A Facebook page can serve as a source of public engagement and outreach for an organization. Planners have found many ways to use their page for engaging the public as a method of sharing to expand their network of engaged stakeholders, including people who may have previously been left out of the planning process.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

- An interview with one of the planners on the project revealed that the most active users on the page were people they were not familiar with in person.
- Although the Facebook page was not primarily being used for engagement purposes, it did generate some activity through engaging posts that posed questions to the users. Some of these questions helped in answering some of the Facebook page's inquiries, and some users were happy to engage with the questions.
- Facebook has been helpful in introducing people to the planning team, and many of these users were governmental officials who are involved with the planning process.

**CONCLUSION:**

- For example, the social network analysis was undertaken using Gephi, a graphic visualization tool that utilizes 3D graphing to portray the connections and communities within a social network.
- NodeXL, an Excel-based software that was used to download user activity from each Facebook page. After collecting the data, Favous and Ncaprise, qualitative analysis tools, were used to analyze the content of adult participants were communicating via the Facebook page.
- Using Favous, the comment and post activity was coded by whether or not it was engaging or sharing, and the level of activity surrounding any given post.
- Interviews with the project planners were then conducted to understand the degree to which those who are engaging online were or were not engaging offline in the planning process.

**CASE STUDIES:**

- **Annapolis, Maryland City Dock Master Plan**
- **Burlington, Vermont Downtown & Waterfront Plan**
- **Philadelphia 2035: Comprehensive Plan**
- **Plan Cincinnati: Comprehensive Plan**

**ABSTRACT:**

City Planners are connecting places, people, information, and events through social media. How can we make sense of the flows of connections that form our social networks? How can city planners grow to understand who they are reaching through social media and how their are connected? Social network analysis (SNA) is an analytical method for understanding the complexity of social networks, a need that is more important now than ever as the internet and social media are changing the dynamics of public engagement. SNA views social relationships through detection of communities, defining a series of nodes and edges which represent the individuals within the social network, and tracing the diffusion of information and how opinions are formed. Hypothesis is that the networks of people that engage online through social media are unique and distinct group of people from those that engage in offline planning. To test this hypothesis interviews with city planners combined with qualitative and quantitative analysis were undertaken. The results lead to strategies that city planners and others can adopt to further their public engagement efforts and aid in the stakeholder analysis stage of planning projects.

**METHODOLOGY:**

- For this study, 20 Facebook city planning project pages were selected. Of these pages, three were selected for detailed case studies based on different levels of public participation.
- For each case study, a social network analysis was undertaken using Gephi, a graphic visualization tool that utilizes 3D graphing to portray the connections and communities within a social network.
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**PLAN CINCINNATI: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

- **In Public Engagement Processes**
- **In Public Engagement Processes**
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**CONCLUSION:**

- There is a large amount of literature on social network analysis and its applications. This study has identified quantitative and qualitative results that help support SNA use for public engagement strategies. The use of SNA can allow an organization to better target their engagement efforts as well as identify key online stakeholders who are ‘influencers’ of other online and offline groups. SNA can expand the scope and exposure of a given project. This research will help the use of SNA software to practical applications in planning firms and agencies. SNA can help organizations determine which of their posts have been most successful, and allow them to replicate this success by creating a strategy for their social media platform. The use of SNA software is also helpful for identifying key topics or emerging issues that the public finds most important. Many types of SNA software are open source and user-friendly, giving planners the ability to do high-level analysis of their social network data with limited technical knowledge.

**KEY REFERENCES:**