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Page 2: ACE Award Application

Q1

Name of Project:

Multnomah County Libraries, Albina and North Portland Libraries

Q2

Jurisdiction or Local Government:

City of Portland, Multnomah County

Q3

Applicant name:

Whitney Geier

Q4

Contact email:

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Q5

Contact phone number:

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Q6

Name of organization or agency:

LEVER Architecture

Page 3: Project Team and Partners

Q7

Who led the community engagement effort for this project?

Other (please specify):
LEVER Architecture (LEVER is one of two architects on the project, our firm led the engagement process because we live and work in the same community where the libraries are located)

Q8

Project start date: Generalizations acceptable: e.g. "Spring 2021" or "2019"

Summer 2021

Q9

Target project completion date:

Fall 2024

Q10

What organizations participated in the project team and/or as project partners? If community-based or community-serving organizations were involved in community engagement efforts, please identify the community or communities they represent in your response.

Multnomah County Libraries (Client), LEVER Architecture (Core and Shell Architect and Community Engagement Lead), Noll & Tam Architects (Programming and Interiors Architect), Minor Planning and Design (Historic Consultant), Ground Workshop (Landscape Architect), Valar (Structural Engineer), Vega (Civil Engineer), Arris Consulting (Mechanical and Plumbing Engineer), Samata Engineers (Electrical Engineer), Biella (Lighting Designer), Acoustic Design Studio (Acoustical Engineer), Project Pivot (Sustainability Consultant), Ditroen (Graphics and Wayfinding Consultant), Treecology (Arborist)

More than 30 community organizations were included in the engagement process in addition to neighboring community centers, parks, schools, individuals, and neighborhood elders. These organizations represented the Black community, Latinx community, Indigenous community, Immigrant and refugee community, disability and accessibility focused community, early learning/youth and teens, family health, women's shelters, and incarcerated community.

Q11

Were any of Oregon's nine federally recognized or other tribes invited to engage in this work?

Yes, the following tribes were engaged::
Specific tribal information was not solicited. The following organizations were invited to engage: NARA, NAYA, Bow and Arrow Culture Club, NACAC Education Subcommittee, Portland Indian Leaders Roundtable, Portland Youth and Elders Council, PPS Indian Education Program

Q12

Was a compensation model used for participation? If so, briefly describe.

Yes, we used a compensation model that::
financially compensated participants of focus groups and student design cohorts. The team provided other resources like food and free books at in-person events as a way to support families and caretakers. Financial compensation was provided in the form of Visa gift cards to participants of focus groups. Cash stipends via personal checks were awarded to students for each session of participating in the youth design cohorts.

Q13

Was this project supported through grant funding?

No

Page 4: Project Description

Q14

Please describe the area affected by this project.

North and Northeast Portland communities and Albina district. The Albina and North Portland neighborhoods have been forever impacted by the racial inequity of urban renewal projects, including the construction of the I-5 corridor and the Legacy Emanuel Hospital. A history of exclusion laws, redlining, and broken promises have caused displacement and harm to these neighborhoods.

Q15

Where is your project in the planning cycle?

100

Q16

What is the desired outcome of this planning process? What will this land use planning effort accomplish?

Two library branch renovation and addition projects that are shaped by the voices of their community. Buildings that strengthen the Albina community, recognize and celebrate culture, reflect a community-driven process, are safe and accessible, are flexible in the short term and long term, and are sustainable and strongly connected to nature.

Page 5: Community Engagement

Q17

What are the community engagement objectives for this plan or project?

This community engagement process has focused on seeking feedback from underserved and historically marginalized communities, groups, and individuals. Our goal for this project was to amplify the voices of non-dominant communities to build a more equitable and just design process that truly reflects the whole community. It is important to note that this focus on non-dominant communities does not mean that feedback from anyone else was avoided or ignored, but rather it is a strategy for addressing inequity in the design process and built environment. Our team believes that by addressing the needs of our community's most underserved populations, spaces can be better and more supportive for everyone. The goal of this community engagement effort was to collect as many ideas, dreams, wishes, comments, and feedback points as possible before the design phase began in order to gain an understanding of the community's priorities and aspirations and allow those values to guide the building designs from the very beginning.

Q18

How did decision-makers use or consider this information in the decision-making process? (if applicable)

Design team members led the community engagement process so they were able to hear and implement the community feedback firsthand. It was important that the community engagement process start before the design process so that the voices of the community could truly inspire and shape the building design from the beginning. The engagement process spanned the entire project design timeline so community input and feedback were incorporated at all project milestones. Weekly community engagement summary meetings were held with Multnomah County Libraries to brief them on takeaways of the engagement and strategies for future engagement.

Q19

What tools did you use for communication and community engagement?Refer to Putting the People in Planning for descriptions of the tools below.

Project website,

Email updates,

Newsletter or newsletter articles,

Translation Services,

Advisory Committee or Group,

Focus Groups,

Traditional Open Houses,

Online Open Houses,

Fact Sheets, Brochures or Flyers,

Fact Sheets, Brochures or Flyers (translated),

Online survey,

Online survey (translated),

Other,

FAQs,

Infographics,

TV, Radio or Newspaper Interviews,

Newspaper ads,

Online ads or promoted posts,

In person presentations,

Community Listening Session,

Stakeholder Interviews,

Neighborhood Association meetings,

Social Media

Q20

If you answered "other" to the previous question, please describe what additional communication and community engagement tools were or are used.

Orchestrated pop-up style information and on-site interactive boards at community events, local farmers markets, summer music events, places of worship, vaccine events, block parties, and posters / PA announcements at local schools to organize youth design advisory groups. Engagement and feedback tools used with youth and teens included building tours, site visits, model-making, drawing, collaging, and furniture testing. Interviews were conducted with community leaders and representatives of local community based organizations. Virtual meetings were supported by Zoom video and Miro - an online interactive whiteboard program. These public virtual meetings were recorded with consent and posted to Multnomah County Libraries' YouTube account for further public access. Sticky notes and heart (upvote) stickers were helpful tools to pair with onsite poster boards for community members to participate to their comfort level. Pairing these quantitative data points with more qualitative data from art, conversation, and storytelling painted a broad yet detailed picture of the dreams, needs, and priorities of the community.

Page 6: Active Outreach and Engagement

Q21

Did you consult a local or agency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan or committee in developing a community engagement plan?

Other (please specify):

The project team and client had a two-day 'Critical Race Spatial Praxis in Design' workshop with Dr. Amara H. Pérez before starting the community engagement process. Dr. Pérez consulted with the project team during the engagement process as well, to provide expertise and feedback on engagement strategy. The team also worked with Ericka Warren at Try Excellence, LLC who is a community engagement and public meeting facilitator. Working with DEI partners that community members already trusted helped forge relationships and make stronger community connections.

Q22

What process did you use to identify priority populations/underserved communities affected by this work?

Multnomah County Libraries provided the project team with a research report titled "Framework for Future Library Spaces", which included maps of library use patterns and planning zones. Our team paired this information with neighborhood and branch location service area demographics and history - prioritizing the Black Community who is impacted by displacement in these neighborhoods specifically, and other historically marginalized communities, groups, and individuals.

Q23

What intentional efforts did you make to include priority populations/underserved communities?

By offering a variety of meeting types and outreach methods our team aimed to broaden our community reach, increase accessibility to information, and strengthen the voices of community members who are at the heart of the Albina and North Portland neighborhoods. Following are some specific efforts made to include priority populations and underserved communities: 1. Recurring meetings with focus groups specific to project location: Black Portlanders, Latinx community, Indigenous community, immigrant & refugee community, and the disabled community. 2. Meeting people where they are: our team conducted outreach at public spaces like farmers markets and food pantries, nearby schools, and culturally-specific locations such as churches, temples, and festivals. 3. Duplicate meetings: the team hosted multiple versions of public meetings in-person and virtually, and at varying times of day in order to accommodate different types of schedules and needs. 4. Language: In-person and virtual events offered American Sign Language, Spanish, and Somali translators, and recordings were transcribed and captioned. 5. Compensation and support: Paid opportunities like focus groups and teen design sessions gave community members time to participate when they would otherwise be earning. Providing snacks and free books at events also incentivized multi-generational engagement by supporting caretakers and children.

Page 7: Monitoring, Evaluation and Documenting Your Community Engagement Program

Q24

What assessments/evaluations have you conducted of the community engagement work to date?

Tracking public meeting attendance,

Tracking website traffic,

Tracking social media impressions,

Tracking newsletter or email engagement,

Project team debrief after events,

Updating or changing plans based on evaluation,

Evaluation form for participants in engagement activities

,

Multiple opportunities for communities, individuals, or organization to express concerns about engagement

,

Open log of public comments available to the public,

Synthesis of public comments and feedback,

Other (please specify):

Log of each engagement activity indicating number of participants, which communities were represented, key takeaways, feedback data, meeting notes, and photos. A comprehensive community engagement report was also compiled to share findings with the client.

Q25

If the project is ongoing, describe assessments or evaluations planned as the project moves forward.

Community priorities and feedback were integrated into Design Principles, which are the guide posts of the design and used as a way to track progress and overall success of the project. Project decisions are evaluated through these Design Principles throughout the entire project timeline as a measure of accountability and inclusion of community feedback.

Page 8: Lessons Learned

Q26

What did you learn through the assessment and evaluation of the community engagement process?

1. Early engagement- set aside a phase of community engagement before the design process begins.
2. Learn the history, connect with people now and in the past - map the stakeholders and assets of the project and community throughout time.
3. Identify community partners and bring them on as key project partners at the very beginning.
4. Present information so it is easy to understand, communicated effectively and timely. Reiterate what was heard prior, and in consistent forms - redundancy is key.
5. Create project Design Principles based on community engagement findings. Use them as a sounding board and reference point for all project decisions.
6. Document all engagement events and meetings with notes, recordings, photos, raw data, number of attendees, and key takeaways. Track and record where data points came from as they get aggregated and synthesized.

Q27

Do any lessons learned have the potential to inform other, future phases, or new community engagement efforts? If so, please explain.

Yes, all of the lessons learned are relevant to new community engagement efforts. Although communities vary throughout neighborhoods, project types are different, and history of place is unique - all of these aspects are fundamental to human connection, understanding of place, and visioning for the future.
1. Get to know the community you are working with - If it is a new community to you, start with identifying community organizations, gathering spaces (faith-based, boys and girls club, schools, etc) and join their events, volunteer, and support things they are doing.
2. Ask the community how they want to be involved (if at all) and ask what they need to feel safe and be able to participate in the process.
3. Be clear on expectations and promises of participation.
Start with basic information in every meeting and review what was heard before sharing new information.
4. As team members build trust and rapport with the community, ensure the same team members are consistent throughout the process and are there to introduce any new team members. Having a facilitator and/or community engagement consultant is helpful if the team is not part of the community.

Q28

How does the community engagement for this project align with overall community engagement efforts for this organization?

The efforts in our engagement process were guided by Multnomah County Libraries' strong prioritization of equity and inclusion which is described in the Library capital bond community engagement ethos and the work led by Multnomah County Libraries' Equity and Inclusion manager, Sonja Ervin.
1. Equitable - prioritizes listening and amplifying the voices of underserved communities
2. Transparent - clearly identifies what is fixed, what is flexible, and where community can have input
3. Just - understands and acknowledges the past and creates a different future
4. Accessible - meets the community where they are, variety of methods of participation, culturally relevant and responsive
5. Informed - is informed by research, review, and recognition of what has already been asked of communities and what's already been shared
6. Flexible - asks for input on process, listens to feedback, is open to change, and not sticking with a singular approach to engaging the community