Public Engagement Framework

CITY OF
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

UPDATE 2021

Contents

Understanding where we came from can help guide where we wish to go in the future.

We wish to acknowledge that the City of Fort Saskatchewan resides on the traditional land of Treaty 6 Territory. We acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries such as: Sakāwithiniwak/Cree, Slavey/Dene Tha', Nakawē/Saulteaux, Niitsítapi/Blackfoot, Stoney/Nakota Sioux, as well as Metis and Inuit, and now newcomers from around the world.

Fort Saskatchewan was incorporated as a Village in 1899, as a Town in 1904, and as a City on July 1, 1985. The city started experiencing population growth after the founding of Sherritt Gordon Mines in 1952. Rail access being an attractive feature, many other industries established in succeeding years. The city experienced mild growth in the early twentieth century and significant growth more recently, from a population of 16,793 in 2008 to 26,328 in 2018. Fort Saskatchewan plays a pivotal role in bridging the urban and rural environments of the region. It is a community hub for neighbouring rural areas offering commercial, employment, health, recreational, and cultural amenities, with easy access to the metropolitan core of Edmonton.

In 2021, Fort Saskatchewan is home to nearly 27,000 residents who enjoy small town living with big city amenities. Favorite attributes of the community are friendliness, connectivity, outdoor amenities including the river valley trails and parks and the many festivals and events.

This framework provides guidance and support so that internal and external public engagement processes and practices are applied consistently throughout the organization. The City follows the IAP2 guidelines for public participation. We support public engagement processes that are honest, transparent and accessible, and demonstrate that the public's input is considered in our decision making.

Appropriate and meaningful public engagement will:

- Increase public understanding of key issues and value of public engagement;
- Build trust and confidence between stakeholders;
- And create a safe environment for meaningful conversations with the citizens of Fort Saskatchewan.

The City of Fort Saskatchewan will engage with our citizens and stakeholders:

- When new programs or significant changes to a program or service are considered
- Developing policy or guiding documents that should be informed by stakeholder input

Public Engagement provides opportunities for Stakeholders and the Public to participate in transparent and inclusive municipal processes, to bring forward an additional diversity of perspectives, to support Administration in identifying challenges and develop alternatives and to assist Council in making decisions.

As the Public Engagement process is implemented, there are several important tasks to be undertaken:

1. At the beginning of the process, ensure the public understands the project or question. If it is not well known, take the time to educate on the issue prior to engagement.
2. Always ensure the public understands how their involvement will be considered in final decision.
3. Ensure participants know what has happened in the past, what is being asked of them at that particular point in time as well as what to expect for the rest of the process. Have participants evaluate public events and processes.
3. Say thank you. The public has contributed their time, knowledge, insight, and effort to the Public Engagement process. Take time to thank them for their contributions.

Communicating your Engagement Process

Your engagement process will only be successful if your chosen audience participates. Corporate Communications will design a communications plan to reach the intended audience.

1. Consult communications early in the planning process.
2. Identify your stakeholders, and key milestones for engagement activities.
3. Identify your budget for communications tactics.

TYPES OF DECISIONS

Public engagement is integrally linked with decision-making, and approaches to engagement must reflect the type of decision that is being made. As defined in the Public Engagement Policy, most decisions can be classified as directive, consultative or collaborative. Decisions are classed as citizen-led in cases where decision-making authority and control is given to the public.

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONS

DIRECTIVE DECISIONS → CONSULTATIVE DECISIONS → COLLABORATIE DECISIONS → CITIZEN-LED DECISIONS

Directive Decisions are those made by the City and are shared with others to inform them the decision has been made. Examples of this type of decision include:

- There is an urgent need for an emergency response (e.g. flood response).

- A person in authority is acting within their authority (e.g. police or fire carrying out their duties).

- The decisions are routine and are accepted as part of the City's normal operations (e.g. snow removal after a heavy snowfall).

- The decisions are dictated by law (e.g. improvements to water treatment plant).

- The decisions have substantial effect only on those who have already agreed to be affected through some form of contract (e.g. employment, volunteerism, accepting elected office).

In these cases, the City is acting within its authority and is expected to implement the decision efficiently.

Consultative Decisions are made by the City but involve input from the community and have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Public notification and input are required by law.

- The decision is a known concern of other parties, or is likely to have a significant impact on other parties (e.g. a proposed casino).

- The decision affects society's moral or emotional expectations (e.g. expansion of a recreation centre).

- The decision affects the lifestyle or routine habits of citizens (e.g. road closure).

- People perceive there are risks associated with the decision (e.g. supportive housing).

- Council or administration requests public input prior to making the decision (e.g. public buildings or open space management).

Collaborative Decisions are those made by the City in partnership with members of the community, other municipalities, communities, organizations or individuals to deliver services or to respond to long-term challenges. In these collaborative situations, the City agrees to share the decision process with those at the table. Usually, those at the table must consult with their constituencies as part of the process. Collaborative processes can create greater buy-in from those at the table. Collaborative processes have been used in recreational facility development and intermunicipal agreements.

Citizen-led decisions are made when the City empowers citizens, communities or subsets of the public to assume full responsibility for decision-making. The City may act as a technical resource but does not actively participate in the decision-making process, and agrees to respect and execute the resulting decision. A binding plebiscite is an example of citizen empowerment and citizen-led decision-making.

CONTINUUM OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned on page 3, the type of decision to be made has implications for the engagement approach. The degree to which the public is involved in decision-making processes reflects a continuum that includes the five levels of engagement.

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
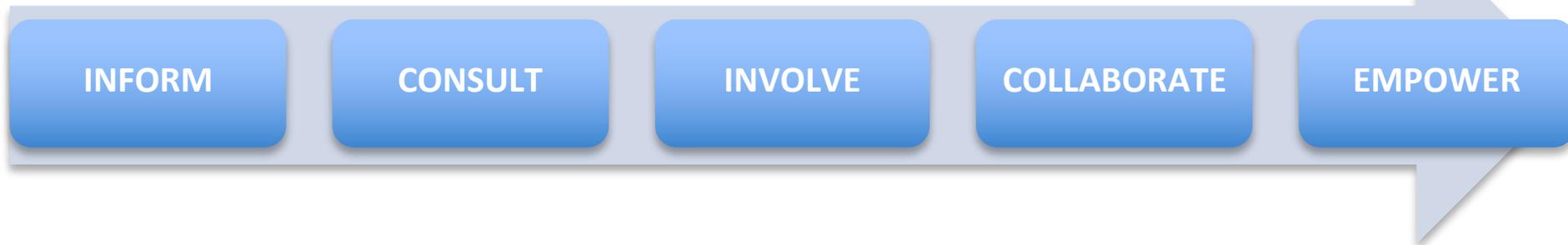
Inform

The public is provided with balanced and objective information about a project or activity in order to help them understand the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.

- This level is characterized by one-way communication;
- involves distributing information aimed at raising awareness and understanding;
- public is least likely to influence decision-making.

Consult

Public feedback on decisions/options is sought.

- There is two-way communication;
- information shared with the public to raise awareness and understanding of the project or decision;
- opportunities for feedback provided;
- the City and the public have the opportunity to listen to and learn, and share plans, views, issues and expectations.

Involve

The City works directly with the public to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered.

- Two-way communication increases;
- public has more influence on decision-making;
- feedback from the public is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.

Collaborate

The City partners with the public and there is joint planning and shared decision-making.

- Public participates in the analysis of issues;
- public contributes to the development of alternatives;
- and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.

Empower

The City empowers citizens to initiate and make final decisions.

- Citizens take ownership of the process;
- citizens are accountable for the outcomes of the decisions;
- the City accepts and implements decisions;
- citizens act independently;
- and the City may provide technical and/or financial support.

LEVELS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Before designing a public engagement program it is important to determine the desired level of public engagement. This is impacted by the purpose of engagement and the type of decision to be made.

AS THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT INCREASES, THE COMMITMENT REQUIRED FROM THE PUBLIC INCREASES, AS DOES THE TIME AND RESOURCES REQUIRED.

➔ **INCREASING LEVELS OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT** ➔

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
LEVEL	Sharing information	Learning about others' views	Obtaining feedback	Sharing decision-making	Delegating decision-making
PURPOSE	To present information about issues that may affect people's lives	To provide information and receive feedback or comments	To involve the public in developing solutions	To involve the public in developing solutions	To give final decision-making to the public

➔ **INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING** ➔

TYPES OF DECISIONS	DIRECTIVE DECISIONS	CONSULTATIVE DECISIONS		COLLABORATIVE DECISIONS	CITIZEN-LED DECISIONS

Modified from the International Association of Public Participation

Public Engagement Tools and Resources

Tools

This section includes key tools to help City councillors and staff:

- Determine the level of readiness for engagement
- Determine the appropriate level of engagement
- Plan and implement engagement programs and processes
- Evaluate engagement programs and processes

LEVEL OF READINESS CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to help the engagement planning and implementation team determine their level of readiness to engage the public. Review and respond to the statements as a group. The more "yes" answers equate to a greater likelihood that the engagement process will be meaningful, effective and successful. The checklist can also help the group identify areas where more work is needed before beginning an engagement process (i.e. statements marked "no" or "somewhat").

ENGAGEMENT READINESS CHECKLIST	No	Somewhat	Yes
The issue and/or question triggering the engagement process has been clearly defined.			
The questions to be asked or the decision sought from the public has been identified.			
The decision has not been made already.			
The public is identifiable, accessible and willing to participate.			
There is an internal commitment to meaningful public engagement.			
There is a willingness to respond to public input.			
There is sufficient time to conduct a meaningful engagement process.			
There are sufficient internal resources (e.g. human, financial) to conduct a meaningful engagement process.			
A project lead has been identified.			
The engagement process has been coordinated with other City processes.			
The potential benefits of conducting a public engagement process have been identified.			
The risks of conducting a public engagement process have been analyzed.			
An engagement process plan has been developed.			
The engagement process aligns with the City's guiding principles for public engagement and communications.			

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

The results of this checklist will provide a general sense of the level of public engagement appropriate for the project or issue. Complete the checklist with all members of the project team and then discuss the results to help develop a common understanding of the engagement program. Rank the level of agreement of each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, and put a checkmark in the appropriate column for each statement. Complete the calculations at the bottom of the checklist.

LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	1	2	3	4	5
SCOPE					
The size and/or scope of the project or issue are significant.					
The number of people affected by the issue or project is significant.					
The people affected by the project are located in a variety of areas.					
The project or issue affects a range of publics and/or stakeholder groups.					
COMPLEXITY					
The project or issue is unique and challenging.					
The project involves a variety of stages and/or components.					
A significant number of people or groups have strong and/or opposing opinions about the issue or project.					
PROFILE					
The project or issue has high visibility.					
CONCERN					
There are aspects of the project or issue that have previously generated concern in the community.					
There are concerns about cost, aesthetics and nuisance factors.					
There are concerns about effects on health, safety and the environment.					
There are concerns about taxpayer expenditures or taxes in general.					
The nature or focus of the project or issue is controversial.					
IMPACT					
The project or issue will have a direct impact on lifestyles or habits.					
The issue significantly affects the rights and entitlements of community members.					
There will be an impact on property values.					
The project or issue is likely to affect quality of life for some citizens.					
Step 1 - Count the number of checkmarks in each column					
Step 2 - Multiply number of checkmarks (Step 1) by weight for each column (X1…X5)	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
Step 3 – Record results from Step 2 in blue boxes					
Step 4 – Add the total weighting for each column (blue boxes)					
Step 5 - Divide total weighting sum by 18					
AVERAGE SCORE					

Cross-reference the average score from the checklist with the Continuum of Public Engagement (page 4) to identify the appropriate level of public engagement for the project. Because each level has a different obligation and outcome, the final public engagement strategy may involve more than one level of engagement.

CONTINUUM OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Inform Score: 1 to 1.9	Consult Score: 2 to 2.9	Involve Score: 2 to 3.9	Collaborate Score: 4 to 5
One-way communication to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Two-way communication where information is shared and opportunities for public feedback are provided. Requires a response from the public, but limited opportunity for public dialogue.	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues, aspirations and concerns are consistently understood. The public has more influence on decision-making and public feedback is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.	Partner with the public in a process that involves joint planning and shared decision-making. The public participates in the analysis of issues, contributes to the development of alternatives, and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.
Promise to the Public			
We will keep stakeholders informed.	We will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with stakeholders and the public to ensure that their concerns, aspirations and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.	We will look to stakeholders and the public for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (Public Participation Spectrum, 2000)

Once the level of engagement has been determined, review the Engagement Tools and Techniques matrix to identify appropriate engagement tools and techniques.

There are a number of considerations and tasks involved in developing and implementing a public engagement program. The following steps will help guide the planning team's discussion and make sure they have considered the critical aspects of a program. After discussion, the planning team can document the discussion on the attached worksheet.

1. Clarify the Purpose and Objectives

- Review the background for the project or issue.
- Clarify the purpose, objectives and desired outcomes for the engagement process.
- Identify key issues.
- Confirm legal or regulatory requirements.

2. Decide Who Should be Involved

- Identify the publics and stakeholders that should be involved.
- Determine each group's interest in and impact on the project or issue.

3. Determine the Level of Readiness

- Determine the likely 'level of readiness' using the checklist on page 6.

4. Determine Level of Engagement

- Determine the desired level of public engagement, e.g. whether the public is going to be kept informed or actively involved in decision-making. Use the Checklist on page 7.

5. Decide on the Tools and Techniques

- Based on the level of public engagement, review the appropriate Tools and Techniques starting on page 13.
- Considering the benefits and constraints for each approach, determine the tools that will be used.
- Consult with Corporate Communications and determine communications plan for engagement.

6. Confirm Timeframes and Resources

- Identify key engagement milestones.
- Develop a budget estimate for the engagement process.
- Determine what skills/resources are available and/or required.

7. Confirm Feedback and Reporting

- Identify how and when to provide feedback about the process to each stakeholder group and the public.
- Determine how the final outcomes will be documented and communicated.

8. Evaluate

- Complete the evaluation Worksheet

Public Engagement Plan Worksheet

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHEET	Project Title:
Engagement Coordinator (Name, title, department, contact information.)	
Project Management (How is the overall project being managed? Include name of project manager, team members and departments. How is the engagement project being managed?)	
Purpose and Objectives (What is to be achieved through the engagement process?)	
Background (Include information such as history, previous engagement exercises.)	

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHEET	Project Title:
Key Issues	
Stakeholders/Publics (List the different stakeholders and publics, level of concern and impact.)	
Level of Engagement Readiness	
Level of Engagement	
Tools/Techniques (consult Corporate Communications)	

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN WORKSHEET	Project Title:
Timeframe (Include stages of public engagement if more than one.)	
Resources (Identify costs, key roles and responsibilities.)	
Feedback and Reporting (Confirm how and when participants will receive feedback about the process, the input received, how it was used and the final outcomes.)	
Evaluation (Refer to the evaluation checklist on page 22.)	

Public engagement tools and techniques

Inform

At the basic level, the public is informed about a project or activity. This level is characterized by one-way communication and typically involves the distribution of information aimed at raising awareness and understanding. Here, the public is least likely to influence decision-making.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES			
- INFORM -			
Tools & Techniques	*Tips*	*Benefits*	*Risks*
PRINT MATERIAL • Brochures • Newsletters • Fact sheets • Backgrounders	• Content should be in plain language and easily understood • Content must be unbiased and objective • Must be visually appealing • Should be concise – typically between 8 and 12 pages	• Ability to reach a large target audience • Opportunity to provide a lot of information at a relatively low cost • Reduces time required to verbally repeat the same information	• Preparation of materials can be time consuming and costly • Limited ability to communicate complex information • Reach depends on mailing or email list and distribution network • Material may not be read by desired audience
PAID PRINT ADVERTISING • Advertisements • Newspaper inserts • Mail box drops	• Ensure that the type of print media and timing of advertising effectively reaches target audience • Design needs to be striking and stand out from other advertisements or inserts	• Allows message to be specifically customized and ensures accuracy • Opportunity to reach a wide range of the population • Ability to segment certain sections of the population • Provides opportunity to include comment form	• Can be cost prohibitive • May not be viewed by desired audience
ELECTRONIC MEDIA • Radio • Television • Social Media • Video	• Consider lower cost or free advertising on community radio or cable channel or internet video options • Ask where you heard about the engagement to track successful advertising methods	• Potential to reach a wide and varied audience • Ability to manage the message • Video can breakdown a complex issue to inform audience • Social Media ads are inexpensive and targeted	• Can be cost prohibitive • Need lead time to produce and information video • Difficult to track audience reach
NEWS RELEASES • Print and Radio	• Provide additional project background information with a website link • Interview with media to provide additional information	• Effective means of informing media of project and public engagement process • May encourage media to cover project in more depth • Language from news release may be used directly in articles	• News organizations determine the amount of coverage • No direct control over final content of article

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- INFORM -

Tools & Techniques	Tips	Benefits	Risks
NEWS CONFERENCES	• Ensure that presenters are well informed and trained in media relations	• Generates additional interest in a project or issue • Can increase the amount of coverage given to a project or issue • Allows the story to be told directly	• Limited to newsworthy events • Potential to increase negativism if the project or issue is controversial
STATIC EXHIBITS/ DISPLAYS • Shopping centres • City Facilities • City Hall • Library • Festivals	• Must be visually interesting to attract attention • Content should be straightforward and in plain language • A staffed display generally attracts more notice • Ensure that staff are well informed about the project or issue • Provide additional support material (e.g. print material, background documents) • Offer opportunities for comment (e.g. flip charts, response forms)	• Effective means of providing general information • Opportunity to identify people and groups interested in participating in the process • May reach publics not ordinarily interested in participating	• Staffed displays require significant staff time commitment
PUBLICITY • Public service announcements • Feature stories • Media coverage • Community calendars	• To generate free publicity, project or issue must be presented in a newsworthy manner	• Newspaper, radio and television reach the broad public • Free publicity offers opportunities for coverage in expensive medias • Information presented in media may have higher credibility among public	• Coverage may be limited if media do not consider the project or issue to be newsworthy • No direct control over media coverage
WEBSITE • Dedicated Public Engagement Section • Web page on host site	• Ensure that the site is user-friendly and easy to navigate and that the information is presented in a simple and straightforward manner • Update the site on a regular basis • Offer opportunity to provide feedback	• Reaches very large audience and is accessible at the public's convenience • Capable of providing in depth information • Can be continually updated • Ability to provide visual and auditory information • Opportunity to provide links to other relevant websites • Effectively collects and organizes feedback from public • Low cost method of distributing general information	• Not all individuals have access to the internet

Consult

At the next level, communication becomes two-way and information is shared with the public and opportunities for feedback are provided. The intent is to raise awareness and understanding about a project or activity and to receive and consider public comments. At this stage, the City and the public have the opportunity to listen to and learn about each other's plans, views, issues and expectations.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES			
- CONSULT -			
Tools & Techniques	*Tips*	*Benefits*	*Risks*
OPEN HOUSES • Exhibits and displays • Informal discussions	• Host on days and times that encourage attendance • Advertise event in advance • Ensure that displays and exhibits are visually appealing and provide information in plain language • Provide public feedback forms	• Increases awareness and educates public in an informal setting • Provides opportunity for direct interaction and relationship building • Ability to correct misinformation and to explore public opinion • People may feel more comfortable expressing views in a relaxed setting	• Verbal public comment is difficult to record • Conflict at event if issue is controversial • Unrecorded or undocumented feedback is lost
TOWN HALL / PUBLIC MEETINGS • Information presentations • Question and answer session	• Advertise event in advance • Keep information presentation short • Use visuals • Provide significant time for questions and answers • Provide response forms for individuals reluctant to speak in public	• Provides understanding of public opinion and concerns • Facilitates open, face-face communication with the public	• Difficult to determine level of participation in advance • A limited number of participants have the opportunity to speak • Question and answer session may be difficult to manage, particularly if the project or issue is controversial • Potential for tension between opposing stakeholder groups
TELEPHONE SURVEYS / POLLS	• Should be administered by a third party external organization to avoid perception of bias • Use in conjunction with another form of consultation	• Opportunity for statistically valid results • Provides input from public not actively involved in a project or issue • Provides balance to self-selected survey results	• Can be cost prohibitive depending on the size of the population and the length and complexity of the survey • Limited access to land lines limits number of respondents

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- CONSULT -

Tools & Techniques	Tips	Benefits	Risks
HARD-COPY SURVEYS / QUESTIONNAIRES Mail or drop off	• Develop distribution strategy to target sample population • Provide a variety of options for submission to increase response rate • Provide drop boxes in key locations (City Hall, library) to increase response rates • Give information about confidentiality • Pre-paid postage increases response rate	• Provides opportunity for both qualitative and quantitative feedback • Solicits feedback from a cross-section of the public and stakeholders • Statically valid results may increase credibility	• Response rate is unpredictable • Printing and distribution can be expensive • Analysis can be time consuming • Risk of campaigns from activist or organized groups • Budgeting may be difficult due to variable response rate
ON-LINE SURVEYS / QUESTIONNAIRES	• Ensure that design and language of web survey is straightforward and user friendly • Test the survey before deployment	• Accesses broad range of residents • Individuals can complete and submit survey at their leisure • Low cost to produce and administer • Response rate higher than mail-back surveys • No additional data entry is required	• Expertise is required to design and post on-line surveys • Risk of campaigns from activist or organized groups
BRIEFING PRESENTATIONS • Civic organizations • Local clubs • Staff • Conferences	• Groups and organizations may be looking for keynote speakers • Ensure that presentation is easy to understand and captures the interest of the audience • Use visuals • Include question and answer session	• Information can be controlled • Opportunity to receive comment and feedback from participants • Same presentation can be used for different groups • Cost effective • May reach public that are indifferent otherwise	• Topic may not be relevant to audience
EMAIL / INPUT LINK ON WEBSITE	• Design a system for organizing and responding to email and website submissions • Develop methodology for analyzing responses to make data useful	• Can be used to contact and notify stakeholders • Allows public to provide comment at their leisure	• Significant amount of time required to read and respond to responses • Response is unpredictable

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- CONSULT -

Tools & Techniques	Tips	Benefits	Risks
INTERVIEWS • One-on-one meetings • Telephone interviews	• Prepare an interview guide with standardized questions for consistency and comparability • Provide respondent with information about the purpose of the interview and how the input will be used • Provide information about confidentiality	• Provides an understanding of each respondent's issues, concerns and preferred outcomes • May provide guidance for future public engagement activities • Provides standardized framework for collecting and analyzing input	• Scheduling and conducting individual interviews can be time consuming
FOCUS GROUPS • Moderated small group discussions	• Prepare a moderator's and recorder's guide for consistency and comparability • Use open-ended questions to inspire interactive discussions • Recruit participants with a cross-section of interests	• Effective for soliciting public and stakeholder insights, perspectives, opinions and preferences • Can be used to test public's reaction to key messages and decision options • Relatively cost effective	• Success of the focus group is dependent on the moderator's skill
SMALL GROUP MEETINGS	• Emphasis should be on informality • Statements or presentations should be extremely brief	• Informal environment encourages relaxed and positive discussions • Builds relationships	• Significant time commitment required to reach a large audience
COMMUNITY EVENTS • Exhibits and displays • Interactive activities • Informal discussion • Celebratory atmosphere	• Attend events and activities that are attractive to target audience • Logistics must be comprehensive and detailed • Make certain that the event is adequately staffed • Be prepared for crowds	• Builds awareness • Attracts media coverage • Tone of the event is positive • Encourages informal information sharing and relationship building	• Public must be motivated to attend • Requires significant time commitment from staff • Can be costly
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS • Letters • Email	• Can request formal response in addition to independent submissions	• Provides qualitative input from organized groups and general public • Typically more in depth than survey and questionnaire responses	• Content analysis can be difficult and time consuming

Involve

Moving through the continuum, two-way communication increases and centers on established and mutually accepted objectives. At this level, the public has more influence on decision-making and feedback from the public is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- INVOLVE -

Tools & Techniques	Tips	Benefits	Risks
WORKSHOPS • Interactive working sessions focused on specific topic or issue	• Provide background materials and technical information • Include a cross-section of interests • Clearly define tasks and the desired outcomes • Design activities to motivate participants and achieve desired outcomes • Provide facilitators and recorders for each working group	• Can build credibility and buy-in • Useful for dealing with complex issues and topics • Participants collectively become involved in definition of issues and problem solving • Fosters a team environment among stakeholders • Opportunity to receive detailed input from participants	• Extensive planning and organization is required • Several small group facilitators and recorders may be required • Challenging participants may negatively influence process and outcome
ROUNDTABLES • Small group discussions from large group meeting	• Ensure that a skilled facilitator manages each of the roundtable discussions • Provide a recorder for each discussion group • Present discussion summaries when large group reconvenes	• Facilitator can probe and solicit more in depth feedback about issues, concerns, preferences • Level of comfort among the public may increase in smaller setting • Facilitator helps to ensure more equitable participation	• Cost of hiring professional facilitators and recorders can be cost prohibitive
SMALL GROUP PROCESSES • Brainstorming	• Ensure that the facilitator is skilled • Clearly identify objectives and desired outcomes • Develop approach for recording and analyzing input	• Encourages groups to generate creative ideas and solutions • Promotes understanding and consensus building • Builds relationships • Diminishes potential conflict by providing a structured format and safe environment for sharing feelings, opinions and perspectives	• Evaluating input can be difficult
CHARETTES • Prolonged, facilitated meeting to achieve mutual agreement	• Ensure that a range of public/stakeholders participate • Ask participants for a commitment to the process until consensus has been reached • Plan exercises and activities that generate creative ideas • Outline objectives and indicate how input will be used	• Effective mechanism for achieving a consensus among conflicting groups or interests • Encourages joint problem solving • Fosters understanding of positions held by other groups • Builds cooperative relationships	• Effective only when participants have sense of urgency or priority • Requires significant time commitment from participants • Beneficial only if there is a willingness to implement outcomes

Collaborate

This stage is characterized by joint planning and shared decision-making.   Here, the public participates in the analysis of issues, contributes to the development of alternatives, and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES			
- COLLABORATE -			
Tools & Techniques	*Tips*	*Benefits*	*Risks*
CONSENSUS BUILDING TECHNIQUES • Nominal group • Delphi panels • Deliberative dialogue • Public value assessments	• Use techniques that are simple and straightforward • Allow sufficient time to reach consensus • Determine degree of consensus necessary to move forward • Ensure that the decision-making authority is committed to the consensus	• Cultivates compromise among diverse interests • Generates structured decision-making • Emphasis is on problem solving to reach mutually satisfactory outcome • May help avoid later conflicts	• Consensus may not be achievable • Group must be open to compromise
ADVISORY COMMITTEES • Group of stakeholders providing direct input on an on-going basis	• Ensure that the committee roles and responsibilities are defined and agreed in a mandate • Provide equitable access to resources and information • Recruit and interview potential participants • Ensure that stakeholders represent a cross-section of affected publics, points of view or fields of expertise	• Provides an indication of public views and concerns • Participants serve as a connection to interest groups • Participants become informed before decisions are reached • Facilitates cooperation and understanding among various interests • Builds relationships	• Financial and human resources requirement can be substantial • Committee members required to dedicate substantial volunteer time
TASK FORCES • Group of stakeholders formed to accomplish specific assignment	• Participants should represent range of interests and perspectives • Stakeholders should have credibility with public • Specific task, desired outcomes and anticipated timeframe should be clearly established • Provide access to information and experts • Strong leadership is necessary	• Provides opportunity for differing interests to reach compromise • Resulting products or recommendations typically have credibility with the public	• Substantial time is needed for preparation • Requirements for staff support may be considerable • Substantial commitment of volunteer time required by participants

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

- COLLABORATE -

Tools & Techniques	Tips	Benefits	Risks
STUDY CIRCLES • Small group meeting to find solutions to a specific problem	• Provide necessary background information before the meeting • Ensure that participants represent a broad range of perspectives • May require multiple meetings	• Provides opportunity for enhanced understanding and communication • Generates problem solving through collaborative study • All participants have an equal opportunity to contribute	• Skilled facilitator is required • Preparing background information can be costly and time consuming
THIRD PARTY FACILITATED CONFLICT RESOLUTION • Mediation • Negotiation • Arbitration • Conciliation	• The third party facilitator must be acceptable to all parties • Clearly define the role of the facilitator • Ensure that the facilitator is thoroughly informed • Determine in advance how recommendations will be used	• Effective when interdependent parties cannot reach agreement • Can result in agreements that are supported by all parties • Communication and understanding among conflicting parties may be improved • Focuses conflicting parties on substantive issues	• Can be time and labor intensive • To be successful, all parties must be committed to the process and have a willingness to compromise • Mutually agreeable resolutions may not be reached

Public Engagement Evaluation Worksheet

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION WORKSHEET	Yes	Partially	No	Comments
Were the objectives of the public engagement process achieved?				
Did the engagement strategy reflect the City's Public Engagement Guiding Principles?				
Were all affected publics and stakeholders identified?				
Were the engagement tools and approaches effective?				
Did the engagement process provide the public and stakeholders with sufficient opportunity to participate?				
Was the public satisfied with the engagement process?				
Was the quality and quantity of public input adequate?				
Were the key issues addressed?				
Was the process for recording and analyzing public input satisfactory?				
Was the engagement process managed effectively?				
Was the timeline for the engagement process realistic?				
Was the staff time allocated sufficient?				
Did the public engagement process stay within budget?				
Did stakeholders receive feedback about how input influenced decisions?				

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