

# Millennials and Civic Engagement: Analysis and Recommendations for the City of Eugene



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PPPM 408 Real World Eugene

University of Oregon

December 2015

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Through this project the City of Eugene would like to know more information about: how to understand how to better involve millennials in civic engagement, how to retain and attract millennial talent, as well as how to improve city services to benefit millennials. The project developed a set of recommendations for the City of Eugene to contextualize and initiate methods of engagement. We want to emphasize the importance of building a strong foundation for any future endeavor in civic engagement. The set of deliverables presents the state of civic engagement not only in Eugene but also throughout the country, and focuses on attitudes that inextricably affect a Millennial's willingness and opportunity to engage civically.

Each section of this report serves a unique purpose, and when examined together, they paint a picture of what underlies millennial civic engagement and/or dis-engagement. The three components of this report evaluate what has informed the state of millennial civic engagement, what has been achieved across the country with respect to engagement, and the current climate of engagement that the City of Eugene is facing. We believe that without the perspective contributed by each piece, the City of Eugene would not be in a place to successfully engage Millennials.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research question answered in this report is as follows: What are strategies that the City of Eugene can employ to conduct outreach and engage with Millennials? We answer this question by referencing three parts of this report:

- An online survey of Millennials in the City of Eugene
- Three evaluations of existing programs related to Millennial civic engagement
- Background Information incorporating academic literature review

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1. Create an Online Community Discussion Board** – The City of Eugene should create a “Discussion Board” as part of the City of Eugene website or an independent site. This site would allow residents of Eugene to create ideas or projects that others can comment on, vote up or down and share on social media. The benefits of an online discussion board are many:

- 24/7 Availability
- Accessibility (home, work, school, smartphone, library etc.)
- Anonymity
- Open exchange of ideas between members of discussion board
- City moderator can join discussions and/or point respondents to existing programs or policies related to their idea, project or concern
- Status updates of community discussion topics provided by City Moderator

### **Rationale:**

This recommendation is based on an existing similar site, [SpeakUpAustin.org](http://SpeakUpAustin.org), which serves as an online discussion board for the City of Austin, Texas. Proper advertising of the discussion board is critical; according to Larry Schooler, Community Engagement Consultant for the City of Austin, “that it's not as easy as if you built it they will come, but rather build it, then effectively invite people, they will come.” Our primary data (Figure 5), case studies and critical background suggests that a “discussion board” style interface would be a valuable tool in increasing communication and engagement with Millennials in the City of Eugene. We are confident that introducing a discussion board-type format would successfully engage Millennials given the feedback from our survey; as

noted in Figure 5, respondents not only indicated interest in delivering input for city-related projects, but several preferred a discussion board option for giving feedback.

**2. Establish a Student Service Partnership with City Council** – The City of Eugene could create a community partnership with local high schools to provide opportunities for students to attend city council meetings. This would be an opportunity for the City of Eugene to reach out to youth and open the doors to the future leaders of Eugene by showing them what it takes to make decisions that have immediate effects and others that may not be realized for many years. The partnership could offer incentives for students to participate such as college recommendation letters and other service recognition awards. A program of this nature would benefit the City of Eugene because it will create a new group of civically engaged advocates with each school year and this early engagement process will increase the likelihood that people will want to be part of city, county or state government when they get older.

**Rationale:**

As shown in our literature review there is great value in providing an environment for people to learn and understand the function and process of city governance. This program would offer just that by getting students familiar with the function of the Eugene City Council. The City of Rancho Cordova has begun to implement such a program as a result of a measure that was recently passed. A Student Council is a great way for youth and City Officials to closely communicate and transfer ideas to one another.

**3. Market the City of Eugene as a living, breathing institution that contributes to the culture and day to day life of Eugene residents**–

The City of Eugene needs to make a connection between what it does everyday and why people want to and enjoy living in Eugene. We suggest that the city should partner up with a diverse array of city services that allow for enjoyment and leisure in Eugene, such as the Hult Center, local festivals, and other events and services that breathe life into Eugene. The City must assert its role in the existence of cultural and civic amenities to convey the importance of civically engaging.

**Rationale:**

From our survey we learned that our respondents felt they had a sense of community and/or home here in Eugene but they did not feel that they had very much of a connection to the City of Eugene government (Figure 9). We feel that if residents are made aware of what the City of Eugene government's role is in creating their perceived sense of community then they will appreciate the city more and therefore feel a greater connection to the city government.

One of the most impactful pieces of data from our survey was in response to question 15 (Figure 9) which asked both whether respondents felt that they had a community and/or home in Eugene and whether they felt a connection to their government. The response was striking: the majority respondents agreed that they had a community in Eugene, yet that same majority did not feel connected to their local government. The group surmised that this reflected the City of Eugene's failure to convey its investment in Eugene as a community and as a home for its residents.

This recommendation echoes what was found in our "Critical Background", where Millennials cited lack of engagement due to their feeling of irrelevance and exclusion. Connecting City of Eugene's

role as providing public welfare with the community would address both the irrelevance that youth feel towards government as well as the feeling that they are not included in civic processes.

**4. Capitalize on the Use of Social Media and Technology for Branding City of Eugene and**

**Spread of Information**—Currently, the city has both government and service/agency-based pages, yet the organization and awareness around these pages could be improved.

Technology is a powerful educational tool—social and other web pages can be used to communicate both standard information about civic events (meetings, voting, etc.) yet also fulfill the need stated in the last recommendation of communicating the intent to appeal to the community and culture within Eugene. City of Eugene must prioritize creating easily accessible and widespread information about its services to combat equally widespread lack of knowledge, as well as adapt to technological interfaces that are intuitive to the millennial demographic. Advertising social media presence on all available platforms is also crucial to recruiting Millennials to follow social networking and/or other webpages.

**Rationale:**

While completing the case study of SpeakUpAustin.org we learned that the administrators felt that they could have had more participants on the community site if they had advertised better, therefore we believe that Eugene must also advertise its social media. Improper and insufficient advertising was also cited as an obstacle to program success in the Boston Mayor’s Office of New Urban Mechanics. This is also shown in our primary data (Figure 10), which shows that the respondents to our survey did not follow the city’s social media pages and while we did not ask specifically we do attribute at least part of this to the relative lack of awareness that the city has social media pages.



Though there is a great lack of awareness surrounding the City's online and technological presence, the internet serves as a great resource for publishing accessible information that can lead to increased levels of civic engagement. The research reviewed in "Critical Background" described a widespread feeling of alienation that prevented Millennials from civically engaging. Partly what contributes to this alienation is a lack of knowledge, which creates an obstacle for Millennials who may be interested in engaging. Advertising sources of information for civic processes can break down a wall of knowledge that significantly impairs youth civic engagement.

One additional importance of social media that is often overlooked is its power to unite people with similar perspectives and to bring together groups that might not otherwise find connection. We encourage the City of Eugene to use social media as a unifying force around concerns or celebrations of Eugene, to not only tap into the sense of "community" that already exists in Eugene but to strengthen this community. The City of Eugene has the power to reach out to all citizens and establish common ground that was not identified previously.

- 5. Start an Email Listserv** – The City of Eugene should create a registry for people to sign up to receive emails from the city regarding news, policies and projects. This is something that can be done relatively immediately by the City of Eugene, yet can have a significant impact on connectedness to civic affairs.

**Rationale:**

The survey data (Figures 4 & 5) and the literature review show that people want to be connected to their city and that they desire direct communication from the city. Receiving

an email from the city would offer connection and direct connection to the city. Sending emails is also a communication from the City that they want and care about the input from the millennial demographic.

**6. Further Partnership with the University of Oregon as a source for innovation and insight.**

This project in itself was a means of increasing millennial civic engagement—the context of our investigation stems from a class that seeks to create an opportunity for engagement that is not usually handed to millennial-aged youth.

**Rationale:**

PPPM 408 is not the only success story that comes from a partnership between University and Local Government; Boston's MONUM is successful largely due to its partnership with Emerson College Engagement Lab. Emerson College serves as a source of ingenuity for Boston that is not necessarily available in the public sphere. The diversity of thought and abstract understanding that is available in academic environments is particularly adaptable to the concern of engaging Millennials.

## **CASE STUDIES**

### Austin

SpeakUpAustin.org is an online discussion board, created in 2011 that is used by the City of Austin, Texas. Austin is a city of 885,400 people in Central Texas. SpeakUpAustin.org is a site where people can join discussions, learn about on going projects, take surveys, and create ideas where others can comment on, vote up or down, and sharing on social media.

For this case study we interviewed Larry Schooler, a Community Engagement Consultant for the City of Austin, and he was very happy to offer information about the site. Larry said that many good ideas were “birthed” on the site and then completed. Projects like their bike share program and their cell phone parking lot at the airport were talked about before the site was created but with this discussion board it brought more people together and eventually pushed it so these projects were completed. Austin’s Single-use Carryout Bag Ordinance was also brought to forward through this site. In the ideas section of the website about 500 ideas have been suggested and in the project section about 100 have been brought to attention or completed.

According to Mr. Schooler, SpeakUpAustin.org has been a considerable success because the citizens of Austin want to have a greater level of influence on projects or policies that will affect them. Having a site like this has increased opportunities for citizens to engage in discussions with fellow citizens and the City of Austin regarding projects and policies under consideration. Looking back, if the City of Austin had a chance to start this all over again, they wish they would have had more people aware of this site in the beginning. Even though they advertised through media releases, radio, and a 24-hour news TV station they did not have as much funding for advertising as they would have liked. Mr. Schooler also said that they are trying to get funding as well to update their page so it can attract a bigger crowd. Currently SpeakUpAustin.org has had over 2,260 people register and participate, this does not include the people who take surveys, which don’t require a login.

<http://speakupaustin.org>

Home Discussions Forums Ideas Surveys Sign In Sign Up

# speakupaustin!

 The City of Austin's community engagement portal

## What's This All About?

SpeakUpAustin is making it easier for the public to communicate feedback and receive information. SpeakUpAustin is a way for you to find out about ongoing **Projects**, join in on topical **Discussions**, create/share/vote on citizen-generated **Ideas**, and connect with others that share your interests. You can also take **Surveys** that will help us, as a community, shape the future of how we work. The more public input we receive the better SpeakUpAustin can become.

## How can we improve the City of Austin?

Enter your idea here...

See More Ideas

Idea: [Add more direct bus options from suburbs to downtown](#)  
Posted by [Christina Kochan](#) on 2015-11-18 22:17:25 -0600

Survey: Proposed One-Day-Per-Week Watering Schedule

SIGN UP

<http://speakupaustin.org/ideas?filter=in action>

Home Discussions Forums Ideas Surveys Sign In Sign Up

## About Ideas

We are always looking for new ideas about how we can improve. **Post** your idea, **share** it with your online community to help it garner votes and attention. You can also **vote**, **follow** and **comment** on ideas that you support - you'll receive updates on them too!

## How can we improve the City of Austin?

Enter your idea here...

Latest Ideas Popular **Ideas In Action** Filter by Idea Type

Idea: **Downtown Traffic**  
**James Smith** 12 months ago

The Downtown Traffic is a joke. There needs to be signs put up at each light to notify drivers not to block intersections, and traffic tickets written when they are not followed. It is ridiculous to take 30-40 minutes to travel from 10th Street to Caesar Chavez on Congress Avenue, just because drivers are blocking the intersections due to the congestion on Caesar Chavez. Some drivers do not realize that it IS AGAINST THE LAW to block an intersection due to congestion in their lane.

2 Comments 9 Votes Completed

**IDEAS IN ACTION**

- MACC parking available to residents with proof of residency during street closures March 17-20; MACC permit required.
- Enforcement to prevent SXSW parking traffic.
- Single Member Districts without Gerrymandering
- Add the ability to change/remove options on this site
- Please add "Domestic Partner" to the list of options on your marital profile status on this website

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

Marcus Wilson voted on an Idea

## Boston

One of the foremost efforts in inventive and cutting-edge civic engagement is in the Boston office of MONUM--Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics. The office is an extension of a non-profit organization called "New Urban Mechanics" which pioneers civic media and other innovative projects for engagement, and has integrated itself into cities across the U.S. According to the

website, MONUM focuses on Education, Engagement, the Streetscape, and Economic Development, demonstrating a wide range of what innovative programs can set out to address. MONUM is integrated with Emerson College's "Engagement Lab", and represents a symbiotic relationship between local government and a neighboring university. The Engagement Lab focuses on play and interactivity to encourage participation in civic processes. One of the great successes of this collaboration has been to utilize strong online presence of Bostonians in bringing efficacy and participation to civic programs. Summary of Highly Successful Projects:

Twitter Tree (<http://newurbanmechanics.org/project/twitter-tree/>)

- People loved the statement made with this tree; it was fun, engaging, and brought attention to the intentions of the City of Boston to engage their citizens. The experiment demonstrated a playfulness and an intent that wasn't demonstrated otherwise.
- One criticism of this project was from Nigel that it did not create any measurable effect in terms of solidifying support for civic processes. However, the twitter tree itself did gain a lot of attention. Something that Eugene can do is have a program like the twitter tree be a sort of "bait" for engaging in something that may not seem as fun or light.

Community PlanIt (<http://newurbanmechanics.org/project/community-planit/>)

- Community PlanIt is an online game designed to gather feedback from different sets of stakeholders. Visitors are rewarded for commenting and discussing feedback with points awarded from the game. The initiative was first implemented in Boston to gather feedback for Boston Public Schools. Some of the strengths in this project included democratic input gathering and deliberation. One of the main strengths of the program was how it connected online and real life interaction to develop policy. One of the shortcomings included people being wary of whether their input was taken seriously or not.
- This program turned out to be particularly successful because it targeted an audience that had a direct interest in the results of the Community Planit discussion, this time concerning public schools, and allowed them an interactive, democratic, and innovative way to express their opinions. This model has been replicated successfully many different times in different cities.

These comments from Nigel are useful for framing future civic engagement efforts:

- Most successful programs (if implemented via a website or app) integrated both online and face-to-face interaction
- There is enough of a statement in taking the risk to develop and promote innovative programs that people will take notice and appreciate the City's effort to make bold decisions
- Every program needs an evaluation piece in order to yield measurable benefit from a program
- Advertising a program and promoting an innovative programs successfully is integral to getting citizens to participate and take advantage of a program or initiative
- Citizens need to have trust that their input is being utilized and that it is worth their time to contribute to a program

### Rancho Cordova

Youth @ City Council is a youth community engagement and service program that provides opportunities for high school age students grade 8-12 to observe and assist during city council meetings in the City of Rancho Cordova, CA. The goal of this program is to foster interest in local government operations and create the future leaders of tomorrow. The program in Rancho Cordova, a city of 78,000 people, is facilitated by a non-profit agency called People Reaching Out (PRO) and their mission is to serve youth and give them opportunities to learn about civic leadership and advocacy. PRO has been operating in the Sacramento metropolitan area, a population of 2.4 million, since 2011 with Youth @ City Council programs involving the City of Sacramento and the California State Senate. In October of 2015 the City of Rancho Cordova started its inaugural class for the 12 month-long program. CJ Lynch works directly with the students in the Youth @ City Council program in Rancho Cordova. He is an employee of PRO and coordinates the student's activities with the city clerk and also facilitates meetings focused on civic education and professional development. Lynch makes arrangements for guest speakers to come and speak to the student participants about their specific job in government and what education path they took to get there. Guest speakers are from city, county and state levels. As mentioned Mr. Lynch coordinates with the city clerk to have student participants assist with handing out agendas before meetings and assisting with taking name cards for public forum speakers. Administrator, Staci

Anderson at PRO, states that student participants are exposed to the activities and politics of city, county and state governance. The incentives for student participants are:

- Service counts toward senior community service projects
- Establish relationships with local community leaders
- Earn a letter of recommendation from PRO
- Recognition of service certificate from the City of Rancho Cordova
- Professional leadership instruction
- Opportunities to give back to the community

Ms. Anderson adds that in addition to the very worthy incentives for the students the long-term benefits of the program are far reaching by allowing high school students to learn about government function create new groups of informed citizens ready to be active contributors to their communities. Mr. Lynch also adds that a great benefit of the program is it truly helps bring people forward and empowers them to speak up when in the past they may not have said anything.

This is the first year that Rancho Cordova has done Youth @ City Council and Mr. Lynch and Ms. Anderson explained that it was made possible by a recent community enhancement measure that was passed (Measure H). Ms. Anderson was approached by a member of the Rancho Cordova City Council about bringing the program to the city and from that point Mr. Lynch set out to identify students at area high schools who would be interested in applying. This was done through discussion with school district super-intendants and principals. They identified students and existing clubs and organizations that Mr. Lynch should go present the program. When all applications were collected there were 30 applicants and they all had to go through a panel interview. The panel consisted of PRO staff, city staff, city councilors and school staff. Upon acceptance to the program the students and their parents attend an orientation and take a tour of city hall. Both Ms. Anderson and Mr. Lynch believe that this program is a great way to inform and empower a community's youth.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

The following data that was collected was gathered through a survey our group created through Qualtrics and then dispersed through the University of Oregon's Planning, Public Policy, and Management (PPPM) department email listserv and social media sites – Twitter, Facebook and Reddit. The survey was created to obtain primary data from City of Eugene residents and to gain a better understanding of how the Millennial demographic engages with the City of Eugene, why they do not engage, how they would like to be heard, and how they would like to provide feedback to the City. In using PPPM department email and social media we were able to reach a wide audience with our survey and most importantly a broad range of ages within the Millennial Generation and students and non-students. The survey was active for 2 weeks and we received 176 completed surveys of 199 started and of the 176 completed, 154 were used after removing respondents who indicated that they did not live in Eugene and were not a Millennial by age definition (over 35). The survey consisted of 17 questions that include single and a five-point Likert style questions, and select all that apply questions.

This data is representative of the age distribution of the Millennials in Eugene with 35% of the respondents being 17-22 years old, 22% being 23-27 years old, and 33% being 28-34 years old. What makes this data useful is that this survey captured the perspectives of both non-student Millennials as well as student Millennials, and did not over-emphasize one group's voice over the other. Out of the 154 respondents, 84 said that they were students (55%), and 70 said that they are not students (45%).

See Appendix I for full survey results.

Key takeaways from the survey are as follows:

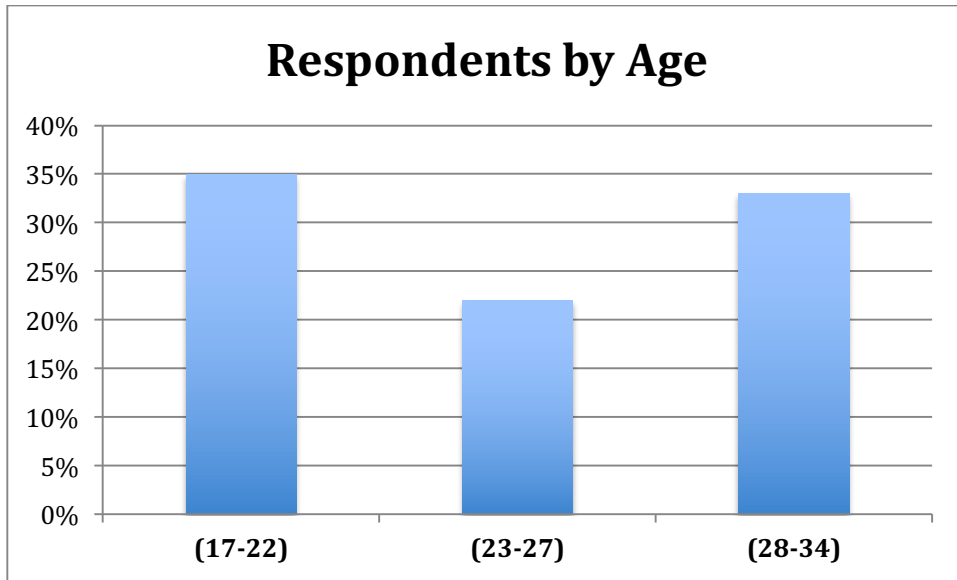


- 81% of respondents (121 people) identify as being a member of the millennial generation
- 148 responded when they were asked whether the term millennial had a very negative, negative, neutral, positive, or very positive connotation, the average was 2.72, in between negative connotation and neutral
- On average most respondents did not feel connected with the City of Eugene Government (2.37) while they did feel that they did have a stake in Eugene's Future (3.07) and that they feel that they have a community/home in the City of Eugene (3.84)
- 63% of those surveyed would want to hear from the City of Eugene through local news publications and through social media. 57% would like to receive an email from the city
- 67% would inform the City of Eugene of their own opinion through email, 56% through a discussion board, and 53% would like to comment through social media

The data obtained from the survey does not allow for generalization of the City of Eugene Millennial demographic due to not being a true random sampling of the population. The group did find the results valuable in fortifying information found within case studies and the academic literature review. The data also changed assumptions the group made about Millennials at the beginning of the project.

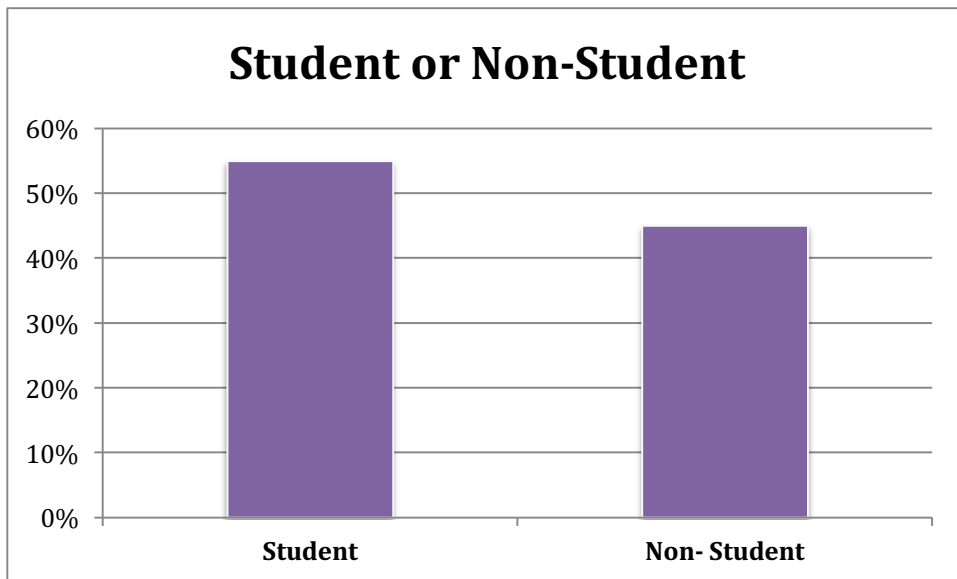
### Charts and Data Analysis

#### **Figure 1. Respondents Reported Age**



(Responses=154)

**Figure 2. Respondents by Student and Non-Student Status.**



(Responses=154)

As mentioned above the group felt that in order to get the highest quality data to make our recommendations we needed to obtain responses from students and non-students (Figure 2) and a full range of Millennials by age definition (Figure 1). The group associated school attendance with being more likely to be engaged with the City of Eugene due to school staff discussing policies and projects in class. As Figure 2a. shows there is no statistical significance with the relationship between student/non-student status and awareness of opportunities for engagement, however the team feels that this is important to note going forward with future recommendations.

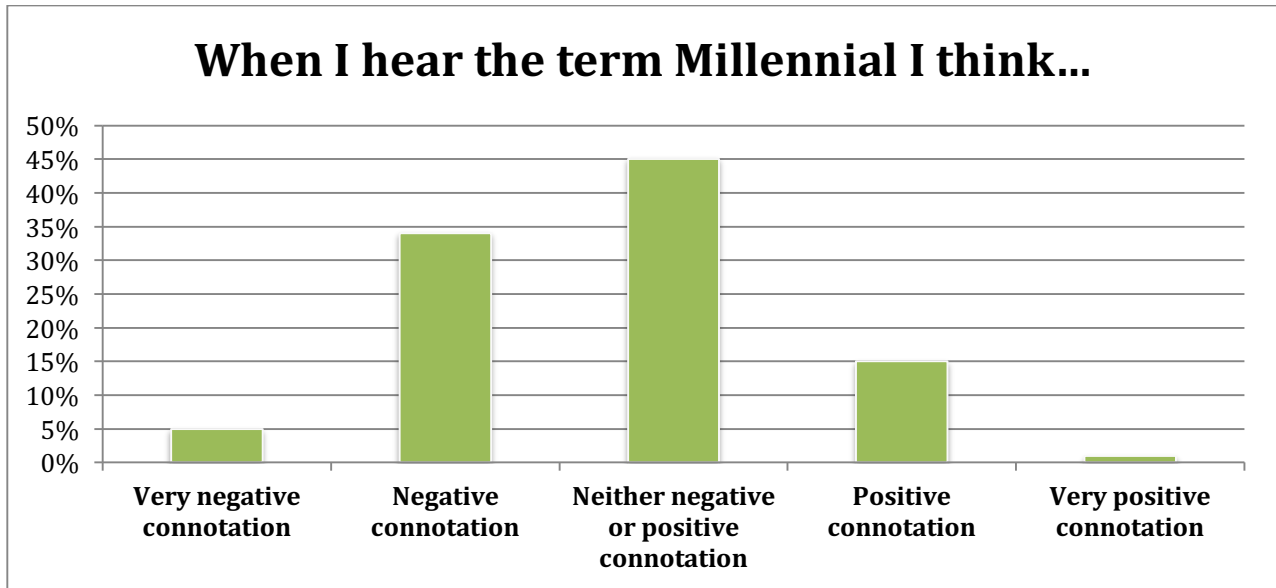
**Figure 2a. Student/Non-student Status and Awareness of Opportunities for Engagement.**

Are you aware of opportunities for involvement with the City of Eugene where you can submit your input on proposed policies/projects?

		Yes	No	Total
	Yes	20	57	77
Are you a student?	No	16	47	63
	Total	36	104	140

p-value: 0.93, This value indicates that there is no statistical significance between whether or not respondents were students or not students in relation to knowing of opportunities to submit input to the city.

**Figure 3. How Respondents Perceive the Term Millennial.**

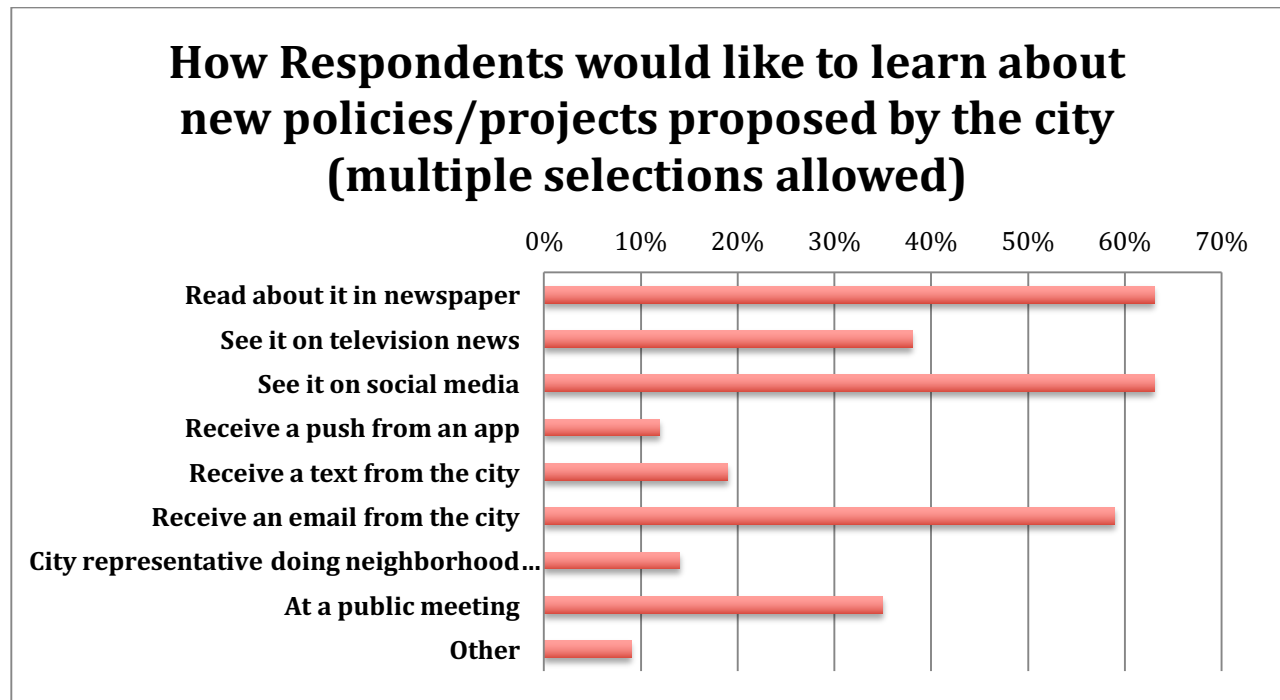


(Responses=148)

The team anticipated that using the term “Millennial” may not be universally well received by Millennials and as Figure 3 shows respondents did in fact lean towards believing the term Millennial did have a “negative” connotation.

Figures 4 & 5 show the results of two questions after the respondent was asked to consider a hypothetical policy that the City of Eugene was putting under consideration.

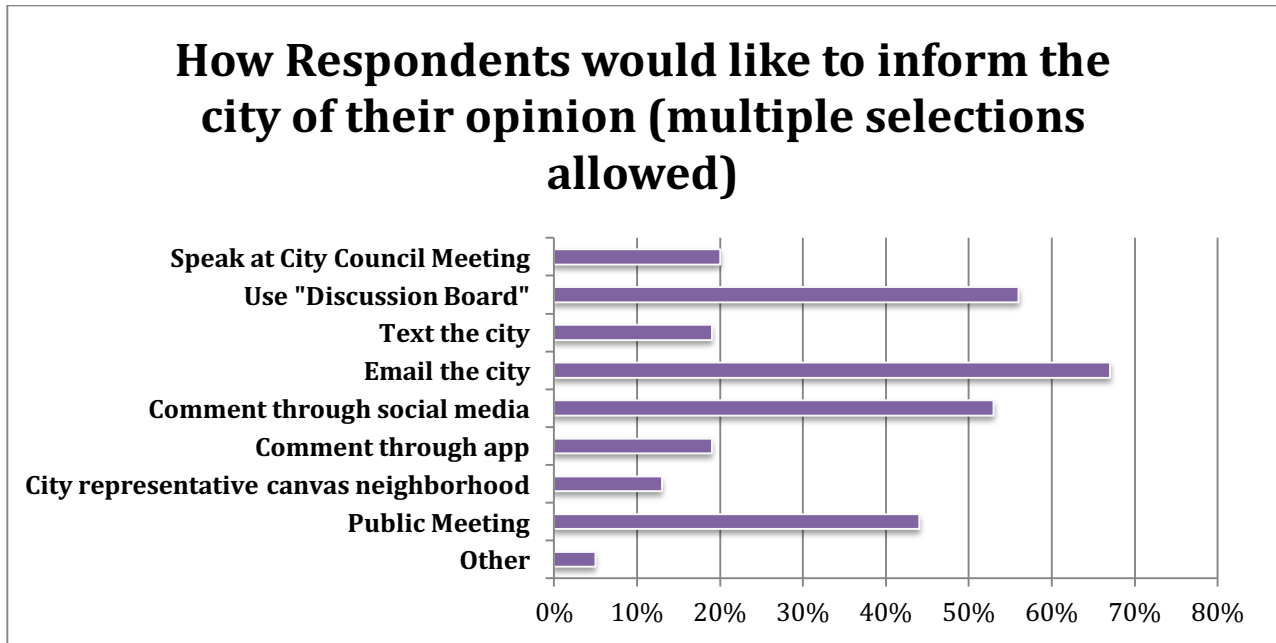
**Figure 4. Respondent Preference for Proposal Dissemination from the City of Eugene.**



(Responses=139)

The team found the data shown in Figure 4 to be interesting for three reasons. First, that respondents desired to receive information from the city via traditional news media. Second, respondents were did not show much interest in receiving information via a smart phone app. Lastly, we found it surprising that respondents were willing to receive direct email from the city because to do this it would mean that the city would have to have an email address provided to it in order to be able to communicate in this manner. The desire to receive information via social media fit the assumption made by the team regarding Millennial use of social media.

**Figure 5. Respondent Preference for Communicating Opinions with City.**

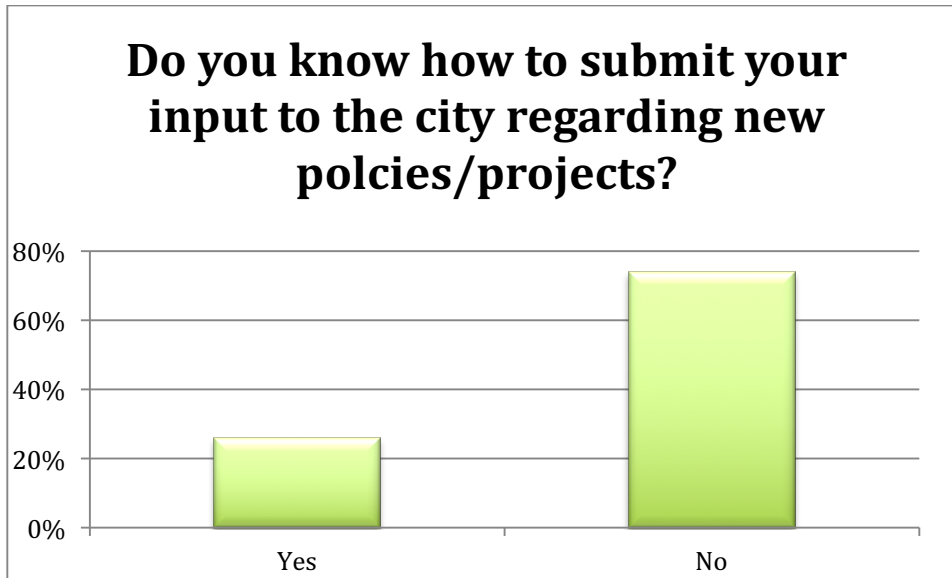


(Responses=135)

The information in Figure 5 supports assumptions of Millennial social media use as is also show in Figure 4. The opportunity to use an online “community discussion board” aligns with the team’s recommendation that the city establish this medium of communication. Again, email is seen as a desired means of communication for respondents.

Sending and receiving text messages regarding policy and projects is shown to have some support from respondents.

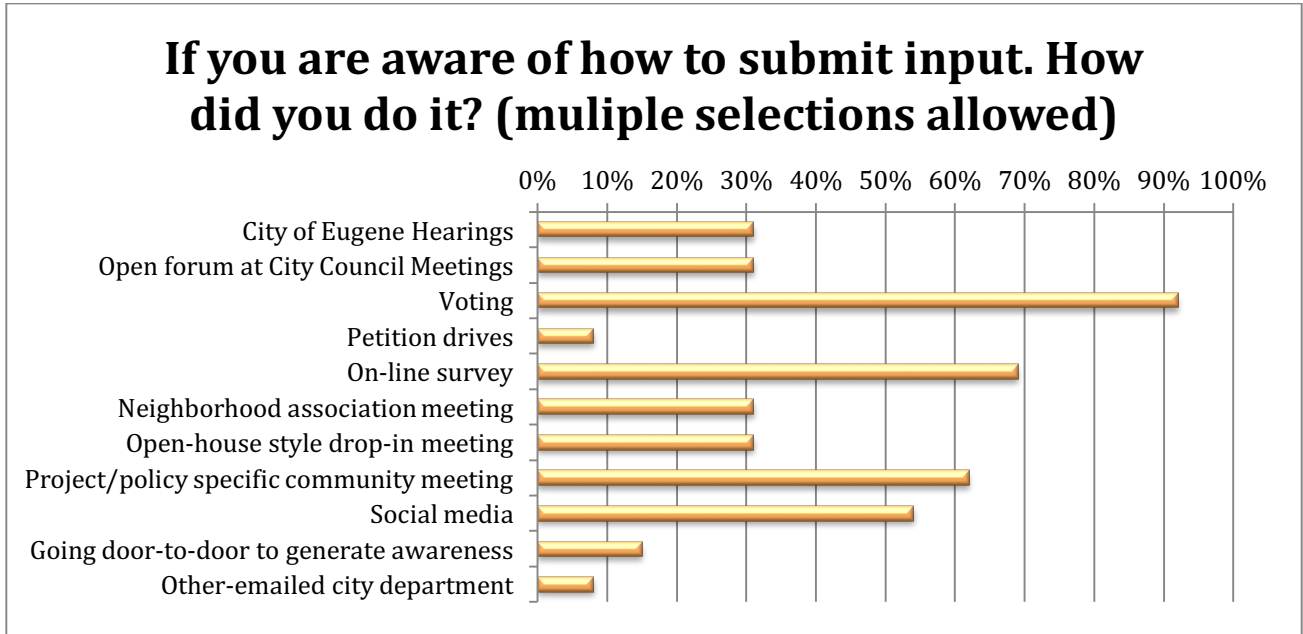
**Figure 6. Percentage of Respondents who know how to submit input to the city.**



(Responses=140)

Our survey indicated that the majority of our respondents were not aware of how to communicate with the City of Eugene regarding giving input and opinions to the city (Figure 6). The team wants to highlight this lack of knowledge by respondents as being an area where the city should place more effort in communicating with all city residents not just Millennials on how to engage in civic discussion.

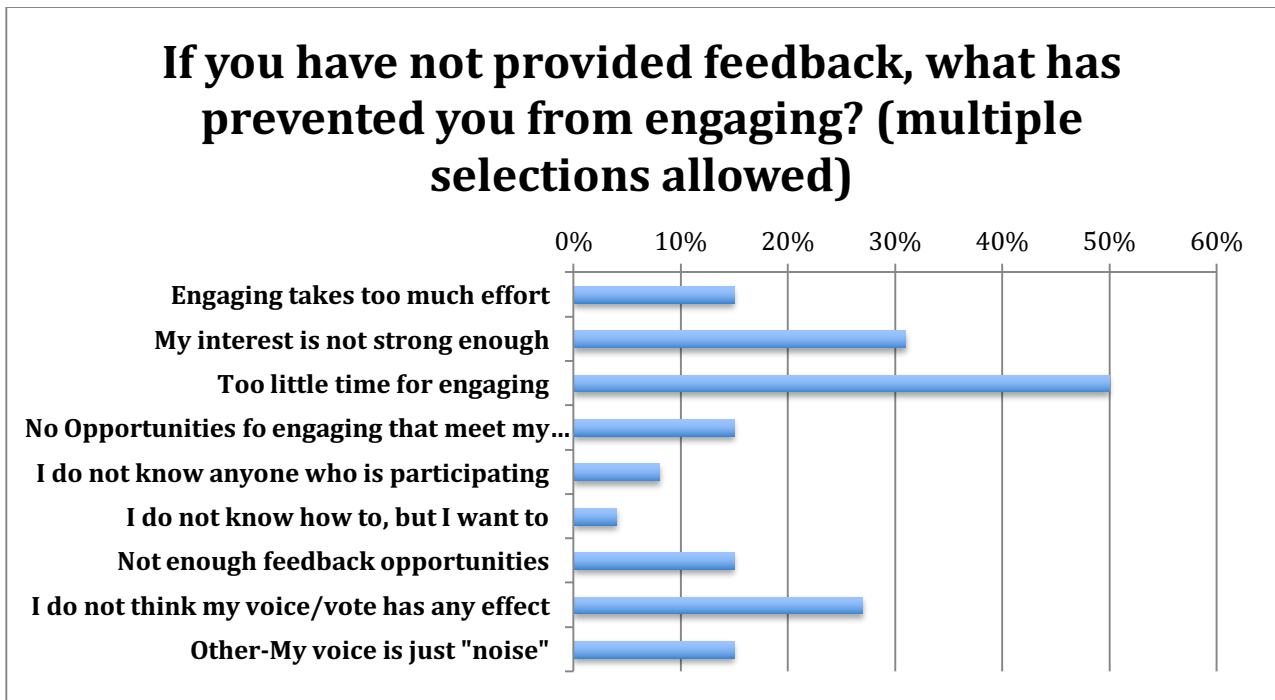
**Figure 7. Methods Used by Respondents That Are Aware of How to Provide Feedback.**



(Responses=13, limited by answering “yes-I have provided feedback to the city”)

After respondents identified being aware of ways to provide feedback to the city they were asked what methods they used (Figure 7).

**Figure 8. Reasons Respondents Have Not Provided Feedback to the City.**

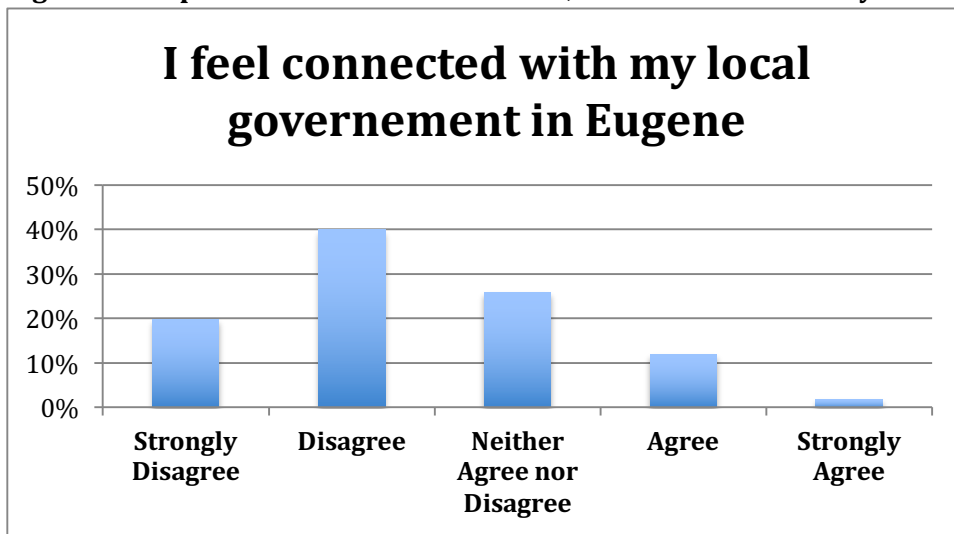


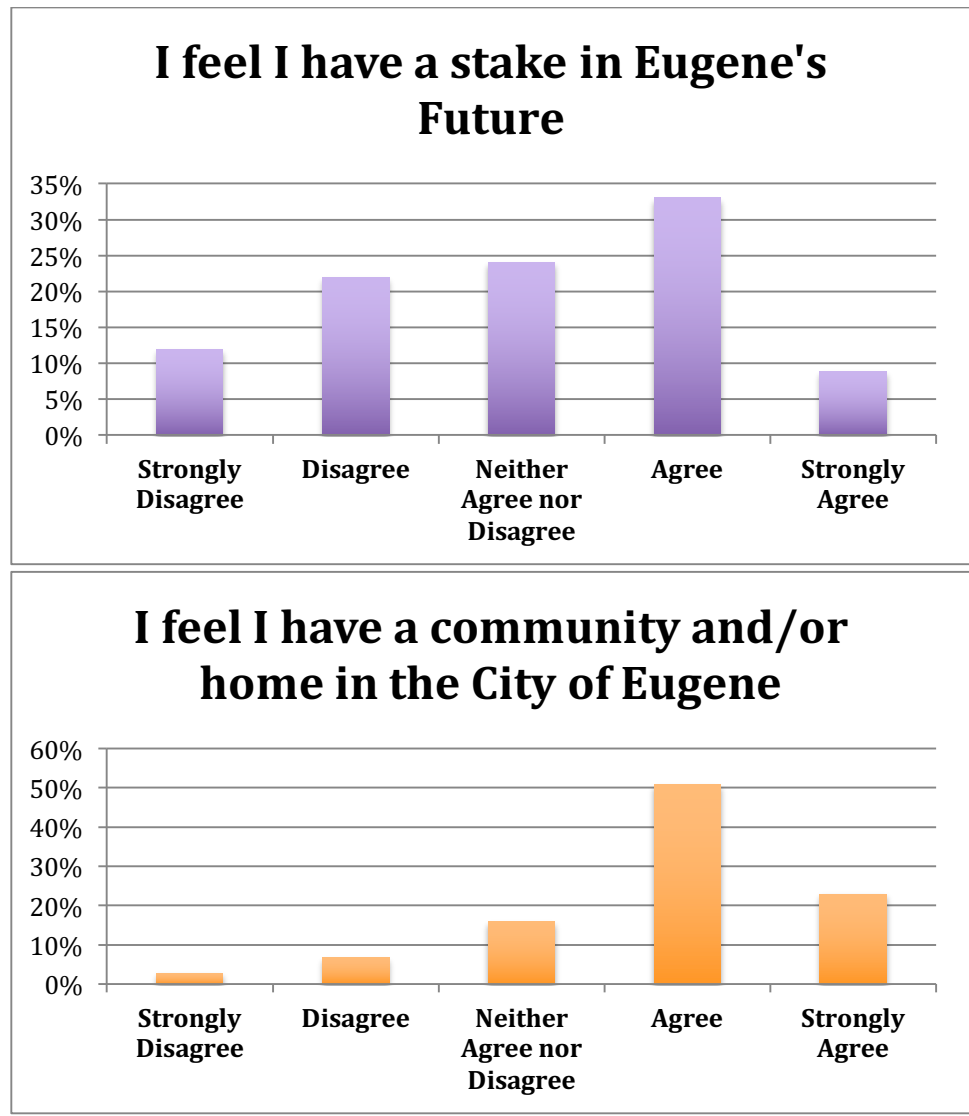
(Responses=26, limited by answering “no-have not provided feedback to the city”)



We then asked the respondents who stated they were aware of how to provide feedback why they had not provided any. The biggest response was that respondents indicated that they had too little time for engaging (Figure 8). In trying to unpack what this means the team discussed the possibility that of those who noted too little time as an issued perhaps they are working and going to school as a possibility.

**Figure 9. Respondent sense of Connection, Stake and Community**

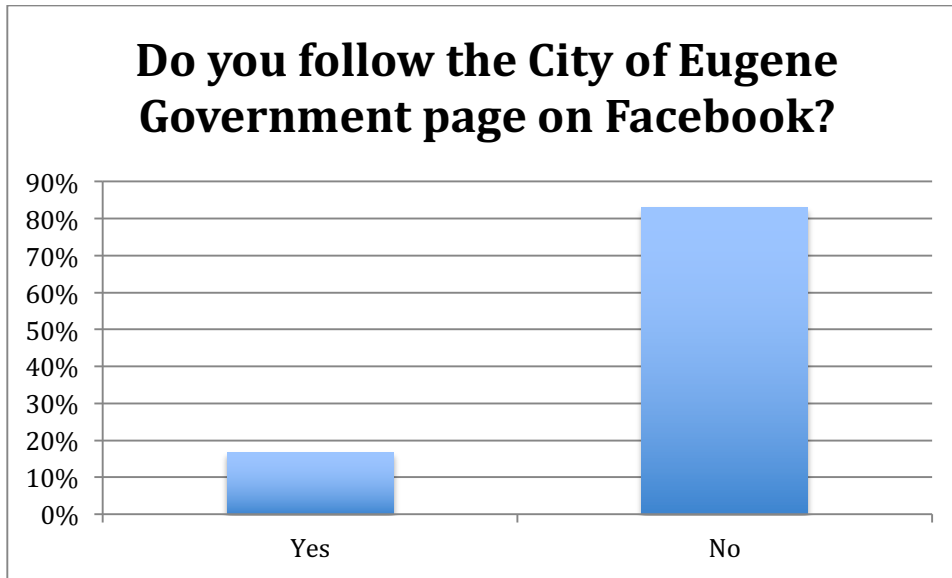




(Responses=139)

The team wanted to see how connected the respondents were to Eugene. The governmental apparatus, its future and whether or not they had a sense of home or community here in Eugene. What we discovered is that the majority of respondents do not feel that they are connected to the City of Eugene government but they did feel they had a stake in the future of Eugene and even more so had a high sense of community and/or home (Figure 9). As a team we discussed what this means for the city and we decided that it was a important for the city to encourage residents to have feel at home in Eugene with a stake in its future but the city should also focus its efforts is in making the connection between what the city’s role is (policies, programs, projects) in making Eugene the place that respondents already identify as having a community and/or home in.

**Figure 10. Respondent Following of the City of Eugene on Social Media.**



(Responses=139)

Social media was identified by respondents as being a way to communicate. Figure 10 shows that the majority of respondents do not follow the City of Eugene's government page on Facebook or Twitter. As is recommended by our team the city needs to make people aware of these pages so that residents current and former can follow postings made by the city.

## **Critical Background: Millennials' Relationship with Civic Engagement**

This paper will review the six following papers:

- Civic Engagement Among American Youth: Research, Activism, and Democracy (Jois)
- Transforming Individual Civic Engagement (Collins, Neal, and Neal)
- Social Capital and Political Participation: Understanding the Dynamics of Young
- People's Political Disengagement in Contemporary Britain (Henn, Weinstein, and Hodgkinson)
- Rebooting Democracy (Sloam)
- Why Millennials Don't Vote For Mayor (Knight Foundation and Lake Research Partners)

What this literature review seeks to do with engaging Millennials:

The task of cultivating and sustaining millennial civic engagement is not inherently different from cultivating engagement in any other social or generational group. However, what has been suggested is that Millennials have yet learn or inculcate a sense of civic obligation or attachment to local decision-making. This is not to say that Millennials are incapable of participating in decision-making or civically engaging, rather that it is in the interest of the City of Eugene to help youth develop a sense of connectedness to civic processes and assist in this development and cultivation of their own civic empowerment. Therefore, this literature review seeks to both explain and establish key determinants in building civic connectedness. This discussion should help to uncover strategies that the City of Eugene may adopt to build awareness around individual and collective efficacy.

#### Civic Engagement Definition:

Many researchers define civic engagement as the effort shown to address and engage a problem that affects the public (Sloam). This definition is increasingly vague and is open to many interpretations, which provides flexibility that should and can be capitalized on by institutions interested in engaging youth. It should be noted that the definition of civic and/or political engagement varies throughout all the surveyed papers. In Henn, Weinstein, and Hodgkinson's paper, "political engagement" is labeled as "interest" as expressed by youth themselves (477). However, The Knight Foundation chooses to view voting as the "quintessential indicator of civic engagement" (3).

Rigidity in defining civic engagement may contribute to alienation and isolation affecting millennials. This review will serve to demonstrate the complexity in millennial connection and participation within civic processes. Therefore, using Sloam's definition provides the most flexibility and benefit for millennials.

#### Preface – Facts and Important Distinctions Surrounding Youth Engagement:

The above papers focusing on youth engagement concurred that political engagement exhibited by youth, also referred to by the term “millennial”, is low compared to other age groups’ rates of participation. James Sloam contends that what can often be mistaken for “political apathy” is rather “political alienation.” Sloam makes this assertion even with the acknowledgment that youth have been reached out to through various electoral projects. As discussed in this paper, politics is something that is seen as being “done” to youth rather than asking for their input. Moreover, researchers marked a distinction between views towards NGOs versus politics noting much more friendly attitudes posed towards the former rather than the latter. Community activism was documented as having a different significance from political activism—empirical testing in the Sloam paper identified more support for community activism rather than political. The possible attitudinal consequences of such support will be discussed later in this literature review.

#### Previously Documented Attitudes Surrounding Millennial Civic Engagement:

According to Gilman and Stokes, millennials “do not pursue traditional forms of civic engagement, such as voting, and are more likely to eschew party identity” (60). This resistance to “traditional” or conventional forms of civic participation is echoed by Henn, Weisnstein, and Hodgkinson who cite political disengagement among millennials represented by lack of voting and trust in political actors (468). Nearly all reviewed papers agree that there is a lack of engagement in traditional voting and political participation within the millennial population. This is partially explained by the fact that many aspects of political life and debate are not immediately relevant to the concerns of millennials (Sloam 550). “Alienation” and “disempowerment” also surfaced in reports that reported lower traditional engagement. Millennials were also reported to have higher volunteering and community service rates than youth their age in the 1970s and ‘80s. (NCoC) Jois and Toppe cited a sharp difference in attitudes towards voting and volunteering: 49% of surveyed youth saw volunteering in their community as important while only 12% saw equal importance in

political involvement (5). This difference may be connected to an observation made by Kiesa et al. that millennials “did not see politics as a viable option for achieving the outcomes they think are important” (58).

One predictor of civic engagement is education: those with a college degree are estimated as four or five times more likely to engage than those without a high school diploma (NCoC 5). The exception to this trend is the factor of “social cohesion”, which does not support higher civic engagement but does influence community engagement (Ibid.).

#### The difference between political alienation and political apathy:

Two of the reviewed papers authored by Jois and Collins, Neal, and Neal build upon the argument of political alienation and exclusion as a cause of weakened civic engagement among young adults. These attitudes are aptly reflected in remarks from past research that include documenting the powerlessness and supposed “apathy” of millennials. Yet there are two separate implications between whether a youth is “alienated” from the political process or “apathetic”—alienation suggests a lack of access to civic processes whereas apathy rests on an unwilling attitude. This difference is significant; in the case of alienation, which Sloam argues for, there is willingness to engage that is not being built upon due to lack of opportunity.

#### Collective Efficacy and Bonding Social Capital Definitions:

According to Collins, Neal, and Neal, collective efficacy is defined as “residents’ perceived collective capacity to take coordinated and interdependent action on issues that affect their lives”. Collective efficacy therefore draws on attitudes of collective empowerment and importance. Such attitudes are developed in the context of bonding social capital, which according to famed researcher Robert Putnam, defines the personal connections and social resources that create a bonding effect, usually between groups with like characteristics and interests. Bonding social

capital is also defined as the shared norms of reciprocity and trust within a community that form the basis of social relationships. Examples where bonding social capital is created include neighborhood organizations, church groups, and other spaces for people sharing similar interests and/or backgrounds to come together.

#### The Effect of Bonding Social Capital on Civic Engagement:

All the reviewed papers concurred that there is a statistically significant effect of bonding social capital on civic engagement. The reason that bonding social capital is so important is because it contributes to two senses of both empowerment and collective efficacy. Here is a quote from Jois and Toppe illustrating the power of social capital and empowerment:

When we compared the highly engaged to the disengaged, we found that the most significant factors that predict whether youth will be highly engaged are developed over time: the belief that one's vote counts, trust in people, attention paid to politics, and talking about politics with one's parents. Second, they do *not* show significant differences by race, region (urban/rural) or demographics (14).

The above quote details an idea of developing an attitude conducive to getting involved civically: empowerment in oneself, the feeling of belonging within a community, and exposure and knowledge of political events. It should be added that though special attention is paid to getting involved in political affairs, this idea can be replicated in programs focusing on community or other forms of engagement.

In any program that addresses civic engagement, these six papers have emphasized the power of social bonding capital to foster empowerment and collective efficacy. Specifically,

collective efficacy is the feeling within a community that their actions will result in genuine change. Not only does bonding social capital provide an avenue for feelings of collective efficacy as well as civic engagement, however the inverse is also true. When given more opportunities to engage civically, communities became richer in social capital through their interactions with one another (Collins, Neal, and Neal). This suggests a relationship between attitude and opportunity in reference to civic engagement; that one tends to feed off of the other.

#### Why worry about social capital with millennial engagement?

Research that has previously documented millennials has stated a lack of visible engagement in civic activities as well as perceived “political apathy”. However, more deeply, research has noted that millennials feel political alienation, a lack of empowerment, and a lack of visibility more than anything else. Thus, in order to effectively engage millennials, the source of their lack of engagement must be addressed—researchers suspect that this is both environmental and attitudinal. As Jois notes, “attitudes form the basis of long term solutions” (9). This literature review serves to demonstrate attitudinal conditions that impede or accelerate civic engagement. What has been widely documented is that empowerment, social capital, and individual as well as collective efficacy build democracy as well as win support for local decision makers. Building social capital and trust within Eugene is integral to the enduring, long-term success of youth civic engagement.

#### The Importance of Attitudes:

Attitudes favoring civic engagement fostered in the creation of bonding social capital, may be formed in the context of institutions such as churches, town halls, or schools. These feelings of shared norms, reciprocity, and trust serve the importance of developing conceptual frameworks that allow youth to develop a stake and interest in civic processes that encourage them to contribute their voices.



The building of attitudes conducive to civic engagement should be the priority of any youth engagement platform. An anecdote from Nigel Jacobs, co-founder of the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics, states that an institution's genuine effort alone to engage and cultivate the trust of its youth builds positive attitudes. Moreover, such attitudes not be invented, but highlighted in such efforts.

#### Millennials and Local Government:

According to the Knight Foundation: "Local government often has more real-world impact on the everyday lives of citizens than other levels of government" (1). Yet, voter turnout for mayoral and local elections has been on the decline between the years of 1999 and 2011 (Knight 6). Perhaps more confusingly, these same millennials identified local government as more trustworthy than federal and state level government (Ibid.).

The paradox of local government in millennials' lives is that though they interface with local government and feel its impacts more acutely than other forms of government, they are barred from voting in local issues. There are certain intuitive explanations for this: millennials don't own homes, move frequently, and local elections don't get the sort of coverage and media attention that elections at higher levels do (Knight 8). The Knight study identified high levels of confusion and lack of information surrounding local government. This is perhaps not surprising when millennials identify government as "distant and anonymous".

The issue of "place making" is fundamental to considering local participation. Since millennials are mobile, they choose where they land—meaning that there is a certain intention in coming to a city and a specific draw that made them want to be there.

#### Conclusion:

When examining what it takes to engage millennials, in reality it is not that different from any other underrepresented group and calls upon methods that build true democracy. No wonder the title of Sloam's publication is "Rebooting Democracy to Engage Youth"—maintaining a core principle of governance yet reshaping this idea to suit under-represented or tough to reach populations. Here is Sloam's articulation of a proper solution:

The study concludes that the key to their engagement lies in addressing the issues that concern them (listening), increasing their sense of empowerment (efficacy), heightening knowledge about the political system and ensuring direct contact with political actors (mobilization) (549).

A community that promotes well-being and prioritizes such well-being is well-disposed to being a civically engaged community. However, the second piece is that there are accessible and meaningful opportunities for engagement that meet the interests and concerns of a community. Sloam's quote highlights that mobilization is not without listening—an act that communicates care. Intentionality is at the core of the relationship between institution and citizen—the struggle that has defined youth engagement has been a lack of integration. Yet the attitude of wanting millennials to be engaged and showing this emphatically can change the nature of engagement.

## **Conclusion: Take-Aways and Next Steps**

The take-away of this deliverable is to change attitudes of millennial-aged youth to view local government not as an extension of the institutions that may have cut them out or alienated them from civic processes, but as a supporter of the community which provides them with the numerous cultural, social, and economic opportunities they take advantage of.

Important questions to consider include what connectedness and community mean; we would encourage the City of Eugene to unpack this further if they choose to better the state of civic engagement. What can be surmised from this report is that connectedness and community impact a sense of belonging, importance, and worth in a place that serve as motivation to get involved in their identified community.

Eugene provides an incredibly unique and rich environment with many opportunities for engagement. In this deliverable, we want to emphasize all that Eugene has available to it--the strong community, the innovation of being by a University, and the progressive mindset of the City of Eugene. We hope that this collection of reference material will be used to provoke further conversation about what lies ahead for civic engagement in Eugene.

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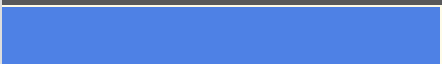

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## APPENDIX I

### Initial Report

Last Modified: 11/18/2015

#### 1. Do you live in the City of Eugene?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		173	92%
2	No		15	8%
	Total		188	100%

## 2. How old are you?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	(7-16)		0	0%
2	(17-22)		60	35%
3	(23-27)		38	22%
4	(28-34)		56	33%
5	(over 35)		16	9%
	Total		170	100%



## 3. Are you a student?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		84	55%
2	No		70	45%
	Total		154	100%



## 4. Are you in?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	High School		0	0%
2	Community College		9	11%
3	Four-year University		73	89%
	Total		82	100%

**5. 4. Do you identify as a member of the millennial generation?**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		121	81%
2	No		29	19%
	Total		150	100%

**6. If yes, why do you identify as a millennial? (select all that apply)**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I think of myself as a millennial because I was born in a year that classifies me as a millennial		107	90%
2	I perceive myself as a millennial because I resonate with the characteristics associated with millennials		51	43%

**7. Indicate your thoughts on the following sentence.**

#	Question	Has a very negative connotation	Has a negative connotation	Neither negative or positive connotation	Has a positive connotation	Has a very positive connotation	Total Responses	Mean
1	When I hear the term millennial I think it...	7	51	67	22	1	148	2.72

The next three questions will ask you to evaluate this **HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION**:










The City of Eugene has proposed a rental tax that will apply a \$100.00 fee to each tenant living in a rental (including dorm rooms, Greek housing and all other university housing) within the City of Eugene to fund various unnamed projects and programs within the City.

**THIS IS NOT REAL. IT IS A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION TO CONSIDER FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.**

**8. Referring to the above scenario, how would you feel if this were to happen to you?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Concerned/upset	106	76%
2	Supportive	27	19%
3	Don't care	7	5%
	Total	140	100%








**9. Given the above scenario, how would you like to learn/hear about what the city is proposing? (select all that apply)**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I would like to read about it in a local news publication		87	63%
2	I would like to see it on local television news		53	38%
3	I would like to read about it on social media		87	63%
4	I would like to receive a push from an app on my phone		17	12%
5	I would like to receive a text from the City of Eugene		27	19%
6	I would like to receive an email from the City of Eugene		82	59%
7	I would like a city representative to knock on my door		19	14%
8	I would like to attend a public meeting		48	35%
9	Other		13	9%



Other
I would not want to hear about it from the City of Eugene Government.
Rental Agency inform
from peers
I would like to know what the tax is being used for before I formed an opinion on it. Also, is it a one-time tax at move-in, a monthly tax w/rent, or an annual tax?
I would like to receive an announcement through my property management company.
mail flyer
Mailings
E-mail blast
post it on reddit, host an AMA on reddit
By mail.
Mail
radio?
I would like to hear it wasn't going to happen.

**10. How would you like to inform the City of Eugene of your opinion? (select all that apply)**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I would like to provide testimony at a City Council Meeting		27	20%
2	I would like to be able to comment on a "discussion board" on the City of Eugene website		75	56%
3	I would like to be able to text the City of Eugene		26	19%
4	I would like to be able to email the City of Eugene		91	67%
5	I would like to be able to comment through social media		72	53%
6	I would like to be able to comment through an app		26	19%
8	I would like a city representative to knock on my door		18	13%

9	I would like to attend a public meeting		60	44%
10	Other		7	5%

**11. Are you aware of opportunities for involvement with the City of Eugene where you can submit your input on upcoming projects or policies?**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		36	26%
2	No		104	74%
	Total		140	100%

**12. Did you actually provide feedback?**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		13	37%
2	No		22	63%
	Total		35	100%










**13. If yes, how did you provide input? (select all that apply)**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	City of Eugene hearings		4	31%
2	Open forum at City Council Meetings		4	31%
3	Voting		12	92%
4	Petition drives		1	8%
5	On-line survey		9	69%
6	Neighborhood Association meeting		4	31%
7	Open-house style drop-in meeting		4	31%
8	Project/policy specific community meeting		8	62%
9	Social media		7	54%
10	Going door-to-door to generate awareness		2	15%
11	Other		1	8%

**Other**

email appropriate departments

**14. If you have not provided feedback, what has prevented you from engaging? (select all that apply)**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Engaging takes too much effort		4	15%
2	My interest is not strong enough		8	31%
3	Too little time available for engaging		13	50%
4	No opportunities for engagement that meet my interest		4	15%
5	I do not know anyone who is participating		2	8%
6	I do not know how to provide feedback even though I want to		1	4%
7	Not enough feedback opportunities		4	15%
8	I do not think my voice/vote has any effect		7	27%
9	Other		4	15%

<b>Other</b>
I am not a permanent resident of Eugene or Oregon.
My opinion is generally mild approval. In that case, my "voice" is just noise. I'll provide feedback if/when I feel like I need to.
Don't plan on living in Eugene long term
Aware of possible ways to give feedback, but find out about meetings after reading of it in news

**15. Indicate your thoughts on the following sentences.**

#	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
1	I feel connected with my local government in Eugene.	28	55	36	17	3	139	2.37
2	I feel I have a stake in Eugene's future.	16	30	34	46	13	139	3.07
3	I feel I have a community and/or home in the City of Eugene.	4	10	22	71	32	139	3.84

**16. Do you follow the City of Eugene on Facebook?**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		23	17%
2	No		116	83%
	Total		139	100%

**17. Do you follow the City of Eugene on Twitter?**

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		17	12%
2	No		122	88%
	Total		139	100%