



# **SARASOTA ENGINEERING DESIGN CRITERIA MANUAL**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

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September 23, 2022

# Sarasota Engineering Design Criteria Manual Public Engagement Plan

Prepared for:  
City of Sarasota

Prepared by:  
Kittelson & Associates, Inc.  
400 N Tampa St Suite 1360  
Tampa, FL 33602

Project Manager:  
Jennifer Musselman, PE

Project Principal:  
Patty Hurd, PE, AICP

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Sarasota (City) is updating the Engineering Design Criteria Manual (EDCM) to improve the quality of design in the community. The new EDCM should support the City's vision for a world-class community and treasured destination, with enduring natural beauty, charm, and diversity. This Public Engagement Plan (PEP) sets a framework to solicit meaningful information and insights at key decision points throughout the EDCM updating process. The PEP establishes a process that informs and encourages feedback from stakeholders, partner agencies and community leaders to take ownership of and support the outcomes of this manual update.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the public involvement effort is to outline a clear community-driven vision for the EDCM update. This public involvement process will be a two-way street between the City and the community: the City will listen to the needs and ideas from the community and inform the public on the engineering design standards of infrastructure within the City's boundaries. Providing opportunities for public input is critical to building informed consensus, project awareness, and community trust, as well as making sure that projects reflect the needs and desires of the community.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The community engagement efforts outlined in this PEP will be conducted with the following goals in mind:

- *Maximize community participation.*
- *Ensure a diversity of participants.*
- *Engage traditionally underserved communities.*
- *Facilitate meaningful and informed dialogue.*
- *Collect actionable data on community preferences.*

A collaborative and context-sensitive community engagement process is proposed as part of this plan. The City is committed to a community engagement effort that strives to achieve the following objectives:

- **Maximize Opportunity for Engagement:** Provide residents, employees, and interested stakeholders with a variety of opportunities to participate, including engaging community members that have traditionally not been well represented in the transportation planning and decision-making process.
- **Invite Continuous and Open Communication:** Provide residents, employees, and interested stakeholders with clear, timely, and accurate information related to the development of the various tasks/projects as they progress.
- **Apply Appropriate Techniques:** Use a variety of techniques to gather input from diverse groups within the community; and
- **Evolve and Refine:** Continually review and improve strategies and techniques to ensure efforts are effective in meeting the public involvement goals.

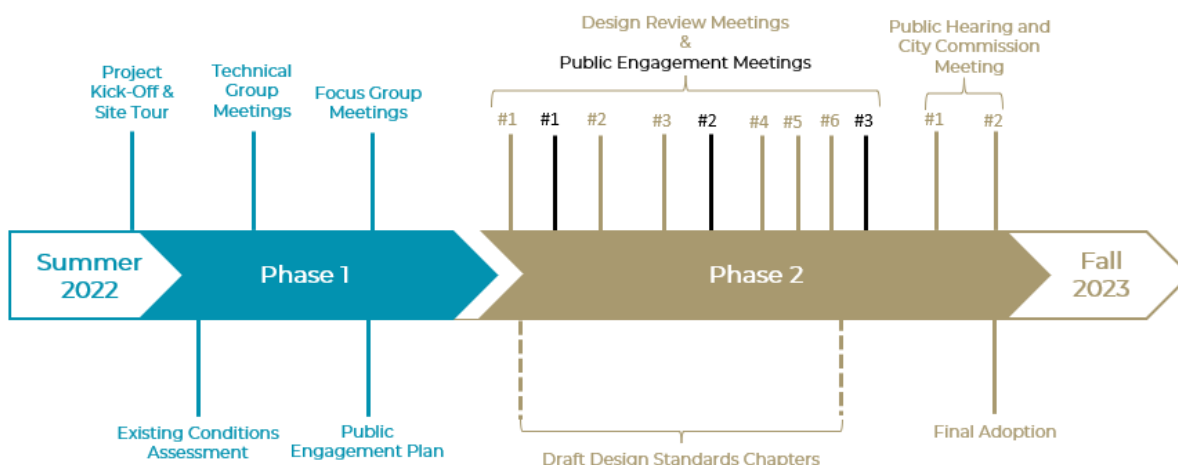
# PROJECT MILESTONES

The project milestones are broken up in two phases:

**Phase 1** consists of the project kick-off and site tour, technical group meetings, and focus group meetings. These milestones represent the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data to include the communities needs and desires. The deliverable for this phase is the existing conditions assessment and the Public Engagement Plan.

**Phase 2** prioritizes continued engagement through public engagement meetings, design review meetings, and public hearings and city commission meetings. The deliverables for this phase are the design standards chapters and the final adoption of the updated EDCM.

**Figure 1 – Project Timeline & Milestones**



## DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

The project management team, consisting of the City and consultant project managers, will facilitate decision-making throughout the duration of the Study based on the framework illustrated in Figure 2. Key City staff for the EDCM are organized into technical focus groups, each responsible for reviewing and providing input on a different chapter of the EDCM. The technical focus groups will serve to advise the study team on the needs, interests, and opportunities throughout the City.

In addition to engaging the technical focus groups, the project management team will conduct stakeholder focus groups with a select group of local developers, project designers, partner agency staff, community organizations, and neighborhood representatives. Additionally, the community as whole will be engaged through a series of public meetings.

**Figure 2 – Decision Making Framework**



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## FOCUS GROUPS

### *TECHNICAL FOCUS GROUPS*

Initially, the City will host meetings with six (6) **Technical Focus Groups**, made up of City staff who will review and help draft chapter changes. These meetings are anticipated to be conducted via video conference. The Technical Focus Group members will be engaged throughout the project through design review meetings, or work sessions, to review key deliverables.

### *STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS*

A series of three (3) **Stakeholder Focus Group** meetings will be held with additional stakeholders who routinely apply the City's design criteria, are responsible for design reviews, and are impacted by design criteria. The Stakeholder Focus Group meetings will be conducted in person, over a one-day period. The input received during the Stakeholder Focus Groups will be summarized to highlight the areas of improvement. The three Stakeholder Focus Groups are envisioned with the following audience:

#### ***GROUP 1 – DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN COMMUNITY***

- Members of the development community and design practitioners in private industry who have recently completed projects in the City.

#### ***GROUP 2 – PARTNER AGENCIES***

- Additional City staff, outside of the Technical Focus Groups, who are responsible for design and design reviews.
- Partner agency staff including Sarasota County, FDOT, Southwest Florida Water Management District, Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT), and other agencies who plan and design projects within the City limits.

#### ***GROUP 3 – COMMUNITY GROUPS & ASSOCIATIONS***

- Agencies and organizations that serve underserved populations including affordable housing communities, non-profit organizations, and other organizations serving transportation disadvantaged communities
- Representatives from the Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations

The list of individuals and organizations contacted is provided in Appendix A.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

The City will host three public meetings at different milestones throughout the project. The public meetings are expected to have the following purposes:

1. The **first** meeting will be a traditional, in-person meeting to inform the public of what the City is doing and present findings of the existing conditions analysis, best practices,



and opportunities for the design standards update. This meeting will provide an opportunity for City staff to collect input on what infrastructure challenges the community is currently facing that may be solved with updated design criteria. Input received from this meeting will help inform the draft design criteria in the EDCM.

2. The **second** public meeting will focus on presenting recommended design criteria and concepts for feedback from the public. This may include updates to street design standards, suggestions for how to integrate public art and streetscape into City right of way, new approaches to manage drainage and coastal resiliency, and changes to development standards. This round of engagement is critical in informing the community on potential new design approaches and collecting input to inform the final criteria. Therefore, it is recommended that the City visit a series of existing neighborhood and community organization meetings to maximize participation. These meetings should cover different geographic areas of the City and include organizations that serve traditionally underserved communities.
3. The **third** meeting will be a traditional, in-person meeting to present the final EDCM and communicate how the public's comments and concerns have been addressed. This will be the final opportunity for community input prior to the City Commission hearings.

During public meetings, the City can use eComments, an online tool aimed at increasing participation in public meetings, to make it easier for members of the public to share their opinions. Once a meeting agenda is published on the City's website, residents can review details and indicate their position on a particular item. The meetings may also include interactive boards, a public presentation, live polling, comment forms, and a meeting summary.

## COMMISSION MEETINGS

Presentation materials will be provided for two Commission meetings. The meetings will be held between 30 and 60 days apart. It is anticipated that the final Sarasota EDCM will be presented for adoption during the second City Commission meeting. A third City Commission meeting may be needed for additional updates or to clarify Commission requests.

## NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC

The City will conduct various outreach efforts to notify stakeholders and the public of upcoming meetings through the length of the project. The following are several outreach initiatives that can be used:

### PRINTED INFORMATION

To reach underserved populations that may not have access to a mobile device or computer, flyers and newsletters can be distributed door to door and at community destinations.

## **INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION**

The City can request help spreading the word from community organizations throughout the City, with a focus on agencies and organizations that serve underserved populations (SCAT, affordable housing communities, non-profit organizations, and other organizations serving transportation disadvantaged communities) to increase attendance at the public meetings.

## **DISTRIBUTION LISTS & E-MAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

If available, public outreach can be done through a master database of contacts, both business and public, to enhance public engagement.

## **PRESS RELEASES**

Formal press releases can be sent to local media (newspaper, TV, and radio) to announce upcoming meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues pertaining to the EDCM update.

## **WEBSITE**

The City can provide meeting information on their website and create a dedicated website for the EDCM for the public to check back for important updates.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media can be used to provide project information to specific communities, promote public events, and encourage participation in the planning process. Posts can be shared in real time and include a call to action to drive traffic to the public meetings. Using consistent hashtags will help amplify the message across multiple platforms. Paid social media may be used to reach a more specific audience with messaging that will increase engagement around key milestones.

## **TITLE VI**

The Sarasota EDCM update process seeks to meet the transportation needs of the unique, diverse, and vibrant communities in the City. The City is dedicated to achieving substantial outreach to ensure broad input from the community. In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal and state nondiscrimination authorities, the City does not and will never deny the benefits of, exclude from participation or subject to discrimination anyone based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, relation, or family status.

## **MEASURING SUCCESS**

To measure success in the public engagement efforts included in this plan, there may be evaluation methods used to determine the effectiveness of the public outreach. The following tools may help facilitate this process.

## **OUTREACH ATTENDANCE/EQUITY/RESPONSE**

Quality public participation is necessary in order to develop a plan that appropriately meets the needs of the residents of the City. To get an equitable sampling of input, representatives from various geographic, demographic, and economic subgroups should be engaged through the process. The goal is to attain at least 5% population engagement from underserved/underrepresented communities.

## **QUANTITY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED**

Maximizing the documentation of public input is critical to the public involvement process. The following means could be used to obtain written documentation from the public:

- Written comment cards to provide input on existing issues and feedback on identified alternatives/ideas. Comment cards may be left at the meeting in a box or mailed back.
- Large poster boards of existing conditions and proposed alternatives on a table could be used. As part of discussions with members of the public, the study team could jot down notes of the conversations on post-it notes to confirm conversations and let the member of the public know that the comment has been captured.
- E-mail contacts for follow-up questions or comments after the public meetings.

## **QUALITY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED**

The types of comments received are an indicator of how well the intended messages and key questions were understood by the public. Targeted questions will be identified in advance of the outreach efforts to verify that the study is posing the right questions through the presentation and follow-up conversations in order to receive the intended feedback.

## **LEVEL OF STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

Stakeholder support is achieved when the stakeholders learn about the issues and opportunities of the EDCM, brainstorm ideas together, and learn about the potential impacts these decisions might have.

## **IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. Seeking public input on ways of enhancing the City's transportation infrastructure is important for the successful update of the EDCM. As soon as possible when a public participation evaluation is performed, a list of improvement strategies should be identified for implementation. If improvement is needed for an ongoing public participation task, a reasonable completion date should be established.

## **APPENDIX A STAKEHOLDER CONTACTS**

## FOCUS GROUP LIST

### Group 1 – Development & Design Community

Company	Email	Profession
Freedman Consulting & Development LLC	joel@jfreedmanconsulting.com	Planner
Hoyt Architects	chris@hoytarchitects.com	Architect
DWJA	phil@dwja.net	Landscape Architect
Infrastructure Solution Services	MMueller@InfrastructureSS.com	Engineering Technician
Kimley-Horn & Associates	Philip.DiMaria@kimley-horn.com	Planner
Kimley-Horn & Associates	colleen.mcgue@kimley-horn.com	Planner
Kimley-Horn & Associates	chris.cianfaglione@kimley-horn.com	Landscape Architect
Kimley-Horn & Associates	jordan.leep@kimley-horn.com	Engineer
Kimley-Horn & Associates	ashley.miele@kimley-horn.com	Engineer
A&M Engineering	bclaybrooke@amengfl.com	Engineer
Shafer Consulting	jennifer@shaferconsulting.com	Environmental Scientist
Morris Engineering & Consulting, LLC	mmorris@morrisengineering.net	Engineer
Solstice Architects	jparks@solsticearchitects.com	Architect
Halfants & Pichette	gabe@halfantspichette.com	Architect
Ivy Ventures	LadyChung@yahoo.com	Engineer
Parker Walter Group, Inc.	brent@pwg.net	Architect
Land Resource Strategies, LLC	bfranklin@srqplanning.com	Planner
Stantec	Ryan.Brady@stantec.com	Engineer
Stantec	Travis.Fledderman@stantec.com	Engineer
Stantec	ben.quartermaine@stantec.com	Engineer
Mel-Haven Engineering, LLC	msmith@melhavenengineering.com	Engineer
Williams Parker	dbailey@williamsparker.com	Lawyer
Icard Merrill	wmerrill@icardmerrill.com	Lawyer
Robert K. Lincoln, PA	Robert.Lincoln@flalandlaw.com	Lawyer
JR Engineering	nrobertson@jreeng.com	Engineer

## Group 2 – Partner Agencies

Agency	Email	Role
Bay Park Conservancy	bill.waddill@bayparkconservancy.org	Chief Operating Officer
Sarasota Memorial Hospital	tom-perigo@smh.com	Director of Architecture and Construction
Sarasota Housing Authority	wrussell@sarasotahousing.org	President & CEO
Sarasota County Schools	Ernest.DuBose@sarasotacounty schools.net	Director of Construction
Sarasota County	plui@scgov.net	Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator
Sarasota County Area Transit	sblancha@scgov.net	Planner II
Sarasota County Area Transit	mlui@scgov.net	Planning & Performance Manager
Ringling School of Arts and Design	twagner@ringling.edu	VP for Finance and Administration
Sarasota County	pwiggins@scgov.net	Transportation Planning Manager
City of Sarasota, Development Services	lucia.panica@sarasotafl.gov	Development Services Director
City of Sarasota, Development Services	tom.sacharski@sarasotafl.gov	Senior Planner
City of Sarasota, Utilities	emigdio.isern@sarasotafl.gov	Utilities Reliability Engineer
City of Sarasota, Utilities	anthony.centurione@sarasotafl.gov	Utilities Engineering Manager
FDOT	tanya.merkle@dot.state.fl.us	Sarasota/Manatee Liaison
New College	brain@ncf.edu	Professor
MPO	ryan@mymppo.org	Planning Manager
Sarasota Office of Housing and Community Development	cindy.emshoff@sarasotafl.gov	General Manager
City of Sarasota, Parking	Mark.lyons@sarasotafl.gov	Parking and Mobility Manager

### Group 3 - Community Groups & Associations

Association	Email	Role
Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association	mary40butler@gmail.com	President
Sarasota Manatee Bicycle Club	rhgarrett.smbc@gmail.com	President
Citizen	maria@marialhaber.com	-
DSCA	davidlough1@gmail.com	President
Friends of the Legacy Trail	louiskosiba24@gmail.com	President
CCNA	louandsue3@aol.com	President
Citizen	dorfflouis@gmail.com	-
Citizen	pgannon@gmail.com	-
Glen Oaks Neighborhood Association	ndumaine@aol.com	President
Bayou Oaks Neighborhood Association	president.bona@gmail.com	President
Citizen	collins.srq@gmail.com	-
Citizen	learnmyhistory@gmail.com	-
North Trail	jignesbpatel@gmail.com	-
Lighthouse of Manasota	info@LighthouseEducationCenter.org	-
UnidosNow	info@unidosnow.org	-
Park East Community Association	agsmith50@hotmail.com	-
Habitat for Humanity	development@habitatsouthsarasota.org	-
Suncoast Partnership	chris@suncoastpartnership.org, brandon@suncoastpartnership.org	-
Suncoast Center for Independent Living	ben.quartermaine@stantec.com	-
Florida Housing Finance Corporation	caroline.benson@floridahousing.org	-
Sierra Club	Kristalohr1975@gmail.com, cnpage@tampabay.rr.com	-
Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast	greynoldsdesign@gmail.com	-