

# Community Engagement Framework



Developed by:  
The Community Engagement Team  
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

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## Overview

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*Why is community engagement important? Quite simply, because it's your city. This is the city you have chosen to live in, to work in, to volunteer in, to raise your family in, to run your business in. Council and City staff work for you. It's your tax dollars we are spending to offer services you need and want. In order to make the best decisions possible, Council needs to hear from you. And we don't want to hear only from the loudest people, or the most articulate people, or the most connected people – we want to hear from everyone. A solid community engagement framework helps make sure that happens. Local government works better when we're all in this together.*

**Statement by Mayor Cam Guthrie, February 2015**

The City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework was 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 engage community? Sometimes the City engages community to conform with regulatory or legislated requirements. Beyond this, City of Guelph 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 is grounded in four pillars: **People, Practice, Policy** and **Performance**. The Community Engagement Framework outlines Definitions, Guiding Principles and a Roadmap for community engagement. A series of **Worksheets** support the development of community engagement plans and a **Resource Catalogue** includes standard operating procedures, event planning resources and activities to support the implementation of appropriate and effective community engagement.



***A note on legislated requirements to consult:*** *This Community Engagement Framework acknowledges that there are 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 City employees to carry out those mandated requirements and fully comply with all applicable regulations.*

## Definitions

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**Community** – A group of people with shared interests or values or who share an environment. This term may refer to external members of the public or internal City of Guelph employees.

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

**Engagement** – The overarching process of involving 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**.



## City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework

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### 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 consistent approach to engaging community supports City employees and decision makers to incorporate the values, interests, needs and desires of our community in the municipal decision making processes.

### Community Engagement Goals

The Community Engagement Framework will:

1. **Support the City's strategic goals through, transparent, accountable, consistent and accessible community engagement.**
2. Build engagement opportunities that inspire community stakeholders to shape **Guelph's future.**
3. Support decisions that reflect the common good for all Guelphites now and in the future.
4. **Build community stakeholder trust in the City of Guelph's decision making process.**

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

*Community Member*



## Four Pillars of Community Engagement

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

**Practice** – Increased City of Guelph community engagement based on consistent practices will improve the relationship between community and the City. Proactive and effective stakeholder engagement may also prevent issues that need to be managed by City employees.

**People** – Employee development is an integral part of the Community Engagement Framework. The Community Engagement team develops and delivers ongoing learning opportunities to increase **employees'** ability to plan, implement and evaluate engagement processes.

**Policy** – The Community Engagement Policy supports the implementation of this Framework across all areas of the Corporation of the City of Guelph.

## City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework

*Providing decision makers and community members with a consistent and genuine approach that sets a standard for community engagement at the City of Guelph*

### Four Pillars Supporting the Practice of Community Engagement

Performance	Practice	People	Policy
Continuous improvement through learning and evaluation	Embed community engagement into the corporate culture of the City of Guelph	Increase employee capability to design and deliver community engagement	Confirm commitment to engage our community

### Community Engagement Components

Framework	Worksheets	Resource Catalogue
Definitions, Guiding Principles and Roadmap for community engagement	Community Engagement Plan, Stakeholder Identification sheet, Risk Matrix, Evaluation forms, etc.	Engagement activities that align to the desired level of engagement, target audience and scope of each project or initiative.

## International Association for Public Participation Foundations

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The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) states that effective public participation is based on these foundations:

### Values Based

Community stakeholders form opinions, concerns, fears, hopes and dreams based on their values. Effective community engagement acknowledges that all stakeholders bring their values to the process and is designed to shift discussions away from people's positions, towards their shared values.

### Goal Driven

Community engagement should be focused around specific, planned and purposeful outcomes. Effective community engagement will clearly outline what information is needed, how stakeholders may participate in the process and follow up with participants when the project goals have been reached.

### Decision Oriented

Community stakeholders participate in engagement activities because they believe that their opinions will help shape the decision being made. Effective community engagement clearly states what decision is being made, and how stakeholder participation has shaped the decision.

**Note:** For more information about the International Association for Public Participation see [www.IAP2.org](http://www.IAP2.org)

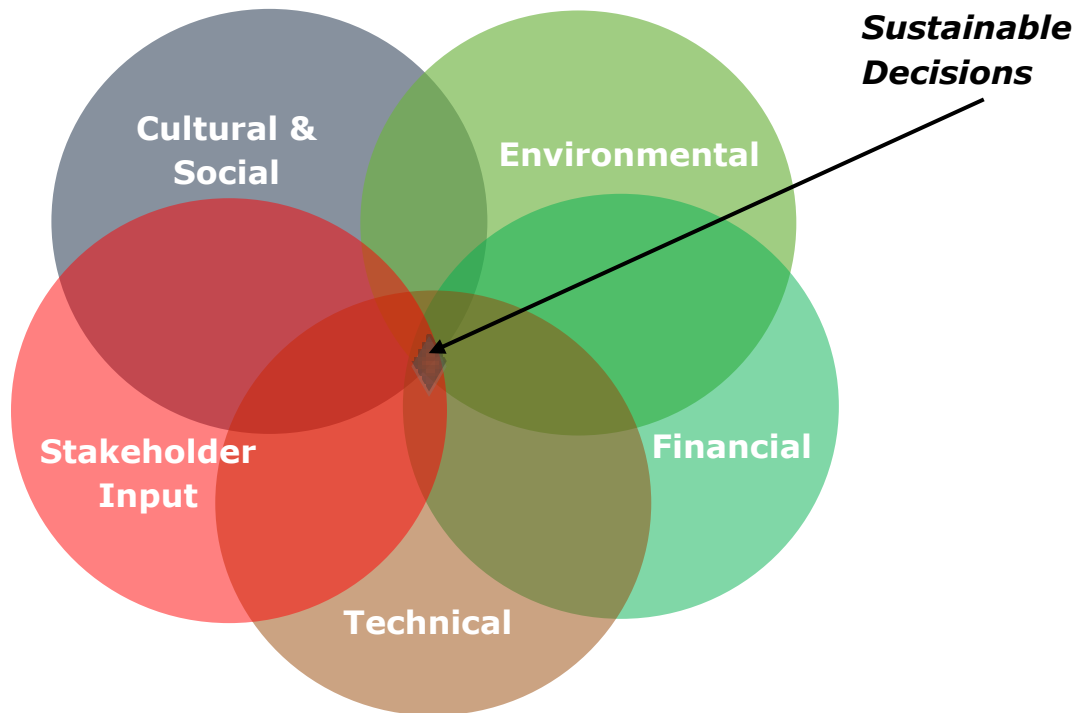




## Sustainable Decisions

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**Spheres of Sustainability** – 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.



## What do these spheres mean?

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**Financial** sustainability means we can afford to implement the decision, or that the decision will have a financial benefit.

**Cultural and social** considers how a decision may impact the culture of an individual or society as a whole.

**Environmental** refers to our natural environment including the soil, air, water, flora and fauna.

**Technical** considerations determine if an alternative can be built or used.

**Stakeholder input** refers to **participant's** opinions about the decision to be made. Sustainable decisions show a balance all of the other spheres and include what we hear from participants.

## Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

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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 designs engagement processes that allow all community members a reasonable opportunity to contribute and to develop a balanced perspective. The City builds relationships with stakeholders by using a range of activities to engage diverse participants.
2. **Early Involvement:** The City involves community as early as possible in the 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 engagement processes so that stakeholders 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 community in an equitable and respectful way that fosters understanding between diverse views, values, and interests.
8. **Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:** The City evaluates engagement activities to ensure engagement processes are effective.



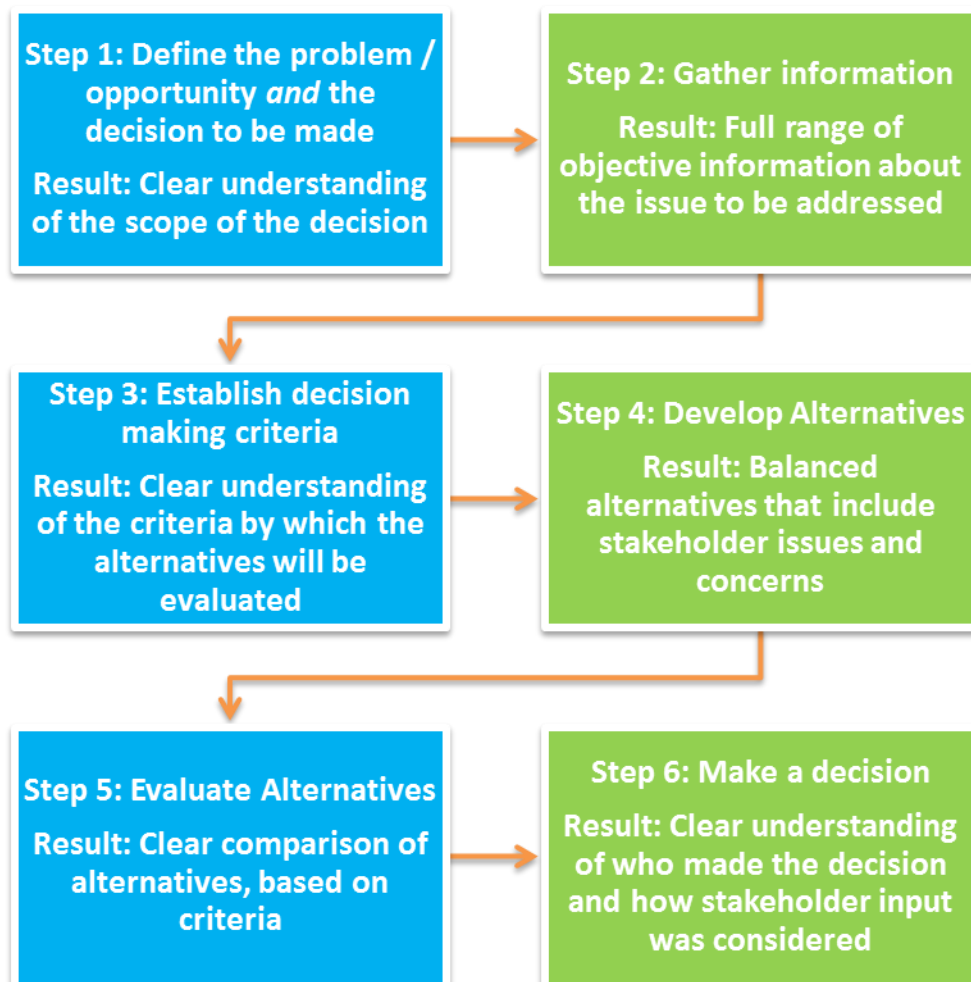
***“Congratulations on building up a lively and marvelous community dialogue in Guelph.”***

***Community Member***

## Decision Making Process

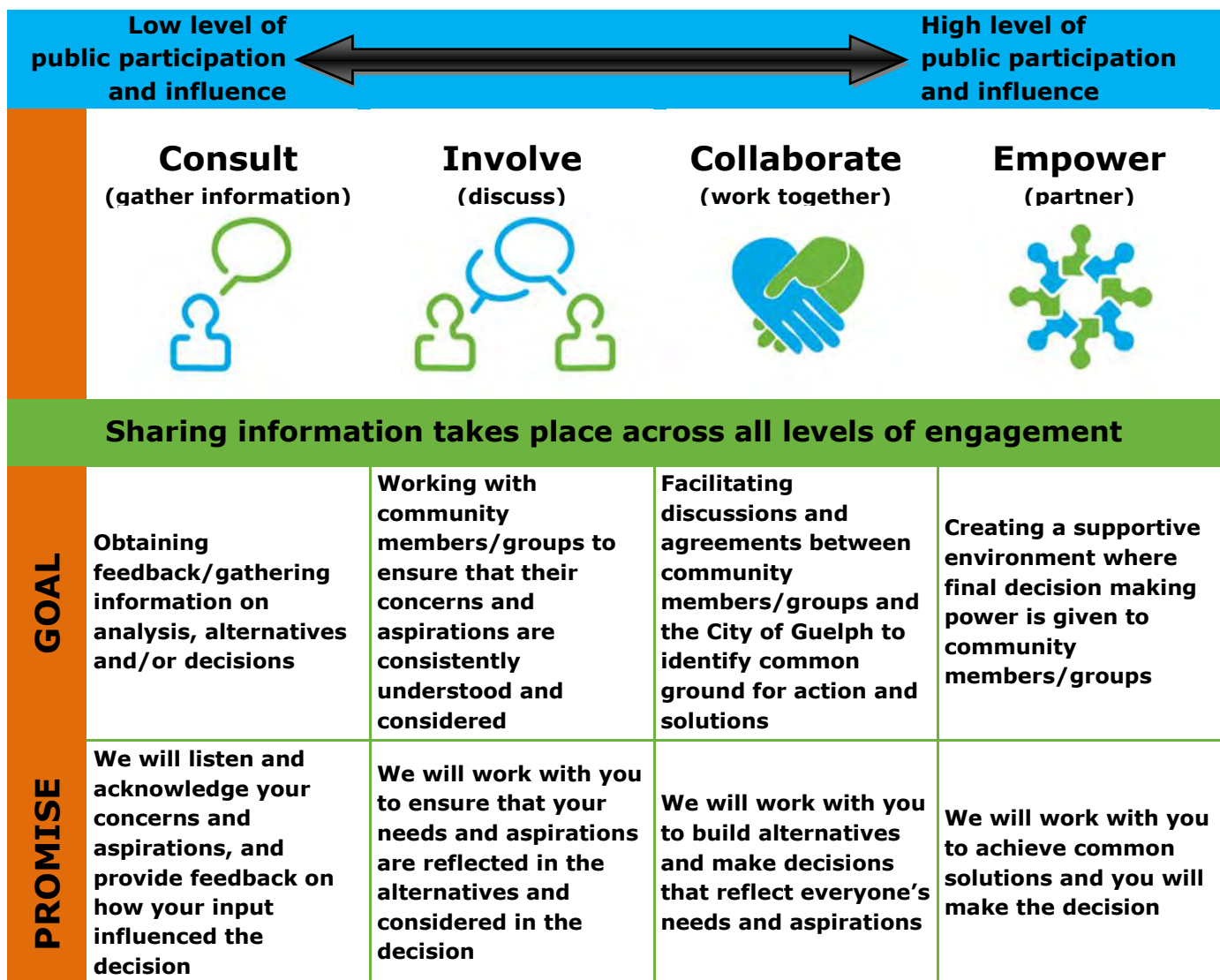
Community Engagement must follow a consistent and transparent process that lets community members understand how and why a decision is made. The best way to do this is to integrate community engagement into the decision making process. Below, the needs of the community are identified at each step of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



## 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.



The City of Guelph's Spectrum of Engagement has been adapted from the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum

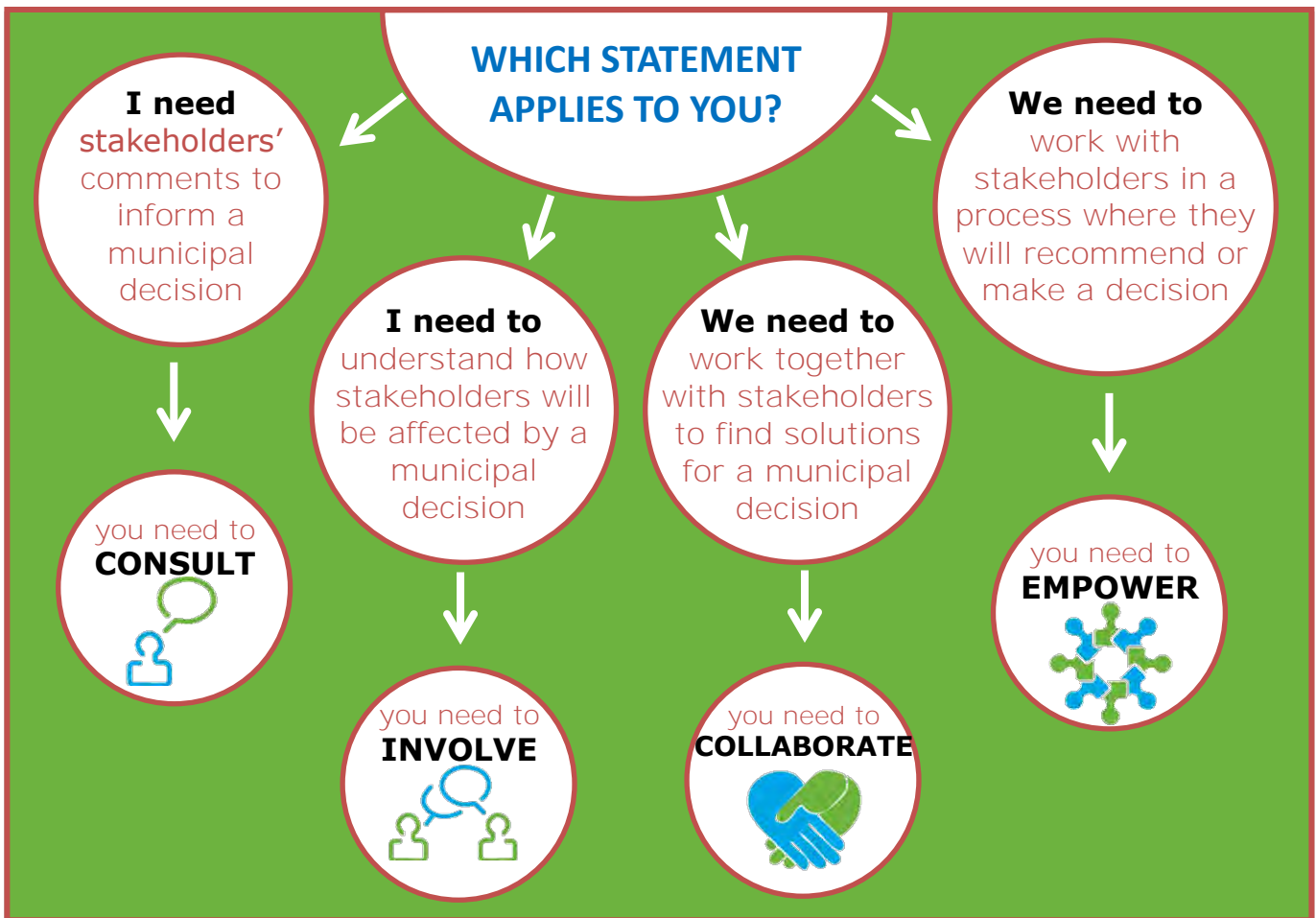
**Note:** The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum includes 'Informing' as a level of engagement. The City of Guelph Community Engagement Framework includes 'informing' as a component of all levels of engagement.

## Appropriate Level of Engagement

It may sometimes be assumed that the level of difficulty of the engagement process increases with the level of participation, with 'consult' being perceived as easy in comparison to 'empower'. In reality, no level of engagement across the spectrum is more difficult or preferable to 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.

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



## Decision Making Matrix

Once the decision making steps have been identified, and we know what information decision makers need from community stakeholders, we are ready to complete the Decision Making Matrix, where we map out the appropriate level of engagement for each decision making step.

Simple projects may only engage community stakeholders at one or two points in the decision making matrix, however, complex projects may require more points of engagement.

Use the matrix below to identify how to best engage each of the identified stakeholders in the decision making process. This matrix should be completed *after* stakeholders have been identified and *before* engagement activities are selected.

Level of Community Engagement	Decision Making Matrix					
	Define Problem/ Opportunity	Gather Information	Establish Decision Criteria	Develop Alternatives	Evaluate Alternatives	Make a Decision
Consult						
Involve						
Collaborate						
Empower						

## Community Engagement Team Responsibilities

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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:

- Participate in an initial project assessment with the project team and the Corporate Communications team
- Work with the project lead to develop appropriate Community Engagement Plans
- Work with the project lead to ensure that Request For Proposals / Tenders include effective community engagement activities
- Liaise with consultants to provide oversight of community engagement
- Work with project lead to ensure the Corporation has effective 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 Council and employees with an annual performance report regarding the success of the Community Engagement Framework and Policy
- Develop and implement appropriate community engagement training and supports for City employees
- Work with Corporate Communications to provide timely information to residents and other stakeholders *about* the Community Engagement Framework and Policy

## City Employee Responsibilities

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

- Use the Community Engagement Framework to determine if community engagement is appropriate, with support from the Community Engagement Team as needed
- Work with the Community Engagement Team to develop appropriate Community Engagement Plans
- Develop Community Engagement Plans for all project charters, business plans, project plans or request for proposals/tenders, to ensure adequate timelines and resources for community engagement
- Invite Community Engagement staff to the initial project assessment meeting to discuss community engagement needs for that project
- Notify the Community Engagement team of any planned community engagement activities
- Ensure that community engagement activities comply with the Community Engagement Framework and Policy
- Ensure consultants or external organizations undertaking community engagement activities on behalf of a City department work with the Community

Engagement Team throughout the project to comply with Community Engagement Framework and Policy

- Ensure the project report accurately reflects stakeholder feedback
- Support Community Engagement staff to evaluate community engagement at the City of Guelph

## Participant Responsibilities

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Participants are asked to:

- Focus on the decision to be made or the question to be answered
- Recognize the City must consider the needs of the whole community
- Request alternative ways of participating if required
- Listen to understand the views of others
- Provide input and feedback within project timelines
- Encourage others to offer input

## Council Responsibilities

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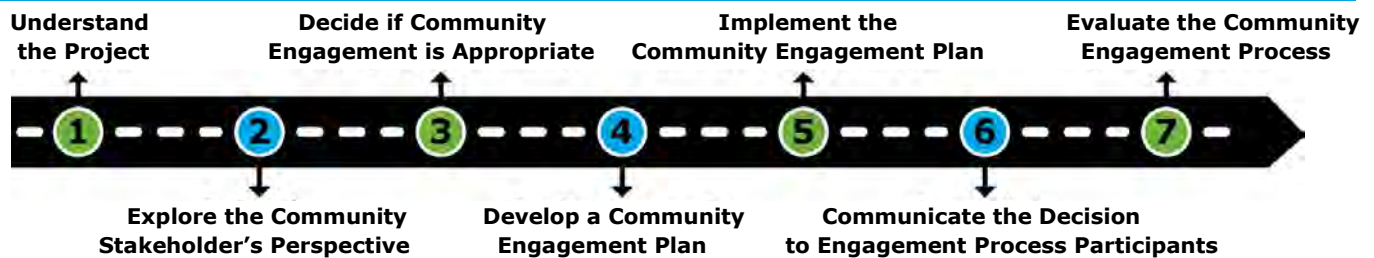
As key leaders within the City, the support of City Council is important for successful community engagement. Council is asked to:

- Encourage City employees to follow the Community Engagement Policy
- Review information gathered through community engagement processes to inform Council decisions
- Consider appropriate project timelines and resources needed for community engagement





## Roadmap to Community Engagement



### Community Engagement Roadmap Steps

Take a moment to answer the following questions. Don't focus on details, just write the basics.

#### Step 1: Understand the Project – From the City's Perspective

- a) What is the overall goal of the project?
- b) Are there legislated requirements to engage stakeholders in this project?
  - If so, what are the legislated requirements?
- c) Who is involved in this project? (One City department or several? City Council? The whole Corporation? Partner agencies? Other organizations?)
- d) Are you working with a consultant?
  - If so, what is the scope of their work?
- e) Who will make the decision? (Employees, General Manager, Deputy CAO, Council, etc.)
- f) What information will the decision makers need to make the decision?
- g) What is the goal of community engagement – what decision is being made?
- h) Who might be affected by the project, and how might they be affected?
  - (see **Stakeholder Identification & Analysis Worksheet**)
- i) What question do we want to ask each identified stakeholder group?
- j) What are the risks in involving the community?
  - (see **Risk Matrix Worksheet**)
- k) What are the risks of excluding the community?
- l) What are the project timelines?
- m) What point of the decision making process is this project at?
  - (see **Decision Making Process Worksheet**)
- n) What municipal issues or historical factors will impact this project?
- o) What are the potential impacts on other municipal departments?
- p) What support/representation do we need, if any, from:
  - Other City departments?
  - Communications staff?
  - Community Engagement team?

q) What is the overall project budget? How much is allocated to Community Engagement and Communications?

## Step 2: Explore the Community's Perspective

- a) How interested will each community stakeholder group be in the project? Why?
- (see **Stakeholder Identification & Analysis Worksheet**)
- b) What information do community stakeholders need from the City?
- Scope and potential impacts on stakeholders
- c) What community issues or historical factors will impact this project?
- d) List any current or previous community engagement or communications around this issue or related issues that may have impacted the identified stakeholder groups.
- e) What factors will influence the engagement process from the community's perspective?
- Vacation and holidays, work hours, school hours,
  - Accessibility, location & costs to participate,
  - Time commitment required to participate, etc.

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

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

**Note:** *If there are legislated requirements to engage, you must answer **yes**.*

**YES!** > COMPLETE A **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

**NO!** > COMPLETE AN **INTERNAL DECISION FORM**

Send a copy of 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) Which department is responsible for this project? Who is the project lead?
- b) What is the promise to the community?
- c) What is the overall project goal?
- d) What are the community engagement goals?
- e) What is the scope of the project? Are there legislated requirements to engage? If so, what are they?
- f) Who are the decision makers?
- g) What information do the decision makers need?
- h) Which other City Departments or partner organizations need to be involved?
- i) Plot the points of engagement across the level of engagement & decision making steps (See *Decision Making Matrix Worksheet*)
- j) Develop an engagement methods strategy listing all stakeholders, the level of engagement and corresponding activities (See *Engagement Matrix Worksheet*)
- k) How will hard-to-reach groups be included in this project? (See *Stakeholder Identification Worksheet*)
- l) Plot each of the project milestones including all communications and community engagement activities on a timeline.
- m) Develop an estimate budget for engagement
- n) Develop an estimate of staff time needed for engagement
- o) Create a data management strategy outlining how information will be stored and shared (See *Data Tracking Worksheet*)
- p) Develop a communications plan **with the project's Communications Specialist**
- q) Evaluate this engagement plan against the Guiding Principles for Community Engagement
- r) Complete the engagement readiness test (See *Readiness Test Worksheet*)
- s) Send a copy of this plan to the Community Engagement team

### **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**

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, see **Appendix B** or contact the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

## ***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 and a sample *Notice of Collections*.

### ***Plain Language***

Plain language is clear, concise, and uses simply constructed sentences. It tells the audience exactly what the audience needs to know without using unnecessary words or expressions.

Using plain language improves audience response to messages and avoids creating barriers for the audience. See **Appendix D** for more information on plain language.

### **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 Worksheet*)
- c) Provide data gathered from community engagement process to the decision makers
- d) If a decision is not reached because other issues have emerged, contact Corporate Communications to develop an Issues Management Plan

### **Step 6: Communicate the Decision**

- a) If there is a report to council, include a section that clearly states how the community input was used or why it was not used to make a decision. Follow up with process participants who asked to be kept informed, to share this information with them
- b) If there is no report to council, follow up with the process participants who asked to be kept informed, to let them know how their input was used to make a decision
- c) Post this report/information on the City of Guelph website

### **Step 7: Evaluate the process**

- a) Use the Guiding Principles for community engagement to evaluate the community engagement process (see *Community Engagement Project Evaluation* in Worksheets section)
- b) Send a copy of this evaluation to the Community Engagement Team

## Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

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

1. What is the level of community interest to participate in this decision making process?
2. How complex is this 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 interest a large number of people may require 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 may not be as interested in, may require 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. Some people may feel very uncomfortable attending a meeting in a church, mosque, synagogue, etc.

**Collaborate** – A level of engagement that requires working with community members, by facilitating discussions 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 with a shared environment. This term may refer to external members of the public or internal City of Guelph employees.

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

**Corporate Communication** – The strategic management of relationships between an organization and its diverse stakeholders, through the use of ongoing, direct and timely two way communication, to achieve mutual understanding, realize organizational goals, and serve the public interest.

**Consult** – A level of engagement that requires gathering information for analysis on alternatives and /or decisions.

**Customer Service** – Addressing and resolving service requests, inquiries, problems or transactions with established procedures and pre-identified outcomes. Customer service interactions between City employees and community are not engagement.

**Empower** – A level of engagement that requires a partnership between City of Guelph employees and community members/groups to create a supportive environment where decision making power is given to those community members/groups.

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

**Engagement Fatigue** – Lack of community interest in engagement activities which may be caused by over-engagement due to lack of coordination by City departments and/or a perceived lack of results from past engagements.

**Internal Community** – Internal community 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** – A level of engagement that requires discussions 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 can easily 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** – Individuals or groups of 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. The **MindMixer** online engagement tool leverages social media to obtain stakeholder input.

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

**Sustainable Decision** – A decision that balances the following considerations: environmental, cultural and social, financial, technical and stakeholder input.

**Values** – Underlying ethical or moral guidelines that shape our choices, opinions and guide our behaviours or actions.

**Value Based Conversation** – An activity 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 who face barriers to access the resources they need, which can negatively affect their health or wellbeing. Vulnerable populations include economically disadvantaged individuals, ethnic minorities, children, seniors, the homeless, those with chronic health conditions or mental illness.

## Appendix B: Accessibility Information

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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"***

***Community Engagement Team***



## Appendix C: Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

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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/information/services/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

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Plain language is more than just short words and short sentences — although those are often two very important guidelines for plain language. It is not baby talk or simplistic, but lets the audience understand the message easily. When messages are created using plain language, they are organized logically to make it easy for the audience to follow.

Consider how well the layout of your pages or screens works for your audience. You also ensure that the information provided is relevant to the audience. What is plain language for one audience may not be plain language for another audience.

Using plain language in all communications helps to uphold the Guiding Principles of Community Engagement. 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: Connor hit the ball.  
Passive voice: The ball was hit by Connor.
  - 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 format and language to distinguish between main points and supportive detail
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.

Original	Plain Language
The participants within the evaluation workshop felt there were a number of factors regarding the evaluation that were working well.	The workshop participants indicated that the following things are going well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of points...</li> </ul>
The whole issue has been raised many times with minimal action resulting from each resulting furore.	We have talked about this many times but nothing has happened.
Attached for your information or appropriate <b>action is....</b>	Attached is...
Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.	Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.
It is located in very close proximity to the <b>location of...</b>	<b>It is located close to...</b>
Accordingly, your cooperation in ensuring that this policy and By-law are followed is appreciated.	We appreciate your cooperation in following this policy and By-law.
<b>Prior to the expiration of the current contract...</b>	<b>Before the contract ends...</b>
Delays in the commencement of the project occurred.	The project started late.
Waste shall be placed by the occupant of the dwelling house for collection no later than 7:30 <b>o'clock</b> in the forenoon of the day of collection <b>and not earlier that 8:00 o'clock in the evening</b> of the previous day.	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.
The City owns, operates, maintains and recapitalizes physical assets like the parks and public spaces you enjoy.	The City owns, operates and maintains the parks and public play spaces you enjoy.

Adapted from workshop materials, Ruth Baldwin facilitator Spruce Grove, AB/CAMA/CUPE.

## Plain Language Resources

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

<http://ernie/ServiceAreas/information/services/CorpComm/Pages/GuidesandDocuments.aspx>

<http://ernie/ServiceAreas/information/services/CorpComm/Documents/HouseStyleGuidelines.pdf>

