

APAB Strategy Session

February 25, 2023

Recap + Recommendations



Recap

The Team

Atlanta-based Urban Planning firm with a strong public engagement focus. Contente Consulting is currently working with the City of Atlanta on the Zoning Code Re-write and the Comprehensive Development Plan Update.



Contente Terry
CEO



Andrea Cruz
Chief of Staff

Leading Global Design & Innovation Firm Transforming Businesses. IDEO Creates human-centered products, services, spaces, and organizations that empower communities, cities, and even countries.



Lauren Collins
Executive Design
Director



Wesley Eugene
Chief Information
Officer

Agenda

Breakfast @ 8:30am

Intros + Goals + Agreements

Activity 1: Creative Tensions

Break @ 10:15am

Activity 2: For the People

Lunch @ 11:30am

Activity 3: Expressing our Purpose

Break @ 1:15pm

Activity 4: Activating our Purpose

Close @ 3:00pm

Goals + Agreements for the day

Assume positive intent.

Acknowledge impact.

Stay engaged.

Listen with curiosity and resist the desire to interrupt.

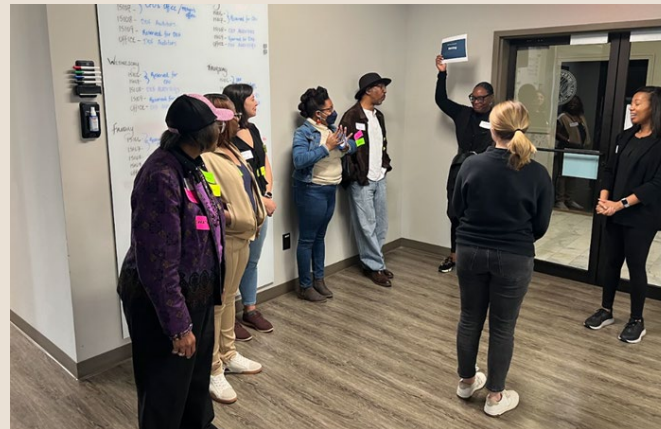
Pay attention to how much space you're taking. If you find you might be taking a lot of space up, make space for others to engage and contribute.

Let's get to action. We are here to work out a roadmap, rooted in clear next steps.

BACK TO BASICS!

Activity #1: Creative Tensions - Summary

Activity Description: Creative Tensions activity provides an opportunity for participants to witness in real time their commonalities and differences to specific topics. The facilitator divided the open room with a blue tape and asked a series of questions with corresponding responses, one on either-side of the tape. Participants selected the response that most resonated with them and ventured to the corresponding side of the room. Two participants were then asked to provide an explanation to their response; if the explanation swayed any participant's response (either positive or negative) they could move closer or further away from the blue line.



Activity #1: Creative Tensions – Summary

Examples of What We Heard:

My neighborhood needs more resources... or needs more representation?

- *“My neighborhood needs resources like grocery stores, green space and facilities affects neighborhoods economically.”*
- *“I feel we need more representation that can represent our voice to make change happen.”*

Our neighborhoods are more alike than different... or more different than alike?

- *“They’re more alike. We all want similar things to ultimately improve our quality of life.”*
- *“I think they’re more different. We have different & diverse needs based on our unique community.”*

I’m a member of APAB to be a changemaker... or to be my community’s voice?

- *“I’m with APAB to be my community’s voice. They need our help to uplift their needs.”*
- *“I joined APAB to help advocate for resolutions and influence change for the people.”*

Activity #2: For the People - Summary

Activity Description: We asked members to think about the people in their community that they serve. As they completed the activity, they used the following questions to describe a person in their community and what they care about most.

What we heard:

Who is Atlanta?

- *Growing senior population*
- *5 different generations in one place*
- *The youth are our future*
- *Artist & Go Getters*
- *People who care enough to volunteer*
- *People will use their resources to support/take care of their community*
- *Naturally segregated, but come together over common issues*
- *Want city life, not rural living*

What do these people have in common?

- *Human*
- *Want a thriving community*
- *Representatives who care*
- *Want Quality of Life*
- *Equal opportunity*
- *Looking for belonging & home*




What do they need from us/APAB?

- *Communication & Engagement*
- *Education & information*
- *Inclusion & Advice*
- *Actions that have result*
- *Feedback loop*
- *Understanding & Empathize*
- *Unified voice*
- *Willingness to have hard/controversial conversations on their behalf*

Activity #2: For the People – Summary

Activity Description: We asked participants to use a score card voicing their opinion on APAB’s impact in the last 12 months. The results are as follows:



Community Needs			
	"We've made significant impact!"	"We've made a little progress"	"We haven't established anything"
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	0	0	12
PARKS & OPEN SPACES	0	3	9
LAND USE	3	9	4
ZONING	5	8	2
TRANSPORTATION	0	0	14
Total	8	20	41

Activity #2: For the People - Summary

Observations:

- APAB recognizes Atlanta is diverse and multi-generational but needs to embrace these differences within the board to remove conflict which impacts their success.
- Keep mission first- remember your purpose for those that you serve and why you do what you do.
- Ensure all NPUs have representation, citizens know who their representatives are and how they can voice their concerns.
- In the areas of impact that are described in the by-laws, APAB has made little to no progress.

Activity #3: Articulating Our Purpose – Summary

Activity Description: Purpose is aspirational and our reason for being. It is our North Star. Articulating your purpose helps everyone connect with the impact we seek to have in Atlanta.

What we heard:

We, the APAB Board, exists to...

Plan, communicate, advise on matters relating to citizen & participation in planning.

Challenges with APAB:

- *Reactive not proactive*
- *Lack of reading what's provided*
- *APAB lost credibility – need to improve perception*
- *We can control how we react. Stay on tasks at hand*
- *Should be addressing city-wide, not individual interests*

Who do we serve?

- *The City*

Activity #3: Articulating Our Purpose – Summary

How do we do it?

- *By providing advice & recommendations to the city.*
- *Educate & facilitate through research.*
- *Partnership with Department of City Planning.*

Challenges:

- *As an Advisory Board we can make recommendations, but the City doesn't have to accept/approve recommendations.*
- *Certain groups aren't required to collaborate with APAB.*
- *Other boards have assigned City staff/ admin that takes notes & captures meetings.*

What are we trying to achieve together?

- *Unified voice in order to be respected enough for the city to act on recommendations.*

Activity #3: Articulating Our Purpose - Summary

Observations:

- Improve relationships among APAB board and how you communicate with each other with the commitment to always demonstrate mutual respect.
- Improve time management by staying on task and avoid time waste that disrupts productivity.
- Get organized by working with assigned Planner on documenting needs, action items, recommendations and resolution outcomes.
- Avoid personal agendas that affect ability to be a unified city-wide voice to improve credibility

Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose - Summary

Activity Description: The attendees were asked to list goals to be achieved to know that APAB is successful. In addition, they were asked to list any barriers to achieving success.

What we heard:

Signs of Success (Goals):

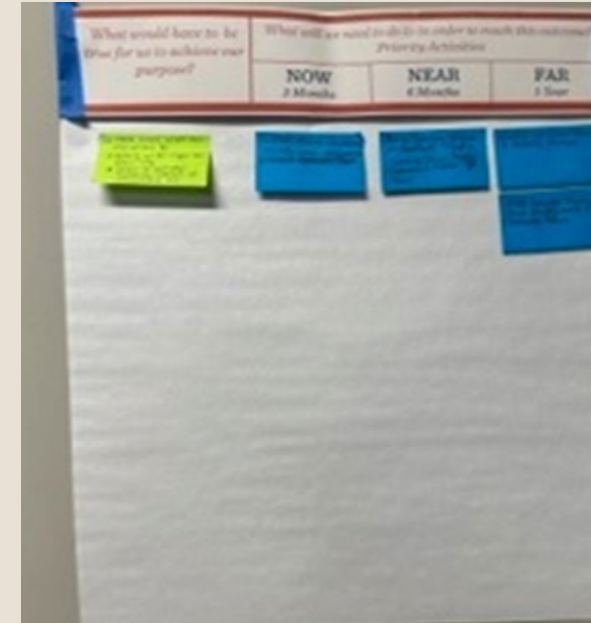
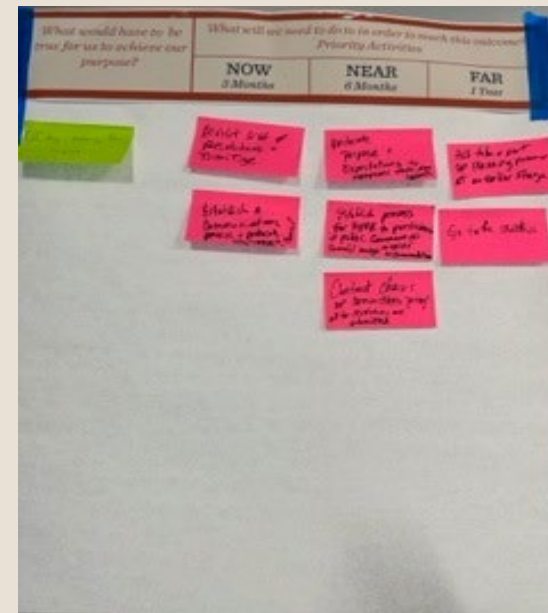
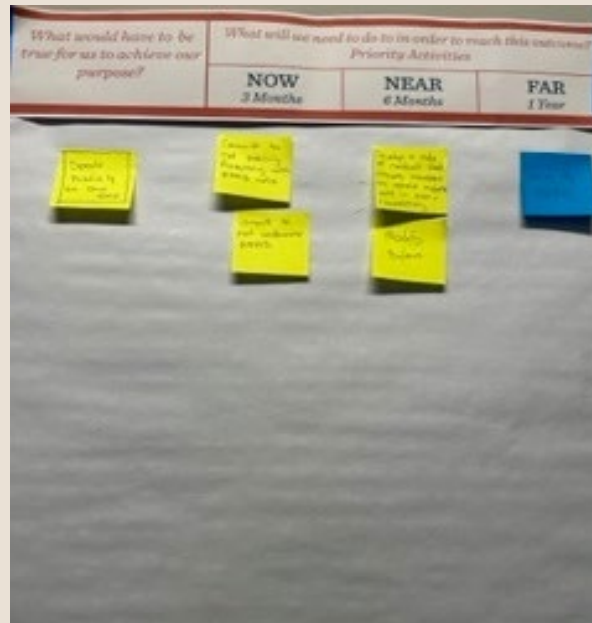
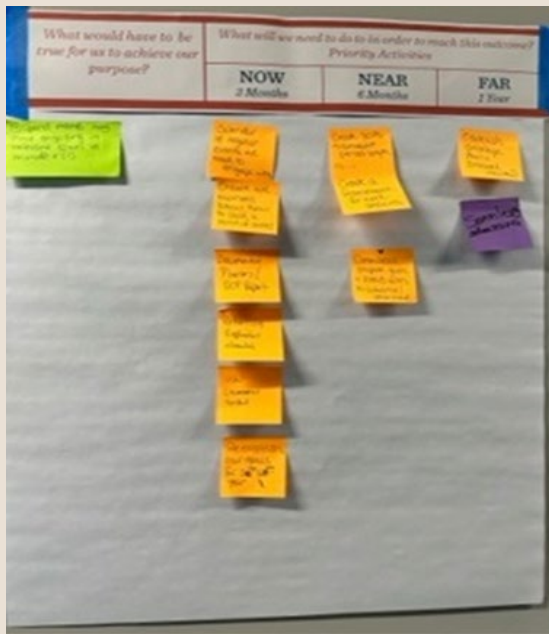
- *Spend time together focusing on the issues that matter most*
- *Speak Publicly As One Voice*
- *Track a resolution's progress*
- *City Asking APAB for Input*

Barriers to success:

- *Micro-aggressions and lack of respect*
- *Leadership Control*
- *Not working as a united body to address issues*
- *Lack of discipline and self control*
- *Lack of onboarding process*
- *Ineffective committee structures, distribution of labor*
- *Inefficient voting member structure*
- *Poor Time Management*
- *Lack of assigned Planner as an advisor*
- *Not all NPUs participate*
- *No clear Agenda/Purpose*
- *Distrust and conspiracies*
- *Lack of adopted policy manual or Standard Operating Procedures*

Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose - Summary

Activity Description: After the participants defined goals to success/ the purpose of APAB, they broke into groups to determine the timeframes by which ideally the goals can be accomplished (Now = 1 to 4 months, Near 5 to 8 months, Far 9 to 12 months).



Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose – Summary

What we heard:

Goal: Spend time together focusing on the issues that matter most

Tasks to achieve this goal:

NOW:

- *Commit to not publicly disagree with APAB vote.*
- *Commit to not undermine APAB.*
- *Create an artifact of commitments made and have available to access by all members of APAB.*

NEAR:

- *Develop a code of conduct requirement to uphold majority vote.*

FAR:

- *Bring modified By-laws to vote.*

Observations:

- Need code of conduct articulating a commitment to always demonstrate mutual respect internally and externally.
- Update and clearly define by-laws in such a way that is not subjective.

Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose – Summary

Goal: APAB Members Should Speak Publicly As One Voice

Tasks to achieve this goal:

NOW:

- *Develop and maintain a calendar of events for APAB to engage.*
- *All members know how to call a point of orders (Robert Rules of Order) .*
- *Request an assigned Department of City Planning Planner to support APAB .*

NEAR:

- *Create and implement a framework for work sessions.*
- *Create and implement a governance structure for goals with APAB voting to decide what to advance & prioritize.*
- *Create Standard Operating Procedures.*

FAR:

- *Create strategic planning & annual review.*
- *Review and revise onboarding processes.*

Observations:

- *Lacking Standard Operating Procedures for multiple critical board operations.*
- *No clear understanding of the APAB, Neighborhood, City Council feedback loop.*
- *No clearly defined plan of action for monthly activities or to guide APAB annually.*
- *APAB lacks the City resources and the support of a planner that is required to be successful.*

Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose – Summary

Goal: Track a Resolutions progress

Tasks to achieve this goal:

NOW

- *Update Resolutions and dates on APAB Website Dashboard.*

NEAR

- *Develop definitive method for tracking approval denial process from Department and/or City Council.*

FAR

- *Create Quarterly and Annual Reports of Resolution progress.*
- *Identify a dedicated APAB member to work with a dedicated DCP planner regarding Resolutions.*

Observations:

- *Lacking a standardized reporting process and system that tracks the progress of resolutions.*

Activity #4: Activating Our Purpose – Summary

Goal: City Asking APAB for Input

Tasks to achieve this goal:

NOW:

- *Revisit list of resolutions and prioritize.*
- *Create a communication process for NPU to APAB.*

NEAR:

- *Reiterate purpose and expectations to appropriate staff, others & council.*
- *Establish process for APAB to participate in public comment at council meetings to uplift recommendations.*

FAR:

- *Ask to be part of planning process at earlier stage.*
- *Go to the media.*

Observations:

- Need to improve relationship with the DCP and City Council clearly articulating purpose, goals and expectations.
- Establish annually APABs role in planning initiatives and chart a path forward.

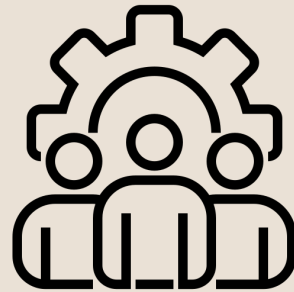
Recommendations

In order to set a long-term strategy, we recommend APAB focus on three key opportunity areas:



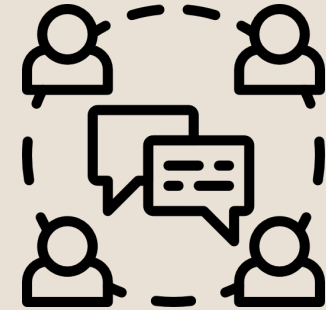
Purpose

Why are we here?



Operations

How do we work together?



Communications

How do we speak to our audiences?
How do they speak to us?



Purpose

Why are we here?

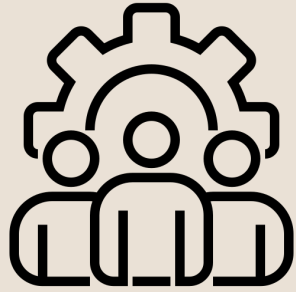
Recommendations

Goal #1: Confirm and clarify APAB roles

Rationale: Everyone knows what is expected of each other and the framework needed to collaboratively accomplish goals.

Tasks:

- Realign the role, code, bylaws, processes of APAB and its fundamental goals and objectives.
- Review Mission and Vision to ensure consistency with APAB's role.
- Create cadence to evaluate and check progress of accomplishing Mission & Vision (quarterly evaluation).
- Plan for an annual Strategic Plan update.
- Revise By-Laws to incorporate all purpose modifications.



Operations

How do we work together?

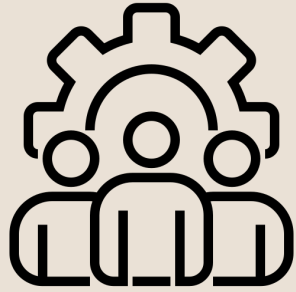
Recommendations

Goal #2: Establish Governance processes and protocols to guide measurable outcomes and ensure success.

Rationale: Provides guidance on how to do things the right way and keeps the mission the priority.

Tasks:

- Redefine board structure, number of members, committees and executive board positions based on need and function. Use other City Board structures as a reference.
- Define committee structures with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure effective distribution of labor.
- Develop Standard Operating Procedures for multiple critical board operations (focus first on work session Agendas and Voting)
- Establish Onboarding process for new members that includes code of conduct, participation requirements, meeting procedures, committee structure and governance.



Operations

How do we work together?

Recommendations

Cont...

- Obtain a Department of City Planning planner to provide administrative support to the board.
- Create a dashboard to track board tasks and responsible parties, resolution submittals and progress, etc.
- Identify a board designee to maintain the dashboard and report out on a consistent schedule.
- Revise By-Laws to incorporate all operations modifications.



Recommendations

Goal #3: Create engagement model for advancing APAB's strategy

Rationale: Structure how to communicate, operate, and motivate influence towards mutual interest.

Tasks:

- Establish a Board Code of Conduct to assist in the establishment of mutual respect.
- Develop a focused and well-crafted message/ brand to building a respected and impactful relationship in the NPU system and City of Atlanta. *
- Create processes for internal and external communication and feedback loop.
- Create opportunities for increased board visibility using a unified voice (i.e. attend City Council Meetings, formally request participation/ a role in upcoming City planning initiatives.)
- Revise By-Laws to incorporate all communications modifications.

*May require assistance from a consultant.

Communications

How do we speak to our audiences?
How do they speak to us?

Timeline: When to Activate?

Timeline	Tasks
MAY – JUNE 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine APAB role• Review and Update Mission & Vision• Establish a Board Code of Conduct to ensure mutual respect
JULY – AUGUST 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define board structure, number of members, committees and executive board positions• Define Committee structure with roles & responsibilities• Secure a DCP planner to provide administrative support• Create opportunities for increased visibility using a unified voice
SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish dashboard to track progress and identify a dashboard gatekeeper• Establish on-boarding process for new members• Develop Standard Operating Procedures for critical tasks
NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop APAB brand messaging• Create communication feedback loop
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convene Strategic Planning Session

Next Steps: Where do you go from here?

- Agree on Goals, Timeline and Task Priorities as a Board.
- Identify a Champion/ Responsible Parties on the Board for each task to ensure delivery and success.
- Identify those tasks that will require outside resources or support in order to accomplish.
- The Contente Consulting & IDEO team support your efforts and dedication. We are committed to be a resource for you.

MUCH SUCCESS!