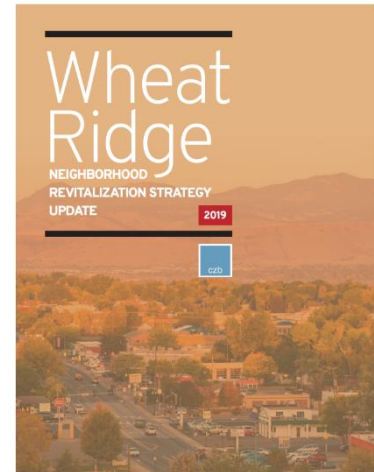




Program Framework

June 2020

In July 2019, City Council adopted an update to the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS). The original 2005 NRS set forth a work plan for the subsequent 10+ years that the city has followed extensively, with examples noted in the 2019 NRS Update. Similarly, the 2019 NRS Update sets forth a work plan for the next 10+ years with two priority recommendations. The first priority recommendation is to spend 1-2 years better understanding what issues and opportunities are most important to residents at the neighborhood level through focused listening and engagement. The second priority recommendation is completion of existing projects and fresh planning efforts on the city's primary corridors such as Wadsworth Boulevard, 38th Avenue, and 44th Avenue.



This document provides the framework for addressing the first priority recommendation through a new Neighborhood Engagement Program. This is a living document that will be updated as the program evolves through the design and implementation phases.

Neighborhood Engagement Program Purpose and Guiding Principles

The purpose of the Neighborhood Engagement Program is to develop and implement systems by which the city can better identify and respond to neighborhood issues and opportunities on an ongoing basis. The guiding principles below represent the commitments of the program and staff. They reflect the overarching desire to build trust between the city and community members through open, transparent dialogue that remains flexible and adaptable with a focus on listening while demonstrating responsive actions.

Guiding Principles

1. Keep an Open Mind
2. Be Flexible and Adaptable
3. Be Action Oriented
4. Communicate Realistic and Clear Options
5. Standardize a Citywide Structure But Customize Engagement by Neighborhood

1. Keep an Open Mind

The program will provide structure for community conversations that encourages stakeholders to get engaged. Staff will design and facilitate the program with an open mind and will not arrive with preconceived notions of each neighborhood's issues and opportunities.

Example: For the first neighborhood engagement event, draft an initial list of potential neighborhood-specific action items if they are needed as a starting point for community conversations, but allow space with open ended questions for other topics to emerge.

2. Be Flexible and Adaptable

The program approach and strategies will stay open and flexible to adhere to the core purpose of maximizing responsiveness to neighborhood issues and opportunities.

Example: After one year of neighborhood engagement that covers a significant portion of the city, assess what is working and not working to address the program's purpose and make adjustments. This could even include changing the sequence of neighborhoods to respond to hot button issues or current events.

3. Be Action Oriented

City staff will guide community conversations towards actionable items that the city has the authority to address and implement those priority items that can be advanced concurrently with ongoing program engagement when possible.

Examples:

- *If a common theme is that new development is out of character with the neighborhood, ask questions to hone in on the root of the issue (e.g., height, design, or something else) and to identify if the issue is something that the city has authority to address.*
- *The first neighborhood in the engagement cycle may prioritize an issue that can be addressed through a targeted Zoning Code amendment. As resources allow, implement these kinds of early action items while engagement is occurring in a subsequent neighborhood.*

4. Communicate Realistic and Clear Options

When framing options with the community, discussion will include the costs, benefits, tradeoffs, and potential unintended consequences to provide a holistic view of the issues for stakeholders. Staff will manage expectations for what is realistic within the city's resources. Presenting voluminous materials in bureaucratic jargon is ineffective for meaningful engagement, so staff will translate jargon into laypersons terms and translate long wish lists into concise options.

Examples:

- *If a common theme is incompatible massing and scale of multifamily housing in a neighborhood, frame a question more simply by asking "how should the homes in your community look and feel?"*

- *If a common theme is that the neighborhood wants more restaurants and retail, communicate the tradeoff that this likely means the neighborhood needs more households to provide the demand.*

5. Standardize a Citywide Engagement Structure But Customize by Neighborhood

The program design will create efficiencies through a consistent structure and format for engagement across neighborhoods, and staff will also develop questions and activities unique to each geographic area. Engagement strategies will be matched to the neighborhood's population to ensure that the process is inclusive, particularly for historically hard-to-engage populations. Engagement strategies will also be calibrated through the lens of the citywide Community Involvement Strategy (see Attachment 2). This document addresses the overarching approach for community engagement across city departments working on various programs and projects.

Examples:

- *Create a neighborhood profile template for display boards at engagement events across neighborhoods and swap out the data, but develop neighborhood-specific questions and potential action item lists.*
- *One neighborhood may have a particularly active Nextdoor page to utilize to get the word out and pose questions on key issues; one neighborhood may be more focused on word of mouth and therefore a targeted strategy to identify neighborhood "champions" is more effective to spread the word.*

Definitions of Success

A successful engagement effort will look different in each neighborhood. In general, the Neighborhood Engagement Program will be successful if:

- The city develops a thorough, well documented understanding of the issues and opportunities at the neighborhood level;
- Trust is built between city staff and neighborhood stakeholders through demonstration that the city is listening and being responsive;
- Neighborhood stakeholders become more empowered to take initiative and work effectively with the city for positive outcomes that respond to neighborhood changes;
- All neighborhoods in the city have an opportunity for focused listening and responsive actions from the city within approximately two year cycles; and
- The feedback received during neighborhood listening is robust and represents a diversity of opinions in each neighborhood.

Schedule


This schedule is based on alternating periods of preparation ("Ramp Up") and active engagement ("Blitz") over the course of two years. It includes a two-month break after year 1 to allow for a short period of evaluation and potential adjustments before covering the rest of the city in the subsequent year. This is consistent with the 2019 NRS Update recommendation to embark on neighborhood focused listening and engagement for a period of 1-2 years¹. It also provides the mechanism to ensure

¹ See page 61 of the 2019 NRS Update.

the city is evolving the program to best address the core purpose of developing and implementing systems to identify and be responsive to neighborhood issues and opportunities on an ongoing basis.

Note that this schedule was established based on the assumption that two full time staff would support the program: a Senior Neighborhood Planner and Engagement Specialist. Both positions were approved in the 2020 budget. The Engagement Specialist has not yet been hired. A top candidate was identified through a recruitment process in March 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a hiring freeze and the position has not been filled. This schedule may be modified based on staff resources.

Neighborhood Engagement Program Year 1

Neighborhoods 1-2							Neighborhoods 3-4					Stop and Assess		Year 2 Neighborhoods 5-10 
2020							2021							
Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	
Ramp Up				Engagement Blitz Neighborhoods 1-2			Ramp Up		Engagement Blitz Neighborhoods 3-4			Adjustments as needed		

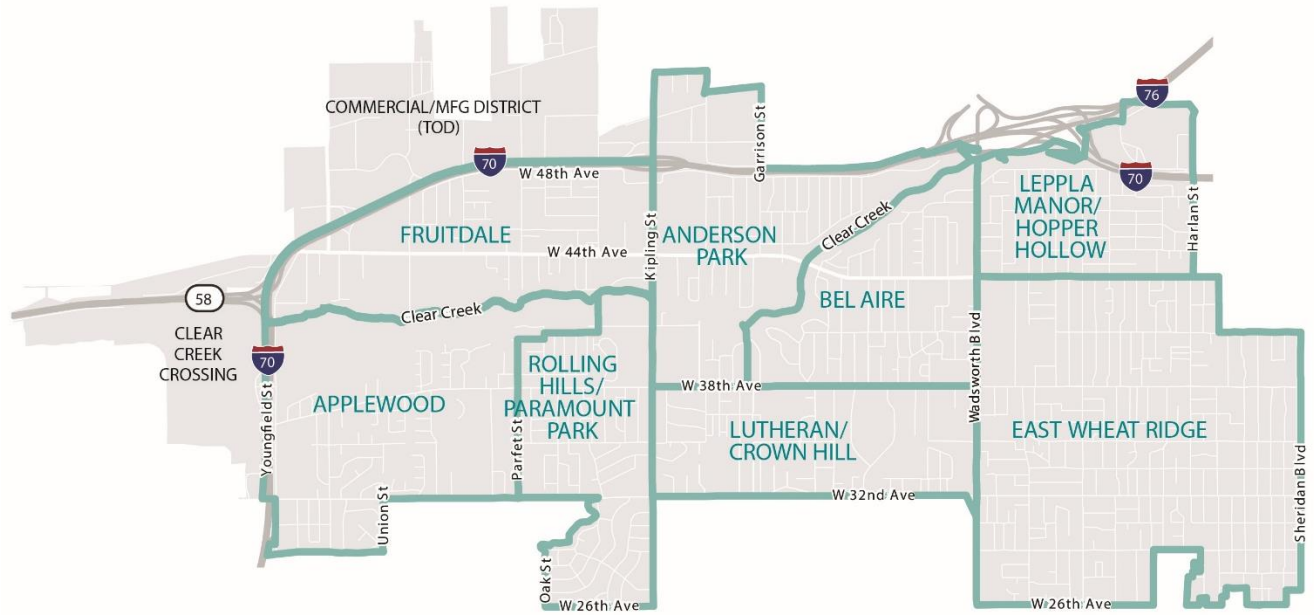
Neighborhoods and Sequence of Engagement

The city does not have registered or formalized neighborhood boundaries, but dividing the city into smaller levels of geography is critical to conducting more focused engagement. The 2019 NRS Update included proposed boundaries for neighborhood-level geographies and used them for extensive data analysis. The boundaries were informed by a mapping exercise that took place at the December 2018 NRS open house. Attendees were asked to “draw the area that best defines your neighborhood” and asked to share the neighborhood’s name; 85 responses were used to create the boundaries and names shown in the map below.² As acknowledged in the 2019 NRS Update, these boundaries are not intended to be official neighborhood boundaries and will likely be adjusted as the program evolves.

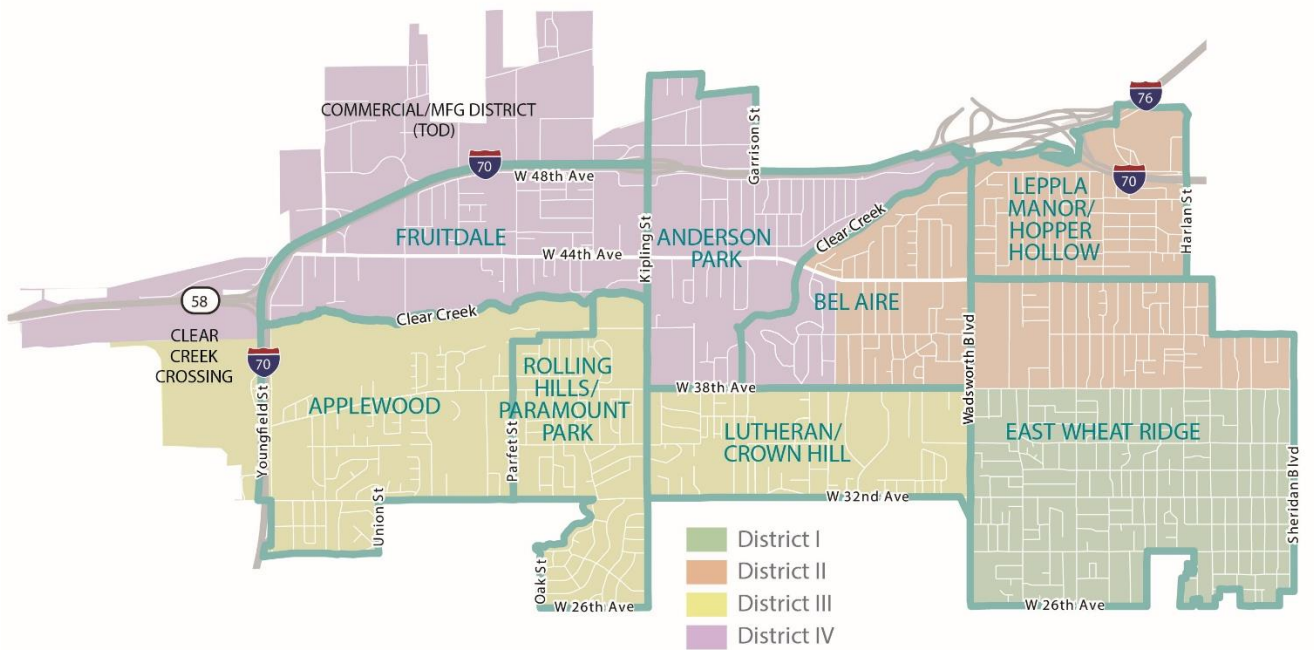
The series of maps below show the neighborhood boundaries used in the 2019 NRS Update, the proposed modified approach for the Neighborhood Engagement Program to define these boundaries, and how City Council districts align with these boundaries. (Note that Council Districts may be subject to modifications after 2020 Census results are returned depending on shifts in population.)

² See page 22 of the 2019 NRS Update.

2019 NRS Neighborhoods Map



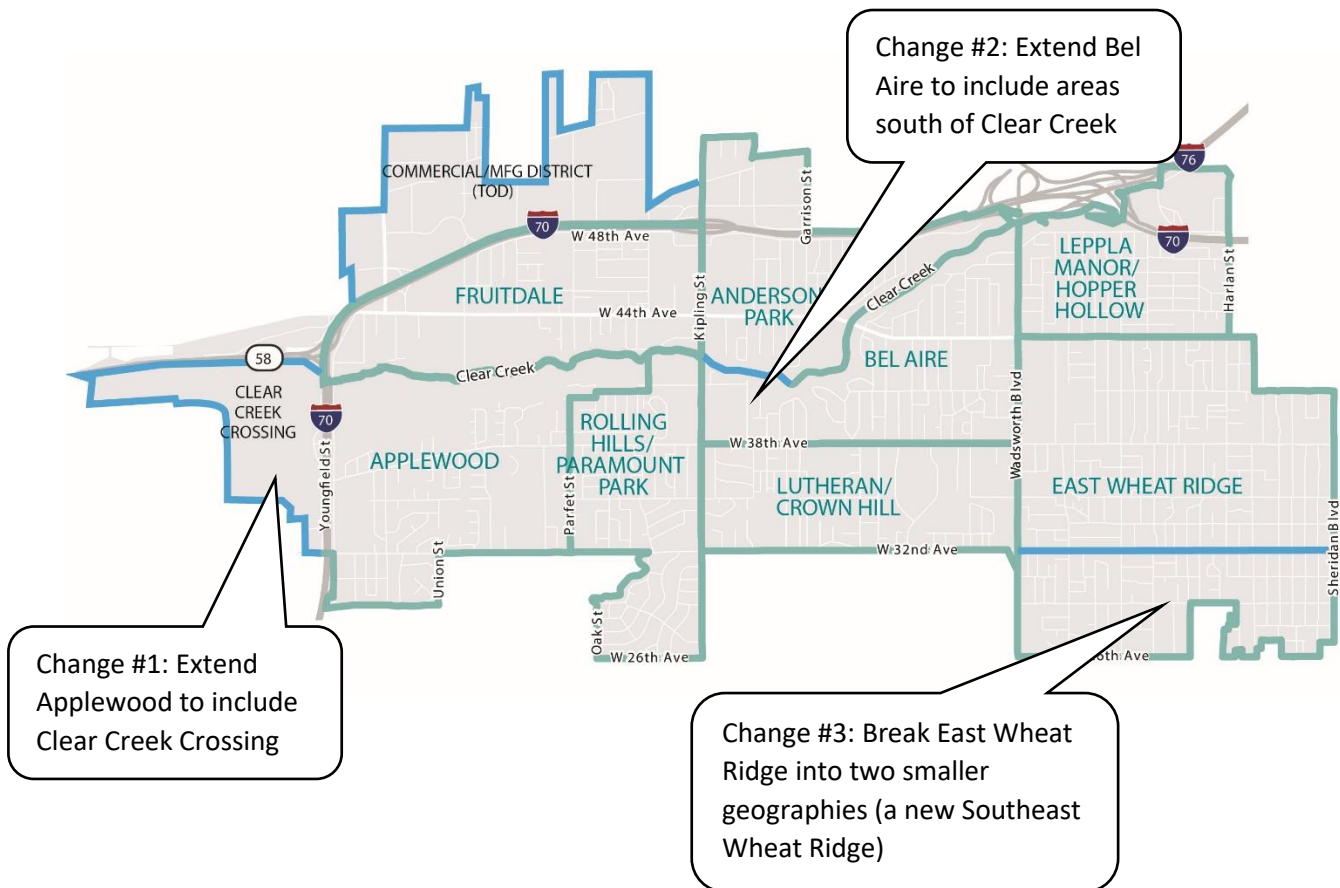
2019 NRS Neighborhoods and City Council Districts Map



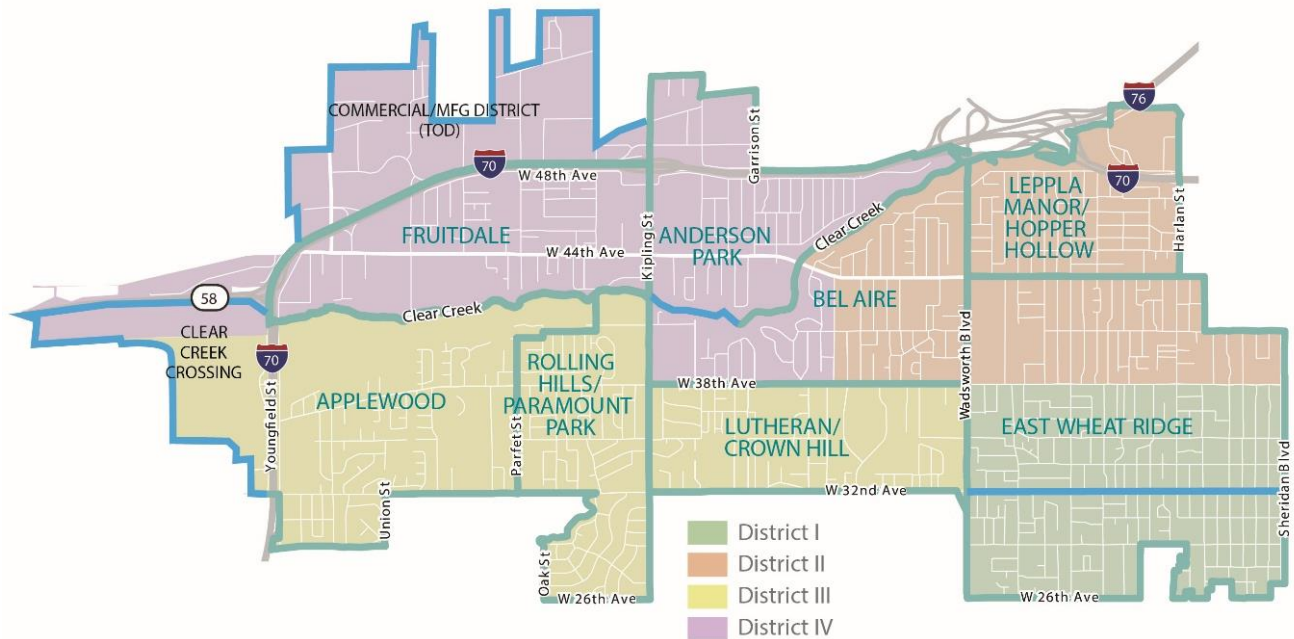
Modified 2019 NRS Neighborhoods Map

The map below is the proposed modified approach for defining smaller geographies for the Neighborhood Engagement Program. The modified approach is based on population and land area distribution, neighborhood boundaries defined on Nextdoor (the city's most active neighborhood-specific social media platform) and other factors. The changes from the 2019 NRS Neighborhoods Map are highlighted with the darker blue outlines and include the following:

1. Expansion of the Applewood boundary to include Clear Creek Crossing;
2. Expansion of the Bel Aire boundary to include all areas south of Clear Creek;
3. Breaking East Wheat Ridge into two smaller geographies.



Modified 2019 NRS Neighborhoods Map and Council Districts Map



Sequence of Neighborhood Engagement

The sequencing of neighborhoods for the ramp up and blitz cycles described in the Schedule Section above will be based on several factors, including but not limited to:

- The levels of recent or anticipated physical changes in the neighborhood;
- The extent of recent or planned city policy or regulatory efforts to address neighborhood issues and/or opportunities;
- Stakeholder comments indicating a particular desire or need for engagement sooner than later; and
- Equitable distribution of neighborhood engagement across the city and Council Districts.

The table below provides neighborhood population estimates and examples of how some of these factors apply to the modified 2019 NRS-identified neighborhoods:

NRS 2019 Update Modified Neighborhoods and Sequencing Factors

NRS 2019 Modified Neighborhoods	Council District	2018 Estimated Population/% of City*		Example Sequencing Factors
Anderson Park	IV	2,555	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44th Avenue Subarea Plan programmed, but delayed • Planned neighborhood engagement around floodplain issues in short term

NRS 2019 Modified Neighborhoods	Council District	2018 Estimated Population/% of City*		Example Sequencing Factors
Applewood	III	4,495	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If engagement boundary extended west to include Clear Creek Crossing, that area is undergoing substantial change Increasing amount of residential infill Less focused recent city neighborhood engagement than others
Bel Aire	II/IV	2,982	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent stakeholder concerns about incompatible development
East Wheat Ridge	I/II	6,833	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 NRS recommends this area for early engagement with significant physical change occurring More focused recent city neighborhood engagement than others related to corridors and regulatory changes addressing neighborhood issues
Fruitdale	IV	2,833	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing amount of residential infill 44th Avenue Subarea Plan programmed, but delayed
Leppla Manor/ Hopper Hollow	II	2,506	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 NRS recommends this area for early engagement with significant physical change occurring
Lutheran/Crown Hill	III	2,115	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lutheran campus and likely master planning effort, but not for 1+ years
North of I-70	IV	1,599	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More commercial and industrial areas than residential Ward Road Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area has seen significant planning and investment Other development slated for area includes Ward Road ponds, other large undeveloped areas abutting I-70
Rolling Hills/ Paramount Park	III	1,587	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing amount of residential infill Less focused recent city neighborhood engagement than others
Southeast Wheat Ridge**	I	5,884	18%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 NRS recommends this area for early engagement with significant physical change occurring More focused recent city neighborhood engagement than others related to regulatory changes addressing neighborhood issues

**Population data is taken from the 2018 American Community Survey from the Census Bureau. The data is taken from census tracts and block groups that in some cases do not align with the NRS 2019 modified neighborhood boundaries. Adjustments were made to address these inconsistencies but the data is still approximate.*

*** New neighborhood boundary to break East Wheat Ridge into two smaller geographies from the 2019 NRS Update*

Engagement Strategies and Outcomes from Neighborhood Blitzes

Before each Neighborhood Blitz begins, outreach will include a pre-blitz survey to “prime the pump” on engagement, to start identifying discussion topics, and to kick off the marketing and outreach campaign. Each neighborhood will have a unique set of topics and stakeholders. In response to this, each neighborhood will have a specific engagement plan that will include the following types of strategies:

- Online engagement activities using the What’s Up Wheat Ridge platform (polls, surveys, open ended questions, etc.);
- Informal small group conversations;
- Intercept events (program presence for groups that are already meeting, at neighborhood gathering places, at other city events, etc.);
- Open houses and town hall style meetings for larger groups;
- Strategies for reaching the hard to reach (e.g., Spanish first households, hard of hearing or seeing, renters, seniors, youth, etc.); and
- Other engagement opportunities.



Following each neighborhood engagement blitz cycle, staff will prepare an action plan or next steps report specific to the applicable neighborhood. Such a report may include a concise list of potential actions the city could take to respond to common themes heard during neighborhood listening. These action plans or reports will be part of staff’s periodic program updates to City Council.

COVID-19 Adaptations

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitates adaptations to the approach and methods for neighborhood engagement. As policies and regulations for topics like social distancing evolve, the engagement strategies will need to evolve creatively with them. Online engagement through polls, surveys, and open questions will continue to be an important tool for community feedback. Historically, online engagement has been used to supplement in-person experiences, but this may be reversed for a period of time. The pandemic will have the greatest impact on the program’s ability to utilize in person engagement. The space for nuanced conversations will likely be through a combination of virtual meetings, small group in person conversations with proper social distancing, and individual and small group phone conversations.