ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND
Asian Development Bank

Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

ADB

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS:

DIGITAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR CITY PLANNING

ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOWARDS LIVABLE AND PEOPLE-CENTRIC SMART CITIES

OPPORTUNITY

In the context of smart city development, the planning of new urban infrastructure investments impacts the lives of the city's citizens. But while citizens provide a wealth of insights into how they live and interact with the city, their voices are often left out of the urban planning process, often leading to developments that lack vital social considerations. This lack of engagement is often a reflection of either a failure to understand the importance of public participation in the urban planning process and outdated and ineffective approaches that are often utilized to engage its eligible resident population.

As urban development should be driven by people's needs and dreams for the future, it essential for city governments to find an approach to ensure an efficient, participatory, socially inclusive, and data-driven city planning process. Digital technologies offer a broad range of engagement mechanisms that allow city governments to collect feedback and insights from a broad scope of community stakeholders that can provide invaluable land-use data for urban planners. When deployed purposefully, these digital tools can create a sense of community, manage the dialogue between city officials and its citizens, and enable local governments to set up specific action and response plans towards improving the livability and sustainability of cities.

BENEFITS

- Create opportunities to grow mutual trust between city officials and citizens and promote transparency in urban planning decisions;
- Digital engagement tools help cities make more informed decision making in urban planning by providing a platform to get critical data on their citizens' needs and circumstances; and
- Enable direct and productive dialogue between city officials and citizens, empowering citizens to participate in the planning of their city by sharing their ideas and feedback on planned or future urban developments.

PRECONDITIONS

- Digital maturity and ICT accessibility of citizens, especially vulnerable groups must be considered to avoid sampling bias;
- City governments must consider incentives to encourage citizens to take part in community planning;
- A holistic and inclusive approach to civic engagement to ensure that the voices of people who were previously excluded because of the lack of technical skills or access to hardware are also engaged;
- Government resource capacity to retain the sustainability of data collection, governance, and ownership.

bit.ly/3a83cVn

KEY TAKEAWAYS ON DIGITAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN URBAN PLANNING

From the ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Webinar Series Part 8: Digital Tools for Enhanced Community Engagement in Urban Planning

- City governments must ensure that digital participation tools such as surveys are developed with the help of experts to ensure that they are well-designed, visual and considers the user's experience, and to avoid "survey fatigue";
- A reliable internet infrastructure, as well as the guidance of community engagement experts are important elements in ensuring success in capturing the interest of citizens to participate using digital engagement tools;
- Incentives are also considered as an effective way to encourage citizens to engage through digital tools;
- When combined with effective offline engagement strategies, digital tools can help boost engagement even among those in the informal sector and other marginalized or vulnerable groups who may not have access to the internet or to smart devices.

SCAN CODE FOR DIGITAL VERSION

bit.ly/3wMlg0V

USE CASES

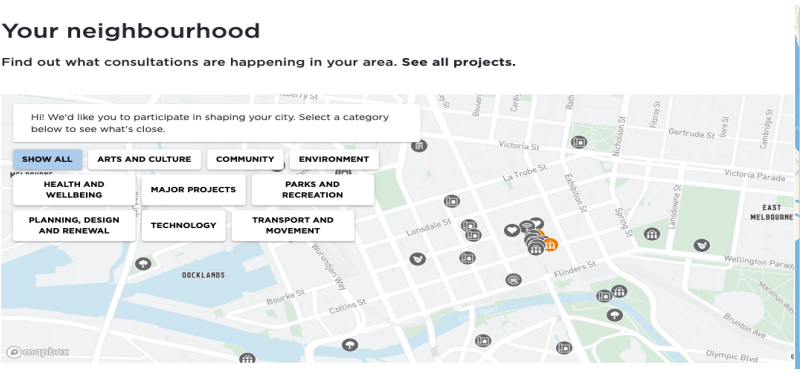

Photo attribution: City of Melbourne/participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au

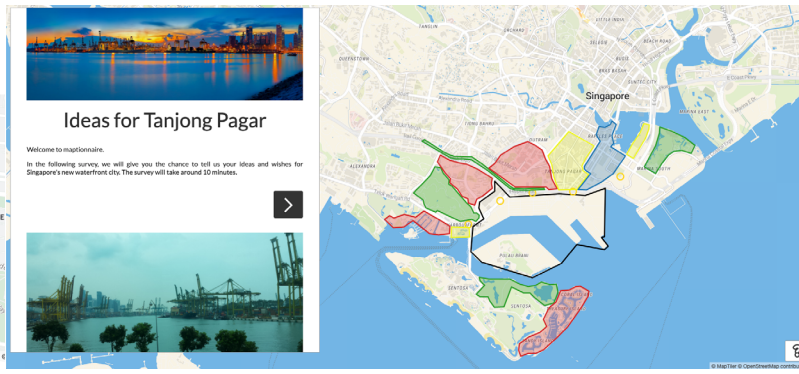

Photo attribution: Maptionnaire

An online community consultation platform shaping Melbourne's future

bit.ly/3dcS9Mk

AUSTRALIA

AGENCIES INVOLVED

- City of Melbourne
- The HIVE

Participate Melbourne is the city's online platform where citizens can share their thoughts on the municipality's future developments and pertinent issues. The city utilizes feedback and opinions from their citizens to help inform decisions made by the city council on planning, renewal, environment, transport, health, and technology, among others. It also allows citizens to learn more about, monitor progress and receive updates on specific projects, city strategies, and issues.

The initiative is considered to be a manifestation of the city council's commitment to be more accessible, transparent, and responsive. While citizens are encouraged to engage with the online platform, it also utilizes more traditional engagement methods such as face-to-face consultations, workshops, and mailers to complement its online component.

Reimagining a waterfront neighborhood designed with citizens

bit.ly/3g458Sx

SINGAPORE

AGENCIES INVOLVED

- Future Cities Laboratory, Singapore-ETH Centre
- Maptionnaire

ETH-Singapore Future Cities Laboratory embarked on a research project that involved citizens as creative contributors in the planning of a new waterfront neighborhood in Singapore. Dubbed as "Ideas for Tanjong Pagar", an aspect of the project aims to find out how citizens would design the city-state's waterfront area in the historic district of Tanjong Pagar from a container terminal to a downtown extension.

The project also serves as an opportunity for FCL to showcase new forms of participatory design, as well as the usability of various online design tools. The team used Maptionnaire as an interactive, online map-based tool for citizens to express their ideas and opinions in a more creative way. The tool provided an easy and simple user interface to visualize people's ideas by superimposing these outputs on a map. This in turn motivated people to continue to engage in the design process as they see their ideas come to life.

ABOUT THE ASEAN AUSTRALIA SMART CITIES TRUST FUND

The ASEAN Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF) assists ASEAN cities in enhancing their planning systems, service delivery, and financial management by developing and testing appropriate digital solutions and systems. Digital solutions address vital cross-cutting themes such as social inclusiveness, gender equity & women's empowerment, climate change & environmental sustainability, and public-private partnerships. By working with cities, AASCTF facilitates their transformation to become more livable, resilient, and inclusive, while in the process identifying scalable best practices to be replicated across cities in Asia and the Pacific.

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