A Guide to Community-Centered Engagement in the District of Columbia

A Partners for Places Equity Pilot Initiative

Photos: Georgetown Climate Center

OCTOBER 2018

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Executive Summary

Photo: Georgetown Climate Center

Effective community engagement can be a powerful tool for creating better policies, addressing inequality, fostering community support, and building stronger communities. However, it is often compromised to accommodate tight budgets, strict timelines, and to avoid difficult conversations. The hope is that the best practices presented here can inform agency budgeting and project scoping so that good community engagement is not jeopardized down the road. This guide outlines a "model" for community engagement where government and community work together as equal partners. The model utilizes a committee of community members that meets with District staff over the course of months, co-creating plans or projects through a collaborative process. The committee brings its deep expertise and vision of the place where they live and work, while local government adds technical expertise and implementation authority.

The community engagement model presented here also articulates how District agencies can integrate racial equity practices into community engagement efforts. Race continues to be a major determinant of life outcomes in the District, and many of the policies that perpetuate these trends were decided with little to no input from people of color. The model encourages government to

shift from exclusion to inclusion by encouraging government to involve people from traditionally disenfranchised groups, lean into conversations about racial equity, and put equity at the center of solutions development.

This model is informed by lessons learned by the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), Georgetown Climate Center, and other partners from a 2017/2018 pilot engagement process around the implementation of two climate plans in the District of Columbia's Ward 7. This project engaged 13 community residents who met monthly to develop a series of recommendations for how DOEE could equitably implement these two plans at the neighborhood scale. The pilot is presented in the guide and used as a reference point throughout.

Key lessons discussed in this guide include:

1. The vision and scope of the project should be co-defined by community and government - and must be flexible enough to transform as the team learns together.
2. Dedicated funding can open doors for more equitable engagement.
3. The community is the expert decision-maker, and project partners should be chosen who are oriented towards uplifting the community committee.
4. The community committee provides an opportunity to hear from a diversity of perspectives and also build consensus.
5. The goal is to listen and learn, not convince and persuade.
6. Co-designed recommendations are not compromises, but rather stronger recommendations informed by the expertise of community and grounded in the realities of government.
7. A community committee may reflect the demographic profile of the community, but does not speak for the entire community; broader outreach may also be needed.
8. Relationship and trust building should be a high priority; this involves delivering on community recommendations and being transparent and non-defensive about constraints.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

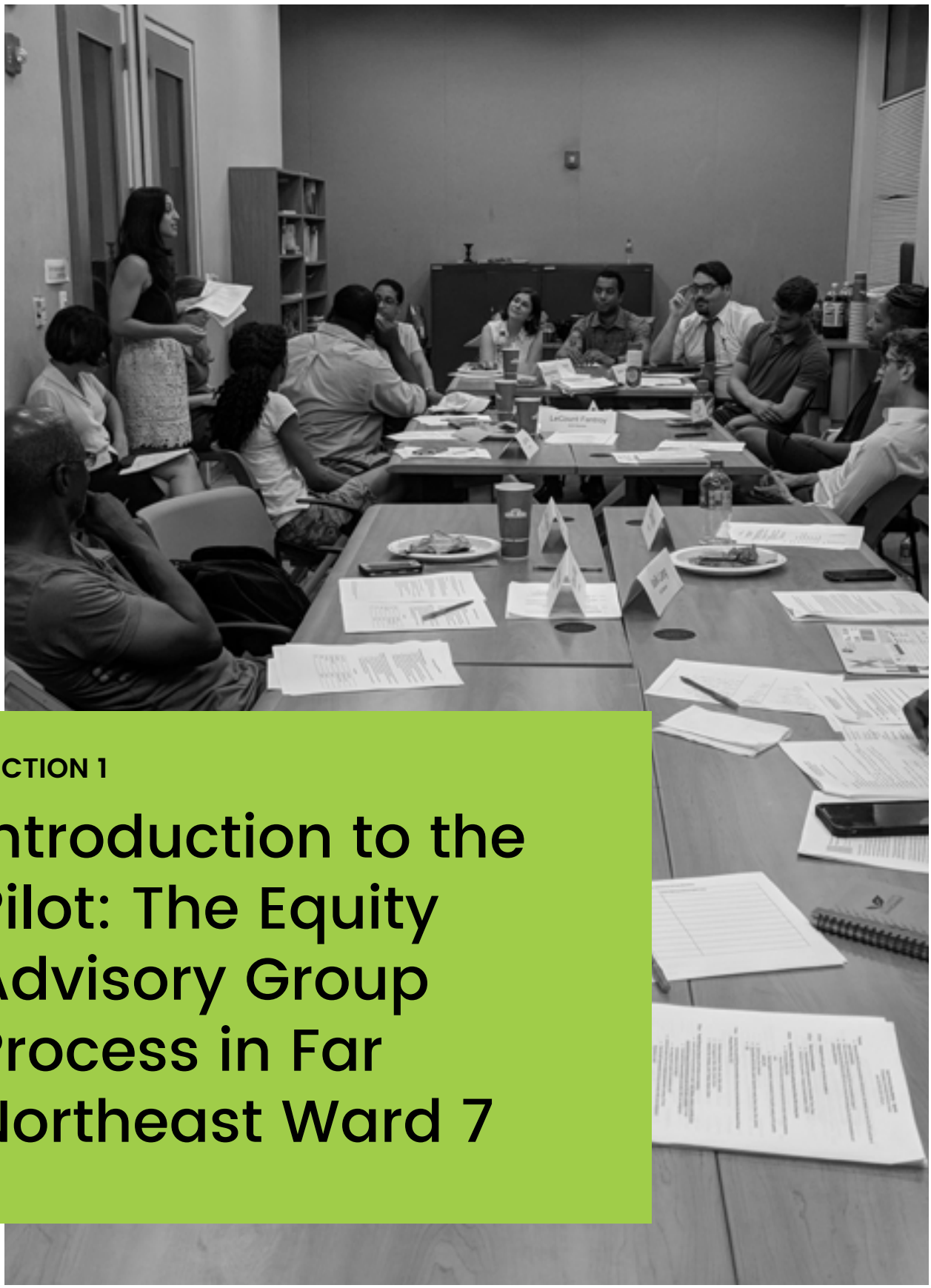
The community engagement model presented in this guide is not intended to be a checklist, but instead provides an overview of considerations and actions that can help agencies improve engagement with communities. Every project is different, and each recommendation will need to be tailored to individual agencies and the communities they are planning with and for. While the recommendations included in this guide support one particular model, this process is meant to be flexible and allow for experimentation and learning.

The guide is organized as follows:

- **Section 1** provides a brief overview of the pilot of this community engagement model used by DOEE in 2017/2018. This provides the reader with background information to better understand where some of the lessons learned and recommendations are coming from. The pilot is referred to in **blue** call out boxes throughout the rest of the document to provide concrete examples or deeper explanations of recommendations.
- **Section 2** introduces the main components of the model, including the different parties that will need to be involved, an overview of the process, and a discussion of some of the benefits of using this engagement model.
- **Section 3** provides a more detailed discussion of the best practices for each step of the engagement process. This section outlines core considerations as well as concrete steps an agency can take to put the model into practice.
- **Section 4** concludes by revisiting the pilot for a brief discussion of some of the indicators that a project is successful.

In addition to best practices around community engagement, this guide also offers a number of recommendations for centering racial equity during engagement and in discussions with community members. Find discussions specific to achieving racial equity goals in the **orange** call out boxes.

★ Look for "gold standards" marked with a star. This is the ideal option, but may be challenging to implement.



SECTION 1

Introduction to the Pilot: The Equity Advisory Group Process in Far Northeast Ward 7

Section 1 - Introduction to the Pilot: The Equity Advisory Group Process in Far Northeast Ward 7

In the fall of 2017, the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and Georgetown Climate Center (GCC) (collectively the "Project Team") partnered to collaboratively engage with residents in the far northeast neighborhoods of Ward 7 in the District of Columbia around the implementation of two District Government climate plans. This community was chosen because a climate vulnerability analysis found that Ward 7 (and particularly the communities surrounding the Watts Branch tributary of the Anacostia River) faces disproportionate flooding and climate related risks relative to other parts of the District.

Out of this partnership, the Project Team convened a community committee called the Equity Advisory Group (EAG). To start, the Project Team contracted with an independent facilitator and a project evaluator to inform the work. In facilitating the engagement process, the Project Team had three main goals: 1) create a framework for authentic engagement, 2) craft a set of community-driven recommendations on how to implement the Climate Ready DC Plan (climate adaptation) and Clean Energy DC Plan (climate mitigation) at the neighborhood scale, and 3) understand and address systemic and institutional racism and the resulting inequities faced by African American residents within the District. This engagement process is called the "EAG Pilot" throughout.

Under each of the goals, the Project Team gained knowledge and experience about authentic community engagement. A few highlights specific to the EAG Pilot are summarized here:

1. Successful engagement requires the **creation of trust**, which in the EAG process was developed through being transparent and recognizing pressing community issues like displacement and gentrification;

2. Successful engagements need to be **flexible** enough to respond to **community priorities**; while the Project Team initially expected to focus on geographically related climate vulnerabilities, the residents reframed the recommendations around their own priorities, including youth engagement, economic opportunity, and workforce development; and

3. Short-term and targeted projects like this **cannot eliminate racial inequality**, but can provide **a step in the right direction**. While this process only scratched the surface, progress was made through the development of a shared language that allowed the team to ground the engagement process in a mutual understanding of racial inequities and the history of institutional racism in the District.

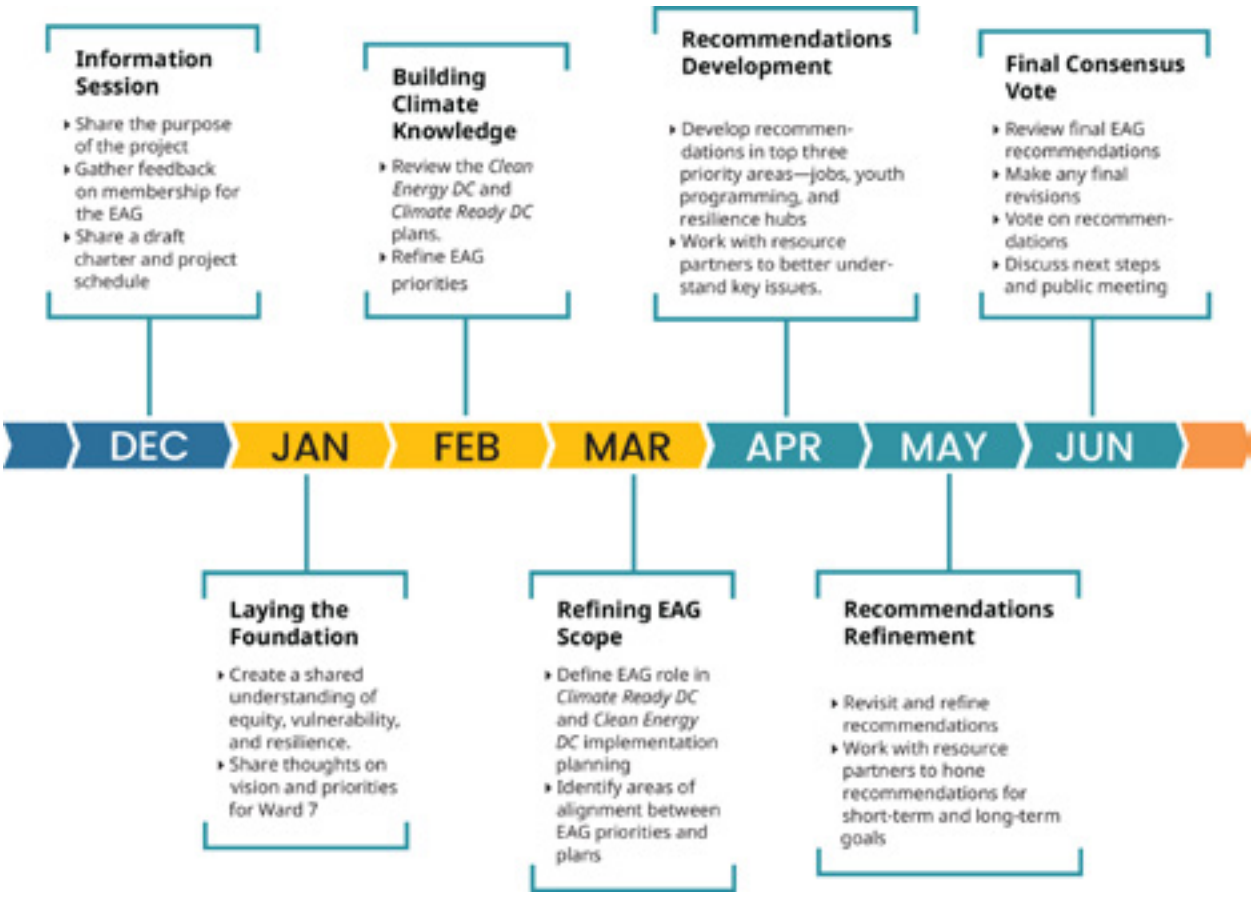
The EAG met monthly between December 2017 and June 2018. To ground the conversation in equity, early meetings explored the history of the community and its relation to racial inequality and institutional racism. These conversations also allowed the Project Team to have open-ended conversations with EAG members about their priorities and vision without being constrained by the more topic-specific issues DOEE brought to the table. Next, the team worked with the EAG to build their understanding of the two climate plans that the EAG was being asked to make recommenda-

tions around for neighborhood level implementation. Working together, DOEE and the EAG found areas of intersection between their priorities and the content of the two plans. Specifically, the EAG chose three areas in which to focus their recommendations:

- Creating neighborhood-scale resilience hubs in Far Northeast Ward 7 to provide ongoing (steady state) and emergency services that increase neighborhood resiliency;
- Creating an integrated workforce development program that positions residents with the skills needed to enter and thrive in the resilience economy; and
- Expanding workforce development programs that lead to gainful employment opportunities for Ward 7's youth, especially those who may not pursue a college degree.

Over the course of multiple meetings, the EAG broke into working groups to develop more detailed recommendations in each of these categories with help from representatives of other agencies, nonprofits, and the private sector. In the final meeting, EAG members took a consensus vote and officially endorsed the final recommendations.

The EAG met monthly between December and June.
This timeline shows the main topics of discussion at each meeting.



The EAG Pilot used a community engagement methodology similar to the one outlined in the model and best practices described in this guide. The Pilot will be referred to periodically throughout the document to provide concrete examples of some of the recommendations presented in this guide. Notably, the EAG Pilot was successful in many ways, but also provided a number of opportunities for learning. Many of the recommendations in this guide are improvements on the EAG Pilot.

To find more information about specific meeting agendas, see the Technical Appendix to this guide, which includes meeting agendas, the EAG charter, the EAG member application, and other related materials.

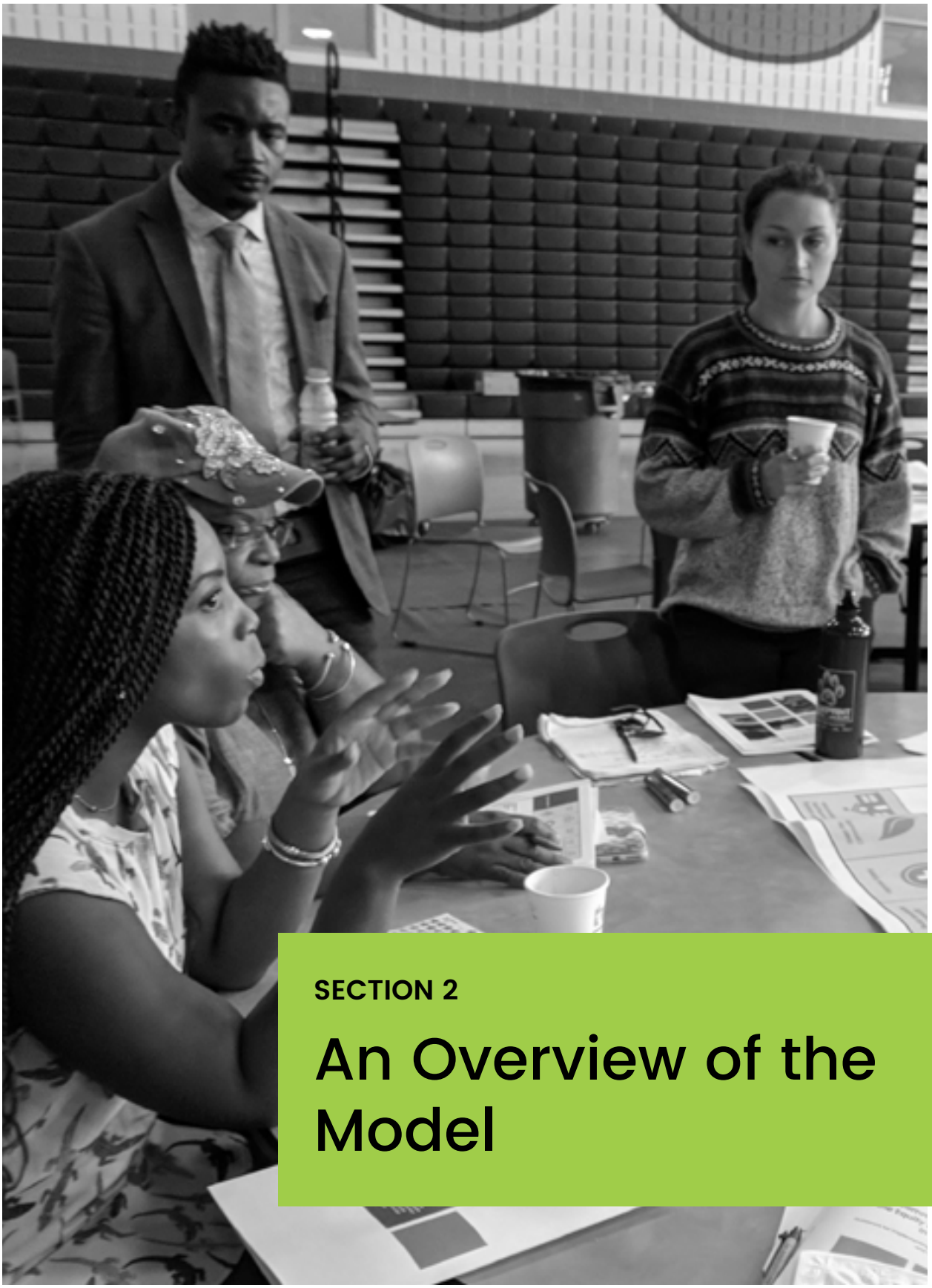
HOW THE EAG MEMBERS DESCRIBED THE EXPERIENCE

Through both the evaluation process built into this model and a separate project to review community-driven engagement processes conducted by Movement Strategy Center, EAG members had the opportunity to share their experiences about how well this model for community engagement worked. Here are some of the benefits they mentioned:

> *"Before the EAG there was no discussion in my day to day dialogue on storm water, flooding, etc. It was informative on my end because now I can be a liaison on Environmental Justice in my community. I now have this dialogue with people....[We] found a way to align our needs to their [DOEE] needs so we were able to weave and see how the [issues] connected to each other...people in the Ward needs jobs and solar panel energy - how do we put this together?"*

> *"I've never been a part of something like this and for me this is how it should go - it makes so much sense."*

> *"I'm glad I was a part of it and I definitely would participate in any other types of committees that are set up this way for other issues."*



SECTION 2

An Overview of the Model

Section 2 – An Overview of the Model

Building Blocks of the Model – Core Competencies

This community engagement model is centered on a committee of residents and community leaders ("committee" or "committee members") that meets periodically over a set period of time to develop recommendations on a plan or government process. The committee works in partnership with a "Project Team" specifically designed to give committee members the resources they need to make actionable recommendations. While some project partners may be able to play multiple roles, the following core competencies should be present:

1. **Residents and Community Leaders:** Residents and other community leaders are the primary focus of this engagement model. To make committee input as reflective of the community as possible, the Project Team should work intentionally to create a committee that is demographically representative of the community, includes diverse perspectives, and creates space for voices that are traditionally left out of government processes. This committee should meet consistently

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

There are many considerations to take into account to reduce obstacles to community members participating. Some important considerations include:

- **Make meetings convenient:** The committee should be able to collectively select meeting locations, dates, and times to maximize their ability to participate.
- **Meet committee member needs:** When selecting committee members, ask individuals what would make it easier for them to attend. To remove obstacles, consider offering childcare, transportation assistance, and interpretation services. While a good idea at any time, provide food and drink if holding meetings during meal times. Finally, when asking community members to serve as consultants as this model suggests, make an effort to offer financial stipends to the committee (While providing food and stipends may be not be possible with government funding, community partners (such as community foundations) may be valuable in providing these important needs for committee members.)

During the EAG Pilot, meetings were held in the community on weekday evenings from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm at a centralized location convenient to EAG members. Every EAG meeting included dinner. Childcare was also provided onsite. Each EAG member received a stipend of $22/hour that covered two-hours of meeting time and one-hour of "homework" between meetings. If needed, funding was also provided for transportation, although this was seldom used.

over the course of the project to build knowledge, refine project goals, and deliver recommendations.

2. **Government:** In this model, a government agency initiates this process when they are seeking community input around a planning process or project. While the "ask" of the committee should be clearly explained, there must be room for the community to reinterpret or revise the question on the table so that it resonates with how community members define their own priorities and vision for their community.

3. **Community Knowledge Broker:** Involving at least one community knowledge broker (such as a community-based organization or a community leader who knows the immediate neighborhood very well) can open important doors. The community knowledge broker can guide the recruitment strategy for selecting committee members, offer advice on which other organizations or people need to be involved to add credibility to the process, and help think through how to involve the community in implementation.

4. **Project Manager:** The Project Manager will serve as a resource to the committee and steer the rest of the Project Team by handling project logistics, including managing grants and communications. This role may be filled by multiple parties, including a community-based organization, the government agency, or the facilitator.

5. **Facilitator:** A skilled facilitator can allow both the government and community to fully participate in the process as equal partners. Facilitators also can keep the process moving in the right direction, ensure that necessary milestones are met on time, diffuse conflict, and guide various parties towards consensus. This role may be filled by community-based organizations or a trained community member. However, a community member or organization in the role of facilitator would no longer be able to act as a full participant.

6. **Subject Matter Experts and Implementation Partners:** Community members will bring expertise in a variety of topics, but are unlikely to be subject matter experts on all issues pertaining to the plan or project. In order for the committee to confidently develop recommendations, the community will need assistance from subject matter experts or technical advisors. Inviting other agencies, organizations, or thought leaders to help explore options for recommendations can have the added benefit of early engagement with some of the very same groups that will be important partners at the implementation stage.

7. **Project Evaluator:** Working with an outside evaluator who provides regular feedback to the Project Team adds an important layer of accountability as well as a more objective viewpoint. The evaluator can survey and interview community members to ensure that they feel heard and are being entrusted with decision-making power. This information will allow the Project Team to proactively address community concerns or course correct as needed.

EXAMPLE FROM EAG PILOT

The decision on who plays each of these roles depends on the goals of the project and the community that is being engaged. In the EAG Pilot, the Project Team consisted of the following:

1. **Residents and Community Leaders:** A committee of 13 **community members** from Far NE Ward 7 called the "Equity Advisory Group" met monthly from December 2017 through June 2018. The group was chosen to be racially representative, multi-generational, and inclusive of both existing and emerging community leaders.
2. **Government Agency:** The Department of Energy and Environment was the **government agency** seeking to engage the community on recommendations for implementing the Climate Ready DC and Clean Energy DC plans in Far Northeast Ward 7.
3. **Community Knowledge Broker:** An experienced community advocate served as a **community knowledge broker** during the EAG recruitment phase, helping the Project Team identify important organizations and community members to engage.
4. **Project Manager:** Georgetown Climate Center served as the **project manager** and the main point of contact with the EAG. Georgetown Climate Center was also the fiscal sponsor of the grant and contracted with outside consultants supporting this project.
5. **Facilitator:** A well-known environmental justice leader who currently works as a consultant served as the **facilitator** for this process. Her team developed meeting agendas and advised the EAG on building consensus around their recommendations.
6. **Evaluator:** An outside consultant served as the **project evaluator**, creating a framework for assessing the process and providing mid-project and final reports to the Project Team.
7. **Subject Matter Experts:** Various District agencies, non-profits, private sector representatives, and academics were strategically invited to meetings to serve as **subject matter experts and implementation partners** to help the EAG develop and refine their recommendations. Georgetown Climate Center also served as a subject -matter expert on climate policy.

Funders may also play an important role in making these projects happen. The EAG Pilot was part of a Partners for Places Equity Pilot Initiative, a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. It would not have been possible without generous support from the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, Prince Charitable Trusts, and the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

Project Steps

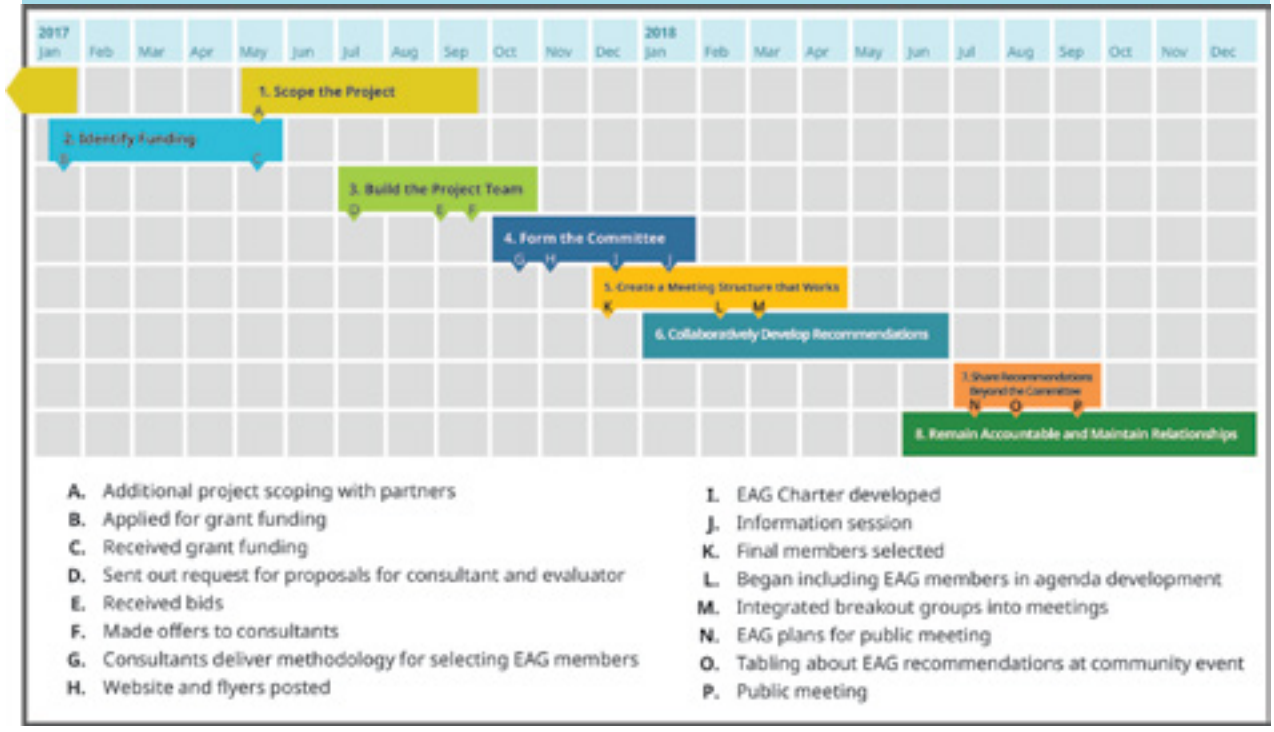
As with any engagement process, the steps involved will not be linear, nor does every step take the same amount of time. For example, the goals of the engagement project will not only need to be defined at the beginning of the process, but should also be revisited periodically throughout. That being said, the basic steps should generally follow the trajectory outlined below. *Section 3 will provide more detail on each of these steps as well as best practices for collaboratively developing recommendations with community members.*

EXAMPLE FROM EAG PILOT: STEPS IN THE TIMELINE

This project received a one-year grant to hire all consultants (project manager, facilitator, and evaluator), recruit EAG members, hold meetings, and develop recommendations. This was an ambitious timeline. In particular, the process for finding and hiring the facilitator and evaluator, and recruiting the EAG members, cut significantly into the time left to actually convene the EAG, build knowledge, and develop recommendations. EAG members described the meetings as *"drinking from a firehose"* as they set out to build expertise in climate and energy policy, explore the racial history of their community, and come up with actionable recommendations in just six meetings. As one member stated *"One thing that we saw when people came together was there was no shortage of ideas, dialogue, curiosity, and interests. And so had we been given the full year, the level of development would have been far greater and we would have been able to think about future funding opportunities to formulate a proposal to keep working together...We have this great momentum and now it's been truncated."*

While this timeline did require some sacrifices, an ambitious agenda had the benefit of focusing committee members on the task at hand. Midway through the project, another EAG member wrote: *"We have A LOT of topics to cover, many of which require extensive dialogue... but [this] also forces the group to focus as opposed to just venting which is common in most 'action' oriented meetings and remain stagnant."*

As visible in the timeline, this project involved a lengthy scoping and funding phase. This is partially the nature of doing a pilot, which necessitates a great deal of creative thinking and staff time. Additionally, if a future project was to be internally funded rather than grant funded, these phases could be compressed.



Potential Benefits of the Model

The main goal of the community engagement model is to support an equitable engagement process that prioritizes inclusion and gives those members of the community who are disproportionately impacted by government policies a clear voice in decisions. Through an intentional shift towards collaborative decision-making with community, the process can support inclusion and foster meaningful engagement. If government agencies commit to this model, it can also have other valuable project impacts:

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY

As the Government Alliance on Race and Equity writes, "racial inequities exist across all indicators for success, including in education, criminal justice, jobs, housing, public infrastructure, and health, regardless of region," and these patterns will continue to exist unless intentional interventions are pursued.[1]

In the EAG Pilot, creating a process that was more racially equitable and discussing racial equity while developing recommendations were goals that helped shape the project design. However, this model will not necessarily ensure that plans or policies will more equitably distribute benefits and burdens in the future, or that they will correct past harms or prevent future inequities. With an intentionality to address racial equity, however, this model can be part of a larger District project to normalize race in conversations and build the capacity of people of color to have a meaningful voice in governance and policy making.

Committee meetings create an opportunity to dig into topics that may be uncomfortable, such as the government's role in supporting and perpetuating institutional and structural racism. These difficult conversations can open doors for productive strategy development by making clear that government partners are approaching the process with humility and a desire to do things differently. Additionally, openly discussing racism and the underlying causes of inequality gives everyone involved (government, partners, and committee members) the knowledge base and language skills to realize a different future.

One lesson learned from the EAG process is that conversations about racial equity take time and sensitivity. As one EAG member stated:

> *"We did not spend enough time on race and power dynamics. We need to have more explicit and open conversations on race and power. We also need to have trauma-informed healing discussions about what are we bringing into this process as individuals and what parts of our family lineages are we bringing into this space...In order for anyone to move forward, truly with equity, you have to start with the heart in order to create space for anything else to come in."*

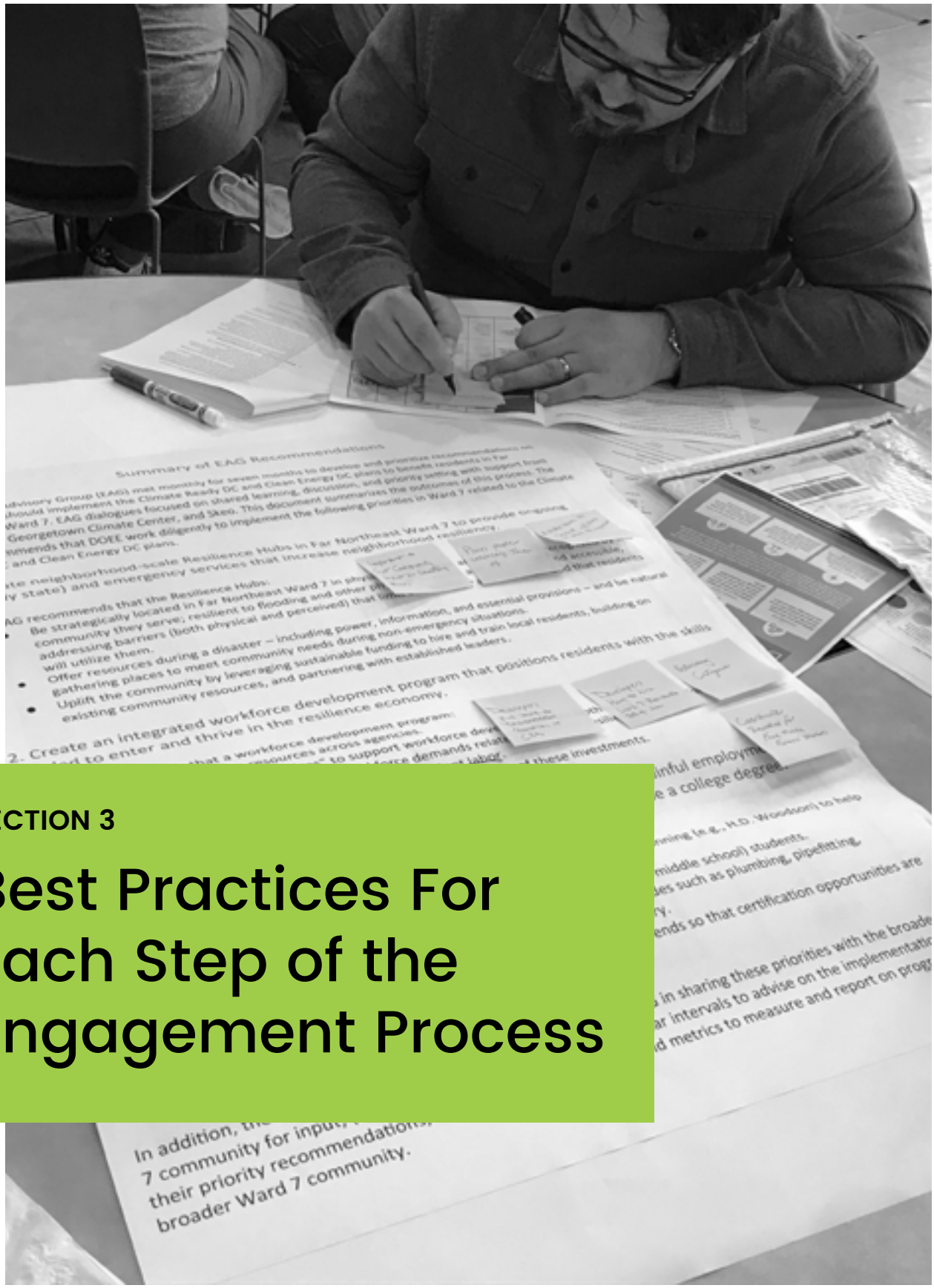
1 Nelson, J., & Brooks, L. (2016). Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity (p. 4). Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity. *https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf*

- ***Build trust and relationships with the community –*** Through sustained interactions over the project period, this process provides an opportunity for relationship-building between committee members, government, and other community organizations involved in the project. Government members can maximize trust-building by delivering on promises, listening and responding to feedback, and demonstrating transparency in decision-making.
- ***Engage in multi-directional learning needed for better policy –*** Over the course of meetings, committee members can come to better understand not only the substantive issues needed to develop informed recommendations, but also the constraints faced by government partners. Likewise, the government has the opportunity to learn from committee members about how policies are playing out in the community and how to design new strategies to meet real community needs.
- ***Build legitimacy for policies in the eyes of community members and stakeholders –*** If the community feels involved, they will be more likely to support policies and actions down the road. Even though not all community members can be directly involved in the decision-making process, it will be easier to justify decisions that were collaboratively developed to a larger audience.
- ***Shift power to the community to be agents of change –*** As committee members become more knowledgeable about the subject matter and are empowered to become champions of their recommendations, they can play an important role in engaging other community members, and gain experience advocating for other community priorities.
- ***Create community liaisons –*** Involving community members and local organizations can uncover important local partnerships needed for implementation. For example, community members might know of churches or businesses that would be interested in supporting implementation.

ADDITIONAL READING

To learn more about community-driven planning and racial equity, check out the following resources:

- *Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity*, by Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity
- *Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning*, by the Urban Sustainability Directors Network
- *Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning: A Framework*, by the National Association of Climate Resilience Planners
- *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, by Richard Rothstein



SECTION 3

Best Practices For Each Step of the Engagement Process

Section 3 – Best Practices For Each Step of the Engagement Process

As with all planning processes, success is in the details. This section provides an overview of best practices and offers a series of recommendations for each step of the community engagement model, drawing on lessons learned from the EAG Pilot.

1. Scoping the Project - The vision and scope of the project should be co-defined by community and government - and must be flexible enough to transform as the team learns together.

Determine goals for engagement: It is important to clarify and articulate why community engagement is necessary. What will you do with decisions or feedback from the community? Do you want to accomplish anything else beyond informing a plan or project, such as building trust or building local knowledge of issues? All of these decisions will influence choices about who to include and what to cover, so make sure to carefully reflect on the goals of the project.

Form a committee early in the planning process: The earlier in a planning process a committee is convened, the more power committee members will have to shape the project and feel a sense of ownership. If a committee is brought in after important decisions have been made, the committee may feel alienated or left out of essential stages of the planning processes.

Ensure that Project Team is prepared to shift decision-making to committee members: Before embarking on this process, it is worth making sure that the Project Team, and specifically the government agency (including its leadership), is comfortable shifting decision-making power to the community and is committed to act on committee recommendations in a meaningful way.

EXAMPLE FROM EAG PILOT: SCOPING THE PROJECT

While EAG members were not included in the scoping of the project, EAG members expressed that it would have given the project more credibility if more people from the community had been included during the early phases of committee formation. For example, one EAG member commented:

> *"When a program, like EAG, looks for input from local community members on a process that will impact them and their community directly, the community members must be included as early as possible in the process if their input is truly valued. This can start with an initial small group who can be included in the planning and goal setting activities. The group can be expanded to the full EAG closer to the last six month phase."*

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO RACIAL EQUITY GOALS

Addressing racial equity should be a named goal identified during the scoping phase and intentionally integrated into all decisions going forward. The government agency should:

- Create a plan to ensure that people of color are involved and empowered to make decisions throughout the engagement period;
- Build time into the project to explore the root causes of racial inequity and definitively ground it in history; and
- Consider developing a screening tool in collaboration with committee members to assess if solutions and strategies identified by the committee address racial equity.

The project should also strive towards specific racial equity-centered outcomes; for example, requiring that a 25 percent cost share of the funding be awarded to a community-based organization. Such an outcome would help address racial inequity, as racial minorities – particularly African Americans – have often been alienated from the receiving end of philanthropic giving[1].

1 Greenlining Institute. (2006). Investing in a Diverse Democracy: Foundation Giving to Minority-Led Nonprofits. Greenlining Institute. *http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/InvestinginaDiverseDemocracyFoundationGivingtoMinorityLedNonprofits.pdf*

2. Funding the Project - Dedicated funding can open doors for more equitable engagement.

Good planning requires appropriately funded community engagement: While many of the activities in this guide go beyond traditional community engagement or may be difficult to implement under time and capacity restrictions, they are important to reducing barriers that prevent residents from participating in community engagement processes. Providing meals, offering childcare, and compensating members for their time are particularly important for retaining residents who may face barriers that make attending meetings more difficult. While some activities require creative funding, others may require only advanced planning. Accounting for community engagement in budget planning makes it much more likely that there will be additional funding to pay for a suitable community meeting space, marketing, and other materials.

Partner with community groups: If planning for a specific geographical area or on a specific topic, it is likely there are community groups that would be interested in partnering with local government to help incorporate resident feedback in the planning process. Community partners may be able to provide additional services without requiring additional government funding, such as childcare, meeting facilitation, or meals – if the project aligns with work they are already doing. Ideally, however, government would fund the community-based organization for their work (although it is important to note District government funds cannot be used for food without special permission).

Consider grant funding: With advanced planning, private funding sources – such as a community foundation or small family foundation – may be interested in partnering with the Government to pilot a more inclusive community engagement strategy. Significant advanced planning is required, but can result in a much more creative approach and better-resourced project partners.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTE FUNDING

Grant proposals or formal partnership agreements provide an opportunity to build consensus among project partners around racial equity goals. All partners should come to a shared understanding of what they mean by racial equity, what their goals are for community engagement, and how they can evaluate success. Having these key elements written down can help the Project Team avoid the pressure to compromise on those same goals when facing time, capacity, or funding constraints down the road.

Additionally, the Project Team should consider creating criteria that will help the team onboard consultants or additional partners that have familiarity with the community and/or target populations. When scoring proposals, do not put a premium on the most polished proposals, but consider placing a higher value on an organization's qualitative and experiential work engaging with and organizing communities of color.

3. Building the Project Team - The community is the expert decision-maker, and project partners should be chosen who are oriented towards uplifting the community committee.

Reflect on internal capacities: At a minimum, the project will involve a government agency and a committee of residents that can represent the community. To begin, the government agency should reflect on which other core competencies (project management, facilitation, community knowledge, subject-matter expertise, and project evaluation) should be filled by a partner rather than internally. Know that doing this work well will involve a significant time investment by all participants.

Form a partnership to co-manage the project: While it can be tempting to hire a team of professional consultants to fill in resource and knowledge gaps, it may be more prudent to partner with respected community leaders or organizations that understand the challenges residents face. Partners should view the committee as their "client"; in turn, the committee members should feel that partners are relatable or trustworthy. If there is a non-profit partner who can fill one or more of the core competencies described in section 2, consider working with them to co-fundraise. Non-profit partners have the additional benefit of being able to take on responsibilities that governments rarely have the flexibility to perform, such as purchasing food, providing community stipends, and providing childcare. Once any initial partnerships are made, reflect again on which

core competencies are not fulfilled and your options for meeting that need through additional partnerships or contracts.

Build in oversight: While partnerships can be valuable, the project evaluator role may be best fulfilled by an independent party that is not otherwise invested in project decisions. Evaluators keep the rest of the Project Team accountable and provide necessary feedback to help the team course-correct when needed. At times, it may be strategic to endow an advocacy group with this role (especially one that is likely to pay attention whether asked

EXAMPLE FROM EAG PILOT: HOW THE EAG WAS FUNDED

The EAG was funded by a Partners for Places grant with matching funding provided by the Prince Family Foundation and the Cafritz Foundation. The Project Team began meeting with local foundations well in advance of the project to determine areas of mutual interest, which included climate adaptation and mitigation, improving the Anacostia River, and strengthening community participation in planning. Grant funding went to Georgetown Climate Center, which provided policy expertise and also managed the contracts that provided for meeting amenities, including stipends and childcare for the EAG members.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO RACIALLY REPRESENTATIVE MEMBERSHIP

A racially representative or balanced Project Team consisting of government staff members, partners, and consultants who have either lived or worked in the target community is a tremendous value-add when building trust with residents. Including team members who understand both the community and how government functions can help the team identify opportunities that may not have been obvious otherwise. For example, in the EAG Pilot, the Project Team was interested in exploring specific vulnerabilities to climate change, especially flooding and urban heat islands. In contrast, the EAG saw economic mobility and employment, youth engagement, and education as more compelling and relevant priorities. Having a team member with an insider's perspective helped the team to translate the issues the EAG cared about into specific actions in the District's climate plans – for example tailoring workforce development goals to incorporate the EAG's focus on local youth. This speaks to the importance of recruiting and hiring long-term District residents so that the Project Team itself is representative of the community.

Finally, Project Team members may also benefit from racial equity trainings to ensure that they understand the importance of race and historical context in their work with the targeted communities. In the EAG Pilot, District staff participated in a training on institutional racism and practicing cultural humility.

or not) so that the Project Team has an opportunity to get in front of any critiques. Alternatively, this position can be filled by a consultant.

Add additional voices as needed: Subject matter experts and implementation partners will likely not be identified until after the committee has begun to define their goals, identify where the committee needs to build knowledge, and consider who needs to be included to move committee recommendations forward. These partners may only need to be involved as invited guests at one or two community meetings.

EXAMPLE FROM EAG PILOT: RECEIVING MID-PROJECT FEEDBACK

In the EAG pilot, the evaluator was asked to provide a mid-project report so that the team could address issues early on. To prepare this report, the evaluator surveyed the EAG and had deeper conversations with a subset of EAG members. Her feedback identified a number of correctable concerns. For example, she found that some EAG members felt uncomfortable participating in large group conversations. In response, the Project Team incorporated breakout groups into subsequent meeting agendas.

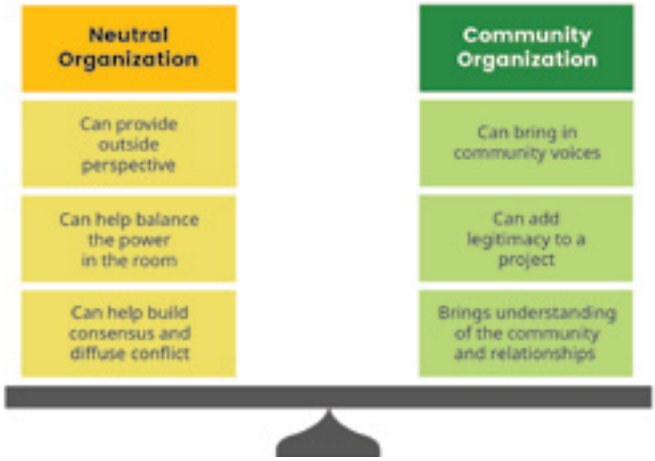
★ *Involve the community in building the Project Team:* To the degree possible, community members should be involved in identifying and selecting partners and consultants. Early community outreach during the scoping phase can be an opportunity to collect information about who might be a good non-profit partner. Ideally, the committee would have a direct voice in selecting the facilitator and evaluator. At a minimum, committee members should have a say in which subject-matter experts and implementation partners are invited to help them develop recommendations. Once a committee has been established for one project, it likely makes sense to reach out to those same committee members in future projects since this group will have the benefit of the knowledge and experience they gained during the first project.

Value partners' time: Partners, especially community partners, should be compensated for their time whenever feasible. Co-fundraising with a community-based organization or non-profit can help cover staff time.

Partners should complement government, not replace it: Partners can be hugely valuable in getting government to think beyond their normal tactics and to reach people outside of the government's network. However, that does not mean that government can expect partners to do all of that work. Government should anticipate assisting with identifying community members to serve on the committee, developing agendas, and bringing subject-matter experts and partners to the table. It is essential for government to actively participate in meetings and find ways to follow-through on committee recommendations.

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE – NEUTRALITY VS. COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE

The Project Team may need to make decisions about whether to bring in "neutral" partners (e.g., universities or consultants) or well-known community partners (e.g, community-based organizations or local leaders). Working with a community-based partner provides many benefits, including access to their community knowledge and network.



However, a community-based organization's goals and preexisting relationship with members of the community may not always align with project objectives or provide the level of impartiality desired by the Project Team. If an issue is contentious, it can be worth having a neutral voice to help facilitate and build consensus. Sometimes this balance can be achieved by bringing in a neutral facilitator while partnering with a community-based organization for project management.

4. Forming the Committee – The committee provides an opportunity to hear from a diversity of perspectives and also build consensus.

Determine what "representative" means: As a first step, conduct a statistical demographic analysis to understand who lives in the project area (pull data from the *U.S. Census Bureau* or, for more user-friendly outputs, consider the *Populations at Risk Tool*). Additionally, speak with a range of community leaders to understand how they would define a representative body. While it would be impossible to include all potential voices in a committee of only 10 to 15 members, government should bring intentionality to making decisions about how to create a group that includes a range of perspectives. For example, consider racial representation, gender parity, income, education, housing status, and multigenerational membership.

Use multiple methods for spreading the word. Consider presentations at community meetings, phone calls with community leaders, flyers, newsletters, social media, and listservs. Also think through whether it is more equitable to advertise in multiple languages.

Bring in established voices: Including some established leaders can be important for getting buy-in from other community members and creating pathways for disseminating information from the committee back to the general public. These people also bring a wealth of community knowledge and even help identify other potential committee members. Consider including members from local schools; community service providers, such as youth and health services; Advisory Neighborhood Councils and civic associations; the faith community; local business leaders; and other community-based organizations. Also consider including respected community elders who understand and can communicate the history of the community.

Photo: Georgetown Climate Center

Bring in emerging voices or voices that are often left out: In addition to established leaders, the committee can provide an opportunity to build the next generation of leaders and lift up voices that may otherwise go unheard. In practice, it may require multiple attempts and conversations to bring certain groups into the room, which only increases the importance of including them. Some groups to consider inviting include youth, renters, residents living in subsidized housing, and recent immigrants.

Consider holding an information session to round out membership: Even with the best outreach, it can be hard to determine if you have the right mix of participants until you can see who is sitting around the table. Even more, committee members will likely be important resources for identifying gaps in representation and recruiting people who should be added. The agenda during an information session

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO ADDRESSING THE ROLE OF RACE

Even though representation can be defined many ways, racial representation on the committee is particularly important. While race and income are closely connected, even when income is held steady, race continues to be an important predictor of social, health, and economic outcomes.[1] For example, while the District has become wealthier in recent years, people of color, and particularly the District's African American residents, are not seeing the benefits of that prosperity.[2]

1 Nelson, J., Spokane, L., Ross, L, Deng, N. (2015). Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A Resource Guide to Put Ideas into Action (p. 8). Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity. *https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf*

2 Zippel, C. (2017). "DC Has More to Do to Ensure Residents of Color Can Access Growing Prosperity, Census Data Show" *https://www.dcfpi.org/all/dc-ensure-residents-color-can-access-growing-prosperity-census-data-show/*

should cover the main objectives for the project, a discussion on what representation means in the context of the project, and an opportunity to brainstorm who else needs to be invited.

★ *Pay the committee members for their time:* Committee members, like consultants, are providing expertise and a service. Therefore, efforts should be made to value their time through stipends or gift cards.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: METHODOLOGY FOR RECRUITING EAG MEMBERS

Recognizing the need to establish deeper ties to the community to facilitate EAG recruitment, the Project Team offered a short-term contract to a community member to act as a "community knowledge broker" and make recommendations on community leaders – new and established – and organizations for initial outreach. Additionally, the Project Team attended community meetings and posted flyers throughout the area. Even with this outreach, it became clear that the Project Team needed to have a deeper presence in the community to effectively recruit. Therefore, the team transformed the first meeting into an information session to welcome the initial committee members, provide more information to other interested parties, and identify who else needed to be added to the committee.

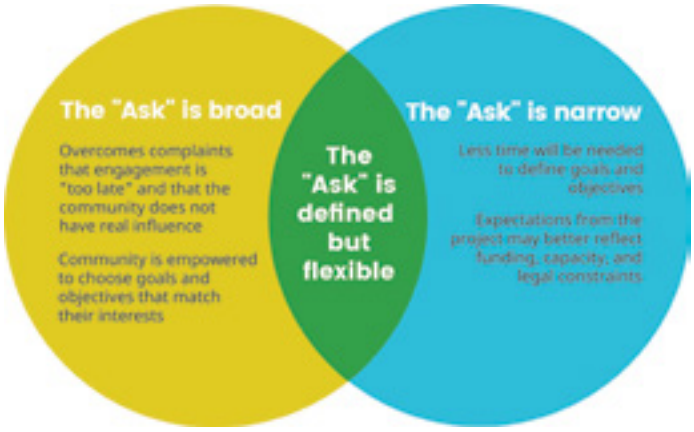
To facilitate the process of choosing a representative group, the Project Team created a brief online and paper application that asked potential EAG members basic demographic information (including race, age, neighborhood, and number of years living in project area). The application also asked about their involvement in community groups. The Project Team spoke with all potential EAG members by phone to learn more about their interest and fill in any gaps not answered in their application. Spots were offered to 16 EAG members, and 13 participated in the full EAG process. The team succeeded in building an EAG that was racially representative and included:

- A range of ages (from high school to older community members)
- Lifelong residents as well as newer residents
- Homeowners and renters

In the final evaluation of the project, the EAG members expressed a deep appreciation for the efforts to include a range of voices, especially a mixture of both existing and emerging leaders. One noted:

> *"I think it is good to involve diverse aspects of the community and civic engagement is arguably not a prerequisite to being able to provide valuable perspectives and influence on community discussions."*

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE – DEVELOPING YOUR ASK



The Project Team will need to develop a clear "ask" and communicate that to potential committee members during the recruitment phase. This is essential for framing expectations around the project, helping committee members understand the value of their contributions, and ensuring that the project has achievable goals that can be met within the given timeline. For example, one EAG member reported "More time should have been spent understanding what the Project Team needs from the EAG. We were tasked with making recommendations that could be implemented large scale, and we should have known going in as much as possible. Then we can sift through the background information and used the time with the resource partners."

However, the Project Team must also be ready to shift and revise the original "ask" to reflect committee priorities as they emerge over the course of the project. In fact, the Project Team should expect the priorities to shift and change as all parties gain deeper understandings of the issues, and should work with the committee to revisit the project goal at regular intervals.

Other key tips:

- Expect the committee recruitment period to take multiple months, especially if members of your Project Team need to build community expertise and establish local contacts.
- Although someone may have certain demographic characteristics, they cannot speak for the entire community they are intended to represent. To avoid tokenism, it is important to either include people who are already widely accepted as representing that community (i.e. elected officials) or to involve multiple voices from that demographic profile.

5. Creating a Meeting Structure that Works - The goal is to listen and learn, not convince and persuade.

Establish rules of order focused on building consensus: Ideally, the committee would independently draft its own charter to establish the project's purpose, goals, and expectations in addition to developing a process for reaching consensus. However, it may be more efficient to work with the facilitator to draft a proposed charter to share, discuss, and refine with the committee at one of the earlier meetings.

Agree on expectations for participation: Ensure that prospective committee members know that the project will be time-intensive and that they are committed to the meeting schedule. Make it clear that committee members are expected to do their best to attend all meetings and commit to some work between meetings.

Build social time into the meeting timeline: Committee members will work better together and offer more honest feedback if they are comfortable with one another. Even more, a committee that has developed deep relationships among members is more likely to endure and continue working together even when funding and other resources may no longer be available. Consider hosting a meeting at the beginning of the process focused on team-building activities and deep discussions on the project purpose.

Find opportunities for committee members to plan and run meetings: Ask committee members to help draft agendas, present during meetings, or even chair a working group or the group as a whole. The more ownership committee members take, the more successful the process will be. Similar to meeting participation, committee members should understand expectations to take on leadership roles from the beginning of the process.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: EAG VOTING PROCESS

The EAG Charter outlined the following points for reaching consensus:

What is consensus?

A consensus decision-making process emphasizes deliberative dialogue and seeks to arrive at a decision that all members of the group can support. Consensus does not require all members of the group to agree to support a decision equally.

How can we measure consensus?

Polling group members can provide a simple way to determine whether a group has reached consensus.

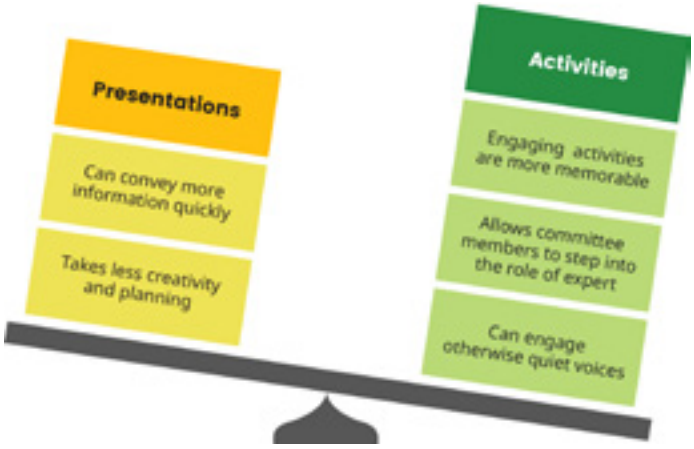
- Thumbs up = I support the proposal.
- Thumbs sideways = I have concerns but will not block consensus.
- Thumbs down = I disagree and cannot support the proposal.

The group reaches consensus when all members can give a thumbs sideways or a thumbs up on the proposed action.

What if we are not able to reach consensus?

When consensus cannot be reached, a 2/3 majority vote will constitute a final decision.

FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE – PRESENTATIONS VS. ACTIVITIES



The purpose of meetings is to create a dialogue between committee members and government, and to learn from the expertise that committee members bring. Formal presentations will eat up precious meeting time and often do not contribute to this dialogue. They also run the risk of being overly technical and are more easily forgotten compared to deeply engaging activities. Even so, there may be a need for a limited number of presentations early on in the process to familiarize committee members with the topic and build capacity.

In the EAG Pilot, The Project Team asked committee members to craft recommendations on the relatively complex topic of climate change and resilience. While many of the EAG members brought an interest in environmental issues, most were unfamiliar with climate projections and the plans the District had already drafted. Therefore, the Project Team relied on presentations for community education and to walk through the plans. The Project Team learned that even explanatory exercises should be conducted more informally, and that conversations should be paired with an interactive activity, such as working together to identify important community assets within the projected floodplain.

Create multiple opportunities and methods for people to express their opinions: Some committee members will be comfortable voicing their opinions during meetings, while others may be more comfortable working in small groups or providing written feedback. Use a variety of approaches so that all committee members have the opportunity to contribute in their preferred way.

Debrief after every meeting: The Project Team should debrief and revisit the project timeline after every meeting. Likewise, "check-ins" with committee members shortly after meetings are helpful for gathering feedback on what went well and what could be done differently. Check-ins provide a strategic opportunity to collect feedback that can inform the development of the subsequent meeting agendas.

Other key tips:

- Start meetings, especially at the beginning of the process, with an icebreaker to help people get comfortable.

- Provide time during each meeting for committee members to reflect on the previous meeting and ask questions.
- Make name tents for all committee members to foster relationship-building.
- If space at the table is limited, committee members should sit at the table and other partners should sit on the perimeter.
- Reserve meeting space longer than you need it so that people have the opportunity to socialize before and after meetings. A more cohesive group will be more productive.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: EAG SURVEYS

Following every EAG meeting, the Project Team circulated Google Forms to elicit feedback from the EAG members. While electronic forms may be limiting in some situations, the EAG told us that they preferred this method. Allowing EAG members to respond at home improved the quality and depth of the feedback. Typical questions included:

- Based on the discussion in the last meeting, what questions or concerns do you have?
- What additional information do you need to make a decision regarding ___?

- While email communication between meetings will work for many committee members, expect to call some members to remind them about meetings and share information. Remind members about meetings at least a week ahead of time and also on the day of the meeting.
- Follow-up with any committee members who miss meetings to better understand why and to catch them up on content. If committee members miss too many meetings, have a conversation with them about what is preventing them from attending, how those obstacles can be overcome, and whether it makes sense for them to continue participating.

6. Collaboratively Developing Recommendations - Co-designed recommendations are not compromises, but rather stronger recommendations informed by the expertise of community and grounded in the realities of government.

Create space to explore the government's vision for the project, and then co-define the purpose, project scope, and timeline: In the first meeting, present the vision of the project from the government perspective while making it clear that it will be revised based on community input. Use an activity to give the committee time to critically consider the vision and ask probing questions. The committee should then be allowed to refine the purpose and project scope. Also consider co-developing a project timeline that illustrates how the group will meet its goals.

Take time to broadly discuss the committee's vision and hopes for their community: Community members will come to the table with a wide range of concerns that may exceed the scope of the planning process. Rather than try to limit the committee to the specific topic area, it can be helpful to start with a more open-ended conversation about their vision and primary concerns. This can

help guide the direction of future conversations. However, if there are genuine limits to the project's scope, it is better to be upfront about those limits so participants are not frustrated later when they learn their areas of interest do not align well with the focus of the project.

Find overlap between community priorities and government priorities: The broader community vision and list of top priorities can be cross-walked against more specific priorities and objectives within the project scope. This can be a useful method for finding a niche where the committee can make the most impactful recommendations.

Photo: Georgetown Climate Center

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: HOMEWORK

Before one of the first meetings, EAG members were asked to speak with a community elder or neighbor about their experience living in the community during a natural disaster. This feedback allowed the EAG to bring more than their own experience to the discussion. EAG members reported that these conversations were rich and that they really appreciated the opportunity to connect to their neighbors. Any homework that is assigned should be actively incorporated into the next meeting's agenda to capitalize on the committee's learning.

Indeed, EAG members reported that they would have been willing to spend more time doing homework than the Project Team asked of them. For example, in the final project evaluation, one member stated:

> *"What's required of people should be enhanced like doing more hard work outside of the meeting space. There would be more commitment from people this way and this will enable them to stick around."*

Strategically use "homework" to get needed feedback: Time between meetings needs to be used strategically to reach the committee's objectives. "Homework" between meetings provides a unique opportunity to have committee members review written materials, weigh options, and generate ideas. Assignments may go beyond reading and could include conversations with neighbors or outreach to a local civic association. If expectations are set correctly and committee members are invested in the project, they will be willing to spend time between meetings doing this work.

Create a two-way dialogue in which committee members learn about government processes: This process is a unique opportunity for community members to become more aware of the constraints faced by government and to problem-solve within that context. Be transparent about the constraints in your agency, the reality of how quickly something can be accomplished, and on how confident you are that you can deliver on recommendations – even if it may be uncomfortable to discuss.

Connect committee members to partners who can help formulate implementable recommendations: Committee members will need assistance from subject matter experts and partners to help them think through recommendations that are achievable. As members begin to hone recommendations, they likely will benefit by collaborating with partners from other agencies, the private sector, or the community. In general, these partners should not be asked to present, but should work with committee members to problem solve and design recommendations.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO RACE CENTERED DIALOGUE

In order to address racial inequities and disparities, the Project Team should intentionally build time into agendas to talk about race and racism as it relates to decision-making and outcomes. Grounding conversations in how past and present racist ideas and policies contribute to and perpetuate social and racial inequality provides a shared understanding that can help committee members imagine new policies and solutions that can reduce the negative impact of those past dynamics. It is important to recognize the significance of providing space for deep and supportive dialogue as a means to address the mental, emotional, and psychological impact this conversation will have on the participants.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

The EAG expressed an interest in developing recommendations around three different topics: workforce development, youth engagement and developing "resilience hubs" (trusted community spaces that provide emergency services before, during, and after a disaster event). While the EAG members brought in a lot of knowledge on each of these topics, our consultant suggested bringing in partners that could deepen their understandings of these issues and assist EAG members in making informed recommendations. Partners included members from other agencies, including the Office of the City Administration and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency; federal partners such as the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers; and organizations such as the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, the University of the District of Columbia, and the District of Columbia Sustainable Energy Utility. These partners were specifically asked not to give formal presentations, but instead to join breakout groups to answer questions and offer guidance.

7. Sharing Recommendation with Others - A community committee may reflect the demographic profile of the community, but does not speak for the entire community; broader outreach may also be needed.

Collaboratively decide if public outreach outside of the committee is important and what form it should take: Periodically discuss with committee members how and if additional public outreach would benefit the process of developing, finalizing, or implementing recommendations. It may make sense to hold a public meeting at a midpoint to get broader input from the community. It may also make sense to hold a public meeting at the end of the process to build support for the committee recommendations and explore next steps for implementation.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: PLANNING A PUBLIC MEETING

While the Project Team ran out of time during the formal grant process to hold a public meeting, the team and the EAG felt that it was essential to share the EAG recommendations with the wider Ward 7 community through a public event. The goal of the public meeting, as defined by EAG members, was to ask the Ward 7 community to endorse their recommendations and connect Ward 7 community members with District resources that can support resilience and energy efficiency.

EAG members divided into two sub-committees – marketing and meeting content – to plan the meeting. Members of the marketing committee sent letters to members of District Council, Advisory Neighborhood Councils, and other groups they felt should be part of the conversation; assisted with social media and flyering; and, along with DOEE and GCC staff, tabled during the annual National Night Out event to publicize their public meeting. The content committee helped design the meeting agenda and determined which other agencies and District programs they wanted to invite to present during the meeting.

Committee members should be the messengers of their recommendations: Work with the committee to figure out when and how they want to broaden their conversation to the larger public. When planning a public meeting, encourage committee members to market, plan, and run the meeting.

★ *Offer public speaking and advocacy training:* Ideally, committee members will become their own messengers and will continue to advocate for their recommendations after the formal process is over. For this to happen, committee members will benefit from coaching and training on how to effectively present to decision-makers and build grassroots support.

Bring people into the room who can be partners in implementation: Public meetings are another opportunity to engage with groups, particularly community partners, which can help move the

committee recommendations into action. Work with the committee to identify which partners they want to invite.

Create opportunities for the committee to engage with top-level officials: While the day-to-day engagement may not include agency directors or elected government officials, creating an opportunity for the committee to directly engage with high-level decision-makers is empowering and demonstrates government buy-in of the process. It can help build even deeper levels of trust since it sends a signal that the community-derived recommendations are being taken seriously.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO INCLUDING MORE VOICES

Even if the committee is representative of the community in terms of race and other demographic factors, it will not represent the voice of the entire community, ward, or neighborhood. In order to avoid tokenism – or presenting committee recommendations as if they were reflective of a larger community – it is important to plan a larger convening to bring in the perspectives of other residents to respond to the committee's recommendations or weigh-in on key decisions. Committee members should take the lead in community engagement, marketing, and facilitating the meeting, with support from government as needed. This objective should be clearly stated as an outcome at the beginning of the process so that committee members can take ownership of a larger public meeting.

8. Remaining Accountable and Maintaining Relationship - Relationship and trust building should be a high priority; this involves delivering on community recommendations and being transparent and non-defensive about constraints.

Have clear deliverables: This process should culminate with a tangible deliverable that makes clear how the committee recommendations will be used. This might take the form of a written report that outlines committee recommendations and next steps for moving them forward.

EXAMPLE FROM THE EAG PILOT: QUARTERLY CHECK-INS

The EAG and DOEE reached an agreement for quarterly check-in calls for one year after the final EAG meeting, in which DOEE will report on its progress in implementing EAG recommendations. While EAG members overwhelmingly reported that they were proud of the EAG process and were given real decision-making power, the ultimate success of the project and long-term trust from EAG members will depend on if DOEE can find ways to put the EAG recommendations into action. As one EAG member stated:

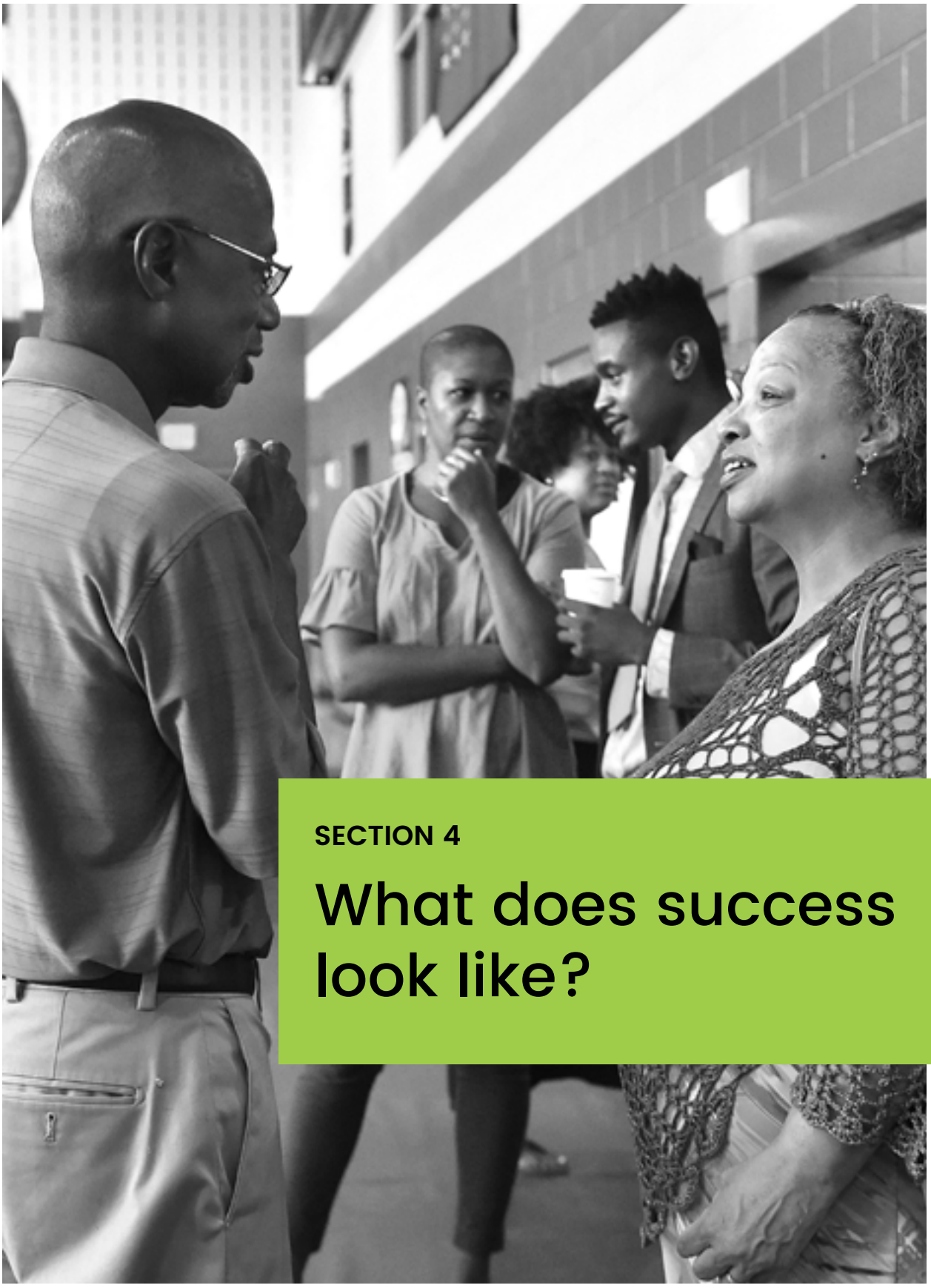
> *"It's a great first step but I need to see the implementation. Am I supposed to make sure they're implemented, or are they doing it? I worry the recommendations could just sit there."*

Reach an agreement for ongoing communication: Do not wrap up the formal committee meeting process, without coming to a consensus on if or how the District will update the committee on the status of their recommendations.

★ *Find funding for continued action:* An energetic committee may be interested in finding additional funding to expand their process or continue advocating for their recommendations. At this point, government should consider stepping out of the process and letting the committee continue as their own entity.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY: COMMIT TO CREATE SEATS AT THE TABLE

It has been said: "bring me in early and I am your supporter, bring me in late and I am your judge." In order to maintain government-community relationships and create a real shift in power to communities of color, the committee must define for itself what success and accountability look like. If the project objectives have not been fully realized, it is important for communication channels to remain open well after the formal process has ended. The initial engagement process should serve either as a foundation or as building blocks to transition to what the committee determines is the next logical step. Additionally, the Project Team should work to elevate the lessons learned and recommendations to upper management and/or throughout their agency for implementation.



SECTION 4

What does success look like?

Section 4 - What does success look like?

The EAG Pilot, while imperfect, was transformative in helping government access much deeper community input and build stronger relationships with residents. In future projects, the Project Team might consider working with the committee and evaluator to co-define what success looks like early on and creating a rubric for assessing that success; potential indicators from the EAG Pilot include:

1. **Willingness to invest time in the process:**
    a. EAG members attended nearly all meetings. When EAG members had to miss meetings, they consistently notified the Project Team ahead of time and made steps to contribute in writing or catch up afterwards.
    b. EAG members completed homework assignments and expressed a willingness to spend even more time between meetings on homework.
    c. When asked, EAG members were willing to help with agenda development or present during meetings.
2. **Building relationships between the committee members and with government:**
    a. EAG members formed a cohesive group by the end of process, exhibited by easy banter and a desire to keep spending time with one another.
    b. 100 percent of EAG members reported in the final evaluation that they had a "direct relationship" with DOEE and 92 percent selected 4 or 5 (on a scale from 1-5) that their feedback was highly valued and respected.
3. **Pride in their recommendation:**
    a. 92 percent of EAG members selected a 4 or a 5 when asked if they were "proud" of the final recommendations, and the majority agreed that their recommendations will benefit their community.
    b. EAG members were excited about planning a public meeting and many members took on extra work to make sure their recommendations were shared with the Ward 7 community.
4. **Benefiting from the substantive lessons learned during planning:**
    a. EAG members are using the information they learned in the EAG Pilot in other aspects of their lives. For example, one member is starting a class about these issues at a local school. Another presented on these topics at his civic association meeting.
    b. 100 percent of EAG members say that they have a better understanding climate issues and the individual measures they can take to prepare.

This project is part of a Partners for Places Equity Pilot Initiative - a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. We would like to thank Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, Prince Charitable Trusts, and the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation for their generous support.

We also extend a special thank you to the Equity Advisory Group in Far Northeast Ward 7 for working diligently to develop thoughtful recommendations and for informing the lessons in this guide.

Finally, thank you to Georgetown Climate Center for serving as a committed community partner and climate adaptation technical advisor. This project would not have been possible without the expertise, diligence, and the significant time Georgetown Climate Center devoted to supporting this work.