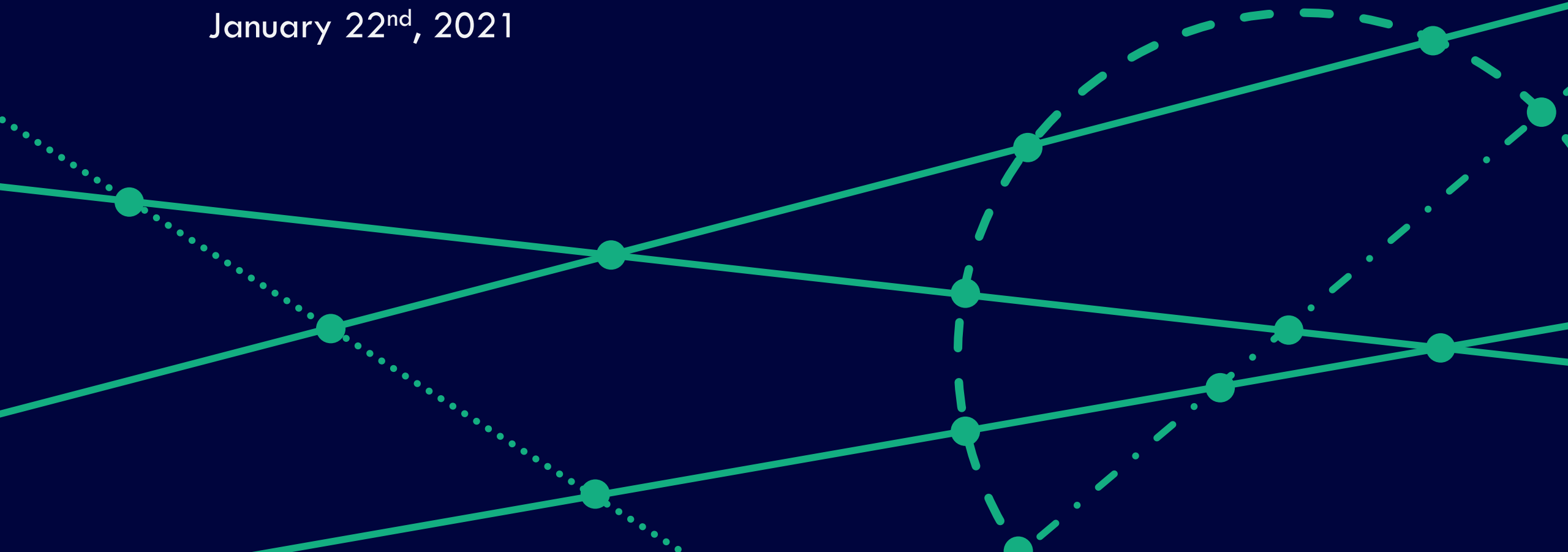


Harnessing the Power of Community Feedback with a Qualitative Methodology

January 22nd, 2021



Webinar Agenda

Introductions

Why Qualitative Methodology?

Methodology and Guide Overview

Examples from Practice

Discussion



Who are we?



Christian Brandt, AICP:
Planner and Community
Engagement Specialist I
cbrandt@mapc.org
[LinkedIn](#)



Alyssa Kogan:
Regional Planning
Data Analyst
akogan@mapc.org
[LinkedIn](#)



Carolina Prieto:
Community
Engagement Manager
cprieto@mapc.org
[LinkedIn](#)



Sharon Ron: Public
Health Planner II
sron@mapc.org
[LinkedIn](#)



What is MAPC?

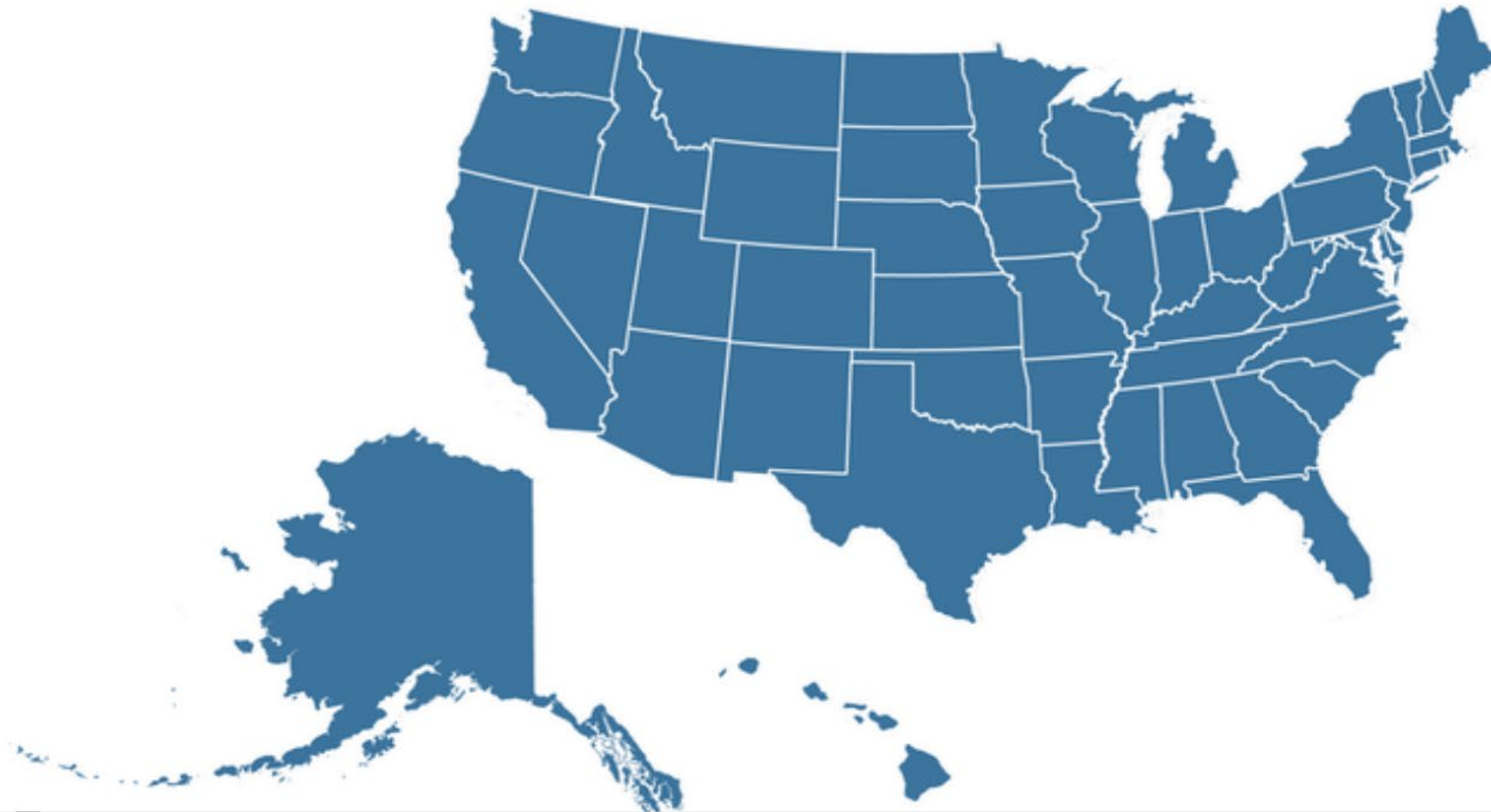
The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of the Metropolitan Boston region.

Our Mission: Our mission is to promote smart growth and regional collaboration.

Areas of Work: arts and culture, clean energy, climate, community engagement, land use planning, economic development, environment, housing, public health, public safety, transportation, public procurement



Where are you joining us from?



Project Background and Goals

Working with community feedback is an integral part of MAPC's work but many staff do this differently and/or struggle to understand how best to use community feedback effectively.

- **Provide** a usable, flexible, detailed guide that answers existing questions and fills in existing resource gaps at MAPC
- **Improve** projects through systematic and strategic inclusion of feedback and qualitative data
- **Save** staff time and money on projects
- **Promote** more racially equitable projects



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data



Methodology Overview

Methodology is the **strategy** that that you follow and the justification that you use for engaging in your project in the first place.

Methods are the **tactics** that you will use to complete your project (interviews, focus groups, text analysis, etc.)



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

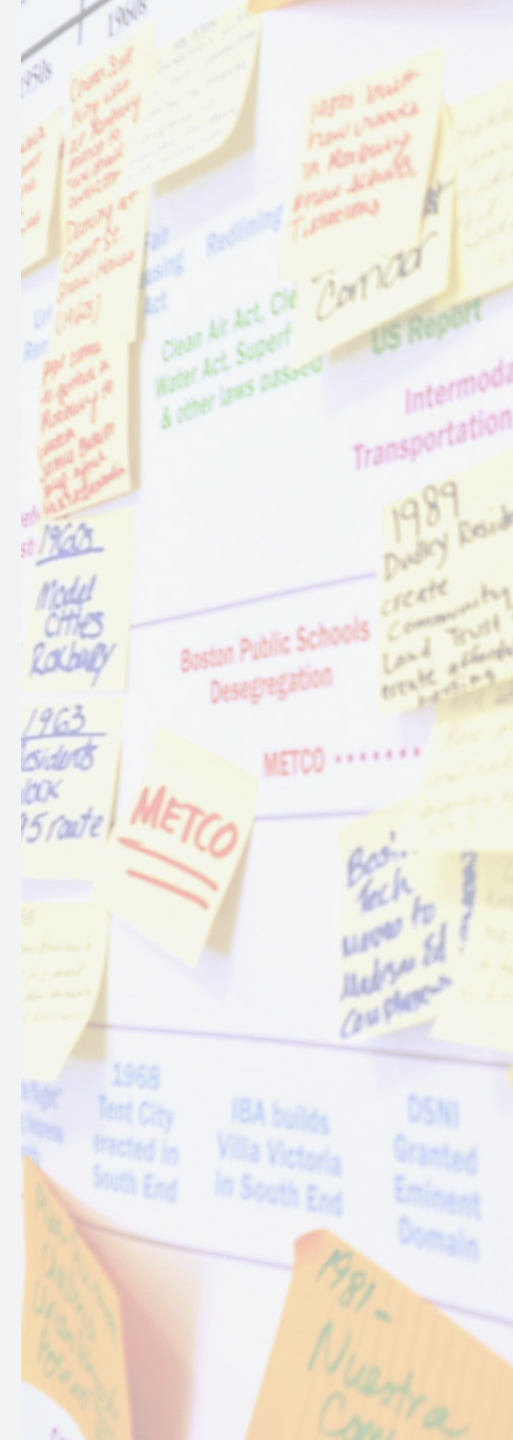
Understanding Data

Sharing Data

What is Qualitative Data?

Any non-numerical, narrative, and/or experience-based data point that approximates, describes, or characterizes the subject at hand.

- Qualitative data is often text-based (direct quotes, observations, anecdotes, existing texts) but can also be image- or sound-based (pictures, videos, audio recordings).
- An easy way to think about this is that qualitative data is people's *stories*. Where quantitative data answers the questions who, what, when, and where, *qualitative data answers the questions why and how.*



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Why should you care about qualitative methodology?

- Most planners work with qualitative data in their projects. A methodology will make that work easier for you!
- Our work *necessitates* an understanding of the perspectives of a diversity of stakeholders

Racial Equity

- Quantitative data is not neutral and suffers from important racial biases
- A qualitative methodology can help address these issues by surfacing the lived experiences of communities who are undercounted and excluded from decision-making



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

How will Qualitative Data help you?

- **Better understand** the lived experiences, thoughts, and opinions of your projects' stakeholders
- **Provide** significant depth and context to projects and address the inherent limitations of quantitative data
- **Ensure** that inequitable conditions and burdens are meaningfully addressed in your planning work



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

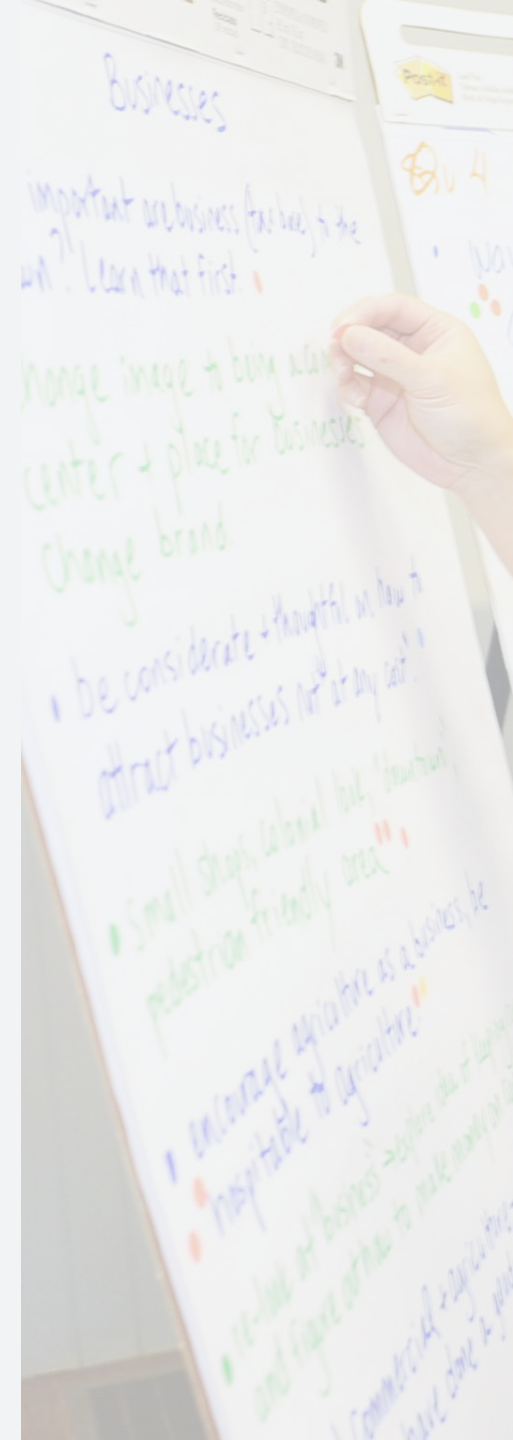
Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Guiding Questions

- **Why** are MAPC and the client pursuing this project?
- **What** are your and the client's objectives for this process?
- **What** do you need to know to meet these objectives?
- **Why** do you need to know this?
- **How** will you use the knowledge that you collect?



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Engaging in this work ethically

- Identify your biases
- Protect your participants' confidentiality and make sure they know what they're
 - Do you need to c
- Work with community members/leaders in project, collect data
- Use interpretation when necessary

Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Consent to Participate
Facilitator:
Project Manager:

Contact Details:

Name
60 Temple Place
Boston, MA
02111

Tel:
Email:

Contact Details:

Project Manager
60 Temple Place
Boston, MA
02111

Tel:
Email:

Project Title:

Project Description:

Procedure and Duration: Prior to the interview, you will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the interview and sign a form indicating your consent to participate. You will also be asked whether you consent to being recorded as back-up for your interview (the recording will not be transcribed). During this interview, you will be asked to respond to questions about [topic]. You may be asked follow-up questions when necessary. The interview is expected to take approximately an hour of your time. If I have any questions about the interview, I may reach out to you no later than [date] for clarification

Confidentiality: The results of this research will be part of MAPC's [project] and as such will be published on MAPC's and the Town's website. Every effort to guarantee confidentiality will be taken and your name and other identifiers will not be used in the final product. However, notes from your interview as well as the recording, will become part of the public record and will be

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

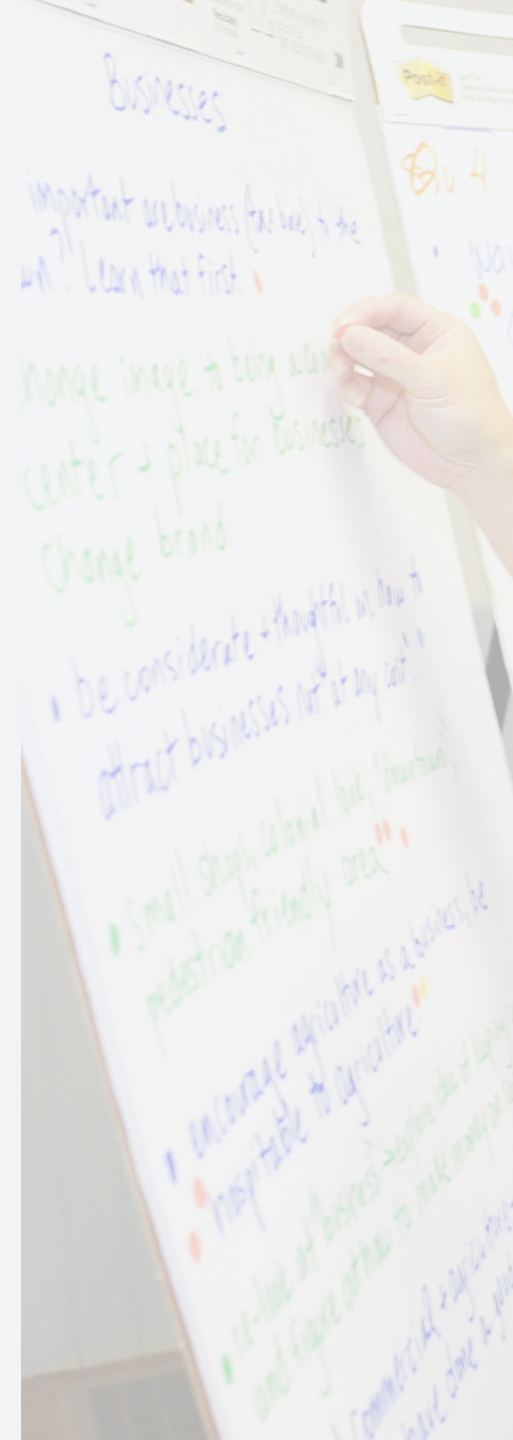
Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Dealing with Skepticism

Sometimes our colleagues and partners must be convinced that qualitative methods are important!

- Ask the person who is questioning your process/findings what they are concerned about?
- Ask them what they would need to feel more comfortable?
- Ask them if they have concerns about participant reliability?



Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Method Guidance and Descriptions

	# of participants at a time	Type of interaction	Skills and knowledge required	What does your data look like?
Interviews	1	In-depth on-on-one conversation	Note-taking, facilitation	Rich narrative, quotes, long-form, single-perspective notes.
Focus Groups	5 to 12	Dialogue-based, small group, educational	Note-taking, facilitation, mediation	Conversation-based notes, narrative data, quotes, multiple perspectives
Observations	N/a	Passive, potentially interactive	Note-taking	Detailed description of activity, timeline, and activity environment
Surveys	Many (unlimited!)	One-way, not interactive, possibly educational.	Question writing, visual design	Large amounts of short answers, annotated images or maps. Provided via excel or a Qualtrics-based report
Public Meetings	Many (typically 20-100, more is also great!)	Large group, interactive, can be both one- or two-way	Facilitation, question writing, visual design	Posters with post-it note responses, short notes from participants, annotated maps (more, depending on your activities)

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Method Guidance and Descriptions

	# of participants at a time	Type of interaction	Skills and knowledge required
Interviews	1	In-depth on-on-one conversation	Note-taking, facilitation
Focus Groups	5 to 12	Dialogue-based, small group, educational	Note-taking, facilitation, mediation
Observations	N/a	Passive, potentially interactive	Note-taking
Surveys	Many (unlimited!)	One-way, not interactive, possibly educational.	Question writing, visual design
Public Meetings	Many (typically 20-100, more is also great!)	Large group, interactive, can be both one- or two-way	Facilitation, question writing, visual design

Focus Groups

What?

Focus groups involve one or two facilitators gathering a group of stakeholders with at least one common characteristic for a facilitated discussion on a particular topic.



During the focus groups, participants can:

- Engage in dialogue with each other
- Generate ideas they may not have had otherwise
- Be influenced in a way that may not have happened one-on-one.

Focus groups typically involve around 12 people and have a trained facilitator and notetaker present. Data from focus groups is most often conversation-based, narrative notes, sometimes with quotes, and containing multiple perspectives.

How?

Focus groups are useful for when you want to facilitate something more akin to brainstorming or when you feel like you want to gather insights from a group of people all at once. Focus groups are also helpful for when you feel like a dialogue might facilitate increased learning or surface commonalities between participants. In focus groups, you can immediately address observed commonalities and discuss them in real time. For example, you may want to schedule a focus group with business owners to understand how they operate a business in the community. This focus group will enable you to identify differences between participants but will also enable your participants to engage with these differences among themselves. Focus groups are also useful including collaborative activities, games, or other kinds of teamwork.

When?

Like interviews, focus groups can occur throughout your process and can provide different benefits accordingly:

At the beginning, they can help establish the foundational knowledge you will need to start your project.

Towards the end, they can be used to evaluate and refine recommendations.

During the middle of your project, interviews can be used to gather specific insights from important demographic groups or from specific interest groups/sectors, or to more deeply investigate questions that arise after starting

Structure

Focus groups can vary in structure from loosely to highly structured.

Loosely structured focus groups allow participants to engage in conversation with each other which can lead to greater collaborative thinking, information sharing, and idea generation. They also provide the facilitator the opportunity to ask follow-up questions that are specific to the conversation without diverging too far from the agenda.

Unlike interviews, however, loosely structured focus groups still need a discussion guide to help the facilitator keep the conversation on track. Unfortunately, these types of focus groups are prone to disruptions, tangents, or domination by one participant.

Highly structured focus groups follow a prescribed agenda, aim to address a higher number of questions, and typically have less room for tangents or follow-up questions.

Highly structured focus groups can help prevent against domination by one participant because the facilitator has more control over what participant discuss but may prevent the surfacing of new ideas and findings as a result.

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Analysis Tools

The steps that you will take to understand your data are:

- **Familiarize** yourself with your data by skimming through everything once
- **Organize** and clean your data
- **Identify** themes and sub-themes in your data
- **Assign** relevant themes/sub-themes to each data point
- **Sort** your data by themes, review and refine your themes (you may want to do this several times)
- **Write** an explanation of what each theme and sub-theme has revealed to you

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Focus Group 1, 10/10/2020, ABC Community Organization	Themes			
2	Note 1	theme 1, Theme 7, Theme 5			
3	Note 2	Theme 4, Theme 6			
4	Note 3	Theme 2			
5	Note 4	Theme 3, Theme 9, Theme 5, Theme 1			
6	Note 5	Theme 1			
7	Note 6	Theme 3, Theme 1			
8	Note 7	Theme 8, Theme 9			
9	Note 8	theme 1, Theme 7, Theme 5			
10	Note 9	Theme 4, Theme 6			
11	Note 10	Theme 2			
12	Note 11	Theme 3, Theme 9			
13	Note 12	Theme 1			
14	Note 13	Theme 3, Theme 1			
15	Note 14	Theme 8, Theme 9			
16	Note 15	theme 1, Theme 7, Theme 5			
17	Note 16	Theme 4, Theme 6			
18	Note 17	Theme 2			
19	Note 18	Theme 3, Theme 9, Theme 1			
20					
21					

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Synthesis FAQs

- What do I do if I think my results are skewed?
- What do I do if qualitative data contradicts or is critical of MAPC's or the client's work/values.
- What do I do if my qualitative data contradicts my quantitative data?
- How do I respond to pushback from partners



Remember! You should report on all the data you have collected, regardless of whether it is skewed, contradicts MAPC, or contradicts existing quantitative data. The only time you should *not* report on data is in order to preserve the confidentiality of any participants.

Take the appropriate steps to discuss in your deliverable your concerns. Call it out, discuss how that skew/contradiction might have impacted your findings, explain whether you considered it in any conclusions.

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Sharing Tips and Examples

- Lead with the community’s voice!
 - Showing, not Telling

Telling	Showing
Most participants preferred McDonald Park to City Park because it is easier to access on public transit.	Most participants said that they rarely visited City Park because they could not easily get to it on public transit. Several indicated that a trip to City Park would take them more than an hour each way and require multiple transit transfers. As Caroline, a participant in a focus group, explained: “My kids love City Park, but we’ve had some frustrating experiences getting to and from. By the time we get there, I’m exhausted and the kids are cranky and anxious from the long trip. Going back home is another story. I’ve just started going to McDonald Park instead because it’s so much easier to get to!” Most participants agreed, indicating that they went to McDonald Park over City Park because of ease of access and transit accessibility.

Methodology Overview

What is Qualitative Data?

Why Qualitative Data?

Getting Started

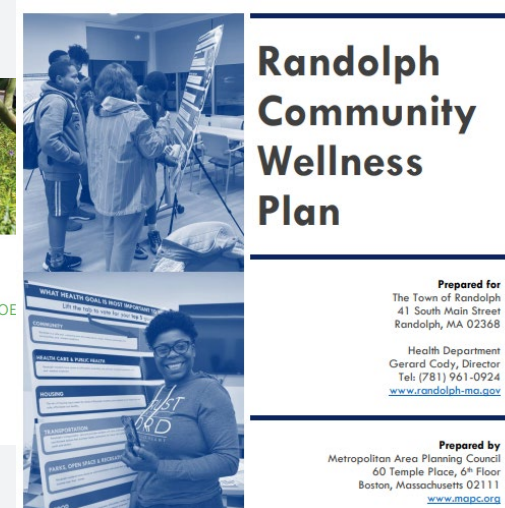
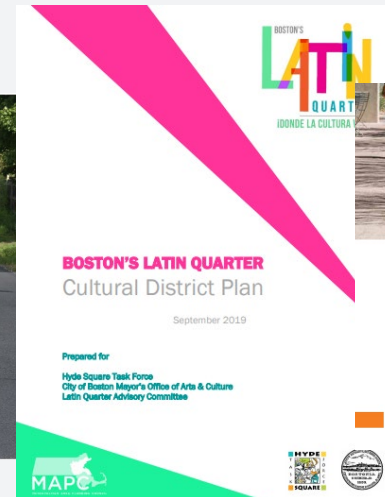
Collecting Data

Understanding Data

Sharing Data

Sharing Tips and Examples

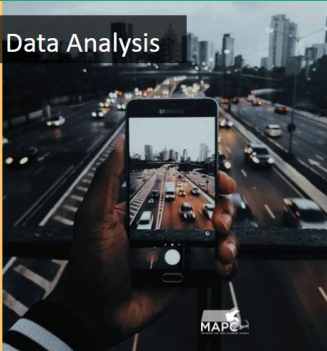
- Lead with the community's voice!
 - Showing, not Telling
- Weave qualitative feedback throughout the document
- Discuss quantitative data and qualitative data in the same section
- Consult with the community
- Include anonymized notes in the appendix



Examples from Practice

Photovoice Data Analysis

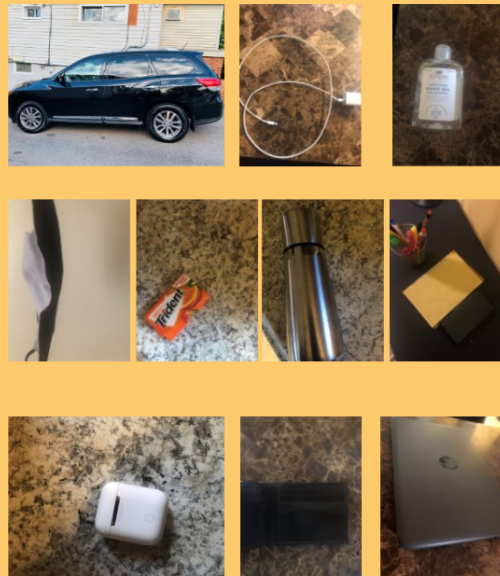
Revere's Workforce Photovoice Diaries



Revere Workforce Development Plan

- Core Committee with both municipal and community leaders
- Stakeholder interviews coded by theme using an excel template from the methodology guide
- Quotes and images integrated throughout the report
- Corresponding Photovoice project

Danial's Media



Organization is a very important skill you'll need for work, a wallet is a good way to keep your stuff in hand. Need spare cash for your lunch break? You can keep it in your wallet. Need to store your transportation card so you can use a train? Your wallet can safely keep everything in there. You can be totally creative of what you put in your wallet and it will help ensure you don't forget anything important if you have it all in one place.

A challenge of COVID-19 when you're working is keeping track of where you're touching outside, especially in public places. You should always use hand sanitizers before you're touching anything indoors or in your workplace. This is to prevent the risk of someone getting the virus and having to self isolate for a while.

A professional person is someone who is following proper protocols during a pandemic like we are in right now. Wearing a mask is currently a protocol most places require, not only for the safety of yourself but for the safety of others. Even if you're not in the age group of being deeply affected by this virus, you could still transmit it to someone who is, putting their life in risk. Being professional is taking other people into consideration and ensuring you're doing everything you can to make sure a workplace is running well and safely.

I think the type of job I'll have ten years from now will require a car. If my workplace is like 20-30 minutes away, I think a car is essential to ensure that I'm reliable and on time every day. A car is essential for this, public transportation is an alternative I'd use if I lived closer. Longer distanced jobs do require cars in my opinion though, and it's something I'm willing to do.

2) I think water fountains will probably close down for a while, so having a water bottle during work is important. It ensures you have hydration and performing better through work. Also, I made sure it was an eco-friendly material due to plastic water bottles being thrown and not good for our environment.

1. To get into a job, I feel that you need connections or else it'll be very difficult to get into a place. Also, with this pandemic going on it's made it harder for everyone including myself to find jobs.

9) My workspace, usually when I'm doing online school is having papers, an abundance of pens, pencils, or anything to write/help me during remote learning. I like that I have my space well organized and I'm always prepared for school, which could be also applied to office work, which I used to do as a summer job in the past. I dislike the amount of space that I have to do things, I wish I had more space to do things on.

3) I think being focused during work is something you'll definitely need to be successful at work. Gum is actually really helpful for me, personally, and for a lot of people in staying focused. It allows me to be able to do stuff without fidgeting, and I can stay focused on what I need to do.

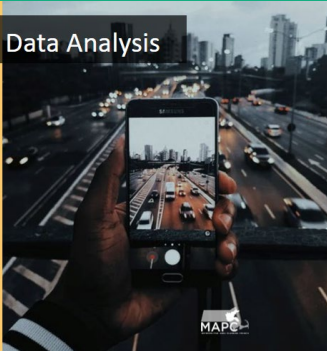
7) One skill I'm proud of is being able to multi-task. Although multitasking in most situations isn't helpful, I think items such as AirPods can be really useful. For example, I might be doing school work, but someone is calling me. I could just tap my AirPods twice to answer the call without having to stop working on something. This has happened to me on numerous occasions, and AirPods have a lot of features that could help in so many work-related situations. It doesn't necessarily have to be AirPods. It can be any wireless earphones as well. Wireless earphones genuinely are a lot better than wired though since the wire could take a while to untangle and it could be distracting during work.

6) My workspace would have materials I would need during a long day of work. I think carrying a charger is essential in case my phone or watch dies. 10 years from now, we will definitely rely on technology more for work, and I see myself using it consistently during work. Making sure my electronics are charged so I can contact people on those devices, I can monitor my health with my watch, and these devices can help with work performance in many ways.

Examples from Practice

Photovoice Data Analysis

Revere's Workforce Photovoice Diaries



Revere Workforce Development Plan

Qualitative Data Tracker									
	Source Name	Source Type	Question	Notes / Statements	Code #1	Code #2	Date	Note Taker	
5			Tell us about your organization	Our mission is to advocate to educate locally to protect the rights of our constituents	Target Population Detail	Support Services	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
6	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	Tell us about your organization	- immigrants/ /refugee/low income women and their families	Support Services		7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
7	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	Tell us about your organization	The services that we provide are computer classes, job readiness support, English classes	Value Statement		7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
8	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	Tell us about your organization	Our ultimate goal is to set up our constituents for a better future.	Language barrier	Social barriers	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
9	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	People are coming here with no English, with no knowledge the systems of this country.			7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
10	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	Some have their profession when they come here but nobody help them transition into those fields, non valid prior titles, certificates, and training here ... some invest a lot of money to actually have a certain advanced career but a big barriers for them is English.	Language barrier	Economic barrier	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
11	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	So of them have a profession but come to the USA and end up with totally different professions... some of them are lawyer or teachers in their countries but can't practice in the USA... Lack of the language is the main reason they end up working in a restaurant or the hotel industries.	Language barrier	Cultural barriers	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
12	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	Everything requires computer and understand of technology... We support constituents in learning how to navigate and use computer and technology	Technological barriers		7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
13	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	We also encourage constituents to be to be part of the community and civically engaged.	Value Statement	Governmental barriers	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
14	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	We also help our constituents navigate the school system and other local services.	Value Statement	Governmental barriers	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
15	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	we are open to everyone including men and non immigrants but women and immigrants are out target audience.	Target Population Detail	Value Statement	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
16	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	Majority of people are coming from Revere, and some from Chelsea in Boston and Lynn.	Target Population Detail		7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
17	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	What type of workforce	We partner with Community School for GED support	Credentialing barriers	Support Services	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
18	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	Who is the target population	We serve, low income immigrants.	Target Population Detail		7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	
19	Olga Tacure	Informational Interview	Who is the target population	We have a mix of levels so some of them might know a little bit of the basics, and some are more advance.	Support Services	Target Population	7/22/2020	Iolando Spinola	

Qualitative Data Tracker

A hand holding a smartphone displaying a street view of a busy highway with cars and a city skyline in the background. The phone screen shows a live feed of the scene.

Target Population Assessment | Interviews

Mass Inc Worker Categorization

		Incumbent Workers	Transitional Workers	Emerging Workers:	
Demographic attributes of Revere priority populations	Source Name				Note Taker
	Olga Tacure				Iolando Spinola
	Olga Tacure				Iolando Spinola
	Olga Tacure				Iolando Spinola
	Olga Tacure				Iolando Spinola
	Olga Tacure				Iolando Spinola
	Age	30 – 40 (traditional labor force age)	15 – 34 (Younger)	15 -24	
	Gender		Both Male and Female but need more acute for Women		
	US/Non-US Born		Non US Born (recognize that non-naturalized greater challenges)	Non US Born or First Generation	
	Race		Primarily Spanish (Latinx) and Arabic Speaking (Moroccan)	Students of Color (Latinx, Black, Asian)	
	Edu Attain	Limited Formal Education / Training	Limited Formal Education or not Recognized Accreditations / Existing Training	Ongoing or Interrupted Educational Background	
	Income	Low Income			

We support constituents in learning how to navigate and

Qualitative

- Language Barriers
- Cultural Knowledge/Understanding of US systems

Incumbent Workers

Transitional Workers

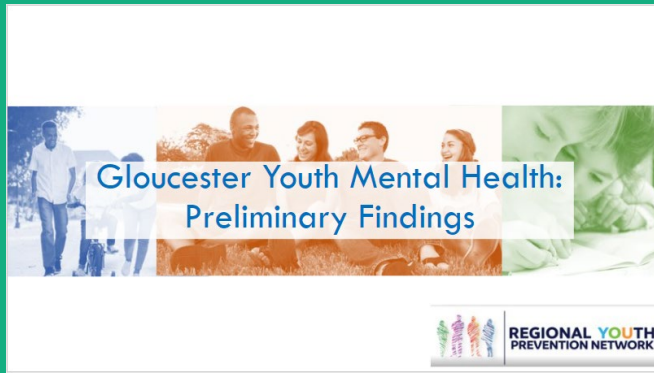
Emerging Workers

- Lack of funding for services/training
- Awareness of resources
- Lack of physical space to turn to help
- Longevity of job access
- Ability to work in the US

- Age Discrimination

- Family Care Costs
- Disrupted education

Examples from Practice



Gloucester Youth Mental Health Project

- 6 focus groups, 4 stakeholder interviews
- Coded data using Dedoose
- Summaries of qualitative findings and quotes integrated with quantitative survey results



“You know, they might send a kid to a program for three days, but that doesn’t address their problems. And then they end up just sending them back into the same program, you know, the same setting that kind of triggered what happened before, and they’re not getting any better. So I guess transition services, so if you do need the help you kind of need someone with you there through the process and not just kind of being, you know, okay, you’re done. You’re cleared now, go home, and then things act up again. That that’s a problem. So continuity of care is, I guess, what I’m getting at there...”

Examples from Practice



Lynn City Summit

- Partnership with municipal, community, and non-profit partners
- Reporting of verbatim notes in final document using the same language that participants used
- Concerns raised by municipal partner about content and findings in the data



Qualitative Data Pledge

I pledge to:

- Answer the guiding questions
- Lead with the community's voice
- Work with community members and leaders
- Be flexible without losing sight of my project goals
- Take good notes
- Report on all the data I have (and make sure I respect confidentiality!)
- All data is useful, all data is valuable



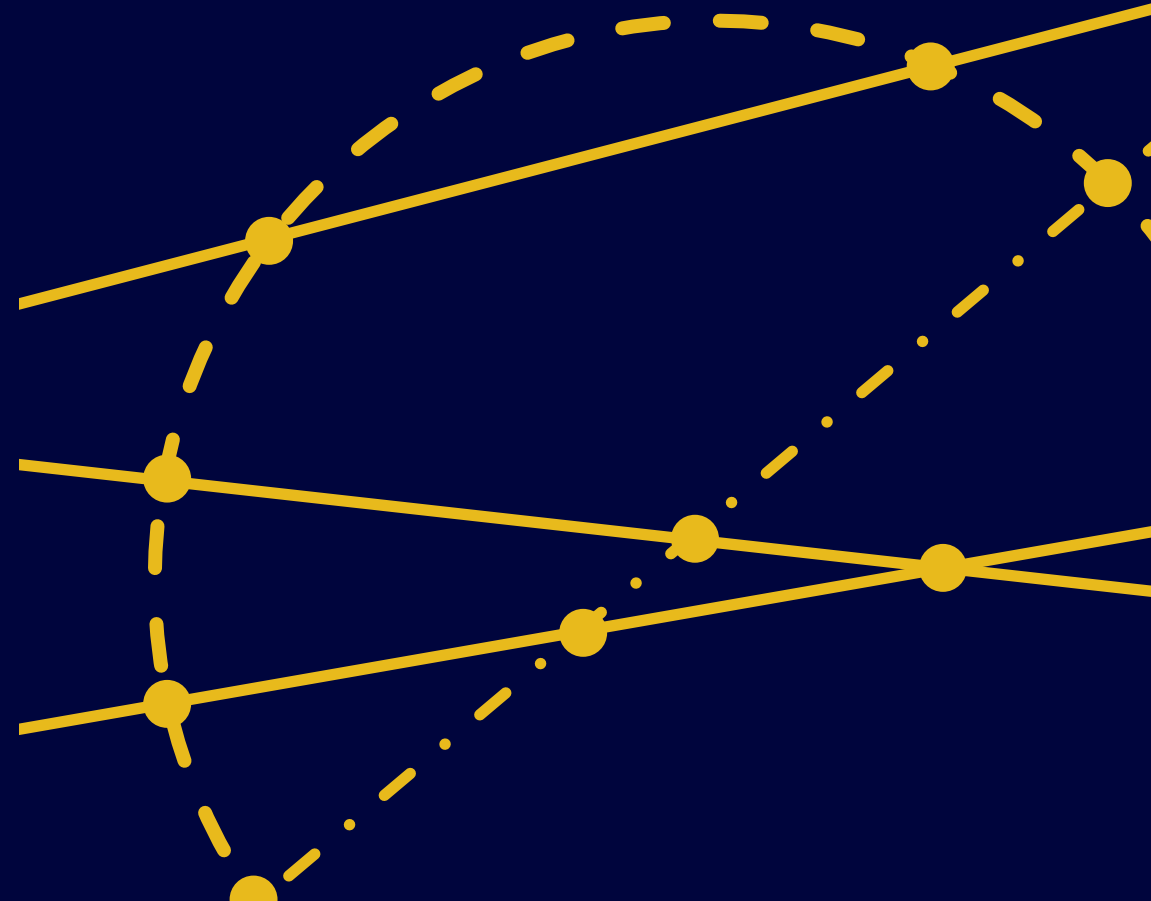
Where can I find the guide?

Currently you can access the guide and the resources included in it by contacting:

Christian Brandt at cbrandt@mapc.org

In the future, the guide will be hosted on MAPC's Community Engagement Team's website:

<https://www.mapc.org/our-work/services-for-cities-towns/community-engagement/>



Discussion Time!

