



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

2023

PRESENTED BY MICHELLE DOYLE & BRIANNA SMITH

OFFICE OF COMMS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

INTRO

Community Conversations is a valuable resource for stakeholders who want to stay informed, educated, and supported. By using a range of communication channels and digital services, the program can provide a space for community members to collaborate and share ideas so the Town can better meet their needs.

Provide space and the ability to hear the voices of key community stakeholders so we can come together and collaborate on future goals, programs, and initiatives as well as keep them informed while educating, listening, and obtaining their feedback.



OUR METHODOLOGY

FORMAT



1x1, Groups, Virtual,
In-Person, Co-Facilitation

LOCATION



Spruce Street, Town
Hall, Off-Site, Local
Businesses

COLLECTION



Note-Taking/Noteated,
Anonymous option,
Observational/Verbal

ANALYZE



Highlighted Main
Themes,
Reccemondations

INSIGHTS



Ideas Collected,
Brainstorming, Friction
Points, Quantitative
Insights

WHO WE TALKED TO

MPS
YOUTH
BUSINESS OWNERS
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS/PARTNERS
LOCAL NON-PROFITS
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS
RESIDENTS

The participants in the Community Conversations pilot program were selected based on recommendations from Town Managers and community groups, with a focus on reaching demographics and communities that the town has historically not engaged with effectively.



MAIN THEMES

BOD MEETINGS



Attendees face challenges with inconvenient timing and lengthy duration. Content complexity, the absence of an equity lens in topics, and accessibility issues, such as language barriers and platform limitations, further highlight the need for improvement.

TOWN LEADERSHIP



There's a desire for greater involvement in general public meetings and decisions, not limited to Board of Directors meetings.

Residents appreciate when Town Leadership shows face at important meetings and discussions in the community.

USER EXPERIENCE



Departments face both praise and challenges with issues such as certain departments being overused as a community point of contact.

The community faces many friction points when trying to connect with Town Depts.

TRUST



Lack of transparency on existing initiatives has the community hesitant to participate in current or future topics.

People are looking to be more heard and seen and invited into spaces that feel safe.

CONSISTENCY



The community is overwhelmed by information overload, citing too many formats and excessive redundancy in the provided information.

[For More Main Themes Refer to DOCX](#)

FRICTION POINTS



**OPTIMIZE BOD
MEETINGS**



**GROW
RELATIONSHIP
BUILDING WITH
TOWN DEPARTMENTS**



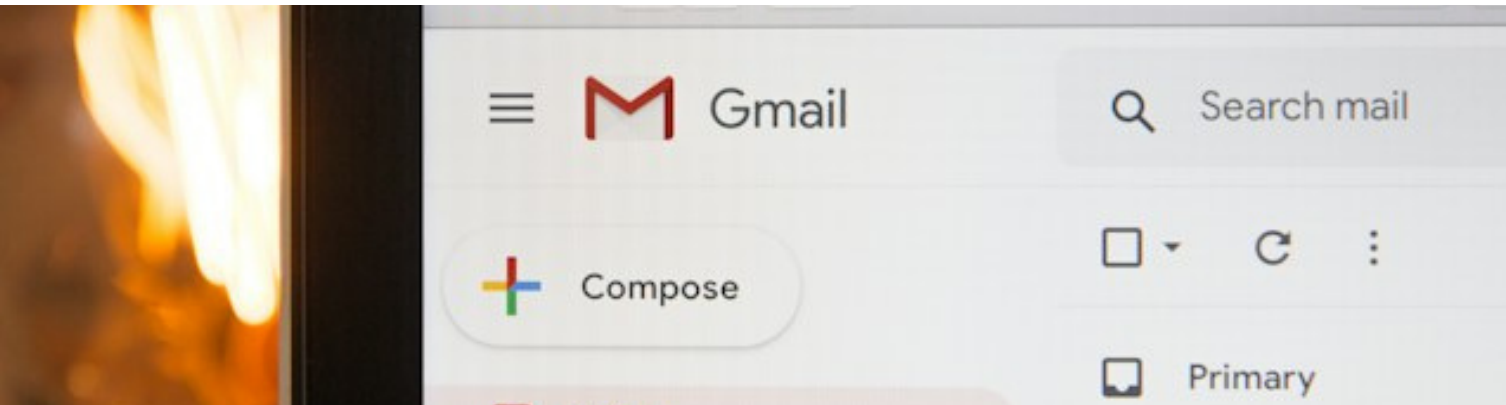
**HUMANIZE EXTERNAL
TOWN
COMMUNICATIONS**



**IMPROVE DEI &
ENGAGEMENT
EFFORTS**

QUOTES

“This is the first time the Town has reached out and asked me these questions directly. Thank you.” - Community Member



“There is an assumption that the ability to process info is the same for everyone when it is not.”
Public Schools Member



“I don’t know who to ask or who is the best suited for my question so I go to the same person hoping they might.” - Local Org



“The last time I watched, and a trans speaker was given the opportunity to speak, they (BOD) glossed over their speech and did not follow up or want to ask more. They didn’t seem interested in what they had to say or the issues at hand” - Youth Member

PILOT IDEAS

PILOT #1

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

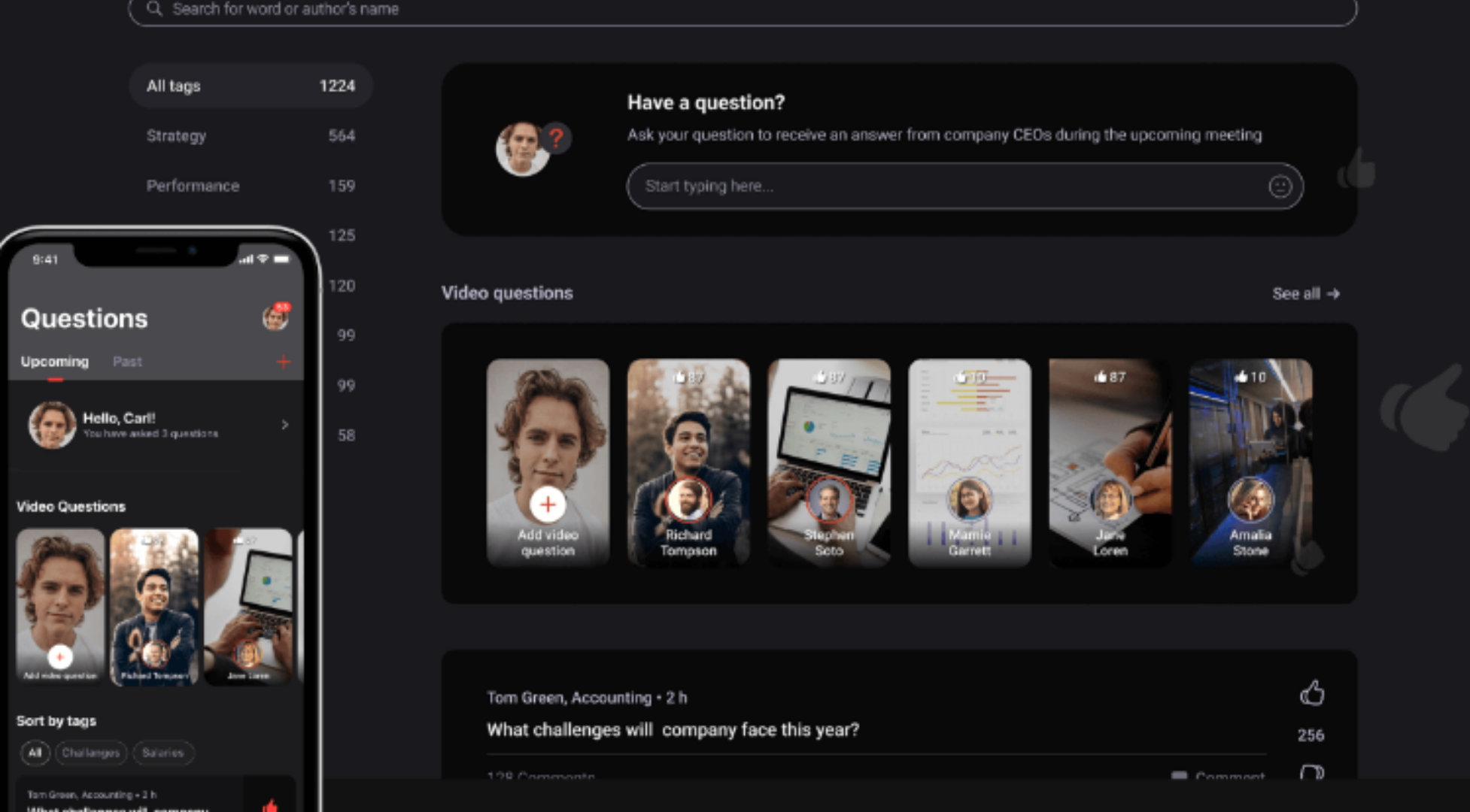
The pilot program is designed to highlight the good deeds and initiatives undertaken by residents and organizations, fostering a sense of unity and appreciation within the community. Whether it's showcasing community-driven projects, the accomplishments of outstanding individuals, or the positive influence of local businesses, this initiative aims to bring forth the diverse and uplifting stories that define the community.

The program is not only focused on community members but also extends to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of the town's staff, recognizing their valuable contributions to the overall well-being and vitality of the community. Through this pilot, the town aspires to create a platform that fosters a sense of pride, connection, and shared identity among its residents.



A big THANK YOU 🙌 to Manchester DPW crews, Town staff, & [Manchester Police Department](#), and [Manchester Fire Rescue EMS](#) for responding to the winter storm ❄️ Thank you for your hard work and for keeping the [#manchesterct](#) community safe today! [#staysafe](#)

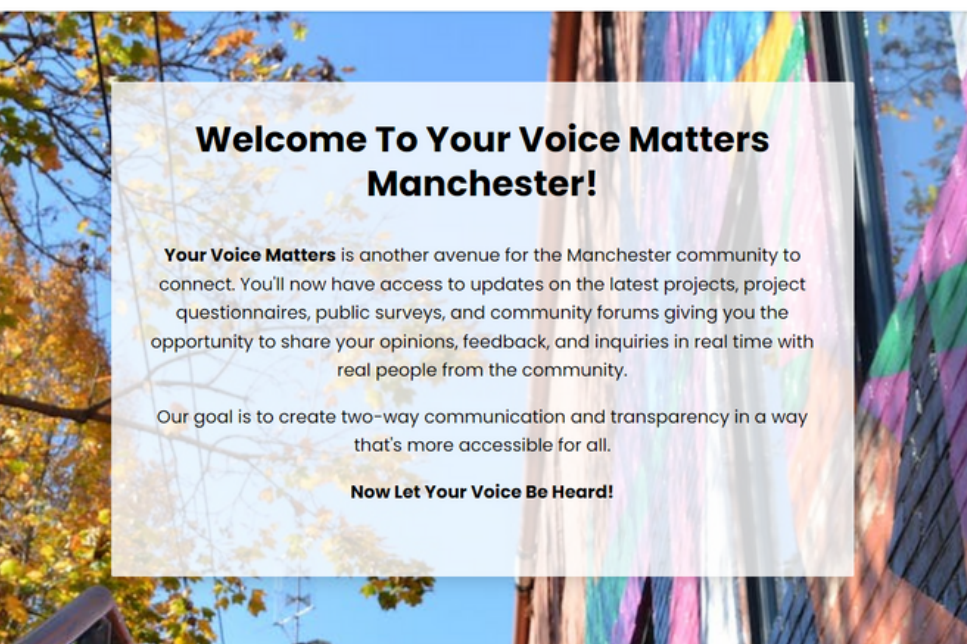




PILOT # 2

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

A virtual town hall platform to enhance communication between Board of Directors (BOD) members and the community. Leveraging the Your Voice Matters (YVM) page, BOD members will have a dedicated space to engage with the community on a virtual level, providing an accessible platform for open dialogue. This initiative aims to empower the community by allowing them to participate in BOD meetings at their convenience, fostering a sense of inclusivity and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to be part of crucial discussions.



Featured Projects



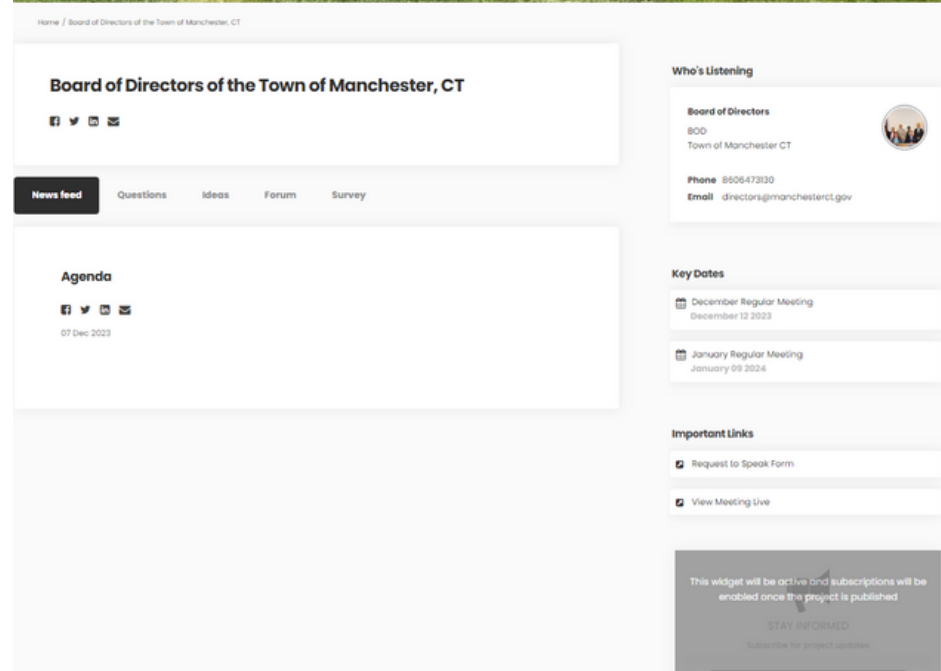
Designing & Building Our Future Library

In November of last year (2022), Manchester voters approved the funding to build a new main li...



Downtown Manchester Improvements Project

The Downtown Manchest Improvements proje...



Through this pilot, the town envisions a more interactive and inclusive approach to civic engagement, making it easier for residents to stay informed and involved in the governance of their community.

PILOT #3

COFFEE CONVOS

This approach involves town leaders hosting informal sessions to engage in open dialogue with community members, fostering a relaxed environment for genuine conversations, input, and feedback. The primary goal is to establish a direct and accessible channel for residents to gain clarity on various initiatives while providing valuable insights to town leadership. By breaking down traditional barriers and making themselves easily accessible, town leaders aim to create a more transparent and inclusive communication platform.

Through these casual conversations, the town aspires to bridge the gap between leadership and the community, cultivating a collaborative spirit that empowers residents to actively contribute to the decision-making process and stay well-informed about the town's initiatives.





PILOT #4

BLOCK PARTY

This innovative event will serve as a centralized space, providing a unique opportunity for new residents, businesses, and existing community members to familiarize themselves with the diverse range of services the town has to offer. The Block Party will feature interactive tables for each department, equipped with marketing materials designed to educate attendees on the various services available.

Additionally, a dedicated landing page will be established to cater specifically to businesses and organizations, offering a virtual space to access information and resources, further promoting collaboration within the community.



THANK YOU!
