

CENTERING RESIDENTS IN THE DESIGN & SCALING OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

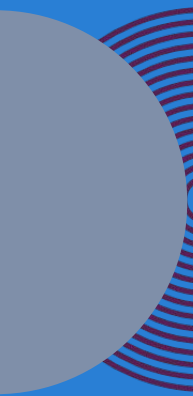
Milzy Carrasco
Director of Neighborhood Engagement
City of Lancaster, PA



PROUDLY BASED IN
Lancaster, PA
a Certified Welcoming community.



CITY OF LANCASTER, PA



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES





D.O.N.E.

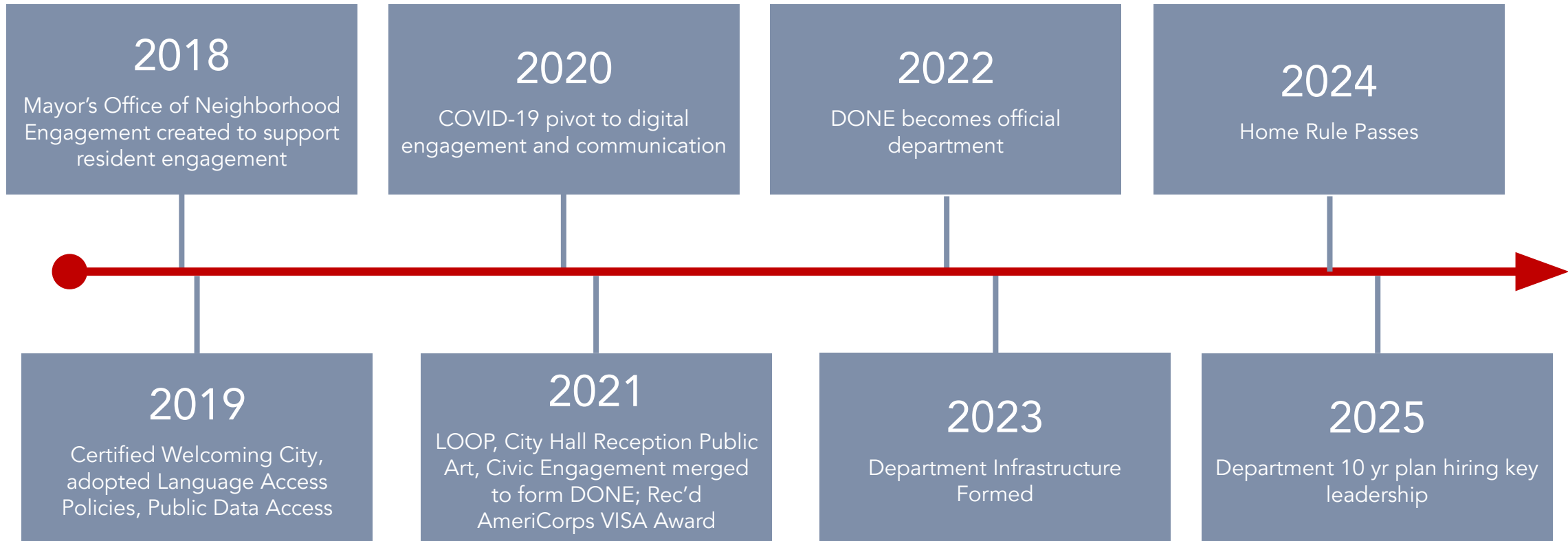
Mission

To connect and empower Lancaster's diverse communities by fostering civic participation, enhancing access to language services, and promoting the city's cultural and tourism assets. Through collaboration, inclusion, and innovation, we aim to strengthen community ties and celebrate the uniqueness of every neighborhood.

Vision

A Lancaster where all residents, regardless of language or background, are actively engaged in shaping their community's future. A city that embraces its cultural diversity, celebrates its history, and thrives through inclusive civic participation and vibrant tourism.

INSTITUTIONALIZING ENGAGEMENT



DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT



Milzy Carrasco

Director of
Neighborhood
Engagement



Abraham Milano

Engagement
Coordinator



Yazmin Way

Special Events &
Programs Manager



Joshua F. Beltre

Engagement
Specialist



Zayra Falu

Language Access
Coordinator



CITY OF
LANCASTER

SCALING ENGAGEMENT BY CITY SIZE

Small City

(Under 50K)

1. Guiding principles in plans
2. Limited programs (grants, clean-ups)
3. Public comment & surveys
 - Budget: \$50K–\$150K
 - 1 PT/shared engagement staff

Med City

(50K–250K)

1. Formal policy with equity goals
2. Multiple programs (microgrants, academies)
3. Forums, pop-ups, digital tools
 - Budget: \$250K–\$1M+
 - 2–5 dedicated staff

Large City

(250K+)

1. Comprehensive, legal mandates
2. Full suite: budgeting, civic tech, design labs
3. Institutionalized citywide cycles
 - Budget: \$1M–\$10M+
 - 10–50+ staff in full department



EMBEDDING ENGAGEMENT ACROSS GOVERNMENT



Procurement & Contracting

Require engagement plans in RFPs; score vendors on public involvement strategies.



Capital & Project Planning

Hold pre-design sessions ' use co-design approaches for capital investment.



Grants & Funding

Use participatory review panels; include community in grant decisions-making.



Budgets & Allocations

Dedicate 1-3% of total project budgets to engagement activities and facilitation.



Policy Development

Host forums and working sessions prior to ordinance drafting and introduction.



Hiring & Workforce

Engage residents and staff in developing roles , expectations, and interview panels.



Evaluation & Reporting

Develop public dashboards and storytelling tools with community input.



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LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR ENGAGEMENT

- Engage Lancaster
- Engagement Tracking & Reporting
- Language Line & Video Remote Interpretation
- Fix It! Lancaster (311)
- Building Blocks: Data Warehousing
- Social Media & Promotions



TOLEMI



ONE



Civic Engagement Programs



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ENGAGEMENT



JOE JACKSON TOT LOT



JUMP, CLIMB, SLIDE, & SWING! ¡PARED DE ESCALADAS!



WATER PLAY ¡JUEGOS ACUÁTICOS!



GATHER! ¡PLAZA DE REUNIÓN!



EWELL GANTZ PLAYGROUND



ARTFUL INTERSECTION



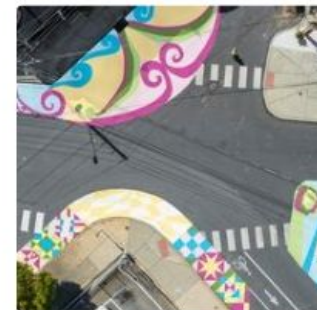
E [Emily Brown](#) last year

Making it a three-way stop sign instead of whatever it was before (2-way?) definitely helps. Before I lived in this area, I never knew how to handle that intersection. Only after being here awhile did I figure it out. It was always a little scary seeing cars coming up W. Vine and not knowing what they would do.

 [Tamara Pelsinski](#) last year

The intersection is very confusing and is too narrow for two cars to pass. I go through this intersection every day coming home from my job in the city. I am going to find a new route to avoid this intersection.

 3 • Reply



As a driver, is it confusing? Como conductor ¿Es confuso?

Department of Public Works , City of Lancaster • 1 year ago If you drive through this intersection, do you find i...

 17  13  19

[VIEWED](#)

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN ACTION?

Comprehensive Plan

Traditional Engagement

- 2,545 conversations, attendees
- 30+ in person events

Digital Engagement

- 3,000 pageviews
- 1,800 unique pageviews
- 711 user submissions
- 3 projects on Engage

Tourism Master Plan

Traditional Engagement

- 3,000 survey responses
- 14 in person/virtual events

Digital Engagement

- 4,500 pageviews
- 3,300 users
- 4 languages

Home Rule

2023

- 9 regular meetings

2024

- 14 regular meetings
- 2 special meetings
- 1 public hearing

14,000+

3,000+



THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. Why Engagement, ask the question
2. Secure Internal leadership and staff buy- in
3. Policies & operational requirements: what do we have and what is missing..
4. Know the community leads
5. Understand the history, evaluate, and tell the story.



THANK YOU!

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