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C.O.N.N.E.C.T.

Community Outreach, Navigating Networks, Encouraging Collaboration Toolkit

UPPER COUNTY

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WHO, WHAT, WHY?

Specifically for Roslyn and Cle Elum local officials to support community engagement and connection

WHO:

This toolkit is primarily for local officials in Upper Kittitas County. It may also be applicable more broadly to amenity or gateway communities – communities with desirable environmental features, outdoor recreation opportunities, or that are in close proximity to national parks (Stoker et al., 2021; Ulrich-Schad, 2015).

WHAT:

Toolkits are typically made up of community case study examples, frameworks, guidebooks, worksheets, relevant literature, and other deliverables to tackle a particular issue. This toolkit contains resources geared towards amenity communities.

WHY:

This specific toolkit responds to requests from local leaders for supporting material to further connect and integrate local residents into community planning processes and to make possible connections among leaders of amenity or gateway communities. We hope this toolkit provides new ideas to build community capacity and guide transformations in times of change.

This toolkit briefly describes findings from a project conducted in the Yakima River Basin to assess wellbeing, a few relevant frameworks, tools, and community examples. **Links are provided on each page if you would like to learn more about a specific resource!**

DEFINITIONS

Below are some key words and concepts to become familiar with, as you read this toolkit.

1 COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Capacity is the potential for action within a community. Community capacity plays an important role in community development (Larson et al., 2015).

2 COLLABORATION

A process through which a collection of people or groups explore their differences, share knowledge and ideas, and explore different solutions all to accomplish a common goal (USDA, 2021 & USFS, 2012).

3 RESILIENCE

Resilience is the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment impacted by change, uncertainty, and surprise (Magis, 2010).

4 GUIDING TRANSFORMATIONS

How communities tackle complex challenges to ultimately move in a trajectory that ensures lasting and positive change (Morgan et al., 2024).

5 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"A process that entails organization, facilitation, and action, which allows people to establish ways to create the community they want to live in" (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2023 p.5).
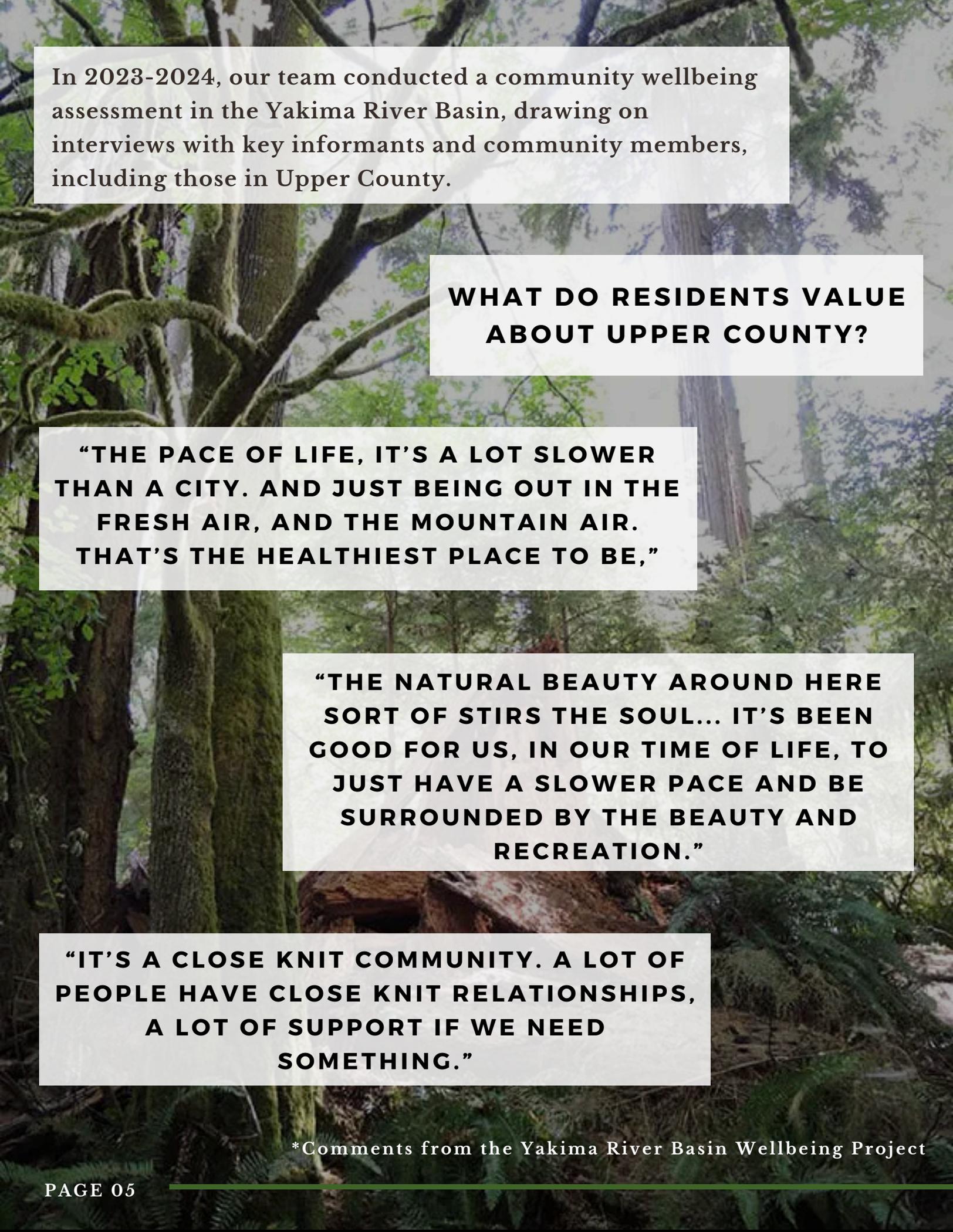
In 2023-2024, our team conducted a community wellbeing assessment in the Yakima River Basin, drawing on interviews with key informants and community members, including those in Upper County.

WHAT DO RESIDENTS VALUE ABOUT UPPER COUNTY?

"THE PACE OF LIFE, IT'S A LOT SLOWER THAN A CITY. AND JUST BEING OUT IN THE FRESH AIR, AND THE MOUNTAIN AIR. THAT'S THE HEALTHIEST PLACE TO BE,"

"THE NATURAL BEAUTY AROUND HERE SORT OF STIRS THE SOUL... IT'S BEEN GOOD FOR US, IN OUR TIME OF LIFE, TO JUST HAVE A SLOWER PACE AND BE SURROUNDED BY THE BEAUTY AND RECREATION."

"IT'S A CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITY. A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE CLOSE KNIT RELATIONSHIPS, A LOT OF SUPPORT IF WE NEED SOMETHING."

*Comments from the Yakima River Basin Wellbeing Project

WHAT ARE RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT IN UPPER COUNTY?

"TOURISTS COME HERE WITH ALL KINDS OF EQUIPMENT, MOTORBIKES, AND BOATS AND IT'S A PLAYGROUND. AND ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON FROM MY HOUSE, I CAN WATCH A LITTLE SEGMENT OF THE FREEWAY, WHERE THE TRAFFIC WESTBOUND IS COMPLETELY BLOCKED UP, STARTING ABOUT NOON UNTIL ABOUT 7PM, ON A WEEKLY BASIS."

"WELL, FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, IT'S WITHIN THE LAST FIVE YEARS AND I GUESS PRICES FOR REAL ESTATE UP HERE SKYROCKETED DURING COVID. PEOPLE WANTED TO GET OUT INTO THE WOODS."

"I MEAN, YOU SEE A LOT OF THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR CAMPGROUNDS, LAKES, ARE GENERALLY FROM THE WEST SIDE OR OUT OF TOWN. THERE'S A BIG LACK OF RESPECT OF, HOW THEY PACK THEIR GARBAGE AND STUFF OUT."

Utilizing these assets can help build capacity to address the challenges experienced in Roslyn and Cle Elum.

*Comments from the Yakima River Basin Wellbeing Project

RELEVANT LITERATURE & FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks can create a foundation for engagement, trust, resilience, and capacity. The following frameworks aid in building these key components in community development. These frameworks below serve as preparation for programs and solutions moving forward.
(Mitchell et al., 2014 & Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2023)
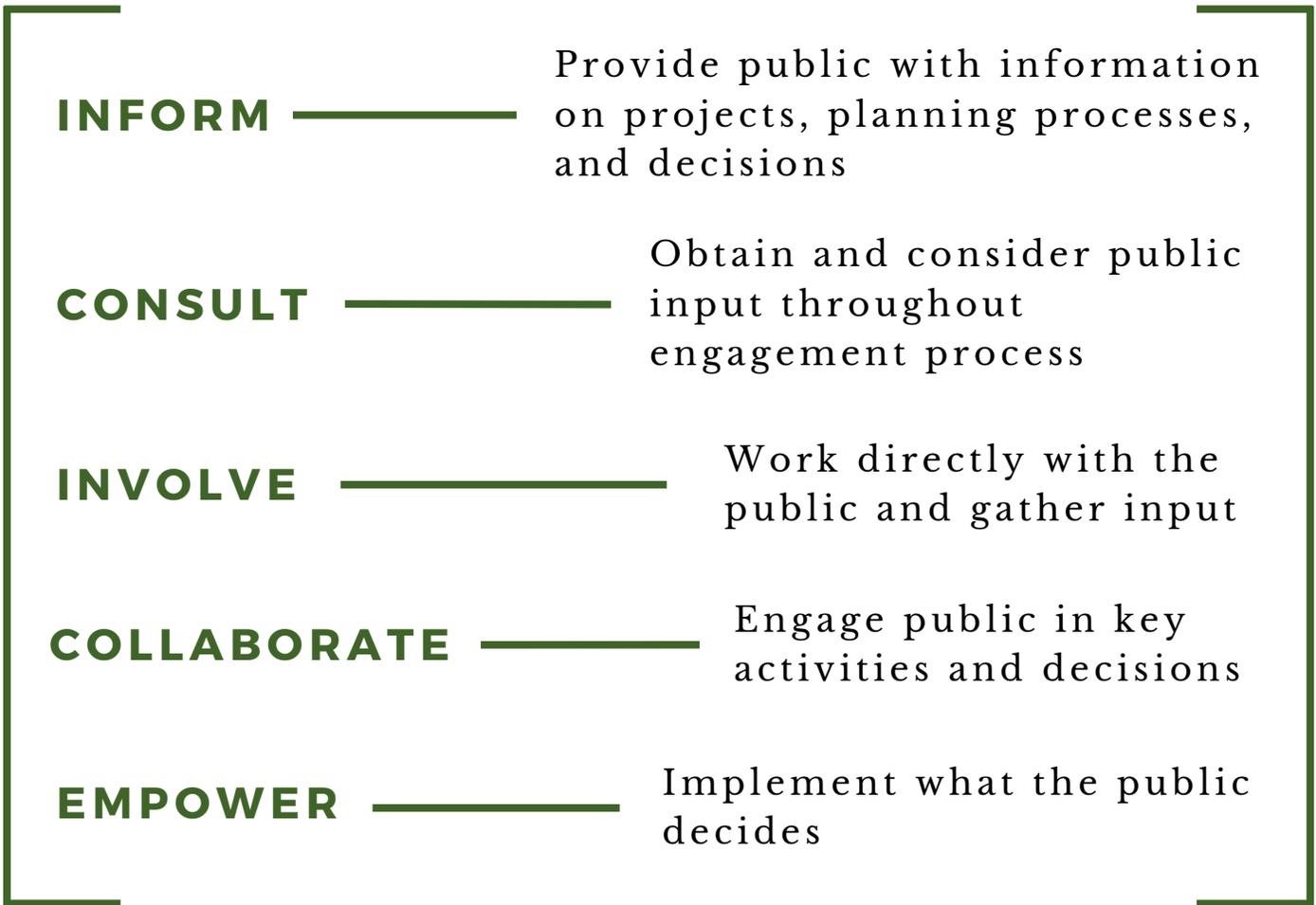
"PLANNING BY DOING" RESILIENCE THINKING FRAMEWORK
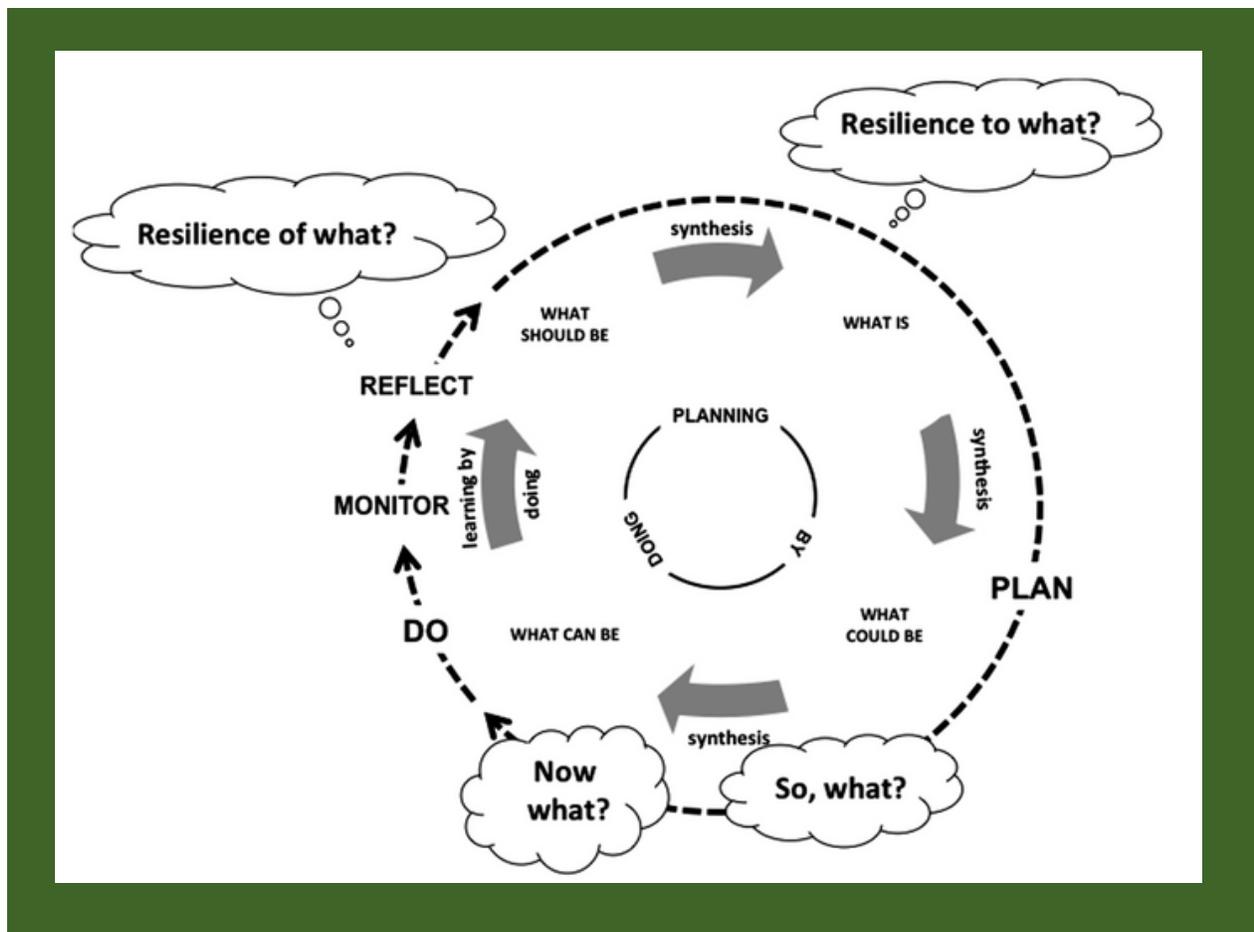
The "Planning By Doing" framework is what it sounds like. As a project is carried out, it's valuable to plan as you go, monitor progress, and reflect. This allows local officials to be adaptive as they carry out engagement plans to build resilience, adaptability, and transformability.
(Mitchell et al., 2014)

SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public engagement varies by amount of desired collaboration. Assessing to what degree local officials want community members involved into planning processes establishes a solid and consistent foundation with community members.

INFORM ——— Provide public with information on projects, planning processes, and decisions

CONSULT ——— Obtain and consider public input throughout engagement process

INVOLVE ——— Work directly with the public and gather input

COLLABORATE ——— Engage public in key activities and decisions

EMPOWER ——— Implement what the public decides

(IAP2, 2024; Reckling et al., 2023)

Engagement with local residents can vary from project to project, but transparency and communication is key with public engagement.

Resource Links
IAP2: Spectrum of Public Participation
Wyoming State Parks Engagement: Building a Toolkit for Public Participation

ASSET MAPPING

Understand the needs and assets of your community as well as the skills and talents of individuals.

(Beaulieu, 2013)

People

Find the hidden talents of individuals, identify key community members, utilize skillsets.

Physical Resources

Assess recreational facilities, vacant buildings, transportation systems, and historical sites

Voluntary Associations

Depend on volunteers, put the people in charge, and provide benefits.

Local Institutions

Work with organizations that, provide services, programs, and services to residents

SHIFTING POWER TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Where appropriate, allow for locals to lead their own projects.

- This builds capacity by investing in solutions that meet local needs.

- Local participation can increase a sense of belonging and can inspire future collaborative efforts. (Socially Connected Communities)

COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

Niagara Falls Collaborative Resident Engagement Council
- A council that provides leadership training, connectivity, and support for local ideas (Healthier Niagara Falls)

Project Green Space
- A community garden was created and ran by community members that engages all ages, strengthens existing nature connections, and builds sustainable practices
(Healthier Niagara Falls)

Kitchen Table Talks
- Three conversations put together by community members
- Smaller conversations hosted by community members
- Larger conversations with different local groups
- Discussions with local officials (Healthier Niagara Falls)

Resource Links

Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative Be the Change

Socially Connected Communities: Solutions for Social Isolation

CREATING A COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROJECT

This resource made by the city of Issaquah, uses worksheets for local officials to properly plan and carry out a community engaged project. These worksheets go through each step of a project to successfully cover all the bases. Below are each of the steps of the worksheets. (City of Issaquah, 2023)

DEFINE THE PROJECT

Project Name

Location

Project Team

Name	Role on team	Department

Description (Project purpose, phase, details, overall timeframe)

Context (e.g., Is this a Capital Improvement Project [CIP]? Was this project an ask from the community? What larger policies and plans will this impact?)

REPORT AND EVALUATE

To identify challenges, measure successes and adjust plans accordingly, it's important to monitor and evaluate your project throughout the process, and particularly at the close of the project. Ensure you share your engagement process — and results — with those who provided input, in addition to partners, team members and City Council. It's important to note that effective engagement can draw out competing values and doesn't always provide clear consensus.

	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Notes
Was my engagement topic clearly defined?				
Was my project successful? Did I meet my outcomes and goals?				
Was it delivered on time?				
Did I engage those more impacted by the project?				
Did I receive feedback and engagement from a diverse group of voices?				
Have I followed up with the community groups I engaged?				
Do I have any remaining City Council touch points?				
Does anything need to be documented with photos, video?				

What was the feedback from:
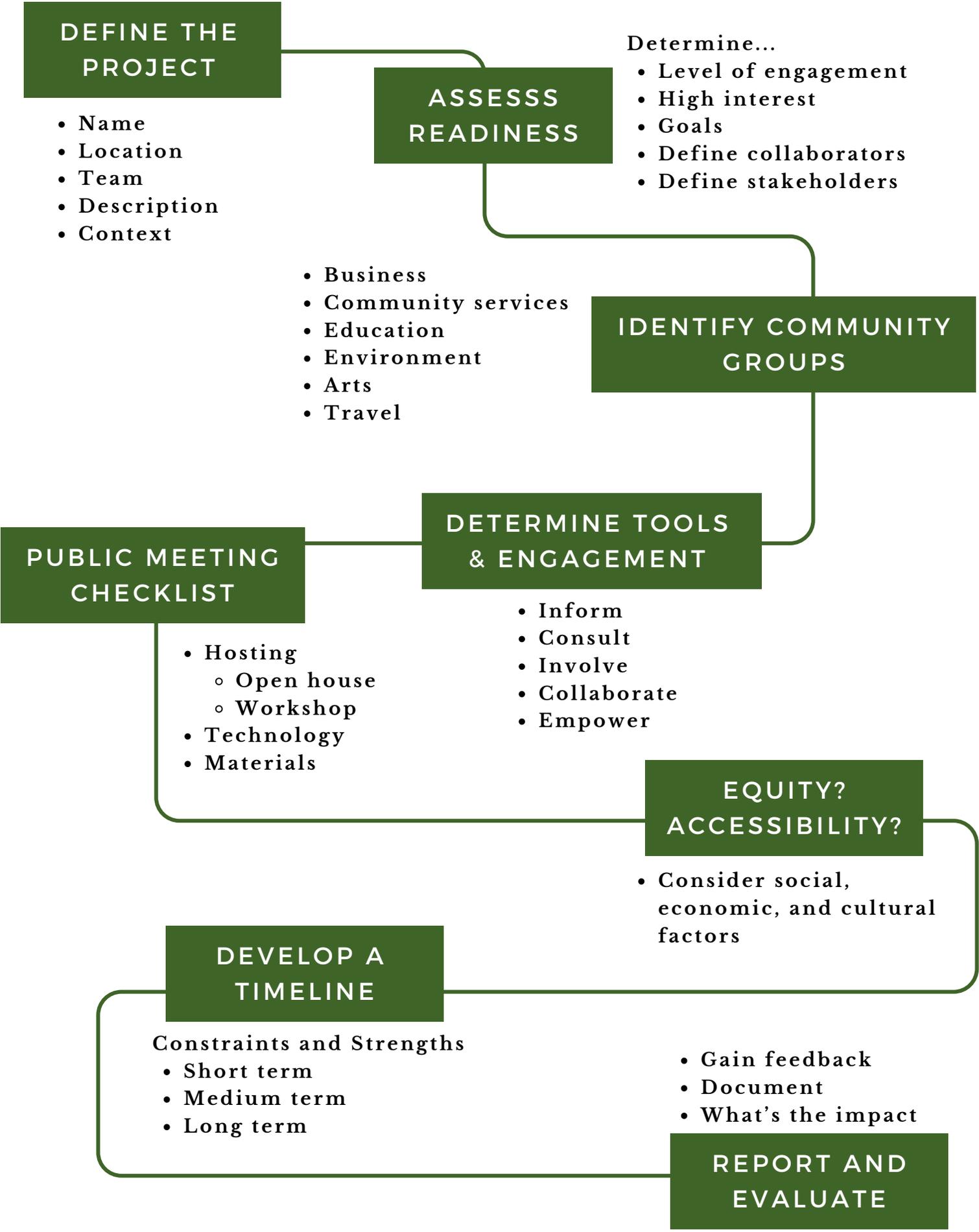
Community members?

Decision makers?

What did I learn that will inform my work next time?

What needs updating on the website and in news items?

Resource Links
Public Engagement Toolkit: City of Issaquah

DEFINE THE PROJECT

- Name
- Location
- Team
- Description
- Context

ASSESSS READINESS

Determine...
- Level of engagement
- High interest
- Goals
- Define collaborators
- Define stakeholders

IDENTIFY COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Business
- Community services
- Education
- Environment
- Arts
- Travel

DETERMINE TOOLS & ENGAGEMENT

- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
- Empower

PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

- Hosting
  - Open house
  - Workshop
- Technology
- Materials

EQUITY? ACCESSIBILITY?

- Consider social, economic, and cultural factors

DEVELOP A TIMELINE

Constraints and Strengths
- Short term
- Medium term
- Long term

- Gain feedback
- Document
- What's the impact

REPORT AND EVALUATE

For more details on this process follow the link below.
Public Engagement Toolkit: City of Issaquah

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR MORE...

HERE ARE SOME OTHER GREAT RESOURCES

Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative: Providing Tools for Tourism

Appalachian Regional Commission READY Grants to Grow Initiative

Stronger Together A Manual on the Principles and Practices of Civic Engagement

Rural.gov Community Networks

Western Rural Development Center: Promoting Community and Family Development and Health

10 Tips to Level-Up your City's Communication Strategy

Shaping the Future Together: A guide to practical public engagement for local government

SUSTAINING ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATING WITH RESIDENTS

Sustaining community involvement over time can be challenging. The next few pages offer a case study from Helper, Utah and additional tips for longer-term community engagement success.

Case Study: Beautification of Main Street in Helper, Utah

This case study highlights the revitalization of Main Street in Helper, Utah, where long-term resident participation contributed to the overall success of the project.

"We encourage citizens to participate in both the design elements as well as building it... we had a lighting committee and a bench committee and a plant committee, so that, you know, creating bite sized opportunities for people was more digestible than saying, "Hey, let's go make Main Street pretty' So we tried to really break it down into things. people were passionate about"
- Mayor Lenise Peterman

The town of Helper partnered with Utah colleges, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Utah chapter, and the National Park Service for aid in design, production, and funding of their beautification project.
This engagement effort lasted multiple years and included residents of all ages throughout all planning stages.

CONNECT with Mayor Lenise Peterman or visit HelperCity.gov to see more of Helper's projects.

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

These helpful hints have been collected through literature, discussions with town leaders, and case study participants that shed light on how to engage residents long-term.

CREATE PASSION PROJECTS

COMMUNICATE POTENTIAL BENEFITS WITHOUT SELLING THEM

FOSTER MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

PARTNER WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS

BREAK UP LARGE TASKS INTO SMALLER PIECES FOR RESIDENTS TO MANAGE

UTILIZE DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION PATHWAYS

Magis, 2010; Matarrita-Cascante et al., 2010; Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2023; Westfall et al., 2009;

ROSLYN AND CLE ELUM

Thank you to the town governments of Roslyn and Cle Elum, for participating and collaborating with USU on this research. USU is grateful for the opportunity to learn from Upper County as the expected outcome of this research is to encourage engagement and collaboration between gateway and amenity communities. We offer an extra thank you to Jeff Adams and Gary Berndt for being key partners throughout this research.

THE TRANSFORMATION NETWORK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESOURCES

The following resources served as inspiration and were often incorporated into this toolkit for Roslyn and Cle Elum.

Socially Connected Communities: Solutions for Social Isolation

Wyoming State Parks Engagement: Building a Toolkit for Public Participation

Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative: Be the Change

Stronger Together A Manual on the Principles and Practices of Civic Engagement

Public Engagement Toolkit: City of Issaquah Washington

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