



520 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4194

MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Phone: 651-757-2873
Fax: 651-297-2343
www.eqb.state.mn.us

March 15, 2017

**Meeting Location: MPCA Board Room
St. Paul, Minnesota
1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

AMENDED AGENDA

General

This month's meeting will take place in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency board room at 520 Lafayette Road in St. Paul. The Environmental Quality Board (EQB or Board) meeting will be available via live webcast on March 15 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. You will be able to access the webcast on our website: www.eqb.state.mn.us

The Jupiter Parking Lot is for all day visitors and is located across from the Law Enforcement Center on Grove Street. The Blue Parking Lot is also available for all day visitors and is located off of University and Olive Streets.

Public comment is taken on all agenda items. Time allocated for discussion is at the discretion of the Board Chair.

I. *Adoption of Consent Agenda

Proposed Agenda for March 15, 2017 Board Meeting
December 21, 2016 Meeting Minutes

II. Introductions

III. Chair's Report

IV. Executive Director's Report

V. Environmental Review Program Updates and 2016 Environmental Review Survey Results

VI. Environmental Congress Follow Up

VII. Opportunities for Expanding Civic Engagement

VIII. Adjourn

* Items requiring discussion may be removed from the Consent Agenda

**Denotes action may be taken



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II. Introductions

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V. Environmental Review Program Updates and 2016 Environmental Review Survey Result

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Presenters: Courtney Ahlers-Nelson
Planning Director, Environmental Review
Environmental Quality Board (651-757-2183)

Mark Riegel
Planner, Environmental Review
Environmental Quality Board (651-757-2472)

Materials enclosed:

- 2016 Environmental Review Data Summary

Issue before the Board: Informational Item

Background:

Since July 2015, the EQB Environmental Review (ER) Program has initiated several efforts to evaluate and improve ER efficiency and effectiveness. ER Program staff will provide an overview of these continuing efforts, including rulemaking, the creation of the ER Advisory Panel, ER outreach and technical assistance, and ER data management improvements.

EQB Staff will highlight the key themes that emerged from the data collected in 2016, and discuss next steps for the EQB Environmental Review Program as it looks to further enhance data collection efforts, explore program improvements, and improve the technical assistance provided to governmental units, proposers, and citizens.

Discussion Questions:

1. What format for reporting ER data would be most useful?
2. Are there data that EQB Staff should focus more on in the future?
3. Were the survey results surprising?
4. Are there examples of successful training programs or models that EQB Staff should follow?

VI. Environmental Congress Follow Up

Presenters: Katie Pratt
Communications
Environmental Quality Board (651-757-2524)

Issues before the Board: Informational Item

Background:

The 2017 Minnesota Environmental Congress was a great success with over 400 people in attendance. Highlights included hearing from the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, a

thought-provoking keynote talk from meteorologist Paul Douglas, a featured panel discussion on environmental justice led by Leslie Fields of the Sierra Club, and ten breakout sessions covering topics from pollinator policy to transportation to building a water ethic in Minnesota. More than 80 people from a wide spectrum of organizations, disciplines, and communities across Minnesota served as panelists and discussion leaders throughout the day. EQB staff will reflect on the event, report next steps, and discuss the role of the Congress in EQB's ongoing civic engagement efforts.

VII. Opportunities for Expanding Civic Engagement

Presenters: Kevin Lindsey
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Carissa Slotterback
Associate Professor
Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Philip Schaffner
Policy Planning Director
Minnesota Department of Transportation

Marie Donahue
Program Coordinator and Researcher
Natural Capital Project

Anna Claussen
Director of Rural Strategies
Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy

Nickolas Kor
Director of Civic Engagement
Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Materials enclosed:

- 2016 Civic Engagement Plan

Issues before the Board: Informational Item

Background: Civic engagement is a fundamental part of EQB's mission. Our board meetings provide a regular forum for public dialogue with state agency leaders, we host special events such as the Environmental Congress that allow for in-depth discussion, and we convene advisory committees consisting of representatives from local government,

industry, and communities across the state to make recommendations on policy initiatives. Building on conversations that took place at the Environmental Congress, an interdisciplinary panel of civic engagement experts and practitioners will discuss how the EQB can continue to broaden and deepen its civic engagement work.

VIII. Adjourn

**MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 21, 2016
MPCA Room Board Room
520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul**

EQB Members Present: Dave Frederickson, John Saxhaug, Charlie Zelle, Tom Landwehr, Julie Goehring, Dr. Ed Ehlinger, Kristin Eide-Tollefson, Brian Napstad, Tom Moibi, Kate Knuth, Shawntera Hardy, Matt Massman, Kirk Koudelka in for John Linc Stine, Bill Grant in for Mike Rothman

EQB Members Absent: Mike Rothman, Adam Duininck, John Linc Stine

Staff Present: Will Seuffert, Courtney Ahlers-Nelson, Erik Dahl, Mark Riegel, Katie Pratt, Claudia Hochstein

I. Adoption of Consent Agenda and Minutes

II. Introductions

III. Chair's Report

IV. Executive Director's Report

- Thanked Brian Napstad for his service to the Board.
- Interviewing for the Local Government Coordinator position on January 3rd and 4th.
- Cancelling the January Board Meeting.

V. **2017 Environment and Energy Report Card

Presenters/Panel: Erik Dahl, EQB; Todd Biewn, MPCA; Mark Lindquist, DNR; Bob Patton, MDA; David Bell, MDH; Brian McLafferty, MnDOT; Cole Hiniker, Metropolitan Council; Jessica Burdette, Department of Commerce

The presenters gave an overview of the *2017 Environment and Energy Report Card*. Staff recommends the EQB Board approve the Resolution and, in addition, authorize staff to make any technical or grammatical changes to the document that does not change its substance.

The following people provided oral testimony:

- Dr. Menzel - Healthy Professionals for a Healthy Climate
- Dr. Snyder - Healthy Professionals for a Healthy Climate

VI. Environmental Congress Update

Presenter: Katie Pratt, EQB

The Environmental Congress is scheduled for February 3, 2017. Katie updated the Board on the planning including the program, breakout sessions, keynote speakers, and logistics.

VII. Interagency Climate Adaptation Team Update

Presenters: Paul Moss, MPCA; Beth Bibus, MMB; Jessica Burdette, Department of Commerce; Kristin Raab, MDH; Jennifer Nelson, MN Homeland Security & Emergency Management; Valerie McClannahan, DNR

Presenters updated the Board on activities of the Interagency Climate Adaptation Team (ICAT) since the previous presentation on January 20, 2016.

The audio recording of the meeting is the official record and can be found at this link: ftp://files.pca.state.mn.us/pub/EQB_Board/

Webcast is also available on the EQB website: <https://www.eqb.state.mn.us/>



MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

2016 Environmental Review Data Summary

2016 Environmental Review Data Background

Over the past two years, EQB Staff have implemented a number of environmental review (ER) data collection efforts. The most significant being surveys of responsible governmental units (RGUs) that completed the ER process, surveys of citizens that submitted petitions for environmental assessment worksheets (EAW), and EQB tracking of environmental review documents noticed in the *EQB Monitor*. These efforts help EQB evaluate and improve the effectiveness of ER, while providing more targeted technical assistance to RGUs, proposers, and citizens.

This summary document provides an overview of the environmental review data collected in calendar year 2016. In an effort to consolidate the data for ease of review, the summary does not include every piece of data collected. Instead, it presents the results that EQB Staff found to be the most surprising, informative, and useful.

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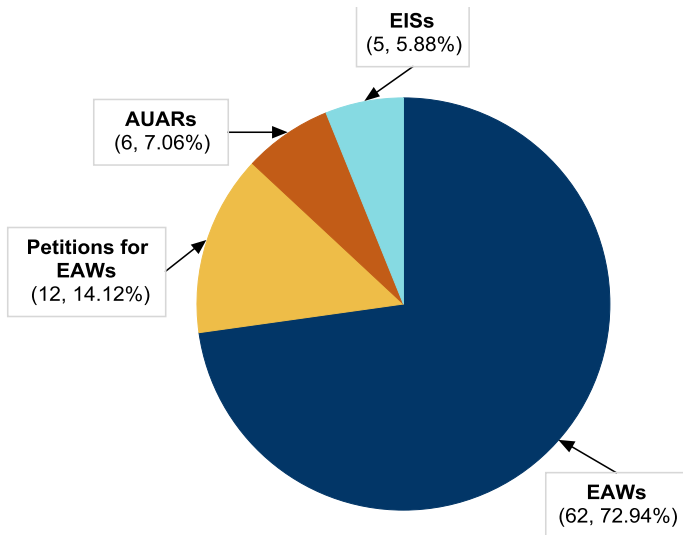
I. Environmental Reviews Completed in 2016

The data presented in this section is focused on the environmental review (ER) processes completed in 2016, which include the petition for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet process (EAW), the EAW process, the Environmental Impact Statement process (EIS), and the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) process. The data provided below are broken down by the type of environmental review process and provides an overview of the process for calendar year 2016.

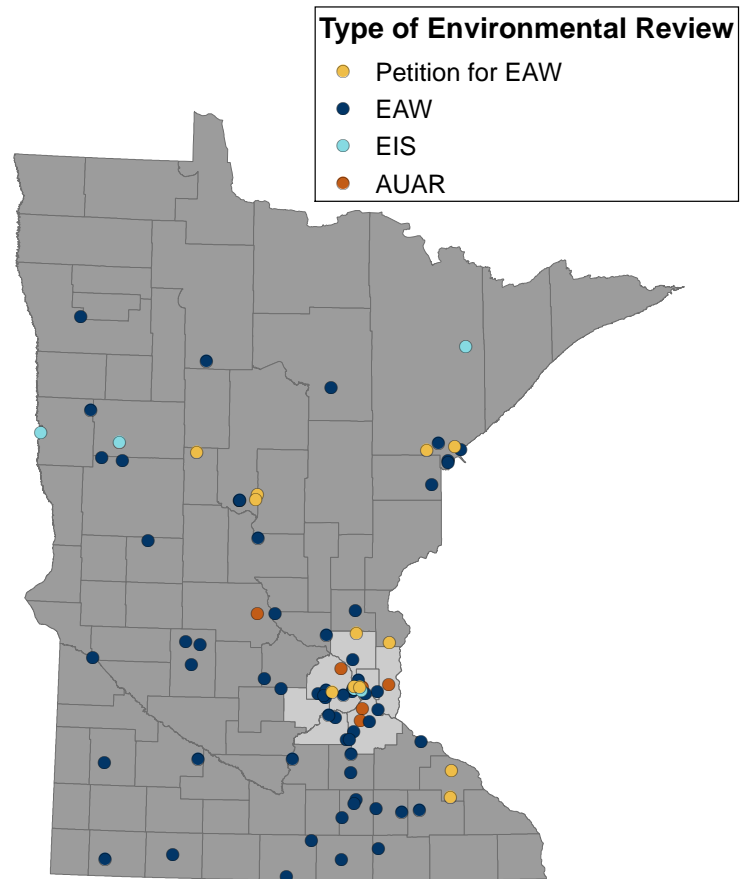
A. General 2016 Environmental Review Data

85 environmental review processes were completed in calendar year 2016. EAWs made up nearly 75% of the ER processes completed in 2016 as indicated by the first pie chart below. In terms of the types of RGUs completing the ER process, state agencies completed approximately 38% of the processes, while LGUs completed around 62% (see the second pie chart below). Finally, the map at the right below illustrates the geographic distribution of the ER processes completed in 2016. Nearly 65% of ER process were completed outside the Twin Cities Metro Area.

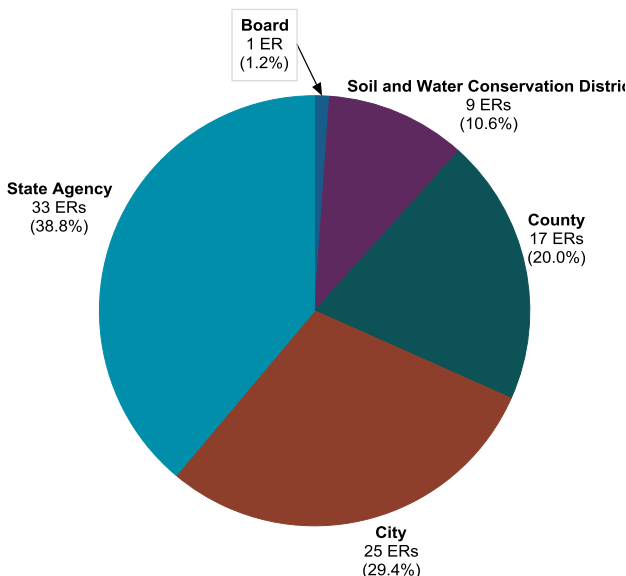
Types of ER Completed in 2016



Geographic Distribution of ER Processes Completed in 2016



ERs Completed in 2016 by RGUs



B. Petitions for Environmental Assessment Worksheets

The citizen petition process is designed to provide a standard mechanism by which citizens can alert government entities of projects that may have the potential for significant environmental effects. Citizens prepare a petition according to [Minnesota Rules, part 4410.1100](#) and submit the petition to EQB. EQB Staff then review the petition for administrative completeness and then, if the petition is complete, forward the petition onto the designated RGU to make a decision on the need for an EAW. If the petition is determined to be incomplete by EQB Staff, the petition is then returned to the petitioners' representative and can be revised and resubmitted for review.

In 2016, RGUs made 12 EAW Need Decisions following the receipt of a complete petition. Of the 12 decisions, four resulted in the preparation of a discretionary EAW for the proposed project identified in the petition.

C. Environmental Assessment Worksheets

The EAW is a brief document designed to lay out the basic facts of a project necessary to determine if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for the proposed project. **In 2016, 62 EAWs were completed**, including 57 completed exclusively under Minnesota Rules 4410, and five completed as a joint state and federal Environmental Assessment-Environmental Assessment Worksheet.

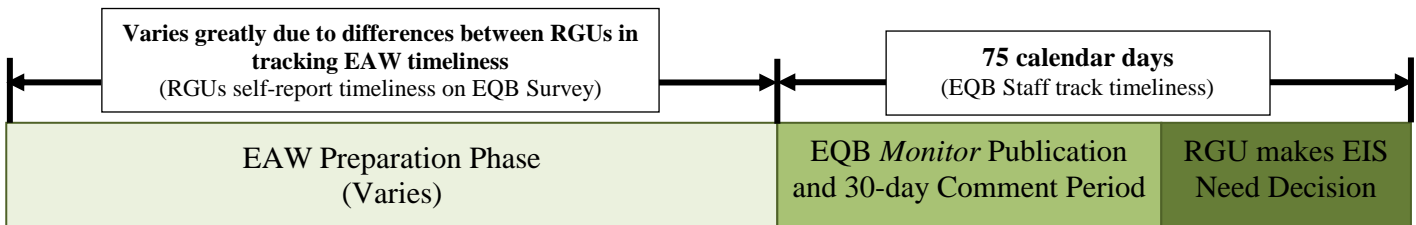
57 State Environmental Assessment Worksheets

- 52 Mandatory EAWs
- 5 Discretionary EAWs

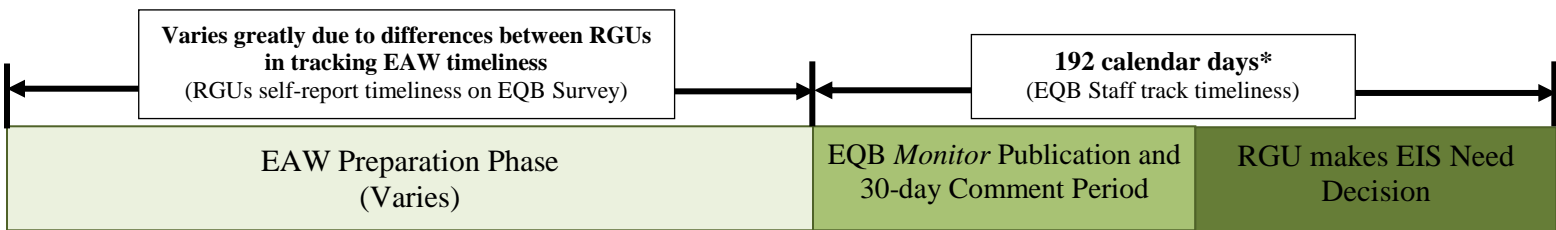
5 Joint State and Federal EA-EAWs

- 3 Mandatory EA-EAWs
- 2 Discretionary EA-EAWs

Timeliness of State EAWs



Timeliness of Joint State and Federal EA-EAWs



***Note:** These environmental reviews were completed in compliance with both state and federal requirements to reduce duplication and allow for greater efficiency

D. Environmental Impact Statements

The EIS provides detailed information about the extent of potentially significant environmental impacts of a proposed project, presents alternatives to the proposed project, and identifies methods for reducing adverse environmental effects. **Five EISs were completed in 2016.**

1 State Environmental Impact Statement

- Fargo-Moorhead Flood Risk Management Project (Mandatory EIS)

4 Joint State and Federal Environmental Impact Statements

- PolyMet Mining, Inc., NorthMet Mining Project (Mandatory EIS)
- Detroit Lakes - Becker County Airport Runway Shift/Extension & Associated Improvements (Mandatory EIS)
- Southwest Light Rail Transit (METRO GreenLine Extension) (Discretionary EIS)
- METRO Blue Line Light Rail Transit (BLRT) Extension Project (Discretionary EIS)

E. Alternative Urban Areawide Reviews

The AUAR process is a hybrid of the EAW and EIS review processes. RGUs can use an AUAR as a planning tool to understand how different development scenarios will affect the environment of their community before the development occurs. The process is designed to look at the cumulative impacts of anticipated development scenarios within a given geographic area. **A total of six AUARs were completed in 2016** and the information below describes the type of AUARs that were completed.

AUARs with Additional Scoping Steps

An AUAR with an additional scoping step is required when any projects within the geographic area being evaluated meets a mandatory EIS threshold or comprises at least 50 percent of the geographic area to be reviewed. **In 2016, two AUARs with additional steps were completed.**

AUARs

In 2016, one AUAR was completed through the normal AUAR process and did not include the additional scoping steps described above.

AUAR Updates

Regardless of any significant changes, the AUAR must be updated every five years until all of the development in the area has been approved. An AUAR update is generally a faster process than starting a new AUAR since the update process does not require a complete revision of the AUAR document.

Three AUARs updates were completed in 2016.

II. 2016 Responsible Governmental Unit Survey Results – Summary

In 2016, 87 surveys were distributed to RGUs upon completion of an environmental review (ER) process such as a citizen petition for an environmental assessment worksheet (EAW), an EAW, an environmental impact statement (EIS), or an alternative urban areawide review (AUAR). Upon closing the survey at the end of January 2017, RGUs had submitted 54 complete responses for a 62% response rate. The survey focused on timeliness of the ER process, perceptions of the effectiveness of ER, perceptions of the outcomes of ER, and the quality of technical assistance provided by the EQB.

The following information provides a high-level summary of the results from the survey of RGUs and highlights the key takeaways from the survey.

A. Survey Demographics

The majority of survey responses (Fig. 1) received were for the EAW process (39, 72.2%), followed by petitions (8, 14.8%), EISs (4, 7.4%), and finally AUARs (3, 5.6%). This is consistent with the number of environmental review process completed in 2016, whereby EAWs constituted about 70% of the ER processes completed (Fig. 2). This consistency between the survey results and general ER data from 2016 also held true for the types of RGUs completing the survey. Local governmental units constituted about 60% of survey respondents (Fig. 3), and completed about 60% of environmental reviews in 2016 (Fig. 4).

2016 Survey: Types of ER

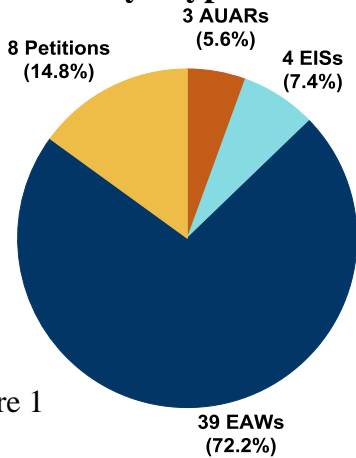


Figure 1

Types of ER Completed in 2016

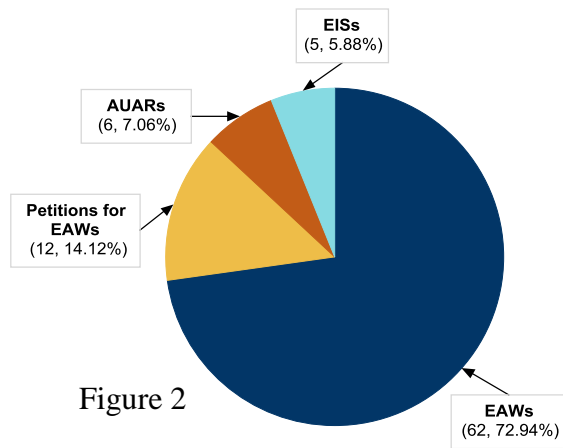


Figure 2

2016 Survey: Types of RGU

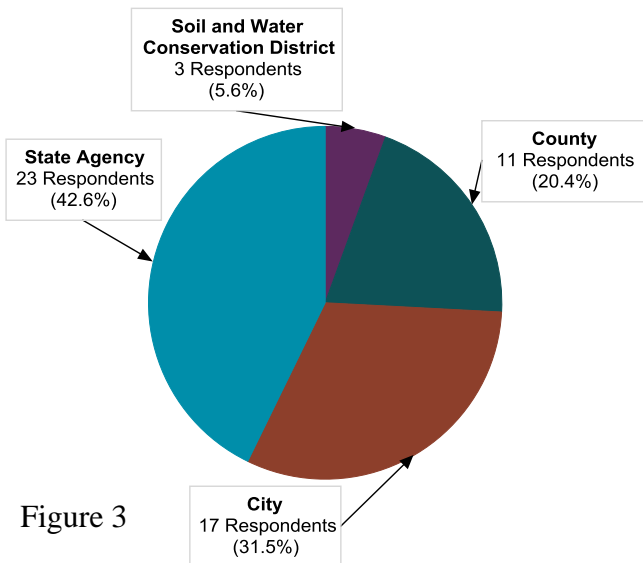


Figure 3

ERs Completed in 2016 by RGUs

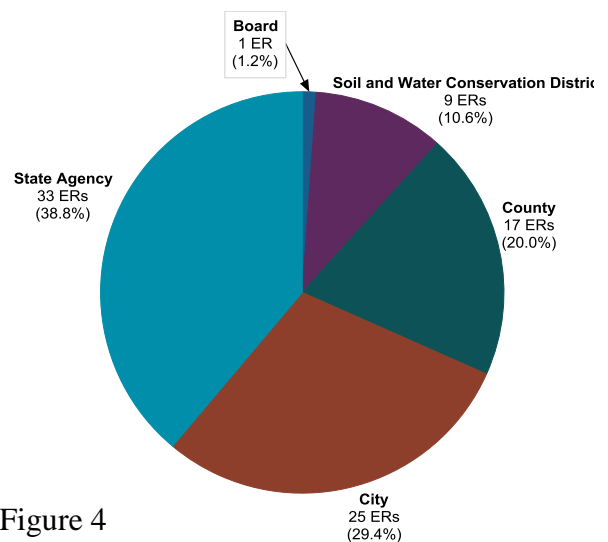


Figure 4

B. Survey Results - The Environmental Review Process

A key component of the survey was to gather quantitative data on the ER processes, including the staff time and cost to complete the ER process, as well as the timeliness of ER. For purpose of the survey and reporting the survey results, “ER process” includes the preparation and review of the ER document(s), the public comment period, public meetings, response to comments, and any other components required to complete the ER process for the project identified above. **The number of respondents for each question is indicated in parentheses (ex. n=54) and may differ between questions as not all questions were mandatory.**

Did the RGU hire a consultant to assist with the ER process? (n=46)

For the development of future outreach strategies, it is important to know who is completing the environmental review process. **Nearly half of respondents (21, 45.7%) indicated that they hired a consultant to assist with the ER process.**

Did the RGU track the staff time required to complete the ER process? (n=46)

This information is intended to provide a better understand of the relative time required to complete the environmental review process for different types of projects. **Most respondents, (28, 60.87%) are not tracking staff time,** and of the respondents that reported staff hours, the amount of staff time varied widely.

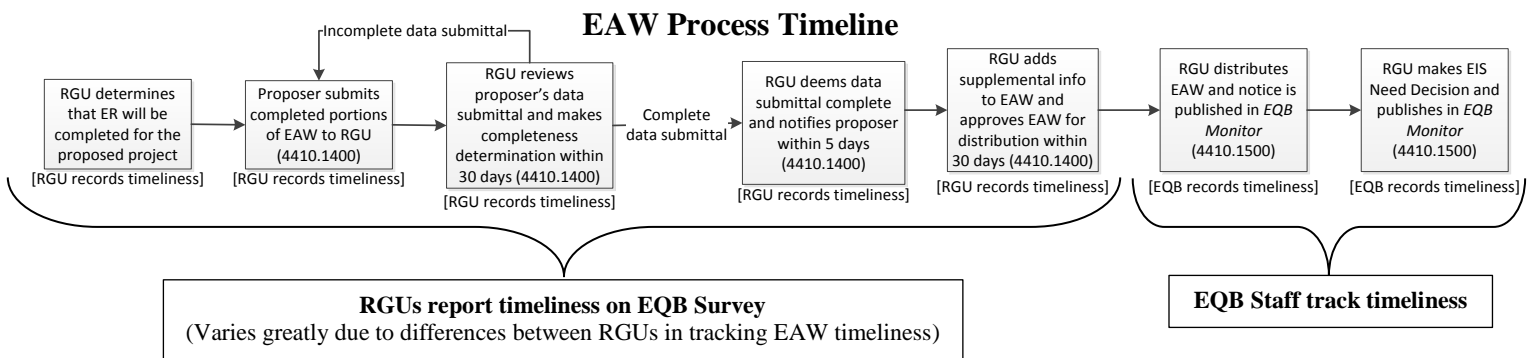
Did the RGU track the costs required to complete the ER process? (n=46)

Results indicate that **most respondents, (33, 71.74%) are not tracking this cost information,** and for those that do, the cost is often times billed back to the proposer or not easily accessible for reporting.

C. Survey Results - Timeliness of the Environmental Review Process

EQB Staff track the timeliness of the environmental review process upon publication of the ER documents in the *EQB Monitor*. However, this length of time does not include the time required to prepare the document for distribution. The survey included a number of questions designed to gather information on the preparation process for EAWs, EISs, and AUARs.

Since EAWs were the most commonly completed ER process in 2016, EQB Staff focused on the timeliness data provided for the EAW process. **The results indicate that there is significant variability in the timeline for preparing EAW documents for distribution.** RGUs reported tracking each step in the EAW preparation process differently, making it difficult to compare timeliness data between EAW processes (see diagram below).



D. Survey Results - Perceptions of Effectiveness Environmental Review

According to [Minnesota Rules 4410.0400](#), it is the responsibility of the EQB to monitor the effectiveness of ER, and take measure to improve the effectiveness. Before taking steps to improve the effectiveness, EQB must first collect baseline data to establish how well the process is currently working. Consequently, a number of the survey questions asked RGUs to share their perceptions of the effectiveness of various components of the ER process.

Perceptions of Environmental Review Effectiveness (n=46; n=44)

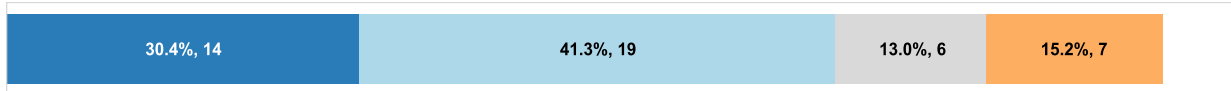
The questions in this section were focused on the effectiveness of the ER process for EAWs, EISs, and AUARs. **When asked if the ER process was useful in identifying the proposed project’s potential environmental effects that would not have otherwise been identified, 33 respondents (71.7%) strongly or somewhat agreed**, while six respondents (13.0%) were neutral, and the remaining seven respondents (15.2%) somewhat disagreed.

RGUs were positive towards the ER process when answering the next question on the opportunity for public participation through ER as 25 respondents (56.8%) strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, while 10 respondents (22.7%) were neutral, and the remaining nine respondents (20.5%) disagreed with the statement. Finally, **the majority of respondents indicated that the comments received during the ER process provided usable information as 30 RGUs (68.2%) strongly or somewhat agreed; six RGUs (13.6%) were neutral, and eight RGUs (18.2%) somewhat or strongly disagreed.**

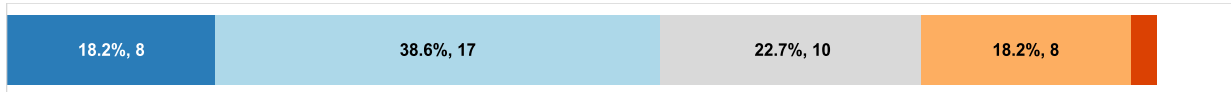
Level of Agreement

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree

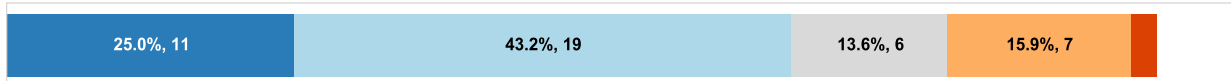
The ER Process as a whole was useful in identifying the proposed project’s potential environmental effects that would not have otherwise been identified by required governmental approvals, including permits. (n=46)



The ER Process allowed for public participation that would not have otherwise occurred for the proposed project through required governmental approvals, including permits. (n=44)



The comments as a whole received during the ER Process provided usable information to governmental units regarding the proposed project’s potential environmental effects. (n=44)



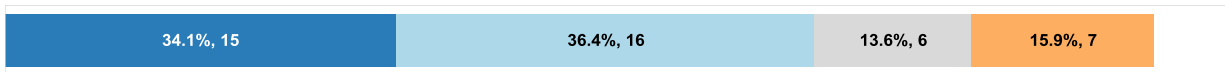
RGUs were also asked to assess whether the ER process provided usable information to the various parties (governmental units, proposers, and citizens) involved in the ER process. **Respondents largely indicated that the ER process provided usable information to each party, especially citizens as 32 respondents (72.7%) either somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement.**

Level of Agreement

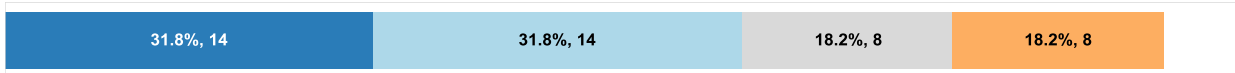


The ER Process as a whole provided usable information to [see category below] regarding the proposed project's potential environmental effects. (n=44)

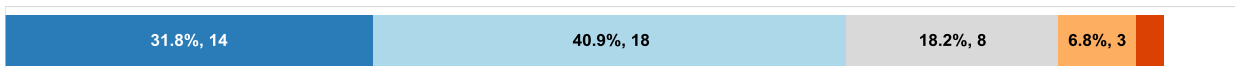
Governmental Units



Project Proposers



Citizens



E. Survey Results - Perceptions of Environmental Review Outcomes

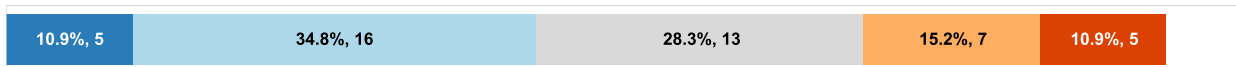
In addition to questions regarding the ER process, the survey also focused on the perceived outcomes of the ER process. Specifically, the survey asked about the mitigation measures identified exclusively through the ER process, and the likelihood that these measures would be included in applicable permits.

For the first question below, **we learned that only 21 respondents (45.7%) strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that the ER process had identified mitigation measures that would not have otherwise been identified** compared to 13 respondents (28.3%) that were neutral, and 12 respondents (26.1%) that somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Level of Agreement

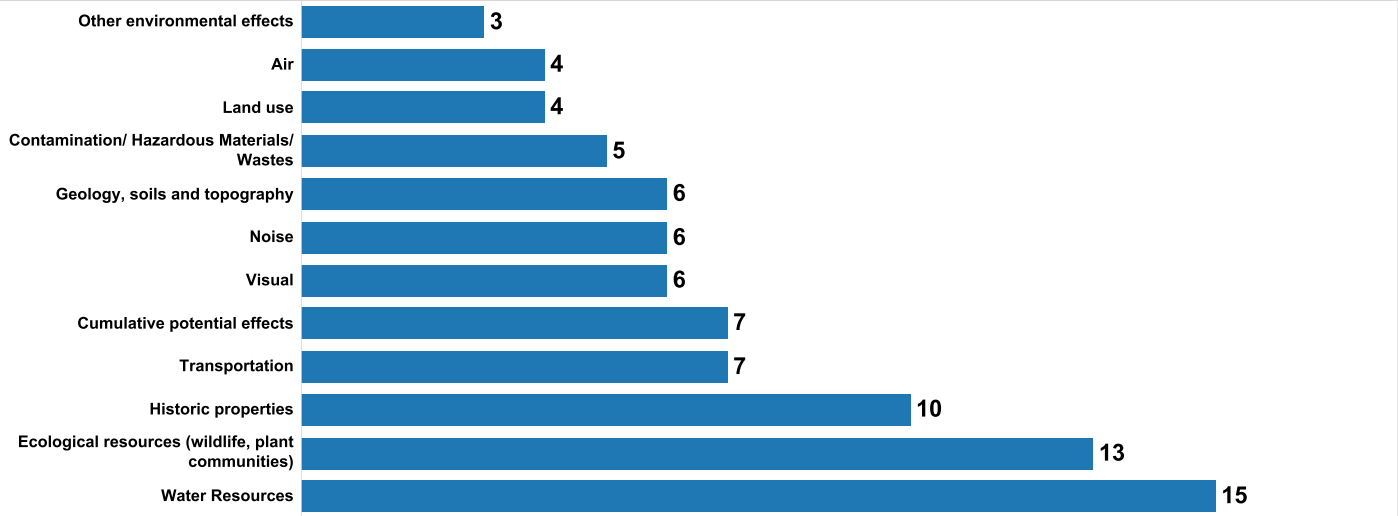


The ER Process identified mitigation measures for environmental effects that would not have otherwise been identified by required governmental approvals, including permits. (n=46)



RGUs were then asked to identify the categories of mitigation measures that were identified exclusively through the ER process. 17 respondents (37.0%) indicated that no unique mitigation measures were identified through ER. **29 respondents, or 63.0%, indicated that one or more unique mitigation measure as was been identified through the ER process. The most commonly identified mitigation measures fell into the categories of water resources (15, 32.6%), ecological resources (13, 28.3%) and historic properties (10, 21.7%).**

Please indicate the type(s) of environmental effects that would be mitigated by measures identified through the ER process that would not have otherwise been identified by required governmental approvals, including permits. (n=46)



Finally, of the respondents that indicated that at least one unique mitigation measure was identified through the ER process (question above), the survey asked the respondent to indicate the likelihood that the mitigation measure(s) would be included in required governmental approvals. Based on the responses, **mitigation measures are likely to be included in permits when identified in ER as 72.4% of respondents (21 respondents were asked this question) indicated that it is likely or very likely that the mitigation measures would be included in applicable governmental approvals.**

Level of Agreement

Very Likely Somewhat Likely Neutral Somewhat Unlikely Very Unlikely

How likely is it that the mitigation measures identified exclusively through the ER process will be included in required governmental approvals? (n=29)



F. Survey Results - EQB Environmental Review Technical Assistance

The final section of the survey focused on the technical assistance provided by the EQB. The goal of this section was to gain information on how well we are providing assistance currently, and what opportunities exist to provide improved technical assistance in the future.

Current Technical Assistance (n=54)

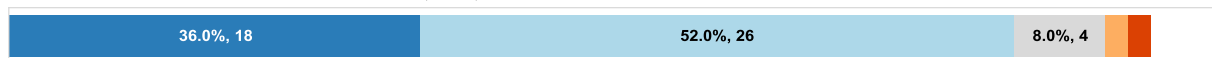
Respondents indicated that they are largely satisfied with the technical assistance provided by EQB.

Respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance provided by EQB Staff by phone (33, 75.0%) and email (33, 73.8%). Although most respondents indicated that they are satisfied with ER guidance documents (44, 88.0%) and website content (43, 86.0%), a few respondents indicated that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this content. This underscores **the need to regularly update ER guidance documents and website content.**

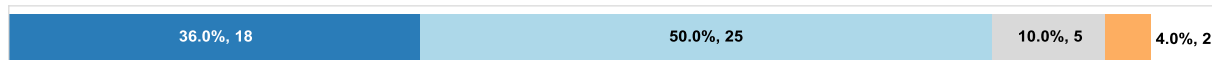
Level of Satisfaction

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Neutral Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Environmental Review Guidance Documents (n=50)



Website Content (n=50)



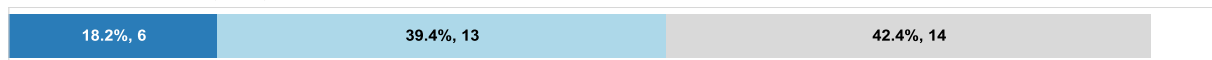
Phone Conversations with EQB Staff (n=44)



Email Conversations with EQB Staff (n=45)



Other EQB Resources (n=33)



Interest in Future Resources (n=54)

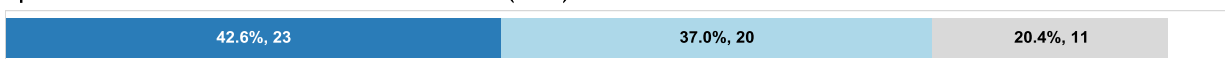
As mentioned in the previous section, **updated ER guidance documents are a high priority for RGUs.**

Additionally, **there appears to be a strong interest in presentations by EQB staff as 39 respondents (72.2%) indicated that they are somewhat or very interested**, while 32 respondents (59.3%) indicated that they are somewhat or very interested in webinars and 50% interested in video guidance.

Level of Interest

Very Interested Somewhat Interested Neutral Not interested

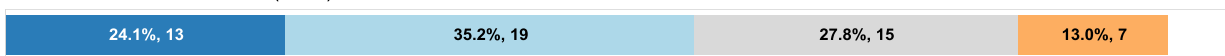
Updated Environmental Review Guidance Documents (n=54)



Presentations by EQB Staff (n=54)



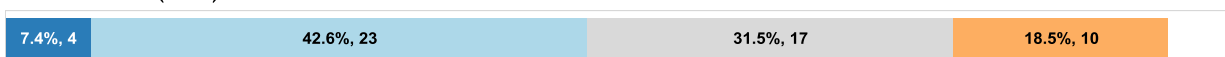
Webinar/Video Conferences (n=54)



In-person Training (n=54)



Video Guidance (n=54)





CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT
PLAN 2016



DIVERSITY INCLUSION EQUITY



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LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER

In signing Executive Order 15-02 and establishing the Diversity and Inclusion Council, Governor Dayton made history as the first Minnesota Governor to create a Civic Engagement Committee that would be responsible for developing best practices in meaningful engagement to ensure Cabinet-level administrative agencies make intentional efforts to communicate with historically disenfranchised communities.

Since the implementation of the Executive Order, a diverse group of citizens and government officials have taken the first step in making the vision of authentic meaningful engagement a reality for all in Minnesota in developing the following strategic plan.

We had honest conversations with one another, which openly acknowledged that trust was an issue that needed to be addressed with intentional effort.

We shared past experiences of frustration and disappointment. We also focused on establishing models of best practices of meaningful engagement for government to emulate. All in hopes of creating an environment in which engagement with all communities is an expectation of all government leaders and valued by all who work in government.

As someone who had the privilege of listening to the rich conversations within each of the four subcommittees, I know there is a genuine desire among people within Minnesota and government officials to work together in addressing the existing disparities in Minnesota. This commitment to collaborate is encouraging to all who are currently working to address disparities.

While we appreciate that our work was an initial first step on a journey, we understand all the important work ahead of us if we are to create a Minnesota that is inclusive for all.

On behalf of the Honorable Governor Mark Dayton, I want to thank all of the members of the committee for their work and contributions that led to the creation of this strategic plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Lindsey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kevin M. Lindsey
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Human Rights



An ideal government is one by the people. This plan was put together by a committee of your fellow citizens to help the government reflect the very people it's serving. The infrastructure committee focused on developing a civic engagement infrastructure within state agencies. The objective of such a civic engagement infrastructure is to foster a genuine relationship; in which a governing process solicits constituent's voices from all communities, and constituents feel fulfilled participating in this process even if the outcome is not one they desired. This plan will get us closer to our ideal government.

– Maher Abduselam



WHAT IS “MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT” AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The Committee defined meaningful engagement as the intentional effort of government to facilitate meaningful dialog with all members of the public in its work and in the development of policy.

Meaningful engagement strengthens our democracy as it reaffirms the consent of the governed. Meaningful engagement also increases the efficiency of government as the ideas of all innovative and creative people are considered and the level of trust in society increases in the identified solutions sought to be implemented by government.

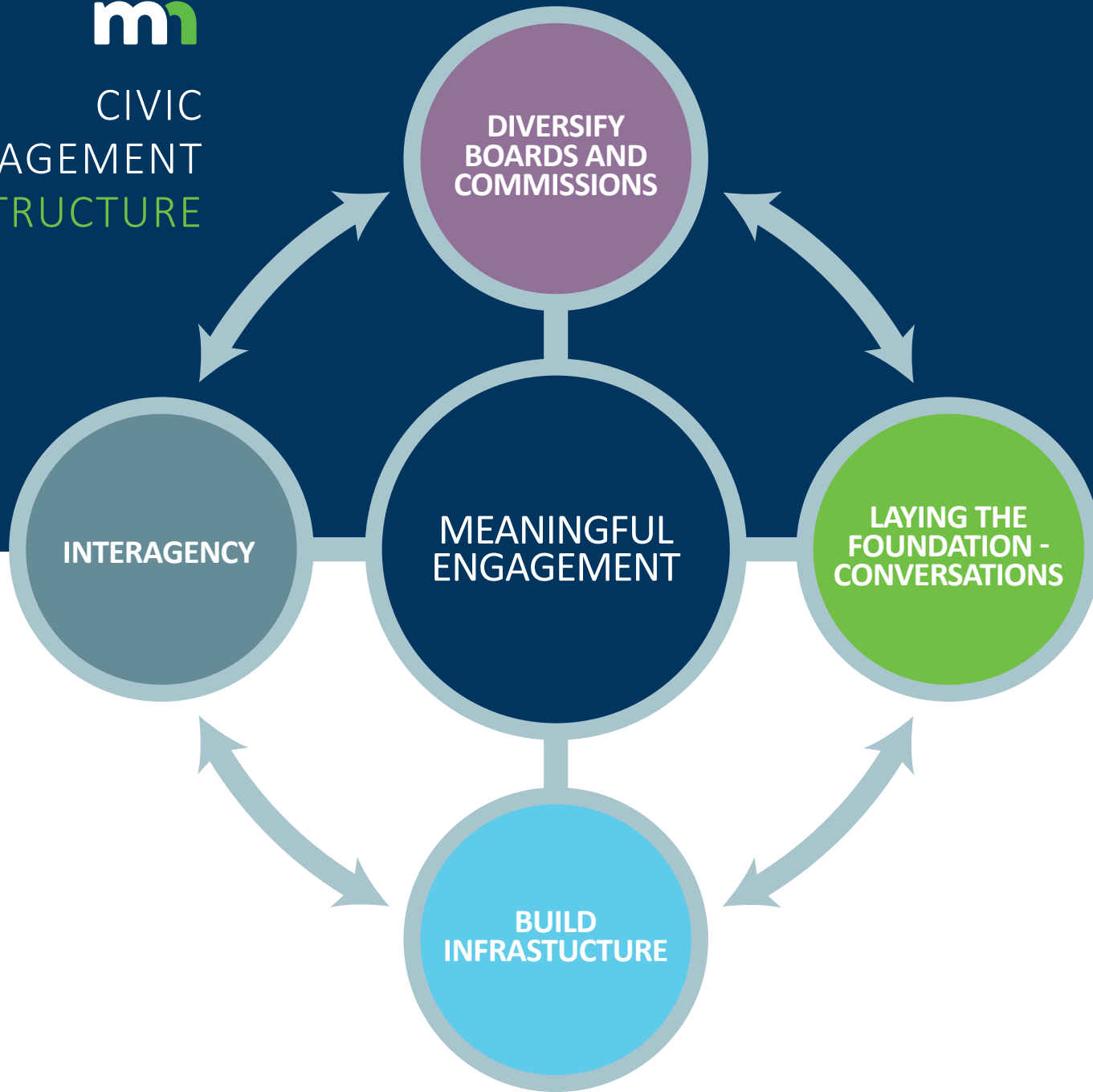
Building a genuine relationship with communities is integral to implementing meaningful engagement. People are experts in knowing their long-term needs and how to maximize their interactions within the places they live, learn and work. Collective problem solving takes advantage of the insights of everyone involved.

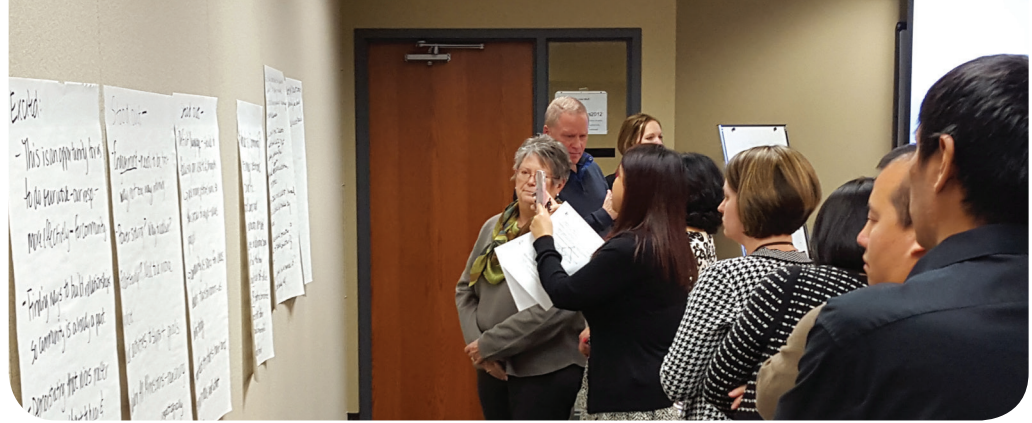
Meaningful engagement means that relationships and conversations are reciprocal and authentic and that engagement happens with the intent of making an impact. In addition, the engagement is educative for all involved and must take into account diversity, equity and inclusion.





CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT
STRUCTURE





PROCESS

During the creation of the Meaningful Engagement Plan, we attempted to model good meaningful engagement. In December 2015, a steering committee, comprised of public members representing priority communities or with an expertise in engagement, came together with a group of State of Minnesota employees to put together the plan. The planning process began with a number of informal meetings with agency commissioners, deputy commissioners and community members. A survey was also sent out to state agencies regarding their meaningful engagement practices.

As part of the planning process, steering committee members learned about the Diversity and Inclusion Council's charge, surveyed existing literature on meaningful engagement, analyzed the state agency survey and had reciprocal dialogues in small groups about how the State of Minnesota could better work with communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBT communities and individuals with disabilities to make better public policy.

During the process, steering committee members concluded that interagency efforts can help locate and bridge access points between government and disenfranchised communities when it comes to policy, systems and processes. Learning about other statewide efforts happening in Minnesota allowed this group to better assess its approach to implementing meaningful engagement efforts. The steering committee would like to thank Ron Solheid and Kelley Heifort of the Department of Corrections, Jeremy Hanson Willis of The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and Darlene Zangara of The Minnesota Olmstead Implementation Office for their work in informing the Committee of their respective interagency efforts to reduce disparities.

On the next page we have listed the individuals who participated on the steering committee. On behalf of the State of Minnesota and Governor Dayton, Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey would like to extend a most heartfelt thanks to these individuals.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Maher Abduselam	African American Leadership Forum	Abby Miller	HealthPartners
Khalid Adam	Citizen	Kathy Mouacheupao	Twin Cities Local Initiative Support Corporation
Anne Barry	Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota	Nick Ngo	Citizen
Barbara Battiste	Legislative Office on the Economic Status of Women	Hue Nguyen	MN Department of Education
Ned Brooks	MN Pollution Control Agency	Guadalupe Quintero	Citizen
Blake Chafee	MN Department of Employment and Economic Development	Erika Rivers	MN Department of Natural Resources
Marisol Chiclana-Ayala	MN Department of Health	Sherry Sanchez Tibbetts	Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
Rose Chu	(CAAL) Coalition of Asian American Leaders	Timothy Sumner	Beltrami County Commissioners
Jane Conrad	East Central Area Labor Council	Pheng Thao	Citizen
Patricia Fenrick	City of Eden Prairie	Meagan Tinajero	Citizen
Kriystauhl Fitchett	African American Leadership Forum	Joann Usher	Rainbow Health Initiative
Victoria Ford	Citizen	Sarah Walker	MN Second Chance Coalition
Cedrick Frazier	Education Minnesota	Chang Wang	Thomson Reuters
Michelle Fure	Metropolitan Council	Mark Westergaard	Richfield Human Rights Commission
Sandra Gerdes	Laura Baker Services Association	Gwen Willems	Citizen
Emilia Gonzalez Avalos	Navigate MN	Joan Willshire	MN State Council on Disability
LaRone Greer	MN Department of Human Services		
Sia Her	Council of Asian Pacific Minnesotans		
Henry Jimenez	MN Council on Latino Affairs		
Ann Kaner-Roth	Office of the Secretary of State		

STAFF

Ben Katzner	MN Department of Human Rights
Rowzat Shipchandler	MN Department of Human Rights



LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

BACKGROUND

Communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities and disability communities have previously been underrepresented in policy making. The failure to include these communities in the development of policy is detrimental to the long-term interests of the State of Minnesota. Effective meaningful engagement with all citizens in our state is essential to the functioning of Minnesota government. For engagement to happen, there has to be an intentional period of building trust with these communities. Trust must first be established with underrepresented communities before meaningful engagement can occur.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Build trust through community engagement conversations

- Hold a series of authentic community engagement conversations around the state that identify practical solutions for healing and community needs for reconciliation to build trust. The conversations

should reflect the principles of meaningful engagement, be convened by trusted community organizations, be held in locations that facilitate power sharing and mutual understanding, have clear expectations and ground rules, and include clear statements on what and how information would be used.

- Measure the success of these conversations including whether people feel heard and the quality of the conversation.

GOAL 2: Build trust through all interactions with community

STRATEGIES:

- Embody the principles of meaningful engagement in all interactions.
- Agencies will be present and connected to communities to build long-term relationships by regularly participating in community conversations, events and activities even when there is no short-term present role for the agency.



Healthy communities are engaged communities, so it was a real privilege to be a member of the Civic Engagement Practices Committee. We worked on developing a plan that was guided by the desire to increase meaningful engagement from diverse communities in agency policy making. I am especially encouraged that this plan is rooted in building authentic relationships and rebuilding trust with marginalized communities and including them in the creation of solutions. I look forward moving from a framework of “listening” to one that is more about “engagement and action.”

– Kathy Mouacheupao





BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE

BACKGROUND

Agencies currently conduct meaningful engagement efforts, however there is room to deepen the engagement and further affect policy. Historical conditions have created distrust and because of that, some communities are wary of the actions and motives of government. Leadership commitment is key to effectively engaging and addressing the many policies that create unnecessary barriers. There are many government policies, from data practices that may make the names of people who come to meetings public to restrictions purchasing food, which make it difficult to do effective meaningful engagement. In addition, unquestioned agency practices may pose additional barriers. There are a variety of meaningful engagement methods and protocols used around the state, but many of them do not specifically take into account communities that have been traditionally marginalized in the political process. Measurement is needed in order to create accountability for change and refine policy and practices.

Identifying tools, approaches and skills for civic engagement will greatly assist our agency in making sure that we involve all Minnesotans in our work. This is a useful first step in improving the “infrastructure” of state agencies. But to be successful we need to continue to increase our emphasis on the value of community members and the importance of collaborative relationships to solve problems and improve our state government’s service to all Minnesotans. For me, this is one of the most important parts of this plan.

– Ned Brooks



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Communities should be viewed as a valuable source for ideas, transformation and leadership by administrative agencies

STRATEGIES:

- Use information gleaned from ongoing relationships and consider purchasing the services of members of impacted communities as consultants.
- Agencies will analyze and document the impact of policy or services on priority communities and routinely ask if the policy is more effective for those impacted.

GOAL 2: Agency leadership, culture, policy and practice support meaningful engagement.

STRATEGIES:

- Senior leaders will support meaningful engagement in a variety of ways, such as incorporating meaningful engagement into the agency mission, regularly communicating support of meaningful engagement, and providing adequate staff and financial resources to support meaningful engagement.
- Meaningful engagement is incorporated into inter and intra agency training, work plans and performance management.

- Assess and create plans to address formal and informal barriers to meaningful engagement such as data practices, purchasing food, lack of per diems and agency culture.
- Create and strengthen networks of people who are doing meaningful engagement across state government to enhance mutual learning.
- Agencies maintain dynamic lists of community organizations to be used to ensure that diverse perspectives are included in community engagement.
- Agencies coordinate among and within agencies so that the state is not always approaching the same people for input.

GOAL 3: Agencies should devote adequate resources to facilitate meaningful engagement with community

STRATEGIES:

- Agencies expand their definition of cultural communities to include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability status.
- Ensuring public meetings are inclusive by incorporating sufficient notice (ideally at least 14 days in advance), being held at times and locations that promote community participation and accessibility for people with disabilities, providing materials in different formats and taking into account needs such as child care.
- Agencies use culturally adaptable practices such as providing for language access, developing new channels to cultivate relationships, using facilitators from cultural communities, and using culturally tailored materials and methods. Agencies will also work to provide materials that use plain language.
- Community organizations and individuals are compensated and/or reimbursed for their planning and implementing outreach efforts. Agencies provide, as feasible, per diem or mileage reimbursement,

food at meetings and assess such policies that create barriers to meaningful engagement.

- Agencies develop and use creative means of soliciting input from community members and go to them.

GOAL 4: Agencies measure the effectiveness of meaningful engagement

STRATEGIES:

- Agencies acknowledge there are both quantitative and qualitative measures that should be analyzed while attempting meaningful engagement. Along with monitoring who is at meetings, agencies should assess whether or not people feel their time and opinions were valued and if those who are part of agency engagement efforts would participate in another agency engagement effort.

AGENCIES MEASURE:

- a) Who is involved, compare who is impacted by public policy to who is engaged in meaningful engagement, the diversity of the group engaged and whether people are new to the public input process.
- b) The quality of the conversation and whether stakeholders feel heard, feel the relationship is reciprocal, understand their role and hear back about final decisions.
- c) Educational impact: 1) Do stakeholders understand the importance of the policy decision; 2) Do stakeholders feel like they learned something in the engagement process; and 3) Can the administrative agency articulate what was learned during the engagement process?

Create an agency scorecard to assess meaningful engagement across agencies.



DIVERSIFY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

BACKGROUND

The State of Minnesota has more than 220 boards, agencies, councils and task forces (collectively Boards) whose members are appointed by the Governor, commissioners of executive branch administrative agencies and members of the legislature. The Boards have a variety of powers such as licensing and registering members of various professions, providing advice on public policy, and overseeing grant, loan or compensation programs.

The majority of the above appointments are managed through an open appointments process that is coordinated by the Secretary of State's (SoS) office. In the SoS office's annual report on Board membership, the report indicates that nearly one third of Boards did not provide Board demographic data to the SoS office.

Applicants are currently required to provide their name, address, and felony conviction information, data such as gender, national origin, race or whether they identify as a person with a disability is optional. Applicants are not asked to identify their sexual orientation. No demographic information is collected by the SoS after someone is appointed.

In comparing the aggregate data from the SoS office Open Appointments Annual Compilation of Statistical Report of Multi-Member Agencies report with United States Census American Community Survey data for communities of color and individuals with disabilities in Minnesota, the Committee found that there were disparities for communities of color and individuals with disabilities. The Committee found that disparities for communities of color were particularly pronounced for individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino or who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Boards should be reflective of the demographics of people of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the State of Minnesota

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage the adoption of goals that every Board is reflective of people of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in Minnesota; Boards that have more than 10 members should be encouraged to disaggregate their goals for people of color and American Indian Communities.
- Encourage Boards to develop and implement retention strategies such as: 1) creating a more inclusive onboarding process for members; 2) creating recognition strategies for Board members; and 3) identifying and removing barriers to Board meeting attendance.
- Eliminate statutory requirement for applicants to provide criminal history information except where absence of criminal conviction is a statutory requirement to participate on the Board.

GOAL TWO: Appointing Authorities and Boards should expand recruiting and outreach efforts to communities of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who identify as LGBTQ in the State of Minnesota

STRATEGIES:

- Appointing Authorities and Boards should create a recruiting and outreach plan that is inclusive of communities of color, American Indian Communities, individuals with disabilities and individuals who

identify as LGBTQ by: 1) collaborating with state ethnic councils, the Olmstead Implementation Office and legacy community organizations; 2) distributing informational materials on opportunities to serve on Boards to targeted audiences; and 3) developing materials that celebrate recruiting successes achieved by Boards.

- Create venues in which staff and members of the Board can share best practices regarding recruiting and outreach.

GOAL 3: Improve data collection efforts concerning Board applicants

STRATEGIES:

- Encourage Board applicants to provide more demographic information by: 1) asking for demographic information after appointment to the Board has been made; 2) adding a statement on the application explaining the importance of collecting demographic information to increase diverse board representation; and 3) adding additional categories for individuals to identify, for example, as multi-racial or as LGBTQ.
- Compile and publish applicant pool data to assess the diversity of the Board applicant pool.

¹ The Committee analyzed both total aggregate data and data that excluded disability-specific and ethnic-specific appointments.



INTERAGENCY STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

The State of Minnesota is committed to addressing disparities in education, housing, employment, wealth creation, and criminal justice. Addressing disparities is often complex as it requires working across disciplines and jurisdictions as solutions to disparities are often multifaceted and require systemic institutional change. Working to address disparities within historically disenfranchised communities is challenging because the communities often have a deep lack of trust in government. Working with a variety of agencies and units of government is also challenging because of the differing approaches to meaningful engagement.

The State of Minnesota has created interagency taskforces with local units of government and the public to develop solutions to addressing society's most pressing disparities. Because of the complexities of working with multiple stakeholders and the lack of trust that exists between historically disenfranchised communities and government, the committee has identified several goals and strategies to enhance meaningful engagement in addressing disparities.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Interagency efforts should play an active role in leveling the playing field of information with disenfranchised communities about policy, systems and process

STRATEGIES:

- Efforts should consider creating informational documents for the public that explain the jurisdiction and scope of government stakeholders in the process.
- Efforts should create a common glossary of terms to increase public awareness and understanding.
- Efforts should inform the public as to what data exists and where there are gaps in data.
- Efforts should provide staff resources for the public to be informed throughout the policy development process.

GOAL 2: Interagency efforts should be intentional in building trust with community at all stages. Trust is built through clear and transparent communication

STRATEGIES:

- Efforts should be clear with the public as to the scope and intended purpose of the initiative.

- Efforts should contain explicit statements about: 1) how input will ultimately be incorporated in shaping policy; 2) how community can provide input into the process; and 3) when community can participate in the process.
- The purpose of public testimony and how the interagency effort intends to use public testimony should be clear.
- Efforts should be intentional in welcoming community members into policy discussions; for example, interagency efforts should consider hosting meetings within community organization meeting space.

GOAL 3: Interagency efforts should be proactive, thoughtful and strategic in determining the role of senior agency leadership in meaningful engagement efforts

STRATEGIES:

- Prior to launching any interagency efforts, senior leadership of administrative agencies and local units of government should discuss challenges to successful engagement and reach consensus on how to maximize effective engagement.
- Senior leadership should visibly demonstrate commitment to collaboration by participation in community listening sessions and outreach activities.
- As involvement of front-line staff in the process of meaningful engagement may occasionally be misinterpreted as a lack of sincerity to engage with community, senior leadership may wish to consider:
 - 1) setting up a process for subsequent contact with senior leadership
 - 2) clearly state the reporting responsibility to senior leadership at a meaningful engagement forum
 - 3) explain how information at meaningful engagement forum will be used in the implementation of policy.



DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2016

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Phone 651.539.1100
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