

planBTV Community Engagement & Communications Strategy

Prepared by the Department of Planning & Zoning for the Long Range Planning Committee
March 20, 2018



Purpose

The vision of planBTV: Municipal Development Plan is about ensuring that Burlington continues to be a sustainable core city at the heart of a regional population.

planBTV: Municipal Development Plan has guided policies and decision-making regarding land use and development in Burlington according to this vision for decades. The 2019 Update is not about creating a new community vision. Instead, this update will inform and educate the community about the vision and role of the Municipal Development Plan overall. Further, the process to update the plan will seek community input on emerging trends and needs throughout the City as a whole, and neighborhoods individually. This input will assist the Planning Commission in updating and prioritizing the plan's policies and actions to guide the implementation of the vision for the next 20 years. This strategy outlines how the Planning Commission and Planning Department will work with the Burlington community to update *planBTV* in order to achieve these goals.

Objectives

The community engagement approach and communications tools included in this strategy aim to involve the public in the following ways:

-  **INFORM** our community about the role of the long-range master plan as a roadmap for future decision-making related to land use and development issues; the vision and core principles of *planBTV*; and issues and trends affecting the City as a whole and neighborhoods individually.
-  **CONSULT** with residents, neighborhood leaders, City Councilors, and other stakeholders on city-wide and neighborhood-level characteristics, and opportunities and issues of highest importance for the plan update. Of particular importance is obtaining the feedback of community members with diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds in order to ensure that the plan's policies and actions continue to result in equity and opportunity for all Burlingtonians.
-  **INVOLVE** residents, neighborhood leaders, City Councilors, and other stakeholders in prioritizing the plan's policies and actions for implementation over the next 20 years, with an emphasis on identifying those actions which are of a high priority within various neighborhoods or areas of the City.

Community Engagement Approach

The process to update *planBTV* will utilize a combination of in-person and online tools to inform, consult with, and involve residents. There are three stages in this planning process. The specific activities that will be utilized within each of these phases are described in greater detail in the Engagement Activities section. With the exception of visiting the Neighborhood Planning Assemblies, these engagement activities will be hosted by the Planning Commission and the Planning Department, with support from other departments and/or community representatives as needed.

1. Before a draft of the updated *planBTV* is prepared

Activities at this stage are focused on 1) informing residents about the plan's vision, and about issues and trends affecting the City and its neighborhoods, and 2) obtaining residents' feedback on those issues of highest priority in order to inform the development of a draft plan. These activities will summarize the plan's current contents, inviting residents to provide feedback on which issues continue to be relevant, and what they feel should be prioritized as the plan is updated. Further, activities will use a form of a SWOT analysis, to collect residents' impressions of both neighborhood-level and city-wide strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Activities at this stage will involve presentations to the Planning Commission regarding the current plan, visiting all NPAs, interactive workshops held in locations across the City, opportunities to provide input online, and conversations with area organizations that provide services to diverse populations in Burlington.

2. When a draft of the updated plan has been prepared

Activities at this stage are focused on 1) obtaining residents' feedback on whether the first draft of the updated plan accurately reflects earlier input, and 2) soliciting input on which actions are of highest priority for implementation. These activities will help more clearly articulate how the plan's big ideas relate to smaller geographic areas of the City. Feedback at this stage will also help identify any edits the Planning Commission should make to the plan before it is warned for public hearing. Activities at this stage will involve visiting all NPAs, interactive workshops held in locations across the City, and opportunities to provide input online. Furthermore, it is anticipated that individual elements of the plan will be reviewed and discussed with the Planning Commission as they are being developed. This will not only more deeply engage Planning Commissioners in the development of the draft, but will provide an opportunity for residents to follow this process and provide feedback that the Commission may consider along the way.

3. In advance of Planning Commission & City Council public hearings

Activities at this stage are focused on informing residents that a second draft of the plan will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption, inviting any final feedback. Feedback at this stage will inform the Planning Commission's and City Council's consideration of the plan through their respective public hearing processes. Activities will involve making print and online versions of the draft plan widely available for public review and comment, and working with the Planning Commission and City Council to make final refinements as needed.

Stakeholders

The process to update the plan will seek to widely engage Burlington residents and other stakeholders. Of particular importance is including community members with diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds in order to ensure that the plan's policies and actions continue to address the needs of all Burlingtonians. The community engagement approach and communications tools identified aim to reach a broad audience, providing opportunities for residents to participate through both traditional forums (Planning Commission meetings, NPA meetings), intentional activities within their neighborhood, and through flexible ones which allow them to participate on their own time (online, surveys, social media). Each tool is likely to reach a different group of Burlington residents.

In order to encourage a diversity of perspectives on this update, community engagement and communication methods will also target organizations that provide services and resources to particular populations in Burlington. The purpose is two-fold: to help spread the word about upcoming opportunities to provide input in the planning process for those who do not typically engage through NPA's or Front Porch Forum, and to act as a liaison to provide input on behalf of the communities they serve. Examples include AALV, CVOEO, AARP, Burlington Young Professionals, and collegiate and K-12 student body representatives.

Communications Tools

The following tools will be utilized to communicate with residents about opportunities learn about *planBTV* and provide their input.

Tools/Activities	Purpose
planBTV Website	Comprehensive resource for information, documents, maps, input tools, etc. All other forms of communication will reinforce this as the main source of information on the plan and the process to update it.
planBTV Branded Emails	<i>Promote Awareness, Encourage Participation</i> Utilize City's GovDelivery email subscription service to sign up to receive notices throughout the process; provide regular updates, and particularly to encourage participation in various engagement activities
Front Porch Forum Posts	<i>Encourage Participation</i> Send notices to residents about launch of process, and leading up to engagement activities during each stage of the planning process to encourage participation
Planning & Zoning Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	<i>Promote Awareness, Maintain Engagement, Encourage Participation</i> Provide regular updates throughout the process, spread word about engagement activities, post queries for residents to respond to (i.e. "Tweet us one word that describes Burlington" or "Tweet your questions @BTVPZ"), share/post examples of planBTV in action, solicit photo scavenger hunt
Press Releases	<i>Promote Awareness, Encourage Participation</i> Issue at major milestones in planning process to inform broad community about update and what to expect, inform broad community about public hearings during adoption stage
Print Materials	<i>Encourage Participation</i> Limited but strategic distribution of posters, post cards, and/or business cards to spread the word about upcoming activities and provide links to website, social media for more information
Comment Boxes	<i>Promote Awareness, Collect Feedback</i> Physical and digital "comment boxes" for residents to submit input, particularly in the early part of the planning process. Physical locations might include a few simple questions on a post card that can be left in a locked box in locations around the City (i.e. grocery stores, schools, library, etc). Digital comments collected on the plan website.
Informal Conversations	<i>Collect Feedback, Answer Questions</i> "Coffee with the planners" type events for residents to drop in and talk with Planning Staff and Planning Commissioners about the plan, likely focused on collecting feedback on and answering questions about the draft plan
City Council Updates	<i>Promote Awareness, Maintain Engagement</i> Provide written and/or verbal updates to Council at the beginning of the plan process, and at the end of each stage to keep them informed, and to encourage their participation and sharing of information with their neighborhoods

Engagement Activities & Timeline

1. Before a draft of the updated <i>planBTV</i> is prepared			
<i>Focused on 1) informing residents about the plan's vision, and about issues and trends affecting the City and its neighborhoods, and 2) obtaining residents' feedback on those issues of highest priority in order to inform the development of a draft plan.</i>			
Activity	Objective	Target Stakeholder	Date and/or Location
Planning Commission Meetings	Inform	PC Members, All Residents	March - April
Present current <i>planBTV</i> vision, policies, actions, and implementation status to prepare PC for community discussions about the plan			
Deliverables: PC Presentations that can be placed online for more background info			
Other Board & Commission Presentations	Inform Consult	Conservation Board, Others?	March - April
Inform relevant boards about the process to update <i>planBTV</i> . Present current <i>planBTV</i> vision, policies, actions and get feedback on has been implemented, and what is relevant/what needs to be updated in 2019 plan.			
Deliverables: Inform development of report on implementation progress of 2014 <i>planBTV</i>			
Neighborhood Planning Assemblies	Inform	All Residents	April - May
P&Z Staff and Planning Commissioners visit all NPA's to present an overview of <i>planBTV</i> and how it applies to the areas of the City, and outline ways for residents to provide input to support the development of the first draft.			
Outreach to Community Organizations	Inform Consult	Underrepresented communities	April - May
P&Z Staff will work with organizations to invite their members to events, and to discuss issues of highest importance to the communities they serve.			
Deliverables: Summary of organizations' input to inform draft plan development and available online.			
<i>planBTV</i> Workshops	Inform Consult	All Residents	May
Each workshop will 1) present an overview of <i>planBTV</i> and how it applies to the area of the City, and trends and issues affecting the City as a whole and the neighborhood individually, and 2) engage residents in activities to provide input on how they view the community changing, and what they view as opportunities and threats. Workshops will be held in locations around the City. While these workshops will be open to all residents, some of the presentation content will be more specific to the area in which the workshop is located.			
North End Workshop	TBD- Miller Center, St. Marks?		
Old North End Workshop	TBD- ONE Arts Center?		
East End & Hill Section Workshop	TBD- Aiken Hall?		
South End Workshop* (<i>focused on planBTV South End</i>)	TBD- Arts Riot?		
Downtown Workshop	TBD- BCA, Main St Landing?		
Deliverables: Summaries of neighborhood input to inform draft plan development and available online.			
<i>planBTV</i> Online & Print Input Tool	Consult	All Residents	May
A printed worksheet and an online input tool will be available to collect information similar to that of the activities in the <i>planBTV</i> workshops. This can be distributed widely to residents via weblinks, and/or left at businesses/community centers/etc. with a collection box and/or address to mail or drop off responses.			
Deliverables: Summary of all responses to input to inform draft plan development and available online.			
<i>planBTV</i> Photo Scavenger Hunt	Involve	All Residents	June - July
Generate a list of frequently mentioned locations or issues from the workshops/online input and issue a call to the community for photo submissions of these elements to use in the draft plan and on the plan website.			
Deliverables: Contributions to a photo library for the plan website and document.			

2. When a draft of the updated plan has been prepared

Focused on 1) obtaining residents' feedback on whether the first draft of the updated plan accurately reflects earlier input, and 2) soliciting input on which actions are of highest priority for implementation.

Activity	Objective	Target Stakeholder	Date and/or Location
Planning Commission Meetings	Consult Involve	PC Members, All Residents	June - August
Discuss individual sections of the plan with the Planning Commission as they're being updated. Residents will have the opportunity to follow along in the draft development and provide input along the way to the planning commission.			
Deliverables: Drafts of individual sections of the plan, with a full draft prepared by end of August 2018.			
Neighborhood Planning Assemblies	Inform	All Residents	August - September
P&Z Staff and Planning Commissioners visit all NPA's to present the draft update to <i>planBTV</i> , focusing on elements in the plan that are important to that neighborhood, and outlining ways that residents can provide input on the draft.			
<i>planBTV</i> Workshops	Involve	All Residents	September
Each workshop will 1) present an overview of the updated draft of <i>planBTV</i> , and 2) include activities to solicit residents' input on the highest priority items for implementation. Workshops will be held in locations around the City. While these workshops will be open to all residents, some of the presentation content will be more specific to the area in which the workshop is located.			
North End Workshop	TBD- Miller Center, St. Marks?		
Old North End Workshop	TBD- ONE Arts Center?		
East End & Hill Section Workshop	TBD- Aiken Hall?		
South End Workshop* (<i>focused on planBTV South End</i>)	TBD- Arts Riot?		
Downtown Workshop	TBD- BCA, Main St Landing?		
Deliverables: Summaries of neighborhood input on the draft plan to inform the Planning Commission's revisions.			
<i>planBTV</i> Online & Print Input Tool	Consult Involve	All Residents	September
A limited number of print copies and an online input tool will be available for residents to review and provide input on highest priority items for implementation. This can be distributed widely to residents via weblinks, and/or left at strategic locations in the community for public review.			
Deliverables: Summary of all responses to provide input on draft plan revisions.			

3. In advance of Planning Commission & City Council public hearings

Activities at this stage are focused on informing residents that a second draft of the plan will be considered by the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption, inviting any final feedback.

Activity	Objective	Target Stakeholder	Date and/or Location
<i>planBTV</i> Online & Print Input Tool	Inform Consult	All Residents	November - February
A limited number of print copies and an online input tool will be available for residents to review and provide input for consideration at the Planning Commission & City Council public hearings in the month leading up to the hearing. This can be distributed widely to residents via weblinks, and/or left at strategic locations in the community for public review.			
Deliverables: Summary of input to inform the Planning Commission and City Council during public hearings.			