

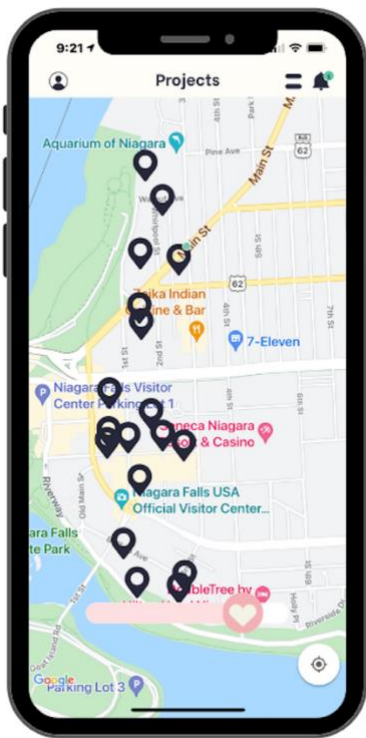


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Rochester Entrepreneur Launches Public Participation App



Rochester, NY – Tanya Mooza Zwahlen, CEO of public engagement consulting practice Highland Planning, today announced the launch of Instant Input, a free smartphone app designed to connect local governments and developers with community members. Instant Input uses a map feature to help citizens stay informed on public and private sector projects in their community, view photos and background information on projects they care about, and offer feedback through surveys and direct messaging.

“Traditional outreach methods, like public meetings, are important but all too often don’t reach the majority of the population affected by a project,” said Zwahlen. “Instant Input meets people where they are and allows them to give input instantly, right from their smartphone.”

Zwahlen developed the idea for Instant Input when she went to her local playground, only to find that it had been removed without notice. She wanted a way to find out about City and developer-led projects taking place around her. During the pandemic, she also saw that government decision makers needed new ways to reach citizens. Instant Input allows project leaders to connect with community members in real time by sending project notifications and inviting input.

After self-funding the development of the tool, Zwahlen is now a member of NextCorps, the Rochester area technology business incubator, where the Instant Input team continues to refine the platform.

Early Instant Input customers include the City of Geneva, New York, USA Niagara Development Corporation, Keller Williams, and LaBella Associates. "Instant Input is an incredible tool for improving communications with our residents and business owners, and generating excitement for public realm projects," says Sage Gerling, City Manager of the City of Geneva, NY. "The app's notification feature makes it easy to reach stakeholders with real time updates on construction activity and related quality-of-life impacts. Unlike flyers, email notifications or website updates - Instant Input's smartphone notifications reach people instantly, wherever they are."

Zwahlen says better dialogue leads to better decisions. "When we make it easy for people to give their opinions on projects that affect them, we learn things that make public decisions more equitable and more in line with the community's desires."

Instant Input is available for Android and iOS. Citizens may also access an Instant Input portal through a desktop computer at www.instantinput.co.

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About Highland Planning

Highland Planning is a public engagement consulting practice founded on the idea that better dialogue leads to better decisions. Since 2007, Highland Planning has designed, planned, and implemented hundreds of interactive public outreach efforts across the United States.