

- Good morning - my name is Alison Abbott and I am a volunteer with the TGCA community association
- Thank you for the opportunity today to provide feedback on the community framework project
- I completely agree and support the concept of engaging more voices when dealing with community issues, the majority being planning types of issues. Especially as many communities are facing significant challenges
- As CA volunteers it is something my community works very hard at ensuring we have effective outreach so in turn we can represent and provide a voice for and capture their concerns or issues appropriately
- It's not always easy, especially when it may be a more controversial topic where there isn't alignment or very differing views.
- We also take seriously our obligation to provide information, resources and facts for community members to assist in their understanding of whatever the issue may be and not try to force a view point on our members
- What I wanted to highlight today is my concern that by not addressing some of the barriers or root causes that impact having a larger diverse group at the table this framework won't move us forward
- For example, the commitment and time required during daytime work hours. For volunteers who work it can be very difficult to attend committee meetings such as this one or other forums be it CPC, council SDAB. Even access to resources is typically during the same hours. It makes it difficult and I believe is huge barrier to having more participation from the community
- Secondly, the process of engagement between the city and community I feel is a priority. For a variety of reasons there is a level of distrust with engagement sessions and I hear often from members in my community it's a done deal and they really don't want my feedback. We still work hard to encourage the community to come out but nothing turns people off more than not feeling heard or listened to or have the opportunity to be persuaded to a different view
- We don't do real engagement it needs to be more than just relying on the old stand by of story boards and post it notes. We need to have conversations and that's not sticking notes on boards.
- Having attended and hosted many town halls or engagement sessions I can speak from experience that having an open discussion, letting people express their views or concerns, hear what their neighbors are saying have led to some of the best outcomes in terms of engagement. It's not always easy and it can be messy but I have seen people soften a stance or come together or even just understand the issues better. In my experience engagement sessions become very scripted and are trying to limit or narrow discussion, we can do better.

- In conclusion my ask would be to ensure we look at the root causes and take some steps to address why people don't get involved as a foundational step to build on the work that has been done.

