Background:
Every year, the City of Oakland engages with its residents on a variety of issues from large scale neighborhood redevelopment to changing public policies. Public interest groups expect for the City to work in conjunction with residents to address these issues as they arise. These organizations often serve as intermediaries between government and communities for large-scale processes or big policy decisions, acting as educators, organizers, facilitators and enablers. However, these same organizations can also become frustrated with City engagement practices, without the resources or opportunity for improvement.

To develop better means of effective engagement, and as part of 100 Resilient Cities, the City of Oakland’s Resilience Office wanted a deeper understanding of how they could improve their practice and build trust between the municipality and local organizations. In order to address this challenge, Rebuild by Design, worked with the City of Oakland to identify key partners for collaboratively developing a process that demonstrates participatory engagement and builds credibility from the onset. The West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project and Streetwyze were invited to join, and together the partners embarked upon a three part workshop series to understand how the City could better engage with Oakland residents.

Rebuild by Design Method of Research and Design:
In order to devise a recommendation of how to engage better, historical challenges had to be uncovered, and a shared understanding of what “good engagement” looks like from both the City and community perspectives needed to be reached.

The research stage began with a survey for municipal agencies within the city. This seminar focused on the ways in which government interacts with community groups. Respondents were asked about the technology utilized in community engagement, how often interactions take place, why they engage with community groups, and if they have the tools needed- including staff, expertise and knowledge of the community and partners- for successful engagement.

That data was used to inform the program for the first workshop which focused on enabling a shared understanding of what successful engagement means from both the city government and community perspective. Community organizations and city agency representatives each presented examples of successful community engagement to one another. This created an open conversation about the struggles each experience during unsuccessful City engagement processes, and giving each
other an understanding of their expectations and constraints. Presentations were followed by
small conversations which focused on understanding how and why certain actions within those
engagements made the effort successful. In the second workshop, participants collectively
created principles derived from the examples of successful examples in order to understand how
to replicate this success.

In collaboration with over 55 city leaders and local organizations ten principles were developed
for future engagements. The third workshop focused on testing these principles by applying them

**Impact:**
The ten principles created from this process have been
integrated into the City of Oakland’s ongoing efforts to better
engage with community organizations. The principles were
integrated into the City’s Sea Level Rise Roadmap, released
shortly after this process. The roadmap was created to identify
physical vulnerabilities to future risks in order to develop
adaptation strategies.

The principles were also included in the Bay Area Resilient
by Design Challenge, a regional effort to address long-term
physical and social vulnerabilities.

The outputs from this workshop series laid the groundwork
for how the City engages the community on service design
through Oakland’s newly formed Civic Design Lab, which was
created to make public service as effective and accessible as
possible.

**10 Principles for Engagement:**
- Mobilize talent
- Diversify outreach
- Improve accessibility
- Know the history
- Foster a safe space
- Ensure equity
- Set expectations
- Create transparency
- Define success
- Institutionalize

**Click here for more information.**

**About Rebuild by Design:**
*Rebuild by Design convenes a mix of sectors – including government, business, nonprofit, and community organizations – to gain
a better understanding of how overlapping environmental and human-made vulnerabilities leave cities and regions at risk. Our
process entails true public private partnerships where entities or institutions are needed to establish a meaningful resilience
collective to understand the specific needs in a city, and design evidence-based solutions for the community you are working
with. This collaboration remains at the heart of an iterative creative process to address the intersection of physical social, and
ecological resilience to drive lasting change.*

*If you would like more information about Rebuild by Design email info@rebuildbydesign.org.
For more information about Resilient Oakland visit beta.oaklandca.gov/issues/resilientoakland.*