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Engaging the Millennial Generation:

Public Participation Methods for Millennials

in Austin's Planning Processes

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Engaging the Millennial Generation:

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Report

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Engaging the Millennial Generation:

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In Austin's Planning Process

by

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Planning processes include the necessary component of engaging the public in the process with a fair and equitable process. The difficulty with participatory planning processes is reaching all affected groups. One of these difficult to reach cohorts is the Millennial generation. It is a common misunderstanding that Millennials are unengaged and self-centered. Regardless, it is important to engaging the generation because Millennials are a large part of urban populations, especially in Austin. As Austin implements the 2012 comprehensive plan, there are many planning processes that will follow. Austin city planners have the opportunity to engage the Millennial cohort moving forward with these planning processes, starting with the activity corridors, which is the next task of the comprehensive plan. To understand how to engage the Millennials it is important to define the generation's characteristics. The literature review is research of the history of participation, generational differences, and analysis of the Millennials. Then, the report looks at case studies from four cities that have targeted the Millennial generation in engagement process to deduct important themes and understand lessons learned. Overall, the report realizes through the analysis of the characteristics and

themes that Millennials engage in different ways than have been effective in the past, but they are, in fact, engaged in civic life. Millennial characteristics and motivations align with the modern landscape of public participation. Understanding the target audience will make planning processes more equitable.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Gone are the days of Daniel Burnham, who was given full control of designing an entire city with only the approval of his best and richest friends. Gone are the days of Robert Moses, who could plow highways through neighborhoods without consulting the residents in the name of progress. In modern planning practice, the protocol is to start with public engagement. The necessity of listening to the people who would be the beneficiaries of the city became prudent as the American city planning profession matured alongside the civil rights movements and a more vocal citizenry. The now existing public engagement methods that surrounds current planning processes range from town hall meetings to online forums, from focus groups to tactical urbanism. Through the use of different engagement methods, planning processes are able to engage a wide variety of audiences residing within the city. A fully inclusive participatory process includes and engages all audiences. However, some audiences are harder to reach than others and require a tailored approach for them to engage with the public process. Understanding the best approach for the hard-to-reach audiences requires a deep understanding of the audience first. The Millennial generation has been recognized as one of the difficult to connect with groups for public engagement in the planning process.

The City of Austin has gone through many planning processes since the turn of the century. The City created a comprehensive plan in 2012 outlining many continuing planning processes to be carried out, such as the code rewrite, neighborhood plans, and activity corridor plans. Austin is blessed with an enthusiastic citizenry complemented by an energetic City staff. Austin is a fast growing city with an estimate of about 100 people moving to the Austin area every day on average (Rife 2014). Millennials, the largest generation in US history, are moving into cities across America at a higher rate than any young cohort before them (Walker 2015). With these congruent trends, it makes sense that the growth in Austin is attracting a large population of Millennials. As Austin continues moving forward on the implementation of

the 2012 Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP), it would be responsible for the young and growing city to seek, encourage, and welcome the input of Millennials.

Every generation has their own defining characteristics creating a unique audience who requires a different participatory process to engage them on their own level. The Millennials generation is different than any generation of the past meaning that a specialized engagement process is needed. The first step in creating an engagement process that targets a unique audience is to really understand the characteristics and preferences of the cohort. A deeper understanding enables planners to create a comprehensive and responsive participatory process design using methods specifically tailored at engaging Millennials (ARC 2014, 5).

This report will aim to understand Millennials within the Austin context to best understand how to engage the generation in the participatory planning process by exploring the main research question:

> *What types of participatory planning methods can the City of Austin apply to encourage greater engagement with the Millennial generation through methods geared specifically toward the cohort as the city moves forward with the next planning processes of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan?*

The main research question can be broken down into three parts. First, the question is looking at participatory processes in relation to generational differences. Second, the research question is aiming to explore Millennials as a separate generation. Third, research will need to understand the Austin context. The supporting research questions will probe these three parts of the main research question by exploring related subjects:

- What is the level of Millennials political involvement and civic involvement, and how is it different from generations before them?
- How can Millennials interest in civic and political participation be translated and applied to the planning practice?
- What participatory methods are being used in Austin and what is the planning landscape of Austin?
- What methods have other cities used to encourage public engagement among the Millennial generation?

These supporting questions intend to fully understand generational differences and participatory planning, as well as understand the background of participation in Austin to be able to best answer the main research question.

I. Premises and Assumptions

The research of this report was founded in a few basic premises and assumption. The first basic assumption, is that it is expected that the Millennials are different in their preferences and lifestyles than past generations. If this is true, then it can be followed that they will also have different needs for engagement processes that are more appealing to them than other generations.

Even though in a recent Journal of American Planning Association (JAPA) article the Millennials were called the "do nothing, go nowhere" generation, the second hypothesis is that the report will find the Millennial generation to actually be rather civically engaged (McDonald 2015, 91-103). Millennials will be attracted to different types of engagement processes and engagement methods than other generations. For example, the engagement methods that are best fit for the Millennial generation may be those with fast turnover rates and instant gratification. Another hypothesis is that the research will find Millennials are more engaged in new, innovative methods of public participation compared to traditional methods, such as town hall meetings. Finally, it is expected that the research from the other cities participation methods for engaging Millennials can be translated to the implementation of the IACP planning process.

II. Goals and Report Content

The goals of this report is to answer the research questions as thoroughly as possible. The goals will help inform the content of the report as well as the methods used for research. The first step in answering the research question is to understand generational differences within civic and political participation. To reach this goal, the research will identify theories on the ways participation changes from generation to generation. This goal will begin to inform how and why the Millennial generation's participation trends are different from past generations. The second goal is to

understand and define "Millennials." The research of Millennials needs to define who is part of the generation and what characteristics makes them different. This definition comes through an understanding of their political and civic participation trends as well as through an understanding of their unique lifestyle choices. Then, the report determines why the Millennials are important for city planners to consider as a separate group in the public participation processes. The importance of Millennials is the third goal. Interpreting the importance of Millennials begins with identifying characteristics of the cohort that can begin to inform public engagement processes within planning. The first three goals will be reached through a literature review about participation, generations, and Millennial characteristics.

The overall goal of the report is for the research is to develop recommendations for the City of Austin corridor planning process, the next step in the implementation of the city's comprehensive plan. It is imperative to first understand the setting and context to best make recommendations for a specific place. Therefore, the fourth goal of the research is to study the Austin context by understanding planning and public participation landscapes within the city. The context study will focus on the Millennials in the city and Austin's public participation history. To reach this goal, the first step is to gather demographic data that examines the characteristics of the Millennial generation within Austin. Next, the report will examine the language of the IACP and the IACP's treatment for the future planning of the activity corridors. To understand public participation within the context of Austin, the report will examine some of the new participation methods that are already taking place in Austin. The identified methods will be studied to see how the Millennials might interact with the methods focusing on the characteristics identified in the literature review. To delve deeper into the history of participation in Austin, the report will look at lessons learned through different planning processes that have taken place in Austin. Learning the history of a place will ensure that mistakes are not repeated and future processes can build on what was learned by these mistakes. The fourth goal of understanding the Austin context will come from census data, research of Austin documents, and will also be informed by interviews from city staffers.

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The recommendations for engaging Millennials in the Austin corridor planning process will be highly informed by selected case studies from other cities. The fifth goal is to understand what other cities have done to engage Millennials in the public participation process by selecting and examining key case studies. Through these case studies, the report aims to surface themes for how to best gain Millennial momentum in public processes.

The final goal of the report is to recommend how Austin can apply new planning participation methods to their corridor planning process that will appeal to the Millennials. These recommendations will be informed by the Austin context, the characteristics of Millennials, and the themes from the case studies. As Austin moves forward with implementing the IACP, the report will guide the ways in which the city can gain the attention and energy of Millennials as an important group to target for planning participation processes.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methods

The intention of this report is to create recommendations for the City of Austin on methods of participation to best engage with the target Millennial population as it begins planning the activity corridors through the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan. The report will explore and analyze four case studies. The information in the report is supported by a literature review of the Millennials and public participation by generation as well as by interviews with professionals to give a more complete understanding of the local history and background.

Literature Review

A literature review is a study of articles, books, and other sources that are related to the topic to fully grasp different aspects of the core concepts. The purpose of completing a literature review for this report is to understand current knowledge regarding Millennials, as a generation, engage in civic life of today. First, the literature review will study generational differences in public engagement. By examining the evolution of participation over time, the literature will realize what makes the Millennial generation unique from other generations. Next, the study will focus on the distinctive characteristics of Millennials to grasp how they function in society as an individual cohort. Then, the literature review will examine the connections of participatory planning processes in conjunction with Millennials. The literature review will conclude in a compilation of Millennial characteristics produced from coding the research.

Case Studies

To explore the application of engagement methods targeted at Millennials, the report explores four different case studies of four cities engagement processes that meet a specific criteria. The report will then code and analyze the results from the methods of each of these cases to see what worked into consolidated themes. The report will then compare these themes to the characteristics extracted from the literature

review. These results will then be applied to the Austin context to give the best and most appropriate recommendations for the activity corridor planning process.

The strategy for case selection for the case study is to study "critical cases." This strategy comes from Brent Flyvbjerg's 2004 article "Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research." Flyvbjerg defines a critical case study as "having strategic importance in relation to the general problem" (Flyvbjerg 2004, 425). The cases chosen for this study will be a specifically selected case used to tell the narrative of engaging Millennials. The critical cases will help understand how methods used by different cities and their engagement processes can apply to other public engagement processes targeting the Millennial cohort. To select the critical cases, there are four necessary qualifications that must be met for the case to be included in this study. These qualifications came out of the literature review as well as through the understanding of the Austin context.

The first qualification is that the Millennial generation, by any name, is specifically called out as the target audience. This qualification rules out cases that had a high turnout of Millennials for a participatory event by coincidence. It also discounts any misunderstandings of the generation as an age group. The second qualification is that the method is aimed at engaging the Millennial cohort in a larger process. The method being part of a process would therefore exclude processes that simply ask Millennials how they want to be involved and are actually moving forward with involving the cohort. The third qualification is that the case does not necessarily need to be part of a process that is specifically for a planning goal. This means the case can include other types of public engagement methods. This is because the cases are focused on the *methods* that are used, not the results. Lastly, for the case to qualify for the study, it will need to be an actual participatory process and not simply a social media campaign, website, or mobile app. There is a value to these types of methods since technology is an important piece of communicating with Millennials who grew up as "Digital Natives" (Bradshaw, 2013, 6). However, the goal of this report is to create face-to-face, meaningful connections through new types of participatory methods. Social media is necessary for

communication and outreach but cannot replace these types of participation and relationship building methods (Sanchez 2016).

Using these qualifications, four critical cases have been selected. The case studies used for this report include the Jefferson Center's "Up for Debate Akron" Millennial voting campaign, Seattle's comprehensive plan update engagement process, the Atlanta Regional Commission's "New Voices" Millennial leadership program, and the Life in Vacant Spaces organization's creation and efforts in Christchurch, New Zealand. Each case will be analyzed through official reports, newspaper articles, and interviews with professionals involved in the processes.

Interviews

Interviews are used for research to gain a better understanding of a subject from a human to human perspective to gain information about a specific person's experiences. The interviews conducted for this report were used to gain a professional's knowledge from their own viewpoint about a specific subject with which that they have personal, professional, or scholarly experience. For this report, interviews were conducted to gain three different types of knowledge.

The first type of knowledge explored through interviews was background understanding on the Millennial generation. This information came from interviewing a demographer who is researching trends among Millennials in relation to urban trends.

The second set of interviews was used to gain a better understanding of the Austin context through professional, first hand experiences. The interviewees were from departments that deal with different levels and types of public participation, specifically city staff from the Communications and Public Information Departments and the Planning and Zoning Department. The interview asked questions of the staff that were meant to understand the methods they used; lessons they have learned with participation in Austin; why they see participation as valuable; how they view Millennials; and how the City might move forward with the activity corridor planning process.

The third set of interviews targeted professionals who were highly engaged in the event design and process of the selected cases studies. The interviews gathered

information about the details of the methods, if the methods were used again or are going to be used again, how well they felt the process was carried out, and what they wish they could have done differently.

All of the interviews were "semi-structured." This term is a concept born from an article titled "Interviewing: The Art of Science" written by Andrea Fontana and James Frey and expanded on by Rubin and Rubin in their book *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. In the article, Fontana and Frey define "structured interviews" as having specific questions that do not allow for explanation or to stray from the original questions. Then they define "unstructured interviews" as interviews that form organically from talking to someone about a subject they have in mind but does not include any set of questions. The method of a "semi-structured" interview lies somewhere in between. The semi-structured interview uses Rubin and Rubin's technique of having an outline of questions but also uses reflective listening and probing questions during the interview. In this way, the interview is structured to get the information the researcher needs but also allows the interviewee to expand on ideas while being flexible enough to account for new ideas to arise and be explored throughout the interview. This method is most appropriate for this report considering the goal of the interview is to gain as much knowledge as possible through talking to professionals.

Some interviews were done face-to-face, one-on-one. This method is preferable because it allows for the most in depth interview considering the interviewee can talk uninterrupted and the interviewer can benefit from some of the nuances of the tone. However, some of the interviews will be group interviews because of time restrictions and some of the interviews will be done over the phone considering the case studies cover a large geographic area.

Limitations

All studies have limitations. Considering the focus of this study is specifically making recommendations for the City of Austin, this research has an impact limitation. The study suffers from limited impact with the strong regional focus as well as being population specific. The study only applies to the Millennial generation and the

recommendations are specific to Austin, Texas and only applies to a certain point in time. Additionally, it must be considered that more appropriate case studies may exist. Access to and availability of data is another limitation.

There are also the limitations of the researcher's time, place, and resources. Given the limitation of time, the research was not able to interview a larger swatch of people. If there was more time, the research could include the ideas of more demographers, more departments within the City of Austin, and could have been able to incorporate residents of Austin. Given the limitation of place, the report could not go into more depth with the case studies. The report was conducted from Austin, Texas which did not give the opportunity for site visits with the four, international case studies. Lastly, given the limitation of resources, the researcher could not test conclusions and recommendations arrived at by this report.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

To begin to answer the research questions, the report will first look at understanding the Millennial generation through a literature review. The literature review will compare the Millennial generation to the generations before it for a deeper understanding of what the differences in characteristics and preferences are between different cohorts as well as to understand what makes the culture of Millennials different from past generations' experiences. Each generation has had a different involvement with participation as preferences change with evolving community and cultures. This report will consider Robert Putnam's fear expressed in his book, *Bowling Alone,* of a future of an unengaged society. Putnam's ideas will be countered by more recent accounts that the young cohorts societal engagement do not necessarily agree with this formidable prediction. Starting with these arguments and counter-arguments regarding participation between generations, the literature review will then turn to explore the trends and preferences of the young generation by observing the way Millennials behave in civic and political culture. The literature review concludes with four themes that will guide how and why planners should engage Millennials in participatory processes as a targeted audience through this study. These themes are (1) the vast effects of the recession, (2) their learned behaviors through education, (3) their tendency to congregate, and (4) their technology and digital base. The themes then inform the key defining characteristics of Millennials to inform the participatory planning process for this target audience.

Generations

The Millennials are the youngest named, defined, and studied generation. The oldest surviving generation has been labeled the Greatest Generation, who are those born between 1901 and 1924. The few that are left from this generation were born before WWI during a time of great prosperity, came of age during the Great Depression, fought in WWII, and are the parents of the Baby Boomers (Putnam 2000, 16-17). The next generation is called the Silent Generation. The Silent Generation was a very small

generation of those born between 1925 and 1945, during the Great Depression and the World Wars (The Nielsen Company 2014, 3-5). Both the Greatest Generation and the Silent Generation lived and thrived in a culture of "joiners." This meant that they would join and participate in many member organizations (such as the Elks Club) and churches (Putnam 2000, 49-51). After the Silent Generation comes the Baby Boomers. The Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964. They were the children of war veterans and, at that time, they were the biggest generation America had seen. Baby Boomers were more educated than previous generations. One of their defining characteristics is that, as a cohort, they extended their adolescence longer than any generation of the past by getting married and having children later in life, on average. This generation started countercultures, moved into urban areas, and changed the landscape and function of cities (Myers 2016). The Baby Boomers changed the culture of the United States, rebelling against the way things are "supposed to be," which really set the stage for Millennials. The lowest point of birth rate in 1976 clearly marks the peak of Generation X (Gen X) (Myers 2016). Gen X is significantly smaller than the Boomers and is marked by low birth rates. The small generation altered the political and economic landscape drastically as they became 25 years old, unable to replace the Baby Boomers numbers as the young cohort in cities and society. Gen Xers were less optimistic than the previous generations within civic and political culture, which lead them to be less enthusiastic about participating in civic life (Zukin et al. 2006 37). This is the change that Robert Putnam was observing when he wrote "Bowling Alone" in 2000, in which he determined that future generations would continue to erode the already deteriorating social capital in America (Putnam 2000, 24).

The generation after Gen X is the focus of this report. No one agrees on who the Millennials are or even what to call them. This generation started out as Generation Y, an obvious progression from Generation X, but has also been called DotCom, IPod, Generation We, Generation Me, The Echo Boomers, and Generation Next. The term, "Millennials," came from William Strauss and Neil Howe's books on generational change, most importantly *Millennials Rising: The Next Generation* written in 2000. Strauss and Howe's coined term, "Millennials," has become the most commonly

referenced title for this generation (Winograd 2011, 12). The term means those who came of age after the Millennium. The birth date range has not been specifically defined yet and varies by author. However, Millennials are most commonly referred to as adults under 35 meaning those born between 1982 and 1998. (Vancore 2015, 23). In an interview with a demographer from the Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California (USC), Dowel Myers, he suggests that Millennials can basically be defined as the babies of the Baby Boomers and the first generation to be "Digital Natives."

Through different interviews, news articles, and public reports, it seems as though it is a common mistake to think of Millennials of an age group instead of a generation. As Myers noted, they are a cohort and should not be treated as an age group because they are "real people with lives that are moving through time " (Myers 2016) Because the peak of the Millennial generation were 25 in 2015, people are concerned with 25 year olds and stop thinking about the whole cohort as an aging, changing group. The reality is that Millennials are soon going to reach the age of 40 and are slowly but surely moving on to the next life cycle (Myers 2016).

An important distinction to make while looking at trends among a specific generation is the difference between "life cycle" change and what Putnam calls "generational change." Life cycle change is the change in an individual as time goes on as typical milestones are met, whereas generational change is when there is a change in society among a generation of people. As people get older, regardless of the generation they are part of, their lifestyles and decisions are affected, predictably, by family, energy, and careers. However, each generation has different defining characteristics specific to that cohort outside of life cycle patterns (Putnam 2000, 248-250). An example of generational change is how women's rights in the 1960's affected family formation as more women went into the workforce. Women in the workforce set a pattern that was different from past generations. It is important to determine the difference between what is being observed in the Millennials' behavior, characteristics, and trends as something unique to this generation and not just a consequence of the normal life cycle changes.

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Changing Participation

Robert Putman's book, *Bowling Alone,* written in 2000, grimly proclaims that civic and political participation across all ages and associations is declining rapidly.   Putnam studies participation trends over the Baby Boomers' lives and how these trends could influence the Gen Xers life cycles (Putnam 2000, 25). The data he uses captures the trends of the older generations but not of the Millennials. Even though the book was written before the total generation had come of age, Putnam tries to project claims onto Millennials and all future generations based on patterns observed from the generational changes between Baby Boomers and Gen Xers. Putnam used the number of members in civic organizations and religious congregations as the main method of assessing participation levels. Baby Boomers were less engaged and joined less organizations than the generations before them (Putnam 2000, 55). Gen X had an even sharper decline in civic and political engagement (Putnam 2000, 61-4). Putnam predicts that future generations will continue on this declining trend (Putnam 2000, 281-3).

However, with more recent reports, it becomes clear that this predicted trend did not continue through the Millennial generation as Putnam thought it would. Although he did not know it, many of his projections were actually predicting the increase of participation among Millennials, rather than the decline he thought he was forecasting. A few of his observations, read in retrospect, relate to the reality of the Millennials. In a more telling comment, Putnam proclaims "perhaps the younger generation today is not less engaged... but engaged in new ways" (Putnam 2000, 50). The "new ways" that younger generations are engaged may require a different method for assessing participation apart from member counts. Additionally, while examining the trends of membership rates for the Twentieth Century, the author notes that increases in participation happened after wartime as an act of patriotism (Putnam 2000, 54). Later, when asking the question of how to get the next generation -what we know as the Millennials today- more involved in civic life, he states that "it would be eased by a palpable national crisis, like war or depression or natural disaster, but for better or for worse, America at the dawn of the new century faces no such galvanizing crisis," (Putnam 2000, 402). This statement has been proven with time, for better or for worse,

to be wholly untrue. Millennials suffered with America during 9/11, a tragedy that lead to an on-going war. Also, during their lifetime, there have been multiple large natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Irene, and Superstorm Sandy. These natural disasters destroyed many communities throughout the U.S. inspiring Americans of all ages to rally together to help their fellow citizens. The Millennials have also survived the Great Recession, an economic recession to rival the Great Depression. All of these "galvanizing crises" could be an explanation of Millennials' inclination to spend their time and resource to help support communities and can start pointing toward some of the factors that shaped this generation, which would actually be consistent with Putnam's original argument.

Although Putnam focuses on membership to organizations as a way to define participation, he also discusses "informal social connections" as a type of public participation (Putnam 2000, 92). The informal social connections introduce the idea of "machers" verse "schmoozers" (Putnam 2000, 93). He identifies "machers" as people involved in formal organizations and "schmoozers" as people involved in informal activities (Putnam 2000, 93). Schmoozers, as he explains, are "active" and "more spontaneous and flexible" than machers (Putnam 2000, 94). The schmoozers usually peak among young adults and singles, then declines as they move into the next life cycle by starting families and settling down. (Putnam 2000, 94). Schmoozers are related to the current life cycle of the Millennials. As Myers points out, the Millennials are extending their adolescence, even more so than their parents, by putting off having a family and a career longer (Myers 2016). Millennials are now waiting until they are 30 to start families, whereas twenty years ago people typically started families at 22 (Castell et al. 2008, 14) Because of this extended adolescence, the associations with life cycle changes are being altered and this life cycle is lasting longer for this generation. This means that Millennials are not acting a certain way just because they are young, but they also have their own distinct motivations and ideas that make them separate from past generations. The Millennials way of approaching civic life is separate from past generations, which shows Putnam's own faults in trying to project the next generation's trends based on the previous cohorts preferences. Millennials, in their

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extended adolescence, are not settling down in the traditional sense as generations before them had, meaning they are still more inclined to participate in informal, spontaneous, and flexible activities, possibly even as they enter into the next life cycle.

In Cliff Zukin, Scott Keeter, Molly Andolina, and Michael Delli Carpini's 2006 book, *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*, the authors claim that Putnam's assumption of the fate of the anti-social, disengaged future "may be misleading" (Zukin et al. 2006, 3). In the authors' discussion of Gen X, they agree with Putnam that Gen Xers are not civically involved and called them the "slacker generation" (Zukin et al. 2006, 52). However, the generation after Gen X, what Zukin et al. calls the "DotCom" generation, is in fact, participating politically and civically, just in different ways than past generations. Putnam's originally theorizes that participation increases and decreases constantly throughout history but he did not believe that the decreasing trend would reverse at the turn of the century because of how steep the declining rate was (Putnam 2000, 64). Zukin et al.'s thesis does show that the engagement among the youngest generation is reversing the trend but in ways that Putnam was not measuring. Instead of becoming members in organizations, the values of the Millennials lead to Zukin et al's observation that "citizens are participating in a different mix of activities from the past and that this is due largely to the process of generational replacement." This means, as the new generation, the Millennials, replace the previous generation as the young cohort, the Millennials unique experiences and preferences will lead to a difference in how they participate both civically and politically compared to Gen Xers. The authors argue that engagement is not declining among the Millennials, just spread into different ways of engaging (Zukin et al. 2006, 3). Although the generation does not have high membership numbers, Millennials are forming looser, informal connections (Friedland 2005, 4). Based on this theory, planners should be thinking of how to change the way they engage and approach Millennials from how planners engages and approached previous generations. The engagement methods that worked for the Greatest Generation are not aligned with the needs of the Millennials. The need for new forms of engagement is supported by the authors' findings that there are "new patterns of public

engagement that... promise to continue to do so well into the future" (Zukin et al. 2006, 5). However, it is risky to promise a prediction.

Zukin et al. recognize that each generation develops their own political and civic preferences based on (1) learned behavior in education and through socialization, (2) key events, and (3) long-term trends (Zukin et al. 2006, 34). *A New Engagement?* was written before the whole of the Millennial generation had reached adulthood so full trends were not known at the time. Now that the cohort has matured, it is possible to look at these three development categories and understand them better in the context of the generation.

The first generational development category is learned behavior in education, and through socialization. The development of the Millennials through these early life stages have big implications for the generation's present attitude towards participation. Examining this category requires reflection on what was happening while Millennials were in primary school through leaving high school. It also requires an examination of social life during their childhood and how their early socialization was dramatically different compared to other generations. Zukin et al. takes note of how the cohort had a different primary school experience. One of the first things to note is that when the Millennials were young, the national focus was on kids again. For the first time since the 1920's, large federal spending went to support children (Zukin et al. 2006, 37).

	College degree or Higher
Millennial	45.8%
Baby Boomer	37.7%

Figure 1. Generational College Attainment. Source: U.S. Census Data 2014.

Commonly, Millennials are compared to Baby Boomers instead of Gen X because there are more similarities (Myers 2016). Even so, Figure 1 shows an increase of the percentage of the generation that has earned or is earning a college degree or higher between the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. Ben Little, in his 2009 article,

"The Millennial Generation and Politics," describes how the Millennials high levels of attending college and the Millennials high levels of community engagement are interrelated. Little credits the cohort's civic engagement to the extra requirements of community services and extracurricular activities on college applications in America as one of the main reasons behind why this generation is more involved than young age groups, typically (Little 2009, 123). American colleges weigh personal achievements, sports involvement, and community volunteering as just as important as educational achievements and grades (Little 2009, 123). When Millennials were in high school, 90-94% said that they intended on attending college (DeBard 2004, 33). This statistic means that when Millennials were in high school, they were thinking about college applications and were already aware that they needed to do more than just get good grades (Friedland and Morimoto 2005, 2). For example, while in high school, 78% of Millennials reported being involved in some sort of extracurricular activities (Zukin et al. 2006, 154). As Millennials graduated high school, two-thirds went on the college. Lewis Friedland and Shauna Morimoto called this phenomenon "resume padding" in their 2005 article "The Changing Lifeworld of Young People: Risk, Resume-Padding, and Civic Engagement." The authors note that because high school seniors were pressured to become more civically engaged to apply to college, it has become a learned behavior that has followed them throughout their lives, becoming a defining factor of the generation (Friedland and Morimoto 2005, 3).

Considering civic engagement became a learned behavior when they were young, it is unsurprising to hear that in focus groups conducted by Zukin et al., "many were regular and active contributors to their local communities. On the other hand, for most of these young people, awareness of the more traditional world of politics seemed almost non-existent" (Zukin et al. 2006, 149). These results can reflect that planning methods could turn away from traditional or political methods like town hall meetings, and find other, more civically inclined ways to engage Millennials. The authors show that the Millennial generation has more of a propensity for civic engagement that has "direct hands-on work in cooperation with others" (Zukin et al. 2006, 51). This

perspective of civic engagement is an important part of Millennial characteristic that will inform the methods used for planning participation aimed at the cohort.

Friedland and Morimoto express that family socialization is "still (the) prime determinate" of how generations progress (Friedland and Morimoto 2005, 3). Family socialization of Millennials is described by Robert Debard as eight distinct pieces of the Millennials rearing in his 2004 report "Millennials Coming to College." The report was about primary schooling and parenting and how it contributes to the way the generation functions. Debard notes that Millennials have been treated "special" and have been "sheltered" by their parents. These two things have given the generation confidence and optimism. They have become "conventional" by being taught that the "best ways of getting along is to go along." They enjoy congregating and are "team oriented." They are "achieving" and yearn for accomplishment but feel "pressured" to perform (DeBard 2004, 35-39).

In addition to Debard, Friedland and Morimoto, and Little's arguments, a more telling difference in how the Millennials grew up compared to other generations is that they are the first generation of "Digital Natives." "Digital Natives" was a term first coined by Marc Pernsky in his 2001 article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants" in which he claims that the first generation who grew up with technology are the "'native speakers' of the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet." This "language" shift is the biggest divergence between the Millennials and all previous generations (Prencky 2001, 1). As Digital Natives, the Millennials have different thinking, learning, and socializing patterns than those who are not "native." These different patterns allow the cohort to be constantly connected to each other and the world by receiving information quickly. Because they are fluent in the digital language, messages that are given incorrectly in the digital language are dismissed (Prensky 2001, 3). When planners want to use digital communication to connect with the Millennials, it must be done carefully and consciously.

The second factor that Zukin et al. claims to shape generational characteristics is "key events." The biggest key event that took place during the Millennials lifetime is the Great Recession and housing collapse of 2007-2008 (Myers 2016). The Great

Recession has shaped how the Millennial generation defines many of their lifestyle patterns that are divergent from past generations (Myers, 2016). The recession affected the generation in many ways. They were unable to start their careers directly out of college, leaving them with debt and no options. Because they were unable to start careers, they put off buying houses, getting married, and having children (Myers 2016). This can account for some of the reason for the influx of Millennials into urban places. Millennials rent, live with roommates, and find alternative careers which contribute to a redefined urban landscape (The Nielsen Company 2014, 8). The Great Recession also created a consciousness in the generation of how they spend their time, energy, and money (Castell 2008, 4). In addition to the Great Recession, there have been other key events that happened during the Millennials lifetime that shaped their characteristics. These key events include the multiple natural disasters that rallied the country around a cause; 9/11 that started an on-going war; and recent national campaigns such as "Black Lives Matter" that has had such a widespread impact because of the movement's use of technology (The Nielsen Company 2014, 37; Luttrell and McGarth 2016, 166).

The third factor that shapes generational characteristics, according to Zukin et al., is "long term trends." These trends can be seen to include the increased diversity within this generation and therefore they are more accepting of others (DeBard 2004, 33). It also includes their continued increase in higher education (Friedland and Morimoto 4, 2004). Another important trend is their extended adolescence. This trend actually started with the Baby Boomers but it has had a larger impact on the Millennials lifestyle choices as they delay settling down (Myers 2016). These long term trends in combination with key events and childhood socializations are the generational determinates that frame the way Millennials are unique from other generations. As applied to engagement preferences, the generational development categories are the backbones of the cohort's characteristics which begin to inform the specific participation needs and form the basis of their engagement patterns.

Millennial Characteristics

Both Robert Putnam and Zukin et al. discuss the different types of engagement as split into civic and political. This report will focus on participation as part of the planning process so it is important to determine where planning belongs within the spectrum. Putnam describes city hall meetings as political engagement and describes civic engagement as being part of voluntary associations and organization. Both of these methods of engagement are important pieces of the participatory planning process. Based on Putnam's definition the, public engagement for planning processes belongs in both camps.   Zukin et al. defines political engagement as activities that are involving federal, state, and local governmental institutions including "agencies and organizations that interact daily with citizens" (Zukin et al. 2006, 207). Therefore, departments within the City, such as the planning department, would be included in political engagement category. Zukin et al. then describes civil participation as volunteering in the community and joining civic associations. Again, the descriptions of civic involvement has strong connections to the planning participation processes. (Zukin et al. 2006, 207). By the definitions that each author gives for the different types of engagement, it seems as though planning participation lies at the intersection of political engagement and civic engagement.

In his 2011 book, *Attention Deficit Democracy*, Ben Berger argues that political engagement is *part of* civic engagement and not separate (Berger 2011, 3). Berger theorizes about the types of engagement in the 21st Century as people become more mobile and traditional organization membership numbers dwindle, as Putnam predicted. In the social, cultural, and political climate of the 21st Century, Berger theorizes that "engagement entails a combination of attention and energy" (Berger 2011, 12). His main hypothesis follows the idea of how to capture attention and energy in a way that is important in engaging modern citizens:

> "Attention generally precedes energetic activity; if a topic does not capture our attention it will not enduringly attract our energy. So to attract our energy and form social or political capital, a subject must first attract and hold our attention. Attention, in turn, is shaped by many factors including ideology, habituation, culture, and perceived threats of danger. But it is also strongly influenced by

individual taste, and as the old saying goes, there is no accounting for that. So to a greater extent than many scholars acknowledge, attention follows taste and energy follows attention" (Berger 2011, 11).

Shown graphically, Berger's main theory for modern public engagement:

Taste → Attention → Energy

Following this logic, when planners create a public participation design, they must first understand the tastes and preferences of the targeted audience to comprehend their unique characteristics to best capture their attention. The target audience's attention should then be held constant as a way to gain forward momentum. The momentum translates into energy around the process among the audience (Berger 2011, 13). Berger's main theory applies to engaging Millennials as the cohort has special characteristics as well as drastically different cultural factors and social pressures than young cohorts of the past. Every generation has their own unique characteristics that will affect the way that they engage in civic life, meaning that with every new generation, a thorough assessment should be completed to understand the unique, identifying traits and characteristics to understand their personal tastes.

By following Berger's theory, to engage a target audience the first step is "taste." The first step for planners to engage and gain the attention of the Millennials as the target audience, is to learn the behaviors, characteristics and attitudes of the cohort. Learning about their lifestyles allows for the creation and implementation engagement opportunities that are meaningful to the targeted audience. As has been discussed above, the Millennials will not necessarily behave the same way as previous generations. Therefore, it would be irresponsible to apply the same methods used for other generations to this new generations and expect the same results. Aside from life-cycle tendencies, "generations… can develop their own distinct 'personalities'" (Zukin et al. 2006, 11). Understanding these "personalities" is key to deciphering the Millennial "tastes" and starting the engagement process. Sarah Castell, Oliver Sweet, Andrew Haldenby, and Lucy Parsons in their 2008 report, *A New Reality: Government and The IPOD Generation,* study the Millennial generation, that they call the "IPOD" generation. The report aims at understanding how government should interact with the large and

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upcoming cohort. The article articulates that although the drive to engage is present among Millennials, they require different methods and stimulates than past generations for participation. Castell et al. studied the political and consumer trends of the young cohort and applies these trends to governmental interactions (Castell et al. 2008, 5). Through their report, they set out to correct some of the "myths" about the generation and reveal some telling truths about the young cohort's participation trends and preferences (Castell et al. 2008, 8). The authors began with examining the common view of this generation as "apathetic and uninterested in politics, binge-drinking consumers with a short-term mindset." Through their research and time with focus groups, the authors discovered that the "truth is more complex":

> They are non-ideological, laissez-faire, live and let live, and tolerant of difference. They are very confident people, demanding a lot from employers and corporations. They have a generous, inclusive spirit and are sophisticated, creative consumers, with a lot to offer society. At present, however, IPODs feel disconnected from the public realm. They tend to vote in smaller numbers than other groups, express more cynicism about government and politics overall, and focus on the personal sphere rather than the political. "(Castell et al. 2008, 4)

From this starting point, Castell et al. debunked six myths of the Millennials and uncovered many important characteristics of the generation that can help the government, and city planners, better understand how to engage Millennials.

The authors' first revelation regards Millennials' relationships with the government and with the community. This generation is living a longer adolescence and not moving into the next life stage, which has a large impact on how they relate to government (Castell et al. 2008, 14). Typically, when people form families, they become more invested in government and politics. However, the Millennials are now waiting until they are 30 to start families, whereas twenty years ago people typically started families at 22 (Castel et al. 2008, 14). This extended adolescence is changing the political culture and forcing old ways to be questioned. Millennials also have a different attitude toward community and defines it differently. This generation sees themselves as part of many different, overlapping communities that have been expanded by virtual connections and are not necessarily geographically based (Castell et al. 2008, 15). The definition of communities as virtual connections reflects the generation of Digital

Natives. However, for the government to engage with Millennials online is tricky. Millennials are in tune with messages that are not within the "digital language" and will perceive the messenger as "not in touch with them" (Castell et al. 2008, 15) Planners should be acutely aware that online connections are not a substitute for real life participation:

> It is still a myth that online worlds are inherently more interesting to IPODs than offline interactions. Actually a high level of skill is needed to build worlds where the technology facilitates a genuine community space; technology is merely a medium for 'real' communities to interact. IPODs are looking for evidence that government really understands the online world and can come up with unexpected, interesting interfaces for citizens to engage with other citizens, and with government. (Castell et al. 2008, 15)

The second important myth that Castell et al. dissects is important for planning participation. The authors show that Millennials are "very busy, time-pressed, sophisticated consumers who mete out their attention carefully and expect a return on emotional investment immediately, whenever they engage with government." The second myth that is debunked also emphasizes the importance of the changing modes of communications (Castell et al. 2008, 16). 18 to 35 year olds "live at a higher speed than previous generations" with this fast pace lifestyle supported by personal mobile technology that leaves no moment of their lives unfilled with activity (Castell et al. 2008, 16). This means that they allot only a small amount of time for engagement. Additionally, government is competing for time with sophisticated consumer branding. To better engage with Millennials, planning engagement methods should "acknowledge their perception of themselves as very busy, provide ways to make life easier, and demonstrate that [they] respect the citizens time" (Castell et al. 2008, 16).

Although Millennials may appear to be apathetic to local political issues and decisions, in reality they are dividing their attention carefully between many different entities and will only invest where they expect "immediate return on their emotional investment" (Castell et al. 2008, 16). Understanding the mentality of having carefully divided time and attention could influence the way that participation processes approach Millennials. Saul Alinsky in his book, *Rules for Radicals,* was able to see setting a

reasonable time frame as an important rule of engagement in 1971. One of his rules of organizing tactics simply states "a tactic that drags on too long becomes a drag" and it is just as true now as it was then (Alinsky 1971, 129). In Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia's 2014 book, "Tactical Urbanism," they express this "drag" in municipal administrations as "planning fatigue" (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 86). Based on Castel et al.'s reports, drag and fatigue will not be accepted by Millennials and they will quickly lose interest and decide to spend their attention elsewhere.

Understanding the changes in common channels of communication is essential when targeting Millennials for planning engagement. The cohort is accustomed to being wooed by consumer advertising. Thus, they expect the same level of entertaining communication from government:

> Information presented in a discursive, interactive way signals that the body behind the information is up to date with modern ways of learning and communicating… will judge how effective and skillful the administration is by how effectively it uses new conventions of communication. Again, getting this right is not about "dumbing down' the message; quite the reverse; for IPODS, an old-fashioned style of communication will be seen as inappropriate, less nuanced and ultimately less intelligent. (Castell et al. 2008, 17)

The importance of communicating in the same language is supported by Berger's thesis of "capturing the attention" of the cohort. Morley Winograd in his book *Millennial Momentum* shows how important using new communication methods was for the Obama campaign. The Obama campaign reached Millennials using entertaining communication methods which resulted in a higher voter turnout rate among the younger cohort than in past years. More Millennials voted in the presidential election that year, which can be traced back to being engaged on their level (Winograd 2011, 1-3). Online techniques are useful for outreach and relaying information in an entertaining way, but not the actual participation, itself (Bradshaw 2013, 6).

The third myth from the Castell et al. article reveals a characteristic of the Millennial generation that opens an opportunity for planning participation. Millennials tend to be more involved and invested in issues at the local level rather than state and federal. This is an opportunity for planning efforts because planning usually takes place at the local level. Planning participation methods could "find ways to channel the

individualistic, natural confidence and inquisitiveness of this generation" (Castell et al. 2008,19). Castell states that the "key to success" is to keep involvement imaginative, unexpected, and "even fun" or else it will become "a chore" (Castell 2008, 23). Alinsky made a similar connection in 1971 as one of his rules was "if your people are not having a ball doing it, there is something very wrong with the tactic" (Alinsky 1971, 128).

The focus on the local level for this generation was also reflected on by Debard and Dowel Myers. Both observed the tendency of Millennials to "congregate" in public because they like to be seen (Myers 2016; Debard 2004). Congregating as a way of being seen in the community is an expression of how Millennials like to spend their carefully meted time. Where they spend their time reflects what they like about certain communities and directly ties them to local life and local economies (Myers 2016; Debard 2004). The Nielsen Company study discovered that this cohort is self-aware rather than self- absorbed, and enjoy expressing themselves. The study also found that 69% of Millennials are happy with their local communities. Because of this tie to local communities and local concerns, the Millennials find a valuable investment of time in volunteering. 57% of Millennials spent time volunteering in 2013, a higher percentage than any other generation that year (The Nielsen Company 2014, 12). Millennials are involved, invested, and active in local culture. Tracking how and where this is happening in different neighborhoods would allow for engagement methods to capitalize on the opportunity of shared local interests.

The fourth characteristic of the generation discovered by Castell et al. through examining myths is that Millennials are smart consumers. Millennials enjoy the satisfaction of knowing where their money and time is being spent (Castell et al. 2008, 27). The need for a feedback loop translates to participatory planning. The young cohort of citizens require results for the time they spend participating. This poses a hurdle for long term planning considering Millennials will not want to wait ten years to see produces of their efforts. Immediate gratification is one of their main characteristics which translates into "taste." If this is not met, then "attention" of the process is lost and "energy" is halted.

The fifth characteristic born from Castell et al.'s assessment of the myths of Millennials is their propensity to make healthy choices. (Castell et al. 2008, 28). Healthy choices could influence how the issues are framed to best engage the Millennials in participatory events. If the planning issues begin to deal with the health of the community such a walkability, transportation, and sustainability, Millennials may become more invested (Vancore 2015, 24).

The last identified characteristic from Castell et al.'s article is that Millennials are "Digital Natives," an idea that has been explored above (Castell et al. 2008, 31). Castell et al. recognize that the use of technology for the generation is a support for relationships that are already existing between the cohort and the municipality (Castell et al. 2008, 31). Social media is an important part of the Millennials lifestyle but "it is critical to understand that social media is not just a box you check" (Vancore 2015, 25). Engagement must go beyond internet but not ignore its importance. Overall, Millennials will engage enthusiastically if the opportunities are presented as "creative action" and speak the digital language (Castell et al. 2008, 33).

A study from the Nielsen Company about the myths and trends of the Millennial generation came out six years after the Castell et al. article. The Nielsen Company's 2014 report, *Millennials- Break the Myths,* reviews the generation's characteristics, preferences, and trends. The Nielsen Company's findings are largely in unison with Castell et al.'s earlier report. Some additional important trends that the study deciphered includes the cohort is volunteering and donating at high levels; they are higher educated and enjoy arts and culture; and are constantly social, either in groups or on their phone. An important trend for planning participation identified by the 2014 report is the recognition that Millennials are living in cities, renting, and enjoying the urban setting. These realizations lead to the conclusion that suburbia is no longer the American Dream for Millennials (The Nielsen Company 2014, 16).

The Importance of Engaging Millennials

Through the literature review, the involvement of the Millennial generation in political and civic life can be confirmed. However, they are participating in different ways

than generations before them. The ways that Millennials view the world and live their lives is divergent from past trends and is contributing to the evolving landscape of politics, participation, and urban space.

The importance of engaging the Millennials can be seen in a few different ways. One way to see Millennials' importance in urban space is simply by considering the size of the cohort. The large generation makes up 24% of the total U.S. population and an even higher percentage population in urban areas (The Nielsen Company 2014, 4). They are more likely to live in cities and enjoy urban life. Planners should to be aware of the preferences of Millennials as they make decisions about how cities develop considering Millennials are developing alongside and within the changing cities. To make decisions for the city at large is to make decision for Millennials, who make up the largest portion of the population. Planners have a natural ally with the largest population portion as the Millennials enjoy progressive urban forms (Vancore 2015, 24). It would be a missed opportunity in the forward momentum of developing cities of the future by not recognizing the potential of engaging the Millennial population.

Many modern planners are consciously trying to engage and hear the voices of underrepresented communities to get away from the "usual suspects" that show up for town hall meetings. Another way to see Millennials' importance in city planning processes is to see them as a cohort composed of many pieces of these hard to reach groups. Millennials includes a mix of White, Black, Latino, and Asian at a more diverse ratio than any other generation (The Nielsen Company 2014, 6). Millennials are increasingly bilingual and immigration plays a role in developing the cohort's composition (The Nielsen Company 2014, 6-7). Considering Millennials were late beginning their career paths given the stress of the recession, a large part of the cohort is low income (Myers, 2016). Additionally, Millennials make up a large portion of the hard to reach renter population. Millennials are not owning houses and prefer living in cities meaning that they must rent (The Nielsen Company 2014, 19). If planners can understand how to engage the Millennial generation, they will actually be engaging many of the hard to reach communities, simultaneously.

According to Berger's theory, the first step to engaging citizens of the 21st Century is to understand their tastes. Tastes stem from behaviors, preferences, and characteristics (Berger 2011, 11). Through the literature review, there are seven characteristics that can be concluded about the Millennials tastes that relate to participation in planning. By starting with Millennials' tastes, the participation process can then focus Millennials' attention by identifying the most appropriate methods of engagement. The characteristics consolidated from the literature review were shaped by the Great Recession, learned behavior through childhood, Millennials tendency to congregate, and the digital base of the Millennium (Figure 2).

The first two characteristics fall under the effects of the Great Recession. The first unique characteristic of the Millennial generation is their "*extended adolescence.*" Coming of age during the Great Recession is the main factor for the generations extended adolescence. Many Millennials did not find positions in their field of study out of college and are riddled with debt for a longer period of time causing them to delay having a family and owning a house (Castell et al. 2008, 4). By not owning a house, Millennials have shaped the urban living preference seen now in cities across the nation as the generation is content with a small living space and having a roommate for longer (The Nielsen Company 2014, 16, 19). Not transitioning into the next life cycle until later in life means the Millennials are still "schmoozers." They continue to have looser, informal connections which is forming new patterns of public engagement. The second characteristic that was shaped by the Great Recession is that Millennials are "*frugal spenders*" of time, money, and attention. Coming to age in a poor economy has taught them to be very conscious of how they are spending their time and what they are spending their money on. Spending time wisely means they carefully mete out how and where their attention will be spent and they expect an immediate return on their emotional investment.

The next characteristic is shaped by learned behavior throughout childhood and educational systems. To be accepted into higher education institutes, grades, alone, are no longer sufficient and must be supported by extracurricular activities. A high rate of Millennials went to college after high school which means they were more civically

involved in high school to add the experiences to their college applications. Having started participating at a younger age, public engagement had become a learned behavior which has influenced them throughout life. This learned behavior does not necessarily translate into high political participation but it does leave opportunity for higher civic engagement. These factors shape the third characteristic of the Millennial generation of being "*civically engaged.*"

The next three characteristics of Millennials come out of their tendency to congregate. The tendency to congregate means this cohort enjoys culture, art, coffee shops, and hanging out with their friends (The Nielsen Company 2014, 30). These preferences illustrate the "*cultural*" characteristic of the generation. Additionally, this characteristic includes the acceptance of the diversity within the cohort. Considering they are frugal with money and time, yet, enjoy spending money and time in local coffee shops instead of making their own coffee at home, the characteristic of being "*local*" emerges (Myers 2016). Millennials see the value in the local area, local community, and local economy. They like to live in cities that produce these opportunities to support the communities they enjoy. Congregating in areas where they can be seen and be with other people illuminates the characteristic of being "*social.*"

The next theme comes out of the Millennials' digitally based lifestyle, bringing to light the characteristic of being "*Digital Natives.*" The Millennial generation was the first to be born as "Digital Natives" and to speak the digital language fluently. This language is not "dumbed-down" but is more entertaining and accessible (Bradshaw 2013, 14). Through the internet, they are able to be part of multiple overlapping communities that are not necessarily geographically based (Castell et al. 2006, 15). Technology is an important medium of interaction that cannot be ignored but is not a substitute for participation or relationships.

Effects of the Great Recession	Extended Adolescence
	Frugal
Learned Behaviors	Civically engaged
Tendency to Congregate	Cultural
	Local
	Social
Digital Base	Digital Natives

Figure 2. Characteristics of the Millennial Generation by Category

Conclusion and Limitations

Even though the Millennial generation has lived the life of a young adult into their thirties, it is reasonable to see that it is coming to an end. Austin is experiencing rapid growth right now because of the large influx of people, many of whom are in their twenties, and the city should not take this growth for granted. The year 2015 marked the year that the peak, or highest amount, of Millennials are 25. Because of this, it is common to see Millennials just as '25-year-olds" (Myers 2016). However, in 2020, the first Millennials will turn 40. This means that the life cycle of this generations is about to make a major shift (Vancore 2015, 25). If planners fail to listen to what this cohort values in their city while they are populating cities in large numbers, there is the potential that Millennials will begin to follow the old patterns of families moving to suburbia. Austin should learn how to listen to the people that are moving in, who are in large part Millennials, and understand their demands for a livable community before they start looking for something different. If cities fail to listen to them now, it could have severe consequences in the near future as Millennials start reaching their 40's, settling down, and starting families. By listening to the Millennials and keeping them in the city, it could the shape of the future of development to help produce the urban living patterns desired in Austin's comprehensive plan.

It is important to understand that this review of the understanding of the Millennial generation is limited by the scope and focus of the literature. The main literature covering the topic of Millennial engagement only captures a subsection of the cohort because of the narrow focus on those who have a higher education. This limitation

begins with only looking at the civic engagement as it relates to college applications, and does not correct for those outside this subsector of the generation moving forward. The literature does acknowledges that Millennials are a diverse cohort with a mix of races and ethnicities. However, none of the literature grapples with the implications of minorities in America and with how engagement could vary across a diverse mix of Millennials. Because of the absence of this deeper understanding, it could lead to the assumption of another limitation being that the research may be limited to only whites. With these limitations, the definition of Millennials for this report coming through the current literature on the topics, therefore, is the white and highly educated subsector of the adults under 35.

Chapter 4: Austin Context

Austin, Texas is a city of 912,791 people. The most well-known characteristics of Austinites are creative, musical, and "weird" people. Other characteristics of Austinites that are known to the people who live and work in the eclectic and fast growing city, is that they love their city and they love to participate (Denton 2016). Recently, the City of Austin has been doing exceptional work at including and carrying out the participatory element of different plans. Austin has a reputation of long participatory campaigns. There is a fear in Austin, that traditional methods only bring out the "usual suspects," who are the same groups of people having the same opinion not representative of the larger community (Leighneinger 2013, 3).The City of Austin has an enthusiastic staff who has the desire to go beyond the same 100 people and hear the other 912,691. This is a tricky endeavor as the population is starting to feel planning fatigue. The 2012 *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* and the resulting code rewrite currently in progress, "CodeNEXT," both have had their own extensive participatory processes. There is evidence that the city is investing in creating more effective and efficient ways to participate with the transition of the city council structure in 2014, switching from an "at-large" system to a "10-1" geographic representation system. The 2015 Task Force on Public Participation is another indicator of the Cities desire for an improved system of engagement, city-wide. As the city grows, Millennial numbers swell. To understand how Millennials fit into the Austin context as the city approaches the next process of the comprehensive plane, the activity corridor planning process, the report intends to lay a foundation by examining the recent history of planning participation in Austin as well as recognizing the current landscape of participation in the city.

Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP): Planning Participation Process and Definitions

The City of Austin adopted the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* (IACP) in 2012. The IACP was the first plan since 1979 and the city was in desperate need of an updated comprehensive plan (Hoene et al. 2013, 43). The new comprehensive plan

was a result of a three year, inclusive and innovative public participation process. In 2009, the city decided the first step towards a new plan was to create a plan for public participation. Before engaging people in the IACP process, the City wanted to learn the best practices and most appropriate ways to engage the Austin community. They did this by holding a public workshop with the community which culminated in the report, "Making Austin: Public Participation in a New Comprehensive Plan." It was decided through these conversations that the public participation for the comprehensive planning process should follow six guiding principles. These principles were: (1) to be open to all, (2) to focus on community engagement, (3) to be transparent through the process, (4) to create an enthusiastic and vibrant process, (5) to engage underrepresented groups, and (6) to be fun ("Making Austin" 2009, 7). With these guidelines, Austin experimented with new ways of participation. The new comprehensive plan was completed after three years of intensive public engagement with an estimated 25,000 participants (Hoene et al. 2013, 45). This is an extremely impressive accomplishment because, in Austin, large scale city projects, such as creating a citywide comprehensive plan, usually take decades to complete (Gurwiltt 2013).

Three years of public participation following the "Making Austin" guidelines resulting in the adoption of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP).* One of the most instructive pieces of the IACP is the "Growth Concept" map. The map's purpose is to "illustrate the desired manner to accommodate new residents, jobs, opens space, and transportation." One of the different areas on the map directs new development and redevelopment into certain "activity centers and corridors" (City of Austin 2012, 95-7). The IACP designates that each of these activity centers and activity corridors should have a "small area plan" that reacts to the context, character and needs of the surrounding areas (City of Austin 2012, 217-9). Each activity corridor is intended to be both a connective link through the city while also supporting a "variety of activities and types of buildings" in either long stretches or grouped together in "small neighborhood centers" (City of Austin 2012, 106). The recommendations of this report will focus on the activity corridor small area plan that is a result of the "Growth Concept" map and the requirements for implementation of the IACP. The implementation phases for the IACP

started with the code rewrite, branded "CodeNEXT." CodeNEXT has been in process for the past 3 years, including its own engagement process. The new, form-based code should be implemented in 2017. The next phase in implementation of the IACP after the code rewrites is the activity corridors.

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Place* (IACP) has a few guiding principles concerning further public engagement with the processes resulting from the plan. The comprehensive plan emphasis the need to act as a complete community and "to remember and protect those who lack a voice" as the city moves forward with carrying out the plan (City of Austin 2012, 13). The IACP also emphasizes the diversity of the Austin community to make sure that the whole community is part of future plans even as "the faces and voices of Austin are varied and grow more diverse each day" (City of Austin 2012, 13). The future of Austin's "community at large [should] embody a broader, innovative mindset and approach to solving problems" (City of Austin 2012, 12). Through innovative solutions, the city aims to "expand opportunity and social equity for all residents" (City of Austin 2012, 12). These vague claims are the only ideas in the IACP referring to further involvement with the Austin community moving forward with planning phases.

As the City moves forward with implementing the IACP, it would be sensible to continue following the guidelines from the "Making Austin" report. When considering Millennials as the target group for participation, three of the guidelines from the report are most applicable. These three guidelines coordinate with the characteristics of the Millennial characteristics discovered in the literature review. First, the "Open to All" guideline states that the participation process should be encouraged across all groups of people by requiring "multiple ways to participate." This is important "because different people have different experiences, preferences, constraints, and capacity to participate" ("Making Austin" 2009, 7). In the literature review, is was discovered that there is a wide range of different ways that Millennials participate that are different from other groups and generations. Second, "Making Austin" labels "Engaging Underrepresented Groups" as a guideline. The report lists "young adults" as one of the "traditionally hard-to-reach groups" recognizing Millennials right now are a difficult but desirable group to work with

("Making Austin" 2009, 7-8). Third, the guideline of "Fun" in engagement is described by including "energetic activities" ("Making Austin" 2009, 16). "Fun" as a guiding principle taps into Berger's theory that participation for the modern age requires a combination of attention and energy. Although it was not stated in the "Making Austin" participation report or outlined in the IACP, the six original principles could continue to guide the processes that the city's comprehensive plan called for, such as the land use code rewrite, the small area plans, and the activity corridors' plans.

Demographics

Austin is a young city. The Millennials are the largest generation in the nation, and they are an even larger share of the population in Austin. Millennials make up 27% of the US population and 38% of the Austin population. (Figure 3) (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010 Census). It is typical of young people to live in urban areas such a Austin. Even so, when comparing Millennials to the Baby Boomers, who followed a similar life cycle, the Millennials make up a larger portion of Austin's urban area. In 1972, the peak of the Baby Boomers were 25 years old and made up only 24.8% of the Austin area population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2013). In 2015, the peak of Millennials were 25 and they made up a significantly higher portion of the population comparatively.

	Austin Population	US Population
Total	790,390	308,745,538
Number of Millennials	302,589	84,690,290
Percentage of Millennials	38.28%	27.43%
Number of Gen X	212,068	86,077,322
Percentage of Gen X	26.83%	27.88%
Number of Baby Boomers	87,643	48,917,992
Percentage of Baby Boomers	11.08%	15.84%

Figure 3. Generational Comparisons between Austin and U.S. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

Looking at the Austin urban area census data, demographic characteristics of the Millennial generation can be observed in comparison to other generations living in Austin. For convenience, the Millennials were defined as 18 to 35 years old for the demographic comparison using census data. The census data sets that will be most telling are renter data, race and ethnicity data, and poverty data. This information correlates with the information discovered through the literature review and will, therefore, show a better picture of what the Millennial generation looks like in Austin. Recall from the literature review that Millennials are more likely to rent, are a very diverse cohort, and are likely low income. Looking at the renter information first, it can be seen that the trend of this generation as renters holds true as 72% of Millennial householders are renters (Figure 4). Of all renters in Austin, 51.8% are Millennials while they are only 15.8% of all homeowners.

	Austin Urbanized Area	Austin-Round Rock MSA
Ratio of Millennials renter to owner	2.65	2.48
Percentage of Millennials renting	72.5%	71.3%
Percentage of Millennials of all renters	51.8%	51.1%
Percentage of Millennials of all homeowners	15.8%	14.6%

Figure 4. Millennial Renters and Homeowners in Austin and Austin-Round Rock MSA. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

Figure 3 looks at both Austin and the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) because the growth concept map goes out further than the urban core as it promotes regional interconnectedness. The MSA data tells a similar narrative of Millennials as renters. In the Austin-Round Rock MSA, 71% of all Millennial householders are renting. Of all renters, 51.1% are Millennials and only 14.6% of all homeowners. The high percentage of Millennials that are renters and the low percentage that are homeowners

can be problematic for engagement process because a lot of current and traditional methods for participation are aimed at homeowners such as neighborhood associations and homeowners associations (Schooler 2016).

Black

Millennials 37.6%
Gen X 39.9%
Baby Boomers 18.9%
Greatest
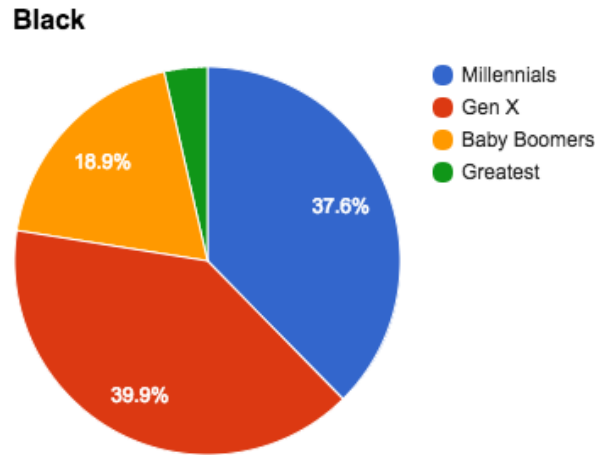
Figure 5. Composition of Black Population Austin by Generation. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

Latino

Millennials 53%
Gen X 33.2%
Baby Boomers 10.3%
Greatest
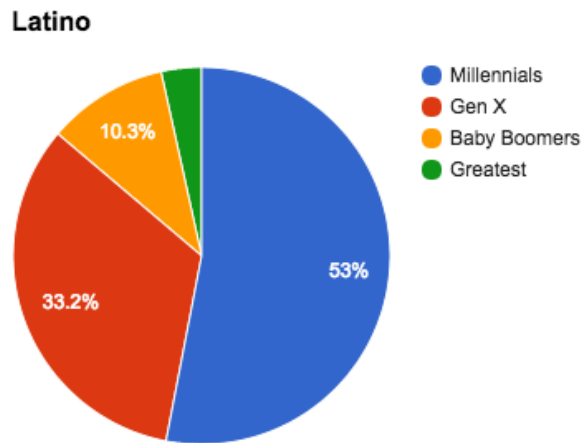
Figure 6. Composition of Latino Population Austin by Generation. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.
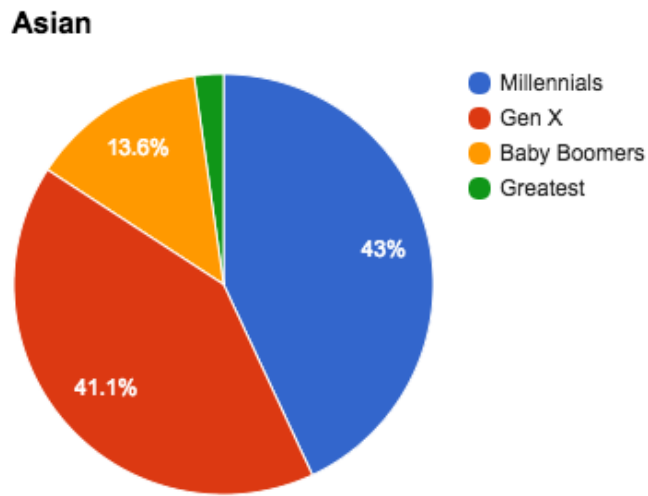
Figure 7. Composition of Asian Population Austin by Generation. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

The next demographic information to examine is the racial composition by generations in Austin. Figure 5 shows, of the Black population in Austin, the Millennials make up about 38%. Figure 6 shows, Millennials make up 53% of the Latino population which is a very significant amount. In Figure 7, it is clear to see that Millennials also make up the largest portion of Asians in Austin, as well, at 43%. This information leads to the conclusion that not only are the Millennials the largest piece of the Austin population but also the most diverse.

Portion of Generations Below Poverty Line In Austin	
Millennials	20.30%
Gen X	10.36%
Baby Boomers	8.64%
All Austin	10.20%

Figure 8. Portion of Generations Below Poverty Line in Austin. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

The last data set examined to understand the Millennial generation in Austin concerns the poverty level of each generation. The poverty level is examined by looking at the "age by ratio of income to poverty level" census data which gives a ratio for each age group that is related to poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). If the ratio is over 1 then they are over the poverty level. The information in Figure 8 shows each generation by combining age groups and the percentage of that generation that is under the poverty line, or has a ratio under 1. With this data, the percentage of Millennials under poverty level is twice as high as the general population. This finding is also in line with the literature review.

To be able to complete the goals set forth in the IACP of including everyone and act as a whole community, it is logical to start with a goal of engaging with the largest, yet hard to reach, generation in Austin. By looking more in depth at these demographic characteristics, it is clear that the cohort is, in fact, a large portion of Austin's renters, minorities, and low income population. Each of these factors separately are pieces of the underrepresented voices in Austin. Therefore, understanding the best ways to involve the 38% of the population that are Millennials will actually involve the many overlapping populations that this generation includes. Learning how to engage with Millennials is simultaneously learning how to engage with renters, minorities, and low income populations.

Current Participation Methods in Austin

Austin holds regular city council meetings to hear their citizens' comments, feedback, and issues. However, it seems that traditional methods such as city council meetings are not enough anymore. Large format meetings typically have a low turnout rate and those who do show up are the "usual suspects" (Leighninger 2010, 3). This format is outdated especially with a wide range of meeting types, methods, and tools that have emerged over the past two decades that create more opportunities to engage with a larger portion of the population (Leighniger 2010, 3). Austin is a modern community with diverse needs. The city has created some innovative ways to involve more of the population in decisions and to hear the voices of the people. The themes

from the literature review will be used to analyze some of the non-traditional methods that Austin has implemented for community engagement outside of city hall or neighborhood meetings and how Millennials would react to them through Berger's lens of "taste" leading to attention and energy. Recall, the themes found in the literature review were the wide range of effects of the Great Recession, learned behavior through childhood and education, the tendency to congregate, and the digital and technology foundation. For the analysis of the methods used in Austin, the recession effects, congregation, and digital base will be the most effective means to understand the potential as each relates to Millennials (Figure 9).

Conversation Corps is a method for dialogue in Austin. Each month, multiple conversations are held all around Austin about the same subject. The main idea behind the method is to be able to reach as many people as possible by having the conversation at different locations on different days at different times. The conversation hosts report the themes of the conversation back to the partnering organizations: CapMetro, Austin Independent School District (AISD), and the City of Austin (Conversation Corp 2016). Viewing this method through the "recession effects" theme, it needs to make sure it is allowing this cohort to spend their time wisely. Therefore, Conversation Corps should make it clear where the themes of each conversation will end up by making sure there is a full circle feedback loop that can be tracked by the participants. This is an issue that Conversation Corps has recognized and is working to fix, currently (Garner-Fry 2016). Examining the method through the lens of the Millennials "tendency to congregate" theme, it seems like it would be in tune with the generation's tastes. The conversations are held in different coffee shops and community centers around town. "Third spaces" such as coffee shops, bars, and bookstores are keys locations (Carmona 2010, 132-5). This methods is in line with the "congregation characteristics of being social and local by going to their realm in the public by not requiring them to come to city hall. Lastly, the digital base of this generation leads to a need to utilize the website for clear feedback and a way to keep participants involved. In addition to their own website, tapping into existing platforms as well as a needed way to speak the digital language (Bradshaw 2013, 8).

Imagine Austin Meet-Up groups are similar examples of community dialogue. The Meet-Up groups are organized by the Imagine Austin team of city planners as a way to keep people involved in the conversation of IACP after the implementation. The Meet-Up groups each have staff members available to have an informal conversation over coffee or a drink about a specified topic (Todd 2016; Denton 2016). Understanding this method through the lens of the recession effects for Millennials, there is a strong return on time investment for these events because they are actually talking to city staff. Considering the topics are predetermined, it is possible to choose only the Meet-Up events that align with personal interests which is an efficient use of time compared for waiting for that topic to come up in hours' worth of city hall hearings. Additionally, holding informal meetings is aligned with Millennials extended adolescence, which created a generation of "schmoozers." However, it may not be a strong emotional commitment because there is no feedback, simply conversations around a specific topic and education about that subject. The issue is that the Meet-Up groups are not directly making any changes or creating results (Denton 2016) Secondly, this matches Millennials tendency to congregate. Meet-Ups are held in third spaces, like Conversation Corps, tapping into the social and local characteristics. Again, these places are out in the community, not making people come downtown. Lastly, Meet - Up.com is a well-known online platform but it moves past the internet world and has a face to face component as well. Using the established online platform speaks the digital language.

Sound Check is a method that was used as part of the CodeNEXT process. The CodeNEXT public engagement process has been broken up into 4 parts. First was the "Listening and Understanding" phase. Next was the "Diagnosis and Outline" phase. The third phase is to write "Prescriptions and a Draft" for the code re write, and is still in progress in 2016. In the final phase, the code will go to City Council for adoption (CodeNEXT Sound Check Report, 12-4). "Sound Check" was part of the "Diagnosis and Outline" phase (CodeNEXT Sound Check Report 2016, 69). The event was set-up like a weeklong charrette and included live music, food trucks, and free paraphernalia. The CodeNEXT staff was available to answer questions and explain complicated questions

about form-based code. Looking at this event through the lens of the effects of the recession, the method had potential to engage Millennials as it was a more informal design that allowed people to come and go when they could. The topics were compatible to the interests of Millennials through the recession theme because the code rewrite supports aspects of the urban lifestyle this generation enjoys. Millennials' cultural and social characteristics were addressed by the inclusion of entertainment and food trucks. The event was held outside of city hall. Unfortunately, restrictions on resources and availability forced the event to be held in a strange location in a vacant strip mall which may have lowered turnout. (Todd 2016). The CodeNEXT website was used to close the feedback loop with this process, which appeals to the digitally based theme. Before the event tickets were "sold" (for free) using the popular website, "Eventbrite." The CodeNEXT Facebook page was used for outreach of the event and did not rely on social media for input.

Road Shows are another engagement method used in the CodeNEXT participatory process. The Road Shows allow groups and organizations to individually book a planner to come to talk to them. The talk is accessible at any level and is tailored per group (Todd 2016). This method could respond to Millennials characteristic of being frugal with time. The Road Shows could be seen as a good time investment as it allows for in-depth conversations where it is convenient, when it is convenient. However, the structure of the method almost requires membership to a preexisting group. Millennials are "schmoozers," not joiners. On the webpage, it was difficult to find where to sign up for the Road Show, but the sign-up is completely internet based using either email or the well-known platform, "survey monkey," through their website, showing some positive and some negatives of appeal to the Digital Natives.

Speak-Up Austin is the main online forum used by the City of Austin to get feedback on and start conversations about current issues. Looking at the appeal to the MIllennials' frugal characteristic, this method is time efficient and allows for participants to be able to invest as much or as little time as they would like. There is an issue with closing the loop to understand where these conversations (Todd 2016; Schooler 2016). Considering Speak-Up Austin only exists as an online platform, it doesn't access the

social and local characteristics. It is a place to connect with people and share data with the public. However, it does not replace public participation events. This method obviously resonates with Digital Natives, as it is completely online. Yet, Millennials can determine when messages are not using the digital language correctly. It has been a concern of the Task Force for Community Engagement that Speak-Up Austin is not functioning as well as it could (Schooler 2016). The Speak-Up Austin website does not use typical website functions to organize the data in a logical way, making it difficult for users to navigate. Because of the lack of sophistication, Millennials could easily get frustrated with the platform.

The Nextdoor app is a social networking application for neighborhoods, used in cities throughout the United States (Chang 2016). The app allows neighbors to post information about anything that is happening in their surrounding neighborhood and allows users to read nearby neighbor's posts. The City of Austin has a partnership with Nextdoor that allows the City to post about issues and event announcements onto any or all of the neighborhood networks (Goodman 2016). The app is free and it enables people to be involved in the community without a large commitment, which are both aspects that are in line with the frugal characteristics of the Millennials. The posts are locally based connecting users to their geographical community which is consistent with the social characteristics. The app is used to spread news about other engagement opportunities, allowing Millennials to choose events that are of most interest to them at their convenience. For the first generation of Digital Natives, using apps on smartphones is in line with cultural characteristics. The app is a good tool to reach people who do not have other networks, such as NA or HOA, at a community level. Although this was listed as a method for engagement by city staff members interviewed, it's more of an outreach tool and it is important to understand the difference for the most efficient results.

"Friends of Austin Neighborhoods" (FAN) is an organization that is based online allowing Austinites to become part of neighborhood conversations. Through interviews with city staff, this organization is seen as the most promising opportunity to engage renters in Austin (Dugan 2016). Based on the characteristics of Millennials living a

longer adolescence, 72% of Millennials are renting. FAN gives renters an equivalent opportunity to engage as a Homeowners Association (HOA) or a Neighborhood Association (NA) would, creating a parallel organization for those who do not own a house. However, as the FAN moves away from its online base to encourage neighborhoods to form advocacy groups, the formal organization may not have the time flexibility and informal structure that Millennials need. Additionally, the $5 yearly fee for individuals "at-large" and $50 fee for groups, may be a detractor for Millennials to join if they do not see the value or immediate gratification for their investment (Friends of Austin Neighborhoods 2016). The FAN forum provides opportunities to join in meetings or volunteer opportunities at the local level, speaking to the civic participation and social characteristics of Millennials. An interesting aspect of FAN is that it allows people to form their own communities instead of being forced to join long standing NAs. The FAN method seems appropriate for Millennials as Digital Natives considering most communication and voting happens on the website.

Meeting-in- a- Box is a method that was created for the Imagine Austin participatory process. The original "Meeting-in-a-Box" was a kit with questions, invitations, and scripts that could be ordered by any community member who wanted to host their own participatory event for the planning process. After the meeting, the information collected during the "Meeting-in-a-box" event would be put back into the box and returned by mail. In Austin, many reiterations of the "meeting-in-a-box" have been used for different processes. For example, the CodeNEXT project used "Community-Character-in-a-Box," which asked neighborhoods to collect photos of their area as well as descriptions and testimonials to be sent back for public record (Steuteville 2014). As the city prepared the 2015-2016 budget, they adopted the method as a "Budget-in-a-Box" to understand how the community wanted their tax dollars to be spent (Financial and Administrative Services 2015). This method allows for the Millennial cohort to express their preference hands-on engagement by handing over the facilitation to anyone. Because of the indirect connection however, it may be hard to see the impact of one particular meeting, which is something that might be discouraging to the cohort. The "meeting-in-a-box" is appealing to the social and cultural characteristics as it can be

done wherever with whomever. Feedback and reports were clearly posted on the City of Austin website.

ATX Hack for Change is an event co-hosted by the City of Austin and St. Edward's University. The event is a "hack-a-thon," which is a method used by communities across America. The hack-a-thon is a weekend long event to find computer based solutions to community and civic problems by bringing together computer engineers and others who have the passion for community and knowledge of computers to make changes possible (Goodman 2016). Creating new ways of doing things and "hacking" the system is part of the "underground culture" that is part of the Millennials lifestyle (Myers, 2016). The Hack for Change can be seen as a good investment of time because there is an actual product at the end of event. Also, considering that the event is hosted by the Innovation Office, the attendees have direct contact with city staff (Goodman, 2016). On the other hand, depending on the outcome, it may not be seen as a good investment of time considering it is a whole weekend commitment. The hack-a-thons create local change by solving civic problems as a group. This aspect is related to the "congregation" theme. The "digital" theme is very apparent in this method. The ATX Hack for Change only attracts people who have the knowledge of technology to be able to make the changes. All the solutions are web based, speaking to the Millennials native digital language especially since it was created by other people who speak the language fluently.

Heart Gov is the last method this report will explore that is used by the City of Austin. Heart Gov is a texting format. A question is posed to the general public along with a phone number that anyone can send a text response to with private comments (Schooler 2016). The frugal characteristics of the Millennials can be seen in this method as it is a free, easy, and quick way to give input. However, the respondents may not feel heard, which could cause Millennials to question if it is worthwhile to answer these questions. The texting platform is practically the opposite of the "congregating" theme considering it is an individual activity with a total disconnect to the others who responded. Yet, considering the platform relies on the use of technology, it may be most attractive to people who are most comfortable with texting, like the Digital Natives.

Above are some examples participatory methods that the City of Austin has used and how they can be interpreted through the lens of Millennial tastes and preferences. The methods listed are not the only methods that the City is using for participation, but a sampling of new, innovative methods. Also, note that these methods were not specifically created to target Millennials but are simply analyzed using the themes and characteristics defined by the literature review. The most effective methods for Millennials participation would be methods that are intentional in capturing the cohort's attentions by deliberately considering each of the themes to capture their energy through the process (Figure 9). By analyzing some of the new methods using by the City of Austin, it is apparent that the City is trying to connect with the citizens in creative ways by offering a variety of channels to engage. When looking at a specific group, an understanding of that group is the first step to fully realize how they can best be reached. That is why it is important to understand the behaviors and preferences of the largest generation that occupies Austin, the Millennials. Only when all groups are fully heard and engaged, including the Millennial cohort, is the participatory process equitable, as called for by the IACP.

Even though many people working within the City of Austin are concerned about inclusive engagement processes, no participation process guidelines or requirements are in place currently for difficult to reach groups, such as immigrants, Spanish speakers, or Millennials, in planning processes. Austin does currently has procedures in place for participation with the neighborhood planning processes. The neighborhood planning process starts with creating a Neighborhood Plan Contact Team that works as the "point of contact" between the neighborhood residents and other stakeholders with the city staff (Planning and Zoning Department 2015, 2). Corridor planning is a little different because it can cross many different neighborhoods as it connects "key destinations" and become a "series of small neighborhood centers" (City of Austin 2012, 106). For example, the Burnet Road/Anderson Land Corridor is an activity corridor designated in the IACP. The activity corridor is a "high activity corridors in north Central Austin" that transverses seven different neighborhoods that have their own neighborhood plans, if they so choose, and their own neighborhood groups (Lanane

2014). This means that the participation plans for neighborhood planning will not directly transfer over to corridor planning and different considerations should be made.

Method	Lens	Positive	Negative
Conversation Corp	Recession Effects	Spending time wisely, can choose when and where	need to make clear where feedback ends up
		3rd space location	
	Congregate	Both social and local	
		Have a clear website	Hard to search
	Digital Base		Need to utilize more common platforms
Imagine Austin Meet-Ups		Ability to talk to Staff	Cannot see results of input
	Recession Effects	Can choose topics that are most interesting	Not making any changes
		Informal	
	Congregate	3rd space location	
		Both Social and Local	
		Uses popular online platform	
	Digital Base	Moves past online	
Sound Check	Recession Effects	Informal design, come and go flow	
		Urban lifestyle	
		Both cultural and social	Strange location
		Entertainment	
		Education	
	Congregate	Food	
		Used popular online platform	
		Used social media for outreach	
	Digital Base	Used website for feedback	

Figure 9. Analysis of Current Austin Participation Methods Through the Lens of Millennial Preference.

Road Show	Recession Effects	In-depth conversation	Requires membership
	Digital Base		Difficult to use website
Speak-Up Austin	Recession Effects	Convenient	Closing the loop
	Congregate		Only exists online
	Digital Base	Online Platform	Not very sophisticated
Next Door App	Recession Effects	Free	
		Not a large time commitment	
		Don't need to join an organization	
	Congregate	Geographically based	
		Connects with local events	
	Digital Base	Apps are convenient	Outreach, not engagement
Friends of Austin Neighborhoods (FAN)		Opportunity to reach renters	Not free
		Flexible and informal	
	Recession Effects	Not necessarily joining an organization	
		Volunteer opportunities	
		Community meetings	
	Congregate	Form your own neighborhood group	
	Digital Base	Voting and news is all online	
Meeting-in-a-Box		Hands on	Hard to see effects
		in control	
	Recession Effects	Convenient	
	Congregate	Where ever, with whomever	
	Digital Base	Feedback and results clearly posted on website	

Figure 9 continued. Analysis of Current Austin Participation Methods Through the Lens of Millennial Preference.

ATX Hack for Change	Recession Effects	Hacking the system	Long time commitment
		Direct contact with city staff	
	Congregate	Group projects	
	Digital Base	Technologically based	
		Fluently speaks the digital language	
Heart Gov	Recession Effects	Free	
		Easy	
		Cheap	
	Congregate		One way communication
			Total disconnect
	Digital Base	Texting is comfortable way of communicating	

Figure 9 continued. Analysis of Current Austin Participation Methods Through the Lens of Millennial Preference.

Lessons Learned

To understand what can be done differently in the future, we first need to understand what has happened in the past. The understanding of Austin's past and the lessons learned from different process comes from two different sources for this report seen in Figure 10. The first report was compiled in 2006 and examines different practices for the planning process for five Austin neighborhoods concluding with some of the lessons learned through the processes. The second source of lesson learned is interviews with city staff who have different experiences and perceptions of the methods that have been tried in the city of Austin.

Neighborhood Stories Reports

In 2006, a study was conducted by University of Texas at Austin graduate students in the School of Architecture in Dr. Patricia Wilson's class to examine the process and results of some of Austin's neighborhood planning processes. Five different neighborhoods' planning processes were reviewed including East Cesar

Chavez, Old West Austin, Upper Boggy Creek, Central Austin combined, and East Riverside/ Oltorf combined. The five reports lead to one document outlining the results and what could be taken away from these experiences as Austin moves forward. The collection of reports is called "Neighborhood Stories" with an additional documented titled, "A Summary of Lessons Learned." The following is the most pertinent lesson learned for the Millennial generations from the "Summary of Lessons Learned" when considering the inclusiveness the methods used for planning processes:

> Austin holds regular town hall meetings to hear their citizen's ideas and issues. However, continuously it seems that this is not enough anymore. The city has realized that it is a diverse community with diverse needs. Austin has begun to come up with some innovative solutions to involve more of the population in decisions and to hear the voices of everyone. (Wilson 2006)

With Austin being composed of such a large number of Millennials, it is important to consider their diverse needs. Innovative solutions that will allow for more voices to be heard means turning away from "regular town hall meetings" (Wilson 2006).

Of the five neighborhood reports collected, "The Story of East Riverside/Oltorf Combined Neighborhood Plan" is most relevant for the purposes of this report considering East Riverside is one of the activity corridors called out in the IACP and can, therefore, be used as a learning tool for other activity corridor planning practices. This report was written by Matt Hennigan, Scott Ford and Justin Fried in 2006. The report accounted the events that transpired in the public participation process during the creation of a neighborhood plan for the East Riverside corridor and the parallel street, East Oltorf. The East Riverside/ Oltorf planning process happened before the IACP was created so the process was not informed as an activity corridor plan.

Not only is this area a relevant tool for future activity corridors, but also a tool for understanding planning process in relation to the Millennial generation in Austin considering the composition of the area. At the time of the planning process, East Riverside corridor was over 90% renters and 41% of the residents were between 18 to 24 years of age, which was about twice the rate of Austin as a whole at the time for that age group (Hennigan et al. 2006). The outcomes of this planning process can be seen

as a way to realize the importance of treating Millennials, who are 73% renters in Austin and compose 38% of the city's population with specialized methods and considerations.

From the report, there are some major takeaways that can be applied to further corridor planning processes (Figure 10). Through the process between the neighborhood and the city, the first issue that arose was that there was "no room for innovation" (Hennigan et al. 2006, 4). Another big issue was that neither "renters" nor "young residents" were mentioned as a stakeholder group (Hennigan et al. 2006, 4). By examining the demographic data, it is clear that these cohorts are very important considering their prevalence in the area (Hennigan et al. 2006, 2). The surveys that were sent out to the neighborhood to collect data for the process revealed the issue of the absence of renters in the process. In one survey, 0% of respondents were renters and only 26% in another. Considering the total renters the area was 90%, these results show that an exaggerated and "disproportionate number of homeowners participated" in the planning process (Hennigan et al. 2006, 12-13). Further, neighborhood associations from outside the planning area took control of the process to meet their own needs (Hennigan et al. 2006, 6). Those outside the planning area seemed to be focused on halting the development of more apartment complexes, which, arguably, could be in contradiction with the needs of 90% of the people who actually did live in and rent in the area.

Another important take-away from the process is, as progress slowed down, people stop coming (Hennigan et al. 2006, 3). According to a resident that was interviewed about the process, some of the meetings by city staff were "boring, dull, and hard to follow" because it seemed that the staff were uninterested and "going through the motions" (Hennigan et al. 2006, 11). After two years of continuous meetings with no tangible results, the process became too much of a time demand. The time demand, itself, "systematically excluded" groups of people (Hennigan et al. 2006, 10-13). After the fact, city staff admitted that the "implementation of recommendations is an important part of the planning process that deserves more attention" (Hennigan et al. 2006, 13). This sentiment was recognized on both sides as "residents are also waiting for tangible planning outcomes" (Hennigan et al. 2006, 13). Had some of the ideas been

manifested into a pilot project for the neighborhood, it may have helped motivate stakeholders to be involved with the plan (Hennigan et al. 2006, 13).

The last take away that can be applied to future activity corridor planning processes is that there were issues of "trust and mutual understanding" between the city staff and the neighborhood residents (Hennigan et al. 2006, 7). Out of frustration with the process, the neighbors created their own, separate zoning and land use map. This act of solidarity from the neighborhood could have been an indication to the planners that the neighborhood had a desire to be involved in the process. If the process had been more flexible, the planners could have given the neighborhood more control of the process (Hennigan et al. 2006, 4). The East Riverside planning process case shows, undermining people's skills, intelligence, ideas, interests, and time will not create lasting engagement. It also emphasizes the importance of engaging the people that are affected by the process, not just the loudest people.

Interviews with City Staff

During the interviews with six city staff from three different departments, each were asked to describe some of the lessons they learned while carrying out public participation efforts in Austin. From the interviews, there are six themes of the lessons learned that stretched across all of the personal accounts and experiences with a combination of different methods within the Austin context. These six lessons learned through past processes have the potential to shape the way new methods are formed moving forward (Figure 10).

The first lesson learned across all interviews is that the City needs to bring engagement events into the public and away from city hall. Methods that go out into the communities or hold different events in different places were reported on positively. Face-to-face engagement is irreplaceable, creating a need to engage out in the public and meet people where they are (Sanchez 2016). Building on this, when planning for events outside of city hall, location is important. The location decision needs to intentionally remove barriers to entry (Todd 2016).

The second lesson is that the participatory process should try to gain the trust of the public. Through the interviews, there were a few suggestions on how to build trust through participatory processes. The first suggestion was education. Participation processes can be used as a way to correct misinformation about planning. Another suggestion on how to create trust between the City and the public was allowing people to meet the city staff and get to know them on a personal level. This allows the residents to start thinking of city staff as people who live in Austin, too, and who want Austin to be a better place.

A third lesson that came out of the interviews is that an informal process will have higher turnout rates. Informal processes that step away from formal, governmental meetings are less intimidating, making people feel more comfortable. When people feel more comfortable, they are more willing to attend the event and are more likely to share their ideas.

The next lesson learned through listening to the city staff's experiences is that the most effective participation methods target a specific audience. Each process needs many methods to incorporate a variety of stakeholders. Each group of stakeholders are different, meaning that some groups may prefer informal meetings, such as Millennials, but others may prefer formal, traditional meetings, such as the Greatest Generation. This may seem in contrast with the last lesson, in a sense, but all stakeholders need to be included, in their own way, at the beginning of the process to make sure that it is not derailed at the end. Stakeholders include all people who are involved, which means people in the community, as well as incorporated departments. While targeting specific groups, the methods need to be relevant and speak the language of the audience.

The fifth lesson that came from the interviews is that participation in Austin is currently a long process that can lead to fatigue for both the city staff and the public. One of the suggested solutions is to include pilot projects or "pop-ups" into the participation process (Goodman 2016, Todd 2016). Pilot projects provide a quick turnaround of input to start showing results from the process. Another suggested solution to remedy planning fatigue is ensuring continued feedback loops using online resources.

The last lessoned learned through the interviews is that resources are a big issue for implementing engagement processes in Austin. Some planning processes do not show a willingness to do public participation because of the time, resources, and costs associated with engagement. On the other hand, some planning processes have ambition to do thorough engagement processes but are halted by lack of resources. The lack of a participation structure interdepartmentally puts a strain on department's resources and can cause repetition in data collection, which can be a waste of time and efforts. The six lessons learned can be taken in conjunction with the themes from the literature review of the preferences of Millennials to understand the ways that participation methods can be formed specifically for Austin Millennials.

Lessons Learned	
Neighborhood Planning Process	No room for innovation in process
	Identify stakeholders first
	Be aware of groups taking over control
	As process slows down, people stop coming
	Trust and mutual understanding is an issue
Interviews	Go to the public
	Gain trust
	Informal process have higher turnout rates
	Target specific audiences
	Quick turn around
	Resource issues

Figure 10. Lessons Learned about Participation in Austin

10-1 Transition and the Task Force for Community Engagement

The City of Austin is ripe for the introduction of new public participation methods. In 2014, Austin decided to switch the governing system to a geographically representative city council election system to be more inclusive and "open opportunities" for citizen involvement. Then in 2015, the City assembled a task force to study the state

of community engagement in Austin. They were charged with creating recommendations for future public engagement in Austin. Combined, these two current actions by the City shows a desire to create a more involved, inclusive, efficient, and equitable engagement process with Austin community.

10-1 System

Prior to the 10-1 system, Austin government was an "at-large" system for City Council. An at-large system means that anyone within the city limits can be elected for City Council. The change was made because there was concern that the system was out of date and not representative of the population, tending to be biased to the upper-middle class and not representative of the racial and ethnic composition of Austin (Lawrence 2015, 5). It was believed that these perceptions of the City Council were part of the reason for declining political participation in Austin (Lawrence 2015, 5). Because of this realization of an explanation for decreased voter turnout, a change to the system was proposed.

The change to a 10-1 system was voted on in 2014. The 10-1 system created ten districts in Austin. Each district votes for their own City Council member to represent their geographic area and all residents vote for one mayor for the City, as a whole. This system was chosen because of the belief that the change will "improve the quality of government by enhancing citizen connections with city council" (Lawrence 2015, 8). The change indicates the willingness of Austin to listen to its citizens and create a more inclusive citizenry. According to a 2015 report about civic engagement in Austin since the switch to 10-1, "additional changes need to be put in place immediately to realize 10-1's promise of creating a new relationship between the public and city government" (Lawrence 2015, 8). Through the research of the 2015 report, it was surfaced that in Austin, although the state of political participation is still lacking, there is an enthusiasm of civic participation. Further changes that will come out of the 10-1 system and the TFCE will bolster the energy and push Austin for into the future, especially regarding civic engagement.

Task Force for Community Engagement

In January of 2015, the City of Austin recognized the importance of community engagement. The Task Force for Community Engagement (TFCE) was created to address the need for a change in how public engagement processes are implemented citywide. The Task Force was charged with four responsibilities. First, the group was to create a description of all existing community engagement tools used in Austin currently (Goodall 2015, 2). Second, they were to identify "innovative techniques and technologies used across the country" for public engagement (Goodall 2015, 2). Thirdly, the Task Force was to identify the best practices and, lastly, create "recommendations for enhancing existing resources, including fiscal implications" (Goodall 2015, 2).

On January 24, the Task Force produced a "Summary of TFCE Needs Assessment" document. The assessment was a result of previous conversations, focus groups with non-profits, a workshop with boards and commissions, online surveys, and case studies. Five themes emerged from the needs assessment (Miller 2015, 1-3). The themes from the needs assessment were used to create a "compilation of consensus recommendations" on February 25. Four themes were identified with the recommendations, consolidated in Figure 11. The first theme was "make information clear, relevant and easily accessible" (Miller 2016, 1). The recommendations included redesigning the website to be more user friendly, expanding programs to have online presence, and providing accommodations for disabilities. The second theme was "make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible, and appropriate for them" (Miller 2016, 2). The recommendations included district based contact locations, partnerships with community organizations, "experimenting" with innovative interactive engagement methods, creating informal and inviting formats, and provide prioritized funding for engagement efforts (Miller 2016, 2). The third theme was "explain how input will be used and show how that input had an impact on the decision made" (Miller 2016, 3). The recommendations for this theme included always providing timely feedback on how the input was used via smart technology use as well as include and enforce public input in the boards and commissions by-laws. The fourth and last

theme was "ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has the opportunity to engage" (Miller 2016, 3). The recommendations under this theme were to create trust among underrepresented populations, give people more opportunities outside of City Hall for dialogue, and uphold a transparent process in City Council, Boards, and Commissions.

In the original resolution, the TFCE was to be disbanded after presenting the report to the City Council. The Resolution states that this was to be completed by January, 2016. This deadline has been delayed considering the final draft had not been completed, going into March of 2016.

The recommendation from the TFCE can be related back to the seven characteristics of Millennials found in the literature review to understand how the results of the Task Force will influence the engagement for Millennials. The recommendation themes all resound with the "frugal" characteristic by realizing the importance that citizen's place on their time and attention spent. Additionally, many of the recommendations are geared toward internet solutions and trying to make the website more useful and usable. These recommendations are, essentially, suggesting that the City learn the digital language, which is a big step toward creating a relationship with Millennials. Overall, the Task Force realizes that people do want to be civically involved, it is just a matter of presenting the appropriate opportunities; a similar conclusion to the one drawn by the Millennial characteristics.

Recommendations from the TFCE
Make information clear and relevant
Make it easier to give input
Explain how the input will be used and show the impact
Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has an opportunity to engage

Figure 11. Recommendation form the Task Force for Community Engagement

Looking Forward

Now is the time for a change in public engagement for Austin. The City should consider the changing and diverse population by ensuring that everyone has an opportunity for their voice to be heard. The Millennials of Austin capture some of the

changing demographic and the diversity of the population. As the City moves forward with examining how to improve civic engagement efforts, it is sensible to involve the Millennial generation because they are the largest, most diverse segment of the population. Soon they will be 40 and will be the leaders of the city and are, as a young cohort, the future of Austin.

Austin had already begun to experiment with methods for engagement outside of City Hall. These methods lay a groundwork for further innovations in public processes. City staff has the opportunity to capture the energy of the citizens around civic engagement. New methods keep the momentum of the civic engagement while avoiding fatigue in processes as the different pieces of the comprehensive plan are carried out in the years to come. The next step for the implementation process for the IACP is the activity corridor planning process for Austin. When Austin begins the next processes of the IACP, there is potential to start incorporating new processes that will engage the Millennials. An examination of cases from other cities who have seen the potential and promise in using innovative methods to engage the young cohort as they plan for the future could begin to inform the course of action for Austin.

This review of the Austin context in relation to the city's public participation legacy has some limitations that should be acknowledged moving forward with the use of this information. First of all, the review of the participation methods in this report is not a full look at all the methods used in Austin, but simply a sampling. The sampling is representative of processes that were mentioned by city staff when asked to reflect on innovative processes used in Austin. Additionally, the report was completed before the Task Force on Community Engaged has completed their tasked outlines in the original resolution. Therefore, the report was unable to give a full review and analysis of that process and results. Additionally, given the time constraints of the research process, the research was only able to talk to city staff about Austin's engagement process. The report is limited by not having the opportunity to talk to citizens that were involved in any of the processes. Without talking to the citizens, the understanding of the participation climate in Austin is subject to bias.

Chapter 5: Case Studies

Cities are beginning to realize the importance of Millennials in urban areas. Some cities are starting to recognize the value of the Millennials' input for the city's future. The selected case studies show four different examples of cities that have taken the initiative to engage the Millennial generation- a generation who is invested and prevalent in urban landscapes. The cases were chosen by following a few specific qualifications, which were formed from the literature review and the examination of the Austin context. Following the first criteria, the engagement process in the case study must specifically call out Millennials as a target audience. The process must also aim to engage this group through a participatory process, not simply ask how the Millennials would want engage in processes. The second criteria for case study selection is that the process does not necessarily need to have planning-related outcomes. This criteria understands that this report's intention is to examine methods of engagement, not results. For the final criteria, the case study cannot be an online platform, eliminating virtual engagement processes, of social media campaigns, websites, and smartphone apps.

Following these three criteria for case study selection, four cases were chosen. The selected case studies examined are: (1) the Jefferson Center's, "Up for Debate Akron" Millennial voting campaign, (2) Seattle's comprehensive plan update engagement process, (3) the Atlanta Regional Commission's "New Voices" Millennial leadership program, and (4) the Life of Vacant Spaces organization's creation and efforts in Christchurch, New Zealand. Through these case studies, some lessons about how to engage Millennials in participatory processes were illustrated through studying other processes. The lessons that come from the case studies can, then, inform the recommendations for how Austin should move forward in involving Millennials in participatory processes.

Up for Debate Akron: Akron, Ohio

In 2015, the Jefferson Center started the "Up for Debate Akron" program to engage Millennials in the Ohio political landscape. The Jefferson Center is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to encouraging citizens to engage in democratic life

in America (The Jefferson Center). The Center meets these goals through education, deliberations, and community action (The Jefferson Center). The group engages Americans in the most pressing issues in the country by using a variety of different methods to reach a range of audiences (The Jefferson Center). The Center was founded in 1974 by Dr. Ned Crosby in Saint Paul, Minnesota as a platform to discuss public policy and electoral candidates (The Jefferson Center). As the organization has grown throughout the years, the programs offered and the centers reach in the community have expanded, both conceptually and geographically (The Jefferson Center).

The "Up for Debate Akron" project was undertaken to engage Millennials in the local political conversation in Akron, Ohio. The reason the Jefferson Center focused on the city of Akron was because the political climate in Ohio was negative, making it hard to engage in a productive conversation about politics with the public (Private Interview, 2016). The negative political rhetoric was off-putting to a lot people and has resulted in a very low voting turnout rate among the Millennial generation in Akron. The Jefferson Center identified that there was a need to understand the Millennial generation and how they function to change the view point and end the pattern of disinterest in local politics (Private Interview 2016).

The first step in the Jefferson Center's process of engaging Millennials in politics was to understand why Millennials were not voting in local elections and what could be done to change this pattern. In August of 2015, they held their first of two public meetings. The intention of the public meetings was to ask what Millennials are concerned about and what the most prevalent issues surrounding local politics and policies are for the cohort. One of these meetings was held at Mustard Seed Market at Highland Square which is a large cafe in a strip mall. The other meeting was held at the North Hill Library. In total for both meetings, one person came to participate.

The poor turn-out of the public meetings convinced the Jefferson Center that they needed to change their approach and try something different to find the information they needed to move on with the process. In October of 2015, the Center held a deliberative focus group as a second attempt to answer the same questions (Eddeb, 2015). The

focus group was held on the college campus and lasted 8 hours. What was discovered at the end of the eight hours was that local elections were not on the radar for the Millennials of Akron. The generation was not making the connection from local politics to local level change. On the other hand, the focus group revealed that the cohort was very engaged in community events and local volunteer efforts.

Using the results from the focus group, the Jefferson Center had to decide how to translate these findings into a meaningful engagement with the Millennials regarding local politics. What they designed a deliberative event as a response (Private Interview, 2016). In January of 2016, the two and a half day deliberative event was held at a cooperative work space in a converted warehouse that held tech startup offices on the upper floors (Private Interview, 2016). The event reached new groups by working with more established networks in Akron who were able to conduct outreach with Millennials (Private Interview, 2016). The event was able to translate the energy for community participation to solving shared local problems. The tone of the event was informal by having an open format and serving food and drinks to participants (Private Interview, 2016). Within the informal setting, there were small groups set up by topic. Participants were able to choose the group they wanted to participate in based on their own interests (Private Interview, 2016). Every 45 mins, the groups were encouraged to switch and join a different conversation The four topics were: (1) media, (2) just and inclusive, (3) how to turn ideas into action, and (4) strategic recommendations (Private Interview, 2016).

The deliberative event was successful because the target audience, Millennials, were present at the event. Each day, 20 and 35 Millennials came to participate in the event. The increased number of people attending the event is accredited to the organization's more thorough understanding of who to contact in Akron, as well as the results of the focus group. The first meeting used radio, online community calendars, and local newspapers to advertise for the events. Connecting with community leaders led to nodes of community networks. Using these networks allowed for a deeper trust of the event (Private Interview, 2016). Another difference that can be linked to the success of the second public meeting compared to the first public meetings is the difference in

location (Private Interview, 2016). Millennials would be more inclined to meet at a new, modern space than at a library branch.

The Jefferson Center learned a few lessons about engaging the Millennial generations through their three events. First, Millennials may not have much interest in the negative politics of Akron, but they did have lot of energy around activism and community activity. It is also challenging to translate this energy into other areas; the area of politics specifically for this case. Secondly, it was discovered through the deliberative event that the lack of responsiveness to comments and information gathered from the public is a deterrent from engaging in further processes. The Jefferson Center learned of the importance of feedback from both the focus group and the deliberative event. Overall, the process taught the Center that the Millennial generation does want to be involved in future of the city. From the information gathered through the Up For Debate Akron participatory process, it was recommended that the City of Akron create meaningful engagement with Millennials instead of the city government simply trying to solve the problems on their own. Government has the responsibility to be open, transparent, and timely to foster the energy of the Millennial population in their city (Private Interview, 2016).

Seattle 2035: Seattle, Washington

Seattle 2035 is the comprehensive plan for the city of Seattle, first adopted in 1994. In 2012, the Seattle Department of Planning and Development was set with the task of updating the city development plan. Seattle's Department of Planning and Development, now the Office of Planning and Community Development, deals with comprehensive planning, research and analysis for city wide policy, community planning, implementing transit-oriented development, and housing policies for a livable city (Seattle 2035, 2016).

The state's Growth Management Act requires the cities of Washington to update their comprehensive plans to correspond with the growing population. Under the Act, Seattle was supposed to have finished the update to the plan by 2015. The city technically made this deadline by officially making some small, technical changes.

However, there was a commitment within the City to make the updated plan an inclusive process that reflects the current needs of the city. Therefore, the City and the Planning Department continued the process into 2016 with the hopes to adopt the updated plan in 2017, extending beyond legal requirements. With the extra time, the city was able to carry out a more engaging process and have a better understanding of what the city wanted to see with the revised comprehensive plan (The Northwest Urbanist 2015).

The process of public participation started by identifying and understanding all of the stakeholders involved with this process. The largest group of external stakeholders were, essentially, all of the people of Seattle. In the April 2015 "Community Engagement Progress Report," the large category of "all of the people' was broken down into "engaged audiences" and "targeted audiences." "Targeted audiences" were defined as people who "we don't typically see at our public meetings or hear from through our normal process" (Hauger and Carroll 2015, 5). Millennials were one of the three groups called out in the report as a targeted audience. However, in the February 2015 "Revised Public Participation Program" document, no methods were specifically called out to respond to the needs of the target audiences.

After understanding who needed to be engaged in the process, the planning department came up with a public participation plan. The first event was in a kick-off event. With a collaboration between the Seattle Art Museum and the planning department, the event was called "Big Ideas" and took place on a Thursday in January of 2015. The kick-off had an open house followed by "Pecha Kucha" presentations from twelve local interest speakers who were each allowed 20 images for 20 seconds each (Seattle 2035, 2014).

The next step was to hold a workshop at city hall to establish the guiding principles. From these guiding principles, four "scoping alternatives" for the updated plan of Seattle were produced. The next phase was to hold "Scoping Open Houses" to show the alternatives to the community and allow the public to comment on which of the alternative are the best fit for the future of the city. All of the open houses were held between April 7th and April 15. Each open house was at a different location throughout the city including community centers, cultural centers, and libraries. Figure 12 was

captured from a posting on a West Seattle neighborhood blog while the event was happening, exclaiming that it was "very casual" (West Seattle Blog 2014).

6:38 PM: At the meeting right now – it's VERY casual.

Easels around the Youngstown theater, a table with some literature, a few city people to answer your questions, big pads to write your thoughts on.

Figure 12. Image from an Open House Scoping Meeting. Source: West Seattle Blog. http://westseattleblog.com/?s=seattle+2035

According to the participatory progress report, in "Appendix A," titled "List of Public Engagement Events," the Seattle 2035 team hosted a "young professionals happy hour" on May 8th. The event was held at GGLO, a local interior design firm and geared towards young professionals in urban design and architecture professions. The description of the event appeals to only a very specific audience of educated, working Millennials with an interest in design and architecture. There is no documentation on any websites or social media about this event (Department of Planning and Development 2015a).

The next event in the participatory process for Seattle 2035 was a large format event to introduce the decisions that were made from the scoping open houses. The event was called "Key Directions." It was held at the Seattle Center, which is a large indoor and outdoor space in the central city. The event was set up like an open house but also had round tables in the center for conversation and activities (Figure 13). The activities included creating a street intersection using markers and cut out of bikes, people, cars, etc. (Figure 13). There were also food vendors and entertainment, as can be seen in Figure 14 of a break dancing group.

Figure 13. Key Directions Open House and activity tables. Source: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection Flickr, https://www.flickr.com/photos/30516210@N02/21304904660/in/album-72157658680147006/.

Figure 14. Break Dancing Troupe entertaining at the Key Directions Open House. Source: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection Flickr, https://www.flickr.com/photos/30516210@N02/21304904660/in/album-72157658680147006/.

According to the "Seattle 2035 Process Timeline," an "online open house" was opened for comments on the website, which extended through the second half of the process design to gather online feedback (Department of Planning and Development 2015b). During the second phase of the participation and planning process, five more open houses were conducted. These "Draft Plan" Open Houses were held between Oct 19 and Nov 14 of 2015. This round of open houses were held at different locations than the last phase. The locations included community centers, a senior center, and a college campus.

The process aimed to include Millennials and get outside the normal audience by including extra spectacles and events to make the process fun. They also used their well-designed and easy to use website to clearly relay the timeline for the process and record all ideas that were gathered through each event and open house. The website provided a full feedback loop and provided a way to give comments online without relying on the internet for participation. Additionally, they held an event specifically

aimed at Millennials. The event was a casual setting with food and drinks among common, young professionals. The happy hour gave Millennials a place to mingle and meet while also participating in the Seattle 2035 process. However, the event was for a specific group within the targeted Millennial cohort of those who had a profession in the design field, creating a very limiting scope.

New Voices: Atlanta, Georgia

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is a ten county regional planning agency that was established in 1947 (ARC 2013, 5). Typically, ARC's processes are reactive to issues instead of proactive to change. However, in 2014, the Commission made a resolution to be proactive in shaping the future of the changing region. ARC see the Millennial generation as the key to making positive changes. To meaningfully engage Millennials in the planning decisions of the region, ARC created "New Voices."

To begin their process of engaging Millennials, they first wanted to understand the generation's characteristics. Through their research, they came to understand that Millennials' urban preferences are much different than the generation before them. With this initial information, ARC wanted to understand more about how Millennials want to be engaged, starting with interviews of local Millennials. After the Millennial interviews, ARC was able to create a process that was attractive to Millennials and representative of the cohort's diversity of needs.

After completing the research and interviews, ARC hosted the "New Voices Conversations" focus groups. From the interviews, the importance of direct invitations was recognized. Millennials were more responsive when directly asked to come to an event and are more likely to engage if they are personally invited (New Voices 2015). This knowledge formed the basis of the structure for the New Voices Conversations. Five conversations would happen throughout the 10 county region. For each conversation, there was an invite sent out to the "Site Co-Chairs." The co-chairs of each conversation would then be responsible for inviting ten people to form the "Recruitment Volunteer" team. Each person on the Recruitment Volunteer team would, in turn, be

responsible for personally inviting their Millennial friends, classmates, and co-workers to attend the Conversation. Overall, 119 Millennials attended the five focus groups (ARC 2014, 7). This structure of personal invitations is a very clever way to tap into the local and social preferences of Millennials, abandoning newspaper or radio announcements that are not as effective for this generation (ARC 2014, 7). Of the 119 attendees, the ethnic makeup of the participants was very comparable to the composition of Millennials in the Atlanta Region, with an underrepresentation of Hispanic Millennials and an over representation of "other" ethnic groups (ARC 2014, 7). The New Voices Conversations participants were 39% White, 32% Black, 7% Hispanic, and 22% other including Asian, whereas the Millennial generation in the Atlanta Region is composed of 38% White, 38% Black, 16% Hispanic, and 9% other (ARC 2014, 7).

The focus groups allowed for the ARC to have a deeper understanding of what Millennials wanted to see in the region, what their preferences and concerns were with livability in the Atlanta region, and how they prefer to interact with governmental agencies. From this information, the ARC produced recommendations on how to best move forward with the New Voices engagement process:

- Consider hosting a Culminating Conversation that invites participants from all five conversations to hear the composite feedback. It is a good way to begin to establish connections with the millennial population and to invite them to the ARC table. But, be prepared to say what the next steps are. They will want to hear what impact the conversations will have, what will be different because I gave my time and voice.
- Reach out to millennials to invite them to ARC events and activities using new outreach strategies, new messages, new mediums, new spaces and new meeting formats and, where possible, ask them to help with the outreach to other millennials.
- Select one or two of their suggestions for implementation and provide the feedback that their input has created the action.
- Create an actionable opportunity and invite the conversation participants to "do" something.
- The Citizen Recruitment process could be valuable for ARC or its member communities to use in future resident engagement efforts, especially when ARC wants to hear from a cross section of residents. The process requires time, diligence, and organizational capacity to create the recruitment teams, but the results can be striking. And there's another benefit worth considering. Building teams of well- connected people to

assist in organizing meetings builds grassroots leadership and involvement with ARC. Once the teams are familiar with ARC, they assist with future resident engagement efforts or as a grassroots sounding board for ARC proposals. (ARC 2014, 39-40)

From the findings in this report, the New Voices program moved forward with three new, intertwined engagement methods. ACR created the "Millennial Advisory Panel in Action." From March to September of 2015, the panel held meet-ups, mixers, and dinner parties to bring Millennials into conversations with leader, elected officials, and each other. The panel is made up of 135 Millennials and is led by the two youngest ARC board members.

The New Voices panel also hosted a series of "Millennial Mixers." The first series of mixers identified challenges and interests for the 10 county region. After these mixers, the Millennials on the panel were encouraged to go back into their own communities and host informal "Civic Dinner Parties" over a four month period. These dinner parties were a way to disseminate the ideas and information that had formed around the conversations at the Mixers while hearing feedback within these smaller, dispersed communities. The information heard at the dinner parties was then brought back to the next round of mixers. The 35 dinner parties engaged an additional 300 people.

At the second round of Millennial Mixers, the panelists came up with specific challenges to address. These challenges were then translated into eight "Action Teams." Each action team came up with solutions to the challenges they saw that were facing the region and pitched them to community leaders. This put control over the whole process, from talking to ideas to solutions (New Voices 2015).

Overall, a few key lessons were learned in the beginning that informed the process. First, Millennials are a social cohort and they want to be invited. Second, Millennials want to see immediate change. Third, Millennials do not just want to be part of the talking and listening phase of participation, but they actually want to do something to be more involved in the process (ARC 2014, 39-40).

Life in Vacant Spaces: Christchurch, New Zealand

The case study process for Christchurch, New Zealand, is a unique case because it was a process *started* by Millennials, then retroactively endorsed and supported by the city council and the Mayor. In 2011, a destructive earthquake damaged the infrastructure and community of Christchurch (Swope 2015). For years afterward up to current times, there exists a large amount of vacant buildings and demolition sites as a result of the earthquake. As the city slowly rebuilds the necessary infrastructure, grassroots organizations started popping up in the left over spaces to rebuild the community (Swope 2015). "Life in Vacant Spaces" (LIVS) is an organization established in June 2012 that was a reaction by the city to multiple different creative solutions that were appearing around the city after the earthquake. The organization is an "umbrella organisation working on behalf of the transitional movement" in coordination with the groups that were formed as these creative solutions took off (Live in Vacant Spaces 2013).

The main purpose of the organization is to cut through the red tape by lowering the "barriers and risks" for those actively trying to make a difference in their community. In an interview with the Mayor, she notes that a lot of those that are involved in the temporary activations and solutions are "young people [who] just want to get on and do stuff and yet they find themselves dealing with the council over regulation" (Swope 2015). Each activation requires coordination with the property owner, proper permissions, and other paperwork for health and safety. All of these barriers can deter Millennials from carrying out these productive innovations.

FESTA, Greening Rubble, and Gap Filler were some of the first and most well-known grassroots organizations to start transforming the urban fabric of Christchurch at the human scale (Life in Vacant Spaces, 2013). FESTA stands for Festival of Transitional Architecture. In addition to annual festivals, FESTA held a number of events and projects such as "milk fights;" a moveable event platform called "Arcades Project;" and a light show that illuminates the future of the city called "CityUps." FESTA was in operation from 2012 to 2014. Another one of the initial organizations was called Greening the Rubble. Greening the Rubble is a charitable organization that creates pop-

up parks in vacant spaces. Gap Filler is the third well- known original grassroots organization that inspired the creation of LIVS. In their own words from their website, Gap Filler is "a creative urban regeneration initiative that facilitates a wide range of temporary projects, events, installations and amenities in the city" (Gap Filler, 2011). Ryan Reynolds is the co-founder of Gap Filler and one of the founders of LIVS. Through his experiences with Gap Filler, he realized that the biggest problem that projects like this run into is permitting. Using his knowledge from running the grassroots, activation organization at Gap Filler, he was able to create LIVS in such a way that it makes similar activations easier and more productive (Syben 2012, 27).

Instead of trying to shut down the illegal activations and prevent others from being created, the city council worked with the community and the grassroots organization to create LIVS as a "community broker" (Swope 2015). LIVS, as the community broker, was created to represent all the different grassroots activation groups and help them meet the proper requirements without it becoming too much of a hassle or hindrance to the progress. LIVS now operates to work with landowners, the city council, and creative Millennials trying to make a difference. In Christchurch, Millennials wanted to make a change in their community and took it on themselves. The city made this possible by first understanding the benefit and desire of these interventions, and then reacting by working with the community to come up with a solution to make positive change possible.

Conclusion

The four case studies exemplify divergent ways of engaging the Millennial that different cities have applied in their own participation processes. By analyzing the case studies, prevalent conceptions from each of the processes can be denoted.   The concepts uncovered form the four case studies can then be compared to each over across all cases to draw out common themes. Figure 15 shows how the participation concepts from all the cases were categorized, logically to create themes of engagement process used for Millennials. It was found that the overarching themes of the Millennial

engagement processes explored above were that the processes were actionable, personal, meaningful, and informal.

Themes	Concepts	Case Study
Actionable	Millennials want to be involved in the solution of the problem	Up for Debate Akron
	Choose some of feedback to be immediately implemented	New Voices
	Actionable opportunities to "do" something	
	Barriers can deter progress from action oriented solutions	LIVS
Personal	Understanding existing networks	Up for Debate Akron
	Processes that are responsive aren't valued	
	Direct Invitations	New Voices
	Invite back to hear feedback, must prepare and share next steps	
	Dinner Parties- go in groups and hang out	
	Millennials are social	
	Work with them, not against them	LIVS
Meaningful	Millennials need to be meaningfully engaged, not just asked to answer survey	Up for Debate Akron
	There is energy around activism and the community	
	Clear feedback loop	Seattle 2035
	Give Millennials control over the process	New Voices
	Millennials are activating in finding positive solutions for their community	LIVS
Informal	Location matters	Up for Debate Akron
	Entertainment	Seattle 2035
	Third space meet up locations	
	Dinner parties and mixers	New Voices
	Eliminate barriers and formal paperwork	LIVS

Figure 15. Themes of Participatory Methods for Engaging Millennials from Case Studies.

Each of the case studies examined in this chapter have limitations to their influence and scope that should be observed. For the Up for Debate Akron case study

there are a few limitations to consider. First, the outreach was focused on college campuses which would only be capturing those between the ages of 18 and 21 with a higher education within the Millennial the population in Akron. Additionally, the process was limited considering it was only a few month long and then the Jefferson Center organization left Akron. This means that the case study is limited by time constants. For the Seattle 2035 case study, the limitation exists because there is no record of the Millennial target audience as a separate process track. The Millennials were called out in their Community Engagement Progress Report. However in their "Revised Public Participation Program" document, none of the target audiences were actually called out. This means that the process did not follow up on its initial intention of Millennials engagement. Secondly, there is no record of the young professional happy hour; there are no flyers, no announcements, no photos, and no recorded feedback. Without documentation, it is as if it did not happen at all. Additionally, "young professionals" in the architecture and urban design field is such a narrow subsector of the Millennials that it cannot be said to have been representative of the cohort through that one event. The New Voices case study from the Atlanta region is limited by the lack of data collection during each part of the process. The New Voices' processes did not report on the demographics of the attendees at the mixers or the diner parties. Because of this oversight, it is hard to see how this process could apply to a larger audience and it is impossible to understand how diverse of a process it was, overall. Lastly, the LIVS case study from Christchurch was limited by the scope of the audience. LIVS only serves a subsector of the generation, mostly focusing on the art and architecture based projects.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

Through the literature review, the Austin contextual information, and the four selected case studies, this report has intended to answer the research question: "What types of participatory planning methods can the City of Austin apply to encourage greater engagement with the Millennial generation through methods geared specifically toward the cohort as the city moves forward with the next steps of the IACP implementation process of the planning for the activity corridors?" To understand how all of these pieces fit together in answering this question, this chapter will first summarize all of the themes that the literature review and Austin context discovered. Next, the report will compare the themes consolidated from the case studies' findings to the characteristics of the Millennials abstracted from the literature review. These results will then be applied to the Austin context to give the best and most appropriate recommendations for the activity corridor planning process.

Summary of Report

The literature review discussed major theories related to participation across generations and discussed the defining features of the Millennial generation. All of these ideas tie together and inform Millennial engagement methods in planning participation processes. The summary of the report will review the concepts examined throughout the research and will allow the concepts and themes to be seen together as intertwined ideas with the purpose of connecting to the main research objective.

First, Zukin et al defined developmental categories for generational changes:

- Learned behavior through education and parenting
- Key events
- Long-term trends

Next, we examined Ben Berger's theory of 21st Century participation:

taste → attention → energy

Then, Castell et al. debunked myths about Millennials leading to four relevant conclusions about the generation:

- Millennials are community based. These communities involve online communities, however, online engagement is not a substitute for face-to-face engagement.
- Millennials are busy which means they require immediate returns on emotional investment. Therefore, cities should respect citizen's time.
- Millennials are investing at the local level. They like to be seen and they like to congregate. They also invest time in local issues by volunteering. This energy should be channeled in fun, inventive, and imaginative ways.
- Millennials need to see the connection to how and where their time and money is being spent.

Finally, the literature reflected on the importance of engaging Millennials in participatory planning processes:

- Millennials are a large cohort, especial in urban areas, and enjoy urban living.
- This cohort is underrepresented in participatory processes traditionally, in many aspects. Traditionally underrepresented groups that overlap with Millennials are:
  - Young
  - Diverse
  - Low income
  - Renters

In the Austin Context chapter, a deep examination of the Millennial composition within the city of Austin was explored. The current methods of participation were examined through the lens of Millennial characteristics. Additionally, lessons learned from past neighborhood planning in Austin were studied to how the history of planning in Austin can inform the future for positive planning processes. The 2006 East Riverside Planning process provided many cautionary notes to understanding the limitations before moving forward with a new process:

- The process left no room for innovation
- Renters and young residents, though the largest demographic present on the corridor, were not identified as stakeholder which derailed the validity of the process.
- Outside neighborhood groups interfered, again, putting into question the validity of the process.
- As the process slowed down over details, people stopped coming. The long process systematically excluded people with the time demand. None of the ideas and input the residents gave were manifested so people lost interest and city staff got bored too.
- All in all, a lack of trust and mutual understanding were core issues to the process.

Another avenue used to understand the history of public participation in Austin was interviews with city staff. Overall, the interviews resulted in six lessons learned:

- The City needs to out go to the public, away from City Hall.
- The process needs to gain trust of the public through education and meeting the city staff on a personal level.
- Informal processes have higher turnout rates.
- Each process needs to target specific audiences through different methods.
- Engagement processes should not be long and time consuming, which is currently the norm in Austin. Processes need quicker turnaround times by implementing things such as pilot projects with constant feedback.
- A lack of resources inhibits departments from completing fully inclusive processes.

The Task Force for Community Engagement (TFCE) has been figuring out best practices of engagement in Austin during the same time frame that this report was written. The TFCE produced recommendations for how to better conduct community engagement processes in Austin into the future:

- Make information clear and relevant.
- Make it easier to give input.
- Explain how input will be used and show impact.
- Ensure that everyone who cares about an issue or is impacted has an opportunity to engage.

Together, this summary of themes and categories from the literature review chapter and the Austin context chapter is a list of guiding principles. The guiding principles can be used to inform future participatory methods in the planning process in Austin when targeting the Millennial audience. The summary combines ideas about generations, participation, characteristics, and lessons learned leading the process of participatory design for the targeted audience of Austin Millennials.

Case Study Results

The four selected case studies reviewed in the previous chapter provide some intriguing lessons of how to engage Millennials in engagement processes. From the case studies, four themes emerged that crossed over each of the four studied

processes. The themes are four key components of any methods that are designed to engage the Millennial generation. By using Berger's theory of "taste → attention → energy," the themes are built around the foundation of seven characteristics of the Millennial generation that were teased out of the literature review (Berger 2011, 11). To recap, the characteristics of Millennials produced from the literature review are:

1. Long adolescence
2. Frugal with time, money, and attention
3. Civically engaged
4. Social
5. Local
6. Cultural
7. Digital Natives

The characteristics of the generation represent the "taste" aspect of Berger's theory. Understanding the specific tastes of the generation is the starting point to getting the cohorts attention for the participatory process. The next step is to hold their "attention" by using the understanding of their tastes to design a participatory process that best fits their tastes and will be most appealing to their preferences. From the case studies, four themes emerged from examining how the four case studies captured the Millennials attention through the process design:

1. Actionable
2. Personal
3. Meaningful
4. Informal

The first theme suggests that a process that appeals to Millennials should be "actionable." This generation wants to see the change and be part of the solutions, so the process design should include actionable opportunities. Actionable opportunities means hands-on methods that create physical results in comparison to leaving a sticky note with ideas on a whiteboard or simply creating a social media platform. Millennials want to draw lines of the road, not lines on a map. This theme clearly relates to three of the Millennials defined characteristics. Actionable engagement connects to Millennials characteristics of being frugal, civically engaged, and local. Through actionable processes, Millennials will get an immediate return on their time and emotional

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investment in a process. Being able to have hands-on involvement taps into the civic engagement tendencies, getting beyond the talking and listening form of participation. Additionally, Millennials are concerned about local issues, so creating opportunities for them to actually make a difference in their immediate surroundings will appeal to their tastes. Following the logic of these characteristic preferences in conjunction with the "actionable" theme, processes that go beyond simply seeking input from participants and allow participation in the process of problem solving have the potential to capture the attention of Millennials. However, any action that a citizen wants to take to improve their own neighborhood requires many different steps, forms, and permissions, especially in Austin. Actionable opportunities become more of a possibility if barriers are removed.

The second theme that was prevalent across all four case studies was that the most successful participatory processes have a "personal" component. Having a personal process design reflects back on the Millennials characteristics of being social, Digital Natives, and frugal. Millennials social characteristics boils down to the desire of being surrounded by friends. If the invitations are sent out by friends, to friends, then the invitee would already be aware that there are other people they know attending the event. Personal invitations assure Millennials that the event is not just a group of strangers and really taps into the root of the social characteristic. The "New Voices" case study showed, the personal invites catered to the social preferences of Millennials, as well at the Digital Natives. Through the New Voices process of personal invitations, people felt more compelled to participate rather than being invited via a mass invite on the internet. Building off of this point, Millennials are so accustomed to digital media that they can become immune to large "email blasts." (Bradshaw 2013, 4). Personal invites through networks that Millennials are already familiar with is another way to incorporate the "personal" theme, as can also be seen through the "Up for Debate" process. Additionally, public processes that are designed with a personal outreach strategy will be more appealing to Millennials, who are characterized as being frugal with their attention, as the process begins with engaging them emotionally. In this way, these tastes can be translated into attention through creating a process that inspires a

personal experience. Personal experience in a participatory process really deals with the meeting format as well as invitation and outreach. For example, in contrast to lecturing, a personal experience within the meeting would mean holding small table discussions. Another example would be to introduce planners and city staff at a personal level, not a professional level, giving a more genuine connection between planners and the public.

The third theme coming out of the analysis of the case studies is that the participatory process should be "meaningful." Having a meaningful process for Millennials connects back to their characteristics of being civically engaged and being culturally aware as well as being Digital Natives. The characteristic of being civically engaged is translated into a meaningful process from the root. Millennials are civically engaged because they were brought up to volunteer and to take leadership responsibilities within their communities. These types of civic engagements are inherently meaningful. It is reasonable, then, that their taste for civic engagement would translate into attention through meaningful engagement methods. Meaningful engagement is important because Millennials enjoy doing things of importance that feed their emotional investment immediately. Additionally, as Digital Natives, Millennials have grown numb to many things that are thrown at them via the internet daily. This means, the message has to speak to them and be meaningful enough that they will feel compelled to turn their attention to it.

A process that is "informal" is the last theme pulled from the case studies for participatory methods geared towards Millennials. Informal participatory methods set a tone that is more comfortable to Millennials than a government process. Informal processes gain Millennials' attention by tapping into their characteristics of having a long adolescence, being frugal, and being civically engaged. Informal processes do not require a commitment to an organization and are welcoming to "schmoozers." The long adolescence of Millennials have lead them to be schmoozers longer, which is, at the core, informal. Being frugal with time also feeds into having an informal process. An informal processes creates a fun and positive environment that allows for immediate emotional satisfaction, compared to sitting through other people's negative comments

such as the common two minute at the microphone rules at town hall meeting tend to become (Todd 2016). Designing informal processes appeals to the civic engagement characteristic by stepping away from political processes. Informal methods for participatory planning processes was also mentioned as a theme in the interviews with city staff, showing the potential for more of these processes within the Austin context.

These four themes from the case studies in conjunction with the other themes that came out of the literature and the context study, outline how participatory processes can be designed to target Millennial populations. These themes are the ways to think about Millennial participation when designing a process that has Millennials as the main audience. It is important to understand how these vary from other audiences. By first understanding the tastes of the generation, the attention of the generation was extracted. Catching the attention of Millennials will mean taking radically different approaches to participatory methods than traditional methods and will take careful consideration on how they are planned.

It is necessary to keep in mind that Millennials are just one of the targeted audiences. Creating participatory method solutions for Millennials is not the answer for all. However, as we discovered, Millennials do include a large swath of different audiences, so holding their attention leads to the possibility of gaining the attention of other, overlapping, hard to reach populations. Additionally, the four guiding themes of actionable, personal, meaningful, and informal do not necessarily exclude anyone. It can be argued that the four themes are actually applicable across all modern day urban residence.

Case Study Theme	Millennial Characteristics
Actionable	Frugal, Civically Engaged, Local
Personal	Social, Digital Natives, Frugal
Meaningful	Civically Engaged, Cultural, Digital Natives
Informal	Long Adolescence, Frugal, Civically Engaged

Figure 16. Relationship of Case Study Themes to the Millennials Characteristics.

Conclusions

      The overview of the findings from the literature review, the Austin context, and the case studies align with the original hypotheses from the introduction. The original ideas that were hypothesized about the Millennial generation's were that this cohort would have different characteristics and behaviors than past generations and that variations will lead to different needs for most effective engagement processes. Through the literature review, these hypotheses were supported. The world in which Millennials grew up in was different than the world that any other generation knew and this greatly affects how they function in society, including their public engagement needs and expectations. Next, the report hypothesized that Millennials were civically engaged, despite myths otherwise. Through research of reports about Millennials in the literature review, this hypothesis was found to be true. Finally, the initial ideas of what types of methods would be most appealing to the Millennial generation were methods that create short term results with fast turnover rates. The research verified that these methods would be effective means of engagement as can be seen through the "actionable" theme that was abstracted from the case studies. Moreover, the report expanded beyond these initial ideas for engagement methods and adds more layers for methods that could attract Millennials. Through the case study research, it was found that methods for Millennials should not only be actionable but also, meaningful, personal, and informal. However, it is important to remember that the research was particularly narrow in view considering all of the resources defined Millennials to include only the highly educated portion of the generation.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

The findings from the literature review define the characteristics of Millennials to understand their taste. The findings from the case studies use the tastes to capture Millennials attention. Ben Berger theorizes that energy is the next step to follow attention. It is left to the initiative of the City of Austin staff to transform the attention of Millennials into energy around participation by creating a fully comprehensive and thorough engagement processes with the future planning endeavors from the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan (IACP). The next planning process for Austin to begin on coming from the IACP is the activity corridor planning process. As learned from the past East Riverside Corridor planning process, understanding the demographic and stakeholders is a key starting point for effective public processes. Using the lessons for the East Riverside Corridor as well as from interviews and the case studies, the future corridor planning processes are perfectly as starting point for working with Millennials as a priority target audience. The activity corridor planning process is starting after six years of public participation: three years of community engagement through the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan immediately followed by another three years of the code rewrite participatory process. At this point in time, both the public and the planners are experiences planning fatigue. On top of this, there are over 20 different activity corridors identified in Austin on the Growth Concept Map that all need a plan. Given Millennials propensity for being involved in solutions, enjoying the urban lifestyles that the activity corridor through the IACP wants to produce, and for wanting to be involved in action, planners could have natural allies with the Millennial generation as the planners begin to work on the next planning process in Austin.

The overall goal of this research report is to provide recommendation for engaging Millennials for the City of Austin as they implement the further planning processes from IACP. This report followed Berger's theory for participation in the 21st Century that energy follows attention and attention follows taste. So far, the report has

examined "taste" by determining unique characteristics of the Millennials. These characteristics are: (1) Long adolescence, (2) Frugal with time, money, and attention (3) Civically engaged, (4) Social, (5) Local, (6) Cultural, and (7) Digital Natives. Next, the cast studies examined "attention" by determining four themes for Millennial methods. These themes are (1) Actionable, (2) Personal, (3) Meaningful, and (4) Informal. The next step is "energy" and will be the organizing idea behind the recommendations for how to use the information from the research to move forward.

Basically, by following Berger's ideas, the recommendation for the engagement process for Millennials is to use the ideas of taste and attention as an outline and guiding principles for the targeted processes. However, if Austin planners moves forward with engaging Millennials as a target audience, they should recognize the small scope of the definition for Millennials used in the literature examined by this report. Austin can then take this as an opportunity to go beyond just the well-educated portion of Millennials and reach others that are tangential to the defined cohort. Austin can use these same guidelines but first, spend more time researching specific characteristics and tastes of those who fall just outside of the definition of Millennials used for this report. In Chapter 4, it was discovered through demographic information that the Millennial generation in Austin is a complex mix of people. This means that the definition for an Austin "Millennials" should, first, be broadened with further research for a deeper understanding of the socio-economic complexities of this generation.

One recommendation born from the research is to use personal invites to Millennials in Austin when starting a new participatory process. The typical outreach methods of going through neighborhood association and churches leave Millennials invisible. The research has brought to light that Millennials do not join organizations as much as generations before them, such as churches or neighborhood associations, meaning that these networks do not reach them as well. The culture of non-joiners leaves a gap between outreach methods and those who are trying to be reached. This gap necessitating more creative routes to reach Millennials. An example of a creative solution to this problem was seen through the extended network of personal invitations to the "New Voices" participation.   Additionally, the lesson of not reaching people in

new ways was seen in the "Up for Debate Akron" case study. The Jefferson Center has much more success with their process when using existing, trusted networks to reach Millennials than the traditional media outlets. Keep in mind that Millennials include renters, minorities, and low income residents. All four of these groups are invisible if the outreach and participatory methods continue to focus on member organizations and are not altered to fit the demographic. Also, remember that Millennials are social. Having personal invites will let them know that these participation events will be attended by their friends and they will not be sitting among strangers. Being around friends can also make the process more "meaningful" because they will feel more connected to the process.

With the themes discovered from research, another possible solution recommended for Austin to engage Millennials is "Tactical Urbanism." Tactical Urbanism is defined as quick, cheap changes for lasting results (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 4-6). The ideas and essence of Tactical Urbanism is in line with the themes of participatory process and the characteristics of Millennials. The Millennial cohort and the Tactical Urbanism method share the characteristics of being cheap with fast results, and both focus on real solutions to local problems, similar to the LIVS case study in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Recall, the LIVS organization was born out of a movement of local, young activists implementing small changes around the city to respond to the lack of community infrastructure in their city. They saw the need for change and also realized that the city was not able to provide the solutions they needed considering the large infrastructure projects the city was completing, first, in reaction to the earthquake. The Millennials of New Zealand took it into their own hands to make their own solutions to the local problems that their local community was experiencing. Although these changes were not permanent, they became a way to express with the citizens wanted in their city. The city recognized the positive results of these tactical intervention and created LIVS to maintain the momentum. The projects that LIVS supports through these other organizations in Christchurch are not specifically called "Tactical Urbanism," but they do follow the same concepts.

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Allowing Millennials to be part of actionable, cheap, fast, and local changes aligns with their values and tastes. Tactical Urbanism ideals and goals relates to six of the defined characteristics. It speaks to both the 'long adolescence" and 'frugal" characteristics considering the projects have real results but do not require a commitment. Additionally, the Tactical Urbanism projects typically aim to improve urban living conditions, which is a value of the urban dwelling cohort. Tactical Urbanism allows for *meaningful* civic engagement. Being able to paint bike lanes or set up a pocket park is a way to be civically engaged that is also meaningful. The project is a physical act with physical results. Being seen doing public projects and creating a community space contribute to the "social" characteristics. Projects of this type are intrinsically local by creating local solutions to identified community problems. Creating these projects as a community, connects people to their surrounding and their neighbors while also contributing to place-making, which really connects to the "cultural" characteristic and falls within the "personal" theme.

Community projects, such as Tactical Urbanism and projects supported by LIVS, can lay on a spectrum from sanctioned to unsanctioned (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 9). The spectrum shows that Tactical Urbanism can start from the top and affect the bottom but it can also originate at the bottom and incorporate the top. As the city planners begin the activity corridor planning process, there has been talk of city initiated Tactical Urbanism projects. If the city starts implementing these projects from the top down, there should first be some doors opened that could allow for similar reactions and solutions from the bottom up, such as what the city of Christchurch implemented with LIVS. If the city is introducing Tactical Urbanism into an area, there should be room and opportunity for active, interested community members to expand on these methods to start finding their own solutions for local problems. Encouraging such positive change to be formed out of the City initiated interventions requires a systematic change first. The City has the opportunity to set up an organization similar to Christchurch's LIVS prior to their own experimentation with Tactical Urbanism. Creating an organization that helps interested Millennials get through the paperwork and connects them to the right

people, interdepartmentally, will pave new avenues for positive change throughout Austin.

City planners have the opportunity to create avenues for citizens to experiment with their own Tactical Urbanism projects before planners start their own projects. Establishing clear avenues or an organization like LIVS to work with citizens ideas for small improvement has the potential to empower the public to take the lead on similar projects. Implementing a way to cut through the red tape would create a "win-win" situation between the planners the interested and active citizens- potentially the 38% of Austin Millennials. Millennials prefer to get involved by doing "something" and seeing that "something" get done. Planners can also get frustrated by not seeing the results of their efforts. Millennials and planners can work together as natural allies as the corridor planning process gets under way.

Personal invitations, Tactical Urbanism, and implementing a program to cut through red tape are only a few recommendations for what the City of Austin can do to start engaging the Millennial generation. The mentioned recommendations were born from the themes brought out of the case studies for participatory process in combination with the Millennial characteristics. Starting with characteristics in combination with the themes when creating a participatory process follows Berger's theory of energy follows attention, attention follows taste. Further processes and process design for Millennials should start with these themes and characteristics, understanding how they align with the cohort. Fully understanding the cohort will jumpstart the participatory process to move it in the right direction of translating Millennial attention into energy around the process.

The research report has created the building blocks for how to design the best possible participatory process for the Millennial generation target audience in Austin, Texas. The literature reviewed identified "taste." The case studies provided an outline for "attention." To move forward with producing an energetic process, it is necessary to fully understand these two components while also making sure to keep in mind lessons learned from Austin's planning past. Further processes also need to consider demographics of the young city. Millennials are an important piece of the population and

Austin has the opportunity to create targeted public process as the next planning processes commence. The 21st Century citizens are ready to help shape the future of the city with modern practices. Is Austin ready?

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Vita

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This report was typed by the author.