.¹⁹ A copy of each follows in full, below.

B. Environmental Justice Public Participation Guidance

This section presents the Public Participation Guidance, which builds on CT DEEP’s years of experience with [public participation](#). In addition, the Guidance synthesizes research from the EPA and Connecticut’s sister jurisdictions, as well as the experience and advice of residents of environmentally overburdened communities.

¹⁷ Public Participation Guidance, *available at* https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cw_GrUc7GhMwrwE5BB1TD7tNH4swB_vjLzTU1tIGTI4/edit?pli=1.

¹⁸ Public Participation Checklist, *available at* <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gnAlQpmYsVuQbqcref3wiJzKfvx9HjtnHGp2dSirSK8/edit?pli=1#>.

¹⁹ Public Participation Remote Guidance, *available at* <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vO5CuaNk74DI7HTtG-jcWFIYyYWdBZ6o530eXdnsFg/edit?pli=1#>.

The Guidance is organized around four principles of public participation. Along with each principle, the Guidance includes a guiding question, a description of the principle, and specific actions the GC3 can take to create more open, accessible, transparent, and accountable public participation now and into the future.

Specifically, the Guidance relies upon the following resources:

- Input from community members in Connecticut, solicited at a public meeting on February 25, 2020.
- The EPA's [Title VI Public Involvement Guidance](#).
- The EPA's brochure on [How to Involve Environmental Justice Communities](#).
- Recommendations from Leticia Colon de Mejias, with [Green Eco Warriors](#).
- The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit's [Principles of Environmental Justice](#).
- The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)'s [Model Guidelines for Public Participation](#).
- Existing city, state and other governmental climate equity plans.²⁰

1. Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making: *Is decision-making open, transparent, and accountable to the public at all stages?*

Summary

When it comes to decisions affecting their wellbeing and environment, members of the public have the right to be informed of, and included early and often in, clear, transparent, and reliable decision-making processes. Being accountable to the public requires not only eliciting, but also listening to, considering, and implementing, stakeholder input, and sharing information frequently and openly.

Specific Actions for Consideration

- Engage the public in all stages of the decision-making, implementation, and oversight processes (soliciting input on a near-final draft of a document under time pressure to complete a process is not sufficient). Stages to engage the public include:
 1. Planning Stage
 - a. Defining the problem or opportunity.

²⁰The city, state, and local government climate equity plans considered include the following: Los Angeles [“Green New Deal”](#) (2019); New York City [“Panel on Climate Change 2019 Report,” Chapter Six](#); Minneapolis [“Climate Action Plan”](#) (2012); Oakland [“Equitable Climate Action Plan,”](#) which is ongoing; Portland, Oregon [“Climate Action Through Equity”](#) (2016); The [Transportation and Climate Initiative \(TCI\)](#) of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States (2019). The EEJ doesn't endorse any as the gold standard, but each presents ideas worth considering and lessons learned.

- b. Establishing criteria for an effective solution (establishing goals and objectives).
 - c. Identifying and evaluating alternatives/potential pathways.
 - d. Selecting a course of action.
2. Implementation Stage: Implementing the course of action.
 3. Evaluation Stage: Evaluating, learning from, and improving the plan and the process.

*Actions to consider **at the start of the planning stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action)*

- Use census data to account for demographics of the community. Be intentional about outreach.
- Develop (with input from key stakeholders, including but not limited to community residents and members of community-based organizations) a community engagement plan, which identifies key communities to engage, how to partner with those communities, and how to track success in partnering with those communities.
- Provide the public with clear information about the government's role, responsibilities, and goals with the project.

*Actions to consider **during the planning and implementation stages** (in order of when to consider each action)*

- Equip stakeholder communities with tools to ensure effective public involvement, including information about the issues at hand and the planned process and timeline for decision-making.
- Inform community members about their rights and role in the planning process.
- Identify appropriate metrics to reflect progress toward (a) policy objectives and goals as well as (b) implementation of the public participation plan
- Capture and share common data to measure progress towards policy objectives and public participation. This may involve training community members to collect data when appropriate.
- Ensure all data that you collect and share respects privacy concerns.

*Actions to consider **during the evaluation stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action)*

- Report progress and outcomes on policy goals and on the implementation of public participation planning in publicly shared reports.

2. Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making: *Is the decision-making process accessible to and inclusive of diverse populations?*

Summary

Every local context has its own cultural, environmental, political, and social background. Work actively to “meet people where they are” so the decision-making process is accessible for as many people as possible, including those who face the most obstacles.

Specific Actions for Consideration

*Actions to consider at **the start of the planning stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action) . . .*

- Work with diverse stakeholders to identify community leaders and assess overall accessibility needs within the community (e.g., what languages are spoken within the community, what communication accommodations are needed, the level of access to transportation, etc.), taking into account census data on languages spoken in the relevant geographic area.
- Create a common language, with and for all stakeholders, that avoids charged language; use this common language in community and public meetings.
- Engage community leaders and local activists to help identify such language, and ensure sensitivity to race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, language, and culture.
 - Clearly define concepts, terms, and ideas, and remove jargon and acronyms from written and spoken word.
 - Providing access to unabridged documents in appropriate languages through repositories (e.g., public websites, etc.)
 - Using multilingual and culturally conscious graphics to convey information.
 - Simplify policy language and ensure that policy information is framed in a way that is relevant to the public and the local audience, to the extent possible. (For example, when discussing issues of climate change before coastal communities, be sure to emphasize the coastal implications in language that is clear and direct; when discussing issues of climate change with communities that are economically disadvantaged, be sure to acknowledge existing inequities as well as how climate change could exacerbate inequities.)
- Gather public suggestions about times, locations, and formats for participation that are most accessible. The GC3 Planning Process is taking place during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Consider how best to reach underserved communities.
 - Recognize barriers to participation specifically for those with disabilities, low or inconsistent internet bandwidth, and homelessness. Connect with these individuals and the organizations involved with providing resources and aid to these populations to inform and impact public participation methods.
- Identify practices, in addition to public and community meetings that to solicit input from the public and to share information with the public. Examples of practices include webinars, conference calls, online feedback forms, etc.
- Consider the use of non-digital outreach to reach those without consistent access to the internet. Examples of practices include Radio PSAs, call-in shows, interviews, direct mail inserts, and SMS messaging
- Codify policies for sharing information with the public in a timely, accessible, and understandable manner, and ensure that all levels of department personnel understand these policies.

*Actions to consider **during the planning and implementation stages** (in order of when to consider each action) . . .*

- Make written information readily accessible by:
 - Considering literacy levels and the needs of people with disabilities and people with physical, intellectual, visual- and hearing-impairments, as well as those without access to personal computers.
 - Translating documents for individuals with limited English proficiency.
 - Making information available in a timely manner, and alerting the public about when and where it can be found.
 - Providing access to unabridged documents in appropriate languages through repositories (e.g., public websites, etc.).
- Make all meetings, events, and information accessible:
 - Determine the types of meeting given constraints of the pandemic for in-person meetings but also limited access to digital technology (computers, Wi-Fi, etc.). Be creative with types of meetings or forums.
- Provide a phone number, web link, and/or email address for communities to learn about upcoming meetings or issues, express concerns, seek participation, or alter meeting agendas.
- Advertise the meeting and its proposed agenda in a timely manner in print and electronic media, as well as radio if appropriate.
- Select time frames that do not conflict with work schedules, rush hours, dinner hours, and other community commitments that may decrease attendance.
- For in-person meetings:
 - Provide food, especially if events are held during dinner hours.
 - Select locations and facilities that are local, accessible, convenient (e.g., reachable via public transit), of adequate size, ADA compliant, and represent neutral turf. Locations should not require participants to present official identification.
 - Provide means of transportation to bring community members to your meetings.
 - Provide tele- or video-conferencing options to increase accessibility of in-person meetings.
- Provide assistance for people who are hearing-impaired, and translators for those with limited English proficiency.
- Provide childcare and/or family-based activities (e.g., coloring stations for children) at events.
- Gather contact information from participants to send information and follow-up.
- Provide access to computers, iPads, Wi-Fi etc. needed for virtual meetings.
- Provide the contact information of personnel who are equipped to record and share community comments, and/or creating online forums or comment opportunities.
- Consider the use of posters and exhibits, public databases, bulletin boards, surveys, telephone hotlines, training and education programs, and participation in community activities.

3. Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination: *Are community members equal partners in decision-making?*

Summary

Those whose health and environment may be affected by a decision have a right to be meaningfully involved in the decision-making process, and to play an equal role in producing ideas and plans. Strong bidirectional relationships built on trust and mutual respect are key to meaningful public participation.

Specific Actions for Consideration

*Actions to consider at **the start of the planning stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action)*

- Develop co-planning relationships with community organizations, by explicitly telling them that you see them as equal partners, and by acknowledging that their community experiences and perspectives are valuable to inform decision-making.
- Provide the community with resources that clearly communicate your work objectives so they can effectively participate in decision-making and implementation.
- Prior to conducting your first meeting with the public, prepare norms to guide how you will collaborate with the community.
 - To develop these norms, solicit assistance from community partners and department staff, including a community steering committee if possible.
 - Norms should include recognizing that members of the public share their own personal experiences/perspectives and that all of those experiences/perspectives are valuable to the policy-making process.
- In addition to developing norms, collaborate with members from the community to learn how the community would like information presented, to solicit questions they would like answered, and to know what languages they speak.
- At your first community/public meeting share norms and frame the entirety of your project by doing the following:
 - Explicitly establish and share goals specific to the meeting, and explain how they fit with larger project goals.
 - Provide a timeline of how the meeting and goals fit into a larger agenda.

*Actions to consider **during the planning and implementation stages** (in order of when to consider each action)*

- Plan meeting agendas in partnership with the community and, at the start of each meeting, ask community members if they would like to add items to the agenda.
- Create an atmosphere of equal participation at meetings and gatherings. (e.g., avoid a head table or panel, use-seating arrangements that allow for easy dialogue, etc.).

- During meetings, provide multiple options and opportunities for community members to ask questions and identify issues of concern. Interested persons should be able to participate in the process through written or spoken means and either identified or anonymously.
- Document questions and concerns, sharing them with the appropriate people and providing clear information about next steps or follow-up.

4. Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation: *Is the decision-making process respectful and streamlined to ensure the time and effort of participants are valued?*

Summary

People have limited social, financial, emotional, and time resources. This may be especially true of environmental justice communities burdened with environmental, spatial, and/or socioeconomic hardships. Policymakers should be respectful of people's limited resources, and avoid exploiting their time, knowledge, and energy.

Specific Actions for Consideration

*Actions to consider at **the start of the planning stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action)*

- Designate a central point of contact within your department to disseminate information to the community and serve as a visible and accessible advocate for community members.
- Identify partners, within the government or in other departments (or working groups) of your project, who will also benefit from community input; contact those individuals to set up a line of communication.
- Identify community leaders who are the most likely to stay engaged with your work and to provide productive feedback that represents members across the public and community, and invite these leaders to act as representatives of their community.
- Consider engaging an independent steering committee of affected community members from the beginning of the process to lead with planning, training, education, and outreach. The committee can act as liaisons between the community and the department when full public participation is not possible.
- Identify groups outside of the government that may be able to provide material and financial resources/support to your community engagement efforts.
 - The department, technical experts, and other key stakeholders (including representatives from local groups) can serve as advisors, and provide resources including financial support for facilitation, technical assistance, and capacity building, as well as meeting locations and logistical support.
- Training existing staff in cultural and linguistically appropriate community outreach techniques. Trainers and staff should be ambassadors of the community engagement process, and should, whenever possible, reflect and represent the communities with which they interact.

*Actions to consider **during the planning and implementation stages** (in order of when to consider each action)*

- Share the name and contact information of the designated point of contact early and often with the public through various channels, especially face-to-face meetings.
- Share community concerns, ideas, and feedback with stakeholders identified in other departments (or working groups) so that all working groups and departments understand and act upon community input.
- After holding a public forum or meeting, establish a procedure to follow up with concrete action to address the community's concerns.
- Alert the community when and how follow up actions are taken, and offer clear opportunities for feedback and further participation.

*Actions to consider **during the evaluation stage** (listed in order of when to consider each action)*

- Create opportunities for continued participation after the project has been implemented, and establish mechanisms to inform the community about the status of the project. Such opportunities and mechanisms could include public in-person meetings in the community, email newsletters, a website where you post updates and solicit feedback, webinars, etc.
- Provide a clearly visible condensed Executive Summary or organized list of recommendations at the beginning of working group reports. Comments have suggested that public participation would benefit from more readable materials, as many people simply do not have the time to fully read and comment on long reports.

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Public Participation Guidance

City, State, and Other Government Practices

For insight into how sister states and other governmental entities have implemented public participation practices, this Part considers information from the following six locations and plans:

- Los Angeles “Green New Deal”
- New York City [“Panel on Climate Change 2019 Report,” Chapter Six](#)
- Minneapolis [“Climate Action Plan”](#)
- Oakland [“Equitable Climate Action Plan”](#)
- Portland, Oregon [“Climate Action Through Equity”](#)
- The [Transportation and Climate Initiative \(TCI\)](#) of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States

The following are some of the most relevant takeaways for consideration:

- **Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making:** Portland’s 2016 plan demonstrates important practices to make engagement transparent and to respond to community feedback. Such practices include continually soliciting and responding to feedback from community partners.

- **Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making:** To cover a broad geographic area, TCI allowed the public to engage with its work through many mediums, including public meetings, online webinars, and conference calls.
- **Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination:** New York City’s and Los Angeles’s plans highlight policies that city and state governments can use to devolve the development and implementation of climate programs to the community-level.
- **Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation:** Oakland has a clear, small advisory body and government office for the community to access as a point-of-contact regarding the city’s climate planning.

The table below details some sample public participation and community engagement practices. The table corresponds to the four guiding principles highlighted in the rest of this guidance document.

Principle for Public Participation	Effective Public Participation and Community Engagement Practices
<p>Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portland created surveys, throughout its process, to hold itself accountable to the needs of its working group. Portland adjusted its engagement practices based on the feedback from those surveys. ● At the end of its work, Portland created a transparent, publicly accessible report to summarize and reflect on its engagement process. ● Since late 2019, TCI has made its engagement processes transparent, particularly by publishing those processes on the internet. ● Oakland has clearly communicated that its advisory committee will hold a series of public meetings and created a webpage with the dates, agendas, and audio recordings of those meetings. ● In an appendix to its climate plan, Minneapolis published a dialogue of formal letters between its city council and community advocates.
<p>Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portland invited a diverse set of community members to nominate themselves to the working group, and its membership appears to have represented a diverse variety of communities in the city. ● Portland provided funds to participating partnering organizations so that they could afford to provide their time to this work. ● TCI, while criticized by environmental justice groups over the last few years, held public meetings and created other mechanisms (e.g., feedback forms, webinars, conference calls, etc.) to engage the public and is currently undertaking to expand its equity efforts. ● Oakland has made its materials available online and the audio of its public meetings available online.

Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● In Portland, the city created its community engagement process in partnership with community partners.● Oakland's advisory committee, which appears to have decision-making authority, consists of a diverse set of community representatives.● New York City's recommendations highlight government policies that provide public funds to community organizations; those organizations implement their own community-tailored climate adaptation plans.● Los Angeles uses California's Transformative Climate Communities grant program to fund community-led climate plans.
Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Oakland has a clear public advisory committee and governmental office for the public to contact.● Oakland's public advisory committee is representative of the broader city community and has real decision-making authority.● Portland created a single community-working group with direct points-of-contact in the city government.

C. Environmental Justice Public Participation Checklist

This checklist was intended as a tool for use by GC3 working groups in planning and evaluating their public participation efforts.

Transparent and Accountable Decision-Making

- Develop a public participation plan detailing the process that will be used to engage the public and how that process will be accessible to diverse populations (see below section titled Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making).
- Provide the public with clear information about the government's role, responsibilities, and goals.
- Inform communities about the issues at hand, their role and rights, and the processes and timelines for decision-making.
- Clearly and frequently, share data that are being used to measure progress toward objectives and goals.
- Document the public participation plan and analyze its success and community opinion, in public reports.
- Ensure all personnel understand policies to share information with communities in a timely and accessible way.
- Use census data to appropriately account for demographics of the community.
- Work with community leaders to create common language with neutral terminology, free of jargon, and sensitive to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability status, and language.
- Use multilingual and culturally conscious graphics to convey information about governmental/commercial/industrial interests.

Accessible and Inclusive Decision-Making

- Translate/interpret documents and in-person discussions for individuals with limited English proficiency, and provide alternative options or assistance for individuals who are physically, visually, and/or hearing-impaired.
- Advertise meetings and their proposed agendas in a timely manner in popular print and electronic media sources, as well as radio, if appropriate. Provide a contact with whom communities can communicate about upcoming meetings.

- Select meeting times not in conflict with work schedules, rush hours, etc. If held during meal hours, provide food.
- Select locations that are local and accessible (e.g., reachable via public transit), of adequate size, ADA compliant, and represent neutral turf (e.g., not a government office, and not an office that requires official identification).
- Offer tele- or video conferencing options for the public to join in-person meetings, using technology available to the public.

Equal Partnerships, Co-Production, and Self-Determination

- Prior to conducting a meeting, form an agenda with the assistance of community representatives. Understand from the community how they would like information presented, questions they would like answered, and languages they speak.
- Create an atmosphere of equal participation at meetings and gatherings by avoiding a head table or panel, and providing multiple opportunities and channels for the public to voice questions and concerns.
- Document questions and concerns, providing clear information about next steps or follow-up.

Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation

- Create relationships by collaborating with other government departments, and ensure interdepartmental coordination and communication so community concerns, ideas, and feedback are acted on in a timely and coordinated manner.
- Establish a central point-of-contact within the department to disseminate information, resolve problems, and serve as an accessible advocate of the public's rights.
- After holding a forum or meeting, establish and advertise procedures to follow-up with concrete action.
- Create opportunities for continued participation and feedback after the project has been implemented, and establish communication channels (e.g., via internet updates or email newsletters, by updating community leaders, etc.) to inform the community about the status of the project.
- Where possible, work with state agencies to identify resources to hire trainers/staff – with technical and administrative knowledge of environmental justice – who are representative of the community, and to train staff in community outreach.

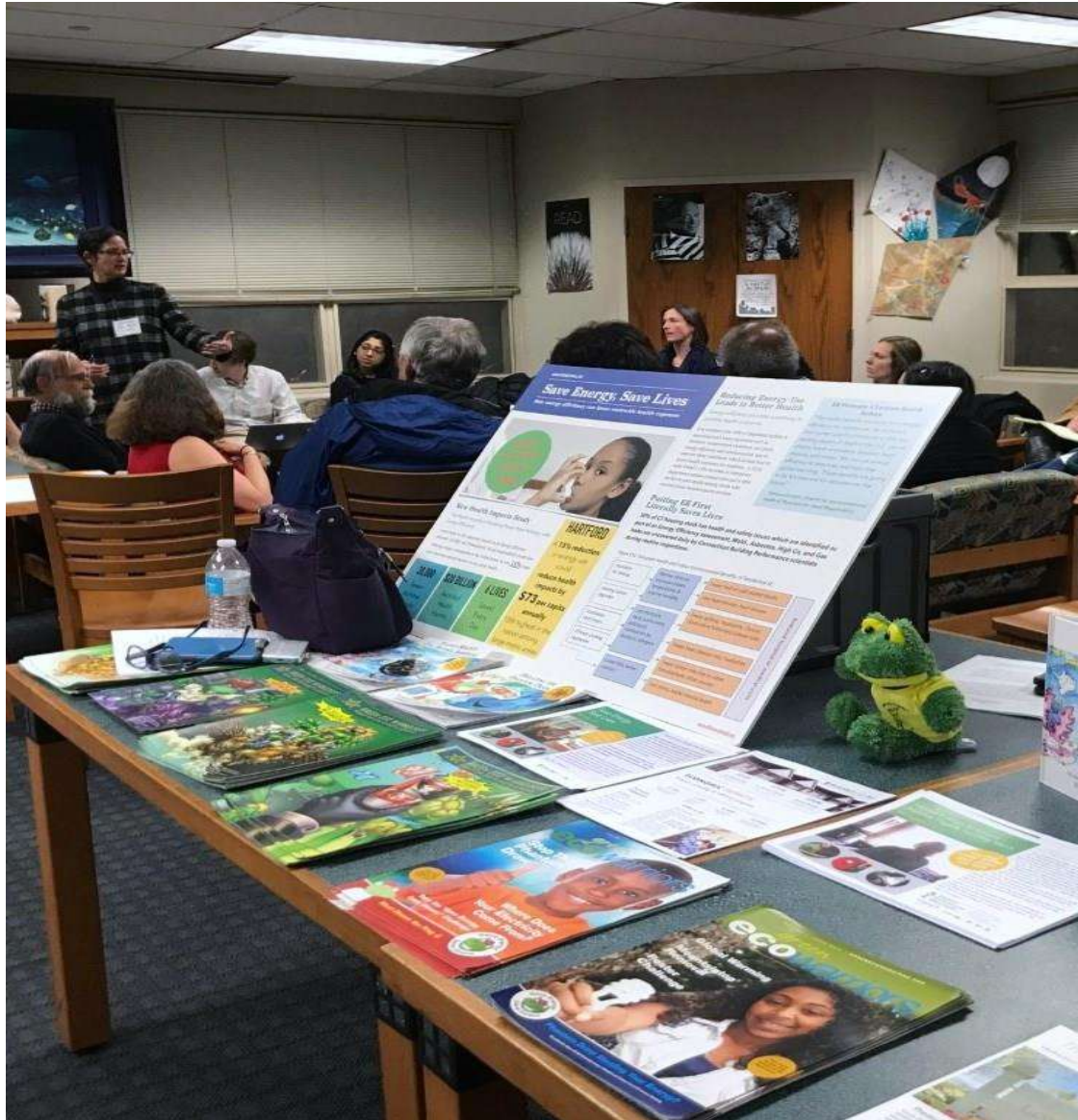


Photo of breakout session to discuss concepts of equity and public engagement practices at the first EEJ meeting at the Sound School.

D. Guidance on Remote Engagement for Public Participation

The following proposed best practices for remote engagement synthesize a range of available literature on the use of Internet, telephonic, and other remote tools for public engagement. The chart below provides guidance for remote engagement by the GC3, separating the creation of a remote engagement strategy into three stages: 1) selecting tools and platforms for remote engagement, 2) implementing these tools and platforms in a strategic and transparent way, and 3) ensuring accessibility of any remote engagement mechanisms.

	PRACTICE	EXPLANATION	THINGS TO CONSIDER
SELECTING TOOLS FOR REMOTE ENGAGEMENT			
#1	Set goals.	Knowing the type and format of remote engagement sought is crucial to choosing an appropriate tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are you seeking close-ended or open-ended input? b. Do you want the public to be able to interact with each other’s input, or only send input directly to you? c. Do you want multiple tiers of options for engagement, so that some people can offer quick feedback and others can offer more in-depth thoughts? d. Do you need to collect feedback, responses, or opinions from remote participants in real time (e.g., in order to make a decision during a meeting?) e. What are quantitative goals for digital participation? Can the tool you are considering handle large groups of people participating at the same time?
#2	Evaluate capacity.	Be realistic about the amount of staff training and time needed by the GC3 or DEEP for successful implementation of an online strategy, and whether or not those staffing resources are available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider technological capacity of participants and accessibility concerns: see points below regarding Ensuring Accessibility of online, for examples of accessibility concerns to keep in mind.
IMPLEMENTING REMOTE ENGAGEMENT			

#3	Plan in detail.	Create a detailed work plan and timeline that notes the goals for remote engagement, the periods when engagement activity will be especially critical, and which online tools should be used to meet goals at appropriate times.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will the tools you are considering reach the intended audiences? 2. What support will members of the public need to use the tools?
#4	Have a communication strategy.	Make sure that the plan for soliciting online public engagement is consistent with your overall communications strategy. Utilize existing communications resources to boost online opportunities. Make sure you are communicating transparently about how online tools will factor into decision making processes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will you get the word out to members of the public? 2. All public meetings must have an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) notice, which includes the contact information for who handles accessibility requests, and information may be provided in an alternative format upon request.
#5	Set ground rules.	Set ground rules for any online spaces in the same way you would in-person spaces, and clearly communicate these expectations with everyone engaging with the process at the outset of their engagement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will you make sure ground rules are digitally available to everyone, even if they are newcomers to the process? 2. What ground rules do you need to function (for example, during a zoom meeting, whether and how lines will be muted)?
#6	Set clear expectations for staff.	Set clear roles and expectations for staff who are responsible for implementing new online tools.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the roles of staff? 2. How will you communicate those goals and expectations?

#7	Solicit and respond to feedback.	Solicit feedback not only on the outcomes of procedure but also on procedural mechanisms used, such as online platforms for submitting commentary, etc. Take timely action to respond to feedback whenever possible, and communicate these changes with stakeholders.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How will you solicit feedback from the public?2. What is the process for tracking and responding to feedback?
ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY OF REMOTE ENGAGEMENT			

<p>#8</p>	<p>Make decisions about incentives, standards, and accountability with respect to the accessibility of remote engagement tools.</p>	<p>All accessibility measures taken for in-person spaces should be duplicated for remote engagement. These include providing translation and interpretation services, keeping detailed records of public meetings by (when appropriate and consented-to) making public meeting minutes or recordings, and identifying and publicizing the identity of point people for handling questions and requests related to accessibility measures, and for implementing changes in response.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider whether creating financial or other incentives for participation is appropriate.²¹ Make sure to value people’s time. Make decisions about incentives and outreach by developing an understanding of potential obstacles to participation faced by your primary stakeholder groups. 2. A remote engagement strategy that seeks to diversify community outreach will have to account for different trends in the demographic preference for various remote tools. Different platforms for remote engagement will be frequented by, or easier to use for, different demographics. <i>See, e.g., “Civic Engagement in the Digital Age”</i> (exploring how income, educational, age, and other demographic gaps are reflected in the use of various online or other media, especially for political purposes). 3. Double check: are the tools accessible for people with disabilities and people who speak languages other than English? 4. Have someone (informally) appointed as the conversation manager to facilitate turn taking. This is extremely helpful when interpreters are present and can only interpret one thing at a time.
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²¹ As discussed elsewhere in this report, a funded public participation process should take place in 2021 to inform the further development and implementation of Connecticut’s climate policies and plans. Outreach to state legislators, municipal leaders, community advocates, grassroots organizations, and the general public is all critical for highlighting the importance of equity and climate justice in the state’s response to climate change. As part of the public participation process, we recommend identifying a working group of environmental justice experts and community advocates, who should be compensated by the state.

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Tools for Remote Engagement

Consistent with the **Draft Environmental Justice Public Participation Guidance**, this document organizes forms of engagement, whether remote or in-person, into three general categories: consulting (soliciting one-way feedback), deliberating (dynamic discussion and/or decision-making), and informing (broadcasting one-way communications to the public).

The following table gives some examples of tools that can be used to pursue all three of these categories of engagement via remote means. This is not an exhaustive list, but meant to help frame and ground the discussion of remote engagement in actual examples for how remote engagement is commonly facilitated.

TOOLS & EXAMPLES	CONSULTING	DELIBERATING	INFORMING
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Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and NextDoor, and attached widgets like Facebook and Twitter polls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Online surveys/petitions/polls such as Google Forms, Survey Monkey, and Poll Everywhere (which allows for real-time collection of answers)	Yes	No	With limitations
Interactive government websites or blogs where the public can post comments	Yes	Yes	Yes
Programs through which the public can access public meetings by computer or by phone, such as FreeConferenceCalls.com phone lines, Zoom, GoToMeeting, or Jit.si. These tools can also be used by the public to observe and participate in webinars (informational sessions on the Internet).	With limitations	Yes	Yes
Informational videos/graphics that can be distributed on social media, public websites, etc.	No	No	Yes
Online receptacles for the public to submit photographic, voice recorded, or video feedback, such as a dedicated email address or submission form on a .gov website	Yes	No	With limitations
Collaborate with other statewide agencies/organizations that serve specific populations.			

Abbreviated Bibliography

“The Beginner’s Guide to Effective Online Engagement” [Link [here](#)]

MetroQuest (a public involvement software company)

Recommendations on best practices and promoting participation, based on observations of use metrics on the back end, as well as one case study from a project it contracted with the public Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization in Tampa, Florida.

“Why Choose Online Community Engagement Platforms & Software” [Link [here](#)]