



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

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A visioning board at a farmers market gives Bellevue residents the opportunity to dream about what would make their neighborhoods an even better place to live. CITY OF BELLEVUE

THE CHALLENGE

The City of Bellevue Community Development Department’s goal for this project was to learn more about methods of community engagement and outreach that would encourage greater participation of underrepresented residents, specifically those who represent the generations X, Y, and Z and who live in Northwest and Northeast Bellevue neighborhoods.

Community input is vital when making decisions that affect a community’s quality of life. This is true because nobody knows more about a community’s unique needs and aspirations than residents themselves. It is important for those community members who are typically underrepresented in and excluded from planning processes (e.g., younger generations, and minority racial populations) to become active participants in conversations about how to make planning processes more equitable and inclusive. Encouraging all residents to participate requires a variety of different approaches, some of which may be used in concert with others.

OUR METHODS

Our three-step process involved:

- Examining and analyzing best practices in community outreach and engagement.
- Synthesizing initial findings and organizing them as a menu of engagement options.
- Developing a report that proposes potential strategies to connect with target communities, specifically the members of Generations X, Y, and Z of NW and NE Bellevue neighborhoods.

We divided our research into three categories: Social Media, Interpersonal Strategies, and Technology. A pair of students researched and developed each category. We also facilitated a creative brainstorming activity to generate fresh ideas for engagement strategies.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Bellevue can enhance its current outreach and engagement methods by boosting its current social media practices, focusing more on student engagement, and incorporating technology to foster two-way communication and make planning activities more accessible and interesting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We recommend that the City consider two-way communication methods on several different social media platforms. Two-way communication can be achieved using the “Stories” feature on Instagram. The City can reach younger generations using Snapchat. Webinars can engage with those who cannot make meetings because of their schedules, mobility challenges, or language barriers.

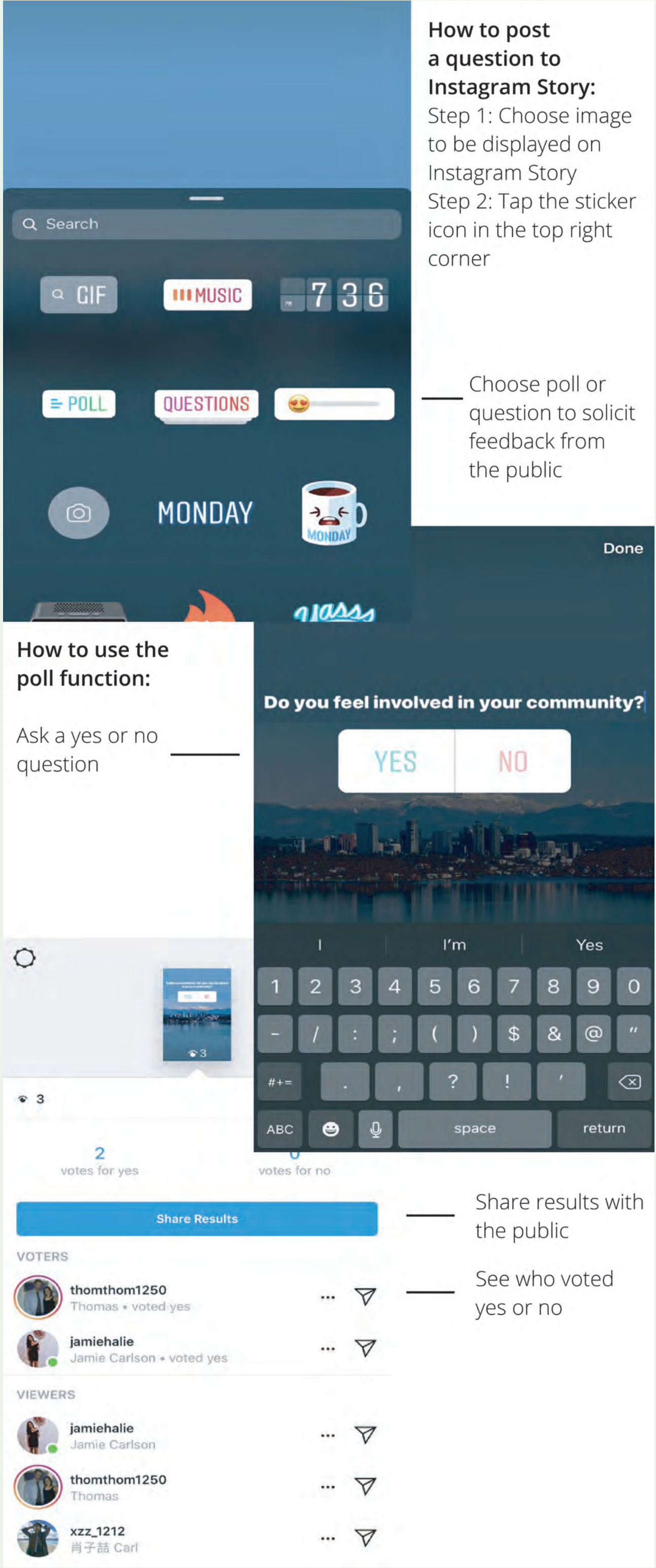
INTERPERSONAL STRATEGIES

Engaging students at age-appropriate events where they are given opportunities to “solve” real-world problems can give the City insight on parts of neighborhoods often overlooked, and inspire a lifetime of civic engagement for participants. A youth commission program or a plan-a-thon organized for youth are two approaches the City might consider.

TECHNOLOGY

By integrating technological devices with traditional public meetings, in-person engagement activities can be made more meaningful and efficient, and visioning capacity increased. Tablets are versatile tools that can be used in a variety of contexts to efficiently display and collect data. Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technologies can be used to let the public interact with and be immersed in design plans.

A suite of engagement strategies will help planners connect with a broader range of community members.



The “Stories” feature on Instagram facilitates two-way engagement by allowing users to create polls and ask questions. LCY STUDENT TEAM

