

Post Pandemic Engagement

Georgia Association of MPOs Fall Conference
Monday, November 6, 2023
Macon, GA

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Our Agenda

- My, How Things Have Changed
- Case Study Examples
- Breakdowns
- Breakthroughs

My, How Things Have Changed





The pandemic has **reshaped**
the landscape of community
engagement, reminding us that
physical distance need not
result in social isolation.



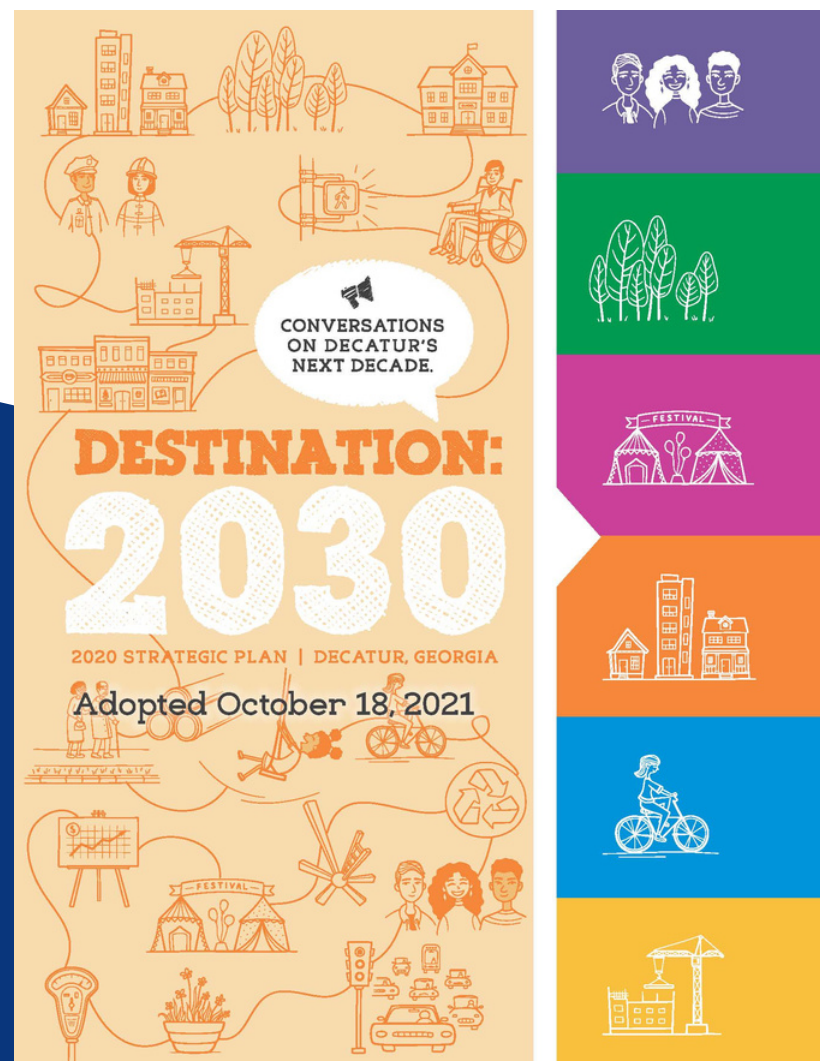
The pandemic underscored the importance of **innovative** approaches and **virtual connections** in fostering a stronger sense of community even when we are apart.

Case Study Examples

- City of Decatur Strategic Plan
- Brookhaven City Centre Master Plan
- Bowen Neighborhood Transformation Plan

Decatur Strategic Plan

Dec 2019 - Apr 2021



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Population: ~25K
- Size: 4.7 sq mi
- Median Household Income: \$92,000
- Average Price of SF Home: \$418,700
- Digitally Connected

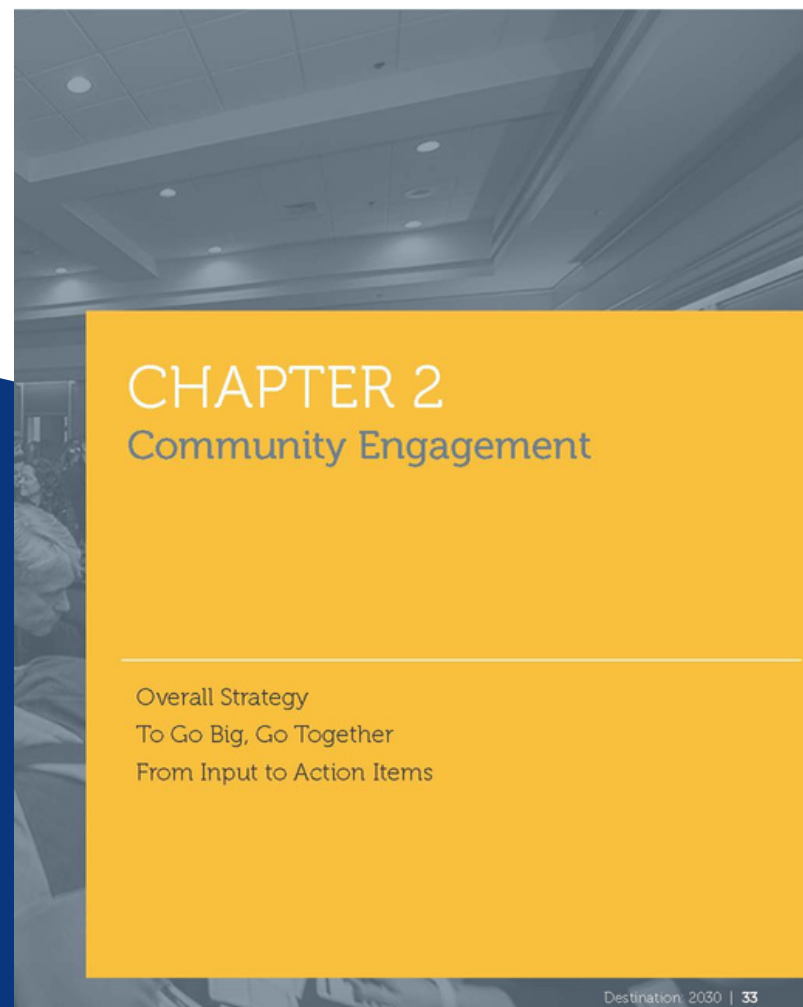
Decatur Strategic Plan

Dec 2019 - Apr 2021



Decatur Strategic Plan

Dec 2019 - Apr 2021



PRE-PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Began w/open houses and on-site events
- Built in some community-led strategies - “Engagement Squad”
- Established a strong online presence

Pause Now. Plan Later.



The COVID-19 outbreak put a temporary hold on Decatur's Strategic Planning process but rest assured: **We will be back.** So don't stop thinking about Decatur beyond today.

Stay tuned for future updates as paths forward become more clear.

DESTINATION:2030

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN | DECATUR, GEORGIA



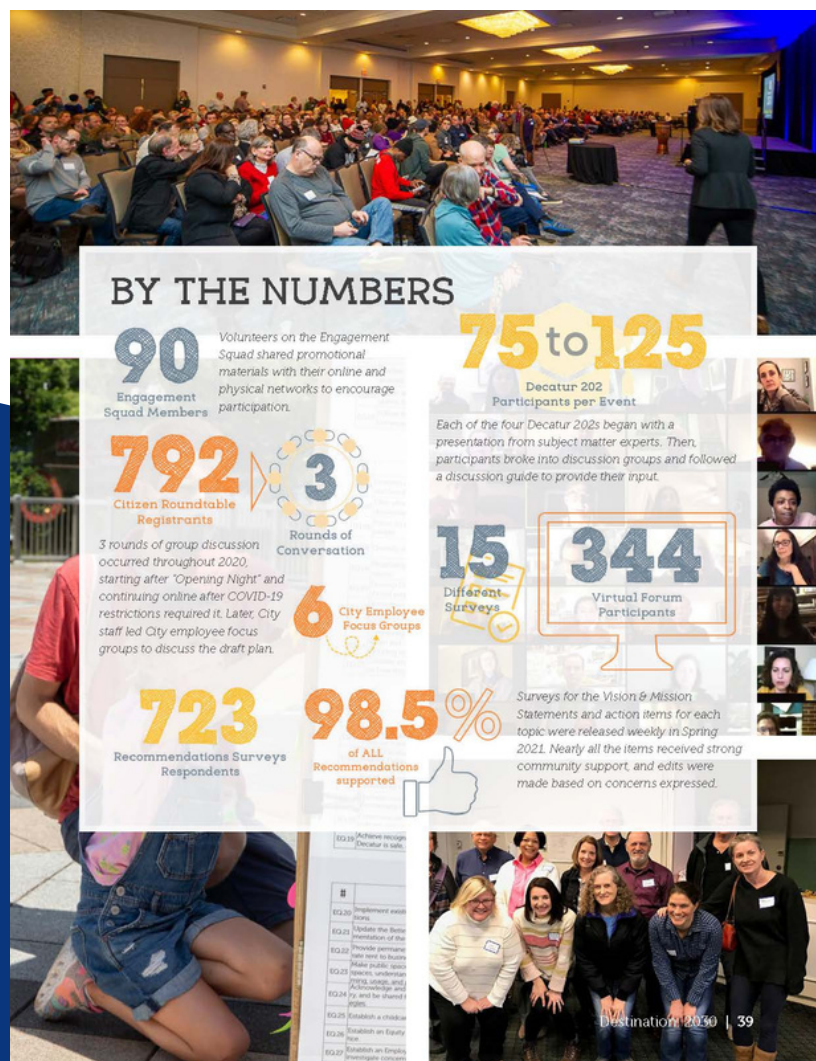
decaturn2030.com

Decatur Strategic Plan

Dec 2019 - Apr 2021

PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Changed our approach “midstream”
- Print and e-media heavily used
- Citizen-led Roundtables
- Virtual Decatur 202s Webinar Series
- Pop Up, Outdoor Events



Brookhaven City Centre Master Plan

Sep 2020 - Mar 2022

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Population: ~60K
- Size: 12 sq mi
- Median Household Income: \$167,000
- Average Price of SF Home: \$660,000
- Digitally Connected



Brookhaven City Centre Master Plan

Sep 2020 - Mar 2022

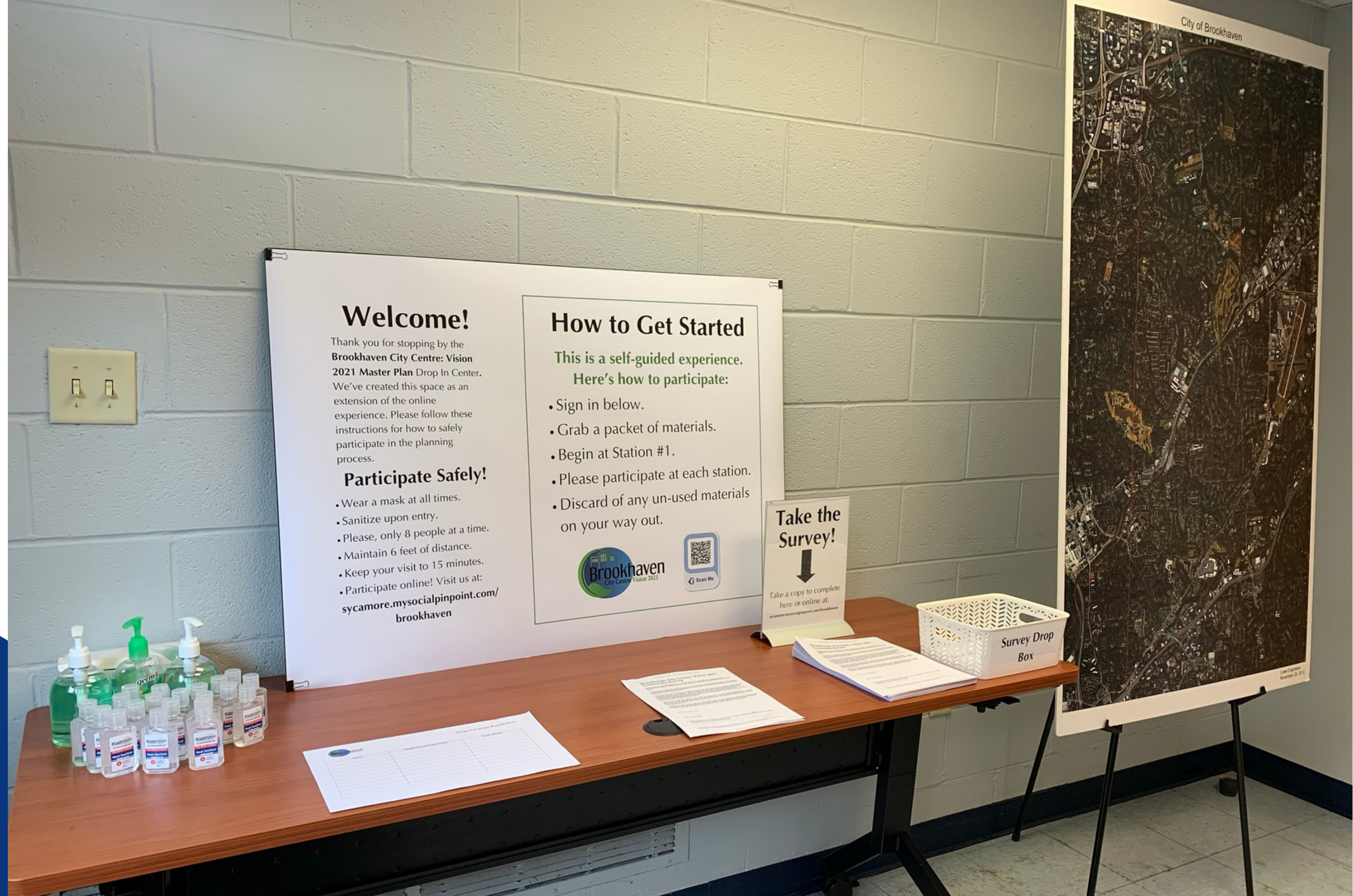


PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Virtual Kick Off Meeting
- Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews
- District Pop Ups
- Email Campaigns
- Drop In Center



District Pop Up Events



City Hall Drop In Center



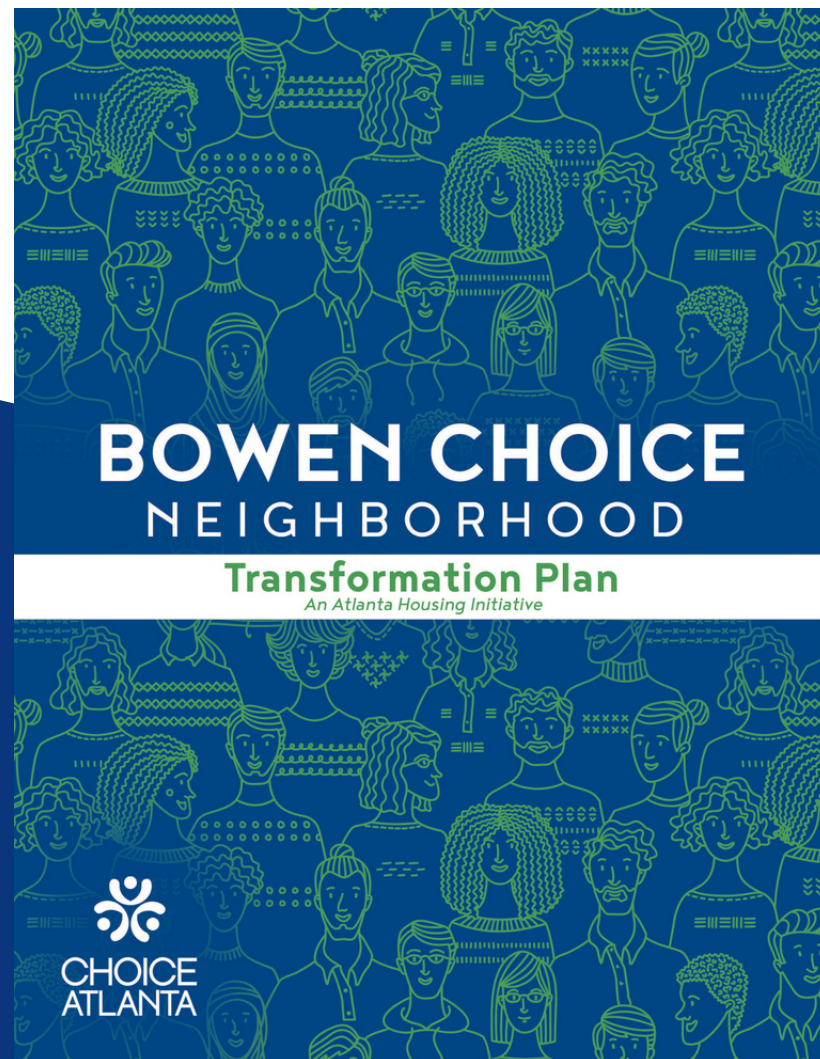
City Hall Drop In Center



City Hall Drop In Center

Bowen Transformation Plan

May 2021 - Dec 2022



ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

- Population: ~2400
- Study Area: 500 acres (0.8 sq mi) & beyond
- Median Household Income: \$26,000
- Average Price of SF Home: \$210,000
- Digitally disconnected

Bowen Transformation Plan

May 2021 - Dec 2022

PANDEMIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY



- Outdoor Meetings
- Virtual Committees + Collab Tools
- Online Surveys + 1:1 Phone Calls
- Pre-Recorded Content
- Oral History Recordings
- Postcard Mailings
- Robocalls + SMS/MMS Messaging
- Community Ambassadors



Outdoor Meetings



Oral Histories Recordings



Community Ambassadors

Breakdowns

- Sometimes, we missed the mark
- Difficulty in getting buy-in at times
- Some communities struggled
- The “Digital Divide” made inequities obvious



The digital divide refers to the gap between demographics and regions that have access to modern information and communications technology and those that don't or have restricted access.

Telephone, television, personal computers and internet connectivity.

The Digital Divide



Pew Research Center

APRIL 30, 2020

53% of Americans Say the Internet Has Been Essential During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Americans with lower incomes are particularly likely to have concerns related to the digital divide and the digital “homework gap”

The Digital Divide

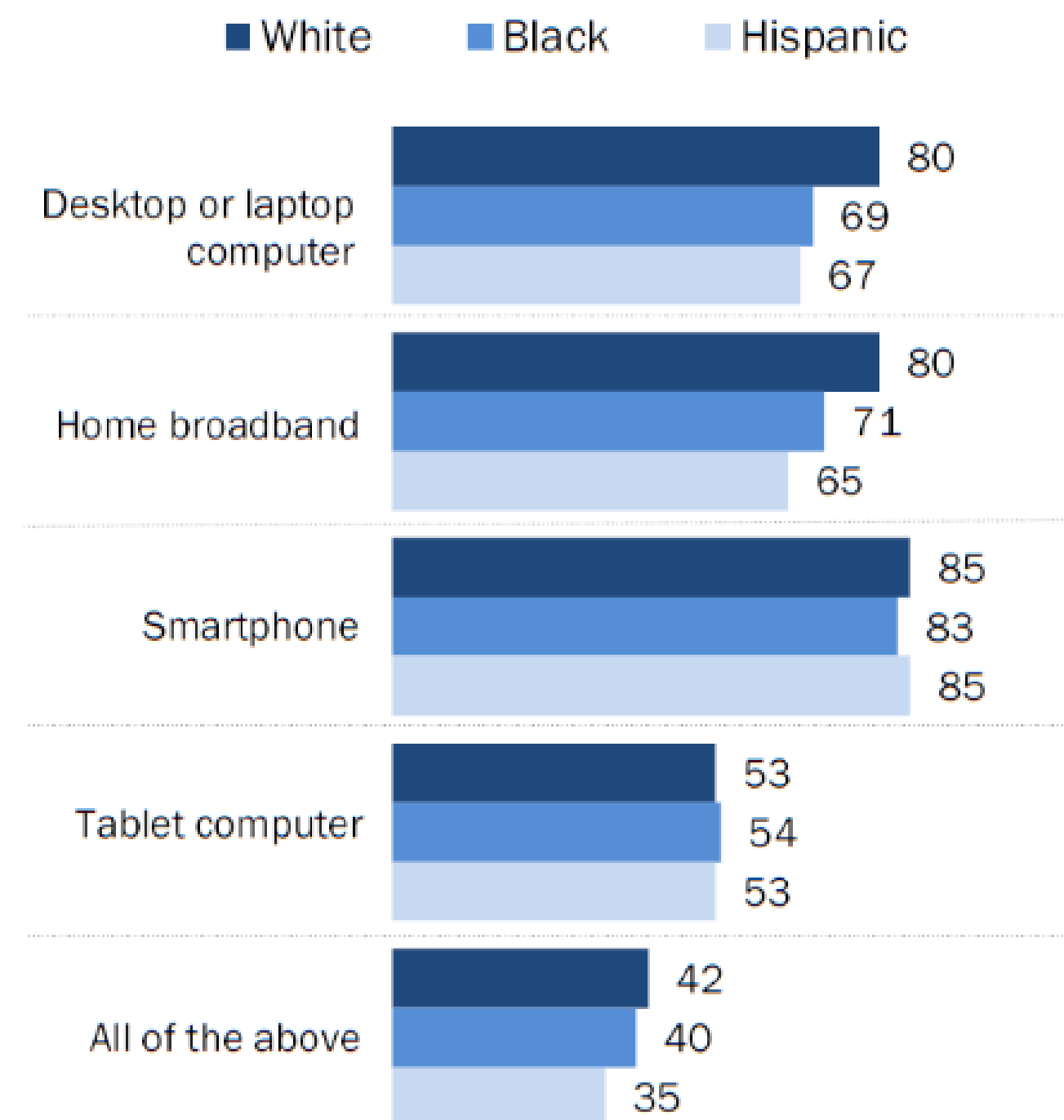


Pew Research Center

JULY 15, 2021

Black and Hispanic adults in U.S. are less likely than White adults to have a traditional computer, home broadband

% of U.S. adults who say they have the following



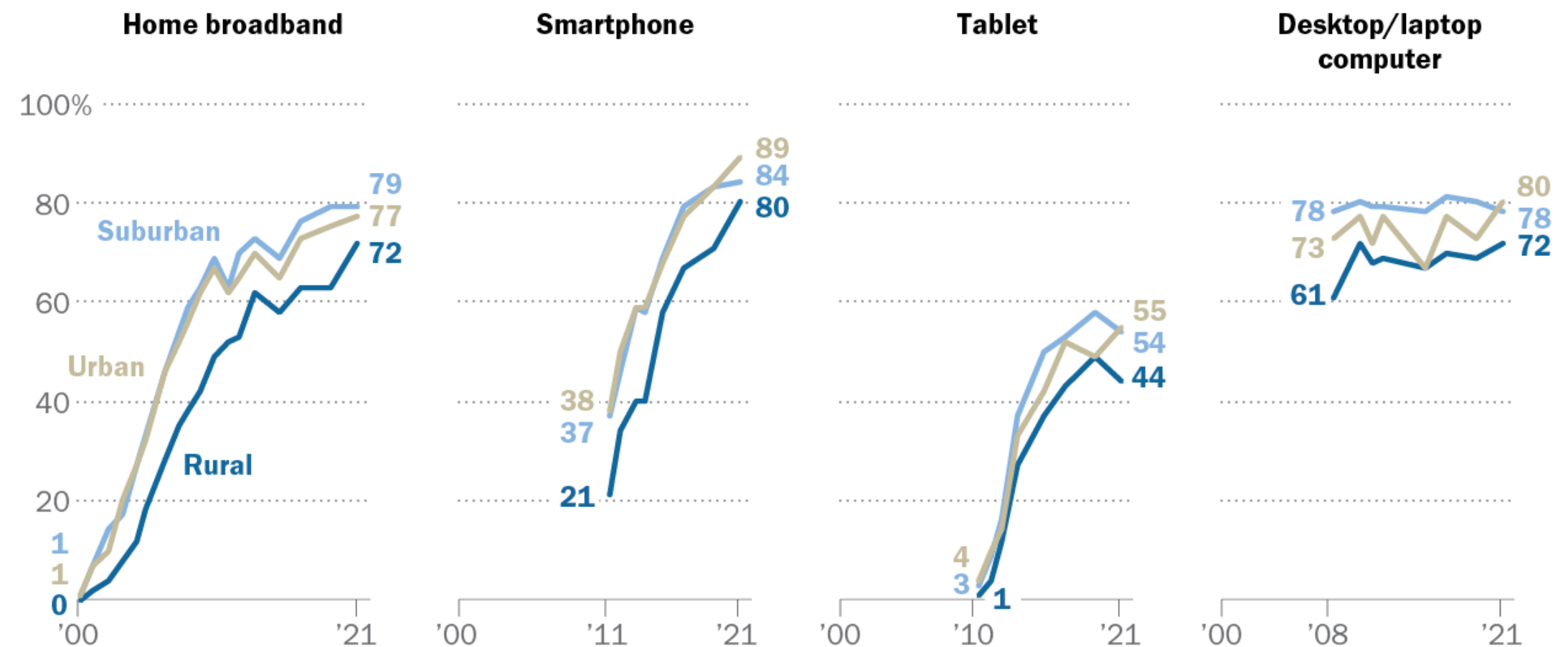
The Digital Divide



Pew Research Center
AUGUST 19, 2021

Despite growth, rural Americans have consistently lower levels of technology ownership than urbanites and lower broadband adoption than suburbanites

% of U.S. adults who say they have or own the following



The Digital Divide

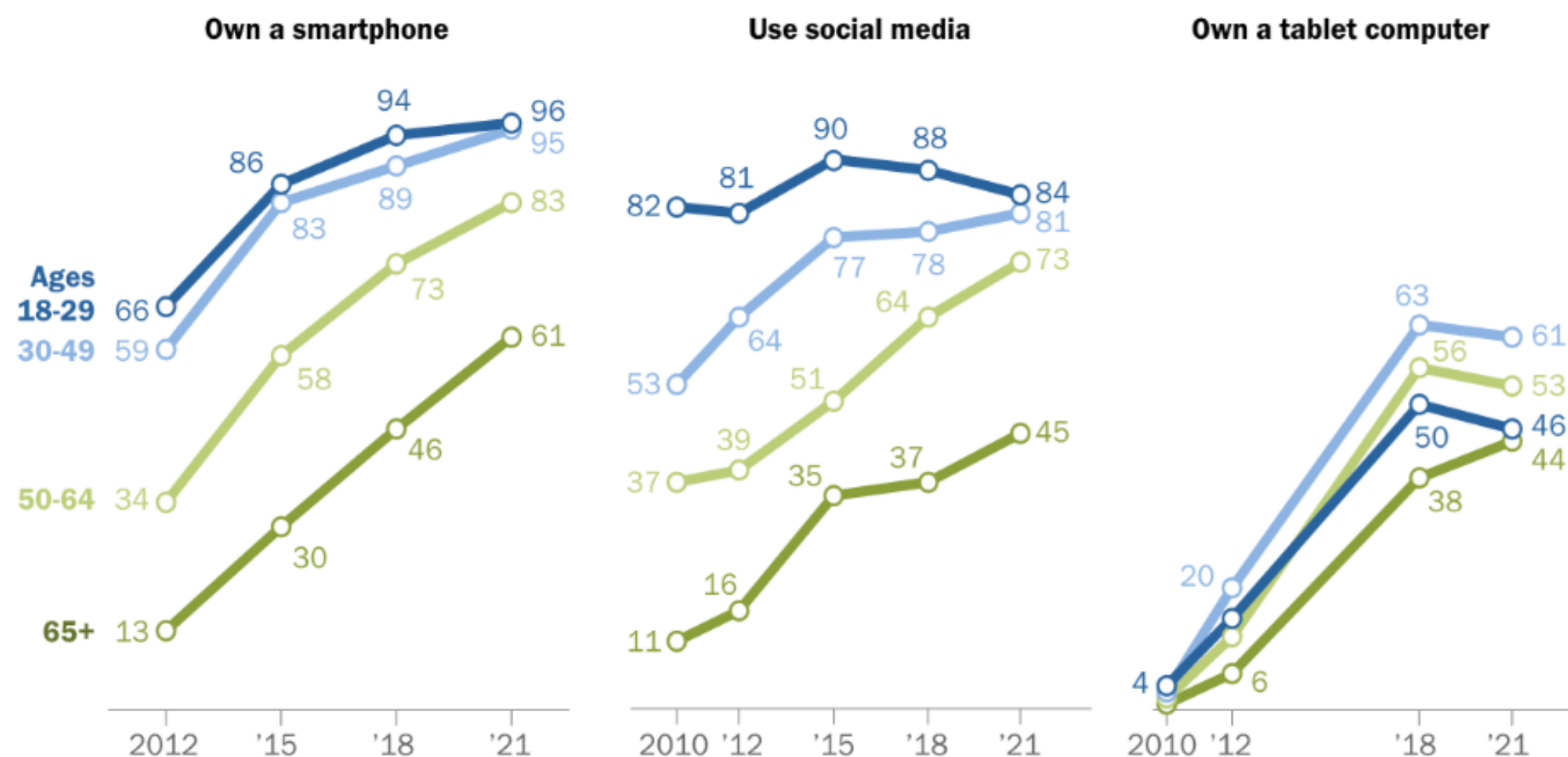


Pew Research Center
JANUARY 12, 2022

Smartphone ownership and social media use among older adults continue to grow

Smartphone ownership and social media use among older adults continue to grow

% of U.S. adults who say they ...



Breakthroughs

- Use Spaces Differently
- Training May Be Needed - “Tech Huddle”
- “Old School” Still Works
- Hybrid is Here to Stay
- Empower Community to Lead
- Incentives Encourage Buy-In

Breakthroughs

- Useful Tools:
 - Social PinPoint - online engagement
 - Miro - virtual collaboration tool
 - Canva - free online graphic design tool
 - Simple Texting - SMS/MMS messaging platform

Thank You!

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