

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY & TOOLKIT

Produced with the support of
Modus Planning, Design &
Engagement.




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from insight to impact

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Chapter 1

Understanding the Context, Purpose & Objectives of Public Participation

WHAT IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Local governments deliver services, offer choices, make decisions, and operate in ways that affect the daily lives of community members more than other levels of government.

The public expects government to make wise decisions around potentially competing priorities, issues, needs, or opportunities. To make these decisions well, Council and staff need to hear from different viewpoints as they grapple with facts, data, options, and trade-offs. As a result, it is **critical that staff and Council are responsive and consistently seek out and listen to input from residents and stakeholders from all parts of the community.**

While this does not mean that every activity or decision of local government must be the subject of a community-wide conversation, there are some areas where public participation particularly strengthens decision-making and operational efficiency.

Public participation refers to how local governments interact with the public beyond regular functions such as election cycles, tax collection, and service delivery.

Fundamentally, public participation means that the local government, its staff, and its elected officials, are consciously making additional efforts to:

- Come out from behind closed doors to encourage transparency;
- Gather input from citizens and stakeholders;
- Use this input to enhance their work; and
- Communicate how input influenced the final decision/project.

Chapter 2 further explains different types of public participation, distinguishing between “input-focused” processes and “engagement-focused” processes. Chapter 3 provides more details about which types of public participation are most appropriate for different situations.

WHAT DO GOVERNMENTS ENGAGE THE PUBLIC ON?

Local governments interact with residents and stakeholders in three main areas:

1. **Governance:** Governments show accountability and transparency by providing good information on municipal decision-making and governance and by encouraging input on how the organization makes decisions, sets priorities (budget), and measures success.
2. **Policy and Program Development & Delivery:** By providing good information on existing policies and programs, and inviting input on an organization's new or current policies (including how policies were developed and implemented), governments can show that they are accountable, transparent and responsive.
3. **Service Responsiveness & Efficiency:** Local governments share information and invite feedback on how to make services and programs more effective and responsive to the needs of the public.

Different processes, tools, and formats can support public participation in any of these three types of activities. Each local government will have to decide which type(s) it wants to emphasize and resource for public input.

Legal Requirements

Existing legislation recognizes that public input can improve municipal decisions. The **Municipal Government Act (MGA)** establishes a minimum legal requirement for notifying and involving the public about certain kinds of decisions.

Alberta's **Municipal Affairs' Public Input Toolkit** describes many MGA (Available on website) sections that require public input. Be sure to double-check the MGA for your project.

Going Above and Beyond

While some public involvement is required by law, local governments can choose to conduct more robust public engagement to give policy makers and staff better information to support decision-making, inform policy and program development, and shape service delivery.

WHY DO GOVERNMENTS ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?

Effective public participation provides the following benefits:

- **Raises awareness** of local government and its actions/decisions/services;
- Keeps the organization **in touch with public opinion** on key issues and service satisfaction;
- **Broadens input “beyond the usual suspects,”** bringing new ideas and perspectives from a wider and more diverse range of community members and stakeholders;
- Allows staff and Council to **field-test options and solutions** with a subset of constituents, improving chances of success;
- **Can generate consensus** around which direction to take, leading to greater understanding of decisions, policies and services, and more support for their effective implementation;
- **Taps into community resources**, allowing government to coordinate with outside networks and assets (helping leverage scarce resources so projects and policies have greater impact); and
- **Increases trust** in local government, which enables the local government to take effective action.

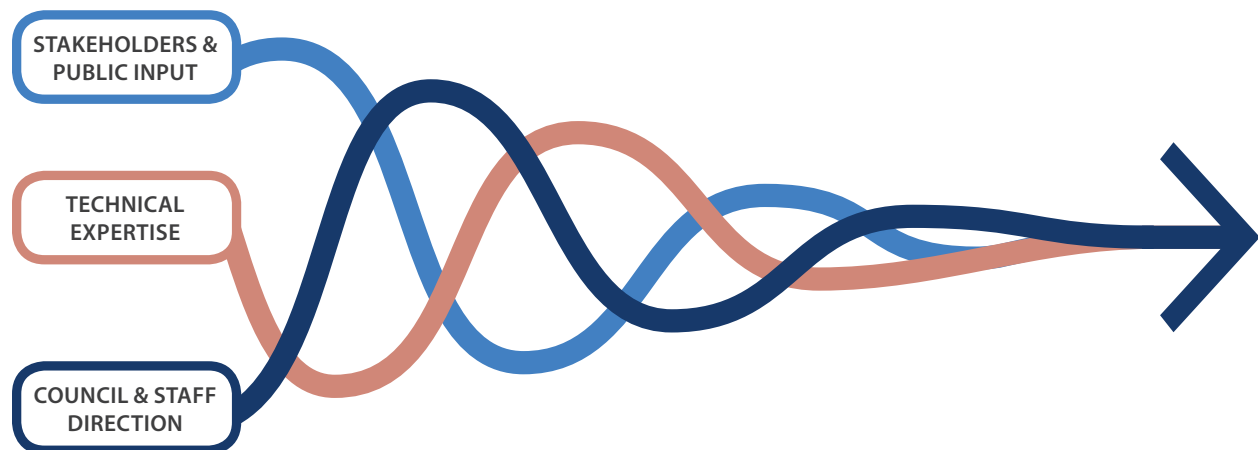
In addition, there are benefits for the broader community when public participation is done well and consistently. For example:

- It **supports cross-learning** among participants from the community, allowing them to broaden their perspectives on a given issue or challenge, and build a shared understanding;
- It **reduces conflict** between various community members and/or interest groups;
- It can lead to greater levels of **volunteerism and activism** on community issues;
- It **reduces isolation** and increases a sense of engagement for individuals; and
- It offers a sense of empowerment and creates **new leadership capacity** in the community.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Governments conduct public engagement to involve people in decisions that will ultimately affect their lives. This can bring powerful benefits and insight, but is just one of several important streams of information, and requires collaboration between community members and stakeholders, technical experts, and policy-makers.

This engagement “weave” diagram shows how these different groups work together over time to move from the general to the specific, finding consensus and agreement by working together. Information and ideas from all of these streams should interact, leading to learning, shared insights and the emergence of new ideas throughout a project or process. No single input, comment, or activity determines the outcome, and Council (as the elected decision-makers) ultimately reserve the right to decide as they see fit.



*The Engagement “Weave”
Modus Planning, Design & Engagement*

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN OKOTOKS

The Town of Okotoks is a young, vibrant and family-friendly community of close to 29,000 people. With a growing population, the Town has decided to adopt a formalized public participation strategy. This will help the organization to use its resources more effectively, but also support a more responsive, open, and accountable government and help us live up to our corporate values.

Our vision

The Town of Okotoks fosters a **culture of resiliency** – where people, businesses, ideas and a strong sense of community thrive. Grounded by the Sheep River valley and supported by thoughtful planning and design, a strong local economy and a vibrant civic culture, **Okotoks offers exceptional quality of life at every stage of life.** Respect for each other and the natural environment makes Okotoks home.

Our mission

The Town of Okotoks strives to create and nurture an environment in which people are able to **pursue the fulfilment of their values, in harmony with the community.**

Innovation

We are a leading-edge organization that creates possibilities.



Collaboration

We work together to achieve great results.



Empowerment

We encourage and support our colleagues in taking initiative.



Passion

We strive to be the best at what we do.



Accountability

We take ownership for what we do.



Communication

We are open, honest, and respectful.



Our **culture**. Our **spirit**. Our **values**.



The Town of Okotoks has always worked diligently to communicate with and involve our citizens. Over the past decade, care has been taken to recognize the growing demand for open and two-way communication – this means listening to citizens, gathering feedback, and responding to the expanding influence of technology while still respecting a broad range of communication channels for different needs.

“Public participation, transparency and meaningful consultation are high priorities for the Town”

Growing Expectations

People who choose to participate in public engagement activities are increasingly knowledgeable and sophisticated in their expectations. In order to meet those expectations, to build trust and credibility, we need to model a consistent approach that demonstrates our genuine commitment and high standards of practice.

OUR PAST

The Town has employed many different communications and public consultation strategies throughout the years including public open houses, design charrettes, surveys, focus groups, and a wide range of newspaper, radio, print, online, email, and in-person notifications and promotion throughout the community.

OUR FUTURE

While the majority of our communication strategies and public participation processes have been positive, there is always room for improvement. In certain instances, we have recognized a need to enhance the following:

- Engaging citizens sooner;
- Boosting public participation numbers;
- Creating new channels to distribute information;
- Having more conversations with the public;
- Providing information that is clear;
- Keeping citizens informed; and
- Building and enhancing relationships and trust.

It continues to be the Town's priority to anticipate issues, prepare timely information, improve dialogue with citizens, improve the manner in which community engagement events are promoted and how feedback is obtained, balance the use of formal communication with opportunities for informal dialogue, and ensure all corporate messaging is sensitive to the reception and needs of our population.

The public participation strategy will help to:

- Recognize the Town of Okotoks and Council's **commitment to public participation**;
- Support community members and stakeholders to **become more involved** in municipal decisions that affect them and further **build trust and relationships**;
- Gain a better understanding of the strength and **diversity of public opinion**;
- Provide a **clear and consistent framework** for public participation so staff, Council, and the public know what to expect;
- **Clarify and distinguish between the roles of administration and Council** in designing and delivering public participation initiatives;
- Distinguish between different levels of public participation and **provide a clear process for selecting the right approach** for each initiative, based on the significance, and/or impact of the issue or decision; and
- **Support staff** in designing, implementing, reporting from, and evaluating public participation activities.

Modern 21st Century Governance

Governance is best defined as how we do the things that we do. It represents the rules and procedures that allow Council to govern and Administration to manage.

Traditionally, decisions were made from the 'top down' and citizens were treated as passive consumers of government policies and programs. However, this approach was inflexible, non-responsive, and slow moving.

The new governance model requires a new approach. Decision making must move closer to the people and organizations affected by it. Governments must stop trying to plan for what they don't know and be more resilient and open to change. We must open up the policy process and bring in more organizations and the public at the beginning of the process, supporting collaboration and partnerships with empowered citizens.

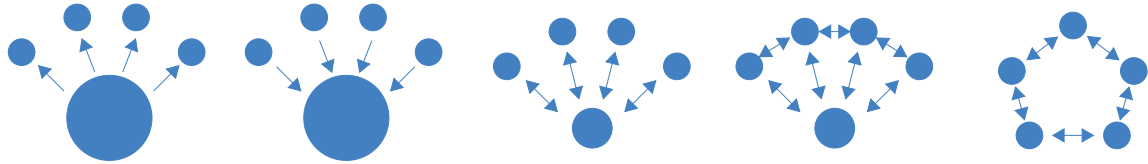


Chapter 2

Key Concepts & Guiding Principles of Public Participation

THE SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following image is known as the “Spectrum of Public Participation,” produced by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).



	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."

International Association of Public Participation

Below are some examples of techniques for each level of the spectrum.

EXAMPLE TECHNIQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses • Letters to stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus Groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen advisory boards • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decision
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Understanding this image is essential for two reasons:

- 1. The spectrum shows that the relationship between the local government and the public can be shaped in a number of ways.** The spectrum begins with a somewhat limited level of participation on the left side (where the emphasis is on one-way communication, and the agency has more control over the content and the outcomes) to more robust levels of participation as you move towards the right (with more sharing of control, greater influence of citizens and stakeholders on the outcomes, and an emphasis on multi-directional communication and learning).
- 2. Some issues are more contentious, have greater impacts, or affect a wider variety of people.** The spectrum reminds us that not every policy issue, program design, or service adjustment requires the same amount of public participation.

Local governments use the spectrum to have internal discussions about what level of public participation is needed for a given issue, and to properly communicate “the promise to the public” both internally and externally. This helps guide their behaviour moving forward.

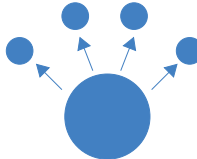
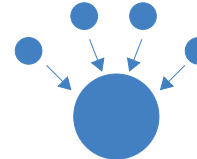
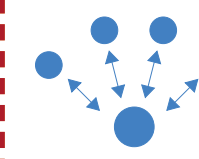
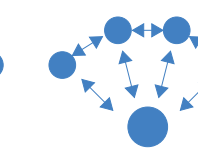
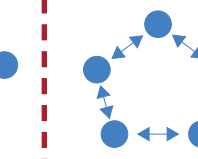
Please remember that each type of participation, from “inform” to “empower,” can be useful and appropriate in different circumstances. Many factors determine the level of public participation required in a process, such as Council priorities, history of and context for the issue, and potential impacts of the initiative (e.g., financial, quality of life, health and safety, environmental, lifestyle, etc.).

THE “INPUT ZONE” VERSUS THE “ENGAGEMENT ZONE”

For this strategy, the IAP2 Spectrum is simplified into two zones that will assist in the process design and selection of the most appropriate tools and formats.

- The “Input Zone” includes the “inform” and “consult” levels of participation.
- The “Engagement Zone” includes the “involve” and “collaborate” levels.

The far-right column, “empower,” is not included in either of the zones, because it is used so rarely and requires different tools, processes, and resources (e.g. referendums, citizen juries and citizen assemblies with effectively delegated decision-making powers).

											
		INFORM		CONSULT		INVOLVE		COLLABORATE		EMPOWER	
GOAL		To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.		To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.		To work with public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.		To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.		To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	
PROMISE		“We will keep you informed.”		“We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns.”		“We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made.”		“We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible.”		“We will implement what you decide.”	
		INPUT ZONE		ENGAGEMENT ZONE							

International Association of Public Participation

THE INPUT ZONE

The “**Input Zone**” is appropriate for many topics and issues, as it seeks to ensure that accurate and timely information on an initiative is provided to appropriate audiences. This ensures a high level of transparency, and allows for any feedback on the initiative with the promise that concerns will be heard and acknowledged.

The Input Zone is typically used when a local government has clarity on what it is trying to achieve and how it will get there. For example, the Input Zone would be used when a municipality has developed a draft proposal, policy, or service adjustment and is seeking feedback from community members and stakeholders. The questions involved are usually:

- “What do you think of this proposal or decision?”
- “Did we get it right?”
- “Have we missed anything?”

Okotoks Example: Veterans Way Draft Designs

Timely, thorough, and diverse communications are essential for success in this zone, where the goal is to ensure that potentially concerned audiences are informed and given a chance to weigh in. Input should be treated as valuable, even if Administration and Council are fairly certain the bulk of the groundwork has been completed to make the decision, draft the policy, etc. It is important to note that this is not a “hoop-jumping” exercise, but a meaningful opportunity for people to understand and potentially help refine your initiative. Later sections of the strategy will help to implement this effectively.

THE ENGAGEMENT ZONE

The “**Engagement Zone**” is used for more controversial, complex, and potentially more impactful issues or decisions. In these cases, the municipality does not yet have a draft policy or proposal and needs more substantive input to get there. In this zone, the local government:

- Asks more fundamental or broader questions;
- Invites early and robust input from diverse perspectives to better understand the issue and the array of different needs and interests;
- Develops a set of viable options for discussion as part of the process;
- Wants to generate a consensus about how best to proceed; and
- Commits to using input gathered to set clear direction and actions.

Okotoks Example: Community Visioning

In the Engagement Zone, the local government seeks to “figure things out together” with community members and stakeholders. This is more of a partnership approach.

Chapter 3 provides more details about which type of participation is most appropriate for different situations.

Comments, Discussion, and Dialogue are Different

When there is a mismatch between what is wanted and asked of public participants, and how they actually participate, this can be confusing and/or frustrating for everyone involved. The following definitions will help set a common language so that better communication can help avoid some of those frustrations.

- **Comments** are thoughts that participants share in reaction to an existing and fairly well-defined set of options, draft policy, draft plan, etc. They would be the response to questions like: “What do you think of this proposal?” or “Have we missed anything?” Comments are well-suited to the **INPUT ZONE**.

Okotoks example: Feedback for Cimarron streetlight installation

- **Discussion** is a two-way conversation in which ideas are shared, adapted and/or evaluated. For example, participants would engage in discussion when asked to think through an array of different ideas or options, consider the trade-offs, and prioritize. Discussion is well-suited to the **Involve level of the ENGAGEMENT ZONE**.

Okotoks example: Playground equipment options

- **Dialogue** is an inquisitive and exploratory form of purposeful conversation in which participants challenge their own thinking by seeking out and engaging with different perspectives from others. This often results in new understandings, meanings, and ideas from the group that no individual party began with. Dialogue responds to fundamental questions and needs, builds connections, and is well-suited to the **Collaborate level of the ENGAGEMENT ZONE**.

Okotoks example: Downtown Urban Design Master Plan

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Town of Okotoks is committed to the following principles that set the tone for how we will act when considering and/or implementing public engagement initiatives:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE	STRATEGIES
<p>ACCOUNTABILITY & LEARNING</p> <p>We believe in upholding commitments made to the public by demonstrating how processes and outcomes are consistent with the approved plans for engagement.</p> <p>We are a learning organization. By monitoring and evaluating our public participation processes and outcomes, we are able to learn from our experiences, track our progress, and improve over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop public participation plans with input from key stakeholders. • Ensure public participation plans and commitments are meaningful, formally approved, and properly resourced (i.e., funding, staff, training, time). • Ensure public participation processes and outcomes are consistent with what we have committed to. • Evaluate public participation processes and outcomes. • Staff are supported by the organization to acknowledge and learn from mistakes. • Where appropriate, publicly acknowledge mistakes and/or lessons learned to build trust and transparency in the organization and community.
<p>INCLUSIVENESS</p> <p>We believe in inclusive public participation processes, whereby everyone affected by an initiative has a right to be involved in the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make best efforts to reach, involve, and hear from all those who are interested in or impacted directly or indirectly by an initiative. • Provide opportunities for stakeholders to get involved at the beginning and throughout a project. • Actively seek out those who are not typically heard from or are underrepresented in public processes and decisions. • Make best efforts to accommodate diverse needs and backgrounds. • Provide opportunities to create shared visions that reflect diverse interests.

<p>TRANSPARENCY</p> <p>We believe in providing clear, timely and complete information to ensure public participation processes and decisions are shared and understood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicate the commitment, purpose and limitations of public participation. • Clearly communicate the roles and responsibilities of all parties (including stakeholders, staff, Council and other technical experts) • Provide stakeholders timely information about opportunities to participate through the channels that best suit their needs. • Provide stakeholders with clear and relevant information in plain, accessible language so they can meaningfully participate in the process. • Clearly communicate and share the results of public participation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who participated – number of participants and any relevant demographic factors or other characteristics; ▪ What was heard – a summary of quantitative and qualitative input received; and ▪ How input was considered, or why input was not used, in decision-making.
<p>RESPONSIVENESS</p> <p>We believe that inviting participation means that public input will be considered or used to influence decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and scale public participation appropriately in relation to the issue's importance, potential impacts or conflict, and the diversity of opinions. • Match tools/formats to the audiences and questions being asked (respecting that different people contribute in different ways). • Where possible, consider and/or respond directly to stakeholder needs and concerns. • Build evaluation into public participation processes from the beginning and use the results to respond to changing needs and circumstances, and to improve public participation over time.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Local governments must take action in five areas to be credible and successful when undertaking public participation activity:

1. **Assess Organizational Capacity** – Local governments are expected to manage existing services and programs, even while being challenged by emerging opportunities, issues, and needs. Organizational capacity must be kept in mind when Council and staff consider whether and how to undertake public participation. There are only so many resources to design, execute, and report back from public input processes. Simply put, if too many initiatives are launched, other organizational functions will suffer from lack of attention and resources, and some of the participation initiatives themselves will be under-resourced and poorly delivered.
2. **Reflect Council Priorities** – As with all local government functions, time and resources spent on public participation must reflect Council priorities. Ensuring that the initiatives requiring public participation are related to Council priorities helps maintain topical consistency so that community members have a better idea of what to expect. It also builds community confidence that local government is following through on priorities set by their representatives.
3. **Maintain Process Consistency** – As described later in this strategy, several steps will help you follow a consistent process that lives up to your “promise to the public” and uses the input received in a meaningful way. To design a consistent process for each initiative, you must create a public participation strategy with logical, time-bound phases. Process consistency will enhance credibility, even if the specific activities, tools, or formats used or issues explored differ widely in different initiatives.
4. **Ensure Ongoing Communication** – Effective and ongoing communication in participation processes make local government more transparent and responsive. Follow the established RACE model to communicate on:
 - a. Research and Analysis (strategy development & outcomes) help establish the rationale for public input, as well as the key audiences, what to engage on, when and how to engage.
 - b. Communication efforts help raise awareness of and launch the project, promote participation and document input activities.
 - c. Evaluation and monitoring efforts focus on reporting out the results of the input and showing the impact of input gathered.
5. **Address Role Clarity** – Confusing the roles of Town staff with that of Council confuses the public and undermines the efficiency and credibility of the participation process. This is unnecessary as these roles should be clearly defined.

Council members are elected decision-makers who represent the community (and are responsible for setting direction and overseeing progress towards goals). Staff implement those decisions, bringing technical skills and institutional knowledge. Community members must also understand that they are involved to inform and improve decisions, but they do not get to decide what happens or direct staff in their work.

Therefore, **Council** members can and should promote, attend, and observe engagement activities, but should not act as participants nor try to influence the input being gathered.

Staff should design, facilitate and report from participation activities, but should not influence the findings.

Citizens should spread the word about such activities to encourage attendance, participate fully, and monitor how input was used, but should not influence the input of others.

Please note: Council Appointed Committees are a fairly unique structure and tool that can help citizens contribute to research, policymaking and good decisions. However, they do not replace the function of council or staff, they are usually advisory and time-limited, and they are usually not decisional. Please note that they require substantial staff and council time investments to ensure they work well and that the agency gets full value from working with them. It is also critical that such committees are given meaningful tasks, that their input is thoughtfully considered and that their mandates and functionality are assessed annually.

The Role of Council

Council direct and oversee staff, through their oversight of the Chief Administrative Officer. This is how Council ensures that staff address the priorities Council establishes as representatives of the community.

In the realm of public participation, Council is responsible for:

- Helping to identify issues that may need public participation;
- Reviewing staff recommendations on issues requiring public participation and assessing the importance of various issues relative to the capacity of the organization;
- Respecting and / or supporting the role of advisory committees in considering the input received from these committees;
- Promoting public participation opportunities and encouraging participation of identified audiences;
- Attending and observing public participation events. Communicating positively to citizens, stakeholders, and media about the importance of such events and activities to the Town;
- Respecting and supporting the role of staff in designing, executing, and reporting from public participation activities.
- Carefully reviewing the findings of participation initiatives, as presented and summarized by staff;
- Using these inputs as an essential part of Council discussions and decision-making; and
- Supporting the increasing capacity of the organization in designing and executing useful, efficient, and innovative public participation activities over time.

The Role of Staff

For public input processes, staff are responsible for:

- Identifying issues that may need participation. For example, respecting Council direction and priorities, and drawing from their own interactions with community members;
- Assessing whether the Town needs to execute a public participation initiative that falls into either the “Input Zone,” or “Engagement Zone,” considering whether the issue is linked to corporate/Council directed initiatives, and making recommendations accordingly.
- Assessing and recommending whether advisory committees can function sufficiently as a public participation structure, or whether broader outreach efforts are needed.
- Assessing both the Town’s capacity for running these initiatives, and community capacity for participation, clarifying the rationale for which initiatives to proceed with;
- Identifying audiences to engage with, while thoughtfully considering the need to engage “harder-to-reach” audiences for some initiatives;
- Developing a Public Participation Strategy that lays out the WHAT of the issue to be discussed, the WHO to engage (and why them), and the WHEN and HOW to engage effectively (using a time-limited and phased process to ensure completion);
- Reviewing this strategy with management before proceeding and making modifications as needed to ensure a diversity of opinion and ideas is gathered. Confirming both the importance of the issue/question and the resources needed to make participation valuable and successful;
- Executing the participation initiative as effectively and transparently as possible, using communications staff and this strategy and toolkit as key resources;
- Documenting and reporting from the activities at several stages, keeping participants up to date on activities and results, and encouraging further and broader participation over time;
- Using the findings of the participation activities to influence the evolving policy, plan, or decision. Communicating how the input gathered has influenced progress to date; and
- Continuously building skills and tools for effective participation that suit the needs and capacities of the local government and the broader community.

SUCCESS FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

The following identifies best practices to improve municipal communications and ensure that it serves as a foundation for success in all your public participation efforts.

1. Provide Quality Information

- **Be a facilitator of information, not a gatekeeper.** An open government philosophy makes it easier to engage with a municipality. Easy access to information and transparency of process facilitates trust. Open data and open government commitments reinforce public participation values.
- **Ensure proper context is shared.** Provide the needed context for both issues and decisions. Ensure that there is a shared understanding of how participation works in the town for each process. Ensure that accurate data, background, and considerations have been produced for people to be aware of issues, or to engage further. Anticipate their interests and informational needs to meaningfully engage on any topic. Don't rely on others to provide the appropriate context that informs decisions.
- **Keep it real.** Engaging content is necessary to making information interesting and make people care. Use plain language, and convey ideas in real terms that anyone can understand. Use consistent language throughout a given process, and across multiple processes. Avoid jargon, and minimize the use of "process language" (like plans, policies, projects and strategies). Use language that people can relate to, understand and visualize (like parks, shops, jobs, and other community features). Train staff to write well and in a way that is meaningful for residents.
- **Be human.** Demonstrate through language, photos and video used that the municipality is a people-centred organization. This is also helpful for recruitment and recognition purposes.

2. Ensure Organizational Commitment, Direction and Tools

- **Create an organizational vision and values that welcome public participation.** Introduce organizational principles and values for guiding communications and public participation goals and activities. Clearly outline what decisions need to be made, and how public input will be used in the decision-making. Follow through on promise to the public.

Create communication checklists and tools to guide consistent public information sharing and practice across all departments. *See Chapter 3 for additional information, resources, and worksheets.*

- a. Ensure project charters include components and resources to inform/involve public (ie., key messages, tools, timelines). Anticipate public needs at outset of project plan, and identify other considerations or opportunities related to other projects or agencies. Plan adequate time for public engagement to occur and to be effective.
- b. Prioritize communications and engagement efforts based on greatest needs and impacts. Create a contacts database and share what is heard broadly (internally and externally) so you aren't starting conversations from scratch each time a new problem or opportunity presents. See Chapter 3, Part 2 for details.

- c. Create an annual communications calendar for the organization that outlines seasonal and routine activities of municipality to guide work plan. (Holiday closures, property tax dates, tax sales, dog and business license renewal dates, annual pool closures, watering restrictions, inclement weather, leaf collection, annual report, budget, etc.)
- d. Establish a staff structure and policy framework that is clear and understood in terms of responsibilities. Create organizational policies for traditional media and social media, scripts for phone and email interaction, visual identity guidelines and writing style guides, and public engagement philosophy.
- e. Corporate standards guidelines

3. Offer Multiple Tools and Channels

- **Provide choices.** Provide residents choices for how to engage with the municipality. No one tool will reach all demographics and multiple communications channels provide more access and options for awareness, education, and input. Ensure online mediums are current, complete and designed based on what works for the customer.
- **Provide plenty of notice and do so through multiple channels.** Provide plenty of notice and time for the public to participate. Recognize the limited volunteer capacity of many organizations, and the busy lives of residents and businesses impacted by decisions and services.
- **Maximize time and effort.** Coordinate the municipality's outreach efforts to maximize public input and community energy. Prioritize public engagement efforts on the decisions and issues foundational to the community, and continue to reference the input gathered when considering everything else.
- **Focus on the basics.** Ensure customer service systems and tools are current and responsive. Capture folks at their first attempt to get involved. Create scripts and standards for how staff communicate by phone and email, and track responsiveness to ensure concerns and opportunities are addressed and actioned, before they escalate to a larger issue.
- **Be social.** Social media and video are necessary tools for a municipality. They are immediate, efficient, and cost-effective. Centralize or minimize the number of social media tools across the organization to foster a go-to information resource for all departments and subject areas.

4. Champion Community Diversity

- **Know Your Community.** Be experts in understanding the diversity and composition of the community (age, family composition, cultural considerations, etc.). Anticipate their needs and interests, and respect how they receive information about Town activities. Stay current, and continually share this information with the community so they can respond, adapt and engage with one another.
- **There is no "general public."** Never treat your community as though it's homogeneous. Individuals and groups, and individuals of shared background or age, for example, have different needs and will be more or less interested in different issues/services. By treating the community as though it is all the same runs the risk of

over-simplifying issues, missing nuances and needs of different age groups or gender. It also runs the risk of reaching the wrong audiences for given initiatives. [See Chapter 3, Part 1, Step 2 for more information.](#)

- **Build a goodwill relationship.** Public participation is an ongoing relationship, not a project or decision based transaction. Invest in keeping the community informed routinely, not just when you need something from them. Build a two-way relationship with residents and stakeholders so they can rely on the municipality's communication tools and staff for accurate, current information and timely response.
- **Encourage the community to lead and you support.** Look for opportunities to support community efforts or processes by providing information or tools to let them lead conversations and bring people together (ie., kitchen table workshops, citizen-led meetings, community-hosted panels or events, etc.).

5. Support Staff In All Areas

- **Everyone is a communications officer and everyone has something to contribute.** Utilize staff in creating content – support a culture where everyone's job is to communicate well, not just limited to one department or position. Seek content and information from areas that are content-rich (ie., researchers, archives, long serving staff).
- **Build strong relationships with media.** Media are still a critical medium for conveying municipal information and influencing public opinion and engagement. Professional, two way relationships are important to ensuring confidence and trust in process and information.
- **Routine media training for staff across the organization.** Support staff in anticipating what media need to communicate information effectively. Media training is an investment in staff. There is an efficiency that is created when staff are trained in this area. Media enquiries are facilitated faster, more seamlessly, and they build relationships within the organization that are helpful during issues management or tight deadlines.
- **Internal is external.** Ensure internal communication efforts are robust to support strong information sharing within the organization. Municipalities are often one of the largest employers in a community and the staff are residents and taxpayers as well. Staff can be excellent advocates for Town initiatives, programs and activities if they are kept well informed. It's important that communication values are modeled and that employees can communicate directly within the community about the current activities of the organization.

Managing Contact Databases

Efficiently maintaining and using up-to-date contact databases is an important aspect of public participation and engagement practices, but does not get sufficient attention. Much time and effort can be saved if this foundational element is addressed proactively and strategically.

Such efforts pay off because informing citizens of relevant initiatives and the progress being made on them is essential to gaining their input, understanding, and support. More critically, these routine communications help establish a more regular and longer-term relationship with members of the public and community groups. Individuals and groups come to rely on and expect updates on important issues and projects.

It is important, however, to not overlook or address the challenges involved in setting up, maintaining, and effectively using such a contact database for stakeholders and interested participants. For example, legislation such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) as well as Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) must be considered.

Objectives:

1. **Secure:** To ensure that an agency establishes and maintains a secure contacts database, hosted in Canada, that is easy for staff to access, use and update.
2. **Central:** To provide a central contacts database that is populated and used on an ongoing basis by staff across different business centres.
3. **Coordinated:** To ensure that business centres are coordinated in how they share information, and in what they share, so that recipients do not receive multiple copies of information or conflicting information.
4. **Legal:** To provide clear procedures about how to populate, use, and manage the database, consistent with agency regulation and legislation on the storage of personally identifiable data (FOIP) and the sending of commercial messages (CASL).
5. **Useable:** To ensure that selected staff have appropriate access to the database to send interested members of the public and stakeholder representatives information about initiatives and their engagement processes, such as notifications, event invitations, background information, project updates, and report results.

Challenges:

1. Contact information is not regularly updated and is thus often out of date.
2. Contact information is collected and stored in piecemeal fashion, with various business centres maintaining various lists for various projects, but no one overseeing and coordinating all the lists.
3. Several different software programs are being used to maintain the contact information rather than using a central and up-to-date database.

4. Concerns and fears about FOIP and CASL issues and rules mean that staff do not know when and how to use the available contact information.
5. Procedures, software, and training are not in place to streamline maintenance and use of the database nor the information in it.
6. There is no “one-stop sign-up for updates” location on the organization’s website.

Solutions:

1. Establish clear staff responsibility/roles for setting up and maintaining an ongoing contacts database for use throughout the Town. Considerations include:
 - a. Deciding what lists to make within the database (e.g. organize by interest category), who administers each list, and what the procedure is for adding new lists. Example lists include: parks and recreation programming, Council updates, utility notifications, tax notifications, and specific public/stakeholder engagement projects.
 - b. Identifying staff who will have access to the database in order to use it for engagement initiatives
2. Identify a software solution that meets your needs and Canadian legislative requirements, such as using Canadian servers to store personally identifiable data, allowing subscribers to unsubscribe themselves, and including a footer that has the Town’s physical mailing address and a contact person.
3. Establish procedures, forms, and templates for staff to collect contact information, send messages, and keep the database up-to-date. This could include:
 - a. **Onboarding techniques** to create ongoing contact lists and/or to build a contact list for an engagement project, such as a website sign-up form, an invitation to learn more and sign up in an existing e-newsletter, information on posters and print media, and an option to be signed up for updates at an event sign-in form.
 - b. **Database management procedures** to manage duplicates across lists, update information, and manage unsubscribes.
 - c. **E-Newsletter Templates** that have the required information about how to unsubscribe and the Town’s physical contact information.
 - d. **Forms or procedures** to add people to the database manually from event sign-in forms, for example.
 - e. **Best practice guidelines** on what successful e-newsletters look like in terms of content, tone, and frequency of use. Consideration should also be given to the template format to avoid appearance of automated spam or glorified email.
4. Coordinated integration with other social media and web tools is required.

EVALUATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

Evaluation is key to ensuring the successful implementation of your public participation strategy overall, and should not be seen as just “testing” whether you got the specific results you wanted.

Evaluation (both of engagement projects and of the strategy as a whole) allows you to thoughtfully assess whether your public participation strategy has achieved a whole range of desired and intended outcomes. This includes things like consistency, capacity, and culture supporting engagement and responsive policy-making and service delivery.

Good evaluation requires careful monitoring and reporting, i.e., determining and tracking meaningful measures (both internal and external) over time and reporting them to appropriate stakeholders. The best approaches to evaluation also emphasize ongoing learning. Good evaluation allows practitioners to learn from their efforts and adapt their approach as required.

Good evaluation offers many benefits, for your public participation strategy and for the organization as a whole.

1. Evaluation enables greater effectiveness overall.
 - It allows the organization to track progress, ensure accountability, and notice challenges.
 - It requires clarity about desired objectives and outcomes, which makes it more likely that these outcomes will be resourced, leading to greater success overall.
2. Evaluation of public participation efforts enables the organization to demonstrate the value of public participation to stakeholders and the broader community.
 - This demonstration of value builds engagement and trust with stakeholders and public.
3. Evaluation enhances situational learning and continuous improvement.
 - Evaluation of outcomes provides specific information on what worked well in a given public participation campaign, what could be improved, and what changes are indicated.
4. Evaluation enhances organizational learning and a culture of creativity.
 - Good evaluation processes help develop “learning organizations,” less wedded to the status quo, and more open to innovation and creativity.

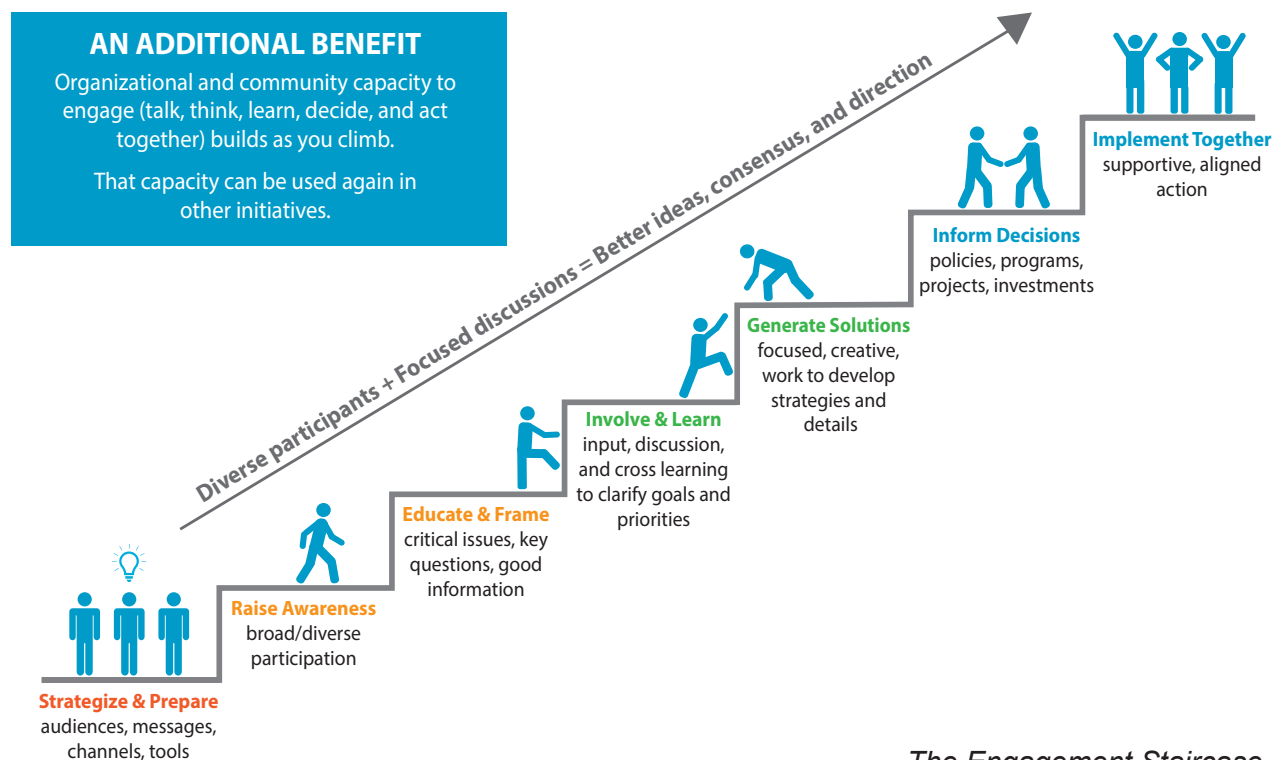
See Chapter 3 for a step-by-step guide to evaluating your public participation.

THE ENGAGEMENT STAIRCASE

The following sequence of steps is required for the rewarding practice of engagement (i.e. the “Engagement Zone” of participation), but is worth reflecting on even for lighter levels of participation (i.e., the “Input Zone”) in which participants are only involved during some of the steps.

Successful completion of each step of the staircase is a prerequisite for the next. For example, the “raise awareness” step is a prerequisite for getting desired audiences involved, and cannot be undervalued or skipped over. Similarly, the “educate and frame” step ensures understanding before moving onto the “involve and learn” and “generate solutions” steps which are the heart of the staircase. If these steps are done well, genuine dialogue between different perspectives (rather than argument) is possible. This creates momentum for the “make decisions” and “implement together” steps.

It is important to note that public participation processes often involve multiple phases which may require certain steps of the staircase to be repeated.

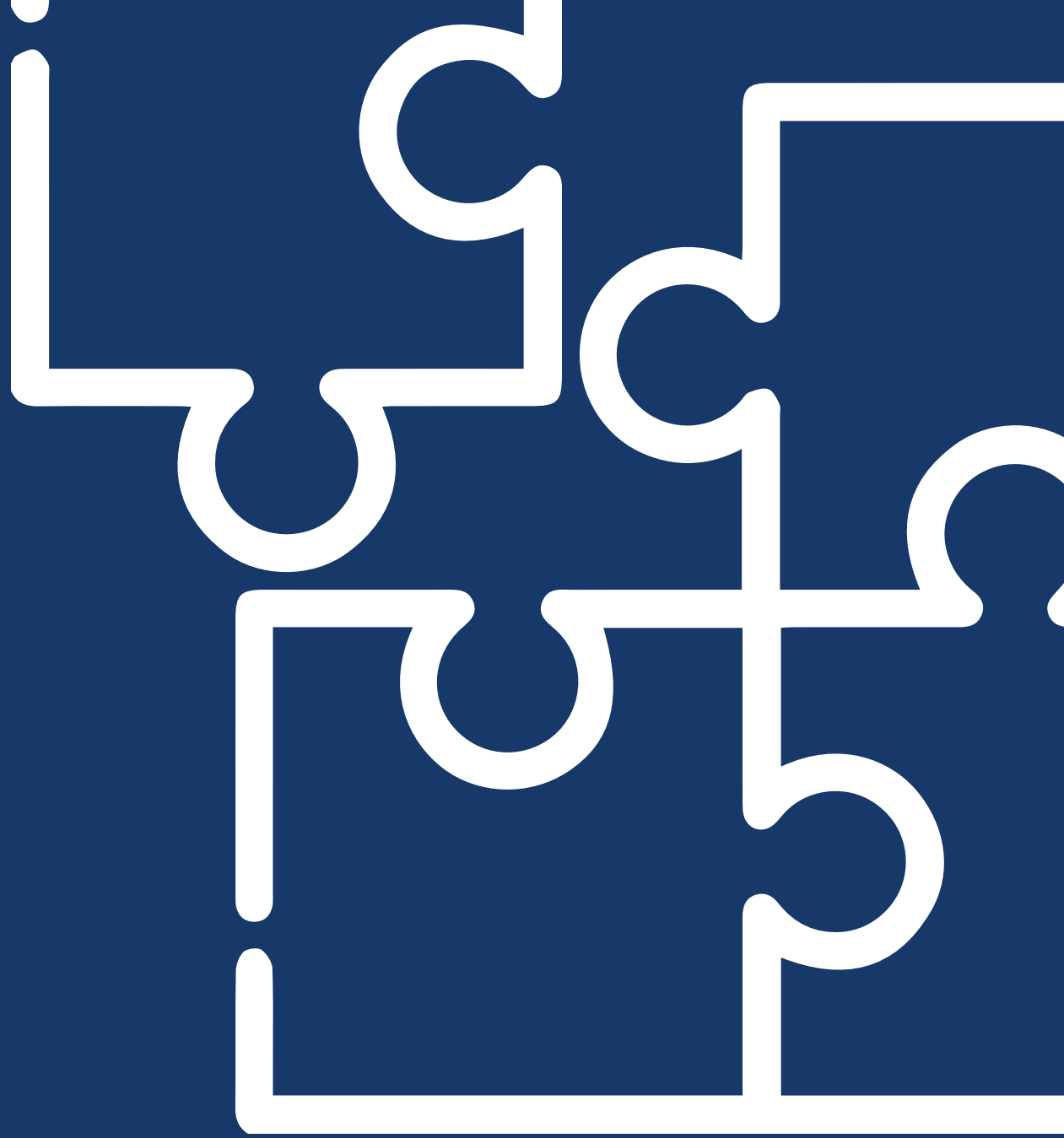


*The Engagement Staircase
Modus Planning, Design & Engagement*

1. **Strategize and prepare** – The first step towards success is the development of a Public Participation Strategy. This strategy clearly identifies WHAT is to be engaged on (and why it needs engagement), along with WHO you wish to engage (and why them), and HOW and WHEN you will engage. *Chapter 3, Part 1 provides step by step instructions for designing an effective strategy for your process.*
2. **Raise awareness** – Successful processes take the time to make people aware that the initiative exists, that participation is worthwhile, and that they have various opportunities to participate. Effective, clear, targeted, and consistent communications are central to this step, which is critical but does not necessarily guarantee participation. *Chapter 3, Part 2 (Step 1) outlines helpful tips for communication and notification.*
3. **Educate and frame** – Providing information and key facts to interested community members and stakeholders with different levels of knowledge is essential to ensuring informed and worthwhile input. The process must make an effort to educate participants so they can move to the next step. Framing is how the input opportunity is explained and provides critical context.

The language used tells a story to the participants about why this issue is important, why their input is important, and how the process will lead to a useful outcome. It also describes the degree of influence they have in the decision process to manage expectations. *Chapter 3, Part 1 (Step 6) outlines helpful tips for sharing information with the public to ensure meaningful participation.*

4. **Involve and learn** – Once the public has been identified, invited, and educated/informed about the project, the core of the participation process is to involve them in substantive discussions about the issues, options, and trade-offs involved. Many different formats and tools can be used to do this. This step succeeds when participants learn from and with each other during engagement. *Chapter 3, Part 1 (Step 5) can help you decide which formats and tools best suit your process.*
5. **Generate solutions** – At a certain point, the discussions and input gathered start to generate ideas for how to move ahead. Clarity and consensus on likely solutions begin to emerge. This step is successful when emerging ideas are fleshed out more fully. *Chapter 3, Part 2 (Step 2) provides tips on designing and facilitating online and in-person discussions to help you identify these emerging ideas.*
6. **Make decisions** – Near the end of the process, the results of your engagement activities should help the decision-makers move ahead with a clear and well-rationalized path of action. The results of engagement should also be shared broadly with the community to show how participant ideas influenced the final outcome and to explain what decisions were made and why. *Chapter 3, Part 2 (Step 3) contains information on reporting findings with graphics and “closing the loop” with participants to support decision-makers.*
7. **Implement together** – By this step, your engagement initiative should have built enough consensus and momentum to generate excitement. Some participants will be anxious to begin implementing and taking action themselves. This is the ultimate payoff of effective engagement.



Chapter 3

Implementing Your Public Participation Strategy

PART 1:

DESIGNING YOUR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The following table outlines a clear process to design an effective public participation and communications strategy to meet the needs of your objective. Additional details, worksheets, and resources are provided in the sections that follow.

By working through these sequential steps, you will develop a clear understanding of whether public participation is needed and if it is - WHAT is to be engaged on (and why it needs engagement), WHO should be involved (and why them), and HOW and WHEN you will engage.

STEP 1: CLARIFY THE ISSUE & PURPOSE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Clarify the issue or decision being made and determine if it requires public participation at all.
- If it does require public participation, what is the purpose? What objectives do you have for the public and what outcomes do you hope to achieve?

STEP 2: IDENTIFY KEY AUDIENCES

- Distinguish between different types of stakeholders and subsets of the general public
- Identify target audiences who could and should be involved, their key interests, participation targets, and any special considerations for engagement and outreach.

STEP 3: DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Assess the type of project and potential impact to determine where your initiative falls on the Spectrum of Public Participation.
- Identify resources and approvals required.

STEP 4: DESIGN & SCOPE THE PROCESS

- Identify project phases to move from broad ideas to specific solutions or ideas.
- Create strong objectives, define outputs and data, and craft powerful questions for each phase.
- Assess potential issues and/or risks and identify appropriate mitigation measures to address them throughout your initiative.

STEP 5: SELECT TOOLS & TACTICS

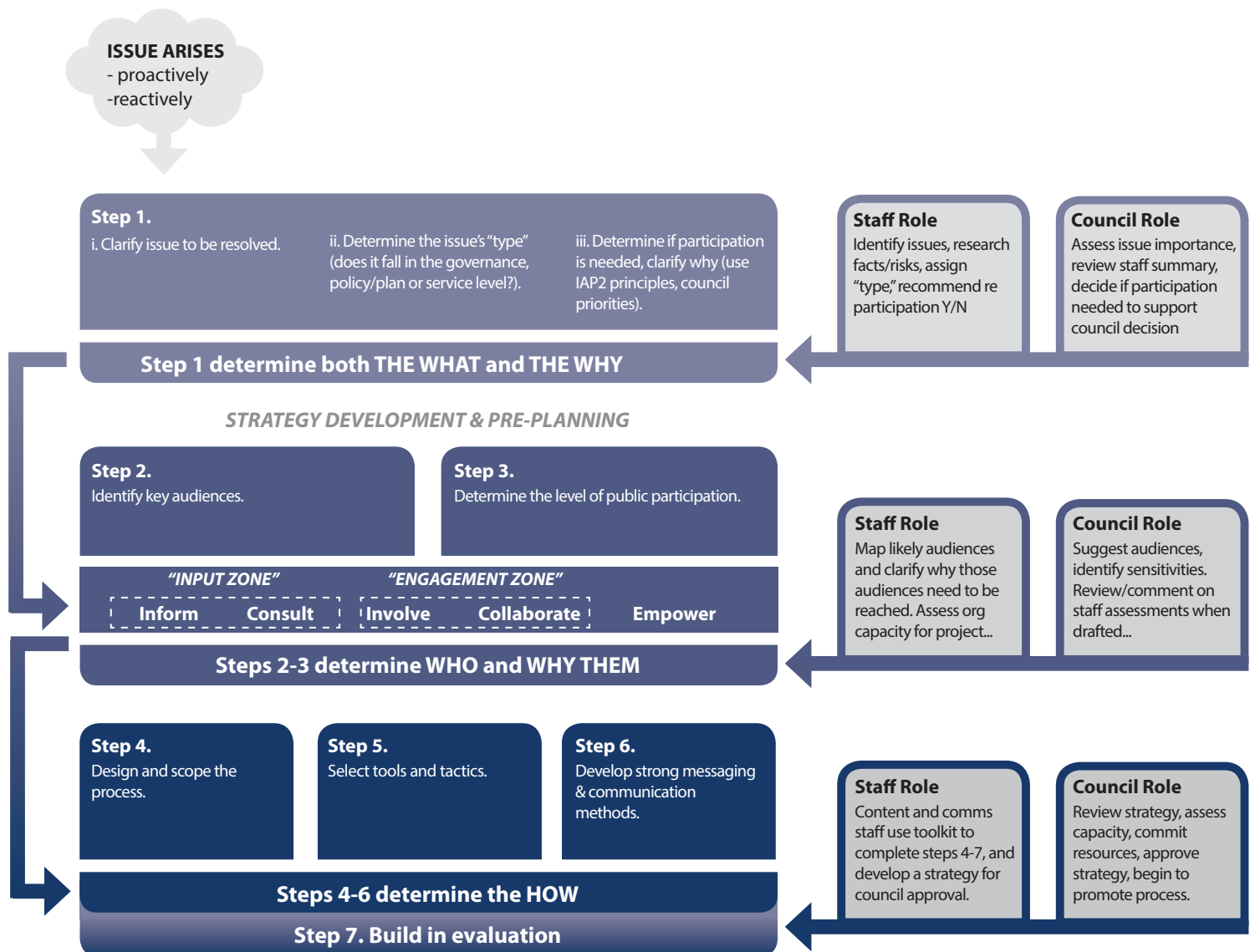
- Match participation tools to your specific initiative, phase, and target audience
- Identify timing, budget, and responsibilities.

STEP 6: DEVELOP STRONG MESSAGING & COMMUNICATION METHODS

- Create effective key messages to frame your initiative and public participation process.
- Identify communication protocols
- Identify specific notification tools to raise awareness and invite participation
- Identify key milestones for communicating results/status of the project

STEP 7: BUILD IN EVALUATION

- Distinguish between process and outcome evaluation
- Identify appropriate evaluation criteria
- Develop quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure success



STEP 1: CLARIFY THE ISSUE & PURPOSE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Not every project or decision made by Okotoks Town Council requires a large-scale public process; and some decisions don't require any outside participation at all. It is important to assess the need for engagement and choose appropriate strategies, based on project and stakeholder needs. Even if your project is only at the 'inform' stage, it is important that this is accomplished efficiently, and the steps below can help you do so.

Use the questions in this section to clearly define which issue you are trying to resolve, and critically assess if and why public participation is needed. Most issues involve a decision that needs to be made after having explored research, options, or ideas. Public participation assumes that public input will be listened to and that participants will be able to find out how input affected the decision being made.

Having clarity on the issue and purpose of public participation helps processes to be effective, because understanding the topic and need for participation (if any) helps us to identify key audiences, highlight important issues, and design an appropriate process.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE AND DOES IT REQUIRE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Q1. What is the project / initiative?

Please be as specific as possible. Examples include: "Choosing the location of a new park", "developing a homelessness reduction initiative," or "updating the hours in the recreation centre."

Q2. What context is this decision being made in?

Describe the history of this project / initiative. What are the main issues and opportunities? What other past or planned relevant activities could affect this project? Have similar projects been tried? What was the result?

Q3. What type of issue is involved and what is the planned outcome?

As described in Chapter 1, public participation processes can focus on one or more types of local government issues:

- ☐ **Governance:** How the organization makes decisions, sets priorities (budget), and measures success.

- ☐ **Policy Development & Delivery:** Changes to existing or development of new policies or plans.
- ☐ **Service Responsiveness & Efficacy:** How or should the organization deliver existing or new services or programs.
- ☐ **Capital Projects:** New or changes to existing

Define what the planned outcome is (for example, creating a new policy, amending an existing policy, changing an existing process, developing an engineering or planning action or decision, etc.)

Q4. Do you need public participation?

Consider the following to determine if your initiative requires public participation:

- ☐ Are there decisions that will be open to public and stakeholder input? If yes, what are they?

Are there some decisions that have already been made? If yes, what are they?

If major decisions are already made or will be made regardless of input, then engagement is not appropriate for the project. However, your project may still need to inform the public about decisions and will need a strategy to do so effectively.

- ☐ Have promises been made to stakeholders about their ability to give input into the project? If yes, please describe:

- ☐ Is there potential for residents/stakeholders to be impacted by the outcomes of the project / initiative?
- ☐ Is there specific Council direction for engagement with the public and/or stakeholders for this project / initiative?
- ☐ Is there legislation or regulations requiring engagement for this project / initiative?

If the answers to any of these questions is “yes”, then some form of public participation is required. Please continue to the following questions.

Here are some examples of projects that typically have an impact on stakeholders:

- Planning (e.g. Inter-municipal Development Plan, regional transit service, community development.)
- Policies and Bylaws (e.g. Street Cleaning Policy, Responsible Pet Ownership Bylaw)
- Project initiatives (e.g. Upgraded or new transportation infrastructure, new community or recreation facilities)
- Mandated/legislated processes (e.g. Cell phone towers, area re-development plans)
- Internal Town of Okotoks initiatives directly affecting staff (e.g. Corporate-wide IT projects, new corporate values)

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACHIEVE THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION?

Q1. Why do you need public participation? What are your objectives?

If you have determined that you do require public participation, describe how public input will impact the final decision being made. Do you want to:

- ☐ Raise awareness for and generate understanding of a project?
 - ☐ Build support for a project?
 - ☐ Provide open and transparent governance?
 - ☐ Gain local knowledge and insight?
 - ☐ Obtain feedback from community members on certain issues or options?
 - ☐ Evaluate a program or service?
 - ☐ Generate innovative or creative ideas?
 - ☐ Develop ideas collaboratively and promote ownership for implementation?
 - ☐ Something else?
-
-

Q2. What outcomes do you hope to achieve through this process?

When we go “above and beyond” in our participation efforts, the reason to gather input shifts from “because we have to” to something more – an outcome. Outcomes are the intangible results of a process, like:

- ☐ Improved personal and/or working relationships
- ☐ Changed perceptions (for the better)
- ☐ Improved communication channels
- ☐ Promotion of a wider circle of responsibility for decisions and actions - active and accountable citizenship

- ☐ Agreement on purpose and direction (i.e. buy-in) of a project or program
 - ☐ Early identification of potential issues, conflicts and benefits
 - ☐ Generation of new ideas
 - ☐ Formation of new formal partnerships
 - ☐ Diffusion of conflict situations before these impede progress
 - ☐ Enhancement of social capital and/or improved services for people
 - ☐ Policy change
 - ☐ Cost savings in the medium to long-term
 - ☐ Promotion of local capacity building and learning (individual and organizational)
 - ☐ Local support and goodwill fostered for a new idea or initiative
 - ☐ Increased community cohesion and strengthened shared identity.
 - ☐ Other?
-
-

Q3. Ultimately, what is the purpose of your public participation?

Summarize your answers to the previous questions in a succinct purpose statement that describes the decision being made, the role of the public, and the desired outcomes.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY KEY AUDIENCES

After determining the purpose of the participation process, we can identify stakeholders – any person or group who is impacted by the results of a decision made by the Town. These individuals or groups may:

- Be directly or indirectly affected by the project or decision.
- Have an interest in the project or decision.
- Have something to offer the project or decision.
- Impact the ability to carry out the project or decision.
- Have influence on the project or decision.

Stakeholders can be members of the community at large, neighbourhoods, customers, businesses, non-profit organizations, community organizations and partners, other government agencies, Town business centres and staff. The engagement process should include as many stakeholders as can be identified and are willing to participate. The hierarchy of stakeholders would start with the most directly affected to the least directly or indirectly affected.

Who is the public?

Public participation processes often reference very specific stakeholders as well as the ‘general public’. While it is helpful to distinguish between these two groups, the ‘general public’ actually includes many different subsets of people and groups. To best reach your target audiences, it is worth breaking down this general category to identify different sub-groups. Some examples include:

- **The ‘key influencers’:** Those who are informed about civic issues and well connected in the community, in local media, or within a specific stakeholder group – they have the ability to share information widely if they care about an issue

Reaching out to this group is critical as they can help raise awareness about your process and encourage participation. It is important to connect with this group early to address any questions or concerns and ensure they are sharing information that is accurate.

- **The ‘usual suspects’:** Those who are informed about civic issues and will generally participate in public processes, sit on advisory committees, and attend Council meetings to ensure their voices are heard – they generally have a specific interest and/or perspective and sometimes assume that everyone else in the community feels the same way (as they are often the only ones participating).

This group requires less targeted outreach as they are already likely to participate; however, it is important that they have a clear understanding of the process so they know how to share their ideas and how their input will be used. It is also important for this group to interact with other groups to learn about different perspectives and understand the full range of issues.

- **The ‘silent informed’:** Those who are generally informed about civic issues but may not participate unless they feel very strongly for or against an issue, or if it was easy and convenient to share their thoughts – they may assume that it is not worthwhile for them to participate.

Reaching out to this group is critical to ensure the input received is representative of the broader community, and that people feel they are active participants in civic decisions that affect them.

- **The ‘silent uninformed’:** Those who are generally not informed about civic issues but might participate if they knew about an issue that mattered to them and/or if it was easy and convenient to share their thoughts – they may assume that their input is not needed in civic decision making.

Reaching out to this group is critical to ensure the input received is representative of the broader community, and that people feel informed and included in civic decisions that affect them.

- **The ‘hard to reach’:** Those who are not involved in civic issues because they are either not informed, don’t care, or face real barriers to participation (such as language, lack of time, need for childcare, cost or hassle of transportation, etc.) – this group may also feel that their input is not needed or it’s not worthwhile for them to participate.

Reaching out to this group is more difficult but important to ensure a diverse range of input and ensure people feel informed and included in civic decisions that affect them, especially those who may often be underrepresented.

It is important to note that these groups are not static and can change depending on their interest in the project and/or the real or potential impact it has on them. Therefore, it is critical to assess the specific audiences and identify who you need to target to meet your objectives.

IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS & KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Q1. Who do you need to involve in your process to meet statutory regulatory requirements and when?

Which groups or partners need to be involved?

- First Nations?
- Neighbouring municipalities?
- Regional government?
- Provincial or Federal agencies?
- Others?

Q2. What groups/networks must be engaged to ensure your project is considered legitimate and that your outcomes/outputs are accepted?

Identify the individuals and groups who are interested in and/or affected by the process. Don't forget to think about people within and outside your organization!

- ☐ **Internal:** other departments in your organization?
- ☐ **Elected Officials:** Mayor and Council?
- ☐ **Landowners:** individuals and organizations that own land in your project area?
- ☐ **Area residents:** homeowners and renters, community associations?
- ☐ Businesses and institutions: commercial and institutional organizations, schools, and business associations located within the area or who have an interest in your issue?
- ☐ **Special interest groups:** associations, informal networks, non-profits, advocacy groups, or industry groups who focus on your issue?
- ☐ **Developers:** individuals and organizations with active or planned development proposals in the area?
- ☐ **Demographic Groups:** are there specific groups who need to be targeted based on demographic characteristics?
 - ☐ Age – Children and Youth
 - ☐ Age – Young Adults
 - ☐ Age – Adults
 - ☐ Age - Seniors
 - ☐ Ability
 - ☐ Economic status
 - ☐ Ethnicity and/or cultural groups
 - ☐ Family/parental status (ie., single parents, families with children, etc.)
 - ☐ Gender (are there gender-specific issues involved?)
 - ☐ Isolated groups (such as seniors living alone)
 - ☐ Language (are there non-English speakers who will require translation?)
 - ☐ Location or neighbourhood-specific groups
 - ☐ Mobility (pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, drivers, service/delivery vehicles)
 - ☐ New immigrants or refugees (and/or settlement associations to reach these groups)
 - ☐ Occupation (ie., are there shift workers who may be harder to reach at certain times)
 - ☐ Religious groups
 - ☐ Vulnerable groups (ie., people at risk or facing homelessness)
 - ☐ Other?
- ☐ **Other Groups?**

Broad & Deep Participation

Not all target audiences will want to or be able to participate in the same way. This will vary greatly, depending on their awareness, understanding and interest in the project as well as many personal considerations such as time, convenience, cost, or other barriers.

If you are trying to reach a broad and diverse range of audiences then you must offer a variety of opportunities to participate.

- Broad engagement efforts reach out widely to the ‘general public’ to raise awareness of the project and identify key issues, opportunities and priorities. This could include activities like attending a drop-in style open house, completing a survey, taking an online poll, or providing input at a pop up booth at a location or event they were already attending.
- Deep dives in smaller groups draw in more specific knowledge and data using “focused conversations” and strategic, powerful questions. This could include activities like attending a dialogue-based workshop or design charrette, leading or taking part in a community conversation or ‘meeting in a box’, or sitting on an advisory committee.

Q3. What are your target audiences’ key interests? How many people should be involved? And how can you encourage participation from your target audiences?

Use the table below to list your target audiences, their key issues and interests, your participation target, and any special considerations for engaging or sharing information with them.

- Key issues may include specific interests or concerns of a target audience or group. Note whether they are generally supportive, neutral, or opposed to the project or issue at hand.
- Participation targets may be a specific number or proportion (ie., all adjacent landowners); a percentage (ie., 5% of the total population); or they may include a diverse range of interests or groups (ie., an equal number of people representing different interests on an advisory committee)
- Special considerations may include things like participation type (in person vs. online) timing, location, communications methods, language, childcare, transportation, event design, catering, and staffing requirements that could encourage more participation. What power dynamics / relationships, language, cultural issues, or other potential barriers need to be considered in the process?

Next, go through and highlight any individuals or groups who are key influencers who could help to raise awareness and encourage participation in your process.

Target audience	Key issues or interests	Participation target	Special considerations for engagement or communications

Are there relationships between groups that could help or hurt your process?

Are all voices equal? Should they be?

Not all target audiences will be impacted or affected in the same way. Therefore, it is important to consider how to weigh the input and opinions of different stakeholders or segments of the public. For instance, if an impact will occur in a specific neighbourhood, should landowners voices count the same as someone who occasionally visits the neighbourhood, or someone who lives on the other side of town?

There is no easy answer to this question. It will depend greatly on the context, history, and sensitivity of your project and community. But it does require careful thought and consideration, and should be clearly and transparently communicated to participants and decision makers.

When deciding your evaluation criteria it is important to determine the evaluation needs of each target group, as well. One group's needs might be as simple as a report on the stages of the public participation process and how many people participated via different channels. A local First Nation might need specific data to show that legal consultation requirements were met. Internal audiences might need to know much more detail about how well the objectives and outcomes of your public participation campaign were achieved. *See the evaluation criteria list in Step 7 for detail.*

STEP 3: DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Many factors determine the level of public participation required in a process, such as:

- Potential financial, quality of life, health and safety, and environmental impacts
- The history and context including the divisiveness or political risk of the issue
- How much influence participants will have on the decision
- Scale of the project/decision
- Legal requirements triggered by the issue or decision
- The relationship to Council priorities

By completing the previous section, you will have started thinking about the level of participation you need.

To simplify this critical step, this section focuses on the type, impact and complexity of the initiative to assess where it falls under the “Input Zone” or the “Engagement Zone” and what types of resources and approvals will be required.

The questions below includes various criteria to assess your project/initiative, demonstrating that the greater the level of potential impact or complexity, the greater the need to engage the community.

Q1. Where does your project fall on the spectrum?

The table below provides a foundation to begin to gauge where your project best fits on the public participation spectrum. Select one from each section and add up your score for each of inform, consult, involve, collaborate.

PROJECT CRITERIA	INPUT ZONE		ENGAGEMENT ZONE	
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Level of Impact				
Public/stakeholder ability to impact decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Little to none – stay informed and provide comments to refine existing decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate – provide feedback, listen to and acknowledge concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> High – work with the public to make sure concerns/ aspirations/ feedback are considered and understood	<input type="checkbox"/> Very high – partner with the public in each aspect of decision making
Project Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor modifications to an existing program, plan or service <input type="checkbox"/> Minor plan update		<input type="checkbox"/> Major modifications to existing or creation of new program, plan or service <input type="checkbox"/> Major plan update or new plan	

	INPUT ZONE		ENGAGEMENT ZONE	
PROJECT CRITERIA	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Project Duration (how much time is available before a decision needs to be made?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-term (several weeks to 6 months)		<input type="checkbox"/> Medium-long term (6 months or longer)	
Internal Impact	Within one business centre	Multiple business centres	Entire organization	
Context				
• Controversial or unpopular history?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but a long time ago	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and recently	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, and the controversy is ongoing
• Will the decision potentially affect tax rates?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Some indirect impacts	<input type="checkbox"/> Some direct impacts	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant, direct impacts
• Moral and/or emotional component?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Moral or emotional issue for a specific group	<input type="checkbox"/> Moral or emotional issue for some of the population	<input type="checkbox"/> Moral or emotional issue for much of the community
Community Input				
• How many people may be interested or affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited number or select neighbourhoods or groups		<input type="checkbox"/> Large portion or entire community	
• Is the decision likely to create winners and/or losers?	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Some perception of winners and losers	<input type="checkbox"/> Widespread perception of winners and losers	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision really creates winners and losers
• Will the decision potentially affect property values?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely and with a high potential impact
• Will the decision potentially be perceived to have negative impacts on health and safety?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely and with a high potential impact
• Will the decision potentially have perceived negative impacts on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely and with a high potential impact

	INPUT ZONE		ENGAGEMENT ZONE	
PROJECT CRITERIA	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
• Will the decision potentially have negative impacts on quality of life (ie., noise, dust, odour, views, dark sky, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely and with a high potential impact
• Will the decision potentially have negative impacts to lifestyles (ie., traffic congestion, loss of access, loss or reduction of services, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely but with a lower potential impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Very likely and with a high potential impact
Level of Complexity				
• Is the project or issue a Council priority?	<input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
• What is the anticipated level of disagreement between stakeholder groups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Little to no disagreement, can be easily managed	<input type="checkbox"/> There will be a few competing positions but they can be managed with some effort	<input type="checkbox"/> Competing positions with multiple stakeholder groups or more than a few different strongly held positions	
• How inclined will stakeholders be to accept this project or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not likely to be concerned	<input type="checkbox"/> Some issues anticipated	<input type="checkbox"/> Many issues or at least one stakeholder group that is strongly opposed	
	Total: ____	Total: ____	Total: ____	Total: ____

This table is also found in [Appendix B](#).

STEP 4: DESIGN & SCOPE THE PROCESS

Public participation processes benefit from a logical, phased approach. Many participation processes follow a “funnel” process: the process begins by asking broad questions and then narrows down to more specific questions.

Organizing your process according to the “funnel” communicates that your process is open, transparent, well-organized, and logical. Moving from broad questions to narrow ones, with report-backs to participants at the end of each phase, builds trust, clarity, and momentum, growing the numbers of people involved over time.

Depending on the level of participation needed, your “funnel” process may take place in a single phase or may make up multiple phases to progress through more complex issues:



*The Engagement Funnel
Modus Planning, Design & Engagement*

IDENTIFY PROJECT PHASING

Q.1 Does your project require multiple phases? If so, explain.

- **Input Zone:** your promise to the public is to keep people informed, listen to feedback, and show how input affected the decision being made. Your process may simply involve sharing communications and educational materials, creating one or more input opportunities, and a report back about what you heard and how that information was used.
- **Engagement Zone:** Your promise is to work with (or partner) the public to consider their interests and concerns and “figure things out together.” These are more contentious, complex, and potentially more impactful issues or decisions where more substantive input and a deeper level of participation is needed. Your process may involve multiple phases that move from broad questions to narrow ones, with report-backs to participants at the end of each phase to build trust, clarity, and momentum throughout the process.

Do you need just one round of input or more than one? How can you design your process into orderly phases or sub-phases?

- **For a single phase project**, examples of sub-phases could include “Research, Outreach, Gathering Input, Reporting Back.”
- **For a multi-phase project**, examples of sub-phases could include “Visioning, Emerging Directions, Options & Trade-offs, Drafting the Plan/Recommendation)

Q2. What budget and resources are available?

How much will it cost? How much staff time is available? Assess the capacity to undertake all engagement activities. May have to prioritize which tools can be used effectively.

Q3. What is the scale of the project?

What staff and resources are needed to implement all engagement activities? How much time is available before a decision needs to be made?

CLARIFY OBJECTIVES & KEY QUESTIONS

Input Zone: Single Phase Project

If your project has only a single phase, consider your overall objectives and the questions you need to ask to support the decision being made?

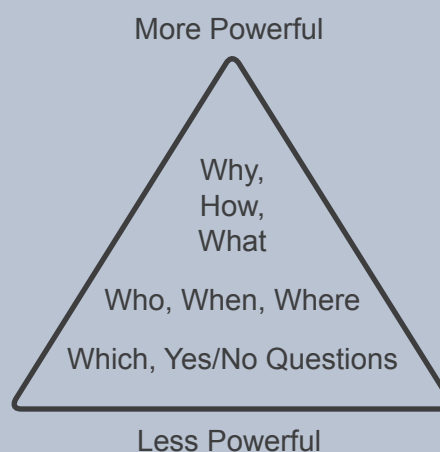
Typical questions for the “Input Zone” include, “What do you think?” “Did we get this right?” and “Have we missed anything?”

“Begin with the end in mind – think about the data you want to collect and how it will be used to generate more meaningful questions. “

Creating Powerful Questions

Throughout your process it is important to ask “powerful” questions. Powerful questions inspire people to think critically, creatively, and positively to generate better solutions. Ask yourself the following questions to craft better, more powerful questions:

- Is this a genuine question—a question which I/we really don’t know the answer?
- Is this question relevant to the people who will be exploring it? Will they understand the language used? Will they find the question compelling to think about and answer?
- What do I want this question to accomplish? What kind of conversations and feelings do I want the people answering it to experience?
- Is this question likely to invite fresh thinking and energize people? Is it familiar enough to be recognizable and relevant—and different enough to call forward a new response?
- Is this question likely to generate hope, imagination, engagement, creative action, and new possibilities? How can I write the question to avoid focusing on past problems?
- Does this question inspire new and different questions that can deepen our understanding of the topic?



What assumptions or beliefs are embedded in the way this question is constructed? How can I write the question to be more clear and neutral?

Adapted From: Vogt, E.E. Brown, J., and Isaacs, D. 2003. The Art of Powerful Questions. Whole Systems Associates.

Engagement Zone: Multi-Phase Project

The following describes the process to design a more complex project with multiple phases of public participation.

PHASE 1: LEARNING TOGETHER

Generally the first phase of a process announces that an initiative exists, it's worthwhile, there's an opportunity to get involved, and we're just getting started so all ideas (within the frame) are welcome.

Q1: What are your Phase 1 objectives?

Typical Phase 1 objectives can be to:

- Identify and prioritize issues
- Raise awareness and generate understanding about the process and the issues
- Generate a shared vision for the future
- Generate a shared vision of current trends and anticipated challenges

Q2: What questions do you want to ask in Phase 1 to meet your objectives?

For Engagement Zone processes, the questions are typically deeper and more complex. Examples include:

- ☐ What do you like about the current situation? What would you improve?
- ☐ What is most important to you as we move forward and why do you care about it?
- ☐ What does your ideal future look like? How are we doing today compared to that ideal?
- ☐ How much change are you most comfortable with? What/which areas should change first? How fast should they change?
- ☐ Who else should be asked about this issue/initiative?
- ☐ Can you help get the word out and will you participate in the future?

PHASE 2: WORKING TOGETHER

Phase 2 is a good opportunity to share a vision based on feedback heard in Phase 1, develop goals and directions through participation for achieving this vision, and to begin generating options. At this point, the scope of what we're engaging on begins to narrow, like the funnel diagram.

Q3: What are your Phase 2 objectives?

Typical Phase 2 objectives can be to:

- ☐ Raise awareness about feedback received in Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities
- ☐ Set goals and directions for achieving the vision
- ☐ Generate options, or alternative ways for achieving the goals and directions (using results from Phase 1 along with technical findings, best practices, etc.)
- ☐ Gather feedback on which options have more consensus and which have more conflict

Q4: What questions do you want to ask in Phase 2 to meet your objectives?

For Engagement Zone processes, the questions are typically deeper and more complex. Examples include:

- ☐ What would it take to achieve our desired vision?
- ☐ What are the barriers? What are the breakthrough strategies?
- ☐ If success was guaranteed, what bold steps could we take?
- ☐ Where do we see opportunities for synergy? For conflict?
- ☐ What big ideas are emerging for you? What connections are you making?
- ☐ What are the gaps in our thinking, research, and approach? How can we fill those gaps together?
- ☐ What resources are needed to move ahead? Who can contribute?
- ☐ Who is critical to bring onside as these ideas evolve?
- ☐ What other data or information do we need?

PHASE 3: DECIDING TOGETHER

Once we reach Phase 3, we have a clear direction, but some of the details are not yet worked out. In Phase 3, typical activities are to discuss unresolved issues and select preferred options or alternatives. We can also begin generating ideas for implementation. Input gathered during this phase will likely be quite detailed.

Q5: What are your Phase 3 objectives?

Typical Phase 3 objectives can be to:

- ☐ Raise awareness about feedback received in Phase 2 and Phase 3 activities
- ☐ Explore unresolved/contentious issues and trade-offs between options
- ☐ Evaluate options for moving toward our goals
- ☐ Select the preferred option(s)
- ☐ Gather initial ideas for implementation

Q6: What questions do you want to ask in Phase 3 to meet your objectives?

For Engagement Zone processes, the questions are typically deeper and more complex. Examples include:

- ☐ Are the ideas and strategies on track? Did we miss anything?
- ☐ Does this pass the “reality check”? Is it adoptable?
- ☐ What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs and values think in this situation?
- ☐ What surprises you? What challenges you?
- ☐ What is missing from the picture? What do we need more clarity on?
- ☐ What would it take to achieve positive change on this issue?

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTING TOGETHER

In Phase 4 we have a draft policy, plan, or recommendation to present to Council for approval. In Phase 4, it is useful to check in with participants – “did we get this right?” – so that Council has a clearer indication of support.

Q7: What are your Phase 4 objectives?

Typical Phase 4 objectives can be to:

- ☐ Share a draft of your work so far and see if there are any outstanding issues or missing information
- ☐ Obtain a final decision on your work
- ☐ Begin implementing your work
- ☐ Monitor the implementation of your work

Q8: What questions do you want to ask in Phase 4 to meet your objectives?

For Engagement Zone processes, the questions are typically deeper and more complex. Examples include:

- ☐ What is missing from the picture? What do we need more clarity on?
- ☐ How can we support each other in taking the next steps?
- ☐ Who is best suited for taking responsibility for the next steps?
- ☐ What challenges can we expect to face? How can we overcome them?
- ☐ What does success look like in the future? How can we measure whether we have achieved it?

Q9: Broadly speaking, what kinds of activities do you need to do in each phase?

Brainstorm all activities you will need to do in each phase. Examples include, awareness raising, public meeting, meeting invitation, project notifications/updates, research, analysis, reporting, and evaluating. Don't worry yet about specific tools or tactics. We will explore those in the next section.

Phase 1:

Phase 2:

Phase 3:

Phase 4:

IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES & MITIGATION MEASURES

In a public engagement process, organizations responsible for and coordinating the initiative sometimes face organized opposition, some of whom are credible, but some of whom may use misinformation, scare tactics, and accusations of bias to undermine the process. If issues and dynamics like this are not recognized and correctly addressed early on, they can build momentum and become a crisis for a project that seeks broad, diverse and meaningful public input. This can negatively impact the organization or project, and result in a derailed engagement process, heightened community conflict and/or a loss of reputation.

Managing issues effectively means recognizing the issue at an early stage, developing a strategy and implementing tactics to deal with the issue and avert a crisis. This section will help you to identify any potential issues, and work through some mitigation measures to get ahead of problems and avoid escalation around contentious issues. This will also help to inform your Communications Strategy in Step 6.

Q1. What potential issues could impact your project?

Identify the key issues - real and perceived – that may be involved in your project or process.

- ☐ Lack of public awareness of the issue and/or participation opportunities
- ☐ Lack of overall participation
- ☐ Lack of diverse participation or representation of key groups
- ☐ Lack of transparency about process or decisions
- ☐ Lack of trust towards local government
- ☐ Impact to community or certain groups
- ☐ Political considerations
- ☐ Controversial issues
- ☐ Other issues

Q2. What can be done to mitigate potential risks?

Use the table below to detail potential issues, the level of risk associated with each, and potential mitigation measures.

Issue	Level of risk (low-medium-high)	Mitigation measures

Managing & Mitigating Risks

- Identify potential risks at the beginning of the project and assess regularly throughout the process to respond to issues as they arise to avoid escalation.
- Use “online listening” to identify hot issues (i.e., blogs, social media groups or posts, newspaper editorials, etc.)
- Involve project opponents early on to address concerns and misconceptions. Invite them for a coffee chat or interview to introduce the project, ask them about their issues, and get their thoughts on the process.
- Invest time in forming strong relationships with stakeholders. They can help to promote awareness and participation, address misconceptions, and even help implement the project once the process is complete.
- Communicate regularly with the public and stakeholders to inform them of progress and how their input is being used.

STEP 5: SELECT APPROPRIATE TOOLS & TACTICS

At this point, you should be able to answer:

- What's the purpose of your participation process and why are you collecting input?
- What do you hope to achieve through this process?
- Who are you inviting to participate?
- How much or what level of participation is appropriate for this process?
- What are your process phases and key questions?
- What activities do you need to plan for?

The next step in drafting your public participation strategy is to consider what tools, or event formats you need in order to carry out the activities identified at the end of Step 5.

Q1. Which tools are best suited for your project?

Review the table below to see tools organized by the level of participation and by the different stages of the engagement staircase. Many times, practitioners find themselves in a situation where no single technique quite fits the bill. Consider using elements from a variety of techniques to meet your public participation objectives in a way that will address the needs and limitations of your audiences and resources.

See Chapter 4 for more information on specific tools and communication tactics.

PROJECT STAGE	INPUT ZONE		ENGAGEMENT ZONE	
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Strategize & Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event registration software • Citizen relationship management software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event registration software • Citizen relationship management software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event registration software • Citizen relationship management software • Key informant interviews • Advisory group 	
Raise Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising / notifications (print, online, radio) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising / notifications (print, online, radio) • Information kiosk • Briefings (to media or organized groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising / notifications (print, online, radio) • Information kiosk / field office • Briefings (presentations to media or organized groups) • Project ambassadors / give-aways / prizes (attend popular locations or events) • Art / photo / media contest 	

Educate and Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information briefs (paper and online) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth backgrounders (paper and online) Symposia / speaker series Webinar Video
Involve & Learn; Generate Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public event (open house with mostly information, Q&A) Event feedback form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public event (open house with some interactive displays/ questions, Q&A) Event feedback form Polls and surveys (online and paper) Workshops with key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly interactive public events (open house with many opportunities for input) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visioning and idea generation activities Content exploration activities Community mapping / input on spatial analysis Prioritizing and voting activities Options and scenarios tools Crowdsourcing new ideas Electronic polling Graphic facilitation Event feedback forms Dialogue formats with groups (focus groups, workshops, charrettes, World Café, Idea Jams, Open Space meetings, deliberative forums, etc.) Citizen-led Kitchen Table Conversations (guided workbooks and discussion guides) Site/Walking Tours Surveys (online and paper) Intercept interviews or surveys (ie., on the street) Online discussion forum Live-casting meetings
Inform Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response summaries Advisory Group presentations / recommendations

Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share decision publicly (ie., website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share decision publicly and promote widely (ie., website, newsletter, news release) • Public launch event / celebration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share decision publicly and promote widely (ie., website, newsletter, news release) • Public launch event / celebration • Webinar(s) • Video • Open Council meetings (live-casting, fishbowl) • Implementation Committee • Formal partnerships
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Q2. How long will those activities take? What budget should we allocate to these activities? Who is responsible for each activity?

List each phase's main activities and tools. Then estimate a duration, budget, and responsible person for each.

Phase	Activity	Duration (weeks)	Budget (\$, \$\$, \$\$\$)	Responsible person(s)

STEP 6: DEVELOP STRONG MESSAGING

The next component to your Public Participation Strategy is to organize your communications strategy. This identifies your key messages and framing language as well as communication protocols and notifications/promotional materials to raise awareness.

Use your communications strategy to identify ongoing communications and consistent messages. Early and ongoing communication is critical to the success of your public participation process. Community members should know where to look for more information and all project communications should have a similar look so they are easily recognizable.

See Part 2, Step 1 for additional information on raising awareness.

Tell the story – what’s in it for them?

In order for stakeholders to provide meaningful input, they need to understand the project and why it’s worthwhile for them to participate. Build credibility and trust in the process by sharing the details of the project in plain language, including:

- What is being considered
- Why engagement is needed
- The overall engagement timeline
- Details of the engagement activities
- What is expected of them and why it’s worthwhile for them to participate
- Who will be making decisions and how their input will be used

Q1. What are your key messages?

Key messages are 3 to 5 points that summarize the most important things you want to say about your process. Be sure to write positive messages that match your audiences and the issues they care about the most. Write about the process and the content that you’re seeking input on, and call for participation.

Key messages should use plain, simple language. They should be persuasive, easy to remember and focused on a single broad idea.

Q2. What is your framing language for each phase of your process?

What issue needs resolving? What is the context? What is the sandbox that public participation will occur in? Look back at your process purpose statement to write a few sentences for each phase that you can use on posters, postcards, your website, and even invitations to give people enough information to encourage them to participate.

Phase 1:

Phase 2:

Phase 3:

Phase 4:

Q3. What are your communication protocols?

Communications protocols establish branding (logo, wordmark, graphics, colours) and communications roles and reporting channels. Depending on the size of your project, useful roles may include: someone available to answer questions by phone or email, someone who is listening to media stories and online for “chatter” about your process, and a media spokesperson.

Q4. What notification tools will you use?

To launch your project quickly and with impact, you should have an idea of the educational and promotional materials you will launch before your first event or questionnaire. Be sure to use a variety of communications channels including print, online, and in-person tactics as well as outreach through key influencers or stakeholder networks.

See Chapter 4 for more information on specific tools and communication tactics.

Phase	Information Hubs
	Town website –all project/process information in one place on your website (ie., project background, frequently asked questions, related reports and studies, upcoming opportunities for participation, summary reports, etc.)
	Project newsletter / mailing list / Town e-newsletter(s)
	Social media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube
	Project information kiosk / field office / community storefront – a physical space people can go to find out more about the project/process (i.e., Recreation Centre, Foothills Centennial Centre, Pason Centennial Arena, Operations Centre, etc.)
	Dedicated project contact
Phase	Community Announcements
	Community calendar (online events calendar and/or print community calendar if time permits)
	Posters/banners in community hotspots such as recreation areas, coffee shops, grocery stores, etc.
	Inserts/ads in Community Guide, utility bill inserts, or other government publications that are already being printed/distributed
	Digital road signs, billboards, or banners – a good way to remind people of upcoming events
	Community bulletin boards
	Key influencers – community organizations, stakeholder groups, advocacy groups, partners (through websites, email, newsletters, phone trees, word of mouth, etc.)
Phase	Advertising & Media
	Press release in local newspaper
	Local newspaper/magazine advertisements or inserts
	Earned media (newspaper articles, opinion pieces, blogs)
	Local radio ads
	Calgary TV ads (for significant issues)
	Facebook ads – you can set a budget and choose the people you would like to reach (by age, location, gender)
	Transportation-related ads – transit vehicles, transit stations, bus shelters/benches, billboards, etc. (e.g. On-It Transit buses)
	Billboards / digital boards
	Addressed and unaddressed ad-mailout – postcard, newsletter, etc.
	Flyer drop (door to door flyer)

Phase	Printed / Online Information & Handouts
	Flyer – short, highly visual, no more than 1 page
	Fact Sheet/FAQ – 1-2 page handout with frequently asked questions and answers
	Brochure – a highly visual handout with basic project information
	Postcard – a 1 or 2-sided handout on cardstock
	Giveaway – fun and interesting giveaways (magnets, buttons, stickers, temporary tattoos)
	Backgrounder/Issue Paper – a more in-depth and technical review of information to provide context – can be shared online and at Town facilities
	Informational video (ie., YouTube)
Phase	Events Intended to Inform / Raise Awareness
	Community event booth – an information booth/kiosk at an existing popular community event like a festival or farmers market
	Community road show – a ‘pop up’ information booth/kiosk at key locations throughout the community
	Project champions (paid or volunteer staff, community members, youth, etc.) who share information at key locations and events throughout the community
	Site visit/walking tour – for site-specific projects
	Symposia / expert panel / guest speaker / TEDx event
	PechaKucha – short presentation with 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each, highly visual, engaging and succinct
	Webinar – an online presentation to share information
	Livecasting meetings – streaming video online, live-Tweeting, etc.

STEP 7: BUILD IN EVALUATION

With all the time, effort, and resources spent on engagement, it is critically important to evaluate both the process and results to better understand the impacts and outcomes, identify and learn from what worked and what didn't, and improve practice over time.

There are two types of evaluation which are most relevant for your public participation strategy.

- ☐ **Formative (Process):** used during a process to assess progress and learnings and identify ways to improve the process in real time to achieve better outcomes
- ☐ **Summative (Outcomes):** used after a process is complete - focuses on the outcome (Did the program work? Did we achieve our goals and objectives?)

Regardless of the type(s) of evaluation you are conducting, it is essential to plan ahead so you know what success looks like, how you will measure it, and what you will do with the data.

Remember – evaluation can be time and resource intensive so keep it simple and only measure data that you will actually use!

Q1. What are your evaluation criteria?

Evaluation criteria will vary for each project / process but should be measurable and meaningful. The following table provides a broad overview of potential criteria for process and outcome evaluations.

Review the list and identify the ones that best suit your needs for your process and/or outcome evaluation.

PROCESS EVALUATION CRITERIA	IMPACT / OUTCOME EVALUATION CRITERIA
Process Design Criteria:	Outcome Criteria (short-term observable changes of conditions or behaviours caused by the process):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Purpose: The type and level of engagement was appropriate for the desired results<input type="checkbox"/> Approach: Approach and techniques reflected the organization's goals<input type="checkbox"/> Timing: Timing of participation was congruent with stages in the decision-making process<input type="checkbox"/> Scope: Goals were established and process and decision constraints were identified at the beginning of the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Responsiveness: community and/or stakeholder input made a demonstrable difference in decision-making<input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness: The process and techniques were effective to achieve the desired results<input type="checkbox"/> Cost-effectiveness: The process was cost-effective; the value is justified for the time, energy and resources spent; could also be compared to similar processes<input type="checkbox"/> Values/opinions: participants' values or opinions changed throughout the process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Context: The process design responded to resource limitations, the local context, type of decision, and issue at hand ❑ Resources: The budget, resources, and timeline was sufficient to achieve engagement goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Education: participants are educated or informed by the process ❑ Acceptance: The decision was broadly accepted ❑ Conflict reduction: Conflict among participants or between participants and the organization was reduced ❑ Quality of decisions: the substantive quality of decisions is improved
Process Implementation Criteria:	Impact Criteria (long-term impacts of the program/process):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Participation rate: The number and type of participants involved ❑ Outreach: The type and amount of outreach and communications to encourage or invite participation or raised awareness of the issue or process ❑ Representativeness: The process included a mix of participants that was representative of the diverse interests of a larger group ❑ Inclusivity and accessibility: The process was inclusive and accessible for a diverse range of people (this may include special considerations to ensure a safer environment for participants of different age, gender, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) and efforts were made to reduce barriers to participation ❑ Balanced and complete information: information was easy for participants to understand, easy to access, made available in a timely manner, accurate, and unbiased/balanced; participants had the information they needed in order to participate in a meaningful way ❑ Fairness: The process was fair and unbiased; selection of participants was fair and legitimate ❑ Transparency: The process was transparent and participants can clearly see what was done, who was involved, what was heard, and how feedback will be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ External capacity building: The engagement process provided participants with additional skills, knowledge or experience on the issue; develops dialogue skills; or develops relationships or ongoing opportunities to work on the issue (with staff or with other stakeholders) ❑ Internal capacity building: The engagement process provided staff with additional skills, knowledge or experience on the issue or in engagement ❑ Trust: The engagement process helped to build trust in the organization and build or strengthen relationships with community and stakeholders ❑ Social impact: The engagement process resulted in a social impact for participants or the broader community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Flexibility: The process was able to respond to changing circumstances as needed ❑ Continuity: Participants were involved early in the process and there were opportunities to participate in multiple stages throughout the process ❑ Respectful: The process incorporated two-way communication that is respectful ❑ Values: The process incorporated values and beliefs into discussion questions ❑ Effectiveness: The process and techniques were effective to engage participants ❑ Appropriateness: Roles for community members, stakeholders, staff, and decision-makers were appropriate for their skills, knowledge, and experience ❑ Satisfaction: Participants were satisfied with the process ❑ Accountability: Decision-makers were accountable and directly involved in the decision-making and participatory process 	
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Q2. Which indicators will you use to measure success?

Indicators of Success

Indicators are measures of success that let you know whether or not you are meeting a specific criterion. Indicators can be qualitative or quantitative and a good process will include a mix of both as well as a mix of sources and perspectives.

Indicators can be strong or weak. **Strong indicators** focus on the how, why, and when (not just the what) and are simple, measurable, important and action-oriented. **Weak indicators** or ‘vanity metrics’ on the other hand, are those that may look impressive but don’t provide useful information or focus on short-term data, or data that can easily be manipulated (for example, number of followers on social media – doesn’t tell you who they are or how they are engaging with your content).

Indicators can come from a variety of sources including but not limited to:

- Website and social media analytics (be cautious about vanity metrics! A weak indicator would include website views while a strong indicator would include click-through rates – this shows how effective the medium is to make people follow up for more information or to share their ideas)
- Survey results (quantitative and qualitative)
- Participant data (total # and demographics)
- Event / process satisfaction surveys
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Staff debriefings / observations of meetings or events
- Archival data
- Statistical data
- Online listening (# and sentiment of online comments included on your organization’s pages and on external pages/platforms)
- Media coverage (# and tone of articles)

Use the table below to identify appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative indicators of success for each of your criteria.

[illegible]

PART 2:

IMPLEMENTING YOUR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

STEP 1: RAISING AWARENESS & INVITING PARTICIPATION

To draw stakeholders into your process, you will need to raise awareness by communicating that the process is happening. You will have to state the purpose clearly and actively invite participation.

Stakeholders need to understand what is happening, why they should care, when and how they can get involved, and how their input will be used to influence decision-making. All of this builds transparency and trust which is absolutely essential to successful public participation processes.

“Participation in your process and support for your team’s efforts depends on effective communication.”

PRO TIPS FOR RAISING AWARENESS

- **Keep it simple.** Use simple words, active voice, short sentences, and images. Tell the story of your project in plain language to engage readers and avoid technical jargon. Communications for the public should be around a 6th or 7th grade reading level. Use a readability test like Flesch-Kincaid to test your communications.
- **Keep it brief.** If the purpose of your project can’t be simply explained in a sentence, you won’t get people to buy into the idea. The details are still important but your headline or invitation needs to hook people’s attention first.
- **Create a project brand.** All project communications should have a similar look so they are easily recognizable as part of the same initiative. Consider a memorable ‘tagline’ that captures the essence of your project.
- **Get creative and use a range of formats.** Use a variety of ways to raise awareness about your project and reach different audiences, including a range of print, online, and in-person outreach. Some examples include humour (see San Francisco Sewer System ads), custom designed flyers (Squamish “OCPizza nights”), or give-aways that people really want or can use (ie., bike bells, seed packets, tissue packs).
- **Create a central hub for project information.** Community members know where to look for information, upcoming opportunities to get involved, and summary reports. Generally, this will be your project website but could also include a project newsletter/ mailing list, physical space (like a kiosk, field office, or storefront), and a key project contact.
- **Provide plenty of notice and options.** Recognize the busy lives of residents and stakeholder groups and provide plenty of notice and different options for the public to participate (i.e., online, in-person). Consider potential barriers and let people know how your event is convenient for them (ie, free parking, childcare and/or family friendly events, free refreshments, etc.)

- **Build your network.** Use multiple communications channels to help grow your list of project contacts (i.e. website, events, integrate existing lists) but be aware of privacy laws for collecting contact information, such as Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), the Health Information Act (HIA), and Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), as well as Canada's new Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)).
- **Use existing community networks to "snowball" your message.** Wherever possible, leverage other stakeholder or partner networks to help raise awareness and share your key messages through their listserves, newsletters, Facebook pages and websites. This will help spread your message more broadly and reach more diverse groups.

Crafting Strong Invitations

To draw people into your process, inspire participation by writing "an invitation" that speaks to their values and compels them to get involved. Successful invitations have a clear and a powerful frame that:

- Defines the challenge both you and the community face together;
- Makes a case for action by explaining how participation can create a better future;
- Inspires possibility by expressing that new ideas and thinking is welcomed;
- Invites participation by making participants feel that their thoughts count; and,
- Shares responsibility by communicating that the outcomes of the event will impact the final decision.

Why do you want people to come to your event? Consider framing your meeting's purpose as a burning challenge that you can't solve alone, such as "We've outgrown our community centre. We need your help to design a welcoming, safe, and comfortable place for our friends and families to stay fit and healthy." You can also frame your purpose as a big question, like "What steps can we take as a community to support our seniors?"

What will you do at your event? Examples include: communicating important information, visioning the future, prioritizing issues or options, brainstorming actions, developing strategies, resolving conflict, and gathering ideas.

Why would people want to come to your event? Describe why they should care about the issues (how the decision being made will impact people's lifestyles, properties, taxes, etc.), why their input matters, and what you will provide to make it easy to participate. When and where is your event? Include the location, date, and time of the event. How does your event relate to a larger process? Explain how this event is related to a larger process, including how participants' inputs and ideas will be used and what the next steps are.

What is your event format? Will it be a workshop where someone needs to attend for the whole time? Or, is it a drop-in format? Will there be any scheduled activities, like a presentation? Is it family-friendly?

Where can people find out more information? Include details about where to find more information (including meeting materials and a summary after your event) and who to contact for more information.

WORKING WITH KEY INFLUENCERS

Plan early to work with other organizations and partners, such as local schools, businesses, non-profits, community groups, advisory committee members, etc. *Refer to Part 1, Step 2* to identify your key influencers.

These stakeholders can provide important knowledge of local conditions and identify key issues and solutions within their own fields and the community as a whole. Buy-in from these stakeholders, and support in getting the word out to potential participants, may also be crucial to the success of your project.

Don't forget to work with your colleagues in other departments, too! Business centres such as Planning, Engineering, and Parks tend to deal with many of the same issues, but lack the opportunities to collaborate. Solutions emerge by working together and raising awareness of the challenges, opportunities, and abilities of each department.

FRAMING THE PROCESS

In your public participation strategy determine an appropriate and realistic timeline to complete your participation process and identify what you will do in each phase. Communicate this timeline to residents and stakeholders so they understand where each event fits into the process, when opportunities to participate will occur, and when final decisions will be made. Depending on the size and scope of your public participation process, stagger events on a variety of times and days to ensure a range of opportunities for people to attend. Weekends and weekday evenings are generally the best bet for in-person events.

Be sure the days you pick do not conflict with other major events (i.e. school summer and winter holidays, major sporting events, and community events) unless you have planned to coordinate with other events in the community. Be sure to let your communications staff know when your events are, so they can help manage communications and prevent double-booking.

"Piggybacking" your participation activities with pre-existing community events, for example setting up a booth at a music festival, can increase awareness of and participation in your process by people who usually would not attend.

Process diagrams (process maps) summarize the timing of your phases and activities succinctly. The process diagram helps your team stay on-track, quickly shows which activities will happen when, and clearly communicates to participants how far along the process is and how they can get involved.

STEP 2: IN-PERSON & ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Preparation is the key to having successful events and processes. This section will help you prepare both in-person events and online formats and help you determine the types of skills to look for in a facilitator, helpful facilitator tips, and some common meeting ground rules. For more information on how to design an event with a specific format, please see Chapter 4.

PREPARING A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

A facilitator's guide includes the detailed agenda, which is a "Cole's Notes" for the event lead. The guide describes:

- Layout of the room,
- Materials checklist,
- Roles & responsibilities,
- Sequence and timing of activities with key questions to answer in each activity,
- Person leading each activity,
- Instructions for participants on how to complete each activity,
- Description of the output of the session, and
- Preparation steps that need to happen between activities (e.g. handing out materials or collecting completed work).

The facilitator's guide can help your event run more smoothly by clearly identifying who is responsible for what and when. Even preparing the guide is helpful, because thinking through the event in enough detail to identify time required and participant instructions for activities can identify when too much is crammed into too short an amount of time or when something crucial is missing. It can also help you make sure that you're asking the right questions at the right stage of your process.

When preparing a facilitator's guide, consider:

- **Environment:** What sort of time, place, and room design will help the participants interact with each other and focus on the topic of the event?
- **Purpose:** What is the purpose of the session? What do we want participants to learn and act on? Does the purpose relate to what participants have expressed as needs, or that we have identified as needs?
- **Feelings:** How strongly do participants feel about what they want? How are participants likely to feel when they arrive? How do you hope they feel when they leave?
- **Experiences:** Does the event have a mix of experiences/activities to facilitate and stimulate exploration and learning, address the purpose of the session, and meet the needs of participants? Are we facilitating the right sort of openings in the session for people to work together to explore and express these?

- **Changes:** Do we want participants attitudes/positions to change during this event? Do participants want to change (and if so how)? Will the event allow/encourage people to change?
- **Timing:** Have we allocated the right amount of time for the different learning experiences and activities?

HOW TO ORGANIZE STAFF AT EVENTS

Assign roles and responsibilities before your event. Be sure to meet a day or two beforehand to go over the event agenda together, make sure people feel comfortable with their role, and answer any questions. Develop a facilitator's guide and distribute to all staff who will be attending the event, so they have a clear understanding of the purpose of the event/ engagement, key issues for participants, the layout of the room, who to contact for what, and key speaking points or tips for diffusing conflict or inviting participation.

Typical staff roles include:

- **Logistics:** Arrange event logistics including facility rental, catering, signage, and advertising. Some facilities will require a key contact person to arrange keys, clean up, etc. Assigning this role to someone who is not involved in facilitation or technical aspects of the event can reduce stress for everyone involved. Often this person also staffs the registration desk at an event, signing people up for updates and handing out materials.
- **Greeters:** Welcome participants and explain the layout of the room and/or timing or format of your activity (ie., circulation of display boards or where to sit at tables, when presentations will occur, who to contact for questions). Depending on the size of your event you may require several greeters or several staff at a welcome table in addition to your greeters.
- **Agenda Planner:** Designs the event plan, acts as a neutral person to introduce technical experts, answers process-related questions, assists facilitators with timing, and adjusts event design in unforeseen circumstances. Facilitators: Coordinate and facilitate presentations, small group discussions, or other big picture activities. It is helpful to have one facilitator for every 6 to 8 people if you are organizing small group discussions. Effective facilitators are neutral third-parties who offer insights, balance participation, uncover important issues, and make sure everyone who wants to have a say is heard. This role is hard to play if facilitators are also technical experts, because the facilitator should not "take sides."
- **Technical Experts:** Present on technical details or support facilitation staff to answer specific questions related to their discipline (i.e. transportation, environment, etc.).
- **Note takers:** Sometimes facilitators can lead small group activities and take notes. However, during heated events, it can be helpful to separate the roles. Assigning someone to take notes during small group or plenary discussions is also helpful for recording the event.

TYPICAL GROUND RULES FOR MEETINGS

Before starting a meeting it is important to establish some ground rules to ensure the meeting stays on topic, respect is shown for all participants and facilitators, and time is used wisely. Ground rules can be set beforehand or developed with the group at the beginning of a session. Some common ground rules for meetings include:

- Minimize distractions. Turn off cell phones and avoid unnecessary talking.
- Actively participate and listen.
- Be respectful and considerate of others.
- Come informed, having read any pertinent background materials beforehand (depending on the type of meeting).
- Make productive comments and use a positive tone (depending on the type of meeting – this may not be suitable if the purpose of the meeting is to identify issues or problems).
- The facilitator or appointed note taker will record ideas and comments.
- Stay on topic and keep questions and comments brief so everyone has a chance to participate.
- The meeting will end on time.

KEY SKILLS FOR GOOD FACILITATION

Events are often most successful when facilitators/staff avoid getting defensive or trying to win by talking about facts! Often, participants just want someone to listen to them. After participants have expressed their concerns, they may be open to hearing a different point of view. The best you can do is invite participation in the process, let people know how to find out more information, and let them know that their thoughts are important.

Summarize & Reflect Back

- **To summarize and reflect back:** “What I think I am hearing is...”
- **To get info and issues:** paraphrase comment “It sounds to me like you’re saying...” and then ask, “Did I hear/get that right?”
- **Show active listening:** Maintain eye contact, show body language cues that you’re listening (such as nods, un-crossed arms, perhaps even talking notes), prompt for more detail with “Tell me more about that...” or “Could you explain that?”
- **For quiet people:** “Thank you for visiting our display. Do you live in the area/when did you come to area? What do you think?”

Move from positions to issues and values

- **To go deeper to get past positions to issues and values:** “Tell me why this is important to you.”
- **For dismissives (“that’s a stupid idea!”):** “We’re interested in hearing everyone’s perspective. What would you add? Why does this matter to you?”

Move from values to actions

- **To find common ground:** “I’m hearing that X values (safety, peace and quiet, sense of community, etc.) are important to you. How can I help you with your concern?”
- **To increase understanding:** “You mentioned earlier that you are interested in X. What information can I share with you about that?”
- **To reduce conflict at an initial meeting:** “The good news is we don’t have to decide this today, as we are just raising awareness and learning what matters. Did you know that we are holding open houses on X dates? At these events we will...After that, ...” (give person poster/handout with event dates and locations)
- **For those who cannot be facilitated:** “This is an important issue. Here’s my card... call me next week. I’d love to come meet with your group and talk about this issue further!”

Facilitation Training

Besides learning from experience, many professional development opportunities exist for improving facilitation skills:

- **International Association for Public Participation (IAP2):** IAP2 promotes and improves the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest in Canada and around the world. The IAP2 website lists an events calendar of training opportunities in Canada. IAP2 training focuses on process design, event design, and facilitation skills. www.iap2canada.ca/
- **International Association of Facilitators (IAF):** The IAF is a professional organization for facilitators to provide support, professional development, research, and networking. The organization offers a rigorous certification program for facilitators. www.iaf-world.org/
- **Tamarack Institute:** A non-profit organization dedicated to supporting collaborative strategies that engage citizens and institutions to solve major community issues across Canada and beyond. A good resource for guides, training workshops and webinars, case studies, and news. www.tamarackcommunity.ca/

TYPICAL EVENT CHECKLIST

With so many details to look after, it is helpful to arrange your event checklist by various themes to help you identify what you will need, where it will go, and who is in charge. The following is an example of an event checklist for a public open house (items will differ depending on the type of event and facility):

PHASE	ITEM	RESPONSIBLE (TO ORGANIZE IN ADVANCE)	RESPONSIBLE (AT THE EVENT)
Staff			
	Sufficient # of staff for the size and format of event		
	Facilitation instructions for staff		
Facility items			
	Room/facility booking		
	Catering: specify the # and type <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee/tea <input type="checkbox"/> Juice <input type="checkbox"/> Cookies/pastries <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit/vegetable tray <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
	Floor plan, tables and chairs, coordinate room setup with facility/staff		
	Presentations: consider the size/layout of the room <input type="checkbox"/> Microphone/speakers <input type="checkbox"/> Podium <input type="checkbox"/> Projector/screen <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop loaded with presentation <input type="checkbox"/> HDMI (or other) cords to attach to projector		
	Internet access, or smartphone (personal hot spot)		
	Directional signage to guide participants to the correct room		
	Camera (for event photos)		
	Transportation for materials and staff		

Registration table			
	Welcome sign		
	Sign-in sheets or click counter to keep track of the # of participants		
	Mailing list sign up sheet		
	Pens		
	Name tags for staff		
	Notice of event photography and brightly coloured stickers – a sign to let people know you will be taking photos to promote the project or event. Have people wear a sticker if they want to opt out (crop or blur their faces from any event photos)		
	Large sign/poster with the purpose of the event and information about the project		
	Information packages/handouts/agendas		
Display boards			
	Display boards mounted on foam core		
	Easels or stands to hold display boards		
	Large scale map secured to floor (for community mapping activity)		
	Materials for interactive activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pens / Markers <input type="checkbox"/> Sticky notes <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 		
Feedback form table			
	Pens		
	Instruction cards for how to provide feedback		
	Paper feedback forms		
	Drop box for completed paper forms		
	Fully charged iPads (with locks) for digital feedback		
Reference table			
	Background documents and plans marked “display only, please do not remove”		
	Reference maps		

Other items			
	Extra materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pens <input type="checkbox"/> Markers <input type="checkbox"/> Sticky notes Paper/notepads <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 		
	Useful items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Stapler <input type="checkbox"/> Binder clips <input type="checkbox"/> Extension cord <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy-duty tape (to attach any loose cords to floor) <input type="checkbox"/> Power bar <input type="checkbox"/> Chargers for laptops, phones, iPads <input type="checkbox"/> Contact list for staff and facility personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ 		
	Various kinds of paint-safe tape, sticky tack, etc. (check the facility agreement's rules for attaching materials to walls)		

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

As with communication tools, it is important to provide a range of opportunities for participation, including both in-person and online options. By providing online opportunities for participation, you can reach a broader and more diverse range of people who may not normally attend in-person events due to a lack of time, transportation, childcare, or other barriers.

Like any participation tool, there are a wide range of options for digital engagement that vary in complexity and cost. It is important to match tools to your community's needs but also your staff capacity and resources.

Some best practices for digital engagement include:

- **Keep it simple.** It's better to have a simple but up-to-date website that provides relevant content, than to have an advanced tool that requires too much time and effort to moderate or keep up to date and which could be forgotten for lack of resources. Identify the staff responsible for maintaining your digital tools and information hubs.
- **Test drive new tools.** When creating or selecting a digital tool, ask yourself "could your grandma use it?" If you are purchasing a digital tool, be sure to set up a test project and have a number of different people test it out (on the user end and the back end if your staff need to manage/maintain it).
- **Make it user friendly.** Digital users are more likely to give up on participation if the tool or platform is not intuitive and easy to use. For example, if they need to sign up or create a log-in before participating they are much less likely to follow through and share their input.
- **Know your target audiences.** Who are you trying to reach and what platforms do they use? Remember, there are an ever-evolving number of new tools and social media platforms and preferences can change quickly, especially for younger audiences.
- **Make it accessible.** Ensure your website and digital tools are mobile-friendly for smart phones and tablets – test them to make sure! You may also consider accessibility for people who have vision and/or hearing impairments, or consider translation into multiple languages. Keep in mind that not everyone is online so if you are creating online surveys, be sure to provide paper copies too.
- **Set clear expectations.** If you incorporate interactive components, such as commenting forums, be sure to have a "Terms of Use" policy.
- **Comply with privacy regulations.** Your digital tools need to comply with anti-spam (CASL) and privacy legislation (FOIP and PIPA).

Consider public vs. private input

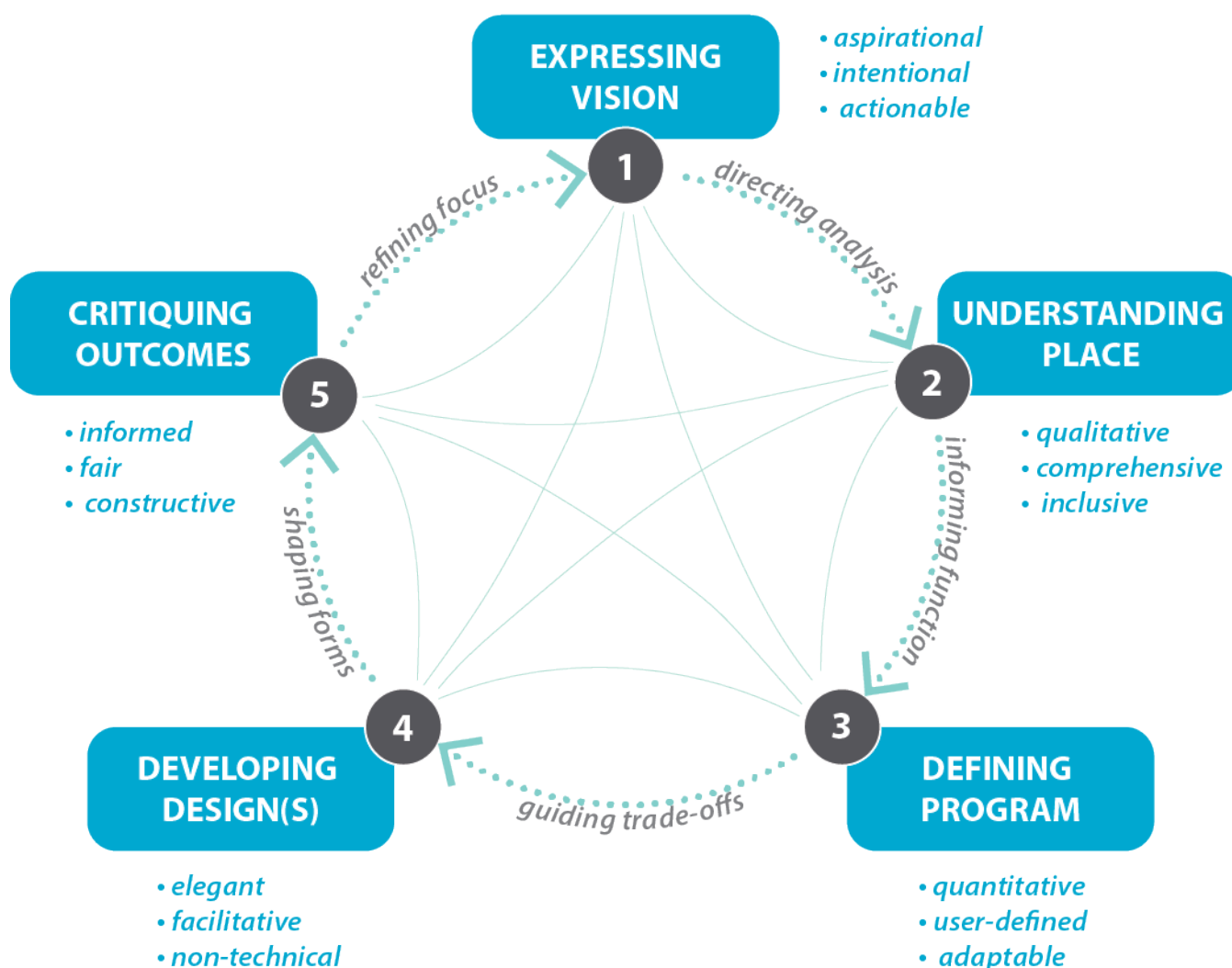
Some digital tools, like online forums, allow for publicly viewable comments while other tools, like an online survey, allow for private input. Public comments allow for more of an interactive conversation between participants but may require more staff support and moderation. Private comments allow participants to share their views more candidly but do not allow for this exchange of views and learning between participants. Different tools work better for different circumstances, depending on the complexity and sensitivity of your project and the community. Consider the implications for your project.

ENGAGEMENT-LED URBAN DESIGN AND PLACE-MAKING

Effectively engaging the public and stakeholder groups through the various stages of urban design and place-making projects leads to all kinds of improved results.

By working closely with local stakeholders and the public you can identify community needs and preferences, deepen understanding of values and priorities, and tap into shared history. Ultimately, this builds shared interest and ownership in project outcomes. The end result is inevitably a more context-sensitive, better-fitting, well-supported and ultimately successful plan.

The following diagram breaks down the engagement-led design process into 5 main elements and suggests potential tools for each. For more information on these tools, see Chapter 4.



Modus Planning, Design & Engagement

1. EXPRESSING VISION | aspirational – intentional – actionable

Engaging stakeholders in the expression of a clear, concise and compelling vision at the onset of a project builds shared interest and ownership in project outcomes. Visioning materials also provide an effective tool to measure alignment of program/design development and helps to direct analysis and frame constructive criticism as part of the iterative design process.

Key tools include:

- **Bumper Stickers & Manifestos:** ‘Bumper stickers’ are a great way to distill the essence of a project’s intentions (in just a few words or even a sentence). These descriptions are short and evocative, giving a taste of what the project aspires to be. Manifestos can be more action-oriented and detailed declaration of intentions for a project, with clearly listed aims and even action items.
- **Photos of Favourite Places and “Love Letters”:** By describing the qualities of their favourite places in the world, participants intuitively communicate their wishes for the future. Love letters requires participants to write a letter to the master plan or future site in question. In doing so, participants distill their aspirations by directly addressing the future place as the object of their affection.
- **A “Day in the Life”:** This approach builds a more comprehensive vision for the site by considering its shifting uses and experiences over the course of a day and throughout the seasons (e.g. at 6am birds chirp at daybreak, at 7am coffee shops open as business people make their way to work.)

2. UNDERSTANDING PLACE | qualitative – comprehensive – inclusive

Engaging stakeholders in a deep and meaningful discussion of “place” – including the exploration of bio-physical, cultural, socio-economic, political and regulatory constraints and opportunities – provides a tremendous opportunity to incorporate local knowledge, values and priorities. It also reveals the logic and rigour of the design process and informs the subsequent stage of program development.

Key tools include:

- **Community mapping + Floor maps:** Local knowledge is key when designing with and for a community. Floor maps are large aerial photos of a site printed for community members to make place-specific comments. This allows design professionals to get direct access to informal uses of the space they otherwise would not know took place, as well as challenges to address and wishes for improvements.
- **Stakeholder interviews + ‘Streeters’:** Interviews are a straightforward way of getting information on who community members are, and how they use the places they inhabit. Stakeholders are usually high-influence and/or close stakeholders who have thought about the subject and have ideas to offer. ‘Streeters’, or street interviews, are an impromptu method of getting a more diverse selection of experiences and opinions. Both of these tools can help you “go to them” for input.
- **Experiential Surveys (Photo/Video Surveys and Walking Tours):** The community records their favourite local places and narrate – in their own words

– the qualities that make these places unique and valued in their community. Facilitators can help identify the intangible traits that make them special. Walking tours provide invaluable experiential understanding of a site and its context to designers and community members as part of a shared experience. Designers share expertise in analysing space, while stakeholders share insider understanding of use and cultural significance.

3. DEFINING PROGRAM | quantitative – user-defined – adaptable

Engaging stakeholders in the development of “program,” including the full range of uses, events, activities contemplated – and, as importantly, the associated spaces they may require – allows stakeholders the freedom to articulate needs and dream about imagined functions and dimensions of a space (asking “what? how much? how big?” without being distracted by imagined form) while further framing design development and identifying potential trade-offs to be considered.

Key tools include:

- **World Cafés and Roundtables:** World cafés and roundtables bring diverse groups of people together to have discussions in small facilitated groups. Attendees move between and mix at different tables as rounds of conversation progress, commenting on a predetermined set of topics and building on preceding ideas. At the culmination of the exercise, facilitators can summarize the emerging themes with input often recorded visually on paper “tablecloths.”
- **Vignette Sketching:** At a table with a sketch artist and facilitator, community members describe themselves in their idealized spaces. This highly visual technique emphasizes the experiential nature of design, encouraging participants to describe ideal scenarios for the future use of the space. Through the real-time sketching and annotation exercise, ideas emerge and grow.
- **Wish lists and Graffiti Walls:** As the names suggest, these methods ask community members to list the types of events and activities they want the site to hold. This is a simple and straightforward brainstorming method to get an initial idea of what a community most wants to see and do in their neighbourhood, particularly where groups are eager to provide input without much facilitation. Graffiti walls typically ask an open ended question and allow participants to “tag” responses (e.g. “If I could change one thing in my neighbourhood, I would _____”)

4. DEVELOPING DESIGN(S) | elegant – facilitative – non-technical

Engaging stakeholders in a collaborative design process allows stakeholders to actively participate in the translation of vision into tangible form. Skilled designers act principally as facilitators of the emerging shared vision, developing and iterating design solutions as defined within the context of site constraints and opportunities, priorities and identified program.

Key tools include:

- **Charrette:** Charrettes bring community members into the room as designs are

developed, allowing them to sit alongside subject matter experts and designers. At key points throughout design development, participants help brainstorm and contribute ideas.

- **Co-design Workshops:** Shifting from the realm of engagement to empowerment, the co-design workshops utilize graphic facilitators and designers to develop designs as directed by participants.
- **Ideas Jam:** In an 'Ideas Jam', community members are fully empowered to directly contribute ideas/designs. Specific methods are tailored to fit the needs/abilities of individual stakeholder groups. One example includes a tournament-style event, where design refinement continues in iterative rounds until a winning design is selected.

5. CRITIQUING OUTCOMES | informed – fair – constructive

Engaging stakeholders in thoughtful consideration of design options is of paramount importance: without rigorous critique – as measured against stated vision, values and best practices – design development stagnates, local communities lack the tools to articulate their support and/or preference, and so-called solutions are less understood and untested as to implementability. Discussion ultimately directs the refinement and improvement of all aspects of the design process.

Key tools include:

- **Open Houses and Online Platforms:** To ensure feedback is received from as many community members as possible, open houses and online platforms (e.g. Okotoks Citizen budget) can be used as a wide-reaching and cost-effective method to share information and solicit feedback.
- **Citizen and/or Expert Lectures and Juries:** Framing presentations, discussions and design critique by subject matter experts are essential to the process of iterative design development and refinement. Presentations and/or public lectures help inform a shared knowledge base to apply within the design exercise. Citizen and expert juries can also provide an objective third party review of emerging directions and improve the likelihood of “asking the right questions” about whether a design meets its intended goals, reflects the community's desires, and results in a workable solution.
- **Active Discourse, Research and Best Practices:** Supporting an ongoing local dialogue regarding the built environment helps elevate the discourse and to align values as critical issues arise. Bringing relevant examples of successful past projects to the discussion, as well as listening to concerns and ideas, can educate stakeholders and helps ensure future project success and innovations based on lessons learned and current best practices.

STEP 3: DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING BACK

COLLECTING GOOD DATA

It is essential to ask good questions in order to get good data that is meaningful for participants to provide and useful for decision-makers. In *Chapter 3, Part 1, Step 4*, you designed powerful questions for each phase of the project. These overarching questions will help you to craft more specific questions for your participation activities. It is also important to consider quantitative questions to gather additional data that is structured and statistical. By asking a variety of qualitative and quantitative questions you can gather a range of broad and deep input.

Always begin with the end in mind. You should have a clear understanding of what type of data you are looking for and how it will be used before designing questions or activities.

Qualitative Questions: Open-ended questions provoke discussion and gather thoughtful qualitative responses. However, they must be focused enough to elicit meaningful input; if too vague, participants may be confused and their answers may be off topic or not useful for your purposes. Qualitative data is helpful to gain understanding about participants' opinions and values. These questions provide rich insight but are time-intensive for participants to answer and for staff to analyze so should be used strategically and sparingly.

Some common qualitative input questions/formats for public participation include:

- **Long open-ended questions:** Focused, powerful questions that ask participants to share their ideas or opinions in detail. These questions can also be used to dive deeper into participant choices (ie., why do you feel this way?)
- **Short open-ended questions:** Focused questions that ask participants to share their ideas in a word or short phrase (ie., fill in the blank – in 2040, the Town of Okotoks will be a place where _____).
- **Other questions:** Open-ended options to supplement multiple-choice questions. These allow participants the freedom to add their own response if the pre-selected list does not meet their needs.
- **Visual responses:** Participants may be asked to draw or work with a graphic facilitator to visualize their answer.

Quantitative Questions: Close-ended quantitative questions force participants to choose among pre-selected options. This numerical data is very helpful to support general conclusions from public and stakeholder feedback and can be combined with qualitative questions to provide additional insight (for example, multiple-choice questions with an open-ended 'other' option or follow up 'why do you feel this way' question). Quantitative questions are quicker and easier to analyze and can be summarized simply and visually with charts or graphs.

Some common quantitative question types for public participation include:

- **Ranking Questions:** Requires participants to select certain options over other options. Useful for assessing priorities (i.e., place these options in order of how important they are to you).
- **Rating Questions or Likert Scales:** Requires participants to rate an option on a scale to measure how strongly they feel about it. Useful for assessing support or opinions on more fully developed options (i.e., on a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you support this draft policy?) but less useful for assessing priorities as people may say everything is important.
- **Multiple Choice Questions:** Requires participants to choose between two or more unique options and can ask for single or multiple answers. For this type of question, it is often important to consider adding an 'other' category.
 - **Single Answer:** Useful for gathering basic information or demographics (i.e., which age group do you fall in?) or assessing trade-offs (i.e., which of the following options do you prefer?).
 - **Multiple Answers:** Useful for assessing priorities (i.e., select your top 3 options)
 - **Unlimited Answers:** Useful for assessing a broader list of options (i.e., which of the following communication tools do you use regularly? Select all that apply).

These types of questions can be used in many different formats and activities. For additional details, please see Chapter 4.

MAINTAINING DATA INTEGRITY

Data integrity and reporting is critical to ensure a transparent and accountable public participation process. For changes to bylaws or significant community documents such as a Municipal Development Plan, a minimum amount of public consultation and reporting is required by law (see Municipal Government Act for details). For other projects, a data and reporting strategy should be developed at the beginning of a public participation process to identify what data is needed, how it will be obtained, and how it will be displayed or reported on.

Data integrity should consider:

- **How to integrate input from multiple channels** (i.e. open house feedback forms, online survey, letters to Council, and social media comments) as part of efforts to reach a broad and diverse group of stakeholders and or community members.
- **Whether to collect personal information** (i.e. postal code and name) to avoid anonymous and duplicate entries.
- **How to efficiently analyze data.** Questions should be clear so that responses are on-topic and focused. Where possible avoid asking open-ended questions, except where it important to understand why participants feel a certain way.
- **How to protect participants' privacy.** Feedback options should clearly state the purpose and use of collected data and a FOIP statement must be included.

ANALYZING INPUT

Gathering quality input is only half of the engagement challenge. Taking that input and providing the proper level of analysis in order to generate options, ideas and directions is the other half.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data is much easier to analyze than qualitative data as it is already in numerical format and easy to compare and analyze. However, the following principles can make your quantitative analysis easier to communicate.

Choose the best display for reporting your data:

- **Use tables** for basic or complex tallies (i.e. number of responses received online, at workshops, and letters sent to municipal staff).
- **Use pie charts** to compare simple parts of a whole (i.e. % of respondents who agree vs. disagree with a specific goal). If there are more than two or three options, consider using a bar chart as it is easier to read/interpret at a quick glance than a pie chart with a complicated legend.
- **Use bar charts or stacked bar charts** to compare things between different groups (i.e. % of support for a number of priorities).
- **Use line graphs** to display changes over time (i.e. number of participants who attended events throughout the engagement process)

Use the same scale for comparison:

- If you are comparing two different questions and one question received more responses than the other, show these using percentage rather than absolute numbers so that you can appropriately assess the level of agreement or disagreement based on the sample size. Otherwise, use numbers with the same Y-axis scale.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is time and effort intensive but can provide rich insight and identify key patterns and themes in participant feedback. It is important to have a plan to know how you will analyze the data and how it will be presented. It is also essential to provide sufficient time and staff resources to analyze the data.

Generally, qualitative analysis seeks to cluster and summarize similar ideas to make it easier to understand a large amount of data. This may be presented in a simple paragraph summary or broken down into key themes and quantified to provide an idea of how many people felt a certain way. In the second case, each comment is read and 'coded' with a particular theme. The following provides an overview of this more complex type of qualitative analysis.

Qualitative questions on surveys should be limited as people may not take the time to answer them. These questions may discourage potential respondents.

The following provide some general tips for qualitative analysis:

- Use a single person who is knowledgeable about the project. Because content analysis relies on subjective interpretation, it works best when completed by a single person (or small team working very closely together). This person should be familiar with the project as comments may only indirectly refer to a concept or use acronyms or other specifics.
- Consider input from multiple channels – consider how you will integrate different input (e.g., open house feedback forms, online survey, letters to Council, social media comments, workshop notes).
- Decide the scope of analysis. How specific are your codes going to be? How many concepts are you going to code for? Will you use major themes and sub-themes?
- Decide how you will distinguish among concepts & create coding rules. Clearly define your concepts, so your readers can understand how you decided to code input. This will also help you to be consistent while you are coding. Understanding how one code is different from another is important, so create definitions, rules, or list of words for each code. For example, you may code input like “open fields,” “rural lifestyle,” “peace and quiet,” “rural character,” and “farming heritage” under a single concept and definition like “Preserve rural character: our heritage as a rural, farming community is important to maintain and protect.”
- Decide whether you are doing relational analysis. Do you want to record whether comments were positive or negative about a concept? Do you want to assess the results by another variable like participant age or geography?
- Decide what to do with “irrelevant” information. Some input will be off-topic, will comment on your process, or will ask you a question. It’s important to understand how people feel about your engagement process so code this information separately, so you can address these issues.
- Be prepared to update your codes and re-code data. Note that your list of concepts could change through discussions or review of input. When you change your list of concepts or how a concept is defined, you have to re-code all comments to ensure good results.

The following provide some step-by-step instructions for coding and analyzing qualitative analysis:

1. Use rows in Excel to record each individual comment, such as a sticky note or a single survey question response. Use columns in Excel for your codes, because you can sort by columns. Sample column headings may include:
 - Response number – be sure to use an identification number for each comment so you can identify its origin if needed.
 - Comment Content – this is the actual comment. It is okay to fix spelling mistakes, spell out acronyms.
 - Comment Meta – identify whether the comment is a process or content comment.
 - Comment Relation – You may wish to list whether comments are positive or negative.

- Comment Geography or Demography – You may wish to use geography, demographics, or another variable to find variations in responses.
 - Concept 1 – Concept that most closely applies to the comment
 - Concept 2 – Optional concept if comment applies to more than one concept
 - Concept 3 – Optional concept if comment applies to more than two concepts
2. Quickly scan all the input before you start coding and identify a list of 10-20 key themes you will use to code the data. Create lists of rules and definitions to clearly identify what is and isn't included in each code.
 3. Go back to the beginning of your data and read through each comment, assigning codes as you go. Some comments will address multiple themes and need to be coded multiple times. Adjust the definitions for your codes as you go to be sure they clearly reflect all the input that has been assigned that code.
 4. Analyze the results. Count the number of times each code has been mentioned. If you are doing relational analysis, decide how you want to report on the results (ie., do results vary based on demographic?)

SUMMARIZING & REPORTING BACK

Reporting Back

While specific reporting requirements will vary depending on the type of project, a public participation report should generally:

- **Describe what you did:** Provide a brief description of activities that occurred before, during, and after the participation process and how the process contributed to the overall project
- **Identify who participated:** Identify the number of people who participated in different activities and any other relevant information (i.e., demographics, key stakeholder groups, etc.)
- **Summarize what you heard:** Provide a summary of key ideas and priorities.
- **Explain next steps:** Explain how input will be used to inform subsequent stages and/or decisions. Identify next steps in the project (i.e., future participation opportunities or timelines for decisions or outcomes).

As with all project communications, public participation summaries must be simple and easy to understand. This will also make it easier for staff, technical experts, and decision makers to use the input.

- Leave lots of white space and organize your information logically using step-by-step instructions, clear headings, and numbered or bulleted lists.
- Use large, easy to read fonts with simple language. Avoid technical jargon.
- Make it highly visual. Consider integrating engagement photos, charts, graphs, key quotes or word clouds.

- Use intuitive colour schemes for charts and graphs. For example, use red for oppose, yellow for neutral and green for support. This way people can understand the results in a quick glance.
- Provide a high level executive summary or ‘snapshot’ for those who just want a quick update, and further details in the report for those who want to read more
- Consider including verbatim responses in an Appendix for greater transparency (but be sure to redact any personal information)
- Avoid general statements like “most people said...” and use your conceptual analysis to explain (for example, “75% of people said...” or “52 comments said...”)
- Consider participation. Should the input of certain groups (such as landowners or residents who live within a specific neighbourhood) carry more weight and be reported separately or highlighted?
- Acknowledge limitations – clearly explain the methodology used to analyze data and acknowledge the limitations of your input (i.e., if it was voluntary then it doesn’t necessarily represent the views of the whole community)
- Thank people for participating. Let people know their time was well spent and explain how their input was used and considered and what decisions have been made. Explain why certain ideas were or were not reflected in the final decision.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Analysis and reporting is an essential aspect of engagement. It is important that the community see the results of their participation, so that they feel:

- Their time was well-spent and that their ideas were appreciated,
- Participation was worthwhile, because their input affected the decision, and
- Their local government is listening and being transparent about participation and decision-making processes.

Reporting out is also essential for:

- Maintaining momentum of the project and interest and excitement throughout the process;
- Responding to any specific questions or requests for information that arose from processes or feedback;
- Documenting any lessons learned for future processes;
- Reporting out to staff, Council, and related departments regarding the process and feedback received;
- Reporting back to those who participated to thank them for their participation, let them know how their input was used and considered, and what decisions have been made (via email, newsletter, public report, or social media updates);
- Explaining why certain ideas were or were not reflected in the final decision, particularly if these ideas were the majority preference; and,
- Updating participants on the progress and status of the project, including opportunities for future input.

STEP 4: EVALUATING

Good engagement is not a formula. Each project and process will be unique, with its own challenges and successes. By evaluating the process and engagement outcomes, the Town can document lessons learned that can be applied to future projects. This extra step ensures we continually refine and improve our engagement efforts and approach.

SHORT & LONG-TERM EVALUATION

In *Chapter 3, Part 2, Step 7*, you identified criteria and indicators to evaluate both the process and outcomes of your public participation strategy.

- Some of these process measures may have been used throughout your project to refine the process to best suit your stakeholders' needs and interests (for example, event satisfaction surveys to improve venue or facilitation for the next round of participation).
- Some process and outcome measures will be used upon completion of the project or public participation process to assess how successful the process was in meeting its objectives and/or short-term observable changes of conditions or behaviours caused by the process.
- Impact measures can be used later on to assess the long-term impacts of the project. To ensure these criteria are measured, a long-term evaluation plan should be created with criteria, indicators, data sources, roles and responsibilities, and timing along with a clear description of the purpose of the evaluation, how the data will be used, and by whom.

Target Audiences

A range of people may be involved in shaping the evaluation and providing or collecting data, including but not limited to:

- Project staff:
 - Project manager
 - Support staff
 - Communications
- Leadership / decision makers
- Engagement participants

The people involved in the evaluation are also the intended audiences for the results. They should be clearly identified along with a description of how they will use the data.

BECOMING A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Evaluating your processes is an important part of improving public participation activities and coordination throughout your organization. By comparing your own participation processes over time, you can see which tools, types of questions, event days, venues, times of year, and other factors engaged the most and most diverse participants. By comparing your findings with your colleagues on other projects or in other departments, you can learn more quickly which techniques will be most effective.

The following tips can help you in creating a “learning organization” for public participation:

- Organize a cross-departmental public participation team that meets monthly to share resources, successes, tools, and techniques. Formalizing a process to share across departments will contribute to “organizational learning” and improve engagement across the organization.
- Always evaluate your process and share your lessons learned with the cross-departmental team.
- Develop a central tool library. Rather than each department purchasing easels, projectors, flipchart paper, markers, hot dots, foamcore, and other engagement materials, pool resources between departments and share them. To coordinate sharing, you may need to develop a “check out” calendar, so staff can reserve tools ahead of time and notify each other that the materials will be in use.
- Develop a shared costing tool. There’s no point reinventing the wheel every time you begin an engagement process. As you plan interactive open houses and workshops, record the materials cost, staff requirements, and facilitation requirements into a shared costing tool, so your colleagues can reference it when they plan similar events.

The background is a solid purple color. Overlaid on this is a large, abstract white line drawing. The drawing consists of several interconnected, irregular shapes that resemble stylized letters or symbols. A prominent shape in the upper left looks like a 'V' or 'M' with a curved tail. Another shape in the center-right resembles a 'K' or 'X' with a long diagonal stroke. The lines are thick and have a hand-drawn, slightly irregular quality.

Chapter 4

Tools & Techniques

Chapter 4 contains brief descriptions of a selection of possible tools. Many more tools and formats exist and Okotoks staff should feel free to identify, use and add others over time.

This section is organized into:

1. Communicating Tools
2. Group Input Tools
3. Individual Input Tools

PART 1: COMMUNICATING TOOLS

Communicating tools help you spread the word and promote your event, without soliciting feedback. This chapter describes some commonly-used tools.

ADVERTISING & MEDIA

Advertising communicates to a broad public audience. Advertising is useful for getting the word out about engagement events and is required by the Municipal Government Act for significant decisions. Some common advertising tools include:

- **Newspaper / Magazine ads:** Best practice is to advertise 2 to 3 weeks before your event. Think about all of the different free, weekly, and daily local magazines and newspapers in your study area, and which are most appropriate for advertising your event. Find out well in advance when the ad needs to be submitted and in how many issues the ad will appear. Sometimes print ads will come with free online advertising.
- **Newspaper insert:** Some organizations run annual or quarterly special inserts to update the community. If you plan far enough in advance, you may be able to announce your project launch or key milestones in such an insert.
- **Radio ads:** Radio advertising is most effective in the days leading up to an event, including the same day. If resources are scarce, consider whether there are any radio shows or DJs who may give your project some air time to help promote upcoming events.
- **Facebook ads:** With Facebook ads, you can set a maximum budget and choose the types of people you would like to reach with your ad (by age, location, and gender). Often it is more cost-effective to pay for clicks on your ad, rather than the number of people who see your ad.
- **Google ad words**
- **Calgary TV ads:** A pricey option, but could be worthwhile for a significant issue or decision and is a good opportunity to educate the public and/or show that Mayor and Council are supporting a specific issue. An important consideration with TV ads is the channel where the ad will appear and time of day, as many more affordable ads are not during prime times. Furthermore, many young people watch TV on the internet, so you may not be reaching as many people. Youtube ads are becoming more popular, especially if the target audience is a younger demographic.

- **Transportation-related ads (transit vehicles, transit stations, billboards):** Depending on whether people in your community drive, walk, use transit, or cycle, there may be opportunities to catch their attention while they get around town. These ads should be eye catching and have a short link to your website.
- **Addressed and Unaddressed ad-mail (postcard, newsletter, etc.):** Addressed ad-mail is sent to property owners within a particular area. But, it can leave out renters. Un-addressed ad-mail is sent to anyone within a particular area, but will not be received by people who have opted out of ad-mail.
- **Flyer drop (door to door flyers/door hangars):** Delivering flyers to each residence in a study area helps overcome the limitations of addressed and unaddressed ad-mail, but can be time-consuming for staff if the area is quite large.
- **Billboard, projection billboard:** Billboards can be used to convey small amounts of information about an event or process. Be careful not to include too much information on a billboard, as passersby may miss key pieces.
- **Earned media:** Earned media refers to media that is not directly generated by the municipality or its partners. This includes articles or opinion pieces in traditional media outlets, as well as posts on blogs and other new media outlets. Having media outlets attend events may help bolster awareness of your project with the general public.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following methods use existing community spaces to promote upcoming events and provide basic project information. These tools help raise awareness about upcoming events and reach a broad range of people within a specific area. Some common announcement tools include:

- **Community calendars and school newsletter:** Some neighbourhood or community groups host their own community calendar. School newsletters are also a great way to reach busy families.
- **Road signs:** Road signs can be a good way to remind residents a few days before or the day of your event.
- **Phone trees/robo-calling:** Community phone trees (like a human-based phone notification system for emergencies or parent-teacher associations) and robo-calling systems are a good way to remind people to attend events. Often phone calls work best when a relationship has been established with someone, otherwise an unsolicited call can sometimes be considered rude.
- **Banners/signs on/inside development sites, community centres, Municipal Centre:** Large wooden and vinyl banners on buildings, over streets, or on properties can help remind people to attend events. If you are running a process about a particular site, this is a good opportunity to place a single sign on the property and update it with event location and time information when an event is coming up.
- **Posters in community hotspots:** Where do people in this community spend time? Often coffee shops, grocery stores, post offices, recreation centres, and other community hotspots have a “community announcements” board where you can place posters and handouts about your process.

- **Inserts/ads in Community Guide:** What does your organization already print and distribute to the community? Can you advertise or put an insert into one of these guides, pamphlets, flyers, or calendars?
- **Bill stuffers:** Including announcements or inserts along with utility bills that are sent out to residents.
- **Community clubs:** Community clubs draw large groups together around a shared topic or activity. Community clubs often have mailing lists or other effective ways of reaching out to their members (ie. church bulletins)
- **Project / Community emails:** You may want to consider setting up a project email. A project email can be used to provide projects updates and advertise future engagement activities.
- **Citizen relationship management software:** Software that tracks your stakeholders, who has contacted the stakeholders, how they were contacted, and which issues matter most to them. These tools are especially useful for large, complex engagement projects.
- **Event registration software:** Keeping track of registered participants, emailing reminders, and sending follow-up can be a time-consuming process. These tools coordinate invitations and RSVPs for events.
- **Bulletin boards and shop windows:** Local businesses may have bulletin boards or windows where project updates, information, and advertising may be posted.

INFORMATION HUBS

Information hubs are fixed locations that people interested in your process can rely on for information throughout your process. Information hubs provide a central location for all project and engagement process information. They help participants to access information, pose questions, and provide feedback on their own schedule. Some common information hub tools include:

- **Website and social media:** It is important to have a web page that describes what the process is, what decision is being made, where we currently are in the process, who to contact for more information, and how to access background information. All communications material should direct people back to this website, so you only have one place to keep up-to-date. Social media is best used to announce website updates. May include artist renderings based on input.
- **Town events calendars:** The Town's Community Calendar (print) and online events calendar should be kept up-to-date to keep the public informed and give sufficient notice about upcoming activities.
- **Community storefront/field office/information centre:** Often used for site redevelopment projects, physical retail spaces in popular areas can help raise awareness about your project and gather input from people who might not otherwise participate in your process. This works most effectively near a grocery store.

PRINTED & ONLINE INFORMATION AND HANDOUTS

The following information briefs raise awareness about a process or upcoming event and informs/reminds people of key dates, topics, and where to find your project website. These handouts are useful for advertising public engagement events and sharing basic project information with the community. Some common handout formats include:

- **Flyer:** Short, highly-visual handout that is no more than 1 page.
- **Fact Sheet, FAQ:** 1 to 2-page handout with frequently asked questions and answers. Great addition for a website.
- **Brochure:** A multi-page, colour, and highly-visual handout.
- **Postcard / Door hanger:** A 1 or 2-sided handout on cardstock
- **Giveaway (magnet, button, stickers, bumper stickers):** Giveaways work best when they are useful, interesting, fun, and relevant to your project.
- **Discussion guide:** A fun and visually-engaging 1 to 3 page brief that gives background information about an issue and asks some questions for reflection.
- **Issue paper, background paper:** A more in-depth and technical review of information that provides context in order for participants to understand the project better and provide informed feedback.
- **Policy brief:** Similar to an issue paper, but focuses more on the current and potential regulatory framework than, more broadly, on issues.
- **Technical report:** Similar to an issue paper, but focuses more on technical research or analysis. These reports are helpful to have available during a process, but often it is important to share the key ideas and findings of the report in a short and graphical format for general audiences.
- **Informational video:** Project videos are an effective and digestible way of providing project updates, information, and advertising for future engagement activities. A video may be more attractive to members of the public than a written paper, brief, or report. Whiteboard videos are becoming more widely used as well as artist renderings to help visualize the input received.

EVENTS INTENDED TO INFORM / RAISE AWARENESS

Many opportunities exist to inform people about your process and the issues being explored. Some commonly used event formats for informing include:

- **Community event booth/kiosks:** Find out which community events are most popular in your study area and what is required to have a booth at those events. Community event booths are a great way to let people know about your process, sign them up to your email list, answer questions, and get some early input on the issues that matter to them the most.
- **Youth Ambassadors, Champions:** Involving youth and community leaders (or champions) early on in your process can help build important social ties in communities. You can support your local leaders with materials to distribute in their

communities, answers to common questions, and remuneration for promoting your project at local events. One effective technique is to arm champions with iPads and t-shirts and train them to help residents complete an online questionnaire at summer events.

- **Site Visit, Walking Tour, Field Trip:** If your project focuses on a specific site, it can be helpful to arrange guided tours for residents so they can get to know the area. Site tours can also be helpful for your internal, inter-departmental, or volunteer team to get to know the site and the issues.
- **Expert Panel, Guest Speakers:** An exciting guest speaker or expert panel can be a great way to kick off your process and raise awareness about the complex issues in your process. Speakers can also help residents understand technical/background information so they can have a more informed participation.
- **Pecha Kucha (presentation with 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each):** Good format to help guest speakers deliver an engaging and succinct talk.
- **TEDx Event (independently organized TED-like event to share and present innovative ideas):** A more in-depth, but still engaging, format for guest speakers to talk. This method works best when the event is already organized, and your issue is just one of many that is being talked about at the event.
- **Webinar:** An online presentation to scores or hundreds of people. Allows for speakers located from many places to present and for participants to ask questions. Testing the software and presentations before you go live is very important.
- **“Livecasting” meetings (streaming video online, live-Tweeting, Google+ livestream):** Showing a live video (or text description) of your event or meeting on the internet. Works best when the event is just information sharing, as this method is not very participatory.
- **Public meetings, open houses:** A formal, large-group meeting with members of the public. Public meetings allow the municipality to share information, make presentations, and discuss projects and issues with the public, while allowing them to share their opinions publicly.
- **Public hearings:** A formal meeting held to fulfil a legal requirement for particular processes (as outlined in the Municipal Government Act). Members of the public may ask questions and give comments at specific times during a public hearing.
- **Symposia:** A formal meeting or conference to discuss a particular subject. Symposia often include several speakers; experts in their field with differing opinions. Symposia often include multiple sessions, allowing attendees to explore different perspectives on and aspects of the particular subject.
- **Roadshow / Pop-up tents:** Roadshows and pop-up tents take engagement activities to the public. These can include the same sort of engagement activities as other events, but can also be more playful in nature.
- **Presentations to media or organized groups:** This is an efficient way of disseminating information to a broader audience. Sharing information with media or organized groups through presentations ensures that information is spread more widely to networks connected to those groups.

PART 2:

GROUP INVITE TOOLS & INDIVIDUAL INPUT TOOLS

The following contains brief descriptions of a variety of tools.

Use the worksheets in *Chapter 3* to figure out which level of public participation is most suitable for your process. When you have done this planning work, selecting tools is easy.

Group input tools

1. Fill in the Blank Visioning Wall
2. Hopes & Fears
3. Superheroes
4. Day in the Life
5. Dotmocracy / Likert Scales
6. Sustain-a-bucks
7. Community Mapping
8. Global Issues, Local Challenges
9. Online Discussion Forum
10. Community Circles / Kitchen
Table Conversations
11. Design Charrette
12. Fishbowl Process
13. Focus Groups
14. Idea Jam
15. Interview Matrix
16. Now, Wow, How
17. Open Space Meetings
18. Walking Tours
19. World Cafe
20. Advisory Groups/Committees
21. Deliberative Forum
22. Resident Feedback Panel
23. World's Easiest Facilitation
24. Graphic Facilitation

Individual input tools

25. Media Contest
26. SMS Fill in the Blank Campaign
27. Favourite Places Collage
28. Mailbox to the Future
29. Walk in my Shoes
30. Manifestos, Love Letters
31. Person on the Street Interviews
32. Questionnaire
33. Event Feedback Forms
34. Key Informant Interviews
35. Community Asset Mapping
36. Self-directed Workbooks

The above tools are organized on a continuum, ranked from 1 to 6 depending on their level of depth, time required, and cost. Tools ranked with a 1 on the continuum are more simple in terms of there depth, time required, and/or cost. These tools get progressively more complex in these terms from 1 to 6.



Requirements:

- Large poster or flip chart paper
- Sticky notes/post-its

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for digital engagement, particularly as a Twitter and SMS (text message) campaign, a Tumblr, or on a Facebook wall.

1. Fill In The Blank Visioning Wall

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1

What

A fill in the blank visioning wall allows participants to dream big and describe their ideal future for the community.

Why

- Participants create a vision without worrying about details.
- Participants learn what various people want in the future.
- Key themes emerge to form a community vision.
- Opens space for some creative thinking.

How

1. On a large board, write: "In the future I would like my community to be _____".
2. Ask the participants to use sticky notes to share their desires for the future.

Variation for kids:

Provide paper and crayons/markers and ask them to draw a picture of what they'd like to see in their community or what they would like it to look like in the future. This variation is also great to use with adults if you would like to unleash some creative thinking.

Variation for a specific building or site:

Provide a suitable space for comments (i.e. poster board, chalkboard, stickers) and write: "In the future I would like this to be a _____." This variation is a great way to stimulate informal community dialogue and receive input from people walking past the site who might not normally attend public events or provide feedback.

Where/When

This activity can be used at public open houses or stakeholder workshops and provides a good starting point to identify key priorities. This activity also travels well, and can be used in an information centre or a community events booth.

2. Hopes & Fears

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1

What

Hopes and fears is a quick exercise that allows participants to express their concerns and excitement about the upcoming project at the very beginning of an event. Participants write down their top hopes and fears about the future to share with others.

Why

- Provides a sense of openness and listening right from the start.
- Reduces tension.
- Participants learn from each other.
- Key themes emerge early on.
- Builds trust.

How

1. On a large board, write: "Please reflect for a moment on the [insert project title here] as a whole". Have one section devoted to people's "hopes" and another for their "fears."
2. Ask the participants to use sticky notes to share 1 hope and 1 fear and place on the board. Depending on group size, participants can write down more than one hope and fear. This will give a broader view of the issues.
3. Let the participants know that the comments will be used to make the project as responsive to their input as possible.

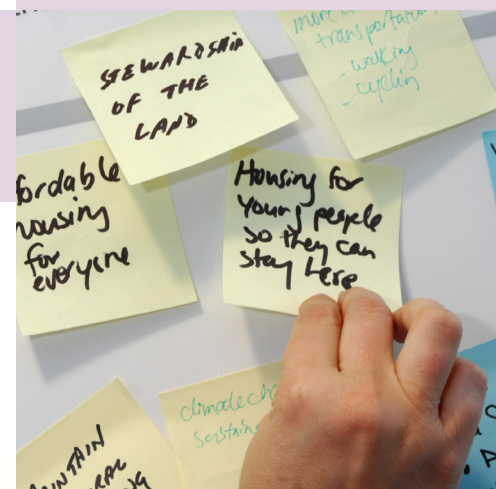
Variations:

What do you LOVE and what would you CHANGE about ____?

What is the BEST/WORST thing that could happen?

Where/When

This activity can be used at initial public open houses or stakeholder workshops and provides a good starting point to identify opportunities and issues at the beginning of the process. This activity works best when this is the first activity participants are likely to complete. This will allow participants to get their rant (if any) off their chest right at the start allowing for the discussion to move forward in a more positive manner.



Requirements:

- Large poster or flip chart paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes/post-its

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for digital engagement, but a "fill in the blank visioning wall" would be a better alternative.



3. Superheroes

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1

Requirements:

- Photo backdrop
- Camera, tripod, and photo printer (with paper!)
- Costume elements
- “I am a superhero because...” form
- Photo/video consent form
- Pens

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for including on your project website.

What

A fun exercise where participants dress up like a superhero, pose for a picture, and then write down why they are a superhero in saving energy, recycling, taking the bus, or another sustainable/desirable behaviour.

Why

- Celebrates residents commitments to a cause you are promoting.
- Key component of Community-Based Social Marketing, which creates a visible critical mass of people behaving in a positive way.
- Identifies assets and positive actions in the community.
- Fun and delivers a good news story.
- Great visuals for your website, newsletters, etc.

How

1. Prepare a “photo booth” with a single-colour back drop, a camera with tripod, masks/capes/wigs and other superhero attire, a photo printer, and a postcard-sized handout that says “I am a superhero because...” with space for the person’s name.
2. When participants are lining up, ask them to think about why they are superheroes and fill out the handout.
3. Let participants dress up as they get closer to the photo booth.
4. Ask participants to strike a superhero pose and take a picture.
5. Print the picture, stick it to the handout, and paste it up on a photo wall. You may also want to print an extra photo for the person to take home.

Low-tech Variation:

While it is nice to print a photo, this format still works if you share just the “I am a superhero because...” on the photo wall. Just be sure to number the written submissions with the photos, so you can use the photos on your website.

High-tech Variation:

Consider taking a video instead!

Where/When

This activity can be used at ideas fairs and interactive workshops. This activity also travels well, and can be used in an information centre or a community events booth.

4. Day in the Life

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Day in the Life is a simple exercise that asks participants to comment on how they use their neighbourhood in their daily routines. It provides insights into neighbourhood use, what participants value, their lifestyles, etc. The result is a giant timeline with details on how the area is used at various times of the day.

Considerations:

- Participants may feel the exercise is too personal. It is important to clarify the intention (i.e. to better understand the neighbourhood).
- The timeline can take a while to draw and should be done ahead of time.
- Exercise can be tedious and drag on: keep on time, don't draw in every hour, and have 1-2 volunteers write the responses on the banner while you facilitate.

Why

- Participants feel they are being listened to.
- All participants have something to contribute.
- Powerful visualization tool.
- Insight into local use and knowledge of the area.

How

1. On a large banner draw a timeline that highlights key times such as 6am, 9am, noon, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm, and midnight (may want to comment on midnight-6am as well).
2. The facilitator begins by announcing the time of day and asking participants to describe what they are typically doing/experiencing at that time. The facilitator continues through the day and records people's ideas on the giant timeline.

Where/When

This activity can be used at ideas fair or an interactive workshop. It is best used after an icebreaker with all participants present, though could be modified to function as a station at an ideas fair. The activity can be used with 20 to 200 people – just add more note takers as participation increases (and feel free to ask the audience for volunteers!).



Requirements:

- Large banner with pre-drawn timeline or times of day
- Markers

Digital Suitability:



This activity would require the creation of a custom tool to be done well online.



5. Dotmocracy / Likert Scales

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Dotmocracy and Likert Scale exercises are similar – they both involve asking participants to “vote” for a preferred option using stickers. A Likert Scale asks participants to respond according to a 5-point scale - strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. Dotmocracy is more flexible, because participants can just “vote” on statements or images they support, for example.

Why

- Quick method to “vote” or find top issues or levels of support.
- Shows respondents how other people feel.
- Dotmocracy captures overall or average top priorities for all participants, not the top priorities for each participant.
- Likert Scales show areas of strong agreement/disagreement.

How

1. Select statements or images that you would like feedback on and decide whether you are designing an ideas fair activity (interactive display boards) or an interactive workshop.
2. For the workshop, pick one statement for every 20 minutes. Print the statement in large type on paper approximately 36” wide, and draw a 5-point scale below the statement. Ask participants to read the statement and take a moment to think about it. Then, have participants place a sticker on the scale that best matches their response. Finally, ask participants to write down why they voted this way on a sticky note, taking turns to share their response and add their comments near their vote on the scale. It’s OK if participants want to “move” their original vote.
3. For the interactive display boards, you can pick more statements/images but try to choose fewer than 20 and no more than 5 per board. On each board, list the statements/images with voting instructions. You can ask participants to vote for their top 3 statements/images, or simply record if they agree or disagree. Or, you can include Likert (5-point) Scales.
4. An easy way to show the results is to show a total of how many people responded, and the percentage of them that agree.

Where/When

This activity works best at ideas fairs and interactive workshops. It is best suited for testing policy options or choosing a preferred direction.

Requirements:

- Display board or group activity sheet with voting areas and instructions
- Voting stickers
- Sticky notes
- Pens

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for including on an online survey or questionnaire. Online tools can more easily capture participants’ priorities in order of preference.

6. Sustain-a-bucks

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Sustain-a-bucks is a voting tool where participants spend their sustainability dollars or “sustain-a-bucks” according to their priorities. Participants are given a limited number of sustain-a-bucks (e.g. poker chips), and drop them in labeled buckets to vote on where they want to see planning efforts focused. Participants indicate their top priorities and come to understand that not everything can be “fixed” all at once.

Considerations:

- No description of why participants voted the way they did. Provide sticky notes for participants to write down comments or questions.
- Tool captures overall or average top priorities for all participants, not the top priorities for each participant.
- Can be renamed if topic is not related to sustainability.
- Informed staff member should stand by to clarify any questions.
- Not statistically valid; more of a learning tool and discussion starter.

Why

- Easy to learn and contribute.
- No heavy data collection or processing.
- Educational tool to generate further thinking.

How

1. Develop a display board that explains the exercise and the role of the participant (i.e. “Imagine - you are in charge of community spending. You have only 10 Sustain-a-Bucks to spend on your community, but many different needs and priorities. How would you spend your funding? Use your Sustain-a-Bucks to decide.”).
2. Give each participant 10 marbles (“bucks”) to drop into the jars which represent various topics relating to infrastructure, social, economic, environmental, and livability. Generally, no more than 10 topics should be chosen (i.e. jars labeled renewable energy, affordable housing, alternative transportation, parks, etc.).

Variation:

Pose the question in survey/workbook form where participants have X dollars to allocate to community needs. List the topics and have them write in how much \$ they would spend on each topic.

Where/When

This activity is most suitable at ideas fairs, community events, or other broad public feedback events.



Requirements:

- Banner/display boards
- Table
- 10 clear jars with labels
- Marbles/Poker chips

Note: do not use marbles if you are using glass containers as they can break!

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for on online questionnaire or survey. Many “participatory budgeting” tools exist that can be used.



7. Community Mapping

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 3

What

Community mapping asks participants to record important places directly on a map. This lets people participate without having to have strong language, spelling or other literacy skills.

Considerations:

- Limited by printers.
- Impact of exercise may not be initially seen by participants.

Why

- Visual tool that is easily accessible and engaging/tactile.
- Taps directly into local knowledge.
- Easily communicates local knowledge to participants and staff.

How

1. Get a high-resolution, high quality base map (e.g. Google Maps, GIS, Bing Maps). If none are available, use a hand drawn map.
2. Post maps on display boards or tables for groups to work on .
3. Ask people to describe the area by recording their views and opinions on post-it notes and sticking them on the map.
4. Typical questions asked include, “What do you love about where you live/work/play?” or “What needs improvement in this area?” You can also ask more specific questions (and perhaps use icon-based stickers to capture them), such as, “Which are the best cycle routes? Where’s the best view in town? Where would you go to see wildlife? Which intersections feel unsafe?”
5. The facilitator’s role is important, because s/he asks participants why they selected this location and helps to record notes.
6. After the event, maps can be scanned, digitized, photographed and/or replicated into an electronic format, GIS, or Google Maps.

Variation:

Walkable Map is a variation in which a large map is printed and placed in the floor in order for residents to be able to “walk” their community (generally 10x17 feet with at least a scale of 1:7000).

Where/When

This activity can be used at an ideas fair or interactive workshop. It provides a good starting point to identify opportunities and issues at the beginning of the process.

Requirements:

- Markers / pens
- Post-it notes / sticky dots
- Tables
- Display boards
- Tape, glue, scissors
- Base maps

Digital Suitability:



This activity can be done online with specialized tools, like MetroQuest or Engagement HQ.

8. Global Issues, Local Challenges

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 3

What

This activity creates an educational discussion about global trends and how they impact regional and local communities. Gathering information on how local communities are experiencing and responding to global and local trends is an important part of a long-range plan or strategy. The activity works by inviting people to pick a topic that interests them. A facilitator leads participants through a structured brainstorming of top issues, community assets, and potential actions. The activity ends with participants voting for the top two issues, assets, and actions.

Considerations:

- Process may not always feel applicable to community.
- Requires skilled moderator for inclusion of all participants.
- A worksheet should be provided to each participant before joining.
- Each step may require more clarification or direction.
- Best to outline entire process at outset of session.

How

1. Pick 3 to 5 “global trends” that apply to your area, and create a station for each one - allow participants to choose their topic stations.
2. Each station will need a facilitator to record notes, encourage participation, and gently guide the discussion when it stalls.
3. Each station should have 3 areas to capture ideas – issues, assets, and actions. The facilitator will move through these in order.
4. For issues the facilitator asks, “What are the most important [global trend] issues that are affecting our community?” The facilitator asks participants to think silently, jot down some notes, and then write their top 3 ideas down, each on a separate sticky note. Participants share the ideas with the facilitator, who clusters them on the issues board. The facilitator then leads a short discussion on what this means.
5. For assets the facilitator asks, “What works in our community to combat [global trend]?” Or, “What do we do well already despite the [global trend]?” If no one has any ideas, the facilitator could ask for ideas about what the community needs more of. The facilitator then repeats the same actions as the last activity.
6. For actions the facilitator asks, “What actions can we take to use our assets to address the issues?” The same instructions are given as previously for collecting ideas.
7. Once these steps are completed, the facilitator asks participants to “vote” for the top 2 ideas (most important) on each sheet using dots.
8. Once completed, discuss the chosen items and capture any additional thoughts.



Requirements:

- 3 comment sheets: issues, assets, actions
- 3 coloured markers (red, green, blue)
- Dot-stickers (red, green, blue)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for digital engagement as it is based on group discussion.

Why

- Builds cohesion.
- Provides more in depth information.
- Tool is scalable - only limited by room size.

Where/When

This activity is best suited for an interactive workshop in the first phase of the project to educate, connect local to global, draw on local knowledge and inform why a new plan is needed.



9. Online Discussion Forum

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 4

Requirements:

- 1-2 staff to monitor/moderate discussions

Digital Suitability:



This activity is intended for online use.

What

An online platform where residents and other participants can discuss and pose questions relating to a topic with others or with the host organization.

Why

- Ability to reach a wide audience and gather a diversity of perspectives
- Participants have the flexibility of participating when and where they want to
- Enhance transparency and accountability to the public

How

1. Establish the question(s) to be answered and desired outcomes
2. Determine target audience(s)
3. Develop questions to be answered
4. Moderate discussion and seed conversations with questions as needed
5. Analyze discussions for major themes

Where/When

This method can be used to reach a wide audience at any point of the engagement process. This can be used to raise awareness for a project, generate ideas, instigate conversation between stakeholders and provide a channel of communication between stakeholders and the host organization.

10. Community Circles / Kitchen Table Conversations

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

This discussion tool enables participants to engage in conversation in the comfort of a casual environment. In a free and open environment, participants are meant to feel welcome and comfortable, while workbooks encourage and stimulate conversation. Open houses and basic surveys may lack depth while Community Circles draw the public into an in-depth discussion on key issues.

Considerations:

- May not be appropriate for site-specific projects.
- Process can be time consuming (up to 2 hours or more).
- Planning with the end in mind will ensure the quality and direction of response is in line with your desired data.
- Make staff or volunteer team members available where appropriate to facilitate discussions.
- Offer a voucher for free dinner (for example “OCPizza nights” to discussion Official Community Plans) or some incentive (i.e., prize draw) to help people host these events improve participation.

Why

- Flexibility for participants
- Great for communities where attending events is challenging.
- Not everyone is comfortable sharing at large public events.
- Feedback is very informative and in-depth.
- Offers time to really dig into issues for deeper engagement.

How

1. Establish desired activity outcomes and develop background materials.
2. Assemble workbooks that contain questions and space for comments.
3. Invite participants to an event where there is a comfortable and informal atmosphere in which participants can talk openly and freely about the issues.
4. Distribute workbooks and facilitate an open conversation.
5. Gather feedback and analyze.

Where/When

Performed in casual small group settings and coordinated by community members. These conversations can be used to begin uncovering priorities, assets, and issues or to dive deeper into issues identified in earlier stages.



Requirements:

- Meeting place
- Workbooks
- Background Materials
- Pens
- Table/chairs
- Props to facilitate a comfortable atmosphere

Digital Suitability:



Group discussions are an important part of this activity, so online questionnaire or survey tools are more suitable for recording each group's input.



11. Design Charrette

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Meeting place
- Background materials
- Tables & chairs
- Design materials & supplies

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for digital engagement as it is based on group discussion.

What

Charrettes are often multi-day events that tackle difficult, design related issues. Charrettes bring community members into the room as designs are developed, allowing them to sit alongside subject matter experts and designers. At key points throughout design development, participants help brainstorm and contribute ideas. The group is divided into sub-groups or breakout groups to focus on a particular problem. These sub-groups then present their work to the full group to generate further discussion. This process may be repeated several times, with groups iterating on their previous ideas.

Considerations:

- Lots of preparation
- Large time commitment from participants
- Careful consideration of power dynamics should be considered as stakeholders and subject-matter experts mix
- Costly process

Why

- Intense, collaborative design process
- Can cover deep and complex problems
- Multiple, interdisciplinary perspectives ensure thorough and holistic solutions
- Creates a shared sense of ownership among participants and community members

Where/When

Performed in formal, large group settings and coordinated by a team of municipal staff, consultants, designers, and community members. Design charrettes allow several interdisciplinary groups to solve complex problems together after background research has been completed and materials have been produced.

Continued on the following page...

How

1. Months or weeks before the event
 - a. Create a steering committee (5-8 people with diverse interests)
 - b. Hold project kickoff meeting (1-2 hours)
 - Discuss event date, location, identify key facilitators and speakers
 - Develop agenda, outline goals and objectives of event
 - c. Invite participants
 - d. Finalize budget and estimate expenses
 - e. Logistics (facility, lodging, food, staff)
 - f. Assemble and distribute participant packages
 - May include pre-charrette survey of participants
 - g. Develop evaluation forms
2. Day of the event
 - a. Setup room and registration table well in advance
 - b. Opening remarks (introduce speakers, agenda, goals, rules)
 - c. Describe project goals, status, issues, concerns, and expectations
 - d. Group sessions
 - e. Small groups: round table discussions
 - Large groups: breakout groups
 - Reconvene and report back on each group's top ideas
 - f. Encourage participants to fill out and return evaluation forms
3. After the event
 - a. Debrief meeting to discuss outcomes and next steps
 - b. Prepare report about the results
 - c. Encourage participants to stay involved
 - d. Analyze and summarize evaluation forms



12. Fishbowl Process

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Tables & chairs
- Microphones
- Easel & flip chart, or whiteboard

Digital Suitability:



Group discussions are an important part of this activity, and so they should be conducted in-person. However, it may be possible to use digital tools to let observers comment and ask questions.

What

This is a meeting or workshop process where a formal or informal group holds a discussion and/or “does their work” in public (in the fishbowl) so that other people can see and then comment on what is being discussed.

For a formal meeting, a group of decision-makers or representatives of the public take on an issue or challenge and work through it while others observe. For a workshop, some of the attendees sit in the middle of the room while the other attendees listen to the discussion and comment only at the end of the exercise.

Benefits are that others can:

- Easily observe what is being done
- See how the topic is being analyzed
- See how the thinking evolves and changes as the discussion process
- See how disagreements are being addresses
- See how solutions are being formulated
- See how public comments and technical analyses contribute to decision making

The people outside the fishbowl can be used as a resource for good decision-making if their insights are brought into the process at a certain point. Sometimes they can see gaps in logic or facts, and often they can add new ideas and options/examples that people in the fishbowl have not thought of.

Why

This tool is often used when trust in a public process is low; it helps open up a process so the public can see the rationale develop and understand the reasons for the decision making as it progresses.

An efficient and powerful workshop process to maximize group insight and productivity around a given issue or question; benefits from diversity of viewpoints and input.

Where/When

Use when trust in a public process is low. As an audience is required for this activity, formal meetings and workshops need to be hosted in large meeting spaces.

Continued on the following page...

How

1. Get permission from the event organizers to do a fishbowl process.
2. Identify stakeholders to participate in the fishbowl process, communicate ahead of time how the process works and their role.
3. Ensure that the space is well-suited to a fishbowl process:
 - a. Chairs, tables, microphones, and other materials in the centre (the 'fishbowl').
 - b. Encircle the fishbowl with chairs, with aisles to permit easy access to the fishbowl.
 - c. Easels, flip charts, or a whiteboard to record key insights and other important information for the observers to see.
4. Invite participants to the fishbowl, explain how the process will work, and open with a provocative question.
5. Invite participants in the fishbowl to comment, allowing 5-10 minutes for discussion, before opening to the observers.
6. Allow for further discussion of the central problem amongst participants in the fishbowl, after which allow observers to ask a question or comment on a particular part of the discussion.
7. After a predetermined amount of time swap participants in the fishbowl with observers.
8. After the second group has had a chance to discuss the central problem, get the two groups to reflect on each other's discussions.
9. Collect feedback from participants about key insights.

How (decision-maker alternative)

10. Get permission from participating decision-makers to do a fishbowl process.
11. Facilitate a meeting or workshop with decision-makers in the fishbowl.
12. Advertise for experts and stakeholders to join as observers, communicate ahead of time how the process works and their role.
13. Ensure that the space is well-suited to a fishbowl process:
 - a. Chairs, tables, microphones, and other materials in the centre.
 - b. Encircle the centre with chairs for audience members, with aisles to permit easy access to the centre.
 - c. Easels, flip charts, or a whiteboard to record key insights and other important information for the audience to see.
14. Conduct the meeting or workshop, periodically allowing observers to ask a question or comment on a particular part of the discussion.
15. Collect feedback from observers about key insights.



13. Focus Group

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Quiet meeting place
- Table/chairs
- Props to facilitate a comfortable atmosphere

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.

What

A small-group facilitated discussion used to gauge public opinion on a given topic or issue. Focus groups involve a carefully selected group of individuals who either have a specific knowledge base and interest in a topic, or randomly selected residents who are seen as representative of the general public. =

Use to explore attitudes in depth at the start of a project and/or to help shape project understandings going forward. Can also be used to provide a safe and timely opportunity for input from otherwise under-represented individuals. Often used to supplement other public participation techniques.

Why

- Feedback is very informative and in-depth.
- Allows for open and honest sharing
- Not everyone is comfortable sharing at large public events.
- Offers time to really focus on specific issues for deeper engagement

How

1. Prepare a set of questions to ask participants. These questions should be aligned with the overall goals of engagement
2. Set up the meeting space to be welcoming and comfortable
3. For the focus groups, begin with short icebreaker/introductions and set ground rules for discussion (ie., actively listen to each other's responses, allow others to finish their thoughts before jumping in)
4. Facilitate discussion, ensuring all participants have equal opportunity to share and provide input
5. Debrief key findings and learnings from the conversations with participants

Where/When

This activity can be used to with specific stakeholder groups or with diverse stakeholders. Held in small groups, these facilitated conversations can be to explore issues, gauge stakeholder opinions and generate ideas that may not be readily apparent.

14. Idea Jam

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

In an 'Ideas Jam', community members are fully empowered to directly contribute ideas/designs. Specific methods are tailored to fit the needs/abilities of individual stakeholder groups. One example includes a tournament-style event, where design refinement continues in iterative rounds until a winning design is selected.

Why

- Similar to charrette, but gives the participant more power
- Creative and tailored events for each process

How

1. Present the problem.
2. Have participants pitch ideas to get started from.
3. Have participants form smaller breakout groups.
 - a. Split into smaller teams based on initial ideas.
 - b. Come up with innovative ideas, visuals, maps, diagrams, and lists.
4. Have participants present their ideas back to the main group.

Where/When

A fast, fun, creative alternative to a design charrette. Lighter in tone, use an idea jam when you don't have the resources or time to do a full charrette.



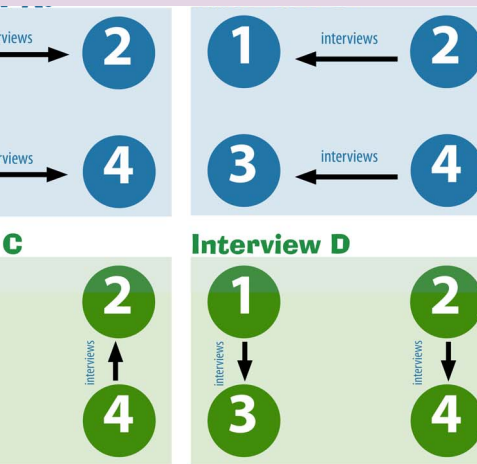
Requirements:

- Meeting place
- Background materials
- Tables & chairs
- Design materials & supplies

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for digital engagement as it is based on group discussion.



15. Interview Matrix

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

Interview matrix is a small group dialogue format that allows for deep discussion and can bring a group to consensus, without everyone making mini-speeches.

Considerations:

- Requires a number of people divisible by four (i.e., 16 or 20 people).
- Time intensive - process takes 3-4 hours minimum

Why

- Creates a sense of openness and teamwork.
- Makes good use of people's time.
- Generates insights and focus on key questions quickly.

How:

1. Work with an organizing committee for your workshop or retreat, and clarify the overarching theme and purpose for the event first.
2. Generate 4 critical questions that fall under that theme and will generate interest and investment from your participants
3. Number off the attendees in groups of four and assign people within each group as a #1, #2, #3, or #4. Tell them which question they are now responsible for.
4. Give everyone a preformatted reporter's notebook/sheet and tell them to write down their question at the top of their sheet.
5. Tell them they will use the short interviews to ask each of the other three people in their group that question and will write down point form notes of their answers on their sheet.
6. In the sequence of 6 short interviews we are about to start, they will also answer each of the other three questions once.
7. Clarify the steps, and that they are an interviewer recording people's initial answers to the question; they are to take notes, to ask for detail, and are not to argue.
8. Run the 6 interviews one after another, for 4 mins each, telling everyone "now the 1s ask the 2s, and the 3s ask the 4s."
9. When the 6 interviews are done, get all the #1s at one table, all the 2's at another, etc.
10. Have each of the 4 tables review and discuss their notes, adding their own ideas, and generating 1-2 flip chart sheets summarizing the best answers to the assigned question.
11. Have a report back in plenary by each table.

Where/When

Interview matrix can be used during any meeting to gather feedback and encourage dialogue.

Requirements:

- Interview matrix instructions
- Interview handout
- Pens
- Flip chart and markers
- Timer

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.

16. Now, Wow, How

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

This exercise encourages groups to think about present assets within a given area, set goals for the future, and identify means of achieving those goals. The result leads to a strategic conversation for the group.

Small groups of 5-10 people are given an overview of the exercise, how it works, and what the desired outcomes are. Each group is given a large sheet with 3 concentric rings labeled Now, Wow and How. Participants discuss the table topic, answering the following questions in sequence: where are we now? where do we want to be? and how do we get there?

Considerations:

- Discussion circles will largely be self-facilitated, but assigned 'floaters' will be on hand to help.
- Activity needs an hour to be done well, but can be done in 45 minutes. To save time, you can provide pre-written ideas that participants can decide to use and/or improve on.

Why

- Positively oriented.
- Constructive and action-oriented discussion.
- Encourages people to imagine possible futures.

How

1. What works well NOW? (10 min).
 - a. Reflect, then write 3 sticky notes per person.
 - b. Each person adds their sticky notes and explains to the group.
 - c. Host clusters, names, checks and places in the NOW ring.
2. What would "WOW" look like? (10 min). Repeat step 1 for the WOW ring, focus on "stretch goals."
3. We get there HOW?(10 min). Repeat step 1 for the HOW ring.
4. Group discussion about what this means (10 min).
 - a. Ask participants to "vote" with dot stickers their top 3 HOW actions.

Where/When

This activity is most suitable for small group workshops and is a good exercise to identify issues and opportunities at the beginning of a process, or to identify actions from broad directions later on in a process.



Requirements:

- Tables and chairs (for 5-10)
- Large paper with 3 concentric rings labeled Now, How and Wow
- Sticky notes
- Pens
- Dot-stickers

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, because group discussion is so important. **However, the Now, Wow, How questions can be asked in an online survey.**



17. Open Space Meetings

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Chairs
- Paper & flip charts
- Pens & markers
- Tape

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.

What

Self-directed meetings formatted to enable participants to create and design their own agenda (e.g. after a flood disaster). They decide how they want to participate and what they want to discuss. Open Space provides people with a setting that allows them to do what they need to do to have their situation acknowledged and to self-determine their needs and how to satisfy them.

Considerations:

- Though this document proposes a structure, keep in mind that open space meetings suffer if there is too much control.

Why

- Uncover emerging issues and opportunities
- Build trust and understanding
- Gain input and perspective on any issue from all stakeholders
- Give participants an understanding of what matters to all participants

How

1. Establish guidelines for you meeting:
 - a. Whoever comes are the right people.
 - b. Whenever it starts is the right time.
 - c. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
 - d. When it's over, it's over.
 - e. Most importantly, The Law of Two Feet:
 - f. If you find yourself in a situation where you are neither learning nor contributing go to a more productive place.
2. Start in a large group.
3. Allow participants and organizers to propose breakout conversations,
 - a. Write the name of each session on a piece of paper and place it in front of the group.
4. Participants choose a conversation to be a part of.
 - a. Remember the Law of Two Feet.
 - b. Don't facilitate/direct the conversation, resulting tangents create the opportunity for emerging issues and opportunities.
 - c. Conversations may end early or run over time, and that's okay.
5. Debrief on what participants learnt.

Where/When

This technique can support people to move through outrage and disempowerment to action and self-determination, such as deciding what support they need following a disaster or what supplies they need most. Use to allow participants to express their concerns/needs; to address issues/concerns of a large group; to address an urgent need with many facets requiring quick action.

18. Walking Tours

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

The community records their favourite local places and narrate – in their own words – the qualities that make these places unique and valued in their community. Facilitators can help identify the intangible traits that make them special. Walking tours provide invaluable experiential understanding of a site and its context to designers and community members as part of a shared experience. Designers share expertise in analysing space, while stakeholders share insider understanding of use and cultural significance.

Considerations:

- If participants have any mobility challenges ensure that walking tour locations are accessible.
- As the tour will likely take place outside, ensure that weather and time of day are appropriate. Consider these for before, during, and after the tour.

Why

- Spatializes ideas and conversations about a specific topic.

How

1. Visit the site of your tour ahead of time to familiarize yourself with how long the walk will take, where might you stop for discussion, and whether or not it's accessible.
2. Prepare background materials relevant to the tour location.
 - a. Maps, photos, historic information, space for observations/notes, etc.
 - b. Consider:
 - what you know and want to share with participants;
 - what you don't know and want to learn;
 - what you care about and wish others cared about; and
 - what you love about a place, what would make it better.
3. Have participants register for your walking tour.
4. Meet at a predetermined location and distribute materials.
5. Do the walking tour.
 - a. End at a location that allows the conversation to keep going, a cafe or pub.
6. Debrief and collect materials.

Where/When

Walking tours are great tools when there is a strong historic and/or spatial component to the topic that you're engaging on.



Requirements:

- Background materials

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.



19. World Café

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Tables and chairs
- Craft materials, markers
- Paper tablecloths (to doodle/write on)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.

Why

- Small, comfortable groups.
- Power in collaboration and openness of format.
- Access to many participants, only limited by room size.
- Patterns can be identified, collective knowledge grows, and possibilities for action emerge.

Where/When

This activity is best suited to small group workshops and can be used to dive deeper into issues that are identified in earlier stages of the process.

What

World Café is a simple way to host conversations about questions that matter. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important.

Considerations:

- Requires skilled moderator to stay on task.
- Important to create a comfortable and welcoming Café environment.
- Make sure key ideas are recorded visually.
- Let people know in a gentle way when it's time to move on.
- When people feel comfortable to be themselves, they do their most creative thinking, speaking, and listening.
- May explore a single question, or several questions may be developed.
- These conversations are often as much about discovering and exploring powerful questions as they are about finding solutions.

How

1. Seat 4-5 people at small cafe-style tables.
2. Set up progressive (usually three) rounds of conversation of approximately 20-30 minutes each.
3. Questions should relate to issues that genuinely matter to your life, work or community. Tables can all focus on the same or different questions.
4. Encourage both table hosts and members to write, doodle, and draw key ideas - drawing on tablecloths is encouraged.
5. Upon completing the initial round of conversation, ask one person to remain at the table as the "host" while the others serve as travelers to other tables, carrying key ideas, themes, and questions with them.
6. Ask the table host to welcome the new guests and briefly share the main ideas, themes and questions of the initial conversation. Encourage guests to link and connect ideas coming from their previous table conversations - listening carefully and building on each other's ideas.
7. By providing opportunities for people to move in several rounds of conversation, ideas, questions, and themes begin to link and connect. At the end of the second round, all of the tables will be cross-pollinated with insights from prior conversations.
8. In the third round of conversation, people can return to their home (original) tables to synthesize their discoveries, or they may continue traveling to new tables. Sometimes a new question that helps deepen the exploration is posed for the third round of conversation.
9. After several rounds of conversation, initiate a period of sharing discoveries and insights in a whole group conversation.

20. Advisory Groups / Committees

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 6

What

Advisory committees represent a broad range of stakeholders/interests and provide advice or guidance to Council.

Considerations:

- Not a decision-making body but advisory to staff.
- The goal is to reach consensus after thoughtful discussion.
- Staff will consider input when preparing options.
- Staff will provide administrative support as needed.
- Membership is unpaid, voluntary.

Why

- Represent the interests of the community/neighbourhood.
- Participate in discussions concerning the committee's mandate.
- Bring local knowledge to planning processes.
- Act as a liaison between community members and staff/Council.
- Help prioritize or implement strategies/initiatives.

How

1. Clearly define the committee's purpose and level of authority up front in the call for membership, the terms of reference, and during the process.
2. Use a consistently credible process to set them up, run them, and close.
When selecting members:
 - a. Encourage a cross-section of representation.
 - b. Establish committee through a formal Council motion.
 - c. Depending on the type of Advisory Committee, Council may specify that committee member have certain expertise.
 - d. Members should not have any conflict of interest..
 - e. Guidelines for membership can include the following: must be a resident, eligible to vote, a Canadian citizen, not employed by the municipality, over the age of 18, etc.
 - f. Member applications should ask about previous experience, applicant's reason for participating, and could ask for references or a resume.

Where/When

Advisory Committees should be set up at the beginning of the process. Generally, Advisory Committees last for the project or a 1-3 year term (with the option to renew and/or accept new members).



Requirements:

- Call for membership
- Terms of Reference
- Scheduled meeting times and locations

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for digital engagement.



21. Deliberative Forum

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 6

Requirements:

- Tables and chairs
- Background materials
- Flip charts and pens or other discussion recording materials

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for digital engagement.

What

This technique brings people together in formal but temporary groups to learn about, discuss and make choices about difficult, complex public issues. Often there is a lot of uncertainty about solutions and a high likelihood of people polarizing on the issue (e.g. population growth, development impacts, sustainability implications).

The goal is to find where there is common ground for action. Used to address contentious issues where there is no one solution; should be a moderator present (often an external third party). This tool is often used to gather public views about a particular issue for presentation in a report to policy makers.

Considerations:

- In order for deliberative forums to achieve their desired outcomes, participants should be representative of the affected population.
- If participants represent specific interest groups this should be identified and communicated during the process and in reporting out.

Why

- Enhances legitimacy of decisions.
- Can produce outcomes that are more representative of the affected population

How

1. Recruit and gather participants that accurately represent the affected population.
2. Host an initial session that clearly frames and defines the topic, while building trust between participants, as well as participants and facilitators.
3. Host facilitated discussions about the topic, asking participants to discuss specific, premeditated questions.
 - a. For larger groups, separate participants into representative or deliberately homogeneous breakout groups. Brings those groups back together once key insights or outcomes have been established to discuss as a whole.
 - b. Focus on getting to a decision.
 - c. Record key insights and findings throughout.
4. Synthesize results and report out.

Where/When

Deliberative forums can be set up at different points throughout a process to generate ideas about specific topics/problems.

22. Resident Feedback Panel

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 6

What

A randomly selected representative sample of residents that is created to give feedback to the Town about a service, priority, project or issues (e.g. Cimarron focus group). The group can get together physically or via email, phone, etc. The group is given briefing material then asked to respond approximately one week later through a survey or another input mechanism.

Why

- Use to gather input from “regular” citizens on an ongoing basis, instead of just from representatives of interest groups or those who more typically come to meetings, participate on advisory groups, etc.; to gather input without requiring people to come to meetings
- Provides deeper exploration into issues
- Builds community capacity for decision-making
- Can foster civic culture of participation
- Diversifies sources of inputs in municipal decision-making

How

1. Establish desired activity outcomes and prepare background and feedback materials
2. Determine how residents will provide feedback
3. Randomly select representative sample of resident and coordinate meet-and-greet amongst panel residents.
4. Provide background and feedback materials and allow the panel to self-organize and discuss on own for a week

Where/When

This activity can be used on an ongoing basis throughout an engagement process. The panels are a consistent source of resident input, which will not only enrich the results of engagement but also foster greater civic participation. Panels can be asked to tackle complex policy issues and decisions.



Requirements:

- Background materials
- Feedback forms

Digital Suitability:



This activity can be implemented online.



23. World's Easiest Facilitation

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1-6

What

World's Easiest is a facilitation method that gives participants time to reflect on a focus question and is designed to make space for all participants to share their ideas. It can be used for any topic and is a very flexible tool.

Considerations:

- Works best in small groups sized 4 to 8. The larger the group, the more time required for each round of discussion. It takes about 30 minutes per round with multiple small groups of 5.
- Groups can self-facilitate. However, if a group has diverse participants, a facilitator can help balance participation.
- With a multiple-round discussion, groups may finish at different times.
- Can be labour-intensive to collect, transcribe, and analyze notes.

How

1. First 10 minutes
 - a. Identify a "table host" who will keep you on time
 - b. Table host reads out the "question"
 - c. Everyone takes 2 minutes time to silently reflect on the question and brainstorm 5-10 ideas or possible answers.
 - d. Everyone takes another 2 minutes to review and pick their best 2 ideas and refine them by writing them clearly on sticky notes (1 idea per sticky please). Wait until everyone is done.
2. Middle 10 minutes
 - a. Table host asks the person to their right to read out (but not explain) their stickies
 - b. Keep going around the table. Each person reads their stickies to the group
 - c. Table host identifies any overlapping items and "clusters" those stickies with help of all attendees
 - d. Group agrees on a name for each cluster and identifies outliers
 - e. Open discussion to increase understanding, go a bit deeper
3. Next 5 minutes
 - a. Table host directs the group to start focusing on their two remaining tasks: identifying top 2 issues
 - b. Each person indicates to table host which 2 issues are most important to them
 - c. Table host keeps a tally of which clusters and issues get most votes and identifies top 2
4. Last 5 minutes
 - a. Group discussion on why these 2 are most important
 - b. Write 4 points explaining why
5. Close
 - a. Thank everyone for participating
6. Repeat for each round of discussion

Requirements:

- Sticky notes
- Markers
- Table with chairs for 4-8 people
- Hot dots for voting
- 1 sheet of flip chart paper per round with the question written across the top

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as group interaction is important.

Why

- Easy to learn and contribute.
- Balances participation between quiet and talkative members.
- Allows time for reflection

Where/When

This activity is most suitable at workshops and meetings.

24. Graphic Facilitation

Group Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2-6

What

A graphic facilitator sits with participants and draws their ideas on a chosen topic as they watch. The facilitator will ask questions and sketch to bring the participants' ideas to life. All audience outputs are different - capturing the unique essence of each event.

Considerations:

- Requires a professional graphic facilitator

Why

- A visual representation of ideas that is accessible to everyone, including children.
- Develops a unique shared vision among participants that includes everyone's ideas.
- Can be used as a visual to promote the project.
- Fun!

How

1. Participants (4-8 at a time) sit with a graphic facilitator who will ask questions on the chosen topic of the event.
2. As participants provide their answers and ideas, the graphic facilitator will draw their ideas in real time, bringing them to life on the page, while being watched by the participants. Participants are asked to build off of each other ideas, creating a visual representation of the group's ideas, hopes, and dreams.

Where/When

This activity is most suitable at the beginning of a process to develop the group's vision for the future of the project. It can also be used to visualize the design of a site-specific project or detail what buildings, streets, or open spaces could look like.



Requirements:

- Professional graphic facilitator
- Larger banner or poster
- Coloured markers/pens

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on group discussion.



25. Media Contest

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1

Requirements:

- Question/topic for the contest
- Resources to advertise the contest
- Fabulous prizes!

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for digital engagement. Ask participants to submit their entries digitally and post them on your website for the community to vote on their favourite.

What

Media-based contests can be used to inspire participants to develop creative solutions or ideas related to your project. This type of feedback can stimulate unique ideas that would otherwise not be included in your engagement process. Art, photos or videos can also be used for marketing or branding your project.

Considerations:

- Consider prizes for different age categories.
- Use local products/services for prizes.
- Display entries within the community or consider creating a community calendar from the submissions.
- Using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, and Twitter for submissions can help spread word about your project.

Why

- Engages participants in a fun and interactive way.
- Encourages creative responses.
- Suitable for all ages.

How

1. Develop your key question(s) or topic for the contest (i.e. "what do you love most about _____").
2. Decide whether it will be an art, photo, or video contest, or be open to any type of creative input.
3. Determine how the contest will be judged (i.e. staff or community voting).
4. Find some fabulous prizes.
5. Advertise within the community and raise awareness about the contest and prizes. Let people know what it is for, what is required, and when/where to submit entries.
6. Receive entries and post them in the community (physically and or digitally). Decide on the winners and award the prizes! Report out to the community on the winners and the process.

Where/When

This activity can be done at the beginning of the process to raise awareness and excitement about the project and engagement process and to identify key ideas and opportunities.

26. SMS Fill In The Blank Campaign

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 1

What

A fill in the blank campaign allows participants to dream big and describe their ideal future. Using SMS (text messages) rather than a poster or social media means that the participant cannot see how other people responded. This method works best when used in conjunction with social media and other ways of “filling in the blank.”

Why

- Allows participants to create a vision without worrying about details
- Key themes emerge to form a community vision

How

1. Identify the key question you will ask (i.e. “In the future I would like my community to be _____”.)
2. Arrange a phone number to receive feedback
3. Advertise your SMS campaign throughout the community to encourage participation

Where/When

This activity can be done at the beginning of the engagement process to identify key priorities and develop a vision for moving forward.

Requirements:

- Phone number capable of receiving a large number of text messages
- System that texts participants back to say that feedback has been received. PollEverywhere is one software option that supports this.

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for Twitter and as a Facebook Wall activity.





27. Favourite Places Collage

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

By describing the qualities of their favourite places in the world, participants intuitively communicate their wishes for the future.

Considerations:

- This exercise is particularly effective within the context of place-based planning and design discussions, where participants are challenged to describe the character, activities and/or qualities of an idealized place
- A variety of inputs for collaging are required (books, magazines, photographs and or newspapers; scissors and glue)
- Not everyone is comfortable with creative expression

Why

- Community members can be unaccustomed to participating in a creative process and the activity of “collaging” is accessible a wide range of participants
- “A picture is worth 1000 words” and the use of cut & paste imagery is a powerful tool to support stakeholder communication
- The medium of collaging often serves to stimulate deeper thinking with respect to the experiential qualities of space: discussion of compositions will often reveal more in-depth insights into stakeholder preferences.

How

1. Identify a particular “moment” in a plan or design: select a space or place to be explored as related to form, character, quality space and experience, activity, etc.
2. Introduce general spatial and/or programmatic requirements for stakeholders (as necessary) and ask participants to develop collages that reflect their own memories or experiences of that space in an idealized sense.
3. Allow participants to develop collages until the facilitator sees that enough progress is made to warrant discussion within groups.
4. Have participants present their collages and annotate drawings

Where/When

This activity can be done at any stage of the engagement process, particularly where identification of key priorities and vision are more related to issues of form and character.

Requirements:

- Tables with enough space for participants to spread out/make a mess together
- Collaging materials including markers, magazines, scissors and glue sticks
- Poster board for mounting

Digital Suitability:



This activity is not suitable for online engagement, as it is based on face-to-face interactions and “crafting”

28. Mailbox to the Future

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Mailbox to the Future is an exercise that allows participants to express, in a positive way, what they want to see happen in the future. Participants write their hope for the future on a postcard and “send” them to the future.

Considerations:

- Can write as many Postcards as a person wants to express all of their ideas.
- Get them to do this when they first walk in the door. This will allow them to start thinking about the future in a positive light.

Why

- Identify key themes, and generate materials for visioning.
- Start to build trust in the process.
- Fun way to start or end events.

How

1. Bring premade postcards that represent the issues being addressed. (For example: In 2025, _____ will have incredible _____ helping make it one of the best places to live in the country.)
2. After the participants have filled in their postcard have them put the postcards in a handmade “mailbox”.
3. Let the participants know that the comments will be used to make the project as responsive to their input as possible.

Where/When

This activity can be done at events near the beginning of the engagement process at an interactive workshop or an ideas fair to identify big ideas, key priorities, and visions for the future. This tool is a good option to use when participants may want to share privately.



Requirements:

- Postcards (can be made in house)
- “Mailbox” or container for postcards
- Pens

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for digital engagement, like a comment box on a website or a question in an online survey.



29. Walk In My Shoes

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Best used as an interactive station at an ideas fair or at a community event, the 'Walk in My Shoes' tool encourages individuals to step outside their "me" box and think about others' challenges and potential solutions. Participants select a card, read the profile of a fictional person and their challenges, and then respond to fictional person's situation.

Considerations:

- How will this information be recorded most efficiently? It can be useful to provide this station as a place of reflection, rather than a place for input. But, you can also collect answers by letting people answer a reflection question on the card.
- Cards should refer to fictional individuals, not stereotypes.

Why

- Evokes empathy and understanding.
- Fun way to teach people about the various groups or issues in their community.

How

1. Look at the demographic profile of the neighbourhood (immigrants, seniors, low income, single mother, angry NIMBY) and create cards of fictional residents describing their challenges. Think of one reflection question that can encourage someone else to place themselves in the fictional person's situation.
2. Encourage participants to select a card, read it, and think about what it would be like to be that person.
3. To collect responses, use the blank side of the card to record people's answers to the reflection question. The answers could be submitted anonymously to a box or posted on a wall. Or, use the cards to start a small group dialogue.

Where/When

This activity can be done at ideas fairs, community event booths, or as an interactive workshop activity near the beginning of the engagement process to develop an awareness and understanding of the various perspectives in the community and to identify big ideas, challenges, and opportunities.

Sample cards on following page...

Requirements:

- Cards with 8 to 12 fictional characters and a reflection question.

Idea: use an interesting shoe or boot as the container for people to draw cards from.

Digital Suitability:



With a custom tool that randomizes the fictional characters, this tool could work online.

Sample 'Walk in My Shoes' Cards:

Mark and Tanya are newlyweds and are expecting twins. They know their one-bedroom apartment will be too small, but they aren't in a position to buy a house and want to keep renting. They currently live in _____ neighbourhood and want to stay for the schools and child-friendly parks. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address their challenge?

Mrs. Franklin has been living in _____ neighbourhood for 40 years. Her adult children moved away many years ago and her husband recently passed away. She wants to stay in the neighbourhood but she is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain her home and yard. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address Mrs. Franklin's challenge?

Arjun, a mechanical engineer, recently immigrated to Canada and chose _____ for his home. He is getting settled into a job and a home before bringing over his wife and 3 children to build a life here. He is ready to purchase a new home, but finds the new areas of town unaffordable. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address Arjun's challenge?

Tommy is six years old and lives with his Mom and older brother in a nearby neighbourhood. Tommy is in a wheelchair and loves visiting _____ because it's designed to be accessible for kids like him. He is getting bigger and becoming more independent, and doesn't want to rely on his Mom to help him get around. For example, his wheelchair doesn't fit in the bathroom of their apartment, and his Mom has to lift him over the first couple of steps into the lobby of their building. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address Tommy's challenge?

Roy and Claire have lived in the neighbourhood for 20 years. Claire works part time as a nurse, and Roy runs a small electrician business. Their kids recently moved away for school, and they've decided that it's time to move into a nicer but smaller place, possibly a condo. Both volunteer in the community and want to stay, but they've found most of the homes in the area are larger houses. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address their challenge?

Marilyn recently moved to _____ from _____. She is a single professional in her early 30s who loves vibrant neighbourhoods. She is attracted to _____ neighbourhood because it is walkable, with convenient shops and services which she can get to on foot or bike. She's been looking to buy a home in the neighbourhood but has found mostly single family houses, which are too large for her. How could the future of _____ (project/site) address her challenge?

IF YOU STAY HERE IT CAN
MAKE IT BETTER, PARTIC
IN ITS FUTURE SO THAT YOU
CALL IT HOME.
YOU ARE THE MOST IM
BUILDING RIGHT HE
STAND NOW: THE TALLEST
TOWER OF KNOWLE
POSSIBILITIES. REDUC
IMPACT BUT EXTEND YO
DREAM ABOUT THE
WOULD LIKE
THEN JOIN SOMEONE AND

Requirements:

- Large format paper
- Marker

Digital Suitability:



This activity can be easily implemented online and can serve as a “barometer of support” and an alternative to an online questionnaire (typically used for evaluation purposes)

30. Manifestos

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 2

What

Manifestos are action-oriented and detailed declarations of intentions for a project, with clearly listed aims and action items. The development of manifestos can help to focus participants on desired outcomes of continued action as identified within workshops and engaged dialogues. As a signatory, participants show commitment to the ideas and inputs beyond the limited time available within the facilitated session.

Why

- Personalizes the responsibility to act within the context of discussion and dialogue around planning problem/process.
- Emphasizes the importance of collective action and implementation.

How

1. Project vision and principles are distilled into a series of personal commitments for individual participants/stakeholders. (Drafting and refinement of the manifesto can also serve as a powerful exercise with participants as principles are translated into individual action.)
2. The manifesto is formatted to signal a level of public declaration and individual stakeholders are asked to participate as featured “signatories” at the bottom of the page.
3. The manifesto is recorded/displayed as a publicly accessible artifact (e.g. project website, engagement summary, etc.).

Where/When

This activity is best done at the beginning of the engagement process as a concluding exercise within an interactive workshop / ideas fair to identify big ideas, key priorities, and visions for the future.

Manifestos can be useful in testing the evolution of design ideas and holding stakeholders accountable over the course of longer-horizon planning projects.

31. Person On The Street Interviews

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 3

What

A team of interviewers or engagement champions intercepts people on streets or in public places to obtain brief feedback and input, usually early in a process.

Why

- Engages those who may not normally attend engagement events using a “quick chat” approach.
- Obtains feedback from a broad range of participants (diversity).
- Raises public awareness about the project and engagement process.
- Builds credibility of engagement efforts.

How

1. Identify and train a team of staff, part-time workers or volunteers to interview people on the street.
2. Identify key locations with lots of foot traffic to perform the street interviews (i.e. mall, busy cross streets).
3. Make the interviewers stand out with signage or t-shirts.
4. Interviewers ask people on the street to fill out a brief survey (either on paper or iPad) to help provide feedback on your project. Be sure to let them know why their input is important and what it will be used for.
5. Hand out fridge magnets or postcards with information on the project and its future activities.

Where/When

This activity can be performed at the beginning of the engagement process to identify key issues and opportunities, or can be performed in the middle of the process to evaluate initial ideas and options.



Requirements:

- Outgoing interviewers wearing apparel (t-shirts, buttons, etc.) branded by your organization or process
- Survey questions (paper or digital format)

Digital Suitability:



This activity can be performed with digital tools such as iPads to quickly obtain and compile feedback.



32. Questionnaire

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 3

Requirements:

- Survey questions
- Medium (online survey tool or paper surveys)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is very suitable for online engagement. A wide variety of custom tools (such as FluidSurveys, SurveyMonkey) are available to help you design your survey and gather/analyze input.

What

Opt-in surveys or questionnaires are useful tools to collect data, gather opinions on options, and gauge support for the process. They can also provide a snapshot of opinions, across a wide range of demographic groups. It is important to note that they may not be statistically-valid. But, if enough people participate and demographic information is captured, the results can be weighted to be a representative sample.

Considerations:

- Be sure your questions are clear, your survey is short, and that you clearly communicate what you will do with input received. Try to aim for a survey that can be completed in 5 to 10 minutes.
- Surveys will get more uptake if you make them available in a variety of formats: online, at events, by mail, electronic kiosks, etc.
- Use questionnaires when you have definitive questions to ask - i.e. multiple choice as opposed to open ended.
- Consider the type of input you will get and how you plan to analyze it when you are selecting the questions to your survey. Keep in mind that qualitative questions (i.e. open ended comments) take longer to analyze but can provide important information. You may want to use a word limit for open-ended questions.

Note: take care to review requirements for protection of privacy when using survey tools. Ensure they store people's personal information on a Canadian server.

Why

- Surveys are useful when wanting to reach the broad population and to help decide areas to focus on in project, understand key issues, develop key themes (exploratory – early on in process).
- Elicit feedback on/review of a discreet set of information (e.g. with key group such as steering committee).
- Sparks dialogue.

Where/When

Surveys can be used at essentially any point during the engagement process. They are useful at the beginning of the process to identify initial issues and opportunities, in the middle of the process to assess options or, near the end of the process to help with final decisions and to ask for feedback on the engagement process.

Continued on following page...

How

1. Know what information you want to obtain from the survey and how you will use the information you obtain (be clear with respondents).
2. Help ensure sound question design by having whomever will be responsible for analysis review questions.
3. Avoid leading and yes/no questions. Try to ask why or how questions instead.
4. Keep surveys short (20 questions or less)
5. Need diversity of questions, e.g.: open-ended (include one-word-answer, open-ended); True/False; choose top 5; ranking; general/motherhood (e.g. to show support); questions that incorporate trade-offs/framing questions (energy efficiency vs. cost – to get at values); pairing questions (e.g. choose between police and public library).

Variations:

Can be used at meetings to make group decisions. If you have the technology, you could set up a live feedback tool, or you could simply use voting cards (agree/disagree) to allow participants to see the results immediately.

Best practices for online surveys:

- How to develop online surveys that work. Author: InsightExpress
- Survey Design (numerous articles from Qualtrics)
- Smart Survey Design - Best Practices Document. Author: SurveyMonkey Inc.
- Journal of the American Association for Public Opinion Research
- “How statistically valid are your survey results?”
- Ipsos Public Affairs “Credibility Intervals for Online Polling”
- Center for Advances in Public Engagement (CAPE) “Promising Practices in Online Engagement”



33. Event Feedback Forms

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 4

Requirements:

- Feedback form questions
- Medium (online survey tool or paper surveys)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for online engagement. Use an online survey or bring tablets or a digital kiosk to an event to provide options for people to share their ideas.

What

Feedback forms are useful tools to collect data, gather opinions on options, and gauge support for the process. They are a good way of getting a snapshot of opinions from the community or key stakeholders.

Considerations:

- Be sure your questions are clear and succinct. Clearly explain how input will be used.
- You will get more results from feedback forms if you make them available in a variety of formats: paper versions that can be filled out in-person at an event or taken home, and online versions.
- Include a couple of questions about the event itself so you can learn lessons for the future (i.e. was this facility appropriate for this event?)
- For online feedback forms on tablets/iPads at events:
- Use locks to secure the tablets to a table.
- Ensure your location has wireless internet access, or use a mobile phone to set up a personal hot spot.

Why

- Useful for receiving informed feedback on key project issues, opportunities, and options.
- Provides an opportunity for two-way communication: participants can provide input after receiving information at the event.

How

1. Know what information you want to obtain from the feedback form and how it will be used.
2. Help ensure sound question design by asking the person responsible for analysis to review questions.
3. Avoid leading and yes/no questions. Try asking how or why questions instead.
4. Keep feedback forms short – aim for it to take 5 to 10 minutes.
5. Diversify question types: open-ended (include one-word-answer, open-ended); True/False; choose top 5; ranking; general/motherhood (e.g. to show support); questions that incorporate trade-offs/framing questions (energy efficiency vs. cost – to get at values); pairing questions (e.g. choose between police and public library).

Where/When

This activity should be coordinated with engagement events to solicit input from participants about key topics or issues. Feedback forms can be used to follow up with participants at public open houses or interactive stakeholder workshops.

This activity can be done at any point throughout the engagement process to identify initial issues and opportunities, to provide feedback on specific options, and to help with final decisions or ask for feedback on the engagement process.

34. Key Informant Interviews

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 4

What:

Short focused interviews with key stakeholders to gather opinions and ideas. Listening exercise, allows venting and surfacing of challenging issues and dynamics. At the beginning of the engagement process to identify important issues and opportunities, identify which individuals and groups to involve, and to test appropriate tools and methods for the engagement process. Key informant interviews also show respect to community leaders by involving them in the process at an early stage, before even the engagement process has been decided.

Why:

- Builds trust and can create supporters early on.
- Diffuses opposition by involving them early on in the process and asking for their input on the process itself.
- Identifies key audiences to involve.
- Identifies tools and methods that will assist the process.
- Surfaces issues and perceptions to address.

How:

1. Develop an initial list of key stakeholders and local knowledge experts to interview (ensure the list is representative of various interests and perspectives). Ask different departments and staff if they have any recommendations and ask key stakeholders if they know of anyone else who should be interviewed at this initial stage.
2. Identify what you need to know from the key informants and develop a short list of interview questions. Design a 15 minute interview, but be prepared to talk for as much as an hour, depending on how much time someone can give you.
3. Contact the list of key informants, arrange interview times and locations (if not performed over the phone), and perform the interviews. One on one interviews done somewhat informally allow for insights to be shared.

Where/When:

This activity should occur at the very beginning of the process (in the planning stage!) to gain a better understanding of both context and process issues and opportunities from key stakeholders.



Requirements:

- List of key informants/stakeholders
- Interview questions

Digital Suitability:



This activity is best completed in person or on the phone, though an email or survey could be a substitute.



35. Community Asset Mapping

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

Requirements:

- Map of community/project area (either digital or paper)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is suitable for digital engagement. There are several options:

- Make iPads available for people to record information in the field.
- Digitize paper maps that were created in the field.
- Ask people to map areas online (i.e., in a survey).

What

Community asset mapping involves asking community members to identify key sites and community assets on maps.

Considerations:

- Impact of exercise may not be initially seen by participants.

Why

- A simple exercise that engages people in an active and fun way.
- Taps directly into local knowledge.
- Communicates local knowledge to participants and Town staff.

How

1. Determine how you will collect information (i.e. digital map or paper versions given to participants to carry with them as they walk through the neighbourhood).
2. Ask participants to identify key assets and important sites in the community/project area and identify these on the map. Consider using some prompts to identify certain aspects. (For example: Where do you like to cycle? Where are some nice views? Where is there wildlife? Where does a crosswalk need to be? What sports facilities do you use?).
3. Make sure all points are referenced to the map and provide a brief description.
4. For paper surveys: once you have enabled people to record their views and ideas onto their maps they can be scanned, digitized, photographed and/or replicated into an electronic format, GIS, or Google maps. If you ask people to write information on printed maps, Field Papers is a good, free online tool to use for gathering those notes electronically.

Where/When

This activity can be done at the beginning of the process to raise awareness and excitement about the project and to identify important sites and community assets.

36. Self-Directed Workbooks

Individual Input Tool - Time, Depth, Cost Level: 5

What

This tool enables participants to brainstorm and think through ideas on their own time. Without careful design, in-person events can lack enough time for reflection. Designing workbooks can provide participants with additional quiet time to reflect on and answer questions.

Considerations:

- Process is more time consuming than basic surveys and may result in fewer responses.
- Can be used to begin uncovering priorities, assets, issues, challenges, and to elicit input on goals or options.
- Can be time-consuming to analyze results.
- Consider offering prizes to encourage participation.

Why

- Educates and frames issues for participants.
- Creates flexibility for participants.
- Feedback will be very informative.
- Not everyone can attend or feel comfortable participating in public meetings – this activity allows everyone to have a voice.
- Offers more time to dig deeper into issues.

How

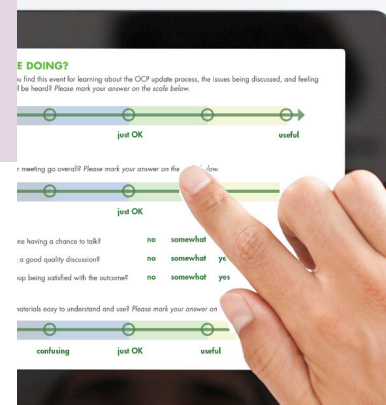
1. Establish topics/questions and develop background materials.
2. Create workbooks with questions and space for comments.
3. Distribute workbooks in person at engagement events, distribute to key stakeholders/groups, and or raise awareness about online workbooks.
4. Gather feedback.

Variation:

Use workbooks to guide group discussions (see Community Circles/Kitchen Table Conversations Tool).

Where/When

This activity can be performed at home (either on paper or online). Workbooks can be used to inform participants about important background information and to dive deeper into issues that are identified in earlier stages of the process. Allowing a month for feedback is usually sufficient.



Requirements:

- Workbook (paper and or digital versions)

Digital Suitability:



This activity is very suitable for digital engagement – the format would be like an extended online survey with more background information and images.

Appendix A: Post-Event Evaluation Template

Debrief with project team and document lessons learned.

Send evaluation to project team.

Identify potential alterations for the next event.

Item	What worked well	What could be improved
Venue <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location – easy to access (parking, transit, wheelchair accessible)?• Wayfinding – signage, easy to find room?• Room – good size, layout, furniture?• Registration desk (materials, welcome process)?• Refreshments (amount, type)?• AV equipment?		
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right number of staff?• Relevant knowledge?• Facilitation skills?		
Format & Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda – good timing and flow?• Presentation – length, content?• Facilitation – clear instructions, keeping time, managing issues?• Activity – comments on the process? Lessons learned?• Input gathered – quality feedback and ideas documented?		

<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key questions or concerns from participants? • General comments or feedback from participants? 		
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