

CITY COUNCIL REPORT
Public

DATE: December 8, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Sara Dechter, AICP

CC: Josh Copley, Jerene Watson, Barbara Goodrich, Leadership Team

SUBJECT: LAUNCH OF ONLINE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Communications and Comprehensive Planning staffs have launched an online platform for enhancing civic engagement on the City's website, called the Flagstaff Community Forum. Not everyone has time to attend an open house or commission meeting. This platform will provide new opportunities for participation to all of Flagstaff's citizens. Flagstaff Community Forum will be run by Peak Democracy, a non-partisan company whose mission is to broaden civic engagement and build public trust in government. Peak Democracy keeps participant information confidential per their strict privacy agreement, meets all public record requirements for the City, and provides unique services in data analysis and civility monitoring.

Over the last few years, there have been numerous public participation efforts that have used online engagement tools as part of their participation plans. For each of these efforts, a separate contract or purchase had to be made and the effort of marketing the participation tool and drawing the public into the discussion required staff and budget resources. The platform being launched now can provide a one-stop service for citizens and staff in creating and distributing surveys, generating online discussions and public review of City proposals and policy documents. Each forum topic will build the base of participants and help staff avoid duplication of efforts.

The website for the Community Forum is <http://www.flagstaff.az.gov/fcf>. The Community Forum will launch with a quick survey about upcoming Fix-It Clinics. Over the next few weeks, staff will expand the topics to host a Regional Transportation Plan survey and public engagement on NAIPTA's Bus Rapid Transit Study. Early adopters have received initial training in the software, and training will be provided again in 2016. City Council will receive a full presentation on the features and use of the tool in January 2016.