



The **Research** Shop

COMMUNITY. CAMPUS. COLLABORATION. 

Report for the City of Guelph: Community Engagement Policies in National Cities

Appendix B

July, 2012

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The Research Shop, University of Guelph



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Introduction

This appendix is part of the project which the Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship/Research Shop, University of Guelph, was engaged to complete on behalf of the City of Guelph. The aim of the project was to identify policies, frameworks and tools on community engagement from Guelph's Ontario comparator municipalities as well as national and international cities in the United Kingdom, Australia and the U.S.A. This appendix provides details on the national cities and their strategy on community engagement. Below is the list of national cities that were searched, as well as additional information that were found for Ottawa.

- Calgary
- Edmonton
- Halifax
- Ottawa
- Saskatoon
- Victoria
- West Vancouver



City of Calgary

Engage! Policy 2003

Contact:

City of Calgary: 403-268-CITY (2489)

Key Document:

<http://www.calgary.ca/CA/city-clerks/Documents/Council-policy-library/cs009.pdf>

Public Engagement:

- Public engagement is a process that allows citizens to get involved in public issues that they care about. Most importantly it helps leaders and decision makers better understand the perspectives, opinions and concerns of citizens and stakeholders.
- When the public is involved in decision making, the results and processes are:
 - Open and transparent
 - Better quality as the leaders and decision makers are better informed.

Background:

- The Citizen Engagement Project (CEP) was initiated by City Council in 2001 to improve the effectiveness of the City's engagement activities. A review of international best practices in stakeholder engagement was completed.
- Internal and external involvement was used in the development of the policy as more than four hundred stakeholders including City Council, Administration and the public were consulted in the development of the Engage Policy.

Purpose:

- The Engage Policy achieves the following:
 - aligns with City Council priorities
 - supports City Council's decision-making by providing information on stakeholders' opinions
 - ensures consistent and clear practices
 - ensures an appropriate level of engagement
 - enhances the City of Calgary's reputation as an organization that listens to citizens and employees

Policy:

- The Engage Policy is aligned with the Corporate Values, which are:
 - Be honest and tell the truth;
 - Pursue excellence;
 - Be accountable;



**Engage! Policy
2003**

- Be responsive, compassionate, and fair; and
- Treat others with respect.

This policy incorporates 5 "**Cornerstones**" which are the principles for guiding action:

1. **Accountability** – The City will be accountable for acting in accordance with the commitments it makes to the stakeholders and will demonstrate that results and outcomes are consistent with promises it makes, while remaining responsible to the citizens of Calgary. The process will be measured for consistency with the promises made to citizens. The process will be evaluated and the results communicated.

- Outcomes of the process will be measured.
- Design and implementation of the process and appropriate use of resources will be the responsibility of the assigned project leader(s).

2. **Inclusiveness** – The City will make its best efforts to reach, involve and hear from all of those who are affected directly and indirectly. Best efforts will be made to accommodate diverse needs, backgrounds, and challenges.

- Opportunities will be provided to create shared visions embraced by diverse interests.

3. **Transparency** – The City will provide clear, timely and complete information, and will endeavour to ensure decision processes, procedures, and constraints are understood and followed. The promise, purpose and limitations on engaging stakeholders will be made clear and understandable.

- The roles and responsibilities of all parties will be clearly communicated, understood and accepted.
- Feedback will be provided on what stakeholders said and how their input was considered by the decision makers.

4. **Commitment** – The City, within its ability and work plans, will allocate available resources for effective engagement. Resources are to be applied appropriately to achieve an understanding of the key issues.

- Staff will be trained and capable in supporting effective engagement.
- Stakeholder time and resources will be respected and used effectively.

5. **Responsiveness** – The City of Calgary will be responsive, accessible and endeavour to understand citizen and other stakeholders' concerns. Efforts will be made to inform affected stakeholders of the issues.

- The Corporation will be prepared for, and responsive to, the views of stakeholders.



Engage! Policy 2003		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders will be given resources so they can help resolve community issues/problems. 		
<p>This policy includes a spectrum of five strategies and associated promises related to reaching and involving citizens and other stakeholders, and external and internal stakeholder groups in specific engagement initiatives regarding planning, policy, and projects. Whenever The City embarks on an engagement process, the purpose of the engagement and the ‘promise’ will be clarified at the beginning of the process. The spectrum of Strategies and Promises is:</p>		
Strategy		Promise
Inform	To provide information that will assist stakeholders in understanding issues, problems, alternatives and or solutions.	We will endeavour to provide information that is timely, accurate, balanced, objective, easily understood, and highly accessible. We will respond to questions for clarification.
Listen & Learn:	Both stakeholders and The City listen to and learn about each other’s views, plans, concerns, and expectations.	We will listen to stakeholders and learn about their plans, views, issues, concerns and expectations.
Consult	Stakeholders feedback is obtained through consultation to analyze issues and build alternatives, and thereby make contributions to the decision making process. Consulting with stakeholders ensures issues and concerns are understood and considered.	We will consult with stakeholders to obtain feedback and ensure their input is considered and incorporated to the maximum extent possible. We undertake to advise how consultation affected the decisions and outcomes.
Collaborate:	Stakeholders are considered partners in the decision making process, including collaboration on analyzing issues, building alternatives, identifying a preferred solution, and making recommendations.	We will partner with stakeholders in a process that results in joint recommendations. We undertake to advise how collaboration affected decision making.



**Engage! Policy
2003**

Empower	Aspects of the decision making process are delegated to stakeholders.	Where legislation permits, we will abide with the decisions made under delegated authority. Where legislation precludes making such a commitment in advance, we undertake to be guided by the outcome.
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Implementation/ Procedures:

1. This policy applies to six zones of opportunity for engagement that exist within the Corporation:
 - Public participation in specific planning, policy, and project initiatives
 - Internal Relations
 - Customer Service
 - Volunteer Participation
 - Community Development
 - Mandated processes involving public participation
2. Citizens and other stakeholders will be encouraged to adopt the Engage Policy's Cornerstones and Guiding Principles when invited to participate in engagement initiatives.
3. The Engage Spectrum decision tool will be implemented by The City to help guide and determine the level of engagement that The City will embark on for stakeholder input.
4. The Engage Tool Kit which is still under development will be used by The City's trained facilitators to guide future stakeholder engagement processes.
5. The Engagement Resource Unit will provide support Council, staff, partners and the public to help build engagement capacity within the Corporation. The Unit will advocate, co-ordinate and link engagement activities, standards and practices across the Corporation. It will provide advice, consultation and facilitation of engagement process design and provide internal training and orientation to the Engage Policy, Framework and Tool Kit
6. Prior to embarking on any commitment to a level of engagement on a project or initiative, the Engage Spectrum and Tool Kit will be utilized by the Corporation to determine the level of investment and need for embarking on an engagement program.
7. All engagement activities will occur within approved plans and funding of the Administration and any requests outside these approved plans must be referred through Council.





**Engage! Policy
2003**

8. Where appropriate, and to the extent feasible, The City will encourage, or contract for, the adoption of the Engage Policy by Civic Partners in conjunction with the Civic Partnerships Guide to Policy & Administration.





City of Edmonton

Website: http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/public-involvement.aspx

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From personal communication:

- *Consultation Manager* is mandated as a web-based tool for City staff to use as a central data repository to store all documents related to specific public involvement projects. It is currently under review.
- Edmonton has no known tool that would assess and evaluate the process and outcome of engagement.

Public Involvement Policy C513 – adopted by City Council 17 January 2006

- **Purpose:** “To provide decision makers, the staff of the City of Edmonton, and mostly the citizens and stakeholders that form the public with a consistent and genuine process that will set a standard of excellence for public involvement processes in the city.”
- Public involvement processes guided by:
 - Clear purpose – use of Continuum of Public Involvement
 - Consistent approach – use of Public Involvement Roadmap
 - Commitment to involve – through three core commitments (Commitment to Citizen Engagement, Commitment to Honouring People, Commitment to Accessible Involvement)



Involving Edmonton: A Public Involvement Initiative (2008)

Reasons for public involvement initiative

- Public involvement is integral part of government
- Provide decision makers with perspectives from different points of view based on different experiences and knowledge
- Build trusting relationships
- Build internal capacity for staff to conduct effective public involvement

- Goal is to provide decision makers, staff, and citizens and stakeholders with a consistent and genuine approach to public involvement that will set excellent standard
- Does not mandate that specific public involvement formats to be used at specific times

Why the term public involvement

- Public chosen because “it is most general and most inclusive term in the municipal context” (p. 3) – does not pertain to individuals only
- Involvement chosen because “it most accurately represents the various phases outlined in the Continuum of Public Involvement” (p. 3)

Continuum of Public Involvement (see guide for graphic representation)

- **Information Sharing**
- **Consultation** – testing ideas or concepts, collaborate to develop solutions to build commitment
- **Active Participation** – sharing decision making, delegating decision making to build responsibility

Section 1 – process tips (p. 9 – 22)

- Take the time to plan
- Ensure form follows function when deciding methodology
- Don’t assume you know the answers
- Ensure process aligns with scope and impact of the overall project
- Use plain language and simple diagram
- Develop a public involvement plan
- Support transition to corporate standard of practice
- Acquire skills and knowledge
- Involve decision makers – key stakeholders
- Involve relevant stakeholders, multicultural communities, seldom heard groups
- Test process design



Involving Edmonton: A Public Involvement Initiative (2008)

- Identify and manage risks
- Work with the media
- Manage data , develop evaluation process, monitor the process, report
- Follow up with participants

Methods (p. 24 – 31)

- Media coverage, advertising ,newsletters etc
- Broken into sections with tools used for information sharing, for consultation, and for active participation

Workbook for understanding the overall project or issue, defining purpose, scope, outcomes, clarifying commitment, participant identification template, resource plan and monitoring tool, communication strategy template, data tracking template, risk assessment template, readiness test (p. 33 – 54)

Template for public involvement plan (p. 56-59)



Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

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Key Documents:

<http://www.halifax.ca/crca/CommunityEngagement/documents/CommunityEngagementStrategy.pdf>

<http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/081125cow3.pdf>

Summary:

- The strategy is made up of a definition, a continuum of community engagement, ten principles of community engagement, a checklist and 5 strategic approaches which will ensure that the new frame work is implemented across the HRM
- The strategy does not mandate that specific strategies be used at specific times and so those using the strategy can tailor it to meet their individual needs; each situation demands its own approach and process
- Since identifying community engagement as a council focus in 2007, Halifax Reginal Municipality (HRM) staff coordinated a detailed review of its community engagement practice as well as successful approaches taken by other municipalities. The review identified a need for a coordinated approach to community engagement. Based on the review of these findings, 5 strategic approaches are recommended to guide future actions:
 1. Adopt an HRM Community Engagement Framework
 2. Improve Engagement Practices of Individual Decisions and Business Units
 3. Increase Training and Internal Support of HRM staff
 4. Invest in Public Education, Outreach and Capacity Building
 5. Ensure Accountability and Promote Excellence in Community Engagement



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

Implementation & Governance:

- Championed by the Senior Management Team
- Governed by Community Developments Community Relations and Cultural Affairs Division
- All reports to council now include a “community engagement” section

Program Delivery:

- The implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy will move forward in a phased approach
- The different actions within each strategic approach will be prioritized in the short term, long term and medium term:
 - **Short term focus** will be placed on the development and adoption of the HRM Community Engagement Framework by Council, including the guiding principles and checklist. Community Engagement Toolkit, promotional materials and E-Newsletter will be launched. Councillors and key business units will be introduced to the framework in 2008. An HRM Community Engagement Steering Committee will also be established. The development of an overall (internal and external) inclusion strategy for HRM will commence.
 - **Medium term focus** will be placed on the collaborative initiation of tailored community engagement improvement programs in relevant Business Units and staff training. An emphasis will be placed on community capacity building and improved outreach and educational materials, including maximizing HRM’s use of its website and the Internet to enhance opportunities for public information, consultation, and participation. Work will also commence to changing the notification process, community calendar and launching a community database solution.
 - **Long term focus** will be placed on, and the evaluation and monitoring of the improvement efforts of relevant Business Units and Divisions and developing a recognition program.
- Evaluation of the implementation will be ongoing and conducted in a formative way by the Community Relations staff and the Steering Committee
 - No evidence was found regarding any evaluations
- Evaluation will also be conducted yearly (summative) with each Business cycle to measure outcomes and ensure progress is in alignment with Council priorities
- Annual progress reports will be tabled with Regional Council

Community Engagement Framework:

- The community engagement framework includes a policy direction regarding common definition, adoption of the continuum of community engagement and 10 principles of



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

community engagement

- The Community Engagement Strategy will be operationalized through 5 strategic approaches and actions contained within them

Policy 1: HRM will adopt a Community Engagement Framework which will guide all of its public involvement, including initiatives led by Council, staff, external consultants and community.

Policy 2: HRM will adopt a common definition of community engagement, including definitions contained in the Community Engagement Dictionary accompanying the Strategy.

- Community engagement can be defined as “the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to enact positive action. It includes information sharing, consultation and active involvement in decision making”.
- Residents expect to be involved in the decisions that affect them, and citizen involvement in deliberations about what is important to them, how their community grows and develops is crucial to more informed government decisions and better service delivery. Effective public engagement taps into the collective knowledge and wisdom of residents and contributes to building more connected, harmonious and resilient communities. When people are involved in initiating and promoting change, the resulting solutions tend to be more successful and lasting.
- Community engagement is fundamental to local representative democracy and engagement that is too numerous, poorly designed and poorly executed can discourage or even silence significant portions of the community. Each situation requires a tailored approach to engagement. The onus on HRM is to honour local values and traditions, to use a strategic approach to community engagement, to facilitate effective engagement and to clearly communicate to the public the purpose and scope of engagement. It is important to recognize that in a vast majority of cases the final decision rests with the elected municipal representatives – the HRM Regional Council.

Policy 3: HRM will adopt the Continuum of Community Engagement in developing, implementing and communicating public involvement initiatives.



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

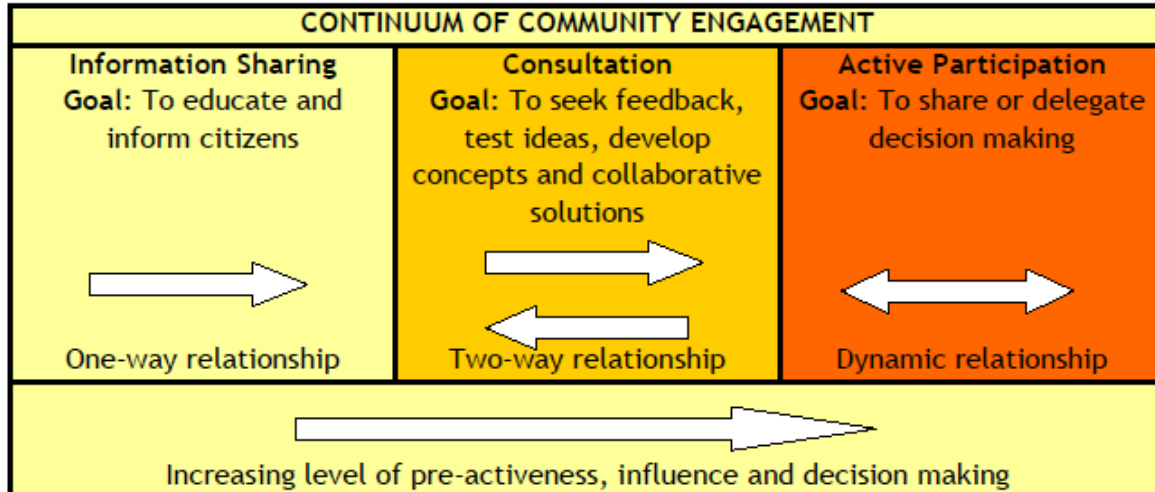


Fig. 2 Continuum of Community Engagement

- **Information sharing** – involves sharing information to build awareness of issues that may affect the public or specific communities. HRM’s responsibility here is to provide objective, reliable, timely, easy to find and easy to understand information. Open houses, public announcements and publications are all examples
- **Consultation** – is typically part of a regulatory process where the public’s input on matters affecting them is sought. Its main goals are to improve the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in projects, laws and policies. It may include simple testing of ideas or concepts to build knowledge or it may include a two-way collaboration to develop solutions and build community buy-in. HRM’s responsibility is to define goals and processes, clearly state the purpose and limits of engagement and how the information collected will be used in decision making. Examples of consultation include Police Town Hall meetings, various Council public advisory committees, public hearings, etc.
- **Active participation** – involves sharing decision making to build ownership or delegating decision making to build community capacity and responsibility. HRM’s responsibility is to provide support, time and flexibility to facilitate dialogue between the public, HRM representatives and other partners.

Policy 4: HRM will adopt the Ten Principles of Community Engagement and use them to guide the development and implementation of all HRM community engagement processes.



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

HRM's Commitment to Principles of Community Engagement

1. Citizen participation is recognized as an asset, is valued and encouraged
2. The purpose and the process are clear to all participants
3. Everyone potentially affected by the process has an opportunity to become involved
4. Barriers to access are recognized and overcome to ensure diverse, inclusive and balanced participation
5. The process is respectful, fair, effective and transparent
6. Communication is clear, timely and effective
7. Public involvement is adequately resourced
8. Participants are informed of outcomes of community engagement
9. The public has an opportunity to provide feedback at the various stages of the process
10. Community engagement will be evaluated and improved

Policy 5: HRM will adopt the Community Engagement Checklist in the development and implementation of its community engagement initiatives.

- Community engagement is an important but only one component of government decision making. It may not always appropriate to engage the public, and when a decision is made to engage the process must be planned for to ensure the public involvement is meaningful, effective and results in positive results for the community. The Continuum of Community Engagement along with the Ten Principles provides a framework for planning any public engagement exercise. Community engagement must take place within a strategic and deliberate decision making process to help ensure that an appropriate level of engagement is sought.
- To assist staff, Councillors and external parties hosting community engagement on HRM's behalf a 'Readiness Checklist' has been developed to assess the level of readiness to engage the public. The expectation is not to achieve a perfect score, but to cover as much as possible all of the key aspects prior to engagement to ensure a meaningful and effective exchange between HRM, its residents and stakeholders. A longer version of the Checklist focussed on the key stages of planning community engagement has also been developed. It is mandatory that this check list be used by internal and external staff when preparing to engage the community.



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

- Questions on the Readiness Checklist include:
 1. We can confirm that a decision has not been made and there is a purpose for the involvement process beyond education and information sharing
 2. We know what information the decision makers are looking for and how they will use it
 3. We have a clear understanding of what we need to know from the public and how we will facilitate input
 4. We selected appropriate engagement strategies to meet our goals
 5. There is adequate time for meaningful involvement
 6. We have project budget and have the resources identified to sponsor an effective process
 7. We have identified potential stakeholders and their level of involvement
 8. We have developed an inclusion policy to address potential barriers to participation including training and support
 9. We have developed a project plan including milestones; decision making points and timing
 10. We have identified and analyzed risk
 11. We have developed an effective communication plan
 12. We have identified a project spokesperson
 13. We have coordinated our process with other HRM processes
 14. We have a plan on how to collect and report public input back to participants and decision makers
 15. We developed an evaluation plan as part of the process
 16. ****Our process clearly aligns with the HRM principles of Community Engagement**
- Each level of engagement along the continuum can be implemented through a range of engagement tools and techniques. In the past, HRM used both traditional techniques, such as advisory committees and public meetings, as well as more innovative processes such as community visioning, asset mapping and appreciative inquiry. The complexity of the issues at hand, the desired outcomes of the process, and the timeline, all help to determine which methods are most appropriate. The Community Engagement Tool-Kit will provide a guide to the various techniques.

**Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy
2008**

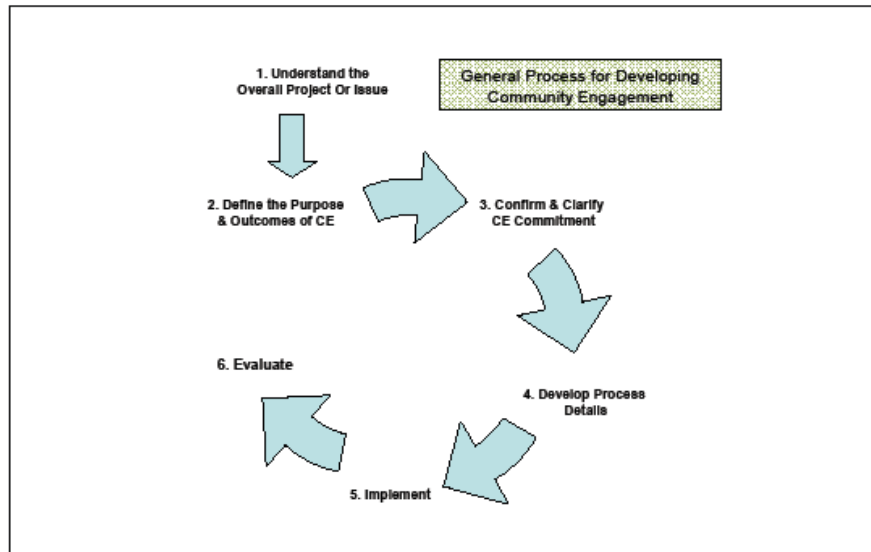


Fig. 3 General process for developing Community Engagement processes

Improving Community Engagement:

Strategic Approach 1: Adopt an HRM Community Engagement Framework

Action 1.1 Develop a Community Engagement Dictionary

- There are many terms used to describe community engagement, many of which are not used consistently. To ensure expectations are accurate for any given process, HRM will use the Continuum of Community Engagement and the terms in the Community Engagement Dictionary. Regardless of what terms are used by others agencies, HRM will consistently use these terms and definitions to ensure clarity and avoid misunderstanding. Also see the Checklist above.

Action 1.2 Develop a 'Community Engagement Tools and Resources Kit'

- To assist staff with designing engagement exercises and making decisions about public processes, a Community Engagement Toolkit will be developed. The kit will include key HRM community engagement documents such as the Guiding Principles, Checklist, Dictionary, Risk Assessment, Communication Guide and Evaluation Guide.



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

It will also provide explanations of both traditional and innovative engagement techniques, the goals and circumstances under which each is most appropriate, as well as the contact information of relevant support staff. The kit will be available in hard copy and on line and will also be made public on HRM's website to support community driven engagement processes.

Strategic Approach 2: Support Improved Community Engagement Practices of Individual Divisions / Business Units

Action 2.1 Develop a 'Community Engagement Resource Group' (CERG)

- HRM has a number of staff with substantial knowledge and experience in community engagement. These staff members will comprise Community Relations Resource Group (CERG) who will focus on skill development and relevant research (i.e. developing the toolkit). This group, comprised of Community Relations staff to begin with, will be available for guidance and consultation in regards to the design, implementation and evaluation of all of HRM's engagement exercises. The group will also help build capacity amongst staff and provide peer to peer mentoring. Over time, Community Engagement expertise will grow throughout the organization as staff becomes familiar and confident with community engagement principles and techniques.

Action 2.2 Educate staff and Councilors on the new Community Engagement Framework

- The new Community Engagement Strategy will need to be communicated clearly to staff, Councillors, and contractors acting on HRM behalf and the public. The Community Engagement Framework will be shared with staff and Councillors through workshops, presentations, written materials, on the web, intranet and open discussions. A special effort will be made to incorporate community engagement as part of new staff and Council orientation sessions. Templates will also be developed to clearly communicate where specific processes are on the Continuum of Engagement. Community Relations will work with Corporate Communications to develop promotional materials.

Action 2.3 Develop a 'Process Improvement Program' for individual Business Units

- Community engagement should align with Council Focus areas and Corporate priorities but it can also inform those priorities. Some HRM business units and divisions have already moved forward with community engagement improvement



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

plans, while others still need to initiate such a process. Community Relations staff will provide support and foster an environment where divisions can easily adapt and apply their improvement programs consistent with the HRM Community Engagement Framework. The goal is to initially assess the three top community engagement processes in each business unit or division and develop a standardized plan that complies with the Principles of Community Engagement.

Action 2.4 Develop a Community Engagement Calendar to improve coordination

- Currently various divisions may post notices of meetings in newspapers and on their individual websites but there is no coordinated approach either internally or externally to notify staff and public of upcoming meetings. As a result more than one HRM meeting may take place in the same community on the same day or several meetings may occur in one week. This results in confusion, poor attendance, community confusion and burnout. It also means that internally opportunities are missed to coordinate a more efficient approach to community engagement. Community Relations staff will work with Corporate Communication, Clerk's Office, Web Services and all the business units to develop and promote the use of an interactive Community Engagement Calendar for internal

Strategic Approach 3: Increased Training and Internal Support of HRM Staff

Action 3.1 Expand and Promote HRM staff training programs

- This will support the implementation of the community engagement framework and allow staff to explore innovative opportunities in gaining comfort with engaging with the public

Action 3.3 Develop a strategic communications plan for business units and their divisions

- Develop a community engagement newsletter
- Emphasis should be placed on clear, timely, concise objective communication free of technical jargon
- Communication materials may also address the history of the issue, relevant policies and procedures and alternative approaches to addressing the issue
- Business units should work with Corporate Communications to develop their own strategic communications plan to improve their exchanges with the public and with one another



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

Action Plan 3.4 Develop appropriate budget and resource allocation for community engagement

- In order to create effective and representative engagement, dedicated resources to support defined community engagement roles as well as inclusive and more innovative processes should be prioritized

Action Plan 3.5 Develop a plan to address needs for technology, equipment, and meeting spaces

Strategy 4- Invest in Public Education, Outreach and Capacity Building

Action Plan 4.1 Improve Public Knowledge of HRM processes and structures

- HRM will promote public awareness: Community engagement can inform how these processes can be modified to create a better fit and easier access for local communities. In addition, HRM “how-to” guides (print and web-based) should outline municipal structures, services provided and how to access them, and how to participate in municipal processes. Materials should be translated to increase access by linguistically diverse groups. Workshops should be developed on specific topics, i.e. volunteering, getting permits, getting involved in planning and development processes. Tours of City Hall and informal meet and greets between municipal Councillors, staff and community leaders should also be encouraged and promoted.

Action Plan 4.2 Improve the HRM website

Action Plan 4.3 Develop a Community Contact database solution

- Should develop a centralized database of community contact information that is accessible to all divisions. The database should arrange contacts and cross reference with information of concerned residents and community groups based on areas of interest, geography and past participation in training, or public processes

Action Plan 4.4 Develop a Community Engagement Inclusion Guide and Workshop

- Such a strategy would develop contact and media lists, consider potential barriers to participation (based on age, language, literacy, economic status, gender, race, ethnic or cultural background, newcomer status, communication style) and develop strategies for addressing these barriers. More inclusive processes must include



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

multiple and appropriate opportunities for involvement.

Action Plan 4.5 Develop a new Volunteer Management Strategy

- HRM currently provides training to community members and groups in facilitation, leadership and board development in order to promote volunteerism, build capacity and help community develop the skills and confidence necessary to act as significant stakeholders in the municipality. Similar training could be offered to all HRM citizen committees to ensure a clear understanding of purpose, decision making scope and effective group dynamics.

Action Plan 4.6 Develop a revised and enhanced notification system

- Current notification practices for most HRM Community Engagement processes primarily rely on formal newspaper notifications as well as mail outs, website notification and placards on properties. In order to reach a broader range of participants, an enhanced notification process should be developed that will go above and beyond notification mandated by legislation and utilize a combination of traditional and innovative communication vehicles (i.e. community-based networks such as notice boards and church bulletins, television spots, internet communication such as email and Facebook, door to door campaigns, etc.). Special attention will be paid to considering the need for clear language, translated materials, and amount of time notice is given in advance of events.

Action Plan 4.7 Allocate Resources to support inclusive participation in HRM processes

- This may include communication resources to broaden advertising in community newspapers, assisting volunteers with transportation costs, childcare, interpreters and ensuring accessible meeting spaces.

Strategic Approach 5- Improved Accountability and Promotion of Excellence

Action 5.1 Institute the “Community Engagement Checklist” as part of planning for all community engagement- See Above for details

Action 5.2 Introduce a new mandatory ‘Community Engagement’ section in staff reports

- A new “Community Engagement” section will become a mandatory requirement of



Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Community Engagement Strategy 2008

staff reports. It will include a mandatory description of a Community Engagement process including how internal and external stakeholders were engaged on a given initiative (i.e. how they were informed, consulted or actively engaged). Staff may also wish to append more detailed description of the process to staff reports (e.g. meeting minutes, key issues and how they were addressed). In the event that stakeholders or the wider community were not engaged, the new section will provide a brief rationale for that decision.

Action 5.3 Revise HRM contract templates to ensure external consultants use the new Community Engagement Framework

Action 5.4 Require regular evaluation of completed engagement processes

- All engagement initiatives should incorporate public feedback and evaluation as part of the planning process. Evaluation should not be onerous and should correspond to the length and complexity of the engagement process. It can be completed by staff, an outside consultant or the participating public. All evaluation should be shared with the CERG to help assess need for training, coordination and to share “lessons learned” across the municipality.

Action 5.5 Develop a program to recognize excellence in community engagement

- The improvement of community engagement practice at HRM will initially require additional staff resources. This effort and innovation should be recognized and celebrated by the municipality. It is recommended that these successes be shared among business units through an annual community engagement recognition program. Community Relations will work with Corporate Communication and the DCAO Office to implement the program.



City of Ottawa

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- Ottawa is currently reviewing its public participation policy and developing toolkits as part of a Community Engagement Strategy – it appears that Ottawa is likely to change its term from ‘public participation’ to ‘community engagement’
- Policy did not appear to be endorsed across the departments – people don’t understand the reasons for doing it
- Ottawa is also researching into evaluation

Encouraging and Advancing Public Participation in Ottawa (2003)

Website:

<http://www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2003/10-22/csdc/ACS2003-CRS-SEC-0016.htm>

The 2003 Public Participation Policy

- **Policy Development:** Involved extensive public consultation with citizens and city staff during its development including online internet discussion, telephone survey, focus group with city staff, focus groups with the community, community forums, focus groups with Poverty Issues Advisory Committee and low income/marginalized community representatives, IAP2 workshop.
- The policy adopts the **IAP2 spectrum**.

Six key principles:

1. **Inclusive & Authentic** –involve all stakeholders who are potentially affected by an issue in a transparent and equitable way to the greatest extent possible
2. **Sharing & Supportive** - involving stakeholders in decision making where their input can influence the decision
3. **Accountable & Committed** - setting clear objectives and expectations, actively listening to the input of citizens, community organizations and Advisory Committees
4. **Meaningful & Responsive** - ensuring consultation is meaningful and valid, with clear objectives and expectations with respect to the ability of the public to impact the decision, is conducted in a timely manner that is appropriate to the issue and level of public involvement. Ensuring that



Encouraging and Advancing Public Participation in Ottawa (2003)

participants receive appropriate feedback on the impact of their input is key to making public participation meaningful.

5. **Continuously Improving** - continuously evaluating and measuring the success of the Public Participation Policy and public participation initiatives
6. **Facilitating & Building Capacity for a Collaborative Community** - strengthening links between the City and the community, building capacity in the community for citizen engagement on issues that affect them

Benefits of a consistent, standardized and meaningful approach to public participation

- Reduces costly project delays by responding to problems and concerns before they develop
- Saves money and time by allowing good projects to move forward
- Provides an early warning system for public concerns and needs – creates a forum for sharing ideas and concerns
- Acts as a sounding board for proposed changes and develops a wider range of alternatives
- Increases two-way communication, which builds trust and fosters relationships
- Increases credibility for decision-makers and provides a clearer rationale for decisions
- Allows meaningful citizen input into decision-making
- Provides a means to better incorporate the public's values in local government initiatives
- Builds a stronger foundation for implementation
- Meets the public's expectations of an open and transparent local government
- Facilitates understanding and fosters respect for different perspectives
- Improves the quality of local democracy
- Creates a credible channel through which accurate and timely information can be disseminated
- Helps secure understanding and support for the Corporation's goals



City of Saskatoon

City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

Contact:

Community Development
City of Saskatoon
306-975-2289

**Community Development is the lead in the Community Engagement initiative for the City of Saskatoon. They are responsible for the development of community engagement materials and for the ongoing coaching and training of departmental staff as required. They are the first point of contact with process/content inquiries and provide consultation with civic administration project leaders on engagement initiatives.

Key Documents:

http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/Community%20Services/Communitydevelopment/Documents/ce_fullmanual.pdf

Purpose:

- Saskatoon City Council adopted a community engagement process to provide a consistent approach to engagement of the public in civic matters. The engagement process is applied when the Administration or City Council want to inform the public, gather face-to-face comments or get input on specific initiatives, projects, new bylaws, bylaw amendments or other civic responsibilities prior to final recommendations, approval or endorsement.
- Examples of initiatives in which the community engagement process would apply include:
 - **Land use issues** such as amendments to the Development Plan or Zoning Bylaw, discretionary use proposals or park design
 - **Social issues** such as affordable housing priorities and social policies
 - **Safety issues** such as traffic, crime, pedestrian crosswalks
 - **Recreation issues** such as parks programming
 - Creation and implementation of a **Local Area Plan**

Components: The community engagement process involves several components. The first is that, when engaging the public, the City of Saskatoon be respectful of the following principles:

- Municipal government decisions be made in a context that is sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values
- The community engagement process must demonstrate openness, honesty and transparency of purpose, as well as communication of results



City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

- The process must be respectful of decision-making protocols
- The process must demonstrate a commitment to being time-sensitive and cost-effective.

Objectives:

- Provide practical and appropriate opportunities for participation by citizens and stakeholders regarding proposed developments, services, programs or other municipal decisions that impact their quality of life
 - Provide sufficient access to information to allow stakeholders to become well-informed and thus capable of participation in the dialogue
 - Demonstrate consistent application of the process to the public and City Council.
 - Ensure a consistent approach to community engagement

Specific Roles:

- *Role of Key Stakeholders*
 - The community engagement process recognizes four primary stakeholders: City Council, Civic Administration, Community Associations and the public. While individual roles and expectations may differ, the overall process is consistent.
- *Role of City Council*
 - The role of City Council is to ensure that:
 - A standard community engagement process is used
 - Administration proposals, individual concerns and overall public benefit are balanced
 - Guidelines and methods for participation, communication and cooperation are clearly established.
 - City Council also evaluates the validity of groups or individuals speaking on behalf of others, acknowledges the public's involvement and actively engages in public participation events.
- *Role of City Administration*
 - Civic Administration is responsible for supporting community engagement principles and objectives, as well as carrying out steps in the defined process. The Administration also:
 - Ensures an effective, appropriate and consistent approach to the process, specifically, matching objectives of engagement with the methodology for achieving that engagement
 - Provides a complete methodology that includes strategy, process and public participation, communication and evaluation tools
 - Co-ordinates public participation forums in specific neighbourhood(s) or on specific topic(s)
 - Is responsible for governance of the process.
- *Role of Community Associations*
 - Review and comment as requested on the engagement process used by the City of



City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

Saskatoon in their respective community

- Assist in facilitating community engagement at the neighbourhood/suburban level (e.g. advertise in local newsletters)
- Participate in community engagement processes
- At the Administration's request, participate as a focus group regarding proposed areas of change such as new policy, policy change or major project initiatives.
- *Role of the Public*
 - Overall, the public's role is to actively participate in the community engagement process, keep the public good in mind and consider current and future needs of the community. When representing others, the public's role (as an individual or group) is to:
 - Clearly state who they represent
 - Consult with the people they represent
 - Present the views of the group
 - Be open minded
 - Demonstrate that they have followed the engagement process and are representative of the group.

Definition of Community Engagement:

- Community engagement is an ongoing process involving communication and interaction between the City of Saskatoon and its residents. The extent of public involvement spans a continuum from simply informing to consulting to involving. By communicating directly, all parties become better informed about the range of views on issues and proposals. Done well, community engagement results in decisions that are more sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values.
- Involves an ongoing exchange of information, discussion, debate and decision-making
- Is an investment of time, energy and resources with payback of some short-term and many long-term benefits
- Opens doors to innovation, creative problem solving, improved service, greater efficiency and win-win conflict resolution
- Aims to achieve consensus where possible, first through creativity without trade-offs, then through prioritization, negotiation and compromise
- Builds relationships whose nature and strength can significantly influence success
- Recognizes that all participants have valid and important contributions to make and can bring new information and perspectives to the table.

10 Tips for Making Community Engagement Work:

- Take the initiative. Community engagement is a permanent part of the City of Saskatoon's decision-making process. Anticipate the need for consultation.
- Be flexible. Be willing to adjust the community engagement process to meet unforeseen developments.



City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

- Communicate clearly. Make sure the purposes and the engagement processes are clearly understood by all participants.
- Set clear limits. Clarify the objectives and scope of your engagement process at the beginning. All participants should understand which issues are open for discussion and where there is opportunity to influence decisions.
- Show respect. Consultation should be carried out objectively, openly and responsibly.
- Make the most of your limited resources. Community engagement requires careful thought, planning and preparation, as time and resources are often limited
- Recognize that conflict, tension and anxiety over issues such as the environment are inevitable. Focus on understanding the sources of conflict. Neither denies nor ignores conflict, but seek to overcome it to arrive at consensus.
- Take responsibility. Whether or not you hire outside expertise, you are responsible for running the program.
- Evaluate your performance. Make evaluation a major element of your engagement process.
- Always follow-up. Follow-up is a critical component of the process. Following up on questions, fulfilling commitments to provide more information and informing the public of decisions is all-important.

Steps to Community Engagement:

STEP 1 – Deciding Whether to Engage the Public

- The decision of whether to engage the public falls into one of two broad categories:
- Pre-defined circumstances – legislation (e.g. The Planning & Development Act), Administration and/or City Council directives make community engagement necessary. Specific engagement parameters, such as target audience or timeframes, may also be defined.
- Planned situations – the Administration and/or City Council request community engagement due to the nature of an issue/project and other special circumstances.
- **Key Questions:**
 - What are the intended outcomes (objectives) of your project or initiative?
 - Why is community engagement needed to reach these outcomes?
 - What do you need to know from the public?
 - How Community Engagement Fits Within a Project
- **Understanding when Community Engagement is required:**
From a civic administration point of view:
 - When wishing to provide information on City policy, procedures and/or program
 - When wanting input from stakeholders in a specific program area
 - When it is appropriate to integrate the public's comments on the design and development of a facility, structure, program or project



City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

- When wanting to build partnerships and strengthen relationships between the community and the City
- When wanting to build community trust and have public ‘buy in’.

From a community point of view:

- When an issue directly affects a significant members of the community
- When a proposal significantly affects the rights and entitlements of community members
- When an issue directly and significantly affects the natural environment
- When a significant number of people or particular groups are likely to have strong views on the issue
- When a change or issue is likely to directly affect quality of life

Degree of Engagement Sought – Inform, Consult, Involve

Inform	Consult	Involve
<p>Definition: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, and/or solution.</p>	<p>Definition: To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</p>	<p>Definition: To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.</p>
<p>What the Public can expect: We will keep the Public informed.</p>	<p>What the Public can expect: We will keep the public informed, consider what they have to say, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>What the Public can expect: We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.</p>
<p>Examples: FAQ's Web sites Open houses</p>	<p>Examples: Public meetings Focus Groups Surveys</p>	<p>Examples: Workshops Advisory Committees</p>

STEP 2 – Planning the Engagement Strategy

- Clarify the level of involvement:
 - Inform – to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solution.
 - Consult – to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
 - Involve – work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues



City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process- A Guide to Public Process (2004)

and concerns are consistently understood and considered.

- This guides your choice in:
 - Defining target audience – in some cases, the target audience will be pre-defined, in others it will need to be defined to suit the nature and extent of the proposed change
 - Developing a community engagement plan – using appropriate participation and communication tools and clearly identifying the stakeholders involved.
- **Questions that need to be answered:**
 - Why would you involve the public in this discussion? What exactly do you want to achieve?
 - What information do decision-makers need to assist them in this decision? How has this been verified?
 - What specific information are you seeking from the public?
 - How will this information add value to the decision-making process?
- **Communications Plan**
 - A Communications Plan is a leading factor in the success of a project. It is the written strategy for getting the right information to the right project stakeholders at the right time.
 - Each stakeholder has different requirements for information, since they participate in different ways.
 - Sharing knowledge empowers every project stakeholder and achieves measurable communication results.
 - Communication objectives should be set within overall project objectives. Different communication strategies may be needed for different types of events. Think about how much lead-time is needed to prepare, print or arrange for communication material.
 - A Communications Plan should be drafted for projects that are more than one-time events and involve a variety of stakeholders with different objectives and needs. It should be used in conjunction with a Community Engagement Plan.

STEP 3 – Implementation

- The use of various community engagement tools (e.g. public open houses, meetings, etc.) as outlined in the community engagement plan ensures that the goals and objectives of the project are met.
- **Key Questions:**
 - What is the critical path (timeline) for your engagement process?
 - What are the key decision points in this critical path and who makes the decisions?
 - Activities
- **Implementation involves coordination of the following activities:**
 - Event management
 - Staffing requirements



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- Financial resourcing
- Collaboration
- Attention to detail.
- **Resources:**
 - Financial resourcing includes an examination of:
 - Logistical expenditures, including rentals of space, audio-visual equipment, display costs, etc.
 - Communication expenditures, including printing, and advertising
 - Technical information and research
 - External staff or contract costs
 - Training costs
 - Travel and accommodation costs.
 -

STEP 4 – Reporting Back

- Reporting back means providing feedback to stakeholders that Civic administration has acknowledged what they had to say as well as providing the stakeholders with information on engagement outcomes and resulting decisions
- **Key Questions:**
 - How will you let stakeholders know how their input was considered and used?
 - How will you let decision-makers know how the information received was used?
- **Reporting Back:**
 - Reporting back to stakeholders means providing feedback on engagement outcomes and resulting decisions. In other words:
 - Acknowledging the many community groups, government agencies and individuals who gave generously of their time, energy and expertise to assist the City in its decision-making
 - Acknowledging participant contributions. Not all participants will require feedback on all issues; the planning process should identify which participants need feedback and how it will be provided.
 - Providing a record of the engagement process
 - Reporting on how the process reflects the City's commitments
 - Demonstrating that participants have been heard (this may take the form of a document which lists participants and records their views in their own words)
 - Providing an outline of decisions made
 - Providing a record of how final decisions were reached (e.g., the principles, values and commitments considered)
 - Advising participants about when an outcome is expected.
 - Reporting back to City Council means providing:
 - Complete and unbiased results of the engagement



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- A history of the reasons for the engagement, the process used, the results and the follow-up action taken
- An outline of any next stages or steps in the process
- A report of the evaluation outcomes.
- **Methods of Providing Feedback:**
 - Community meetings
 - Written reports (may be after each phase and at the end of the process)
 - Publication of a summary of community comments and final results in the local newspaper
 - Newsletters
 - School newsletters
 - Website
 - Final reports
 - A combination of some or all of the above.

STEP 5 – Evaluation

- Evaluation measures the effectiveness of your community engagement process. It may indicate future needs within the same project as well as valuable information in the undertaking of future similar projects.
- **Key Questions:**
 - How will you measure the effectiveness of your community engagement process?
- **Evaluation Process:**
 - Design an evaluation process to answer these questions:
 - What should you evaluate?
 - How should you evaluate? (Audience, tools, reports, etc.)
 - How will the results be used?
 - Is the methodology for the evaluation proportionate to the time spent on the engagement?
- **Checklist:**
 - How could we have done it better?
 - Was the presentation and the information provided appropriate to the participants' needs?
 - Did any of the participants complain about the process? Why? Were their complaints valid?
 - What could we have done to avoid the complaint?
 - Did the participants compliment us on aspects of the process? Why? How can we build on these strengths?
 - What skills were lacking?
 - What skills did we discover?
 - Do we need to engage specialists or can we be better trained to facilitate the process in the future?



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- Did the specialists we engaged meet the requirements?
- Did we get the information we wanted?
- Even if community members did not get the result that they had hoped, are they satisfied that they were heard and that we considered their views?
- **Evaluation Techniques:**
 - Informal discussion
 - Interviews
 - Questionnaires
 - Tear off forms with tick box answers
 - Observations to assess the quality of participation
 - Reviews of process documentation (e.g. records of events, issues raised, decisions made, submissions, feedback forms)
 - Process evaluation forms filled in by key participants in the process

*** Ensure the evaluation methods you use match the type of information you are trying to gather and are appropriate to the people you are talking to.*

- **Reports:**
 - Written evaluation reports should address the following:
 - The community engagement process followed
 - Key questions:
 - Relevance – did the process reach the right people and ask the right questions?
 - Results – did the answers tell us what we need to know?
 - Cost effectiveness – did the process stay within budget and use resources well?
 - Information collected (and methods used to collect it) about the relevance, results and cost effectiveness of the process
 - Analysis – identify how the information was analyzed
 - Timing – identify the key milestones against which progress was marked and reported
 - Reporting back and evaluation methods.



City of Victoria

Foundations for Success: A Strategy to Improve Civic Engagement at the City of Victoria (2010)

Website: <http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/communications/engaging-victoria.html>

- In 2009, the City Council identified civic engagement as one of its top priorities, following the endorsement of George Cuff's Governance Review and the adoption of the IAP2 principles for engagement.
- **Strategy Development:** the Strategy was developed as a result of consultation with over 200 citizens, stakeholders, City staff, and local key informants over a 4 month period and was carried out by researchers at HB Lanarc Consultants and UBC. Methods included key informant interviews and stakeholder interviews, Public Ideas forum, online discussion forum, focus groups with youth and immigrants, discussion page on the City's Facebook page, staff workshop. The consultation revealed a strong desire to build on past successes, learn from past mistakes, repair damaged relationships and rebuild trust.

Definition of civic engagement:

"timely and meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement in civic priority setting, decision-making, program development, and service delivery" (p. 12)

Benefits:

- Ensuring that the ideas and suggestions of citizens and stakeholders are actively sought, listened to and incorporate into decision making and program development
- Improved government decision making and quality of decisions and more responsive to community needs and priorities
- Greater accountability to and transparency for the public
- Increased understanding between the public, staff and elected officials
- Reduced conflicts between different interests
- Improved organizational learning and service delivery

Goals:

- Goal: 'not to produce and absolute consensus, but to ensure that the decision-making is well informed and offers citizens the chance to contribute their ideas and knowledge to policy development.' (4)
- Aim to increase responsibilities in the #, scope and quality of engagement efforts

Objectives:

- Better understand the diversity and strength of public opinion



Foundations for Success: A Strategy to Improve Civic Engagement at the City of Victoria (2010)

- Reach the “silent majority” of citizens more often
- Share different viewpoints and learn from each other
- Generate new ideas and solutions
- Build trust in decision-makers and more organizational capacity
- Enhance community capacity and social connections
- Better understand the diversity and strength of public opinion

Continuum of Civic Engagement

- IAP2 continuum

Barriers/Challenges identified during strategy development

1. Confusion about roles and responsibilities in engagement
2. How to set resources when resources are scarce
3. How to ensure that engagement efforts are consistent and co-ordinated across City
4. How to allocate resources
5. How to ensure effective communication about city issues
6. How to engage a diversity of stakeholders and citizens

Main strategies to address the six Challenges

- Lays out clear recommendations for Councillors, Staff and Public Advisor Committees Clarify, communicate, document,
- Inform public/include public input, have resources for important CE plans, use consultation identify top priorities, use CE activities
- Tools to ensure successful application of guiding principles, planning processes and metrics for success, indicators for evaluation (long and short term); annual report; increase staff capacity in using systems and tools i.e software
- Budget and time, training, learning, communication, consultation software, increase internal efficiencies, centralize an office of Civic Engagement to implement activities
- Centralize customer service; e-access to info, advance notice of EC initiatives, e-tools for residents; clear correspondence practises, ensure 2 way dialogue
- Identify key stakeholders and categorize them; remove barriers; attract participants; info packages to invite representatives/increase outreach

12 steps to successful engagement

1. Be clear on the objectives of the project
2. Be clear on the objectives of the consultation



Foundations for Success: A Strategy to Improve Civic Engagement at the City of Victoria (2010)

3. Confirm the readiness of your organization and/or department for engagement (checklist)
4. Collect existing information to improve knowledge and save resources
5. Identify the stakeholders and the range of citizens to be engaged (worksheet and mapping exercise)
6. Small group to comment on the initial plan
7. Determine the most appropriate and effective engagement techniques (worksheet)
8. Determine the resources (budget/time) the project will need (worksheet)
9. Promote your public participation process (communications strategy worksheet)
10. Implement and document the engagement activities
11. Ensure information collected is used effectively, and report back (input tracking worksheet)
12. Monitor and Evaluate → qualitative and quantitative indicators of success, p. 36-37

Techniques toolkit

- *Techniques to Share Information (inform)* - Lists methods, description, consideration and costs (p. 73 – 75)
 - Earned media, advertisements, printed media, information hotlines/contact person, public displays and kiosks, site visits or tours, websites, discussion document
- *Techniques to Consult and Involve* - (p. 75-78)
 - Interviews, surveys, open space technology, world café, focus groups, online forums, workshops, presentations, open houses/community fairs, kitchen table/coffee klatches discussions
- *Techniques to Collaborate and Empower* – (p. 79)
 - Expert committees, task forces, advisory committees

Appendix B: Measuring the success of civic engagement

Four outcomes

- Did the process fit the problem, was it done well? Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the process design and implementation.
- Were the ultimate decisions different and better than would otherwise have been the case? Consider impacts on public decisions, policies and actions.
- Has the public involvement process made it more or less likely that the necessary information, skills and willingness to get involved are present in the community?
- How has a particular public participation effort enhanced local agency's ability to effectively



Foundations for Success: A Strategy to Improve Civic Engagement at the City of Victoria (2010)

sustain and support CE? Was the process a one-time affair?

Key Questions to Ask

1. Was a comprehensive plan put in place?
2. Did participation meet your goals?
3. Was the process appropriate for participants?
4. Did discussions lead to action?
5. Were participants satisfied?
6. Was communication effective?
7. Did the process enhance capacity?
8. What are the key lessons?



District of West Vancouver

Website: <http://westvancouver.ca/Level3.aspx?id=2886>

- Use of Community Engagement Committee and Working Groups

Terms of Reference: Community Engagement Committee

- Community Engagement Committee was created by Council in October 2006
- **Vision:** collaborative government and spirit of personal civic commitment to power and shape future
- **Purpose:** to advise Council on how to fulfill vision. Committee oversees public engagement and optimizes multiple communication and engagement strategies
- **policy**
 - **Duties:**
 - **Communication Outreach:** consider various forms of outreach and how it can strengthen the relationship with the community; advise Council about improvements. Focus on E-Government → how can web based communications be improved. Help District Facilities optimize messaging
 - **Message Substance:** how can key messages be improved?
 - **Working Group Appointments:** CEC should help Council and staff liaisons select members for WGs; aid in the development of terms of reference, oversee web forums/info posting systems; guide Council and staff with operating principles, processes, structural issues and new approaches to consultation/engagement with community
 - All policy approvals, Reviews and Amendments are made by council and reviewed by Chief Administrative Officer

Community Engagement Policy

1. **Philosophy:** West Vancouver is committed to engaging the community in the deliberation of issues and policies:
 - a. integrated approach involving citizens elected officials and municipal staff in policy forming and decision making
 - b. positive and collaborative atmosphere
 - c. operates in the spirit of openness and ethical conduct reflecting the Community Charter and District policies
2. **Background:**
 - a. Defines and describes CE → improves the quality of solutions/decision making; provides opportunities for community based alternatives; utilizes community expertise/resources; greater understanding of community issues/support; generates ongoing feedback; fosters mutual respect, responsibility, flexibility and community commitment among citizens



3. Guiding Principles

- a. “Community engagement means that citizens actively participate in governance. They are broadly informed about community affairs, and directly or indirectly involved in planning and influencing policy.”
- b. Elected Officials and District Staff are expected to:
 - i. ensure citizens have timely access to info about community issues/participation opportunities
 - ii. motivate citizens to participate
 - iii. represent a broad cross-section of residents/groups who participate/are
 - iv. considers full range of community output
 - v. timely status reports on CE activities
 - vi. CE processes are open and clear, positive and collaboratively
 - vii. CE processes’ effectiveness, value and decision making processes are evaluated
- c. Citizens: expected to be informed, encouraged to be involved in a working group, board or committee (can include: forums, input etc)

4. Opportunities for Engagement

- a. Informing Citizens: via website, newsletter, on-line forums, attending special public meetings, working groups, or council meetings
- b. Direct Involvement:
 - i. WGs: (Ambleside Town Centre Strategy, Arts & Culture Strategy, Child Care Services, Community Centre Governance, Community Grants & Social Services, Environmental Strategy, Heritage Strategic Plan, Neighbourhood Character & Housing, Rodgers Creek Area); Council Committees; Boards; Serving on council; other advisory groups

5. Community Engagement Through Working Groups

- a. **Working Groups (WGs):** address certain issues, 8-10 citizen members with appropriate enterprise/representative of the community, a councillor and staff Liaison
- b. **WG Process:**
 - i. **Framing the Question:** WG may be presented by Council with a question or help making a decision
 - ii. **Establishing a Working Group:** the CEC in consultation with Council creates a Working Group with terms of reference to carry out task in a certain time frame
 - iii. **Communicating:** WGs use the District’s website which is accessible to citizens. WG meetings are open, citizen input is welcome. Web pages include meeting minutes, background papers, reports and other materials
 - iv. **Reporting to Council:** once assignments are completed, WGs present a report to Council and term ends. Reports include: analysis of issue, process followed, alternatives considered, conclusions reached and the options/recommendations to council
 - v. **Providing Feedback:** WG’s feedback is posted on Districts Website and WG’s evaluate their experiences



District of West Vancouver: Guidelines for Working Groups

The Community Engagement Committee (CEC) was established by Council to oversee and implement the Working Group structure.

Implementation

- Implemented by the CEC to address/make recommendations on certain issues. CEC appoints members to WGs, prepares terms of reference and facilitates operations
- WGs: typically last/exist for a year (or until task is complete); are advisory in nature and represent the community and are voluntary

Role:

- WGs carry out tasks re: Terms of Reference within specified time frames; devise solutions and evaluate alternatives to issues; outline options and recommendations for Council

“Council’s intent is that Working Groups should have great freedom and flexibility to carry out their work as they see fit. Their activities could include obtaining information, evaluating alternatives, seeking expert advice, holding public forums, conducting discussions, and holding meetings.” (p.1)

WG Process (See figure in document)

WGs may be proposed to Council by citizens, community organizations, elected officials, municipal departments, or, it may result from recommendations of the Official Community Plan. Council via CEC will implement WGs

1. Council will indicate its support for implementing a Working Group, if it deems this to be desirable and in line with Council’s priorities.
2. CEC implements the Working Group, and works in close collaboration with District Staff to prepare Terms of Reference. CEC’s Council Members select the members of the WG.
3. The CEC Chair reports to Council describing the rationale, Terms of Reference and Membership of the new Working Group. Council may approve, amend, or reject any aspect of the Working Group, or defer its implementation.
4. The Working Group will begin its work with at least one Orientation Session where members will:
 - Review the Working Group Guidelines & rationale for the Working Group;
 - Review their Terms of Reference & prepare an initial Work Plan (Sec. 4.6);
 - Get acquainted and select a Chair & Vice Chair, preferably citizen members.
5. At the mid-point of project WG completes a Progress Report for Council, and review its Terms of Reference with the CEC to identify modifications in WG tasks and completion date that may be indicated.
6. Once assignment is completed, WG submits report of findings and recommendations to Council. WG is terminated when work is completed → mayor and Council thank WG members and ask them to complete a short feedback questionnaire



Membership of Working Groups

- Members are appointed by Council Members of CEC: selection criteria includes: experience, knowledge and expertise in the WG's sphere of interest and reflection of community's diversity
- WGs include: 1 Council member, 5-9 representative citizens selected from volunteers in Citizen resource pool, member of staff, Mayor as an ex officio member
- Membership is 1 year/when WG completes task. Member can serve 2 consecutive years in the same WG, but no more than 2 simultaneously
- WG appoints chair and vice chair from its citizen members and creates a work plan and schedule for meetings → these appointment opportunities are advertised to the public (W, Vancouver resident, business operator or property owner) and may confidentially apply

Guiding Principles and Expectations of WGs

Basic Principles:

- Open process, citizen input welcome
- Positive environment of good faith, integrity and mutual respect → free flow of ideas and constructive discussion
- Flexibility (meetings, discussions, compiling/evaluating info) and freedom to create subgroups

Consensus and Conduct

- Build towards consensus when working towards alternatives and recommendations. While working, WGs must maintain: clear purpose of Terms of Reference; focused/task oriented and time sensitive; accountability of members working in a group; flexible/inclusive approach to all citizens

Communications

- Motivate to participate.
- Maintain informative websites → time/place/agenda for meetings; key notes of meetings; progress reports/background info; online forum directed by WG and moderated by Staff liaison

Open Sessions

- Public may attend and participate
- Chair will explain role of WGs, how the meetings are conducted (free flow of ideas) → respectful and inclusive.

Records

- Are kept → schedule of meetings, agendas, tasks, timelines etc notes and progress reports

Reporting → simply advisory, not advocacy

- Once project is completed WG, staff Liaison and Chair prepare a report which after review by the WG is submitted to Council. It shall include:
 - An understanding and analysis of the issue under consideration;
 - An overview of the work done and the process involved;
 - The alternatives considered, including minority views;
 - Recommendations and options for action by Council;



- Where the recommendations and options have financial implications, these should be addressed

Feedback/Evaluation and Development

- CEC asks from WGs regular feedback, evaluate results and the process upon completion, make suggestions for improvement –can be a presentation to Council at mid point and end of project or when Council asks

Role of Members

- Council members: Acts as liaison b/w Council and WG → provides status reports to Council
- Citizen members: represent views and interests of West Vancouver and contribute their expertise and experience in the WG
- Staff Liaison: facilitates project management and provides administrative and clerical support

Rules of Procedure

- **Meetings**
 - WG Meetings: open and constructive, spirit of good faith, rely on CEC for support/advice
 - Public participation: all may attend/participate. May be called by the WG for input. - → no lobbying or speeches
 - Conflict of Interest
 - (pecuniary)/ contravenes councils c of I guidelines
 - WG members advise personal conflicts of interest (direct/indirect interest in deliberations)
 - Authority: WGs cannot work with other levels of government → cannot misrepresent authority beyond what was delegated by the CEC.
 - Budget: reasonable use of miscellaneous services. May request other funding under review of CEC

Review of Committee and Working Groups

Information taken from the Community Engagement Committee and Working Group Annual Review (2007-2008), Key Excerpts (2007-2008), and Committee Review 2008 → basically provide feedback from the staff and citizen members of the CEC on the progress/evaluation of Working Groups (WG) which replaced Advisory Committees (AC).

- Citizens' response
 - Overall positive experience with WGs, need more orientation/staff training
 - Terms of reference needed greater clarity and focus
 - Reports needed to show more balanced views of citizen members and should be reviewed by WG before submission to Council
 - Resources: need more background info and administrative support
- Appendix (pg 21-26) expressed:



- Rational for replacing ACs with WGs. WGs were better suited for public input, allowed for more community engagement, tackled issue specific structures vs. discipline specific ones. AC was not considered an effective use of resources, cumbersome, not representative of the community, never sought advice from CEC
- Expressed the need for a formal Administrative Assistant to perform clerical duties as well as be a contact person for each WG's staff liaison and Council; maintain communication b/w groups and update websites
- Terms of reference
- Working Log Book

Positive Comments:

- Well informed/extensive recommendations
- True collaboration
- WGS are clear, specific and finite in prioritizing and identifying issues and plans
- Flexible
- Intangible benefits of communication across facilities/WGs
- Great cross departmental collaboration
- WG members were a great resource
- WG added credibility, accountability, and weight to issues
- Community input was invaluable

Process Issues:

- Even though the CEC creates guidelines and chooses members of the WGs, Council has the final authority
- WG recommendations may pose budgetary/financial implications

Admin/Organization Issues

- Staff have dual roles: facilitation and project management and admin and clerical support → staff needs appropriate clerical support
- Meeting space is an issue
- Tight time frames can make processes difficult to manage

Implication Resulting from Report

- Clarifying staff functions related to Working Groups;
- Need for CAO representation on the Community Engagement Committee;
- Providing suitable meeting space for community meetings;
- Providing better orientation for Working Groups;



- Being aware of the balance needed between being flexible and system control;
- Providing for ongoing feedback and evaluation of the Working Group process.

An unexpected result relates to observations of increased inter-dependence and sharing of human resources between District departments. This suggests that the existing organizational structure does not yet adequately reflect the new interfaces and integration emerging from community engagement and relationship building.

- The community interfaces created by the Working Group Process have positively impacted the organization, through:
 - Trust building & constructive interaction between citizens, staff, elected officials;
 - Clarification of the role of staff in the Working Group Process;
 - Increased effectiveness in performing District business, via better information for decision-making, and indication of opportunities for organizational improvement