



COLORADO  
MUNICIPAL  
LEAGUE

# CML Special Conference

September –22-24, 2021 • Westminster, CO

## The Year of Engagement (We're Crazy & We Know It)

*Contents of this presentation reflects the view of the presenter, not of CML.*



# Who's Who?

**Lauren**



Planning  
Manager

**Jeff**



Senior  
Neighborhood  
Planner

**Ashley**



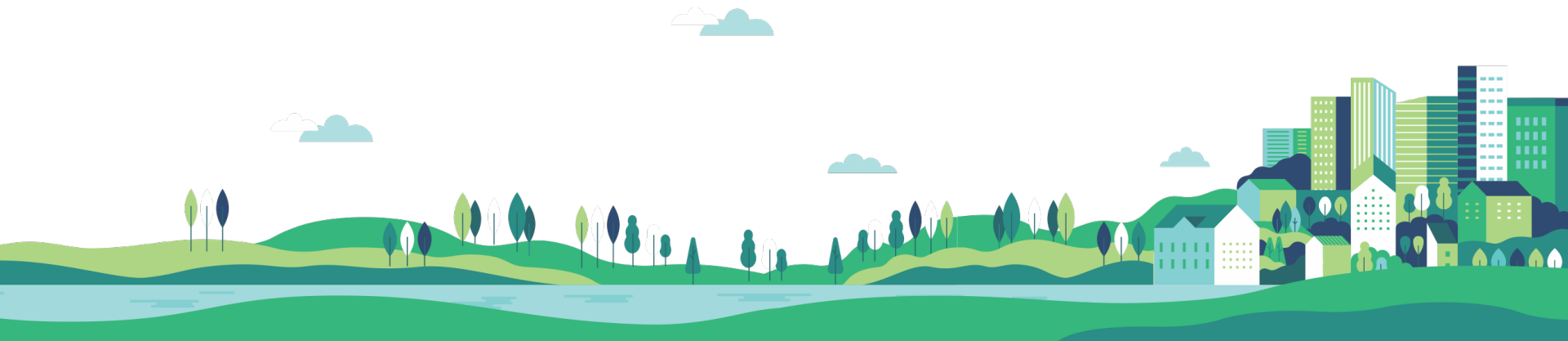
Neighborhood  
Engagement  
Specialist

**Allison**



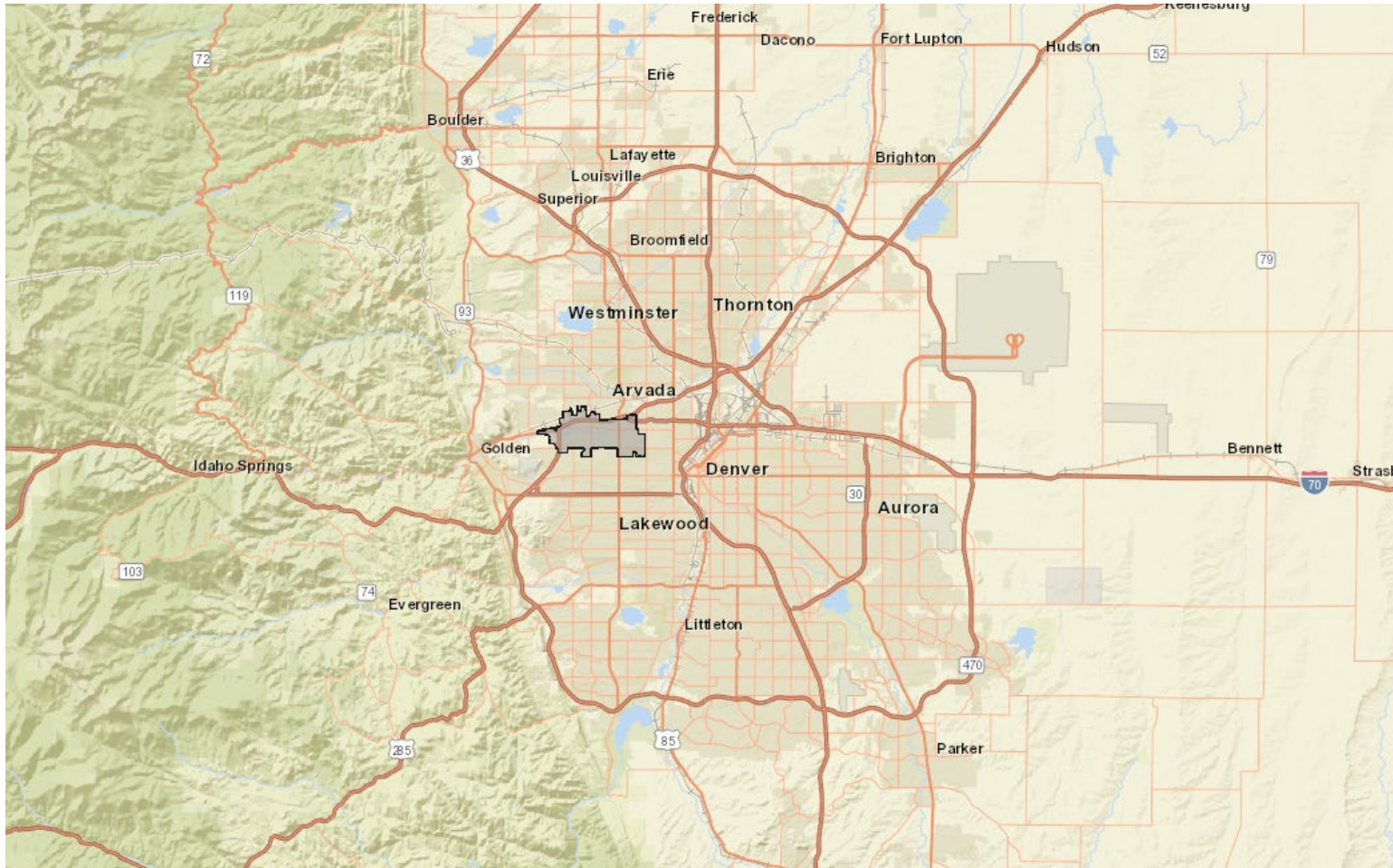
Administrative  
Services  
Director

# Who's Here?





# Who is Wheat Ridge?



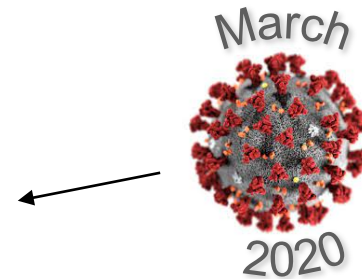
# The origin story



...and why it feels like we're renewing  
our vows to the community.

# Since late 2019...

- Restructured neighborhood meetings
- Wheat Ridge Speaks (online commenting for public meetings)
- Community Involvement Task Force
- What's Up Wheat Ridge (Bang the Table)
- Hired Jeff & Ashley
- IAP2 membership & staff training
- Let's Talk Resident Engagement Program
- Wheat Ridge 101 (6-week civic academy)
- Race and Equity Task Force
- Priority aligned budget
- Wonders of Wheat Ridge video series ("I wonder how...")



# What do we mean by engagement?



# What do we mean by engagement?



Inform  
Educate  
Celebrate



Consult



Involve



# Engagement works when you...

... **resource it**

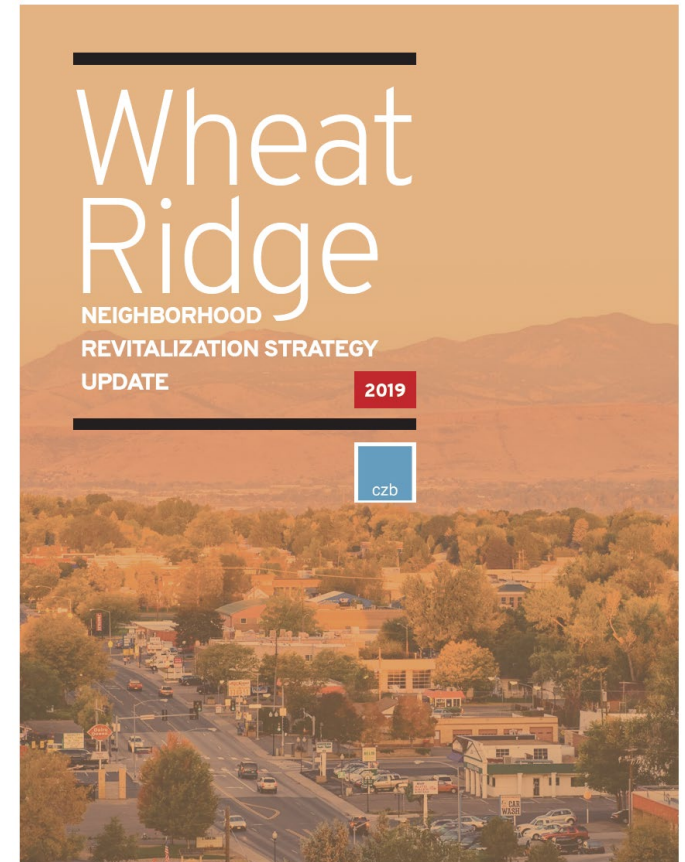
... have **internal collaboration**

... know **what to do with feedback**

... strive for **representation**

# Better Engagement Becomes a Priority

In 2019, an adopted citywide strategy led by 26 residents told the City loud and clear that they want more and better opportunities for engagement.

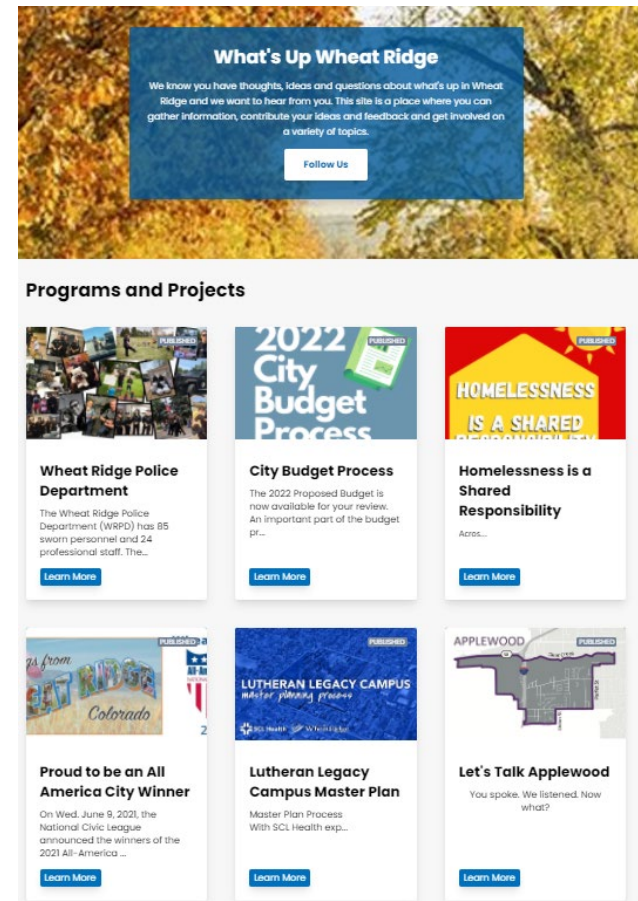


# Leaning Into Resident Engagement

If we build it, will they come?  
Have we lost our minds?

Answer:

So far...yes! There is a more diverse range of opinions on City issues like we thought, we just need better ways for people to engage.



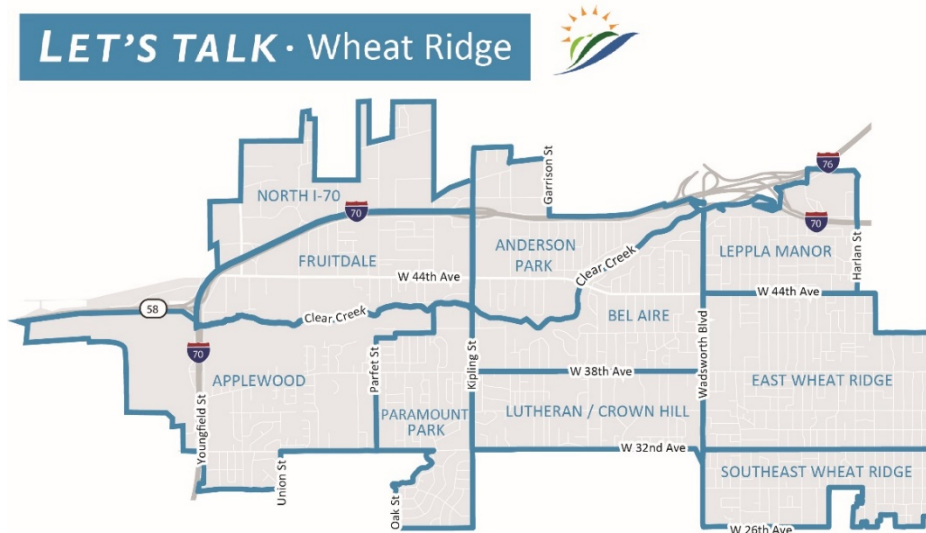
# Let's Talk Resident Engagement Program

Let's figure out what's important to residents at the neighborhood level in a proactive way.



# Let's Talk Resident Engagement Program

- Ask residents in ten neighborhoods – what do you love? What could improve?
- Cover the city in about two-year cycles, two neighborhoods at a time.





# Let's Talk “Blitzes”

Open-ended and proactive, without any preconceived ideas of what the City could or should do.



# Capturing Resident Input

Keep it digestible and simple for those that want the bottom line but provide the nuance and details for those that want to dive deeper.



Participant Response to Action Items		
Potential Action Item in Bel Aire	Rank	Weighted Score*
Increase Resources for Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)	1	85
Broaden Housing Options While Being Sensitive to Bel Aire's Character	2	82
Expand Programs That Provide Funding to Improve Commercial Buildings	3	75
Improve Communications on Development Projects with Potential Neighborhood Impacts	4	69
Expand Bulk Plane to Address Size of Residential Buildings	5	56
Adopt Tree Preservation Rules	6	54
Expand Dumpster and Cleanup Days to Address Property Maintenance and Code Enforcement Issues	7	53
Create a Slow Down Awareness and Signage Program	8	23

# Listening and Taking Action

A program work plan that aligns with citywide priorities and guides budget requests and staff assignments.



***LET'S TALK*** • Wheat Ridge



***LET'S TALK*** • Applewood



***LET'S TALK*** • Bel Aire



***LET'S TALK*** • Leppla Manor



***LET'S TALK*** • East Wheat Ridge



**[www.whatsupwheatridge.com/lets-talk](http://www.whatsupwheatridge.com/lets-talk)**

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... know **what to do with feedback**

... strive for **representation**



# Creating a Culture of Engagement

- Support from City Leadership
- Creation of the Community Involvement Task Force

## **How it started:**

- Communicating so we don't overlap dates during engagement efforts

## **How it's going:**

- Learning from external speakers
- Cross training
- Collaboration
- Creating an organizational culture

# Collaboration in Action



Resident  
Feedback



Internal  
Collaboration



Budget and  
Implementation

# Alignment through Collaboration

- Consistent messaging
- Internal vetting for feasibility



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# Over to you!

- Who do you currently hear from?
- How do you currently hear from constituents?
- What positions are most common (for/against/ middle)?

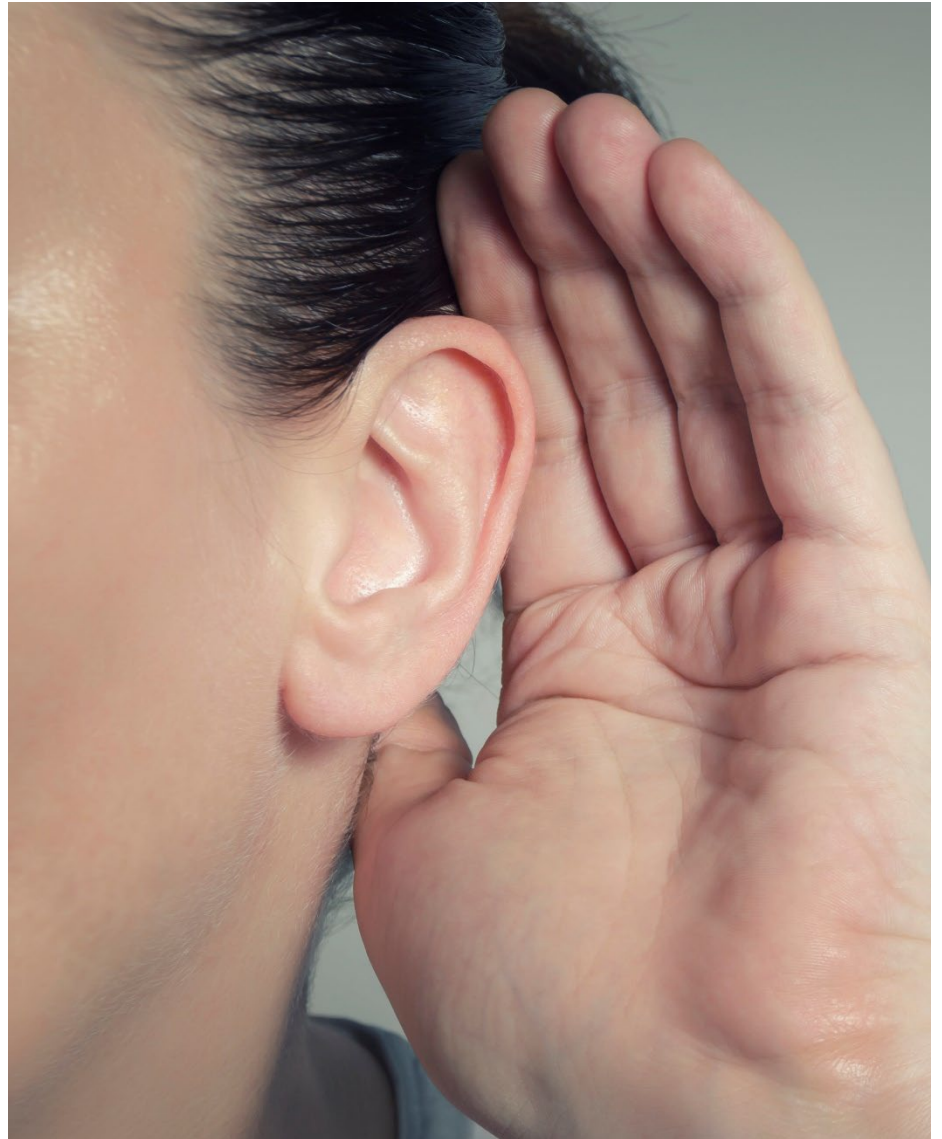




# Listen...

Moderate perspectives  
aren't usually as loud.

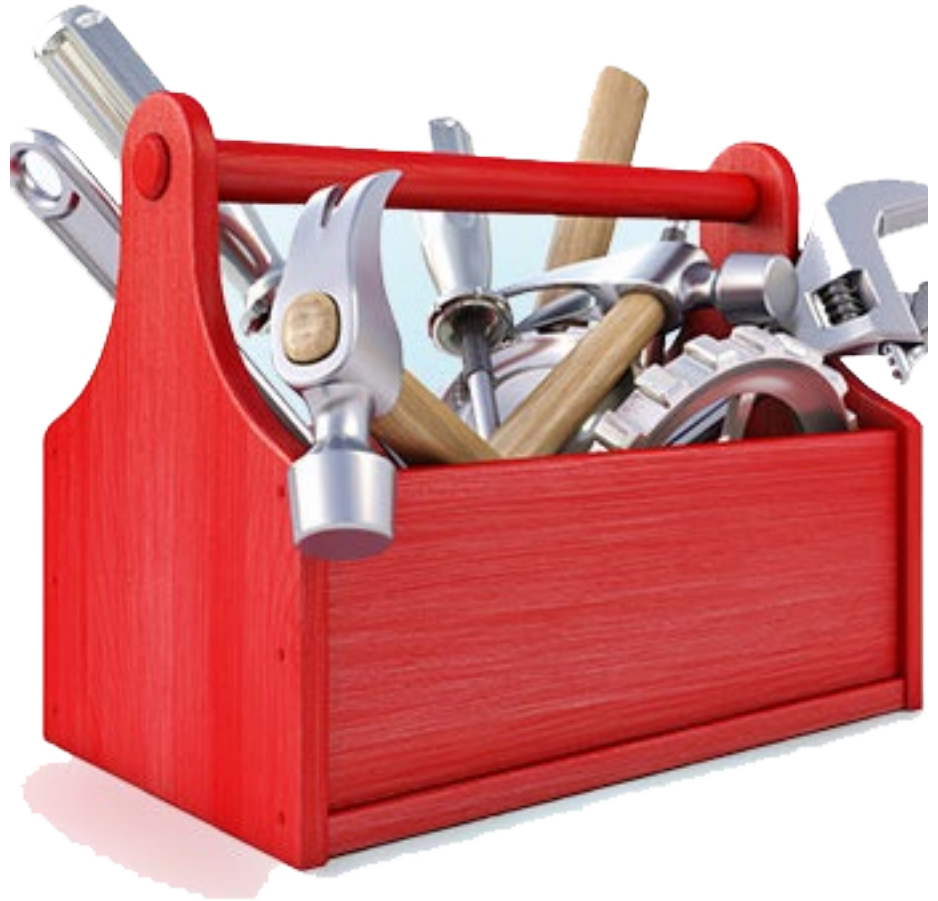
But they matter!



# Lots of Tools

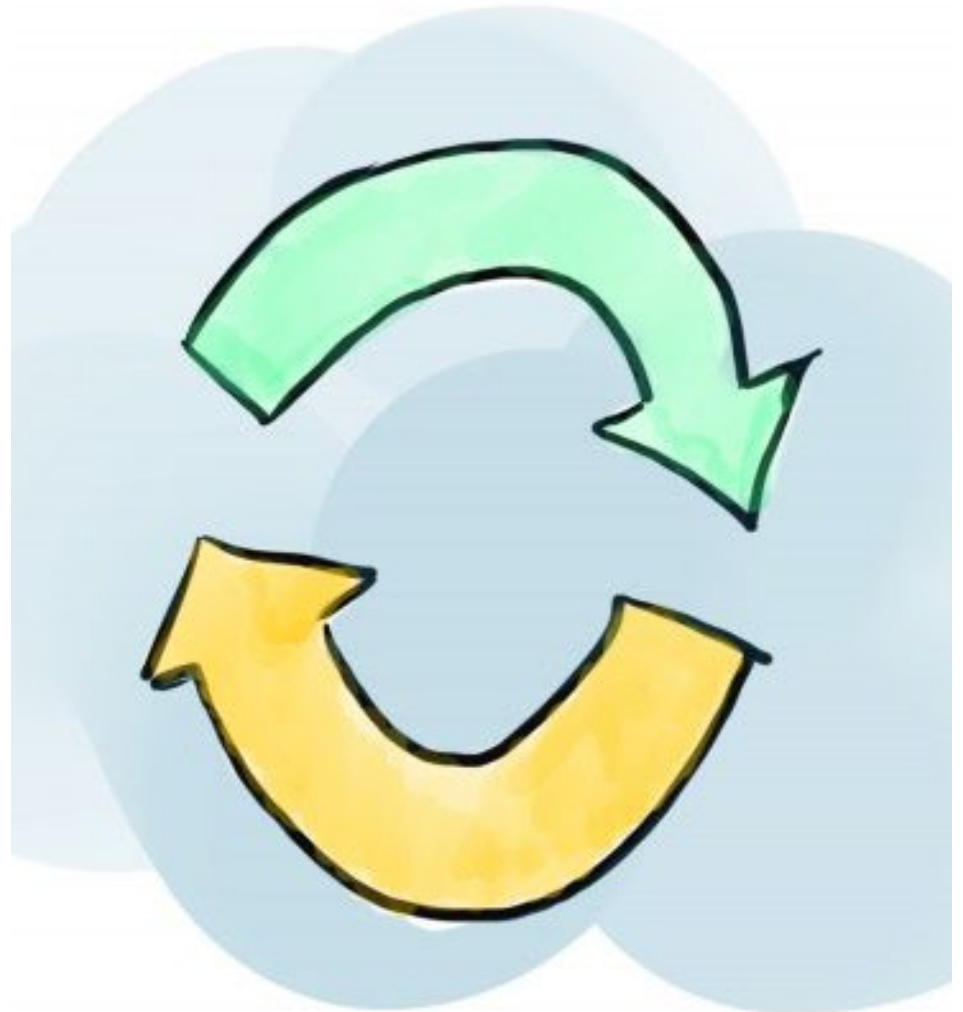
(might make some uncomfortable)

- Council/Planning Commission-Formal
- Online formal public comment
- Online public participation
- Public meetings/events
- Virtual public meetings



# Share Feedback Widely

- Be open and honest about the feedback you receive
- Serve it directly back to the residents who spoke up
- Package for decision makers



# Engagement works when you...

... **resource it**

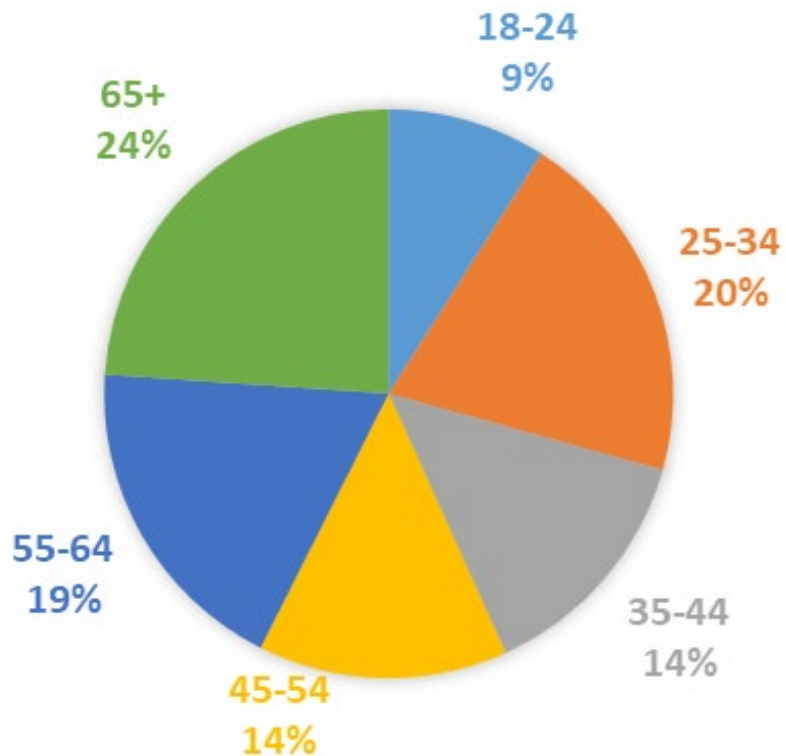
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# Strive for Representation

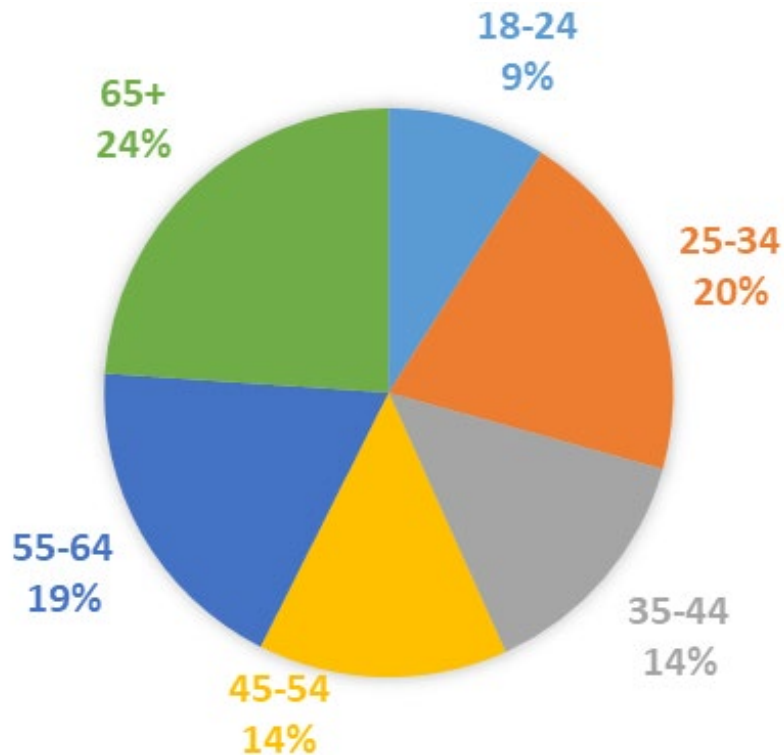
## WR Population



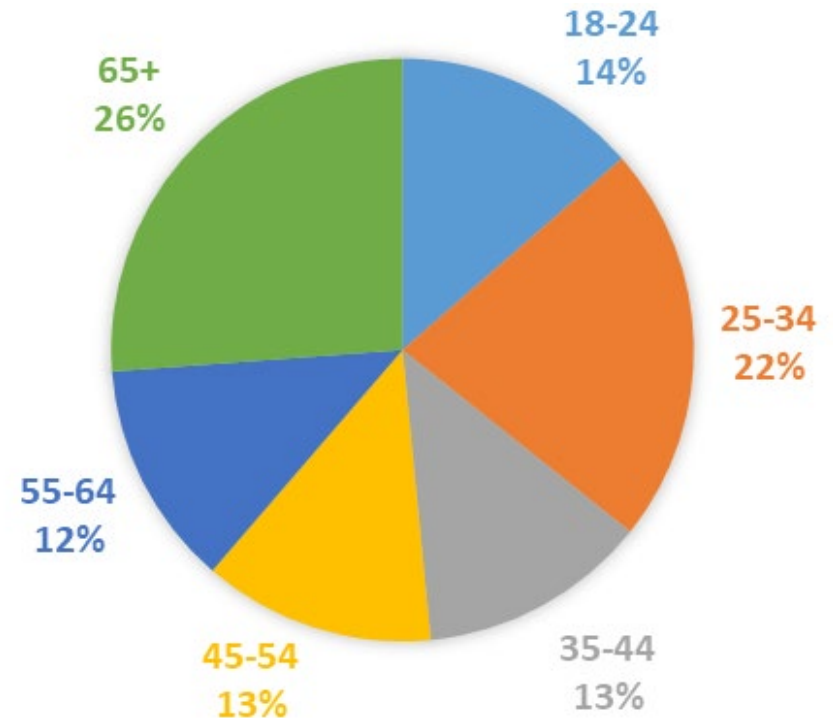


# Strive for Representation

WR Population



WR Speaks Users



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