Community Engagement Framework

Developed by:
The Community Engagement Team
Community and Social Services

Kate Bishop, Supervisor, Community Engagement
Rodrigo Goller, Community Engagement Coordinator
Kelly Guthrie, Community Engagement Coordinator
Acknowledgement

This framework was developed with the support of City of Guelph employees across all service areas. An extensive internal review showed that City of Guelph employees have a strong desire to improve the quality of our community engagement processes. City of Guelph employees support adopting a standard engagement process that applies to the Corporation as a whole. We thank all employees who participated in the internal interviews.

We thank all employees who worked with the Community Engagement team to pilot the draft Community Engagement Framework in their projects. Their support in embracing the community engagement processes has been significant to the development of this framework.

We also thank the following internal champions that provide ongoing advice and support to the development and implementation of this Community Engagement Framework:

- **Brenda Boisvert** – Corporate Manager, Strategic Planning and Corporate Initiatives
- **Heather Connell** – Integrated Services Manager, Solid Waste Resources
- **Louise Daw** – Community Wellbeing Initiative Project Manager, Community Engagement
- **Vivian DeGiovanni** – Supervisor Program Development, Solid Waste Resources
- **Wayne Galliher** – Water Conservation Project Manager, Water Services
- **Doug Godfrey** – Manager, By-Law Compliance and Security
- **Alex Goss** – Project Manager, Local Immigration Partnership
- **Marina Grassi** – Communications Specialist, Corporate Communications
- **Greg Hahn** – Business Webmaster, Information Technology
- **Stacey Hare** – Communications Specialist, Corporate Communications
- **Richard Henry** – City Engineer, Engineering Services
- **Rob Kerr** – Corporate Manager, Community Energy
- **Blair Labelle** – City Clerk, City Clerk’s Office
- **Kim Lawrence** – Web Designer/Developer, Information Technology
- **Becky MacDonald** – Coordinator of Volunteer Services, Senior Services
- **Karen McKeown** – Healthy Landscapes Program Technician, Water Conservation
- **Moez Mehdi** – Manager, Information Technology Projects and Service, Information Technology
- **Joanne Oliver** – Workforce Planning and Development Specialist, Human Resources
- **Adam Rutherford** – Youth Services Coordinator, Youth Services
- **Jennifer Smith** – Research Policy Analyst, Social Service Policy and Liaison
- **Todd Salter** – General Manager, Policy Planning And Urban Design, Planning Services
- **Joanne Starr** – Supervisor of Traffic Investigations, Traffic and Parking

We also thank the following groups for providing their input to the draft Community Engagement Framework: the Accessibility, Cultural Advisory and Environmental Advisory Committees of Council, the Guelph Civic League, the Guelph Youth Council, the Guelph-Wellington Senior’s Association, the Non-Profit Housing Corporation Board of Directors, and the Social and Civic Inclusion Delivery Group of the Guelph Wellington Local Immigration Partnership.
This Community Engagement Framework is based on the engagement processes and principles outlined by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). We have learned and built upon the engagement frameworks of many municipalities in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We are particularly grateful for the guidance and support provided by Michelle Chalifoux and Angela Turner of the City of Edmonton, and Dawn Green of Strathcona County, Alberta. We also thank Don Lenihan for his advocacy work for greater public engagement in governments.

We also recognize the significant contribution made to this framework by Kim Chuong, Kathryn Walton, Morgan Marini and Sophie Maksimowski of The Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship, University of Guelph. Kim Chuong and her team of researchers compiled a comprehensive overview of community engagement frameworks amongst our comparator municipalities in Ontario and other municipalities across Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia.

In the spirit of community engagement, this framework has been made better by the insights of all the internal champions and external key informants who have made contributions both large and small.

My heartfelt gratitude to the Community Engagement team, Kate Bishop, Kelly Guthrie, Rodrigo Goller and their direct Manager, Lynne Briggs, for the enthusiasm with which they embraced this work. They worked hard to be inclusive in the project, strove for excellence and relentlessly applied the emerging framework to more than a dozen engagement processes undertaken by the City to date.

Last, but not least we are grateful to our leader, Community and Social Services Executive Director Colleen Bell for the inspiration and direction she has provided to this important work.

On behalf of the Community Engagement Team,

Barbara Powell

General Manager Community Engagement,
Community and Social Services Department
Overview

The City of Guelph is committed to be the best run city in Canada as well as having one of the lowest unemployment rates, lowest crime rates, and highest quality of life. The 2012 City of Guelph Strategic Plan “Our Future – Our City,” approved by Council in 2012, provides the framework for this transformation... The average person finds it difficult to understand what local government does or how to engage with it. And it is hard to trust what you can’t see or understand. We own that... Transforming municipal services means ensuring excellent outcomes for all citizens... transforming government from a traditional service provider to an institution that also engages and inspires - one that has learned how to work across sectors – public, private, not-for-profit – to embrace opportunities that deliver public value... If anything is going to crack us out of old ways of doing things, it will be the Guelph Wellbeing Initiative. There is a gap between the community people want to live in and our current ability to deliver on these aspirations.

State of the City Address by Mayor Karen Farbridge, November 1st, 2012

The City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework is the corporate facing component of the Community Wellbeing Initiative. It has been developed in response to both external and internal demands from community members and City of Guelph employees, for greater clarity, transparency and support for engaging community members in decisions made at the municipal level. The Community Engagement Framework aligns with other corporate strategies, primarily the Open Government Framework, to establish new channels of communication between the Corporation and the community we serve.

Why do we do community engagement? Sometimes the City engages the community to conform with regulatory or legislated requirements. Beyond this, our employees want to ensure that stakeholders have a voice in decision making, to ensure that decisions made at the municipal level strive to be sustainable and reflect the common good. Community engagement also increases transparency in municipal decision making processes. Well developed and implemented community engagement helps all stakeholders to understand the full scope and implications of municipal decisions. It builds trust with community members, partner organizations and businesses.
Over the last few decades the complexion of western democratic societies has been changing. We are culturally and ethnically more diverse, less rooted in our communities and more mobile. Globalization has brought new commitments and obligations. The internet connects people and organizations in innovative ways. Distant events now are often linked, flash around the globe at lightning speed and have changed our view of time and space. And, finally, citizens are more educated and more informed on issues, and correspondingly less willing to defer to leaders who broker backroom deals. Politically speaking, these changes have resulted in two very important trends: growing complexity and interdependence; and growing public expectations around transparency and accountability… Growing complexity means that policy issues today often can’t be solved by a government acting alone.

Dr. Don Lenihan, Rescuing Policy,
The Case for Public Engagement, 2012, Public Policy Forum

The Community Engagement Framework consists of three components and is grounded by four pillars. The components of this Community Engagement Framework are: a Framework which outlines Definitions, Guiding Principles and a Roadmap for community engagement; a series of Worksheets which support the development of community engagement plans; and a Toolkit of techniques to support the implementation of appropriate and effective community engagement. The four pillars that the Community Engagement Framework is grounded in are: Performance, Practice, People and Policy.

A note on legislated requirements to consult: This Community Engagement Framework acknowledges that there are existing federal and provincial regulations that dictate a minimum level of engagement that must be carried out for certain projects. This framework does not supersede any of those requirements, rather, it acts as a support to augment the ability of staff to carry out those mandated requirements and fully comply with all applicable regulations.
Integration with other Corporate Initiatives

The Community Engagement Framework will be integrated in the following key initiatives and strategic directions of the 2013 – 2016 Corporate Strategic Plan:

Open Government Strategy

- Community Engagement is an essential component of the City’s Open Government Framework. Action areas within this key direction include the Community Engagement Framework, Web 2.0 integration, collaboration and knowledge sharing and e-government services.
- The Community Engagement Framework aligns with the established principles of Open Government: participation, innovation, transparency and accountability.

Communications Plan

- Sets a timeline of 2013-2014 to support and encourage an engaged community that is aware of and participates in the public involvement process, and recognizes its role in addressing issues and contributing to municipal policy and solutions.
- Objective 3.1 calls for:
  - development of a ‘public engagement strategy to guide the public consultation process and create consistency across the organization’
  - increasing awareness of existing opportunities for public engagement and dialogue
  - identifying new/alternative opportunities for public engagement that are accessible and convenient to the public
  - increasing the public’s trust that the City genuinely wants input and will take various points of view into consideration

Corporate Business Development Framework

- The purpose of this framework is to improve collaboration between the City’s service areas, community stakeholders and other public organizations.
- Provides a common business planning process which ensures that programs and services delivered provide value and are responsive to the needs of the community (business cases, community engagement-transparency, accountability).

Diversity Strategy

- Sets a timeline of 2012-2014 to meet objective 3.A – encourage and enhance diverse participation in public engagement activities, and calls for:
  - engagement that features participation in a manner that represents the diversity of our community... supports the goals of the Community Wellbeing Initiative.
Strategic Direction 1.1
Engage employees through excellence in leadership

- Leadership and Development Training for Council and Employees
- Decision Making Excellence - Accountability and Delegated Authority

Strategic Direction 1.3
Build robust systems, structures, and frameworks aligned to strategy

- Information Flow Systems – enable all City employees to be aware of every community engagement activity that is undertaken
- Project Planning, Framing and Management – support client involvement, representation and satisfaction

Strategic Direction 2.2
Deliver public services better

- Parks Model – engaging community members to determine what they consider to be must haves in making parks living community centres
- Community Energy Initiative – creating community buy-in to support the reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse emissions
Strategic Direction 3.2
Be economically viable, resilient, diverse and attractive for business

- Guelph Innovation District – joint University of Guelph/Conestoga College campus proposal, identifying how a new campus will benefit community well being for the City of Guelph

Strategic Direction 3.3
Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications

- Canada 150th Anniversary – engaging community members, focusing on youth to co-ordinate events for this celebration
- Economic Development Summit – engagement of strategic stakeholders to identify potential initiatives
- Organizational Roles & Expectations
- Performance Measurement and Tracking Scorecards
- Integrated Performance Reporting Format
- Corporate Calendar Coordination with Service Area Work Plans
City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework

Our Vision
Guelph is an involved, vibrant city where municipal decisions strive to be sustainable and supported by the community.

Our Mission
The Community Engagement Framework provides decision makers and community members with a consistent approach that sets a standard of excellence for community engagement processes in the City of Guelph.

This framework is grounded in four pillars and supported by guiding principles, employee and participant responsibilities, worksheets and tools to engage the community. This consistent approach to engaging the community supports City employees to enhance their current engagement activities, to better incorporate the values, interests, needs and desires of our community in the municipal decision making processes.

A coordinated approach to community engagement fosters understanding between individuals. Even those who hold opposing positions can be engaged in conversations that focus on their beliefs and underlying values. Through this approach, City employees will build on common ground and strive to develop sustainable decisions.
Four Pillars of Community Engagement

Performance – The Community Engagement Framework includes an evaluation component to establish and document the effectiveness of each engagement activity.

Practice – Shifting the corporate culture of the City of Guelph will improve the relationship between the community and the City. By proactively engaging stakeholders, the City will also decrease future expense and employee time needed to correct engagement processes that polarize community members or do not yield community support.

People – Employee development is an integral part of the Community Engagement Framework. In collaboration with the Human Resources department, the Community Engagement team will develop and deliver ongoing learning opportunities to increase employees’ ability to plan, implement and evaluate engagement processes.

Policy – A Community Engagement Policy will support the implementation of this framework across all areas of the Corporation.

City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework
Providing decision makers and community members with a consistent and genuine approach that sets a standard of excellence for community engagement processes in the City of Guelph.

Four Pillars Supporting the Practice of Community Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue improving through learning and evaluation</td>
<td>Embed community engagement into the corporate culture of the City of Guelph</td>
<td>Increase employee capability to design and deliver community engagement</td>
<td>Confirm commitment to engage our community</td>
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Community Engagement Framework Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>WORKSHEETS</th>
<th>TOOLKIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitions, Guiding Principles and Roadmap for community engagement</td>
<td>Community Engagement Plan, Stakeholder Identification Sheet, Risk Matrix, Evaluation Sheets, etc.</td>
<td>Engagement activities that align to the desired level of engagement, target audience and scope of each project or initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definitions

**Community** – A group of people with shared interests or values or who share an environment. This term may be used interchangeably with ‘Public’.

**Community Engagement** – The process of involving the public in the decision making processes of issues that affect them. This includes techniques that facilitate an informed dialogue amongst participants and encourages them to share ideas and opinions for decision-making.

**Engagement** – The overarching process of involving the community in decision making processes.

**Plain Language** – Clear, concise communication designed so the audience will understand the message.

**Spectrum of Engagement** – The different types of community engagement: Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower.

For a glossary of other relevant terms, please see Appendix A.
**Spectrum of Engagement**

The spectrum of engagement demonstrates the possible types of engagement with stakeholders and communities, from ‘consult’ through to ‘empower’. As you move through the spectrum from the left to right, there is a corresponding increase in expectation for public participation and impact. The strength of relationships increase through consult, involve, collaborate and finally to empower, where the main focus is not the task but the importance of the relationship.

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**Low Level of public participation and influence**

- **CONSULT** (gather information)
  - Note: The City of Guelph’s Spectrum of Engagement has been adapted from the International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) spectrum

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**Sharing information takes place across all levels of engagement**

**OBJECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
<th>EMPOWER</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining feedback/gathering information on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions</td>
<td>Working with community members/groups to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered</td>
<td>Facilitating discussions and agreements between community members/groups and the City of Guelph to identify common ground for action and solutions</td>
<td>Creating a supportive environment where final decision making power is given to community members/groups</td>
</tr>
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**PROMISE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSULT</th>
<th>INVOLVE</th>
<th>COLLABORATE</th>
<th>EMPOWER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will listen and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision</td>
<td>We will work with you to ensure that your needs and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed</td>
<td>We will work with you to build alternatives and make decisions that reflect everyone’s needs and aspirations</td>
<td>We will work with you to achieve common solutions and you will make the final decision</td>
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</table>

**Note:** The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum includes ‘Informing’ as a level of engagement. The City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework includes ‘informing’ as a component of all levels of engagement.
It is sometimes assumed that the level of difficulty involved in the engagement process increases with the level of participation, with ‘consult’ being perceived as easy in comparison to ‘empower’. In reality, where engagement is effective, no part of the spectrum is more difficult or preferable than another. Indeed, the need for different skills, depth and trust in relationships can make all parts of the spectrum both challenging and rewarding.

Most importantly, every community engagement process requires balanced and objective information to assist participants in understanding the question at hand, the alternatives to choose from and the opportunities the decision presents.

“I would suggest that making it easier for people to provide input on community issues would garner more feedback.”

Appropriate Level of Engagement

The following questions can help employees identify the appropriate level of engagement depending on what you are trying to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which statement(s) applies to you?</th>
<th>What you need to do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I need to ask residents, groups or specific stakeholders about their views on the decision being made. Their feedback will be considered when the decision is made.</td>
<td>You need to <strong>CONSULT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I need to get feedback from an individual or group to find out how they will be affected by the outcome of a decision. Their feedback will be considered when the decision is made.</td>
<td>You need to <strong>INVOLVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We need to develop joint alternatives, working with community members/groups and employees to propose alternatives that will work for and be supported by those affected by the decision.</td>
<td>You need to <strong>COLLABORATE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I need to work with a community member or group in a process in which they have the final decision-making power.</td>
<td>You need to <strong>EMPOWER</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decision Making Process

Community Engagement must follow a logical and transparent process that lets community members understand how and why a decision is made. The best way to do this is to integrate community engagement into the decision making process. Below, the needs of the community are identified at each step of the decision making process.

Each step in the decision making process is an opportunity to work with the community to build trust. City employees can lose the trust of community members by failing to involve them until alternatives have been developed, or worse, a preferred alternative has been chosen.

Please see the Worksheets section for a Decision Making Worksheet. This will help identify how to engage the community at different levels of engagement throughout the steps of the decision making process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Process</th>
<th>Community Needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Define the problem /opportunity and decision to be made</td>
<td>Clear understanding of the scope of the decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gather information</td>
<td>Full range of objective information about the issue to be addressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Establish decision making criteria</td>
<td>Clear understanding of the criteria by which the alternatives will be evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Develop alternatives</td>
<td>Balanced alternatives that include stakeholder issues and concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evaluate alternatives</td>
<td>Clear comparison of alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make a decision</td>
<td>Clear understanding of who made the decision and how stakeholder issues were considered</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

The following principles build on those approved by Guelph City Council in 1998. They have been updated to reflect emerging community engagement practices. Community engagement at the City of Guelph embraces these principles.

1. **Inclusive**: The City encourages participation by those who will be affected by a decision. The City builds relationships with stakeholders by using a range of tools to engage varied audiences.

2. **Early Involvement**: The City involves the public as early as possible in the community engagement process so stakeholders have time to learn about the issue and actively participate.

3. **Access to Decision Making**: The City designs processes that will give participants the opportunity to influence decisions.

4. **Coordinated Approach**: The City coordinates community engagement activities to use community and City resources effectively.

5. **Transparent and Accountable**: The City designs processes that are open and clear. Stakeholders will understand their role, the level of engagement and the outcome of the process.

6. **Open and Timely Communication**: The City provides information that is timely, accurate, objective, easily understood, accessible, and balanced.

7. **Mutual Trust and Respect**: The City engages the community in a fair and respectful way that fosters understanding between diverse views, values, and interests.

8. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**: The City commits resources to evaluating engagement processes to ensure engagement activities are effective.

9. **Equitable Engagement Process**: The City designs engagement processes that allow all community members a reasonable opportunity to contribute and to develop a balanced perspective.

"Communicate like you are selling something and your existence depends on it!"
Community Engagement Team Responsibilities

The Community Engagement team is responsible for implementing the Community Engagement Framework across the Corporation of the City of Guelph. The role of the Community Engagement team is to:

- Work with Human Resources and City employees to develop and implement appropriate community engagement training and supports for City employees
- Consult with City department or project teams to review individual Community Engagement Plans and develop appropriate engagement strategies
- Work with City department or project teams to ensure the Corporation develops robust systems to monitor, record, coordinate and evaluate its community engagement activities
- Evaluate and update the Community Engagement Framework based on clear performance measures, employee feedback and emerging practices, on an annual basis
- Provide timely communications to residents and other stakeholders about the Community Engagement Framework and Policy
- Provide Council and employees with annual performance reports regarding the success of the Community Engagement Framework and Policy

Employee Responsibilities

City employees who are responsible for the design and implementation of community engagement processes will:

- Pursue community engagement with the belief that involving the community leads to better decisions
- Ensure that community engagement activities comply with the Community Engagement Framework and Policy, its processes, worksheets and tools
- Develop project charters or project plans that provide adequate timelines and resources for community engagement
- Notify the Community Engagement team of any planned community engagement activities
- Design engagement processes that reflect the promise made to stakeholders according to the level of engagement
- Design engagement processes that reach out to vulnerable populations
- Ensure all community members who want to be involved are included
- Ensure all communication is clearly presented, balanced and understandable to the target audience
- Ensure that participants are aware of their responsibilities in the engagement process and support participants to fulfill those responsibilities
- Foster long-term relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- Ensure the project report accurately reflects all the feedback received
- Ensure decisions and recommendations acknowledge the needs, values and desires of the community
- Ensure consultants or external organizations undertaking community engagement activities on behalf of a City department comply with Community Engagement Framework and Policy

"Engage the people where they are whenever possible rather than creating a new space and trying to convince the people to come to you."

**Participant Responsibilities**

Successful community engagement processes require respectful and constructive contributions of participants. Participants are responsible to:

- Pursue community engagement with the belief that community involvement leads to better decisions
- Focus on the decision to be made or the question to be answered
- Recognize the City must consider the needs of the whole community
- Strive to reach sustainable solutions
- Request alternative ways of participating if required
- Listen to understand the views of others
- Identify concerns and issues early in the process
- Participate openly, honestly and constructively, offering ideas, suggestions, alternatives
- Work in the process in a transparent, respectful and cooperative manner
- Stay abreast of the project, engagement activities and related issues
- Provide input and feedback within project timelines
- Encourage others to become engaged, and offer input to the project and engagement activities
- Provide contact information as requested, to receive updates about the community engagement process

**Council Responsibilities**

As key leaders within the City, the support of City Council is important for successful community engagement. Council is asked to:

- Review information gathered though community engagement processes to inform Council decisions
- Consider appropriate project timelines and resources needed for community engagement
Important Considerations

Please keep the following in mind when developing community engagement plans

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

City employees must provide accessible customer service according to the AODA. This may mean doing things in a different way for one person or changing the way we provide a service that will remove barriers for many people.

For guidelines on how to make engagement activities accessible contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator and/or see Appendix B for guidelines.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

When obtaining personal information from community members, keep in mind the regulations about how that information may be used. Please contact the Access Privacy and Records Specialist and/or see Appendix C for guidelines.

Plain Language

Like good communication of any kind, plain language is clear, concise, and uses simply constructed sentences. Plain language tells the audience exactly what the audience needs to know without using unnecessary words or expressions. It is not baby talk or simplistic, but lets the audience understand the message easily.

Plain language is more than just short words and short sentences — although those are often two very important guidelines for plain language. When you create information in plain language, you also organize it logically to make it easy for the audience to follow. You consider how well the layout of your pages or screens works for your audience. You also ensure that the information you provide is relevant to the audience. What is plain language for one audience may not be plain language for another audience.

Communication that is clear and to the point helps improve all communication because it takes less time to read and understand. It also improves audience response to messages. Using plain language avoids creating barriers that set us apart from our audience.

For more information on plain language please see Appendix D.
Community Engagement Roadmap Steps
Take a moment to answer the following questions. Don’t focus on details, just jot down the basics.

**Step 1: Understand the Project – From the City’s Perspective**

a) What is the goal of the project?

b) Who is involved in this project? (One City department or several? City Council? The whole Corporation? Partner agencies? Other organizations?)

c) Who is affected by the project? (Does the final outcome affect some community members? A ward? The whole city?) (see Stakeholder Identification worksheet)

d) What question do we want to ask those affected by the project? (What is the reason for a community engagement process?)

e) Who will make the decision? (Project staff, General Manager, Executive Director, Council, etc.)

f) What information will the decision makers need to make the decision?

g) What are the timelines?

h) What municipal issues or historical factors will impact this project?

i) What are the potential impacts on other municipal departments?

j) What support/representation do we need, if any, from:
   - Other City departments?
   - Communications staff?
   - Community Engagement team?
Step 2: Explore the Community’s Perspective

a) Does it make sense to engage the community? Explain.

b) How interested will the community be in the project? Why? (see Stakeholder Interest worksheet)

c) What information do we need from the community? (see Decision Making worksheet)

d) How will the community input be used? (see Engagement Strategy worksheet)

e) What is the scope of the project from the community perspective? What are the potential impacts on:
   - Geographic communities?
   - Communities of interest?
   - Individuals?
   - Others?

a) What community issues or historical factors will impact this project?

b) What are the risks in involving the community? (see Risk Matrix worksheet)

c) What are the risks of excluding the community?

d) List any previous community consultations around this issue.

e) What factors will influence the engagement process from the community’s perspective (time, resources, etc.)?

Step 3: Decide if it is appropriate to engage the Community

So... After answering the questions in Steps 1 and 2, is it appropriate to engage the community in this project?

YES! > COMPLETE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN
(see Community Engagement Plan worksheet)

NO! > COMPLETE AN INTERNAL DECISION FORM
(see Internal Decision Form in the worksheet section)

Please send a copy of this either the completed Community Engagement Plan or the completed Internal Decision Form to the Community Engagement Team.
Step 4: Develop the Community Engagement Plan

a) Determine the outcomes that are required from the community engagement process
b) Identify the stakeholders (see Stakeholder Identification worksheet)
c) Identify the level of engagement on the Spectrum (see Stakeholder Interest worksheet)
d) Determine which tools/methods will be used (see Tools section)
e) Establish timelines
f) Determine the budget
g) Do a risk assessment (see Risk Matrix worksheet)
h) Complete the readiness test (see Readiness Test in Worksheet Section)
i) Create a Community Engagement Plan (see Community Engagement Plan in Worksheet Section)

Step 5: Implement the Plan

a) Adapt to new information and circumstances
b) Record information (feedback, comments, etc) in a standard way (see Data Tracking and Community Engagement Evaluation Form in Worksheet Section)
c) Provide data gathered from community engagement process to the decision makers
d) If a decision is not reached because other issues have emerged, develop another engagement plan to address those issues

Step 6: Communicate the Decision

a) Follow up with process participants to communicate the final decision and how their collective input was used by decision makers
b) Write a report that briefly outlines the consultation, decision making process and results. Include a section that clearly states how the community input was used or why it was not used
c) Post this report on the City of Guelph website and distribute it to any participants who requested to be kept informed about the project (see Community Engagement Activity Registration Card)

Step 7: Evaluate the process

a) Use the Guiding Principles for community engagement (see Community Engagement Project Evaluation in worksheet section)
b) Make recommendations to improve future community engagement processes

“Congratulations on building up a lively and marvelous community dialogue in Guelph.”
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Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

**Appropriate Level of Engagement** – Choosing the level of engagement (consult, involve, collaborate or empower) based on three criteria:

1. What is the level of community interest to participate in the decision making process?
2. How complex is the issue?
3. How many people will this decision affect?

An issue that will impact a large portion of the community, that is highly complex and which is likely to involve or interest a large number of people will have a higher level of engagement (moving from consult to involve, or from involve to collaborate). A project that does not have significant impact on the community and which community members are not as interested in participating in, may have a lower level of engagement.

**Barriers** – A barrier is anything that keeps an individual or group from participating fully in society. A barrier can be visible, invisible, environmental, physical, economic, social or political. Barriers prevent full communication, working together, and progress or achievement. Visible barriers include buildings with steps but no ramp, heavy doors that do not open at the touch of a button or bathroom stalls that are too narrow. Invisible barriers may include high level or confusing information which leaves the participant feeling stupid and intimidated. Sometimes the type of building that houses the meeting is a barrier. For example, some people may feel very uncomfortable attending a meeting in a church, mosque, synagogue, etc.

**Collaborate** – To work together with community members, by facilitating discussions and agreements between community members/groups and the City, that identify common ground for action and solutions.

**Community** – A group of people with shared interests or values or who share an environment. This term may be used interchangeably with ‘Public’.

**Community Engagement** – The process of involving the public in the decision making about issues that affect them. This includes techniques that facilitate an informed dialogue amongst participants, and encourages shared ideas and opinions for decision-making.

**Consult** – To gather information for analysis on alternatives and/or decisions.

**Consultation fatigue** – Lack of public interest in consultation initiatives which may be caused by over consultation due to lack of coordination by City departments and/or a perceived lack of results from past consultations.

**Customer service** – Addressing and resolving a service request, inquiry, problem or transaction with established procedures and pre-identified outcomes. Customer service interactions between City employees and the public are not community engagement processes.
**Empower** – To partner with community members/groups and create a supportive environment where final decision making power is given to those community members/groups.

**Engagement** – The overarching process of involving the community in decision making processes.

**Internal stakeholders** – Internal stakeholders can include members of City Council, a City division, department, service area, committee, or individual City employees. Their involvement is important because their department may be impacted by the decision, their knowledge or expertise may be critical to the project, or their sphere of influence may be helpful in moving the process forward.

**Involve** – To discuss with community members/groups to ensure their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

**Outreach** – Providing services, information or opportunities to participate in decision making, to communities that may not otherwise be able to access those services, information, or participate in decision making processes.

**Plain Language** – Clear, concise communication designed so the audience will understand the message.

**Promise to the community** – The commitment undertaken by City employees when engaging the community. This promise varies depending on the level of engagement. Regardless of the level of engagement, City employees need to follow up with participants to tell them how their input was used to make the final decision.

**Public** – Groups of individual people. This term may be used interchangeably with ‘Community’.

**Risk Tolerance** – The level of risk the City is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives. It can be measured qualitatively with categories such as major, moderate or minor. The level of risk acceptance is directly related to the nature and scope of the project or work.

**Social Media** – Various online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources. Social media can include text, audio, video, images, podcasts, and other multimedia communications. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Stumbleupon, blogs, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.

**Stakeholder** – Identified or self-identified individuals or groups that are or may be affected by the outcome of a decision.

**Sustainable Decision** – A decision which is environmentally and culturally sensitive, economically viable, technically feasible and publically acceptable.

**Values** – Underlying ethical or moral guidelines that shape our choices, opinions and guide our behaviours or actions.
**Value based conversation** – A technique designed to create a bridge of understanding between individuals/groups with apparently incompatible positions. Value based conversations bring a human element to conversations by exploring positions to identify beliefs and find commonly held values. This common ground is then used to develop alternatives which are acceptable to those individuals/groups.

**Vulnerable populations** – Individuals and groups of people who may face barriers in participating fully in society and who have increased susceptibility to negative health outcomes or other harm as a result of inequitable access to the resources they need. Vulnerable populations include economically disadvantaged individuals, ethnic minorities, children, seniors, the homeless, those with chronic health conditions or mental illness.
Appendix B: Accessibility Information

City of Guelph employees must provide accessible services according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Sometimes that might mean doing things in a different way for one person, providing an accessibility accommodation, or changing the way we provide a service that will remove barriers for many people. Accessibility accommodations begin with informing people of a contact person if they require an accommodation under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, when sending out meeting notices.

Accessibility accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing information in different formats, such as formatted documents for text to speech software, adjusting colours to provide high contrast or using larger fonts
- Providing written and verbal descriptions of charts, tables, drawings or any other visuals
- Hosting meetings ONLY in buildings which are fully accessible to wheelchairs/walkers
- Offering services of an American Sign Language Interpreter for those who are deaf
- Offering assistive devices, such as amplified hearing equipment, to those with hearing loss
- Removing barriers for many people may include, but are not limited to:
  - Providing information in plain language
  - Ensuring that the level of lighting is appropriate for all displays and work areas during meetings
  - Setting up a meeting space that includes aisles wide enough for two people to comfortably pass each other with walkers or wheelchairs
  - Being equally welcoming and accommodating to all participants. Attitudinal barriers are the most prevalent barriers. All participants are residents of our community.

For more information go to ERNIE, click on link below, or contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator at 519-822-1260 x 2670 | TTY 519-837-5688

Accessibility information on ERNIE:

http://ernie/ServiceAreas/corporateservices/corpproperty/accessibility/default.aspx

"Know the audience you want to interact with and adjust your activity accordingly"
Appendix C: Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

The purpose of MFIPPA is to:

1. Protect the privacy of individuals and their personal information held by the Corporation

2. Provide a right of access to information under the control of the Corporation
   - Provides the public with the right to access records held by the City
   - Provides individuals with the right of access to, and request correction of, personal information about themselves held by the Corporation
   - Limited exceptions to the right of access
   - Prevents the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by the Corporation
   - Provides for an independent review of decisions made under the MFIPPA Act by the Information and Privacy Commissioner (IPC)

3. A record is: information, however recorded, whether in print, on film, by electronic means or otherwise collected. This includes but is not limited to:
   - Reports, documents, maps, letters, emails, photographs
   - Other various types of media:
     - Tape, disk, CD, DVD, microfiche, drawing, film, photograph

4. Personal Information as defined by the MFIPPA Act is information that identifies and individual including:
   - Name, home address, home phone number, home fax number, personal email
   - Ethnic background, skin colour, religion
   - Marital status, sexual orientation
   - Health information
   - Education, financial, criminal history
   - Personal opinions
   - Social Insurance Number (SIN) and Health Card information

5. What is covered by MFIPP Act?
   - All records in the custody or under the control of the Corporation
6. Privacy Protection
   - The City collects large amounts of personal information from people in order to provide services and run public programs.
   - Although we can request information, we cannot demand an individual provide information, however some information may be necessary in order to provide a service.
   - When we collect information, the MFIPP Act outlines our obligations to protect that information.
   - We are only permitted to use and disseminate information for the purpose it was collected.

7. Personal Privacy:
   All releases of information are processed through the City Clerk’s office. The City Clerk shall refuse to disclose personal information to any person other than the individual it relates to unless:
   - The individual has given prior written consent.
   - There are compelling circumstances affecting the health and safety of the individual.
   - Under an Act of Ontario or Canada.

8. Employees of the City of Guelph must:
   - Understand the obligations under the MFIPP Act.
   - Use proper records management practices.
   - Contact the City Access, Privacy and Records Specialist if a request to provide access or correction to records is received.

9. Collection of information:
   When collecting personal information from the public ensure:
   - There is a clearly defined purpose i.e. this information is being collected for the purpose of administering program X.
   - That notice is given about the purpose of collecting personal information and how that information will be used (the City Access, Privacy and Records Specialist will develop the notice).
   - The information collected is used for the stated purpose only (if you collect information for program X i.e. taxation, you cannot use it for program Y i.e. wastewater).
   - Whenever you collect, use, disseminate or dispose of personal information you contact the City Clerk’s Office for assistance.

For more information please go to ERNIE, the City of Guelph webpage on Access to Information, or contact the Access, Privacy and Records Specialist at T 519-822-1260 x 2349

Access to Privacy and Information on ERNIE:
http://ernie/ServiceAreas/informationservices/clerks/Pages/AccessandPrivacy.aspx

Access to Privacy and Information on the City of Guelph Website:
http://guelph.ca/city-hall/access-to-information/
Appendix D: Plain Language

Using plain language in all communications with the public helps to uphold the Guiding Principles of the Community Engagement Framework. Plain language makes community engagement more inclusive, transparent and equitable. It also improves trust and respect for the engagement process and for the City in general. When people easily understand what they are reading, they are more likely to participate. Use plain language in all aspects of engagement, from the letter informing the community of the process, to handouts and displays, to the evaluation feedback sheet. It is often helpful to test terms or diagrams beforehand, with people who are unfamiliar with the content. If they don’t understand, the wording needs to be refined.

Guidelines for creating plain language materials

A document, web site or other information is in plain language if the:

1. **Basic approach** specifies and considers who will use it, why they will use it, and what tasks they will do with it. Consider if the basic approach:
   - Identifies the audiences and is clearly created for them
   - Focuses on the major audiences, their top questions and tasks
   - Does not try to be everything to everyone
   - Keeps in mind the average reader’s level of technical expertise

2. **Language** minimizes jargon and uses sentence structure, strong verbs, word choice, and other similar techniques to ensure the audience can read, understand, and use the information. Consider if the language:
   - Has a conversational style rather than a stuffy, bureaucratic style
   - Is simple and direct without being too informal.
   - Whenever possible, uses an active voice. When the subject of a verb does something (acts), the verb is in the **active** voice. When the subject of a verb receives the action (is acted upon), the verb is in the **passive voice**.
     - Active voice: Conor hit the ball.
     - Passive voice: The ball was hit by Conor.
   - Uses reasonably short sections, paragraphs, and sentences
   - Uses sentence structure, especially the verbs, to emphasize key information
   - Uses transitions to show the link between ideas, sections, paragraphs, or sentences
   - Puts titles, headings, and lists in parallel form
   - Uses words familiar to the audience
   - For online information, matches the text of links to the page title the link points to
3. **Design** reinforces meaning and makes it easier for the audience to see, process, and use the information. Consider if the design:
   - Organizes the information in a sequence that’s logical for the audience
   - Uses layout to make information easy to find, understand, and use
   - Uses principles of good design, including appropriate typography, font size, line spacing, color, white space, etc.
   - Uses visuals to make concepts, information, and links easier to see and understand
   - For online information, minimizes the number of levels, layers information appropriately, avoids too much on one page

4. **Structure** is well-marked so the audience can find the information it needs. Consider if the structure:
   - Uses many informative headings to guide the audience to the key information most important to them
   - Helps the audience to quickly complete tasks
   - Breaks content into topics and subtopics that match the audience’s needs for information
   - For a document, minimizes cross-references

5. **Hierarchy** helps the audience distinguish between critical and less important information. Consider if the hierarchy:
   - Puts the most important information first
   - Omits unnecessary information
   - Uses visual design and language to distinguish between main points and supportive detail
   - Uses advance organizers for the whole, and at the section, paragraph, and sentence levels to give the audience a frame for subsequent information

6. **Author**, whether an individual or an organization, creates a sense of reliability and trustworthiness. Consider if the author:
   - Demonstrates a concern for the audience
   - Anticipates the questions and needs of the audience
   - Uses an appropriate tone for the audience
   - Provides a revision date to show the age of the information
   - Shows how to get additional information

7. **Overall**, the audience can:
   - Understand the main purpose and message
   - Complete the task, if this is being asked
   - See how the design and the content reinforce each other
   - Scan to find information
   - Follow the language easily

Adapted from Centre for Plain Language [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov).
Examples of Plain Language

The following examples show how document wording can be changed to plain language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Plain Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The participants within the evaluation workshop felt there were a number of factors regarding the evaluation that were working well.</td>
<td>The workshop participants indicated that the following things are going well:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● List of points…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole issue has been raised many times with minimal action resulting from each resulting furore.</td>
<td>We have talked about this many times but nothing has happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attached for your information or appropriate action is….</td>
<td>Attached is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.</td>
<td>Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is located in very close proximity to the location of…</td>
<td>It is located close to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accordingly, your cooperation in ensuring that this policy and By-law are followed is appreciated.</td>
<td>We appreciate your cooperation in following this policy and By-law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to the expiration of the current contract…</td>
<td>Before the contract ends…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in the commencement of the project occurred.</td>
<td>The project started late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste shall be placed by the occupant of the dwelling house for collection no later than 7:30 o’clock in the forenoon of the day of collection and not earlier that 8:00 o’clock in the evening of the previous day.</td>
<td>Garbage must be out for collection by 7:30 a.m. If you put your garbage out the night before, it should be after 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City owns, operates, maintains and recapitalizes physical assets like the parks and public spaces you enjoy.</td>
<td>The City owns, operates and maintains the parks and public play spaces you enjoy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from workshop materials, Ruth Baldwin facilitator Spruce Grove, AB / CAMA / CUPE
Plain Language Resources

For more information on plain language on ERNIE see the Corporate Identity Guidelines and House Style Guidelines:

http://ernie/ServiceAreas/informationservices/CorpComm/Pages/GuidesandDocuments.aspx