



# COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN

## TOOLS + TACTICS

An approach to equitable community engagement and action

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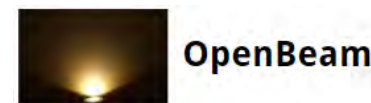
Destination Medical Center

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY OF ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA'S COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN TOOLKIT!

This document is meant for practitioners or organizations hoping to implement a community co-design engagement process for the development of a place, program, or initiative. The primary purpose of this toolkit and process is to provide the information needed to explore a co-design process within your own community. While there are certainly other engagement methods that prioritize the involvement of historically excluded populations that are effective, this guide is focused on community co-design, a type of human-centered design (HCD) approach that looks to create opportunities and structure for shared decision-making.

### The primary objectives of the co-design process are the following:

- Meaningfully include diverse voices in the conceptual and design development process through paid positions where community members develop the project's key principles and measurements for its success.
- Community members are selected because they or their community is most impacted by the project and have the least amount of access to influencing its development.
- The requests, conversations, and questions of communities acknowledge and utilize previous research and community input to scope the co-design effort.
- Co-design explorations are grounded in the lived experiences and assets of the communities most impacted by the project's development.
- Through a series of facilitated meetings and individual explorations, the co-designers and their communities, inform a set of guiding principles that the design team can use to develop a more equitable and community-centric outcome.

The co-design process explained in this toolkit was advanced, tested, and refined by a group of government, non-profit, and private organizations in Rochester, Minnesota. A steering committee comprised of Olmsted County and City of Rochester staff, Rochester-area non-profits and individuals interested in developing an approach to encourage, compensate, and prioritize the inclusion of diverse populations in Rochester in project development. At the time of the development of this approach, the City of Rochester and Destination Medical Center Economic Development Agency (DMC EDA) recognized that their current engagement approaches were not reaching and providing easy or accessible ways for marginalized communities to participate in the development of publicly-funded projects. So, with the help of the Steering Committee members above, we set out to create a process that achieved our inclusion goals and apply it to a pilot project that the DMC EDA was involved in. Since March 2020 and its application to the design of a downtown public park, this process has been used

on nine other local or regional projects. The impact of the co-design process has grown and is shifting how community leaders think about community engagement and equity. The continued expansion of co-design is leading to more direct investment in local expertise and experiences, fostering and strengthened relationships between public agencies and the communities they serve.

In Rochester, we have found the co-design process to be very useful. While we understand community co-design will not solve all problems that ail a community, it is an accessible framework to reframe many of the inequalities that plague many communities. This deeper form of engagement with the communities who can benefit the most, leads to better project outcomes and, in the long-term, helps build trust of community with governmental agencies and other community organizations.

### The toolkit is organized in the following manner to help a practitioner understand a community co-design's purpose:

- Community Co-Design Attributes and Distinctions
- The Benefits of using a co-design process
- Recruitment of co-designers
- Facilitating co-design meetings
- Evaluating the process itself
- Co-design project examples

Our collective hope is that with this toolkit, background, and examples, practitioners will develop a comfort to pilot a co-design process themselves. From our experience, the co-design process is fiercely human-centered and offers real and practical opportunity to move beyond talk to action. We hope to see your community join us on our journey as we work to build a more equitable Rochester, all people at a time.

**Warm Regards,**

Community for Health Steering Committee

# CONTENTS

## 01 Purpose & Background

**IN THIS SECTION** we will cover the who, what, where, and how to this guide, including:

- Who might find this action-focused guide valuable
- What types of project might benefit most from this approach
- Where and when it will have the most value to a project, program, or policy
- Why this approach versus others
- How to use this guide (action-oriented and dynamic rather than a static toolkit).

## 02 Setting Context

**IN THIS SECTION** we will fully describe the co-design approach and value proposition, including:

- Definition and intention of a co-design process
- Detailed co-design sequence
- Literature and case studies that informed approach
- Importance of equity in public projects, programs, and policy
- Barriers to traditional engagement approaches and how co-design addresses them
- How co-design compares/differs from other engagement and research approaches
- Project and organizational prerequisites for successful co-design
- Outline key terms and definitions.

## 03 Recruitment

**IN THIS SECTION** we will describe the importance of, and approach to, effective recruitment for the co design process (recruitment of community co-designers). We will cover:

- The importance of a diverse (racial, geographical, age, socioeconomic, etc.) group of co-designers
- Co-design team
- Stakeholder mapping
- The required competencies for community co-designers
- How to leverage existing relationships
- Growing long-term relationships and community networks.

## 04 Facilitation

**IN THIS SECTION** we will cover the planning and logistics necessary to schedule, facilitate, and support an effective co-design effort. Specifically, we will review:

- Roles, responsibilities, and how to manage team dynamics
- Logistics and helpful tools for scheduling, supporting co-designers, and ensuring a safe and healthy collaborative environment
- Developing principles of success (know you are on the right track)
- Facilitation tools and best practices
- Synthesis and developing co-designer guidance
- One-on-one coaching
- Compiling and sharing outcomes.

## 05 Evaluation & Dissemination

**IN THIS SECTION** we will describe equitable evaluation development strategies that ensure project outcomes reflect community value and lead to continuous improvement. Specifically, we will describe:

- Developing community-centric definitions of “success”
- Capturing feedback from all stakeholders
- Evaluation of project outcomes,
- Evaluation of co-design process
- Developing community-centric communication and marketing strategies.

## 06 Case Studies

**IN THIS SECTION** we will detail several case studies (including Discovery Walk) to help illustrate co-design done well regardless of what the approach was called.

## 07 Appendix

**IN THIS SECTION**

Appendix A: Co-Design Structure Explained.

Appendix B: Co-Design Case Studies

# PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

Effective and equitable co-design is not a set of tools, but a way of collaborating directly with, and investing in, community members being most (and often disproportionately) impacted by challenges. Instead of outlining prescriptive steps, this guide is intended to act as a compass for community organizations to unleash the untapped creative capacity of community members to navigate the most persistent and complex issues facing their community.

Instead of asking how “I” might lead a co-design project, think of this guide as a way to develop the appropriate conditions and structure for equitable co-design to take place and be successful. Each project will take on a little different approach with different stakeholders around the table, as it should. You will find ways, as we have, to adapt this working guide and make it something unique to the communities you are working with. Most importantly, do not let political polarization or analysis paralysis get in the way of doing something. The work of co-design is difficult and can be messy so use this guide to bring community together around goodwill and action.



**Equitable co-design is not traditional community engagement. Equitable co-design aims to address the most persistent inequalities through addressing disproportionate power structures. Co-design is not a good fit for every project or every project team, so before proceeding, please review the pre-requisites for effective and equitable co design in “Assessing Organizational Readiness.”**

# TERMS & LANGUAGE

## Equitable Engagement

Incorporating all stakeholders equitably in the co-design of policies, programs, and projects in the public realm from conceptualization through implementation. Recognizing the failure of our systems to be inclusive of diverse perspectives and correcting for these shortcomings through intentional improvements to design processes and practices. DC

## Traditional Engagement

Seeking transactional or intermittent input from population or affinity groups for the purpose of incorporating feedback and/or garnering support for policies, programs, or projects being developed in the public realm. DC

## Community Stakeholders

Every individual who cares about the community and considers it their own. Those interacting with and impacted by the systems and structures that make up a society. DC

## Power Structures

Formal and informal systems that function simultaneously to control access to power by privileging, normalizing, and valuing certain identities over others. Power structures reflect the institutional nature of power, and the ways that culture underwrites the privileging of certain categories of people. DC

## Diversity

The amount of variation or difference represented (racial, gender, ability status, geography, etc.) Diversity describes a state where a broad and deep level of difference exists. DC

## Inclusion

The level of support that individuals from a diversity of backgrounds feel. Inclusion is an action wherein deliberate steps are taken to ensure participation by all. It is the act of harnessing the power of diversity. DC

## Equity

The condition under which individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities, as the general population. Equity accounts for systematic inequalities, meaning the distribution of resources provides more for those who need it most. Conversely equality indicates uniformity where everything is evenly distributed among people.

Source: National Association of College and Employers

Diversity Council (DC)

## Privilege

Unearned social power (set of advantages, entitlements, and benefits) accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to the members of a dominant group. Privilege tends to be invisible to those who possess it, because its absence (lack of privilege) is what calls attention to it.

*Source: University of Washington School of Public Health Exclusive access or access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group. DC*

## Systemic Racism

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. It has been an enduring feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.

*Source: University of Washington School of Public Health*

## Tokenism

Tokenism is the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive to members of minority groups, especially by recruiting people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of racial or gender equality within

a workplace or educational context. Wikipedia

Tokenism involves the symbolic involvement of a person in an organization due only to a specified or salient characteristic (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, disability, age). It refers to a policy or practice of limited inclusion of members of a minority, underrepresented, or disadvantaged group.

*Source: Psychology.iresearchnet.com*

## Lived Experience

Knowledge and skills developed over time through an individual’s personal history, resulting in unique and valuable wisdom.

## Learned Experience

Professional, technical, and tactical knowledge and skills acquired through formal education and practice.

## Culture

Implicit and explicit values and ways of knowing that allow groups to bind together and perpetuate themselves

The values, beliefs, traditions, behavioral norms, linguistic expression, knowledge, memories, and collective identities that are shared by a group of people and give meaning to their social environments. Culture is learned and inherited behavior that distinguishes members of one group from another group. Culture is not static and can change over time.

*Source: American Sociological Association*

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Humility & Inclusivity



Directly focus on the lived experiences of communities most impacted by a challenge.

**HOW:** Partner with community members that have been most impacted by and have the most at stake in addressing challenges.

## Leverage Assets



Leverage existing community passion, creativity, relationships, and efforts (community assets).

**HOW:** Create efforts that draw from, support, and enhance existing community programs and organizations, not replace or replicate them.

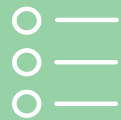
## Radical Collaboration



Diversity of ideas, experiences, and cultures is fundamental to identifying new ways of addressing community challenges.

**HOW:** Create an equitable, inclusive, and transparent process that leverages the collective creativity (diversity) of the community to reframe persistent problems.

## Action-Focused



Don't let uncertainty or differing perspectives be the excuse for doing nothing. All breakthroughs in human history have two things in common: 1) they started somewhere and 2) almost none of them started in the right way or place.

**HOW:** Create iterative opportunities for stakeholders to offer insights and feedback in real-time when they can directly inform and refine the work.

# BACKGROUND

A diverse team of community partners and stakeholders tailored, prototyped, and refined this equitable co-design framework over several years. The start-point for this work arose from an environmental scan that reviewed best practices and projects from around the country, specifically drawing from the following projects/approaches:

- Live Well San Diego
- Imagine Austin
- RWJF County Health Rankings
- Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index
- Healthy Montgomery
- Santa Monica Bloomberg Project
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Human Centered Design (HCD)
- Equity-centered Collective Impact



# SETTING CONTEXT

Too often, community engagement is practiced by simply “going through the motions,” where the outcome is about checking a box rather than shifting the underlying inequities being reinforced through this approach. Not all community engagement is equal, in fact community engagement occurs along a continuum, ranging from passive at one end to partnership and empowerment at the other. The aspiration of any public project, program, or policy should be to continually and actively share decision-making power with community design partners, not for them.

## Increasing impact on the decision

Spectrum of Public Participation  
*(International Association for Public Participation)*

### 1. INFORM

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

### 2. CONSULT

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

### 3. INVOLVE

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

### 4. COLLABORATE

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

### 5. EMPOWER

To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

### ROCHESTER SPOTLIGHT:

For local projects like Discovery Walk, we targeted the involvement and collaboration of communities and individuals who had the most to gain from a new public park in the community and historically had not participated in public projects. More information on this project can be found in the case study section.

# WHAT IS EQUITABLE CO-DESIGN?

No one person or organization can address the complex or wicked problems facing communities today, especially because they disproportionately impact some communities over others. Equitable co-design is about a rigorous and meaningful opportunity for all community members to have a “say” in the community of the future by leveraging shared lived experiences to reframe seemingly intractable community challenges and disparities.

*Co-design is about challenging the imbalance of power held within groups of individuals, who make important decisions about others lives, livelihoods and bodies. Often, with little to no involvement of the people who will be most impacted by those decisions. Co-design seeks to change that through building new relationships, capability and capacity for boundless curiosity. It uses inclusive convening to share knowledge and power.*

- “Beyond Sticky Notes.” Kelly Ann McKercher



## ROCHESTER SPOTLIGHT:

It is difficult to imagine that red-lining or other discriminatory practices would have occurred if it followed the principles of a co-design process. Prioritizing the involvement of (and listening to) people most impacted by a particular planning effort can be a great way to prevent inequitable processes and outcomes.

# WHY EQUITABLE CO-DESIGN?

Like many places around the country, Minnesota is home to high quality of life, but it is also home to significant and persistent disparities in who can access a high quality of life. Relying on the same small group of decision-makers to address these disparities has only maintained the status quo at best and expanded disparities at worst. We can expect little to change unless we “flip the script” and look to directly invest and engage with the same communities experiencing these disparities most acutely.

## How are those most impacted by disparities involved?

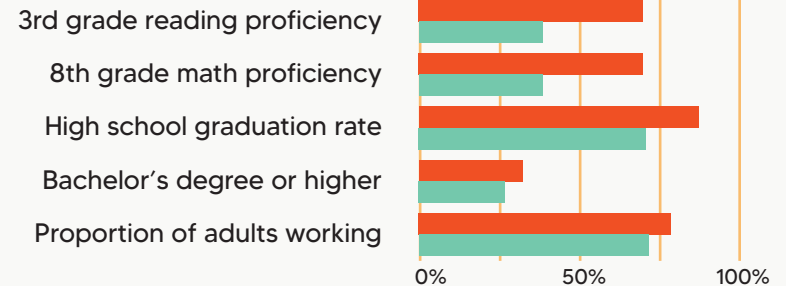
- How are community demographics reflected in the design process?
- How are community demographics reflected in the decision-making process?
- How is community participation being professionally compensated?
- How are community demographics reflected in how projects, programs, and/or policies are evaluated?

## MINNESOTA COMPASS KEY MEASURES: RACIAL GAPS

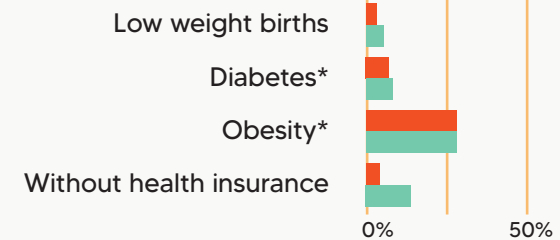
White population Population of color



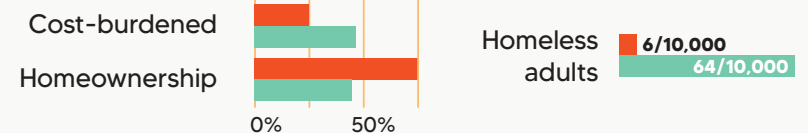
### EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT



### HEALTH



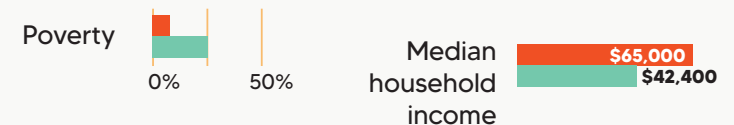
### HOUSING



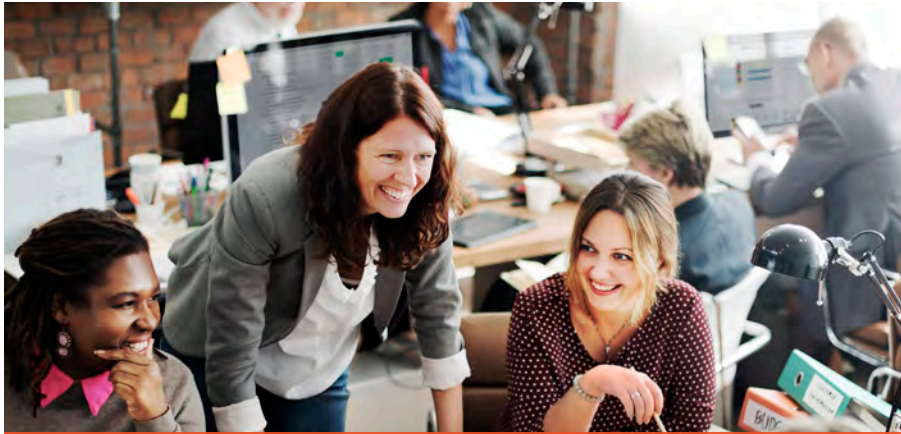
Homeless adults **6/10,000** **64/10,000**



### ECONOMY



\*Derived for purposes of this article; data are not broken out this way by source (Centers for Disease Control).



### COMMUNITY BARRIERS

- › Power differentials in decision-making
- › Existing community networks
- › Over-valuation of learned experience
- › Lack of lived experience to inform policy, program and project design
- › Distrust of government, institutions, and public processes



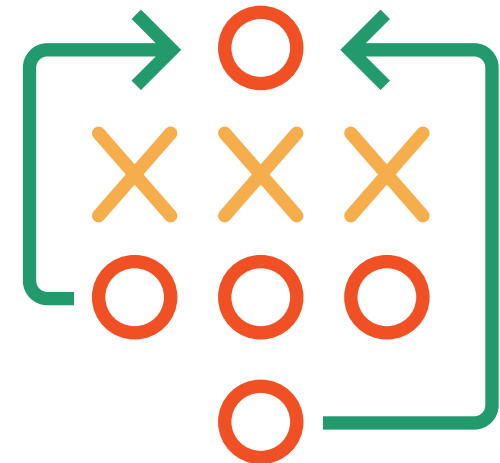
### PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

- › Lost wages
- › Language barriers
- › Meeting location
- › Speak for community / tokenism
- › Transportation availability and costs
- › Childcare availability and costs
- › Time of day



## BARRIERS TO ADDRESS for equitable engagement

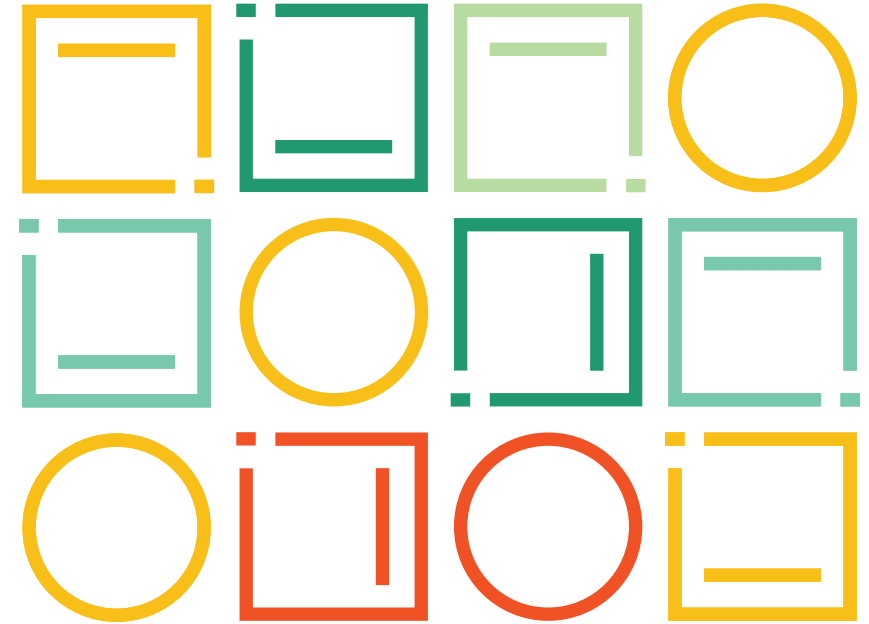
An underlying challenge to equitable engagement is to create equitable and meaningful opportunities for community members to participate. Regardless of investment or resources, equitable engagement will be inaccessible to those most impacted by a proposed project, policy, or program if structural barriers are not fully addressed.



# MAKING THE CASE

While many organizations and government agencies are increasingly focused on equitable workplaces, policies, programs, and spaces, it can be difficult to move beyond mission statements. Some lack effective methods to move to action, but others fear that more equitable problem solving approaches might cost more or require more time.

**The reality is that at a time of increasingly complex issues and limited budgets, co-design offers a cost-effective and almost untapped opportunity for fresh thinking and innovation.**



## SAFE AND COST-EFFECTIVE SCALE:

Because the process is iterative and incremental, teams avoid over-investing in concepts that might be ripe with costly assumptions that do not reflect the communities impacted by a challenge.

## CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

By definition, creativity is about bringing together a diversity of thought, experiences, and perspectives. The most effective way to reframe persistent challenges is to look beyond the “usual suspects.”

## SHARED RISK:

Equitable co-design is a structure for truly interdisciplinary collaboration which not only improves outcomes, it distributes the risks of “going it alone.”

## COMMUNITY-CHAMPIONS:

Because community members are a central part of the co-design process, transparency and project marketing is baked into the process. Additionally, by investing in people, not just projects, the co-design process builds long-term relationships and capacity within community networks that can be reliably utilized in the future.

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE:

Having a cost effective and scalable method for equitable community engagement and innovation will result in a unique competitive advantage.

## BROAD IMPACT:

Co-design, done well, will not just address existing disparities, it will create more universal design criteria for future projects, policies, and programs (for example, ADA requirements created more accessible environments for those with mobility limitations as well as older individuals and those with strollers, etc.)

# EQUITABLE CO-DESIGN

Traditional engagement models tend to amplify inequalities because they rely on the same decision-makers taking the same approaches to address the same issues, resulting in the same outcomes. Engagement approaches are often well-intentioned, following what are assumed to be in the best interest of the community, but there are distinct and important differences between traditional engagement strategies and more equitable, co-design approaches.

## TRADITIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Community responds to pre-determined options
- Engage the most readily accessible community members (usual suspects) as token representatives of community
- Prioritize learned expertise
- Decisions are made on behalf of community
- Uncover what people think
- Engagement is project-based (short-term)
- Attempt to control for diversity of experiences, perspectives, & cultures
- Focus on the number of engagements

## CO-DESIGN

- Community collaborates to identify, develop, and implement efforts
- Engage less accessible community members as conduits to under-represented community experiences
- Prioritize lived experiences
- Decision making with community at all phases of design process as possible (shared power structure)
- Uncover what people feel
- Directly invest in community members, relationships, trust building, and network building (long-term)
- Leverage diversity as a prerequisite to creativity and innovation
- Focus on the depth of engagements

## TIP:

Asking yourself: who may benefit most from this project? Do all stakeholders (individual or collective) have an easy (obstacle-free) and meaningful way to offer insight?

# START WITH WHAT IS KNOWN

→ **TIMELINE:** Prior to engagement planning and recruitment

Often overlooked, understanding what is already known about a particular issue, especially input and feedback from community, is an important place to start your project. **Be sure to spend time reviewing literature and research that has been done to best identify the scope and scale of the problem and most importantly, the communities being most disproportionately impacted.** Failing to leverage and honor previous work done in the community risks framing the wrong problems, recruiting the wrong stakeholders, and creating outcomes that are duplicative and ineffective.



## LITERATURE REVIEWS

The easiest place to start to better understand challenges, those that are being disproportionately impacted, and best practices is to review existing peer reviewed literature. Literature reviews can help hone your project, policy, or programming scope and inform your stakeholder mapping.

**Example:** Start with a simple “Google Scholar” (or similar) search to identify research done on the challenge you are starting with. Pay special attention to local and recent research.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Most community issues have been directly explored with communities through surveys, focus groups, and/or community listening sessions. These data can help contextualize the information or gaps identified in the literature review. Failing to honor community input and time by asking the same questions that have been asked of communities in the past will damage the trust and relationships needed for effective co-design.

**Example:** Reach out to regional non-profits to identify applicable past community engagement efforts. Also look for on-going engagement data sets, such as those found in Community Health Needs Assessments (which occur every three years in Minnesota).



## CASE STUDY REVIEWS

Reviewing regional, national, and international case studies related to the challenge you are tackling can help you more clearly articulate project goals. Be careful to approach case studies with a critical eye, as some read more like a marketing brochure than a collection of lessons learned. The intention of reviewing case studies is not to find full scale projects to replicate, rather to develop a set of principles to help guide your efforts.

**Example:** Compile a diversity of case studies related to the challenge you are addressing and look to find common lessons (success and barriers).



## ROCHESTER SPOTLIGHT:

In Discovery Walk, the team relied on existing parks master plans and Community Health Needs Assessments, among other data to understand what the community has defined as challenges and assets, so that the work of co-design was informed by existing community insights.

# DETERMINE PROJECT READINESS

 **TIMELINE:** Prior to co-design engagement planning and recruitment

Regardless of the structure, tools, prep or resources, without certain conditions in place or the ability to put them in place, the co-design effort is likely to be unsuccessful. These requirements should help you determine which efforts are a good fit for co-design and maybe more importantly, which ones are not.



## BUILDING ON ASSETS

While understanding gaps in community resources is important, it tends to focus on factors/conditions that take away from health rather than the those that contribute to health. It is important to honor community efforts, history, and people to support and enhance existing community programs and organizations, not replace or replicate them. The last thing most communities need is “another project.” Co-design should leverage existing community passion, creativity, relationships, and efforts (community assets) to build solutions that stick.

## IDENTIFYING WORK THAT MATTERS (THE RIGHT EFFORTS)

The fatal flaw to many co-design/equitable community engagement efforts is that they focus on the issues that are just not the issues that matter most to those being disproportionately impacted by them. It is important to leverage and honor all the community assessments and conversations that have already occurred to focus on what matters (not starting from scratch). Additionally, if the effort doesn’t offer the opportunity for community co-designers to affect the outcomes (in real and direct ways), don’t bother.

## RELATIONAL NETWORKS

You cannot shortcut or fake relationships and often we are confronting long-seeded distrust of institutions and communities that have evaluation burnout in our design efforts. Relationships and trusted networks are foundational in the identification of community co-designers and their ability to access voices that tend to be missed in traditional engagement approaches.

## DIVERSITY OF LIVED EXPERIENCES

Lived experiences have been significantly devalued especially when compared to other forms of learned expertise – understanding how policies, projects, and programs manifest in the real lives of real people, especially those of under-invested demographics, offer almost untapped potential.

## POWER-SHARING INFRASTRUCTURE

Regardless of the level of engagement, if those holding disproportionate power are responsible for managing, synthesizing, and designing outcomes, you are more likely to reinforce inequitable systems than change them. Co-design requires more than sentiment, it requires sharing financial resources and decision-making power throughout the end-to-end design process.

# ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

## Tools & Tactics

### ORGANIZATIONAL CHECK-LIST

Before launching a community co-design effort, make sure that the proposed project is the right project and at the right stage to benefit from community involvement or you risk alienating both the community and project leadership. First it is important to ensure that you 1) have a defined project team (who are the key stakeholders) and 2) that the project team is on the same page about what you're trying to understand and/or inform through this process. A "readiness" checklist can be an effective way to understand where there are disagreements on the project team and identify if this effort is a good fit for the co-design process as well as who those community co-designers might be.

## TIP:

Give a copy of the checklist to each of the project team leadership members to fill out individually first. Then come together to see where there is agreement or disagreement about the nature of your project and the appropriateness of a co-design process. Use the tool as a discussion guide rather than a tool that will offer a black and white outcome.

## Organizational Check-list

- ☐ On a scale of 1-10, to what degree are project leadership engaged/invested in this project? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ On a scale of 1-10, to what degree are impacted community members engaged/invested in this project? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ On a scale of 1-10, how willing are project leadership to collaborate and share decision-making power? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ On a scale of 1-10, what is the level of existing momentum around this project? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ To what degree are resources and decision-making power tied to project outcome (what is the level that community co-designers would be able to affect the outcome)? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ How has this project been informed/will be informed by existing community data (surveys and town halls for example)? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ To what degree does the project timeline allow for meaningful engagement and execution of community feedback and input? *Describe in detail.*
- ☐ On a scale of 1-10, how likely is this project to positively impact under-served populations? *Describe in detail.*

# RECRUITMENT

## WHAT IS CO-DESIGN RECRUITMENT?

An important part of the co-design approach is your ability to bring together a diverse and traditionally under-represented set of perspectives, experiences, and values. To do so, you need to actively recruit community members through existing community relationships and remove barriers to participation including having to apply to participate in the work.



## ROCHESTER SPOTLIGHT:

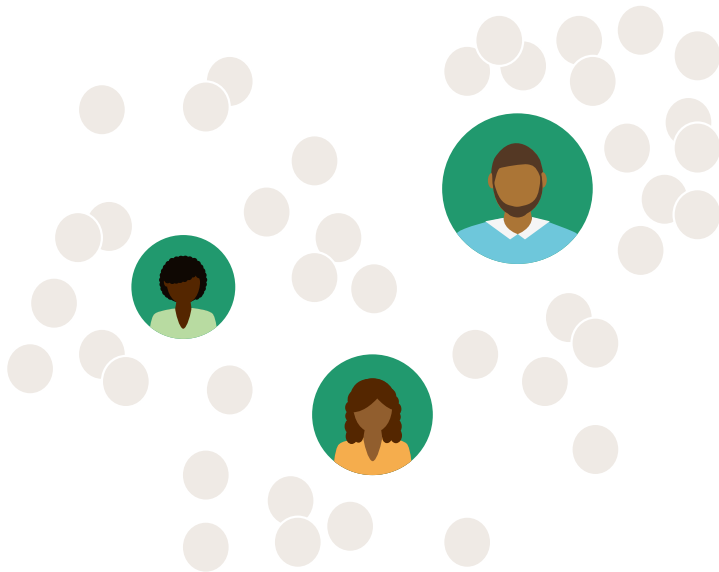
For the Rochester Bloomberg Mayors Challenge Project and Discovery Walk, the Project Teams consulted with community-based organizations (CBO's) like the Diversity Council and County Public Health Department to identify co-designers. Given their trusted relationships with community members, they helped encourage the participation of their networks.

# WHY EQUITABLE CO-DESIGN RECRUITMENT?

Source: CULTURE OF HEALTH BY DESIGN

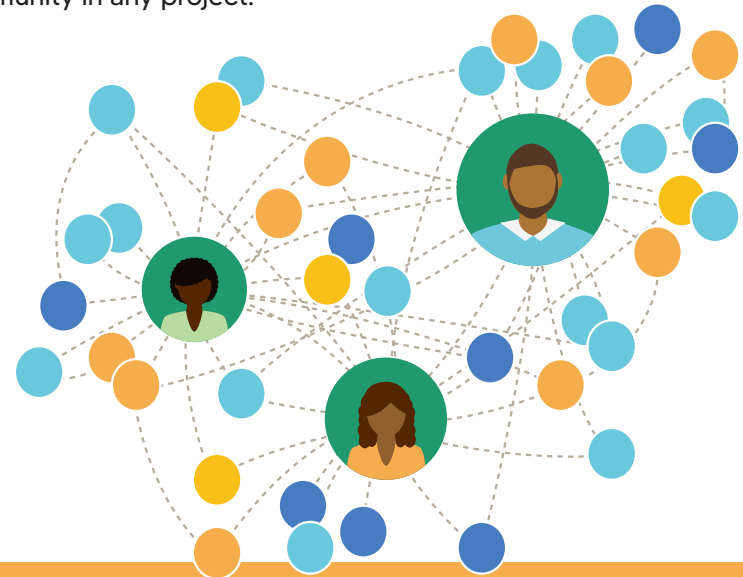
## TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Traditional approaches tend to engage the “usual suspects” who are often treated as universal token representatives of the communities they are part of. This approach offers a very limited, and often inaccurate, perspective on community experiences and values.



## COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN

In a co-design approach, the community co-designers (who are from under-represented communities) are conduits to difficult-to-reach community networks (friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.). In this way you have access to a much broader and more diverse collection of perspectives and experiences from those that would not be accessible through other methods. In short, the co-design process is a cost effective, equitable, and mutually beneficial way to include community in any project.



## TIPS:

Part of the focus of co-design is to create a communication and personal links with your organization/agency where they did not exist in the past. Identifying and prioritizing the involvement of communities' who have the most to gain from a project and currently least access to provide perspective, should be central to your recruitment approach.

Early and accessible options to influence project/policy design is essential for successful co-design. Too often, organizations will offer listening sessions during workhours and only when the project is nearing completion.

# RECRUITMENT SEQUENCE



## Stakeholder Mapping

Identify all possible project stakeholders, both those that will be most impacted by the effort as well as those that have the most ability (decision-making power) to impact the outcomes.



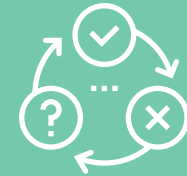
## Prioritizing Stakeholders

Not everyone will be able to participate in the co-design effort, so you should look to prioritize a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and influence. Including diversity of age, race, gender, geography, physical and mental ability, etc.



## Outreach

Once key stakeholder groups have been identified, look to leverage existing personal and organizational relationships to identify community co-designers that meet target stakeholder criteria and are good a good personality fit for working in collaborative and diverse environments.



## Expectation Setting

Connect with community co-design candidates to gauge interest and availability. Offer a project overview and outline individual expectations for participation.

## TIPS:

Asking community-based organizations (CBOs) for their help to identify individuals who are collaborative, open to difference in opinion, connected within their communities, and invested in the project/policy being addressed is critical to recruiting co-designers.

# PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS & ROLES

## Project Team

The project team is responsible for oversight, guidance, and support of the co-design process. The project team encompasses the key decision-makers and project leadership. The project team is foundational in supporting the co-design process and ensuring that the co-design outcomes are translated into real and meaningful outcomes.

## Community Partners

Community partners are the backbone of the co-design process. Community partners offer feedback and insights to guide the development and implementation of the co-design process. Community partners are also critical in connecting with community co-designers.

## Community Co-Designers

Community co-designers will share experiences, facilitate community interviews, discuss ideas, and communicate project outcomes to project and city leaders throughout the co-design process.



# SETTING EXPECTATIONS

## Community co-designers

- Know that co-design is a process not a product
- Debate and disagreement is part of the process—consensus is not necessarily a focus
- Quality and depth of engagement over quantity of input.
- Know that not all ideas or priorities will be acted upon/ implemented, but everything will be shared through appropriate channels
- Know that every project has constraints and limitations (political, financial, geographical, etc.)
- We all have different lived experiences and cultures that inform our perspectives and values – diversity is the biggest advantage of this approach
- Know that you will be a co-researcher/designer and we will not expect you to be a universal representative of the communities you identify with
- Individuals must be curious and mission-driven (not over-invested in a singular approach or outcome)
- Individuals must have comfort with ambiguity
- Paid professional wages



# SETTING EXPECTATIONS

## Project Team

- Know that co-design is a process, not a product.
- Debate and disagreement is part of the process—consensus is not necessarily a focus.
- Quality and depth of engagement over quantity of input.
- Do not have community members respond to predetermined ideas and be open to pursuing issues/questions that may not have “immediate” solutions
- Dedicate to learning/following lead of community—primary role is to listen and ask questions
- Co-designers have lived experience expertise which is different but equally important to learned expertise
- Focus effort on, and dedicate resources to, input and feedback (do not explore issues you are not willing to address/change)
- This project is part of a long-term investment into individuals and communities, beyond this project
- On-going communications/relationships (beyond co-design phase)



# SETTING EXPECTATIONS

## Community leaders/ decision-makers

- Play a supportive role: advance and advocate for co-design processes and outcomes.
- Ensure continued community involvement beyond the co-design process (through development and delivery phases of effort and post-project).
- Incorporate principles of co-design process to insure more democratic process to public projects and policies across city/region.
- Invest in people, not just projects.
- Support community champions to support decisions/projects

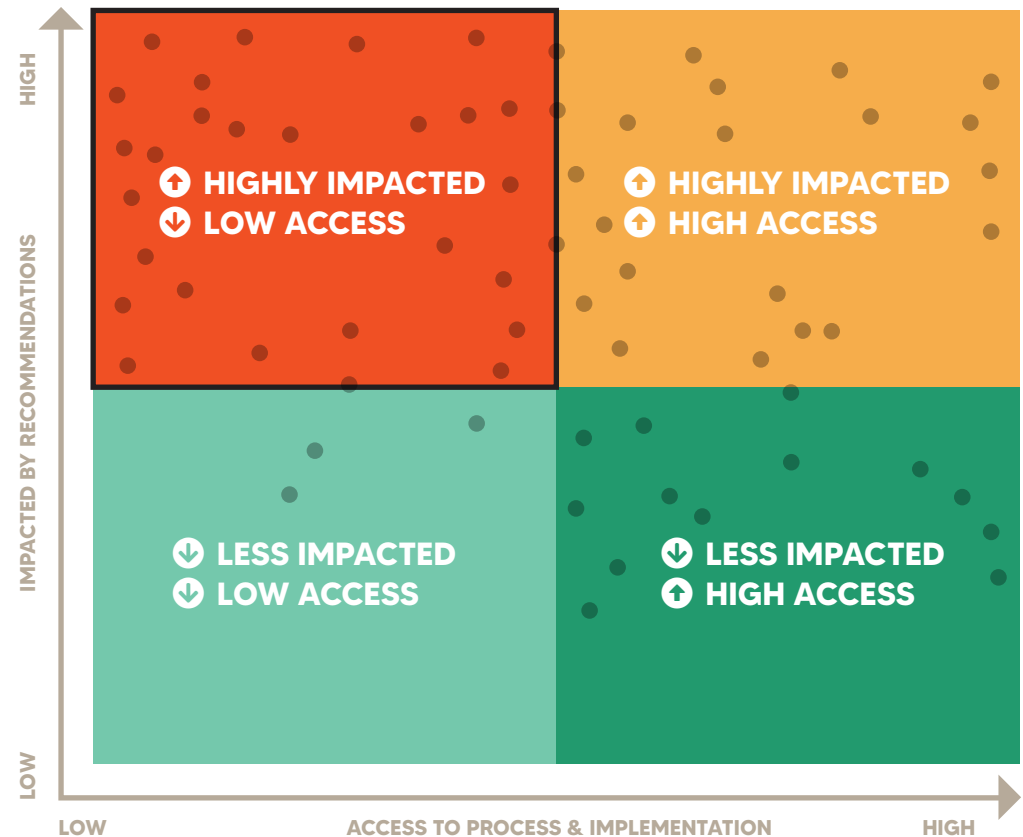


# STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

## Tools & Tactics

### STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The most important part of the co-design process is identifying key stakeholders, both those who are most impacted and have the least decision-making power and those that are least impacted and have the most power or influence on the project outcomes. A Stakeholder analysis can be an effective way to bring a project team together and identify perspectives that have historically been left out of the process.



Source: groupmap.com

## TIP:

A stakeholder map is a tool that prompts discussion around which voices are most important to access and not currently part of the work. Consider a diversity of perspectives (such as a minority business owner, or person seeking to develop a downtown business) from communities that might have different lived experiences that could provide particularly keen and unique insight for a project.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

## Tools & Tactics

### JOB DESCRIPTION

Most community co-designer candidates will want information about the project as well as expectations for participating. A job description is a straightforward way to share essential details about the co-design project without overwhelming candidates. The case studies included in the appendix of the toolkit include information around compensation details and payment for each effort.

### TIP:

When recruiting community co-designers, rely on a warm handoff through existing individual and organizational relationship. Share the job description with potential to gauge interest and availability and to identify concerns or questions before you interview co-designer candidates.

### JOB DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD:

- Describe project background and objectives
- Outline co-design participant responsibilities, including time commitments
- Describe co-design format and sequencing
- Illustrate a high-level timeline
- Clearly define compensation and pay schedule.



# COMPENSATION

## Tools & Tactics

### COMPENSATION

Compensation may not feel like a tool, but it is critical to ensure that community co-designers can fully participate in the process and address challenges, such as childcare and transportation. Professional level compensation shifts power dynamics and demonstrates an equitable valuation of lived experience.

The most efficient and equitable way to compensate participants is in lump sums, with half being paid at the beginning of the project and half being paid at the end of the project. Depending on the project scale and state and federal tax regulations, co designers may be required to fill out W-9 tax forms and report their earnings to the IRS. This can impact individual's state or federal benefits, so be sure to explore these impacts and make adjustments as necessary.

## TIP:

**If working with immigrant populations or those with significant distrust of institutions, you can adjust compensation levels and subsequent hours of effort to stay below reporting levels. Additionally, be sure to offer support in filling out W-9s and secure ways for submitting them.**



# FACILITATION

## WHAT IS CO-DESIGN FACILITATION?

It is important that the co-design process follows the lead of your community co-designers as much as possible. To do so, co-design facilitation is about collaborating with and empowering co-designers to share questions, insights, and feedback and feel safe in doing so. The facilitation process is about asking the right questions at the right times and in a curious manner to best elicit and capture the lived experiences of the communities that your co-designers are part of.

## WHY CO-DESIGN FACILITATION?

Traditional forms of engagement can tend to oversimplify problem solving by ask community, 1) what's the problem and 2) what do you need to address it? This assumes that community members fully understand the full scope of complex influences driving a particular challenge and that the solution is a simple tweak of existing programming or policy. The main objective of this approach is to create a unique call-to-action grounded in the lived experiences of those most impacted.



The co-design facilitation process is not focused on specific solutions, instead it looks to create and prioritize compelling design challenges and develop detailed guiding principles for successfully addressing the challenge.

# TIPS AND EXPECTATIONS OF CO-DESIGN FACILITATION



**GROUP NORMS:** Establish ground rules for communication of co-designers and listening. Make these expectations explicit at the outset of each design studio.



**HUMILITY:** Regardless of how passionate a facilitator might be about an issue, they cannot truly know an experience that is outside of their own.



**ASKING FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS:** The foundation to creativity is asking fundamental questions of the systems we have long taken for granted.



**SUPPORT AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING WITH CO-DESIGNERS:** Do not under-estimate the importance of building rapport with co-designers. Spend time prior to and during the co-design process with each co-designer to learn more about them.



**BE CURIOUS AND NOT JUDGMENTAL:** Instead of responding to experiences or ideas, better understand where they are coming from.



**CREATE INVITING AND SAFE ENVIRONMENTS:** Co-designers must feel safe in sharing lived experiences, create multiple opportunities (inside and outside of group meetings) for this to happen.



**PERFECTION IS A BARRIER TO GOOD:** Consensus is not the objective. The iterative format of the co-design process allows teams to “learn their way forward” and not become paralyzed by having to be “right.”



**KEEPING IT LIGHT (where applicable):** Try to not make the process feel like “work.” Lend hope through honoring experiences and creating an optimistic and at times humorous environment.



**CREATE MULTIPLE WAYS FOR CO-DESIGNERS TO SHARE:** Each co-designer will have different skill sets and levels of comfort with the work. Be sure to allow multiple ways for co-designers to share (for example, visual versus written).



**FOCUS ON WHY, NOT WHAT:** The main role for facilitators is to better understand the “why” behind community experiences and responses (for example, if a community member relies on their neighbor for health information you could ask, what do you find most valuable when you seek health information from your neighbor? Or have them describe a recent positive experience receiving health guidance from their neighbor in detail.)



**HOLDING AND NAVIGATING TENSIONS:** Tensions are where innovations live. Do not avoid tensions, instead explore them to better understand the challenge and possible solutions.



**BALANCED PARTICIPATION:** No one voice should dominate the co-design process. Ensure that all experiences and perspectives are honored.



**RECORDING AND TRACKING DISCUSSIONS:** Be sure to capture and illustrate each co-design session. Share the notes with co-designers to ensure that their priorities were captured accurately.



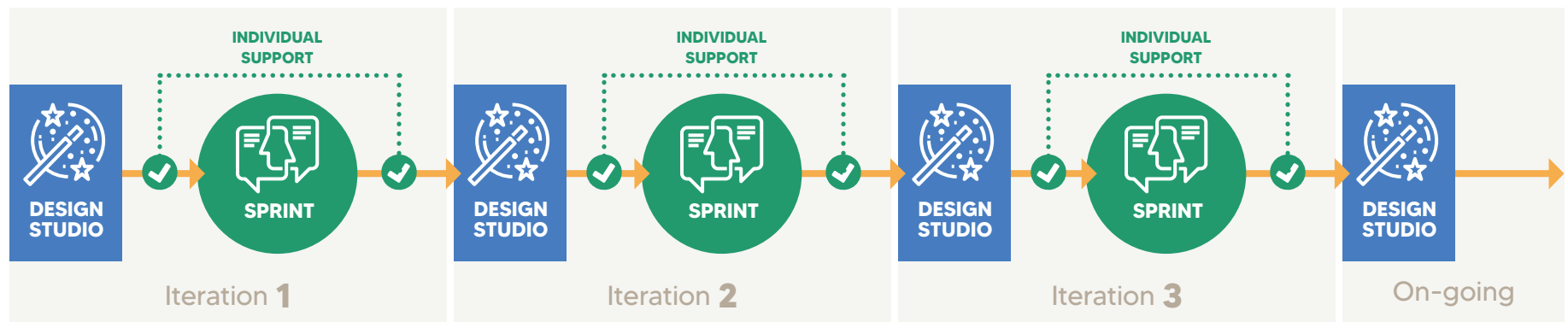
**INVOLVING DECISION-MAKERS/PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS:** Be sure to involve those with decision-making power in the co-design process, but do so carefully. Decision-makers should be in attendance, but only to listen and ask questions of co-designers.



**RAPID FOLLOW-UP WITH CO-DESIGNERS:** After each co-design session, facilitators need to follow-up with next steps that are grounded on the previous discussion within 48 hours.

# CO-DESIGN STRUCTURE

A co-design structure is an iterative sequence of in-person (or virtual) studio sessions followed by community co-designer exploration sprints. The studios are where a diverse collection of community co-designers (who are all professionally compensated as designers and researchers) come together and collectively interpret information and insights from their community conversations (sprints) as well as co-develop promising solution concepts to test with community members in subsequent sprints. Co-design is the space and authentic opportunity for community perspectives, hopes, fears, and values to be a central part of the design and decision-making process. As a way to help bring this theory to practice, an example of the Discovery Walk Project has been included in the Appendix that outlines the Project Team's process and documents for recruitment of co-designers, studio agendas, sprint questions, and explorations, and the final documents.



## DESIGN TEAMS

Design teams are a collection of co-designers that self-identify across a diversity of communities, values, cultures and lived experiences, especially those most difficult to reach in more traditional research and engagement efforts. Co-designers will draw on their trusted and intimate relationships with community members to offer deep insights and perspectives that would otherwise be inaccessible.

## STUDIOS

Studios are the spaces/times for co-designers to come together and collectively interpret information, co-develop and test promising solution concepts, and to work with decision makers and community leaders to translate community vision into action. The studios are workshops for sharing what participants/teams have learned through the previous sprint and co-develop an approach for the next sprint.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Design facilitators connect one-on-one with co-designers in each iteration to offer guidance and develop customized approaches and tools that are culturally appropriate and effective at better understanding community history, needs, and values.

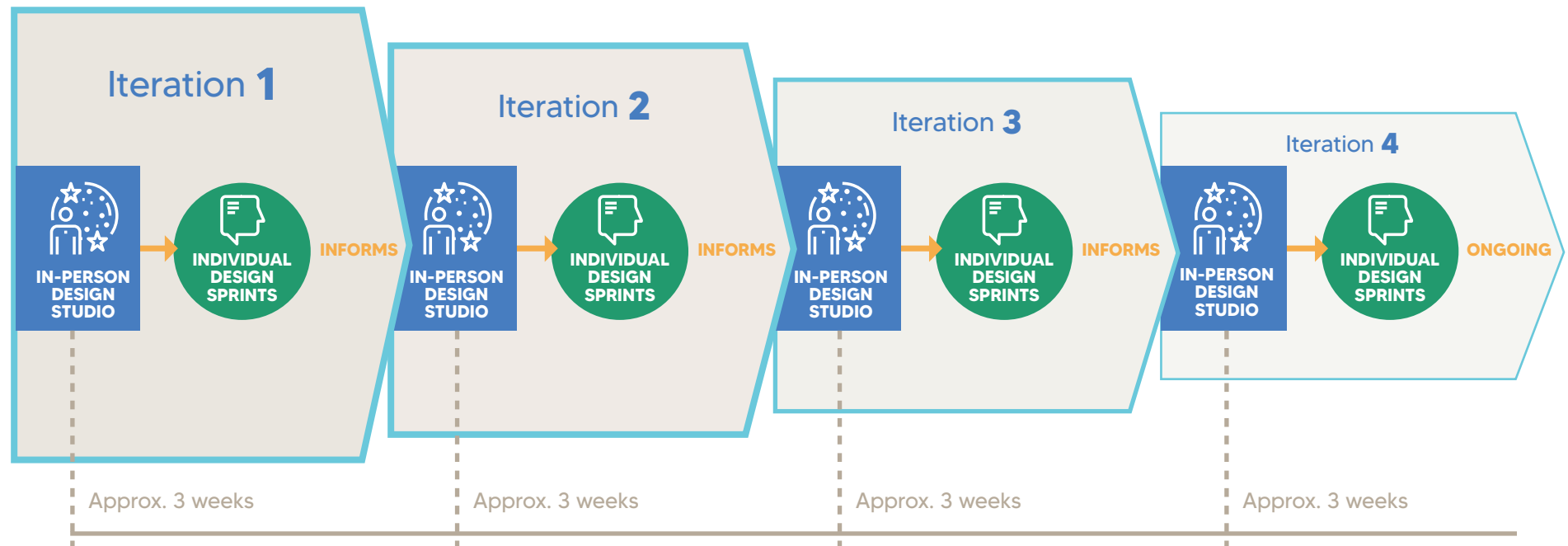
## SPRINTS

Sprints are where participants/teams explore the questions, ideas, and community input that arise during the design studios. Sprints are the opportunity for co-designers to explore questions and test ideas within their trusted networks and generate insights and ideas to share at the next studio.

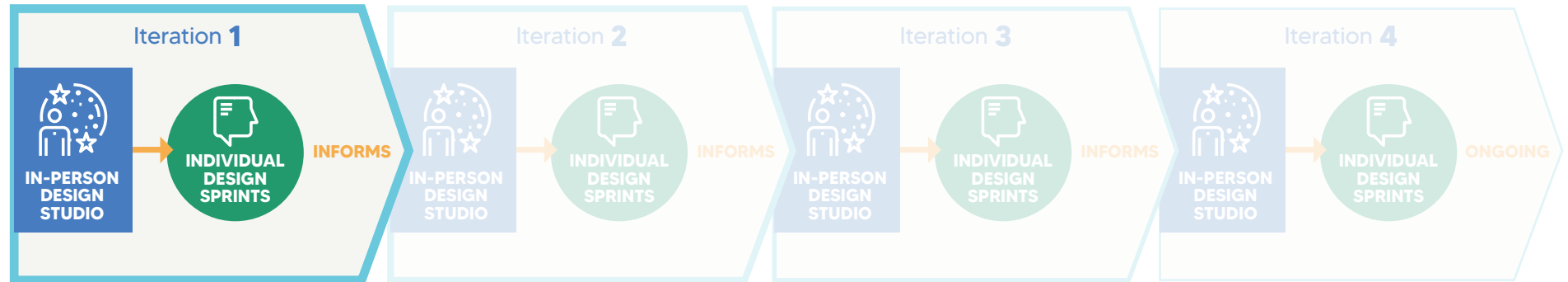
# ITERATIVE STRUCTURE

The iterative structure for co-design allows for longitudinal and in-depth engagement with community stakeholders which allows for the emergence of insights that would be inaccessible through other methods, regardless of investment of resources or time. This structure is rigorous enough to move the work forward while being open enough to allow for unexpected insights to emerge which is critically important when looking for co-designer's experiences to drive the process.

Each iteration informs the focus and scope of the next (following co-designer's lead), but there are general priorities that should be covered in each iteration. This guide outlines a general co-design sequence, but this process and number of iterations will depend on the project scope, objectives, and timeline.



# ITERATIVE STRUCTURE



## PRE-KICK-OFF

**INDIVIDUAL CHECK-IN:** Prior to the launch of the co-design process, one-on-one check-ins with each co-designer will build trust and relationship between facilitators and community co-designers. These check-ins are intended to make co-designers as comfortable as possible with what to expect over the coming weeks and offer guidance for what to do if they have questions or issues arise at any point of the process.

## ITERATION 1:

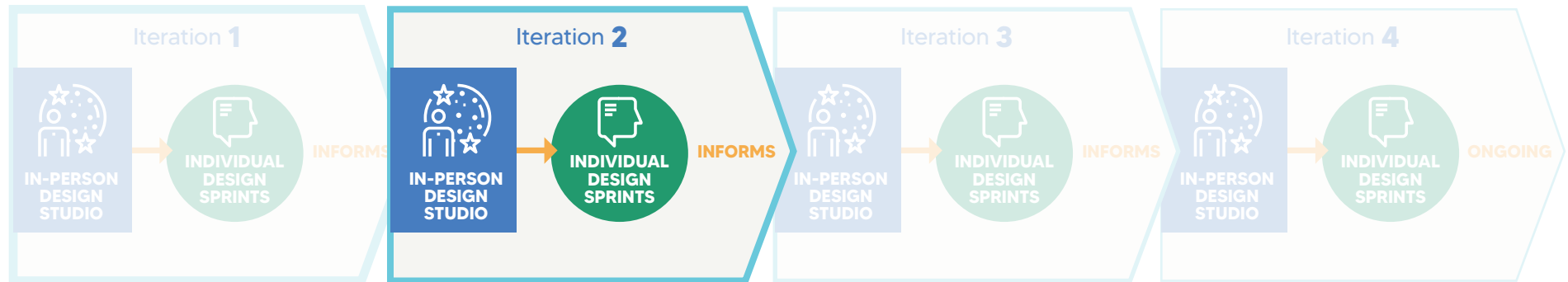
### SET CONTEXT AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

**STUDIO #1:** The kickoff studio is an opportunity for community co-designers to get to know each other and build familiarity with the project, project team, expectations and timeline. Community co-designers learn about 1) project priorities and proposed outcomes, 2) Identify interview approach and community members to interview during first sprint, and 3) review and practice interview approaches and documentation.

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT CHECK-IN:** The individual check-ins are short one-on-one meetings between facilitators and community co-designers to, 1) answer questions about the previous studio and/or next steps and 2) adapt the discussion/synthesis approach and tools to align with personal and cultural preferences.

**INDIVIDUAL SPRINT #1:** The first sprint is where community co-designers will interview those in their personal and professional networks. The first sprint is focused on getting a broad understanding of perspectives and experiences related to the project challenge.

# ITERATIVE STRUCTURE



## ITERATION 2:

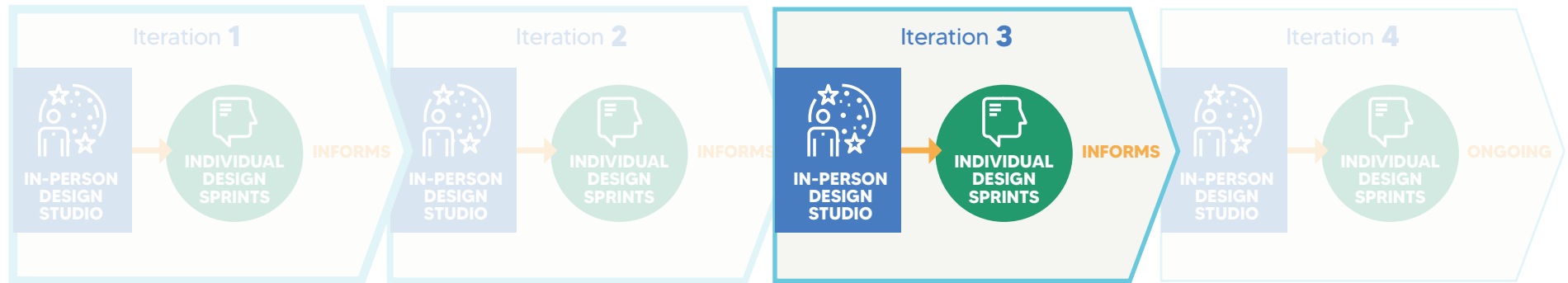
### CO-DEVELOP INSIGHTS AND PRIORITIES

**STUDIO #2:** The second studio brings together community co-designers and invited community stakeholders and project leadership to share and synthesize the conversations from sprint #1. Studio attendees will 1) synthesize community feedback into priority areas/themes, 2) identify key ideas/questions for further exploration, and 3) determine whose perspectives might be missing/might lend unique insights.

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT CHECK-IN:** The individual check-ins are short one-on-one meetings between facilitators and community co-designers to, 1) answer questions about the previous studio and/or next steps and 2) adapt the discussion/synthesis approach and tools to align with personal and cultural preferences.

**INDIVIDUAL SPRINT #2:** In the second sprint, community co-designers will hold more focused interviews with an expanded number of community members (those in personal/professional networks). The second sprint is focused on prioritizing and contextualizing the themes/insights that have emerged in the first iteration.

# ITERATIVE STRUCTURE



## ITERATION 3:

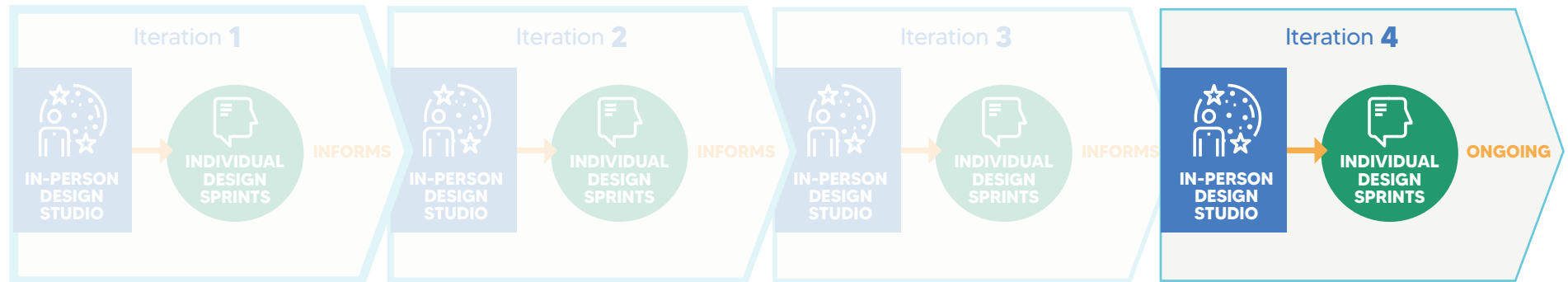
### REFINE CONCEPTS AND DEVELOP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**STUDIO #3:** Like the second studio, the third brings together community co-designers and invited community stakeholders and project leadership to share and synthesize the conversations from sprint #2. Studio attendees will 1) incorporate community feedback to refine project, policy, program concepts 2) begin developing guiding principles to successful solutions, 3) create an approach to best capture feedback on concepts and guiding principles, and 4) discuss best way to share findings with community partners and project leadership.

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT CHECK-IN:** The individual check-ins are short one-on-one meetings between facilitators and community co-designers to, 1) answer questions about the previous studio and/or next steps and 2) adapt the discussion/synthesis approach and tools to align with personal and cultural preferences.

**INDIVIDUAL SPRINT #3:** In the third sprint, community co-designers will gather feedback from the community members (those in personal/professional networks) they spoke to over the first two sprints. The third sprint is focused on gaining feedback on prioritized concepts and discussing guiding principles for successful solutions.

# ITERATIVE STRUCTURE



## ITERATION 4 AND BEYOND:

### FINALIZE CONCEPTS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND DEVELOP COMMUNICATION PLAN

**STUDIO #4:** The forth studio (or subsequent studios) is focused on translating the work of the previous 3 iterations into actionable guidance. Community co-designers will 1) share community feedback on developing concepts and guiding principles, 2) share individual reflections on the process and outcomes, and 3) offer final recommendations.

**INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT CHECK-IN:** The individual check-ins are short one-on-one meetings between facilitators and community co-designers to, 1) answer questions about the previous studio and/or next steps and 2) adapt the discussion/synthesis approach and tools to align with personal and cultural preferences.

**INDIVIDUAL SPRINT #4:** If needed, the forth and subsequent sprints will be used to further refine concepts and guiding principles. Additionally, future sprints can be used to gather feedback on specific project, policy, and program criteria.

# FACILITATION TOOLS

## Tools & Tactics

### SYNTHESIS & SETTING AGENDAS

The co-design structure was developed around the idea that those with direct lived experience of a challenge must be part of the collection and interpretation of community input and feedback. The facilitators' role in this work is to follow the co-designer's lead by exploring what emerged in previous iterations and using those insights to develop criteria to guide the next iteration without driving to predetermined (or personally-preferential) outcomes.

Following each design studio, the project team should meet and develop a document that community co-designers can use to discuss, document, and synthesize with individuals within their networks. The document should be shared with co-designers within 48 hours of the last design studio and should:

- 1 Document and prioritize the concepts and insights as outlined by community co-designers.
- 2 Develop a set of open-ended questions to further explore and/or refine emerging concepts.
- 3 Develop criteria to guide synthesis of co-designer discussions.

Project teams should use to develop an agenda and to determine other stakeholders to invite to the next design studio.

### KEY QUESTIONS

The following are a set of questions to guide project team debriefs including the development of community co-designer materials and setting future design studio agendas:

#### ▶ WHAT DID WE HEAR?

- Did anything surprise us? What questions did the feedback raise?
- Did anything that you heard or observed verify or falsify your assumptions going in?

#### ▶ WHAT ARE THE KEY EMERGING THEMES?

- How might we learn more about the emerging themes? What perspectives might be missing?
- How might we better understand how communities experience and prioritize these emerging themes (for example, if creating space that feels "welcoming" what does this look like in stakeholders' daily lives).
- What questions will help community co-designers learn more/further develop emerging themes?

# FACILITATION TOOLS

## Tools & Tactics

### DISCUSSION & SYNTHESIS GUIDE

Ensuring that community co-designers feel comfortable and prepared to hold community conversations and synthesize those conversations is a key for successful co-design. The discussion and synthesis guide will guide the work that community co-designers do in each independent sprint. After the first co-design iteration, the discussion and synthesis guide will be developed in response to the information that emerges in the previous design studio (see tools and tactics “synthesis and setting agendas”).

## TIP:

**When outlining co-designer discussion questions, make sure they:**

- Are questions that are grounded in lived experiences.
- Are open-ended, do not suggest solutions, and cannot be answered with one-word answers.
- Are questions that draw from previous experiences (negative or positive).
- Ask why to better understand the reasons behind answers.

**Example Questions:** *Describe the last time you genuinely felt healthy and why or Where do you go, or who do you rely on most for information? Why?*

#### CO-DESIGN CONVERSATION & SYNTHESIS GUIDE

The following information can be used to share background on the food access co-design project and expectations for your conversations. Additionally, a list of questions has been included to help start and guide your conversation. All of this is intended to be a start point, so please use and adapt as you see most fit for your conversations – you know the people you will be talking to far better than us!

**Background:** The following is high-level project background to share with potential participants when reaching out.

- Offer information on how community co-designers can describe this project, policy, or program and who is funding it.

**Purpose and logistics of conversation:** The following are some talking points to discuss the purpose of your conversation.

- Offer information on how community co-designers can describe the purpose of their interviews as well as logistics, such as meeting place, meeting format, and duration.

#### “Conversation Starter” Questions

Use the questions below to start and support your conversations. Remember, you do not need to ask every question, but try to use at least 4 of them.

Key Questions:

1. Include open-ended questions here.

#### Tips for your conversations

- ✓ The intent is to stimulate stories and ideas from the participant, not to get through the list of questions.
- ✓ Try not to think of solutions during your conversations, instead be curious and ask follow-up questions.
- ✓ Probe deeper (tell me more about that, what was that like for you, can you remember a time when...).
- ✓ Do allow for silence. Your participants may need time to think and reflect.
- ✓ Don't suggest answers to your questions. Absorb what participants say and how they say it. Don't think about next question.
- ✓ Be curious.
- ✓ Just jot down the most important ideas/comments while talking – you do not need to have a full transcript of the conversation.

#### Capture & Synthesize

Take notes during your conversations/observations/diagraming, but do not let it take away from your conversation. You do not need to write down everything you hear, only the things you feel to be most interesting, important or surprising. Follow your instincts on when to take more detailed notes and when to simply listen. The focus of your exploration is to capture rich context and stories, not compile pages of notes.

#### Synthesize

The most important part of any exploration is to review and synthesize your notes/documentation as soon as possible (while it is most fresh). There are no hard and fast guidelines for synthesizing your conversations, but the following guidance will support identifying the most promising themes, insights, and stories for further refinement (*this is not an exhaustive list – just a start*). **You will be asked to share these take-aways with the group at our next session.**

Think about the stakeholder stories and experiences that stuck out:

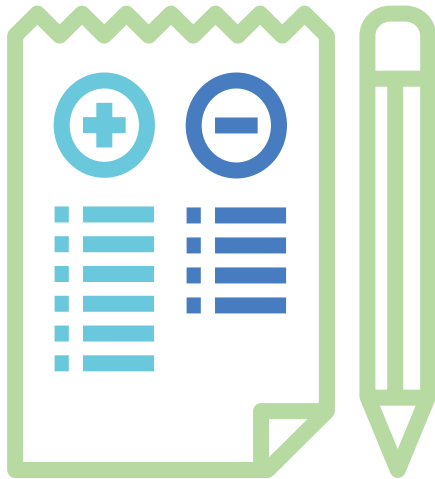
- From your perspective, what do you feel were the top 3 most important insights, stories and/or questions raised in your conversations (Describe each in detail)?
  - What did community members prioritize when they described their experiences?
  - What did community members identify as the most difficult/frustrating/least welcoming parts?

Source: CULTURE OF HEALTH BY DESIGN  
for the co-design conversation guide

# EVALUATION & DISSEMINATION

## WHAT IS EVALUATION & DISSEMINATION?

The most important part of any effort, is in the ability to demonstrate value and do so in an accessible, transparent, and community-centered way. The key objectives of evaluation in co-design should be two-fold, 1) how is this process informing the project, program, or policy, and 2) how is the co-design process improving DEI awareness and access to professional networks for co-designers participating in the process?



# WHY EVALUATION & DISSEMINATION?

Effective evaluation and dissemination is critical to the co-design process as it will help to refine the project and process in real-time and ensure continuous transparency and accountability to those most impacted by the project, program, or policy. Just as community perspectives are critical to involve in the co-design of effective solutions, community co-design of evaluation criteria and strategy is critical to ensure that community objectives and values are built into defining success.

Any project or initiative is only as good as the stakeholder's ability to "tell the story" of that project or initiative's value/impact. Evaluation should organize around three key questions:

- 1 What impact do we hope to achieve? How are we defining "impact" and with whom?
- 2 What is the mechanism by which we will achieve that impact? (this is the question to be answered in the co-design sessions)
- 3 How will you know when you've achieved impact?

The following criteria should be used to initiate, guide and formalize an evaluation of the Discovery Walk project.

- ☐ Evaluation cannot happen only at the end of a project, but throughout the process
- ☐ Metrics that are not only measurable but meaningful to key stakeholders, especially those most impacted by the issues being addressed
- ☐ Metrics should be able to be adapted to better meet community and/or co-designers' descriptions and priorities of value
- ☐ Co-designers develop (and vet with key stakeholder groups) project success criteria and how, when, and where it will be collected
- ☐ Focus on monitoring data that can improve/strengthen project and implementation (informs project changes/ revisions throughout implementation not just after implementation)



# CAPTURING PROJECT OUTCOMES

It is important to note that in the co-design process, traditional measures of “success” may not be relevant. Instead, start with what the co-design process has identified as “value” and look for ways to measure it.

Once you have co-developed criteria for success, you must take care to fully capture project progress and outcomes from a variety of stakeholders (see stakeholder mapping). Be sure to create accessible and diverse opportunities (including co-designers collecting feedback from community members) for stakeholders to contribute their feedback across the duration of the effort. The key questions you should be looking to answer through your evaluation is

- 1) where did you start and why
- 2) what did you learn through the co-design process
- 3) what did the community co-designer input and feedback lead to (decisions)
- 4) what impact did this work have on the project.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

For the Bloomberg Project, questions were asked of co-designers both about the development of the concept, but also about their personal thinking as the project progressed to measure project and individual outcomes. Some examples of the evaluation are included in the appendix.

## Brief Check-list for Equitable Evaluation

- ☐ Evaluation must start with what community co-designers have identified as value, not just what can be measured.
- ☐ Evaluation cannot be a “one-time” effort and should be co-developed by those that are part of the engagement effort.
- ☐ Evaluation must be continual and iterative (incorporate stakeholder and community feedback on-going).
- ☐ The evaluation process must focus on building trust and relationships, especially with those most often missing from the design/evaluation process.
- ☐ Evaluate not just what is being delivered but how it is being delivered
- ☐ All efforts must continually communicate how community input was incorporated/affected final decisions, including why input/feedback might not have been incorporated.
- ☐ Evaluation must place equal value on lived experiences as learned expertise.
- ☐ Evaluation and communication plans should be built in parallel.
- ☐ Evaluation should take place in locations and in ways that are culturally/community appropriate and accessible.

*‘Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted’*

**- Attributed to Albert Einstein**

# COMMUNICATION & MARKETING



The last thing you will want to do once you have captured community-centric data is to put it into a dense report that few will have access to and even fewer will read. Instead, leverage the same community co-designers that have been part of the co-design process and evaluation to help communicate progress and outcomes of the work. They can tap their same trusted personal and professional networks to get information to those most impacted by the project in the ways, times, and places that are most appropriate.

Community co-designers are your greatest assets when communicating project priorities and concepts to project leadership and local decision-makers as they offer rich lived experiences (context), community perspectives, and impact statements that can be missing in other forms of communication.

## Strategic Communication:

### COMMUNICATION WITH PROJECT-SPECIFIC STAKEHOLDERS

- › Co-designers and other community partners as conduits to communicating with communities.
- › Describe benefits of co-design project and process to under-represented communities and project leadership alike.
- › Demonstrate link between community input and outcomes (where did co-design approach make the biggest impacts).
- › Detail future opportunities for community to participate in similar approach.

### COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM THE PROCESS

- › Co-designers as spokespeople for process—describe and contextualize process and impact.
- › Describe how co-design differentiates from traditional design and engagement approaches.
- › Detail key project results that were unlikely to occur through other means.
- › Outline project outcomes that might be applicable to other projects.
- › Describe what other efforts might benefit most by co-design approach.

### COMMUNICATION WITH DECISION-MAKERS

- › Co-designers as spokespeople for process—describe and contextualize process and impact.
- › Describe how community, especially those most impacted, have directly benefited from project and process.
- › Describe how co-design process improved DEI awareness and access to professional networks for co-designers.
- › Outline project outcomes that might be inform broader policy changes.
- › Detail long-term benefit and cost-savings possible through community co-design.
- › Describe benefit of growing community capacity for co-design (co-design network).

# EVALUATION TOOLS

## Tools & Tactics

### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Open and continual feedback from your co-designers is critical to best support them and ensure a successful co-design outcome. Interviews should be done:

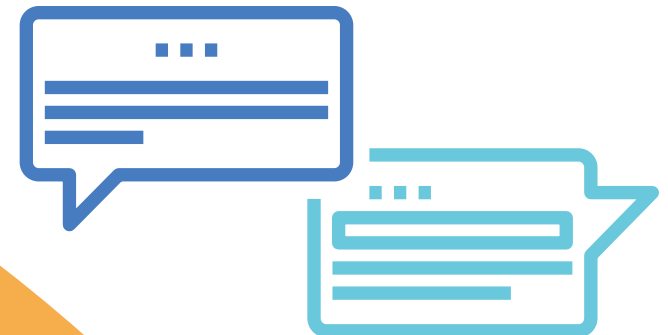
- › At the start of the effort to understand expectations, hopes, and concerns
- › At the midpoint of the effort to gauge progress, concerns, and priorities
- › At the conclusion of the effort to capture priorities, expectations of project team, individual experience, interest and capacity for future development, and requests of the project team or other community leadership.

## TIP:

Don't send out a generic survey to your co-designers, instead set up a one-on-one interview with them at a place and time of most convenience. To avoid biased responses, this should be facilitated by someone not directly involved in the project, but still has some familiarity with the co-designers.

### KEY QUESTIONS

- › What would you say is the most important insight/ concepts to emerge thus far? Why?
- › What do you think about this approach? How (if at all) is it different from approaches you have seen/been part of in the past?
- › What part of the process has been most rewarding thus far? What part has been most difficult? Why for either?
- › What other projects or efforts do you think would benefit from this approach in the future?
- › What do you think communities and/or community leaders could learn from this approach?
- › What, if anything, have you learned from others participating in this process (so far)?
- › Is there anything about this process you might use in your own community/work? What and how?
- › What do you think needs to happen with this project to make your time feel worth it?
- › What about this effort are you most skeptical of? Why?

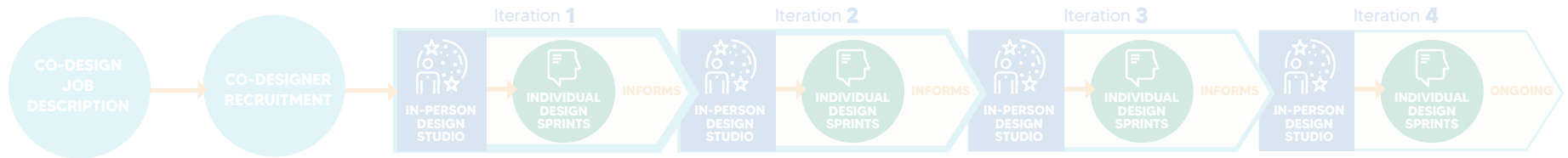


# APPENDIX A

## CO-DESIGN STRUCTURE

- 1** Discovery Walk Project Introduction
- 2** Co-designer Job Description
- 3** Co-Designer Recruitment Collaboration with Community-Based Organization (CBO) Example
- 4** Co-Designer Recruitment Initial Interest Example
- 5** Design Studio #1 Example Agenda and Exercise
- 6** Design Studio #2 Example Agenda and Exercise
- 7** Design Studio #3 Example Agenda and Exercise

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



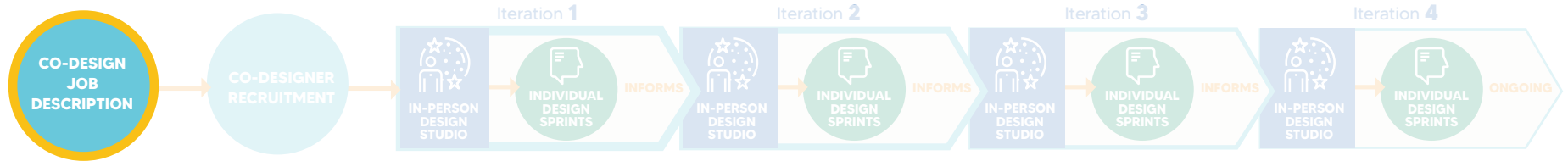
# 1 DISCOVERY WALK

Discovery Walk covers a four-block distance along 2nd Avenue SW in downtown Rochester, from Soldiers Field Park to Annenberg Plaza. It is part of Destination Medical Center's Discovery Square sub-district and connects with Heart of the City public space—all within a 10-minute walk. Destination Medical Center, in partnership with University of Minnesota Design Center worked with seven Community Co-Designers to help guide the design process of Rochester Minnesota's Discovery Walk. Co-Designers are connectors to under-represented community members with very different perspectives—cultural, religious, mobility, mental health, and socio-economic. The Community Co-Designers engaged with their communities to discuss how design and programming can be inclusive. The co-designers will continue to have a consulting role in the design process to ensure that the project maintains a focus on health, equity, and collaboration, early and throughout the design of public projects, policies and programs.

The following sections are meant to display the process used for the co-design process for Discovery Walk including the notes used to recruit potential co-designers, as well as the iterative approach of the design studios that demonstrate the questions utilized to understand the key priorities of community. In design studio 3, you will find prescient emerging themes from community that were integrated into the design thinking of the project.



## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



## 2 CO-DESIGN JOB DESCRIPTION

Drafting a job description for your project's co-designer role is an important step to provide a clear understanding of what are the duties and the commitments expected from the co-designer. This is the co-designer job description used for the Discovery Walk project.

### JOB DESCRIPTION

As part of the "Community for Health" effort and to create a healthier and more equitable Rochester region, we are seeking to identify community members (community co-designers) that would take an active role in informing the design features for a linear urban park (Discovery Walk). Community co-designers will offer insights from their own experiences as well as research and share the experiences of the communities they are part of to work closely with Discovery Walk designers? and city leadership to create a park that offers equitable opportunities for health and wellness for all residents.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Community co-designers will participate in four (4) in-person meetings where each community co-designer will share experiences, develop interview questions, discuss ideas and communicate (with the help of the project team) project outcomes to project and city leaders. Strong candidates will be able to work well with other community co-design participants (5-10 total).

Community co-designers will participate in 3 research and design explorations which will occur between each in-person meeting (approximately 2 weeks). Participants will individually hold interviews or conversations within the communities they associate with (this could be with co-workers, neighbors, friends or family). Participants will take notes and bring them to the in-person meetings to share with other community co-designers and project leadership.

### TIME COMMITMENT

While accommodations will be made for un-scheduled events such as personal or family illness, each candidate should be able to contribute the time needed to participate in this project. Candidates can expect the project to run from the week of February 10th to the middle of April.

### IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Candidates will need to attend four (4) two-hour in-person meetings which are tentatively scheduled for the weeks in the table below. In-person meetings will take place at a time and location that is most convenient for all community co-design members. Refreshments (or a meal if held during lunch/dinner times) will be available at all in-person meetings and transportation and daycare will be made available for community co-design participants as needed. If there are other limitations to participating, please share these concerns with the Community for Health Team in order to find accommodations.

**In-Person Session #1** > Week of February 10th

**In-Person Session #2** > Week of March 2nd

**In-Person Session #3** > Week of March 16th

**In-Person Session #4** > Week of April 6th

### RESEARCH AND DESIGN EXPLORATION

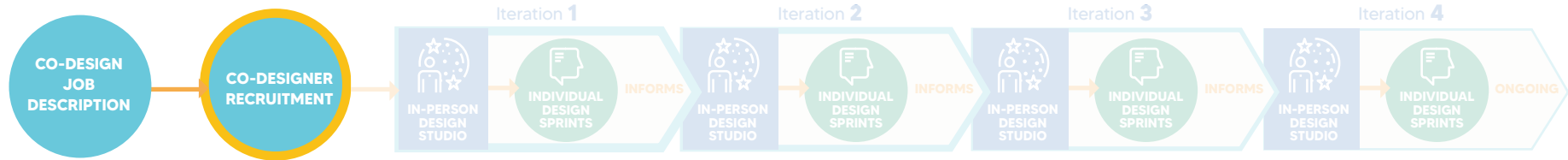
Between each in-person meeting, candidates will spend 1.5—2 hours to hold interviews or discussions with members of their community (the types of interviews and questions will be determined during the in-person meetings). Candidates will also schedule one 30-minute phone call with the project team.

**In total, Candidates can expect to spend 14 - 18 hours total over the 2-month project.**

### COMPENSATION

Each community co-design participant will be compensated \$20 per hour. Payment will occur at each in-person session for the previous design session and research and design exploration.

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



### 3

#### CO-DESIGNER RECRUITMENT COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION (CBO)

The example shows a community organization reaching out to invite a community member to participate as a co-designer in the Discovery Walk project.

**Wafa, hello and happy 2020 to you!** I hope this will be a year of great action and advancement in all the important work that you do.

Realizing that you are very busy, I am hoping that you will give heartfelt consideration to this request for your participation as a Co-Designer on the Discovery Walk project. I cannot think of a better person to become involved in this effort, both in terms of improving program outcomes and advancing professional growth.

The team coordinating this initiative is exceptional. The potential for changing HOW we, as a community, do things and WHO is involved in design and benefit is tremendous.

Below is an introductory statement from the team and I am attaching a description of the commitment as well. I would love to talk with you about this and find a way to get you engaged. Your voice would be a most meaningful addition. Thank you for considering and potentially joining the effort. Please contact me with questions! J D

As part of DMC's America's Community/City for Health effort, we are piloting a process to more directly involve community members in the design and development of community-centered projects, policies and programs. The first project we will pilot is Discovery Walk, which is a downtown park that will connect the center of the city to a nearby public park. Our hope is that we will not only be able to demonstrate improved community-defined value in the design of Discovery Walk but learn and refine a community-guided design approach that can be applied to other regional projects, policies and programs in the future. To do this well, we will rely on a diverse and respected group of paid community co-design partners. With that in mind and given your engagement in the community, we would love for you to consider participating in this effort as a community co-designer in this project.

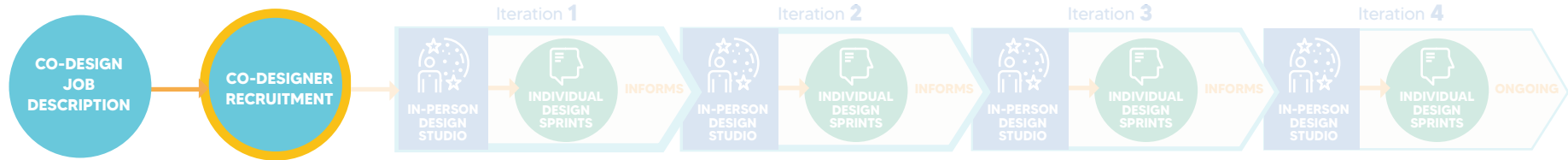
#### Dee Sabol

Diversity Council Executive Director

507.282.9951 | [diversitycouncil.org](mailto:diversitycouncil.org) | [DeeS@diversitycouncil.org](mailto:DeeS@diversitycouncil.org)

Mobile 719.338.2943 | 1130 1/2 7th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



# 4

## CO-DESIGNER RECRUITMENT INITIAL INTEREST EXAMPLE

This is an example of a co-designer recruitment email encouraging the participation of a local community leader in the process. The example shows a project team member/facilitator reaching out to a co-designer with specific information regarding the co-design sessions.

**Dear Wafa,**

We are following up on your willingness to participate as a Co-Designer on the Discovery Walk project. As a valued voice and perspective of the community, we could not be happier that you are considering joining this effort!

You should have received a description of commitment (job description) for this effort (from Dee). If not, or if you have questions about involvement, please let us know. We will be looking to schedule our sessions together at times and locations that work for everyone, so please let us know what your preferences are or if you require additional support such as transportation or childcare. We are looking to schedule our in-person meetings the following weeks:

- In-Person Session #1** > Week of February 10th
- In-Person Session #2** > Week of March 2nd
- In-Person Session #3** > Week of March 16th
- In-Person Session #4** > Week of April 6th

Finally, before our first meeting together, a member of our team, Jess Roberts, would like to schedule a short call to answer any questions or concerns you might have and to just learn more about you and the communities you serve/are part of. Please let us know which of the following times might work for a 30-minute call:

- > Thursday, January 21, 11:00am – 3:30pm
- > Monday, January 27, 9:00am – 12:00pm
- > Thursday, January 30, 2:00pm – 7:00pm

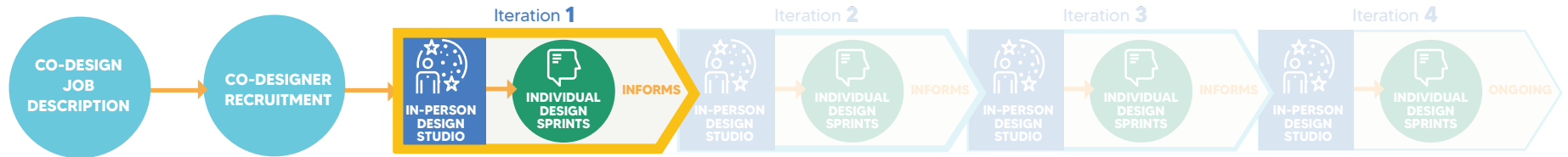
Best,

**Jess Roberts**

Jess Roberts  
he/him/his

Founder & Lead | CULTURE OF HEALTH BY DESIGN  
Minnesota Design Center | University of Minnesota  
robe0412@umn.edu | 651.503.4584

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



# 5

## DESIGN STUDIO #1 EXAMPLE AGENDA AND EXERCISE

This is an example agenda for Discovery Walk’s first design studio. The example shows the agenda of the first co-design session for Discovery Walk project.

### DMC “COMMUNITY FOR HEALTH” COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN SESSION #1 (KICK-OFF)

➤ TOTAL 120 MINUTES

#### OVERVIEW/PURPOSE

The kickoff (the first studio session) is an opportunity for community co-designers to get to know each other and build familiarity with the project, project team, expectations, and timeline. Community co-designers will:

- Share relevant experiences and perspectives on health and public spaces
- Learn about the CHNA priorities identified through community conversations in 2019
- Identify interview questions and community members to interview during sprint
- Review and practice appreciate inquiry approaches and documentation

#### WELCOME AND DINNER | 25 MINUTES

##### Welcome and Introductions

Community co-design participants introduce themselves:

- Name, organization (if applicable) and community(ies) you identify with
- How would you describe your mission in life – what gets you up in the morning?
- What unique perspective do you feel you bring to this group?
- Given what you know—what most excites you about participating in this project?
- Design team/steering team members introduce themselves

**PROJECT OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE | 25 MINUTES****Review project purpose, objectives, deliverables, roles, and timeline** (20 minutes)

- › Describe role of design/steering team members (as facilitators)
  - Outline expectations and guidelines for collaboration (respect and privacy)
- › Hand out photo/media releases and describe purpose of capturing co-design experience (evaluation strategy)
- › Hand out and discuss stipend information and forms
- › Gather signed stipend forms (time + travel)
- › Hand out first half stipends

**Review and discuss CHNA process and priorities** (5 minutes)**DISCUSSION (HEALTH AND PUBLIC SPACES) | 50 MINUTES****Review input from DMC annual event** (5 minutes)

- › Discuss purpose and approach of informational interviews

**Community co-designers (and facilitators) interview one another** (15 minutes)

- › See “Discussion Guide” (the group will revise based on conversation)

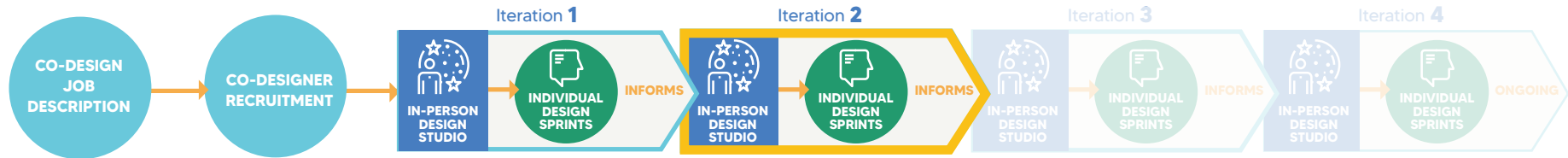
**Large group report out and next steps** (30 minutes)

- › What did people hear?
- › What was similar/different from your own perspectives/experiences
- › What, if anything, surprised you?
- › Discuss revisions to questions for community interviews
- › Who should we be talking to? What voices are missing?

**CONCLUDE | 15 MINUTES**

- › Next steps and scheduling “check-in” calls
- › Discuss next meeting(s) times and location
- › Discuss comfort with including other community stakeholders (identified by participants) and community leadership

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



# 6

## DESIGN STUDIO #2 EXAMPLE AGENDA AND EXERCISE

This is an example of Iteration 2 of the Iterative Structure. The example shows the key questions that were provided to the Discovery Walk co-designers at the end of the kick-off session. The tips for the co-designers to align the questions and the discussions with personal and cultural preferences.

### “CONVERSATION STARTER” QUESTIONS

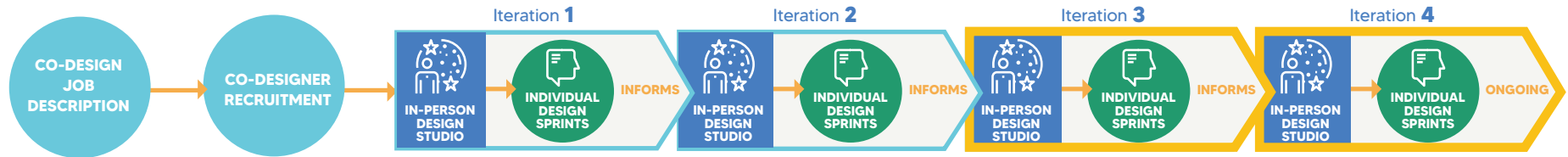
#### Key Questions:

- Where do you go and/or what do you do to feel most healthy? Why?  
**PROBE:** Where do you go and/or what do you do to feel more connected? Why?
- What, if any, community spaces do you feel contribute most to your mental health? Why?
- What do you believe are the 2-3 most important characteristics of a “mentally healthy community?”  
**PROBE:** What do you believe are the 2-3 most important characteristics of a “connected community?”  
**PROBE:** If these answers are different, why do you think that is?
- What, if any, community programs have you found to best support your/your family’s mental health? How?
- What are the biggest barriers to utilizing community spaces and/or programing in your community?
- How might community spaces better support mental health and connectedness?  
**PROBE:** How might community programming better support mental health and connectedness?

#### Tips

- The intent is to stimulate stories and ideas from the participant, not to get through the list of questions.
- Try not to think of solutions during your conversations, instead be curious and ask follow-up questions.
- Probe deeper (tell me more about that, what was that like for you, can you remember a time when...).
- Do allow for silence. Your participants may need time to think and reflect.
- Don’t suggest answers to your questions. Absorb what participants say and how they say it. Don’t think about next question.
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues.
- Listen. Be present.
- Be curious.
- Just jot down the most important ideas/comments while talking—you do not need to have a full transcript of the conversation.

## CO-DESIGN SEQUENCE - DISCOVERY WALK



## 7 DESIGN STUDIO #3 EXAMPLE AGENDA AND EXERCISE

This is an example of Iteration 3 and Iteration 4 of the Iterative Structure. The example shows the identified concepts that have emerged from the Discovery Walk co-design sessions and the co-designers conversations.

### DISCOVERY WALK CO-DESIGN

#### Design Session #3 Synthesis

The following have been identified (by the Discovery Walk community co-designers) as the most promising Discovery Walk design and operational concepts and ideas. The concepts have been organized to inform spatial programmatic and policy design:

**Spatial:** ideas and criteria that inform how the park looks or how space is designed or utilized.

**Programmatic:** ideas and criteria that inform how the park might operate/function.

**Policy:** ideas and criteria that inform how local or regional rules or regulations might support healthy interactions, spaces and activities at the park

### SPATIAL

**Year-round function:** Community members noted that one of the most persistent issues driving isolation and being mentally unwell was the long, cold and dark winter. This was especially the case with immigrant populations that had moved from warmer climates. The community members noted the need for indoor spaces in the park or to be built out in future development along the park:

- Indoor spaces that could offer year-round warmth and light (similar to Como Observatory in St. Paul, but smaller scale)
- Lighting – community members mentioned how lighting can change a space, especially throughout the dark months
  - Blue “happy” lighting
  - Wrapping all trees with lights

**Healing space:** Community members recognized that a good number of patients and their families receive a difficult diagnosis or “bad news” when visiting Mayo Clinic. They felt that it would be important to acknowledge that in the park space adjacent to the clinic:

- Reflective “bad news” spaces – spaces that would allow for quiet and privacy for patients and/or families dealing with bad news.

**Accessible:** Those with mobility and/or cognitive challenges require spaces that adequately support their day-to-day realities:

- Immediately accessible parking (parents of children with autism noted the importance of having parking spaces that can be accessed quickly in case their child became overwhelmed and overstimulated).
- Bench cut outs—cut outs allow those in wheelchairs to sit next to friends/family who are not in wheelchairs.
- Path bump outs—bump outs allow those in wheelchairs to “get out of the flow of movement” and pause at gathering/reflecting spaces.

### SPATIAL + PROGRAMMATIC

**Broadly welcoming:** Community members noted that the most important way to help individuals feel welcome is to create familiarity with park spaces and programming such as:

- Signage with multiple languages (community members mentioned how important it was to feel “recognized” by the community—to “be seen”)
- Flags and colors that represent a diversity of cultures
- Plantings that are native to different global locations (where applicable)
- Games and programming that are native to a diversity of cultures
- Free WIFI and charging stations—younger community members noted that opportunities to “stay connected” is important to draw young people
- No cell phone zone—While young people may seek opportunities to remain digitally connected, other community members felt that too much technology contradicts what a “park should be.”

**Interactive and Dynamic:** Communities noted that in order for Discovery Walk to attract and maintain visitors, it must have programming and spaces that allow for visitors to interact with (perhaps “leave their mark” in some way) and must offer a diversity of experiences for a diversity of audiences over time:

- Ground-level green space that “you can interact with”
- Adult sandbox and/or gardening
- Digital displays that allow for park-goers to offer input/feedback and see their responses (similar to “pop-up city” walls—see image)

- Graffiti wall or performance space for amateur artists
- Water play for adults and children
- Spaces/programming that support and separate those seeking introverted or extroverted experiences
- Activities calendar (a real-time calendar displaying opportunities to improve health/reduce isolation across Rochester and Olmsted County)

**Friendship and connection:** Community members discussed that it is difficult to promote social connectedness when you do not meet new or different people. They felt there should be opportunities to induce meeting new people:

- Friendship benches
- “instagramable” or “snap chatable” spaces and programing (to draw and engage young people)
- Local activities (activities such as ice fishing to expose new residents to new experiences/networks)
- Spaces for groups (community members noted that they feel most comfortable coming to the park with family and/or friends)
- Game/trivia nights
- Multi-generational exercise classes

**Safety:** Multiple communities cited not feeling safe as a primary reason they would avoid visiting a park. Community members identified the following safety topics as important to address:

- Programing/spaces for children to play but be monitored.
- Limited and/or fully separated vehicle and pedestrian movement.
- Group spaces/opportunities—some communities will only attend in groups or families as they can feel unsafe because of cultural differences or time of day they visit.
- Monitoring systems/personnel (call boxes for example)—Young people and some cultural communities tend to want to visit parks late in the day after dark but not if they feel “alone.”
- Adequate lighting

## PROGRAMMATIC

**Connecting healthcare and public:** Community members recognized that while community members have identified mental illness and isolation as key public health concerns, they also noted the challenges of burnout being experienced by clinicians. Clinician members noted that re-connecting with purpose and getting out of the clinic are important ways to address both burnout and support community in addressing their own health concerns:

- › “Walk with a Doc”—clinicians walk with or get lunch with community members on a regular basis
- › “Clinic in the park”—Dr. Jennifer Rho operates a mobile clinic staffed by clinical residents that could provide direct service in the park or adjacent spaces

## POLICY

**Affordable and accessible:** Community members, specifically younger and older individuals with fixed or no incomes, noted that downtown activities all have associated costs that can make it difficult to utilize downtown. To vitalize the park, older and younger community members may require incentives (and associated marketing) such as:

- › Parking fee holidays
- › Immediately accessible parking (parents of children with autism noted the importance of having parking spaces that can be accessed quickly in case their child became overwhelmed and overstimulated)
- › Reduced event fees
- › Group or event deals on coffee/restaurants
- › Reduced cost for activities such as movies
- › Rental fee holidays—cost associated with renting park space in the past has been a barrier. Community members felt that free rental periods or free rent for purposes that align with the city’s mission would bring more and a more diverse audience to the park and downtown.

**Community participation:** Some community members mentioned a desire to participate in the building of the park and/or gardens within the park to help make it their own and ensure that the community's "fingerprints" are on the finished product—similar to habitat for humanity opportunities.

**Non-smoking policy:** Community felt that if Discovery Walk is a park for health, there should be a full ban on smoking and vaping.

**Year-round accessibility:** While the park will be designed to be accessible for those with limited mobility, the community (those with limited mobility) cited the need to keep sidewalks clean in the winter is equally important to accessibility:

- Snow removal ordinances and policing
- Installation of snow melting systems

**Pets:** Some cultural communities find spaces with pets (primarily dogs) as unwelcoming for a variety of cultural and religious reasons. They suggest limited times or areas of the park to be accessible to pets and sufficient pet stations (poop pick up stations).

**Alcohol:** In the past some cultural communities have felt un-welcome at events where alcohol was present. Additionally, other community members mentioned how spaces can feel unsafe when alcohol is served/over-served, thus some strategic restriction on alcohol sale/use in the park space may be warranted.

**Cultural connectivity:** Important to reducing social isolation is finding ways for individuals and communities to connect with one another and not just within existing social networks. Because communities are and will continue to become more diverse, bringing people together in meaningful ways to better understand each other's perspectives, values, traditions and practices is critical.

# APPENDIX B

## CO-DESIGN CASE STUDIES

- 1** Rochester Bloomberg Mayors Challenge:  
Equity in the Built Environment
- 2** Discovery Walk:  
Co-Designing Public Space Case Study
- 3** Main Street Grant Revitalization Program:  
Co-Designing an Equitable Application Process
- 4** Channel One Food Bank:  
Co-Designing Service Delivery Case Study