Involving Edmonton 2008 Edition

A Public Involvement Initiative

Acknowledgements

Welcome to the second edition of the *Involving Edmonton Handbook; Public Involvement Framework*.

The City of Edmonton is committed to involving the people affected by the decisions it makes. We seek diverse opinions, experiences and information so that a wide spectrum of information is provided to decision makers.

Since the introduction of the Public Involvement Framework in 2005, numerous staff have used it to determine when, and how, to reach out to involve people who may be affected by a city decision. This second edition incorporates changes and improvements those taking part in, and running, public involvement processes have suggested.

Since January 1, 2005, all City staff have been expected to take a strategic approach when considering public involvement. We are to use the use *Public Involvement Framework* to determine what our intention is in involving the public:

• Are we informing them of a decision that has been made?
• Are we involving them in developing an overall strategy?
• Or has the strategy been determined and are we asking for public involvement on one particular aspect of the design or implementation phase?

Knowing up front why we are asking the public to be involved will help us better communicate to citizens why they are being involved, what the decision is they are being involved in and who, ultimately, will make the decision.

Effective January 1, 2008, all City staff conducting public involvement processes must use *Consultation Manager*, the online companion tool to the *Public Involvement Framework*.

Consultation Manager is a web-based application that gives all City staff one standard area to store and access all information relating to all Public Involvement efforts for all projects, large and small.

This central data repository acts as an electronic filing cabinet to store all Public Involvement Plans (PIP), stakeholder involvement input, evaluations and all documents related to a specific public involvement project including the post public involvement evaluation.

Consultation Manager for the first time gives both citizens and City staff one calendar showing what public involvement events are happening where in the city. Staff and citizens can see a short description of the event as well as the issue, time and place.

This corporate tool gives us a shared window to help us better plan the timing of public involvement events, integrate where appropriate, and avoid overlapping events. It will also give City staff the knowledge to better answer citizen questions about recent public involvement events in their area.

To gain the most benefit from this tool, it is now mandatory for all staff to enter their public involvement information in *Consultation Manager*.

Utilizing the *Public Involving Framework* and *Consultation Manager* will enhance the City's planning and decision-making as well as develop both a corporate history and knowledge of our public involvement processes.

I urge you to work through the strategic thought process laid out by *Involving Edmonton* and track your data using *Consultation Manager* and its public involvement event calendar. Both are designed to increase Council and citizen confidence in our public involvement process.
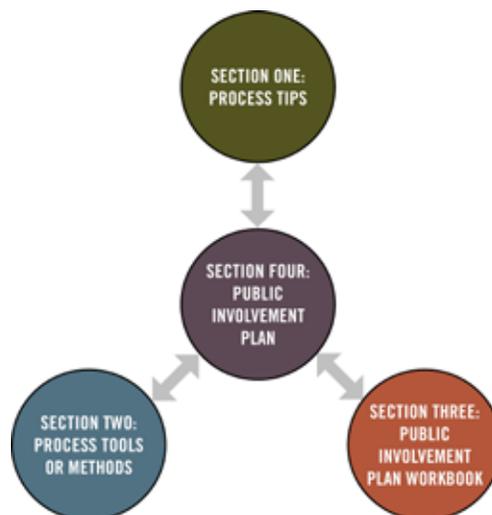

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City Manager

Involving Edmonton

City of Edmonton Public Involvement Initiative

This icon appears throughout this book to identify points for consideration.
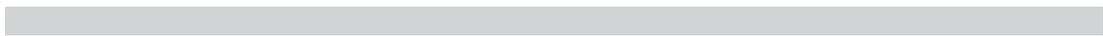
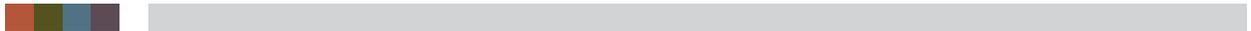This is how it all fits together:

All information presented in this book is available for download and use. Go to the Public Involvement web page on eCity.

Putting it All Together

Introduction

Why does the City need a Public Involvement Initiative?

Involving the public in discussions on matters that affect them is a fundamental element of representative democracy, and has become the norm for every level of government and most public bodies. Governments actively solicit information representing a range of perspectives, experience and knowledge and facilitate forums where people listen to each other, respond to each other, and, in some cases, create shared solutions. As a result, most governments and major public organizations have adopted policies and established public involvement processes recognizing its place as a mainstream activity of the organization.

Beyond having a policy or mandating public involvement as an integral part of business, municipalities are striving to build the internal capacity in their organizations to conduct effective public involvement processes on *which they can consistently rely for credible data.*

The goal of this initiative is to provide decision makers, the staff of the City of Edmonton and, most importantly, the citizens and stakeholders with a consistent and genuine approach that will set a standard of excellence for public involvement processes in the City.

A Public Involvement Initiative is absolutely critical at this point in time. The practice of involving the public in the decision making process is suffering a credibility crisis due to the overwhelming amount of involvement activity conducted with varying levels of effective planning and implementation.

An effective public involvement process can provide decision makers with perspectives from different points of view, based on different experiences and knowledge. It makes the discussion richer and the solutions more sustainable, effective and easier to implement.

Effective public involvement is about building trusting relationships that are founded in integrity, and respect for both the public and the people inside the organization. In these processes:

- everyone's time and input is respected;
- people know what to expect, how to participate, and how their input will contribute to the decision;
- clear and forthright two-way communication is a cornerstone; and
- the discussion and recommendations reflect a full range of stakeholder perspectives.

In effective public involvement, people feel comfortable sharing their ideas and opinions. It moves issues beyond vested interest by eliciting a balanced range of opinions. It is about giving a voice to people and balancing the voices of those who speak constantly and loudly with those who might have difficulty being heard.

What is the Public Involvement Framework?

As the key part of the Initiative, the City of Edmonton has developed a Public Involvement Framework to ensure a consistent approach by all City staff for all public involvement processes.

The Public Involvement Framework consists of three pieces or tools:

- *Core Commitments and Standards of Practice* outline the City beliefs about public involvement and how its staff will reflect those beliefs.
- The *Continuum of Public Involvement* is a tool for determining the scope and purpose of involving the public.
- The *Public Involvement Road Map* provides a step-by-step strategic approach to developing a Public Involvement Plan.

COMMITMENTS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	CONTINUUM OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS ROAD MAP

CITY OF EDMONTON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
CLARITY OF PURPOSE, CLARITY OF PROCESS, CLARITY OF ACTION

What will using the Framework achieve?

The Framework's elements are not exclusive of each other and must all be utilized for every project regardless of complexity—recognizing that less detail will be required for smaller, simpler projects. This will move public involvement past mechanical and arbitrary exercises which cover off a requirement of saying, "we consulted with the public" to creating shared solutions or recommendations that are credible, defensible and sustainable.

Consistent use of the Framework will ensure that:

- The scope of the consultation process appropriately responds to, and aligns with, the size and complexity of the decision being made.
- All stakeholders and decision makers will understand what information is being sought and how it will inform the decision making process.
- The people who need to be involved have been invited to participate.
- Timelines, budgets and other resources respond to the scope of the project.
- The process clearly adds value to the quality of the decision.

What won't the Framework do?

The Framework does not mandate specific public involvement formats to be used at specific times. To the contrary, in this world of complex decisions, sophisticated participants, and changing situations it is impossible to mandate such things as the type of event or whether or not there should be a committee. The Framework is intended to communicate that it is essential to take a strategic approach to every public involvement process hosted by the City.

The Framework will not address all of the challenges of managing the complex issues of public involvement. But, using a consistent, strategic approach will equip you with the tools you need to deal with the challenges.

Who should use the Framework?

Anyone conducting a public involvement process. Every Public Involvement Plan should be the result of using the Framework and the Handbook, regardless of who is responsible for the public involvement process. If you are using a consultant or facilitator, they should have an integral role in developing the plan. The development and approval of the plan could be a part of the contract terms of reference.

If you are using a consultant, creating the Public Involvement Plan should be a shared responsibility between the City and the consultant. Don't create the plan without their expertise.
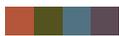
Why call it Public Involvement?

Like other specialty areas, the practice of involving people in issues that interest or affect them has acquired a language of its own. Language can be very confusing and become a barrier to an effective process. It is critical that the City use a common language to ensure clarity and build trust in public process.

COMMON TERMINOLOGY USED TO DEFINE PUBLIC PROCESSES		
WHO		WHAT
Public Citizen Stakeholder Community	and/or	Participation Involvement Consultation Engagement

These terms, and others, are frequently used interchangeably and can be explained as subsets of each other or as one overarching the others. Some terms are seen as inclusive by some, while the same words are seen as exclusive by others. Rather than producing a detailed glossary that articulates the nuances between the various terms, the City of Edmonton will use the term **Public Involvement.**

"Public" was chosen because it is the most general and most inclusive term in the municipal context. Public does not only pertain to individuals but can and should include not-for-profit and corporate organizations, and institutions.

"Involvement" was chosen because it most accurately represents the various phases outlined in the Continuum of Public Involvement for the City of Edmonton. Together these two words will be used to represent the various methods of engaging the people of Edmonton in discussions about civic matters that affect them.

Public Involvement Considerations

It is important to acknowledge and remember:

- Public involvement can be messy. It is a complex process with many unknowns. Even in small projects, a disciplined approach to design, implementation and evaluation is required to ensure the City of Edmonton standard of practice is met.
- Public involvement includes a level of stress. There are always stressors and unknowns. Planning will help you to keep the stressors at a reasonable level and not allow them to develop into anxiety and distress.
- Public involvement requires dedicated resources. Under-resourced processes will result in anxiety, distress and inadequate results.
- Public involvement participants are increasingly knowledgeable and sophisticated in their expectations. Consistent processes of modeling the core commitments and standards of practice from start to finish are required to build trust and credibility.

Essential Elements of Effective Public Involvement

The Public Involvement Handbook will coach you through a comprehensive strategic approach to planning, implementing and evaluating City of Edmonton Public Involvement processes. However, there are five essential elements that serve as a solid foundation for any process hosted by the city (discussed in greater detail in the Process Tips Section, p. 9):

1. Take the time to plan before the process is launched.

2. Don't assume you know the answers about anything.

3. Ensure that form follows function when deciding on methodology.

4. Ensure the Public Involvement Process aligns with the scope and impact of the overall project.

5. Use plain language and simple diagrams.

Assumptions about Public Involvement

Making assumptions about the purpose and outcomes of involving the public in decision making can have a profound effect on the approach and the process.

An overview of these assumptions and some strategies to ensure they do not negatively impact your process can be found on page 22.

A part of the initial project scoping process should be naming and dispelling assumptions and misconceptions.

The Involving Edmonton Framework

The City of Edmonton Public Involvement Framework defines the strategic approach to be used in all City public involvement processes. The Framework includes the Core Commitments and Standards of Practice, the Spectrum of Public Involvement and the Public Involvement Road Map.

Using the Framework will result in the trademarks of City of Edmonton Public Involvement processes:

Commitment to involve - achieved through the Public Involvement Commitments and Standards of Practice.
Clear purpose - achieved through the use of the Continuum of Public Involvement.
Consistent approach - achieved by using the Public Involvement Road Map.

Public Involvement Commitments and Standards of Practice

COMMITMENTS:	THOSE INVOLVED IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESSES WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING STANDARDS OF PRACTICE:
OUR COMMITMENT TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT The City of Edmonton believes a key element of representative democracy is that people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.	• Public involvement processes will be designed to involve the appropriate people at the appropriate time in the appropriate way through the completion and communication of a Public Involvement Plan for all processes. • The Continuum of Public Involvement will be used to ensure involvement processes align with the scope, complexity and outcomes of the decision being made. • A balance and range of public perspectives will be provided to decision makers for consideration in the decision process. • Processes will be appropriately resourced to ensure effective implementation.
OUR COMMITMENT TO HONOURING PEOPLE The City of Edmonton Public Involvement process design will ensure people are treated with respect, honesty and integrity.	• The purpose and goal of the involvement will be identified at the outset of the process. • Participants will know what is included in the discussion and what isn't, what decisions will be made or have been made, and who will make the final decision. • Timing, location and format will reflect considerations for effective participation. • Where appropriate, outreach processes will be used to include the public who need support to participate.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE INVOLVEMENT
The City of Edmonton will ensure public involvement processes are accessible to the public.
	• Information is accessible:
	  - It is always provided the simplest form possible—in plain language or understandable graphic formats.
	  - Translation or interpretation services are provided when necessary.
	• Facilities are accessible:
	  - Location and physical accessibility are always considered.
	• Information is readily available so the public can participate in an informed discussion.

Continuum of Public Involvement

THE INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN AND INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING →

	INFORMATION SHARING	CONSULTATION		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT BUILDING BLOCKS	Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to develop solutions to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Delegating decision making to build responsibility
THE PURPOSE OF THIS TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT IS:	To present information to the public about issues that may affect them	To provide information and receive feedback or comments	To involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	To partner with stakeholders in the development of recommendations	Stakeholders have the responsibility for making the decision
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITY	**Information** Provide complete, objective, reliable, timely and easy to find and understand information	**Consultation** Define goals and processes clearly state the purpose and limits of the exercise and the City's commitment for the use of the public input		**Active Participation** Provide time and flexibility to facilitate a dialogue between City representatives and the public and a defined process for integrating decisions into the process	

↕ *INFORMATION SHARING IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE ENTIRE CONTINUUM*

Examples of types of involvement processes are included in the Process Tools and Methods Section page 23

Public Involvement Road Map

I. Understanding the Overall Project or Issue

- Complexity
- Scope
- Impact
- Context/History
- Decision being made

II. Defining the Purpose and Outcomes of Public Involvement

- What is the goal of the public involvement process?
- What information do decision makers need?
- What other factors will influence the decision about level and scope of consultation? (time, resources, etc.)
- What information is being gathered?

Public Involvement Decision

- Where does the involvement fit on the continuum? Does it fit at all?

NO

Public involvement not required for this project or issue.

YES

III. Clarifying the Public Involvement Commitment

- How will the information be factored into the decision making process?
- How will the process reflect the City commitments and standards of practice?
- What other principles or values need to be considered?

IV. Public Involvement Process Details

- Required outcomes
- Identify stakeholders and level of involvement from continuum including special population strategies
- Budget
- Timelines, key decision points

V. Creating the Public Involvement Plan

- Collaborative design of process/methods with stakeholders
- Implementation plan
- Data management strategy
- Communication strategy

Use of this Framework

The Handbook will coach staff through the development of the Public Involvement Plan which is the cornerstone to effective practice in Edmonton and is supported by City Council Policy 513 and an Administrative Directive and Procedure (see Appendices).

Use of Consultation Manager

Consultation Manager, a web-based software, is a mandatory tool for City staff to use when planning and implementing any public involvement process. This tool will provide:

• The City's public involvement planners with an internal calendar to plan and schedule events

• A repository for public involvement data which builds corporate/department history of public involvement processes in a single, easily accessible place

• The opportunity to give Edmontonians advance notice of what issues will be discussed along with when and where, through the use of an on-line calendar
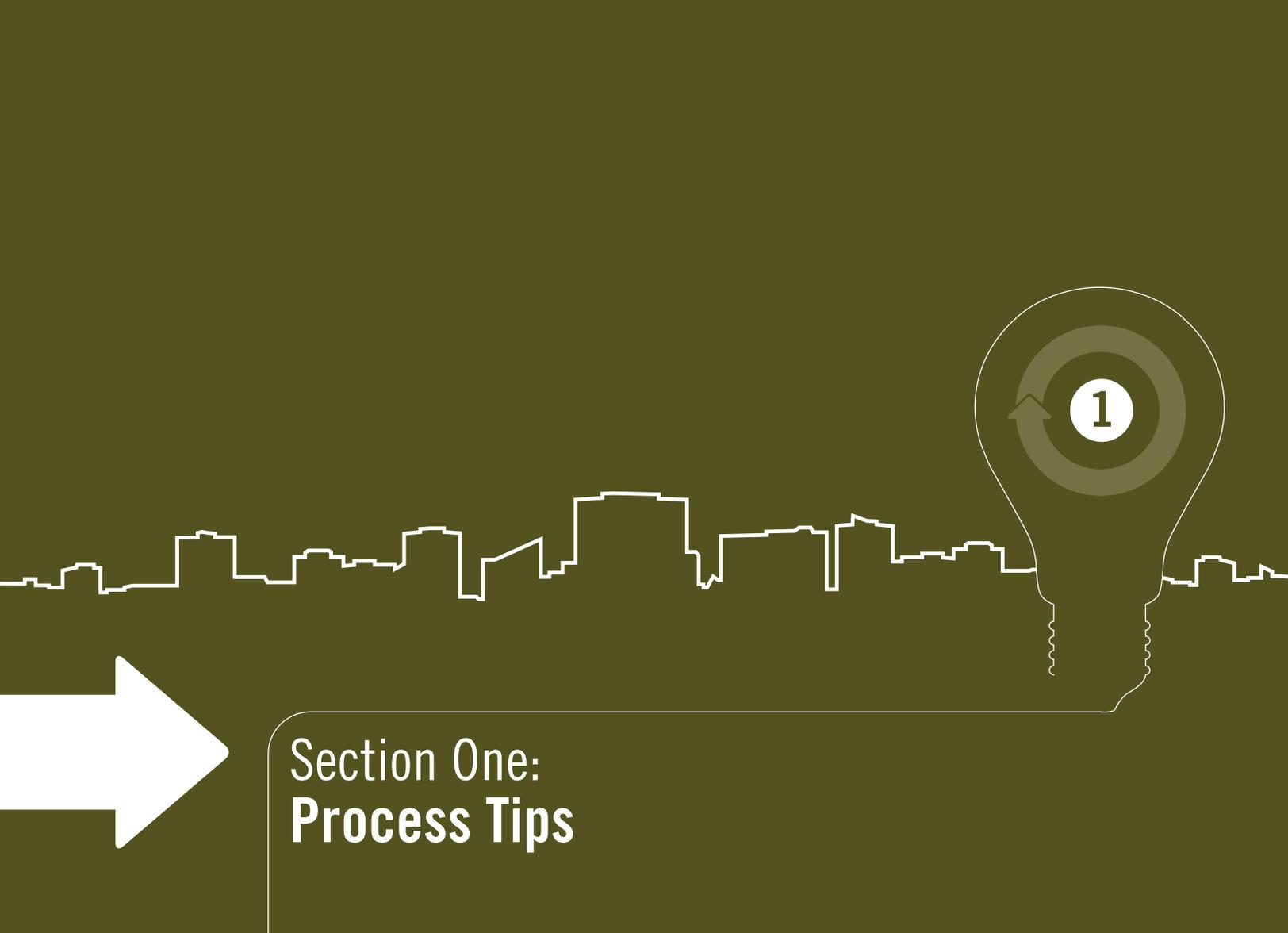
Section One:
Process Tips

1

Section One:

Public Involvement Process Tips

Essential Elements of Planning Public Involvement Processes

Public involvement can be a complex and messy process.

Addressing the following five essential elements of planning public involvement will go a long way to increasing effectiveness and reducing the risks.

ONE: TAKE THE TIME UP FRONT FOR PLANNING—OR PAY NOW OR PAY MORE LATER

Consider this:
- Making the investment in the scoping phase can ensure the public involvement process is appropriate for the complexity of the project.
- Public involvement processes that have not been strategically planned to consider all of the various factors and accommodate stakeholder needs, can end up costing more than they should in both political capital and financial resources.
- Investing time in planning ensures clear communication, increases process accountability and can save significant amounts of time and money.
- Taking time to monitor and evaluate enables the process to adapt to:
    - emerging issues or new information,
    - practice continuous improvement, and
    - share lessons learned throughout the organization.

Resources in this Handbook
    Evaluation Strategy Template (p. 51)
    Public Involvement Plan (p. 55)

TWO: ENSURE FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION WHEN DECIDING ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT METHODOLOGY

Consider this:
- One of the largest challenges for effective public involvement is using the right form or type of process. Remember in good design—form follows function.
- A common approach in public involvement is to define the form—number of meetings, questionnaires, dates and timelines—as a first order of business. However, making decisions too early in the process is a common mistake that can cause problems throughout the process and result in questionable results.
- The form of the involvement process is the last thing to consider, not the first. The process should be defined only after you have determined what you are trying to achieve, who needs to be involved, what extenuating circumstances there may be, how much time and resources are available, etc.

Resources in this Handbook
    Process Tools and Methods (p. 23)
    Methods Strategy Template (p. 47)

THREE: DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS—ABOUT ANYTHING

Consider this:

- Making assumptions about any part of public involvement planning can be a serious mistake. For example, that:
    - you know what the issues are.
    - you know who the stakeholders are.
    - what worked last time will work this time.
    - the same stakeholders will come with the same attitude or needs.
- The public's sophistication, expectations and tolerance regarding public processes are changing, as is their willingness to participate in processes that do not provide a vehicle for meaningful discussion and input.
- What may have worked five years ago, may not work now.
- What worked last time, may not work.
- How stakeholders responded last time may not be the way they respond this time.
- Don't assume you know the answers.

Resources in this Handbook

Public Involvement Assumptions (p. 22)

Participant Identification Template (p. 44)

Risk Assessment Template (p. 52)

FOUR: ENSURE THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS ALIGNS WITH THE SCOPE AND IMPACT OF THE OVERALL PROJECT

Consider this:

- Public involvement is not a one size fits all situation and more is not necessarily better.
- The purpose of strategic analysis is to ensure the plan you develop involves the appropriate people in the appropriate way at the appropriate time.
- The size and scope of the public involvement process should directly relate to the size, scope and impact of the decision being made.
- Right sizing includes not only the number of people involved, it also includes the amount of time taken and the type of events used. Don't hold an open house if a coffee party will do. Don't hold a coffee party if you need to hear from a whole range of people.
- The tendency is to hold one big event. This, more than likely, is giving lip service to the public involvement process.
- If your goal is to build trust, be honest about whether a big meeting is the best process to use to gather the input that decision makers need.

Resources in this Handbook

Public Involvement Assumptions (p. 22)

Process Tools or Methods (p. 23)

Project Scoping Tool (p. 43)

Stakeholder Sphere of Interest (p. 46)

A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE INVOLVING EDMONTON

FIVE: USE PLAIN LANGUAGE AND SIMPLE DIAGRAMS—ELIMINATE TECHNICAL JARGON AND ACRONYMS

Consider this:

- The goal of public involvement is to create an environment where people can participate in an informed discussion. This means providing information in the most basic form possible.
- Often inadvertently, and with the best intentions, we increase the complexity of public involvement by using processes or technology that can be confusing to the uninitiated public.
- The increasing capacity to produce maps, designs, etc. relatively easily leads to the temptation to do it en masse. As a result members of the public are overwhelmed with the amount of information.
- We think people will understand technical terms because we use them often.
- Have a lay person proof read or review your documents and be prepared to simplify.
- Minimize the use of acronyms—even the most obvious ones.
- It is important to recognize that participants who come with emotional issues are less able to absorb technical information.
- Ask yourself, "How does this information add value to the discussion"?

Process Tips

This section is intended to identify points for consideration that support effective public process. The goal is to provide information useful in conducting municipal public involvement processes, not to present an encyclopedia of all the information on public involvement.

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TIP #1: DEVELOPING A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN FOR EVERY PROJECT

Consider this:

- Public involvement is not new to the City and many staff members have been integrally involved in public involvement processes for many years.
- Extensive experience in public involvement processes can lead to making assumptions and/or skipping bases.
- Also recognize the tendency to do what has worked and hasn't caused problems before will be significant.
- A stakeholder strategy increases the ability to rationalize and manage participation.
- The goal of this process is to ensure that the public and decision makers know that each process the City hosts will take the same approach and have a public involvement plan as a point of reference.
- Produce a Public Involvement Plan for every project to frame the Public Involvement Process, recognizing that they will differ in scope.

TIP #2: SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO THE CORPORATE STANDARD OF PRACTICE

Consider this:

- Although this is a new initiative, it does not mean public involvement is new to the City.
- Many staff members have been engaged in public involvement for many years and have ingrained attitudes (positive and negative) about the purpose and the value of the process.
- Making the transition to consistently using the framework and reflecting the standards of practice will require ongoing effort and support.
- The Public Involvement Initiative is supported by a network of mentors and coaches who have experience in public involvement and can guide you in the development of your Public Involvement Plan and act as a sounding board when you face challenges.
- Training and orientation will be available on a regular basis.
- The Public Involvement Web Page has a more extensive repository of how to's and links to other resources.
- City of Edmonton Public Involvement Initiative Coach and Mentor Network is available on the Public Involvement Web Page.

TIP #3: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONSULTANTS AND THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

Consider this:

- It has become a common practice to retain the services of a public involvement consultant to design and conduct the public involvement component of major projects.
- Reflection of the standards of practice throughout the process and producing a Public Involvement Plan is required of consultants as well as internal staff.
- One concept would be including a complete City of Edmonton Public Involvement Plan as part of the first project deliverable.
- Ideally, the consultant would work with the hosting department to develop the Public Involvement Plan.
- The City of Edmonton has made the public involvement orientation and training mandatory for any consultant before they can be hired for City of Edmonton public involvement processes.
- Pre-approved public involvement consultants are listed on the City of Edmonton Public Involvement web page.

TIP #4: ACQUIRING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Consider this:

- Knowing how to plan a public involvement process is just one part of effective public involvement.
- If corporate team members are going to be actively involved in public process and events, they should access training in facilitation skills, problem solving, consensus building and conflict management.
- Some of these courses can be accessed through the City of Edmonton Human Resource Department.

TIP #5: DECISION MAKERS AND THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

Consider this:

- Decision makers are the key stakeholder in any involvement process.
- The public involvement purpose and outcomes must contain information from the public the decision makers feel would help them in their discussion and deliberations.
- It is important to ask decision makers what information they need.
- Asking insightful questions of decision makers is critical since they might not be clear themselves about what they would like to know. Take the time to prepare your questions and test them to ensure you don't get top of the head responses or frustrate them.
- Providing a range of alternatives can be helpful.
- Involving decision makers in a discussion up front is a tool for ensuring the results add value to the decision.

TIP #6: IDENTIFYING AND INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

Consider this:

- Stakeholders can be involved in different ways at different times throughout a given process.
- Commitment is created by involving them in the appropriate way at the appropriate time.
- The challenge is to ensure they are involved in a way that is meaningful to them and beneficial to the process.
- Use the Continuum of Public Involvement to frame who might be involved and how.
- Identifying stakeholders requires a strategic thinking approach not a paint brush.
- Do not assume you know who needs to be involved. Use the participant identification tools to identify potential participants.
- Create an initial list and test it with a sampling of stakeholders.
- Ensure you clearly communicate who is being involved, as well as how and when, to all participants.
- Participant Identification Template (p. 44)

TIP #7: REACHING BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM—INVOLVING MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Consider this:

- Ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity does not meaning treating everyone the same. It may be necessary to include strategies for involving multi-cultural participants.
- These strategies increasingly include translation services to ensure people are able to communicate.
- Outreach to multi-cultural communities may require providing opportunities in which special efforts are made to increase the level of comfort and the willingness to participate. This may include (but is not limited to):
    - Learning about the demographic mix and the cultural composition of the project area.
    - Identifying a formal or informal leader who holds a place of trust in the community.
    - Determining communication needs in advance.
    - Identifying someone on your team who is comfortable with multi-cultural groups and can develop linkages with them.
    - Going to their social gathering places rather than expecting them to come to large public gatherings.
    - Building on existing networks or community processes (e.g. church groups, cultural organizations, social service groups, schools, etc.).
    - Being creative in hosting events. Keep them small and realize participants may take longer to overcome language barriers and cultural differences. (Don't try and use a strictly timed agenda.)
    - If necessary, hiring someone who can facilitate a specific group (e.g. has trust, can communicate, etc.).
    - Being prepared to invest extra time and effort in getting feedback in a respectful way if obtaining input from the multi-cultural community is important to the project.
    - Framing questions to reflect the reality of the situation. In other words, ask participants about things they know about and has relevance to them and the project. This may take an inquiry process of presenting the information and asking them what part of it they would like to comment on.
- A key part of any public involvement is the ability to listen and ask questions in a way that encourages people to share openly. This is especially important when working with multi-cultural groups and persons-at-risk.

TIP #8: ON REACHING BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM—INVOLVING PERSONS OR COMMUNITIES AT RISK OF NOT PARTICIPATING.

Consider this:

- Effective public involvement is about creating a space where it is safe for people to share what is important to them.
- "Persons-at-risk" means these people are at risk of not participating in a standard involvement process.
- There are many barriers that prevent people from participating in standard public involvement processes—ability, language, timing, transportation, age, etc.
- In the initial scoping process, consider how to welcome people whose insights would benefit and balance your process, but for whom participation may be a challenge. (Participant Identification Template)
- Outreach takes time and requires resources—make sure you think about this when you are budgeting finances and time.
- Literacy is a key consideration with many at-risk communities and therefore using basic language is especially important.
- Some specific communities at risk of not participating are women, youth and seniors. A key concept for involving these groups is to "meet them in their world."
- These tips apply to most outreach efforts:
    - Ask people how they would be most comfortable participating.
    - Advocacy or representative groups are a vehicle for inclusive participation. Use advocacy groups to identify participants not to speak for participants.
    - When dealing with at-risk people, consider two shorter meetings rather than one long one.
    - Time of day and location is often a critical factor with at-risk participants.
    - Go to them; don't make them come to you.
    - Test your process with a sample group.
    - Ask them to identify what would have meaning to them in the context of the project.
    - Use audio-visual presentations—translated if required.
    - Recognizing that crowds and speaking in public will eliminate participation of a number of people, consider using focus groups and interviews as a process tool.

TIP #9: WORKING WITH INTEREST OR ADVOCACY GROUPS

Consider this:

- There is sensitivity to the impact and influence (perceived or real) vested interest groups can have on a public involvement process; and, as a result, a tendency to avoid interaction with them.
- Including is better than avoiding interest or advocacy groups.
- Find ways to build relationships with interest groups while ensuring a balance of perspectives is maintained.
- Develop and enforce guiding principles or ground rules to use with all participants to ensure a balance of voices and opinions.

Children   Youth   Seniors   Disabled   Aboriginal   Multicultural

TIP #10: SEEKING DIVERSITY

Consider this:
- Public input that informs effective decision making must reflect the full range of opinions.
- An integral part of the planning strategy is to seek out diverse perspectives (demographically or interest-based) and ensure they are represented in the conclusions/recommendations.
- Seeking diversity may require special outreach and different processes. It means challenging the assumption.
- It is important to determine how important seeking diverse opinions is at the outset so you can budget and plan for it.
- Do not assume that if people think it is important, they will come out to the public process. Some people will avoid pubic gatherings for a variety of reasons.
- Don't lock yourself in to only receiving feedback from one type of process.
- However, if you do use a variety of methods, your process must be open and transparent. Honouring people means that you share the entire process with them and tell them how the information will all fit together.
- It is not ethical to seek diverse opinions at the end of the process when it appears the results are too narrow in scope.

TIP #11: DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Consider this:
- Generally when people take the time to participate in a public process it is because they are interested, passionate or concerned. There is a potential for conflict.
- Understand that in any public input process, the task is to gather a range of perspectives and to test them for level of concern, or range of support.
- Public involvement is rarely about achieving consensus. Use the Continuum of Public Involvement to determine whether you are in a consensus building process.
- Being accepting of the range of perspectives and encouraging others to do so will eliminate much of the potential for conflict.
- If there is the potential for conflict, ensure team members have conflict management skills.
- Or, use the skills of professional facilitator.
- Deal with the issues when they occur and move on, don't let conflict poison your process.
- Resource: City of Edmonton Human Resources Conflict Management Training

TIP #12: PROJECT SCOPING AND STAKEHOLDER PROFILING

Consider this:
- Scoping and profiling will enable you to design your process based on solid information not assumptions.
- It is important to take the time to do research on public perceptions and range and levels of concerns, before you finalize the process design.
- This can be accomplished through telephone and face-to-face interviews, focus groups and reviewing other City projects in the same area.
- One key part of project scoping is finding out who was out there last and how that might affect stakeholder response.
- Also, find out about other processes currently underway or scheduled for the geographic or demographic area.
- Use Consultation Manager's Internal Calendar when planning your process.
- Process Tools and Methods (p. 23)

TIP #13: TESTING THE PROCESS DESIGN

Consider this:

- All process design should be tested by stakeholders before the actual process starts, then reviewed and amended.
- Basically the question is, "Have we got this right"? The testing should include identified stakeholders, process, communication and evaluation components.
- Testing the design doesn't mean it is then cast in stone. You may find that it needs to be amended again when you actually put it into motion and are dealing with a broader group of stakeholders.
    - Create a working draft of the public involvement plan and clearly mark it draft.
    - Do not make it so professional that it looks final.
    - Do not test the plan if the input will not make a difference. Test the plan while the input will still make a difference.
    - Identify a range of stakeholders—experienced, knowledgeable and neophyte—and ask for their advice.
    - Provide the test group with enough time to give due consideration to the information being presented—send it out in advance and provide a response time.

TIP #14: HOSTING A TOWN HALL MEETING

Consider this:

- In the beginning, the traditional town hall meeting was the primary method for providing a public involvement opportunity.
- Town hall meetings have serious limitations because the opportunity for dialogue and discussion are extremely limited.
- People who have strong opinions will use a town hall format to influence others.
- If you must use a town hall meeting format:
    - Ensure you have a skilled facilitator.
    - Clearly establish what you want to achieve in the meeting and ensure your agenda allows time to do that effectively.
    - Establish ground rules for the meeting and stick to them.
    - Do not overload your agenda or leave so little time for discussion that people get frustrated.
    - Provide a variety of ways for people to provide input.
    - Have a clear rationale for why you would use an open mike format.
    - Clearly outline the process at the beginning of the meeting and stick with it.
    - Ensure that your process is outcome or solution oriented.
    - If the facilitator is challenged for any reason, turn the decision back to the group—and then listen to the decision.

TIP #15: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS

Consider this:

- One of the greatest weaknesses of public involvement happens when the time and effort is not taken to create meaningful or insightful questions that will provoke thinking, dialogue and a solution orientation.
- When you develop your driving question or ask questions in the process, take the time to think about what you really want to know or what these people could tell you that would add value to the project.
- Don't ask meaningless questions so you can say you asked them. It is an insult to the people and a waste of time.
- Use the resources of coaches and mentors in framing your questions.

TIP #16: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING RISKS

Consider this:

- If you are beginning a complex project with complicating factors, it might be helpful to conduct a risk analysis.
- To determine if this is necessary ask:
  - What is the complexity of the project?
  - Is there a history with any stakeholder or community that needs to be factored in?
  - What is the level of political interest?
  - Are there extenuating factors that need to be considered?
- Risk Assessment Template (p. 52)
- Resource Link: www.edmonton.ca/citygov/Auditor/Admin/ERM-CBRP%20Model%20-%20Sept%2005v2.pdf

TIP #17: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Consider this:

- There are fundamental differences between public involvement and public relations.
  - The foundation of public involvement is the unbiased presentation of facts. It should never promote the project or present an opinion on the issue.
  - In public involvement the communication process is about sharing information not messaging. It is about asking and not telling.
  - In public involvement the proponent or facilitator must present all information, both negative and positive, in an objective way.
- If stakeholders perceive the project as being promoted in any way, they will perceive the public involvement process as rubber-stamping, and not feel that their needs or desires were truly heard and considered.
- Remember, trust is fragile and hard to earn back.
- Often the proponent does have a vested interest and it is wise to use the services of a third-party facilitator.

TIP #18: DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Consider this:

- Effective communication is critical to any public involvement process.
- It is a two-way process that includes sharing and receiving information.
- It is almost impossible to regain trust damaged through ineffective communication.
- A communication strategy includes how you will deal with each set of stakeholders—internal and external—which often requires different processes.
- A media strategy is one small part of a communication strategy.
- City of Edmonton Communication professionals must be involved in the development of the communications strategy.
- The communications strategy must clearly demonstrate and be developed as public involvement and not a public relations process.
- Communications professionals must be involved in dealing with issues management.
- Communication Strategy Template. (p. 50)
- Sample Communication Strategy (Appendix Four)

TIP #19: WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Consider this:

- If your public process was publicized in any way, there is potential for media participation.
- It is better to be ready for them, than to be unprepared when they arrive.
- Appoint a spokesperson for all events.
- If you are working with a committee, ensure all members are clear on their role with the media.
- Prepare media packages that will address the types of information they will need.

TIP #20: SHARING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

Consider this:

- Sharing information often ends up as a low priority and "quick and easy" processes are used. The result is the information goes out incomplete, hard to understand and in a form that most people won't access.
- Especially in longer processes, it is critical to share information with the public on an ongoing basis.
- Share information with people who choose not to be actively involved but are interested in the process.
- The priority of sharing information is ensuring the information is provided in a way that people can and will access it. Mort importantly that they can understand it.
- Ask stakeholders how they access information.
- Ensure you budget time and resources for sharing information.

TIP #21: USING TECHNOLOGY AS A PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TOOL

Consider this:

- Bear in mind that while technology can be an effective public involvement tool, it does not replace the public involvement process.
- Technology, especially the use of the Internet, has become mainstream when dealing with large numbers of participants, committees or specified groups.
- Consult your Communications Branch Advisor about using the City's web site for public involvement.
- As technology advances, on-line public involvement tools are continuously evoling in new and different forms.
- If you are going to use a tool like an on-line discussion group, appoint a moderator.
- Recognize that self-selection into on-line discussion is not a proportional representation but a group of interested people. Report as such.
- Remember, technology is only one way of communicating. Do not assume everyone can access technology, or has sufficient capacity for large documents or complicated processes.
- Don't forget about letters, faxes, telephone calls and face-to-face discussion.

TIP #22: REPORTING THE RESULTS

Consider this:

- Results of a public involvement process are not how many people attended how many events.
- Results should report the discussions held, the solutions identified, the places where people didn't agree and where they did.
- Results must begin with stating the question and the desired outcomes of the process, and measuring the actual outcomes against them.
- You may need to provide results in a number of different formats when you are sharing them with different stakeholders. Make sure that all results you provide include all key points and are consistent with each other.
- Providing results of the final decisions to the public is an important and often overlooked part of public involvement.
- The basic language principle applies to results as well. Do assume the report you provide to decision makers will have meaning to stakeholders.

TIP #23: GATHERING INFORMATION

Consider this:

- A common question is, "how much data should be gathered?"
- A strategic approach would consider what information you need and how it will be managed.
- Moreover, do not ask questions when the answer will not influence the discussion or the decision. i.e.: How do you feel about_____?" when how they feel is not a decision factor.
- Rather, ask questions that are solution oriented and seek to gather insights and wisdom.
- Don't gather information you are not going to use. For every question you ask, you must know how it will inform the discussion.

TIP #24: MANAGING DATA

Consider this:
- A mandatory tool, Consultation Manager is a web-based software City staff must use when planning and implementing any publc involvement process. It acts as a repository for public involvement data. Contact the Office of Public Involvement to add your public involvement process.
- A significant challenge of public involvement is to manage what can become overwhelming amounts of data.
- Ensure you define the parameters before you collect the data—is this a statistically valid survey or a general response process?
- Before gathering any information, it is essential that decisions are made about how data will be gathered (surveys, meeting records, response forms, etc) and how it will be used.
- Ensure all input is reviewed and considered, and all points of view are provided in a fair and balanced way.
- When gathering large amounts of information it is critical to have someone skilled in data analysis summarize it.
- Data analysis requires reading, rereading, sorting, synthesizing and identifying strong themes of all perspectives as well as unique ideas or concepts.
- Data Tracking Template (p. 49)

TIP #25: DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Consider this:
- Evaluating the process is not about whether or not the recommendations were accepted, although that may be one indicator of success.
- The reason for evaluation is to determine if the process is and was effective. Ensure you plan for interim and final evaluation of the public involvement process.
- Evaluation is most often the step that doesn't get done.
- When you are evaluating the public involvement process you can use both quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- Be careful how you determine your indicators of success. The key is to make sure the indicators are meaningful and RELEVANT to the success of the process.

> **The number of participants at a public event is often used as an indicator of success when in fact some of the best information is gathered in small groups or from one-on-one processes. Numbers of people attending, phone calls, web site hits, amount of media coverage is an awareness factor not necessarily an evaluation factor.**

- Evaluation is a key accountability tool with decision makers. If you don't supply an evaluation, decision makers will evaluate based on the information available to them—for example two people speaking out at public hearing. Therefore, it is important to confirm indicators of success with decision makers before the process starts.
- Evaluation Strategy Template (p. 51)
- Core Commitments Checklist (p. 53)

TIP #26: MONITORING THE PROCESS

Consider this:
- Interim or ongoing evaluation is as, or more, important than the final evaluation.
- It is important to keep your finger on the pulse of the process to assess whether you are moving toward your identified outcomes or not.
- If there are issues with the process take the time to retreat, review, and reflect.
- It is better to make a course correction midway through the process than to let the process derail or to end up with results that aren't credible or defensible.
- Evaluation Strategy Template (p. 51)

TIP #27: FOLLOW UP WITH PARTICIPANTS

Consider this:

- Credibility and trust are built upon closing the communication loop with the stakeholders and the public.
- This does not mean providing them with the formal report that was provided to decision makers.
- It does mean providing a synopsis of the findings and recommendations and the action that was decided upon by decision makers, with a rationale if required.
- Timeliness is important in follow-up.
- Including a synopsis of the process evaluation is also helpful.

Public Involvement Assumptions

ASSUMPTIONS	DISCUSSION	PRACTICE

Public involvement means public consensus	• The purpose of the majority of public involvement is to gather perspectives for decision makers, not to make decisions.
	• It does not mean everyone will or should agree on the solution.
	• It does mean the various perspectives must be presented to the decision makers in a fair and balanced way.
		• Clearly define the purpose of the involvement at the beginning of the process.
		  - If it is a consensus-building process then it must be structured as such—which requires a mandate from decision makers and added time and resources.
		  - If it is an information-gathering process, then the public needs to understand that the diversity of opinions will be presented to decision makers.

Public input replaces technical expertise	• Public involvement supplements technical information, it doesn't replace it. • The purpose is to elicit different perspectives and identify information and insights the experts often do not know about and add them to the discussion.	• The Public Involvement Plan must identify all factors that will influence the final recommendations and how the public input will be considered or what weight it will have relative to technical data.
Input is direction	• Public input supplies planners with points for consideration within the context of complex decisions.	• The decision-making process and decision makers must be clearly identified at the start of the process and reiterated throughout. • Public involvement coordinators/facilitators must define the public involvement question and how the information gathered will be used in preparing the final recommendation for decision makers.
Public involvement is about conflict or listening to complaints	• Many organizations have had negative experiences with public process. • Experience has shown that if the process is structured to provide a forum for complaints, that is what happens.	• Design solution-oriented processes that will identify concerns and use a problem solving approach. • Establish operating principles that share the responsibility for individual respect, honesty and integrity.
More is better	• Some organizations believe that doing a great deal of consultation means they are doing effective involvement—which is often not the case.	• The public involvement process needs to reflect the size, scope and complexity of the overall project or initiative and be sufficient to provide the required information for decision makers. • It is about right-sizing the process.
It worked last time it will work this time	• Public expectations and positions continuously change. One small factor can entirely change the attitude of a situation and influence the way the process is designed.	• Using the Public Involvement Planning Road Map is essential for every project.
They didn't come to our meeting, so they must not be interested	• Many people feel that coming to a public meeting or open house does not provide the opportunity for meaningful discussion or that their comments are not even noted. • Some people are intimidated by large meetings. • Accessibility—timing, location, format—can exclude some people from participating.	• Holding a meeting is only one way of involving the public and should not be the only way. • It is incorrect to assume there is no interest because people did not attend a meeting. • Even on a limited basis, other outreach should be conducted to test this assumption: contact with key stakeholders, providing an article or contact number in local publications.
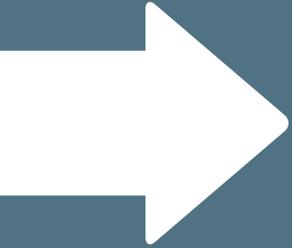
Section Two:
Process Tools and Methods

2

Section Two:

Public Involvement Process Tools and Methods

The purpose of this section is to provide a range of public involvement process tools or methods commonly used in municipal public involvement processes. The processes have been sorted into the space on the continuum where they would most likely be used. However, do not be limited by this. Several tools cross over between the various stages and you might think of innovative ways to use a tool that isn't mentioned here. The key is to be clear on the purpose of using a tool. As we have mentioned before, information sharing is a part of every stage or phase of public involvement—thus the large number of Information Sharing tools in the inventory.
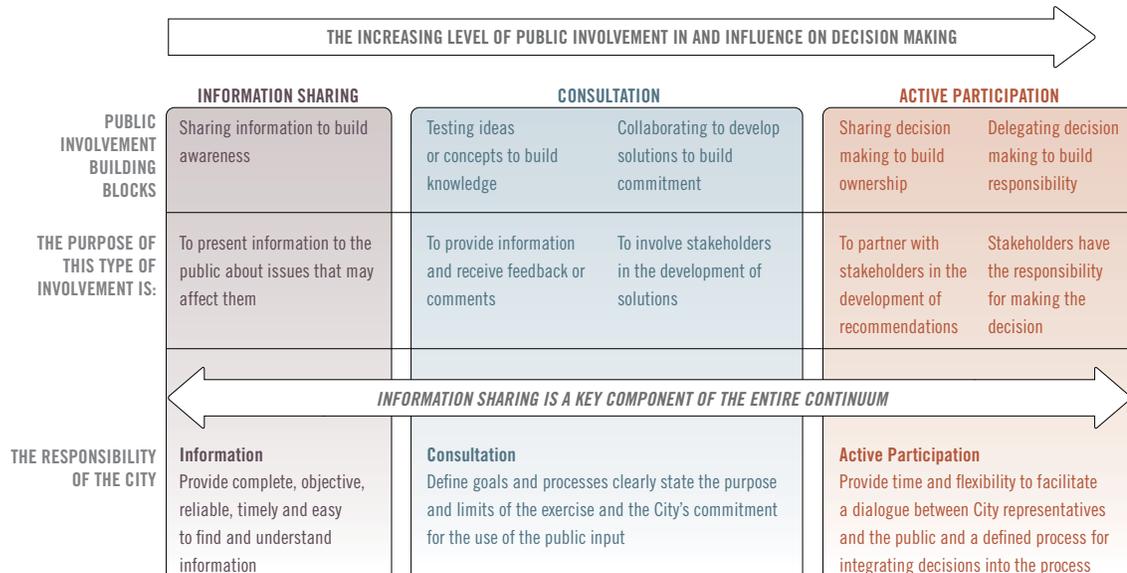
Additional resources that provide excellent information on process tools and how to use them are:

- **The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Toolbox**
  http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/toolbox.pdf

- **Grittifh University Urban Resuearch Program Community Toolbox**
  https://www3.secure.griffith.edu.au/03/toolbox/alpha_tool_list.php

This web site presents one of the most detailed and interactive tool boxes available. It is a must visit.

- **The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) Public Participation Activities: How to do them**
  http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/chp_5.pdf

Aligning the Continuum with Public Involvement Tools

	THE INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN AND INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING →				
	INFORMATION SHARING	**CONSULTATION**		**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION**	
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT BUILDING BLOCKS	Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to develop solutions to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Delegating decision making to build responsibility
THE PURPOSE OF THIS TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT IS:	To present information to the public about issues that may affect them	To provide information and receive feedback or comments	To involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	To partner with stakeholders in the development of recommendations	Stakeholders have the responsibility for making the decision
	← *INFORMATION SHARING IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE ENTIRE CONTINUUM* →				
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CITY	**Information** Provide complete, objective, reliable, timely and easy to find and understand information	**Consultation** Define goals and processes clearly state the purpose and limits of the exercise and the City's commitment for the use of the public input		**Active Participation** Provide time and flexibility to facilitate a dialogue between City representatives and the public and a defined process for integrating decisions into the process	

Information Sharing Process Tools

- Sharing information is a key component of all public involvement processes.
- You must work with your Communications representative as they can advise you on many of these areas.
- Develop a communication strategy to outline how and when the project will share information.
- Keep it simple: use basic language and simple diagrams.
- The way you share information can profoundly affect the credibility of your project. It needs to be strategic, meaningful and timely.
- Technology is increasingly being used as an effective tool to share information, but do not let it become your primary tool. Use it strategically.

TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
MEDIA ARTICLES OR COVERAGE	• Media articles can raise awareness about municipal projects. • Work with Communications to develop a media plan. • Generate media awareness through public service announcements, press releases or news conferences. • On large or significant (potentially contentious) issues, it might be advantageous to prepare media packages.	• Pro-activity is the key to effective and accurate media coverage. Wherever possible develop a relationship with media so they come to you for the facts. • If you are working with a committee, make sure you have guidelines about who talks to the media and how they will respond. • If the media is being used as an awareness tool, ensure broad coverage—print, radio, television. • Ask stakeholders about which media sources they rely on. • If you have had media coverage of your events, consider sending those reporters a copy of the results.
ADVERTISING	• Some processes require advertising; regulations or legislation may define exactly what needs to be advertised. • Advertising is also used for major public events that have a broad geographic scope.	• Through Consultation Manager, public involvement events can be entered in the Public Involvement Calendar, providing a consistent place to find information to advise citizens of when, where and how they can be involved. www.edmonton.ca/publicinvolvementcalendar • Timing is critical for advertising. Ensure people have sufficient advance notice. • If there is a set corporate format make sure you use it.
NEWSLETTERS	• Using the communication tools of stakeholder organizations is generally advantageous as they have a dedicated readership. • On larger projects, developing a project newsletter can be very helpful to stakeholders. • It can be circulated in hard copy or electronically depending on your audience's needs.	• It is essential that the information is not amended after you turn it over to the organization and contact information is included. • Keep it brief—present enough for people to become interested and provide a way for them to contact you or get more information. • If necessary, pay the organization for an insert. • If you are working on a large, long-term project create an index of newsletters, contacts and publishing deadlines.

TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
BROCHURES, FLYERS OR FACT SHEETS	• These tools provide factual information to a broad cross-section of the public in a format you determine. • Fact sheets can be used in a variety of ways—mail drops, inserts into other publication, posting on web sites, and/or emailed. • Use brochures or fact sheets to explain the scope and impact of the project and to stem the rumour mill.	• Keep it concise, clear and minimize the use of acronyms and jargon. • These tools are an excellent way to rekindle interest in a long term project, or to use when the project is moving to a next phase where new stakeholders may be interested.
WEB SITES	• The Internet is increasingly used as an information-sharing tool for public involvement. • It can be extremely useful if designed to be accessible and kept up-to-date. • Web sites combined with on line surveys can be used to gather information. However, there are issues like single access, group lobbying, etc. to be ironed out in this area before it becomes effective. • Municipalities are responsible for including the complete spectrum of constituents, some of whom have no or limited access to the Internet and limited capacity for navigating complex sites.	• Work with your Communications Branch Advisor on effective use of the City's web site. • A web site is only one way to share information and must not be used as the sole or primary communication tool. • Less text, more graphics. Provide links for those who want more detail. • Archive old information. • Integrate web monitoring tools so you can document type and amount of usage.
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY REPORTS	• Interim and final reports that reflect how input influenced the development of the project and was incorporated into recommendations are an essential, and often overlooked, component of a public involvement process.	• "What we heard" documents are an example of using summary reports. • The critical part of this type of a report is the "So what?" element. "We heard you say this and this is how it influenced our approach…." • Providing summary reports does not mean circulating the technical report. The findings must be put into plain language in a form that is easily accessible.
INFORMATION REPOSITORIES— LIBRARIES, CITY HALL, AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFORMATION RACKS, ETC.	• Sometimes legislation requires that notices and reports are provided for access by the general public. • Using a repository enables people to access detailed or technical information that is too lengthy or large to circulate. • While information repositories are not a highly used form of sharing information, it provides for people who either want the extra information or can't access it through other channels.	• Make sure the facility staff knows where the information is being stored. • Consider using information repositories as a distribution centre for information. • Consider adding the same reports to your web site.

TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
INFORMATION HOTLINE	• On occasion, a municipality will set up an information hotline for specific projects. • The intention is to provide up-to-date information on issues affecting the public. • For the most part, web sites have replaced information hotlines, which are labour intensive and require attention from an informed person.	• Using an information hotline on a public involvement process is not the same as a customer service line. • While web sites often take the place of the hotline concept, don't forget that not everyone can access the Internet. • Be aware that using information hotlines or telephone response mechanisms can present a risk of eliminating people who are not fluent in English or cannot follow the complicated instructions.
PUBLIC DISPLAYS	• Setting up stationary displays at public facilities (arenas, malls, City Hall, schools, hospital lobbies, and trade fairs) can provide introductory information and informal consultation. This would fit within the testing ideas building block.	• Displays generally can not be left without someone to answer questions and supervise the display. • Information must be timely. • Select a facility frequented by a demographic or audience you wish to reach.
PRESENTATIONS	• Presentations are useful in complex projects to outline the scope and impact of the project, the timelines, and clarify the range of involvement. • As opposed to an open house format or information station concept, everyone hears the same information at the same time. • Presenting too much or overly complex information is the greatest liability of using presentations as a way of sharing information. • Presentations can be a double-edged sword. While a presentation can start to build trust through transparency and respect, if you overwhelm people, they may feel you are using amounts and formats of information as an exclusionary tactic.	• Do not provide an overwhelming amount of information and provide information packages to support the presentation. • Do not have too many speakers. • The presenter needs basic presentation skills and must be able to speak to the level of the audience. • Provide time for questions and answers. • Use a skilled facilitator to keep the discussion on track. • Provide handouts on the information presented. • Consider providing CDs or DVDs of the presentation for circulation. • Making presentations at an organization meeting is a way of providing information to a specific audience.
SITE VISITS OR TOURS	• On occasion it is possible to provide the opportunity to gain first hand information and deeper understanding through site visits or facility tours. • The impact of this type of information sharing can not be underestimated. • The experience moves participants to a new level of understanding and facilitates a truly informed discussion.	• Site visits are used primarily with stakeholder committees although a facility tour could be used with the general public. • Clearly define the purpose and the benefits of a tour or site visit before you decide to do it. • Make sure your host knows what types of things the group needs to see to inform their discussion. • Do not take people to sites that are not clearly aligned with your project as it can set up an expectation. • Provide time for a question and answer session with your host. • Debriefing with the public is a critical part of this process.

TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
PUBLIC HEARINGS –INFORMATION SHARING IN REVERSE	• Municipalities are required by law to provide the opportunity for the public to speak directly and formally to council on specific development issues. • The challenge with public hearings is they can be emotionally charged with people with vested interests or strong opinions speaking out. • Currently, most major projects have a significant public involvement component so hearings are just one element of extensive public involvement processes.	• It is critical the planning team ensure decision makers are aware of the larger public involvement process—the scope, the complexity, the range of participants—and that they are able to place the public hearing comments within that framework. • If possible, the project team should encourage representatives of all perspectives to speak at a public hearing. • If the process has a committee, the committee spokesperson should be encouraged to speak.

THESE CAN BE BOTH INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSULTATION TOOLS:		
TOOL	**DISCUSSION**	**CONSIDERATIONS**
COMMUNITY OR ORGANIZATIONAL LIAISON	• Liaisons are used when committees or advisory groups are struck. • A community liaison can be the conduit ensuring information is passed on in a timely way.	• If the intention is for a committee member to be a liaison to the community and have responsibilities as such, this must be clearly spelled out in the recruiting process. • The responsibilities must also be spelled out. It must also be clear if the liaison has been appointed as the representative of the organization or merely as a conduit.
DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS	• A discussion document is used to provide an overview of the project and to focus the discussion on areas where you have determined you need public input. • It encourages participants to look at the whole picture rather than their area of interest, and to move past rote responses.	• The key to an effective discussion document is presentation of materials in a simple and accessible format (including diagrams). • Use probing questions that foster exploration of predetermined assumptions. • Tell people how you will use the input. • Provide a summary report.

OPEN HOUSE SESSIONS	• Open house sessions are generally an information sharing exercise. However, they can be used to gather information in two ways:
	  - through discussions with representatives
	  - through response forms.
	• Basically an open house is set up in a display format with either static or electronic displays staffed by project representatives.
	• The liability of an open house is you do not know how many people to expect. You can either have massive attendance or just a few people.
		• See the Open House Logistics Checklist (Appendix 5) for details on planning and hosting an open house.
		• All open houses must be added to the on-line Public Involvement Calendar through Consultation Manager. All print advertising must include the web address (www.edmonton.ca/publicinvolvementcalendar).
		• Presentation of appropriate information is a major challenge in open houses. There is a temptation to share everything in the name of transparency. Don't do it.
		• Ensure all staff at the open house have attended a briefing session and are prepared to share the same information.
		• Staff should NEVER share an opinion or show a bias in a consultation event.

Consultation Process Tools

- The most challenging part of conducting public consultation is managing expectations about how the information will be used in the decision process.
- When you move to this level of the continuum, you will use very direct and focused questions to elicit specific information.
- Stay away from broad general questions.
- Ensure you provide time for thoughtful response.

PROCESS TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
INTERVIEWS	• Interviews are an excellent tool for gathering initial information and learning about a specific situation. • The data from interviews can be effective in developing position papers. • Interviews are also a good way to gather detailed data about perceptions.	• An interview requires an established format with a set number of key questions. • There is a temptation to let interviews become too long or to try and get too much data from them. • Interviewees must be informed how the data will be used. • Often, but not always, the raw information is shared with the interviewee to check results. • It is a good idea to do more than one interview per interest group to validate the information gathered.
FOCUS GROUPS	• A focus group is a group interview intended to be kept small and quite informal other than there is a pre-determined set of questions. • A focus group is an effective tool of "digging deeper." Often one person's comments can trigger reflection or challenge assumptions for the rest of the group.	• If you are holding more than one focus group, be sure to use the exact process and questions for each so the data is comparable. • Since they are generally short in nature (2 – 2 ½ hours) having more than 8-10 people makes it hard to have meaningful discussions. • A skilled facilitator will have the ability to ask probing questions and explore ideas more fully.
RESPONSE FORMS	• Response forms are typically used to gather feedback or reaction to information presented at a public event or through printed material.	• Response forms are not a survey and should not be treated as such because they do not represent a random sampling. • It is important that you provide time for people to give a thoughtful response to a response form. • If you are going to ask open-ended questions, make sure you have the resources to synthesize and analyze the results.
SURVEYS (MAIL, TELEPHONE AND/OR ELECTRONIC)	• Surveys, when properly conducted, can provide statistically valid data that can be used to identify patterns of perceptions and expectations.	• Surveys can be used to measure the opinions of the silent majority. • They need to be created by qualified professionals and strong control mechanisms must be used in collecting and interpreting the data. • Do not use surveys as a weapon to disprove the qualitative data gathered through other processes.

PROCESS TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
ELECTRONIC FORUMS (E-CONSULTATION)	• Technology is increasing being used as a vehicle for public involvement. • An electronic forum is an on-line discussion group that can occur in real time or over a period of time. • Complimentary to face-to-face methodologies.	• Participation guidelines are essential. • Make the site easy to access. • Limit the size of a real-time forum to enable participation by everyone. • Like face-to-face forums, a moderator is required to vet input and to focus the discussion.
PUBLIC OR TOWN HALL MEETINGS	• Traditionally public or town hall meetings were the primary tool for gathering public input. • They usually consist of some form of presentation by a speaker or a panel and provide for a plenary discussion. • A town hall meeting has the potential to become a soap box session if it is not well managed.	• With the development of more effective and interactive participation tools, public meetings are a vehicle of last resort. • They have serious limitations as an effective tool for gathering information—they can be large and often conflict-ridden. A few vocal voices often monopolize the discussion. • This forum doesn't allow for dialogue or learning. • If you do host a public or town hall meeting refer to the tip on hosting public meetings.
EXPERT PANELS	• An expert panel can be convened to review materials or recommendations at several stages in the process. • Expert panels can be used as interim evaluation tools.	• Technical experts are not the only experts even in technical projects. • If an expert comes with a bias it is important to disclose that and place the remarks in context do not assume you know the bias. This could affect how you use the information and you could be wrong.
WORKSHOPS	• Workshops can be either large or small events that utilize a structured process to facilitate discussions on specific topics. • If they are larger in size, design provisions must ensure participants have the opportunity to fully participate. • The key challenge to a workshop is using creativity to ensure interaction and dialogue are aimed at the desired outcomes.	• A workshop agenda should be structured so less than 25% of the time is given to providing information/making presentations. • Workshops generally are used with participants who have a level of experience or knowledge about the task at hand. • Ensure you provide time in your agenda for creating a level of comfort or forming. • Planning a workshop should begin with identifying the desired outcomes and working backward. • Provide the opportunity for participants to evaluate the process and the outcome. • Always provide the summary to the participants. • Ensure you have a strategy for integrating the results of a workshop into the project discussion.

| THESE CAN BE BOTH INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSULTATION TOOLS:		
PROCESS TOOL	**DISCUSSION**	**CONSIDERATIONS**
EXPERT COMMITTEES	• Expert committees can be useful in identifying the questions that need to be asked, providing unbiased information to the larger stakeholder community, and reviewing recommendations.	• Technical expertise is only one type of expertise that should be sought out—e.g. communication, community leadership and socio-economic. • Information received from an expert committee may need to be "translated" into basic terms before it is shared with the public. • If you do simplify the information, ensure the experts have a chance to review the information before it is circulated.
TASK FORCES	• A task force is an ad-hoc committee charged with a specific task, specific deliverables and usually specific timelines.	• One way to use a task force is in outreach to a specific community of stakeholders—e.g. multi-cultural, communities-at-risk or specific interests. • Also a task force can act as a research mechanism to provide specific information. • Keep them small and provide clear guidelines. • Usually one staff member would work with a task force to provide logistic support and guidance without interfering with the process.
ADVISORY COMMITTEES OR BOARDS	• Advisory committees generally consist of broad representation from a range of stakeholders. • The committee generally sits for the duration of the process. • The City of Edmonton utilizes advisory boards in a variety of areas.	• It is very important to balance participation on advisory committees to ensure all voices are heard. • This often means using the participant identification tool to determine balanced participation and a recruitment process. • Also refer to the Tip Sheets Section on Working with Stakeholders.

Active Participation Process Tools

- This level of participation is rarely used for City of Edmonton public involvement processes.
- Size of the forum, representation, timing and time commitments are all key considerations that will affect the quality of the results.
- All groups must be very clear about their role in the decision process and the expected outcomes, which usually needs to be reiterated throughout the process.
- Any type of committee needs terms of reference that clearly defines the purpose, scope, responsibilities and level of empowerment of the committee.
- Leadership and accountability must be defined at the outset.
- Token participation is a significant concern of this type of public involvement. Using any of the methods outlined below requires a significant commitment to ensuring that opportunities for discussion are balanced with providing information and holding meaningful, solution-oriented discussions.
- Third party facilitation can be a significant advantage in active participation involvement.
- Strategically recruit committee members to ensure a balance of interests and voices.

PROCESS TOOL	DISCUSSION	CONSIDERATIONS
DECISION MAKING BOARDS	• The City of Edmonton utilizes the services of the public through a number of decision-making boards that oversee a range of services in the City. • These boards are appointed by the city and have defined role and responsibilities. • Generally these are long-term commitments in which the appointees provide a citizen view point but do not speak for a specific interest or organization.	• When beginning a public involvement process identify if there is an appointed board or committee for this area. Learn about their mandate and communicate with them about potential involvement. • Ensure you share all pertinent information with them in a timely manner. • Be cautious about asking questions or gathering information that would conflict with the mandate of a decision-making board.
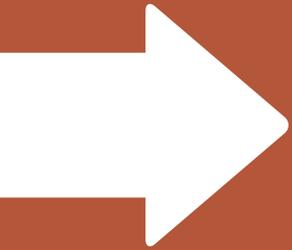
Section Three:
Public Involvement Plan Workbook

Section Three:

The Public Involvement Workbook

The Public Involvement Plan Workbook has four worksheets that correspond with the four steps on the Roadmap:
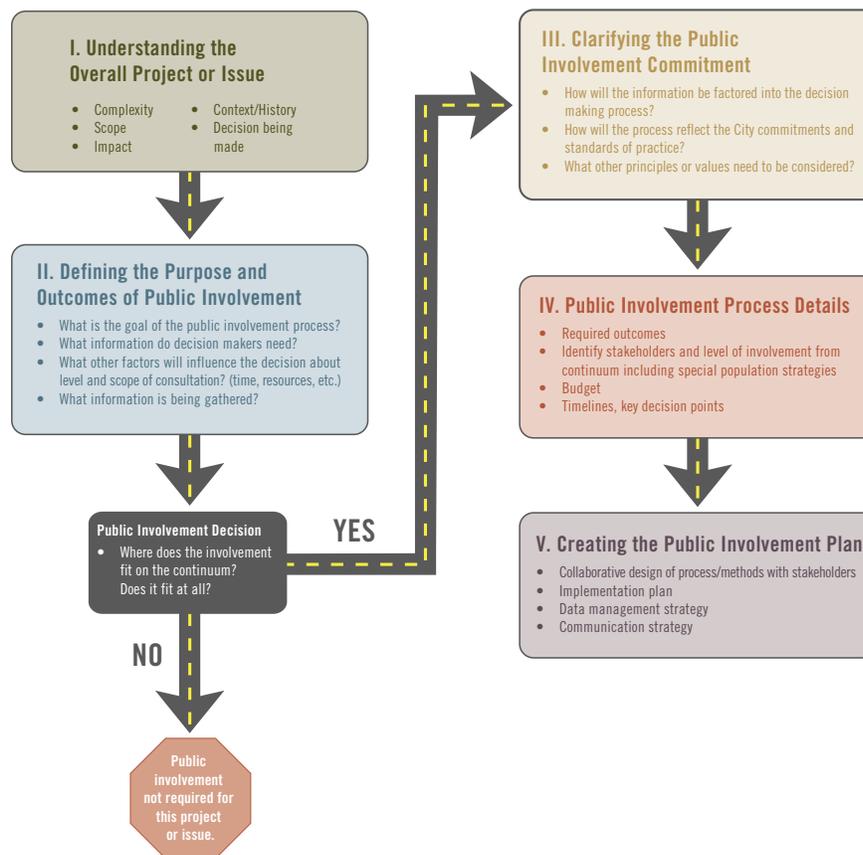
- **Worksheet One:** Understanding the Overall Project or Issue
- **Worksheet Two:** Defining the Purpose, Scope and Outcomes of Public Involvement
- **Worksheet Three:** Clarifying the Public Involvement Commitment
- **Worksheet Four:** Public Involvement Process Details (comprised of a number of templates for specific considerations)

The information from these worksheets will be summarized in the Public Involvement Plan (p. 55).

Using the Workbook:

- Begin by reading through the entire handxbook to familiarize yourself with the Plan, the Process Tips, and the Process Tools and Methods. This will help orient you to the process.
- In the Workbook, the questions on each worksheet are trigger questions intended to get you thinking about the overall project and the specific step in the plan.
- Read each worksheet through first and see if the questions stimulate your thinking or bring other questions to mind. Respond to them in the order that makes sense to you and your team.
- This is not so much about answering each question as about being able to say, "We thought this through."
- As you complete the questions for each step, summarize the key points to the Public Involvement Plan.
- Once you have completed the Public Involvement Plan use the Core Commitments and Standards of Practice Checklist and the Readiness Test to ensure you haven't missed any key points.

The Public Involvement Road Map outlines the strategic approach required for every project in which public involvement is a consideration.

I. Understanding the Overall Project or Issue
- Complexity
- Scope
- Impact
- Context/History
- Decision being made

II. Defining the Purpose and Outcomes of Public Involvement
- What is the goal of the public involvement process?
- What information do decision makers need?
- What other factors will influence the decision about level and scope of consultation? (time, resources, etc.)
- What information is being gathered?

Public Involvement Decision
- Where does the involvement fit on the continuum? Does it fit at all?

III. Clarifying the Public Involvement Commitment
- How will the information be factored into the decision making process?
- How will the process reflect the City commitments and standards of practice?
- What other principles or values need to be considered?

IV. Public Involvement Process Details
- Required outcomes
- Identify stakeholders and level of involvement from continuum including special population strategies
- Budget
- Timelines, key decision points

V. Creating the Public Involvement Plan
- Collaborative design of process/methods with stakeholders
- Implementation plan
- Data management strategy
- Communication strategy

YES

NO

Public involvement not required for this project or issue.

For each stage it is important to:

- **consider** or think about the questions presented, and ones that might come to mind;
- **confirm** the responses with others; and then
- **commit** to a plan of action that aligns with the Continuum of Public Involvement and reflects the City of Edmonton Commitments and Standards of Practice.

The Public Involvement Readiness Test should be used to ensure you have done the work you need to do to proceed with your process. (p. 54)

Staff members who have experience with public involvement might be tempted to provide top-of-the-head responses to some of these questions or to gloss over them. It is essential you take the time to review and respond to the questions in these worksheets to ensure your processes are strategic and reflect the Core Commitments to public involvement.

Worksheet One:

Step I: Understanding the Overall Project or Issue

Taking time to ensure you understand and can effectively communicate the issue being addressed or the overall project—the decision being made, who is making it, and understanding how this project or process could impact or be impacted by other projects—contributes to effective public involvement design. This is an important first step as it will enable the project team to explain the context with clarity to stakeholders as the process unfolds. Answering these questions will also help to define the scope of the public involvement process.

> **Jumping to design the process before contexting the project can lead to over or under estimating the scope of involvement or confusion about why the public is being involved.**

Project Name:	
What is the decision being made in this project?	
Who will make the final decision? (Council, Senior Management, etc.)	
What is the scope of this project? Does the final outcome affect just one department, one area of the city or the whole city?	
Will or how will this project decision impact: • Other municipal decisions or projects • Specific communities • Businesses • Individuals • The environment • Etc….	
Are there historical factors or previous decisions that will affect how this project is implemented?	

Summarize this information in the Public Involvement Plan (p. 55)

Worksheet Two:

Step II: Defining the Purpose, Scope and Outcomes of Public Involvement

The primary reason for involving the public in the discussion about a project or initiative is to provide decision makers with insights reflecting a diverse and balanced range of perspectives so they can make informed and credible decisions. Therefore, it is important to confirm with decision makers and/or help them to clarify the types of information that would help them in making an effective decision.

Confirming or testing assumptions about the information required by decision makers is essential and can be achieved either by asking them directly, or in the development and approval of the public involvement plan.

The most important aspect of this stage is to confirm what question you are asking or what information you are seeking from the public. Establishing this clarity up front will ensure you are asking the right questions, gathering the right type and amount of information, and that stakeholders know how the information will contribute to the process.

One person doing this review could lead to making invalid assumptions.

Some framing questions:		
• 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 factors will influence the decision about level and scope of consultation? (Time, resources, etc.) How?	Factor	Impact

The following are key questions of the public involvement planning process. It will help you define where the process fits on the continuum, what questions you need to ask, and help you frame the entire process.

Driving questions	
• What specific information are you seeking from the public?	
• How will this information add value to the decision making process?	

> The public involvement component of a project may fit at several places in the information—consultation—active participation continuum (see below). The key is to define which of the five building blocks the process will use.

• Does this involvement fit on the continuum? Where? • Why?	

Continuum of Public Involvement

WE INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN : THE INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN AND INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING				
Information	Consultation		Active Participation	
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT BUILDING BLOCKS				
Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to develop solutions to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Delegating decision making to build responsibility

Summarize this information in the Public Involvement Plan.

Resources:
Process Design Tip #13 (p. 17)
Project Scoping Tool (p. 43)

Worksheet Three:

Step III: Clarifying the Public Involvement Commitment

At this point, the decision to include a public involvement component in the project has been made and the Continuum of Public Involvement has been used to determine the level of involvement required to achieve the desired outcomes. The next step is to make a commitment about how the information being gathered will affect the decision process.

• How will you use the information gathered?	
• How will you demonstrate and communicate the information gathered was considered in the decision making process?	
• How will the process reflect the City commitments and standards of practice? (Core Commitments and Standards of Practice Checklist p. 53)	
• What other principles, values or commitments need to be considered? (i.e. other charters, by-laws, etc.)	

Especially when working with Committees there is an opportunity for a two-way commitment on behalf of the City and the Committee which can be formalized in a Terms of Reference or a Charter. But, keep it simple!

Summarize in the Public Involvement Plan (p. 55).

Worksheet Four:

Step IV: Public Involvement Process Details

This stage could be described as laying out the pieces of a puzzle before you put it together. In this stage the team will address:

A) Project Scope: Timelines and the key decision points
B) Identifying Stakeholders
C) Resource Strategy
D) Public Involvement Methods Strategy
E) Communication Strategy
F) Evaluation Strategy
G) Data Management Strategy
H) Risk Management Strategy

The explanation of these pieces or planning components is followed by a set of templates that you might find helpful in preparing the Public Involvement Plan.

Also included are two checklists:

1) The Core Commitments and Standards of Practices Checklist to ensure alignment.
2) The Readiness Checklist to ensure you have covered the important bases.

A) Project Scoping

Public involvement should be an integral part of the overall project, but it is just one part. A process is required for input to be synthesized, reviewed and factored in with other considerations as the project develops. Identifying key decision points in the project where public input will be reviewed and factored into the process is an important part of this stage. Use the project Project Scoping Tool (p. 43) to help you identify the key decision points and how the information will be used.

Summarize this information in the Public Involvement Plan.

B) Identifying Stakeholders

Identify stakeholders and level of involvement using the Participant Identification Template (p. 44) and then summarize the information in the Public Involvement Plan.

> Once you have defined the scope of the project and the potential stakeholders, you are better able to decide what process tools can be best used for your process.

> Timing of public involvement events is critical. Use Consultation Manager's internal calendar to find out what else is happening, potential opportunities for joint/integrated public involvement events, and check with stakeholders if there are times to avoid. Remember: Trust can be absolutely destroyed if events are timed so participation is limited.

C) Resource Strategy

An accurate assessment of the required resources for a public involvement process is a key accountability tool and necessary to ensure adequate resources.

> When budgeting for staff or contractors remember to factor in preparing for, attending and debriefing/reporting on public events, ongoing communication, and, ever increasingly, developing audio/visual tools.

Some resource considerations are:

1. *Staff and Contractors:* While many departments contract out all or part of the public involvement duties for major projects, there are still internal requirements for staff on the project.

> While public involvement can be a labor intensive undertaking, it is often considered an add-on to current responsibilities, rather than a specific job duty. As a result, staff get burned out, over-burdened and less able to do a good job overall. It is important to include the requirements of internal staff in your project plan.

2. *Technical information and materials:* Web site development and maintenance, displays, etc.

3. *Communications:* Advertising, newsletters, brochures, web site development and maintenance, development of CDs, DVDs, information gathering expenses, surveys, etc.

4. *Logistics:* Facility rental, refreshments, committee expenses, signage, etc.

5. *Participant funding and outreach:* Interpretation/translation, transportation, child care, etc.

> Remember when you are reaching out to multi-cultural communities or persons at-risk of not participating for reasons of ability, access, communication or other socio-economic factors, you may need to budget for extra costs.

Use the Resource Plan and Monitoring Tool (p. 48) to develop your the public involvement resource requirement and then summarize it in the Public Involvement Plan.

D) Public Involvement Methods Strategy

Once you have defined the scope of the public involvement process, where it fits on the continuum, and identified the potential stakeholders, you are better able to decide what process tools or methods can be used at what stage to implement the plan.

Use the Process Tools and Methods Section (p. 23) and the Methods Strategy Template (p. 47) to define how and when you will involve the various stakeholders you have identified. Transfer the summary to the Public Involvement Plan.

E) Communications Strategy

Effective information sharing is critical to any public involvement process and it is basically a matter of strategic thinking and common sense. In communication or information sharing the "Keep it Simple" rule is paramount.

Work with your Corporate Communications representative to develop your Communications Strategy. Use the Process Tools and Methods Section (p. 23) to identify which method best fits your communication needs once you have decided whom you need to share information with, when it is best to share it, and what the key messages are.

Use the Communication Strategy Template (p. 50) to identify your target audiences and key messages and then summarize the details in the Public Involvement Plan. Also available is a sample communication strategy (see Appendix Four).

F) Evaluation Strategy

Evaluating the public involvement process is not the same as evaluating the project or about whether the recommendations were accepted by decision makers, although that may be one indicator of success. The purpose of this type of evaluation is to determine if the process was effective.

Evaluation is often the step that doesn't get done – for a variety of reasons: timing, other demands and assumptions. The assumption is if it wasn't a train wreck it must have been a good process. The two don't necessarily correlate. It is important to ask how it could have been better, what worked and what didn't AND make changes the next time around.

A key component of any evaluation is the "So what?" part. So what do we commit to doing differently?

Interim evaluation should be used as a tool for ensuring meaningful results through process adaptations or course correction.

Use the Evaluation Strategy Template (p. 51) and summarize results in the Public Involvement Plan.

G) Data Tracking Strategy

Depending on the complexity of the project, data tracking can be a critical accountability tool. In some cases every telephone call will need to be tracked. In others, summaries of activity will suffice. It is important to scope the amount of data that will be gathered and ensure you have decided on tools or process at the beginning of the public involvement process.

Use the Data Tracking Template (p. 49) to provide a guide for tracking the information you gather. Consultation Manager, a web-based software, is a mandatory tool for City staff to use when planning and implementing any public involvement process. Contact the Office of Public Involvement to set up your project in Consultation Manager.

H) Risk Management Strategy

In the beginning of the assessment, you took the time to identify the scope of the project and determine if there were any complexities or historical factors that might influence the tone or the way in which the public involvement process is approached. If the preliminary assessment suggested there might be complications, it would be wise to conduct a full risk assessment. Use the Risk Assessment Template as a guide for this. (p. 52)

Project Scoping Tool

Project/Process: _____

WHAT ARE THE KEY DECISION POINTS?	WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES FOR THE PROJECT?	WHAT INFORMATION DO WE NEED FROM STAKEHOLDERS?	WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT?	HOW WILL STAKEHOLDER INPUT BE INCORPORATED AT THIS DECISION POINT?

Participant Identification Template

Project/Process: _____

Answering the questions below will help to context your thinking about potential participants

1. Geographic Boundaries or Scope of Consultation: _____

2. Impact of Decision: _____

3. History of the area or the issue that might affect who wants to be involved:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Potential Participants by Community of Interest

- Business associations
- Businesses
- Development associations
- Development companies
- Industry associations
- Industry companies
- Citizens
- Aboriginal
- Alternative Lifestyles
- Ethno-cultural
- Multicultural
- Religious
- Seniors

- Urban Poor
- Youth
- Area councils
- Community leagues
- Arts/Festivals/Historical
- Educational Boards and Associations
- K-12 Institutions
- Post-Secondary Institutions
- Emergency Services
- Public Safety
- Environment
- Health
- Persons with Disabilities

- Media
- Adjacent Municipalities
- City Administration
- Mayor and Council
- Other Municipalities
- Boards-Agencies-Commissions
- Federal Government
- Provincial Government
- Sports and Leisure Groups
- Service Agencies and Boards
- Transportation

Identifying Specific Participants

Use the table on the next page to create your initial list of participants.

| BASED ON QUESTIONS 1-3, WHO SPECIFICALLY MIGHT WANT TO BE INVOLVED?	WHAT CATEGORY DO THEY BELONG TO?	WHAT ISSUES WOULD THEY BE INTERESTED IN? WHAT IS THEIR LEVEL OF INTEREST?	WHAT METHOD WILL WE USE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THIS STAKEHOLDER?
SAMPLE			
Edmonton Newcomers	Multi-cultural group	Need to be determined but there is a strong ethnic community in the area	May need to look at translation and small groups
XYZ Community League	Community leagues	Anything that affects the community	Through the organization, web site, newsletters

BASED ON QUESTIONS 1-3, WHO SPECIFICALLY MIGHT WANT TO BE INVOLVED?	WHAT CATEGORY DO THEY BELONG TO?	WHAT IS THEIR LEVEL OF INTEREST? WHAT ISSUES WOULD THEY BE INTERESTED IN?	WHAT METHOD WILL WE USE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THIS STAKEHOLDER?

Stakeholder Involvement Sphere of Interest

Project/Process: _____

Since there are seldom resources to cover every base that is identified; sometimes it is helpful to map out the sphere of interest on identified stakeholders The Sphere of Interest enables you to identify where to target your resources and where to expect the most interaction. We have correlated the sphere of interests with the continuum.

> **For each stakeholder group, map (and be ready to rationalize) where they might fit in the Sphere of Interest: Often the closer proximity to the project the higher the impact and the greater interest by stakeholders. Once complete it provides insight on how ou consider targeting your resources.**

Tertiary Level of Interest

Secondary Level of Interest

Primary Level of Interest
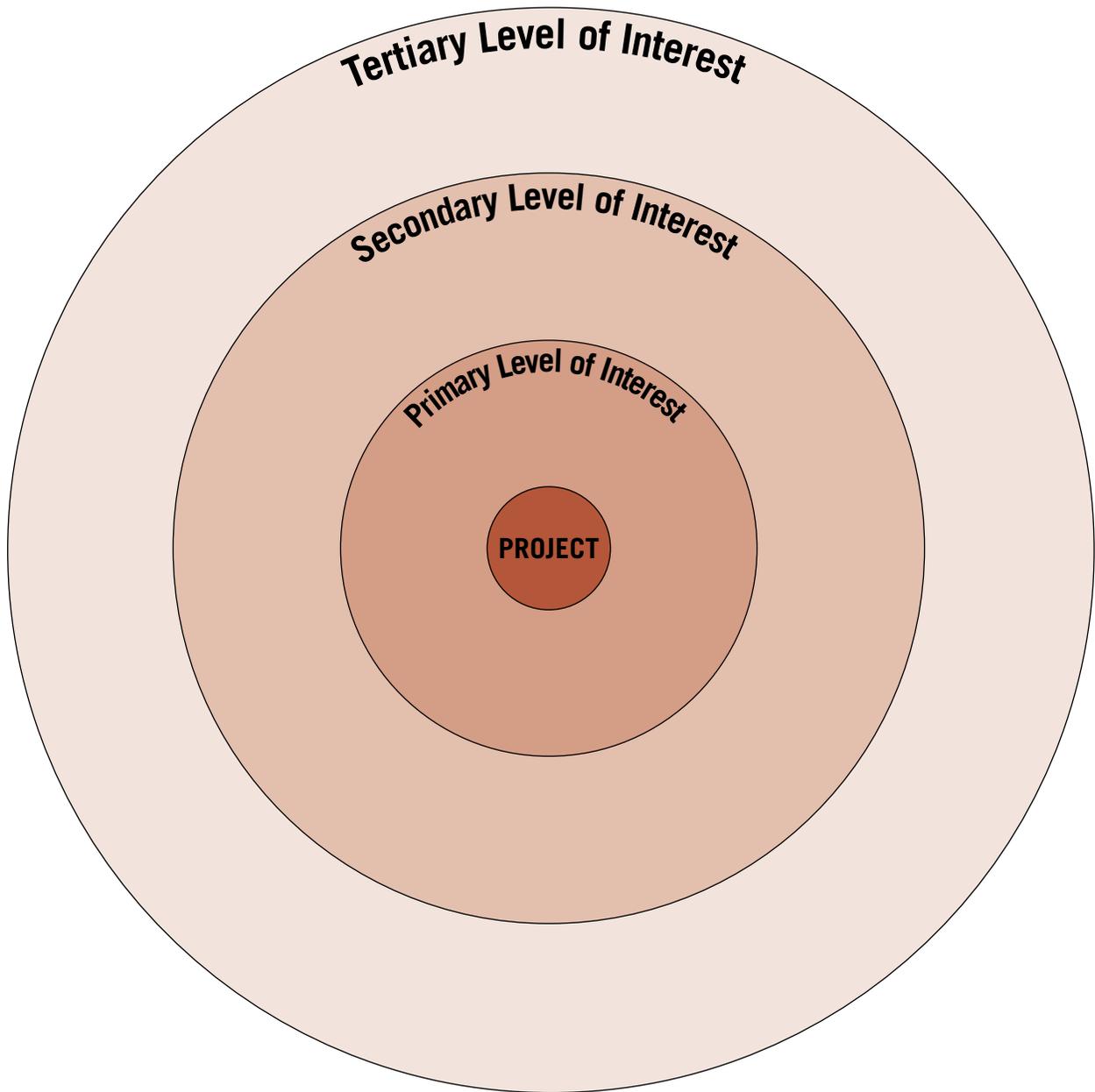
PROJECT

Public Involvement Methods Strategy

Project/Process: _____

Step One: *Identify appropriate involvement tools to meet the needs of the stakeholders.*

PARTICIPANT (FROM PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION TOOL)	LEVEL OF INTEREST	LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT FROM THE CONTINUUM	POTENTIAL SIZE OF GROUP OR NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS	INVOLVEMENT TOOLS THAT MATCH NEEDS
Sample: Community Leagues	High—want active participation	Information sharing and consultation —collaborating to develop solutions	Representative group —15 members	Attend community meetings, newsletters, web site, advisory committee

Summarize this information in the Public Involvement Plan.

Resource Plan and Monitoring Tool

Project/Process: _____

HARD COSTS	PROPOSED COSTS	FINAL COSTS	VARIANCE
Staff/Contractors			
• Public involvement consultants			
• Allotment out of expert consultant budgets			
• Communications consultant			
•			
Data gathering			
• Public opinion polls/surveys			
• On-line surveys			
•			
Technical Requirements			
• Computer analysis processes			
• Equipment			
•			
Logistics			
• Facilities			
• Refreshments			
•			
Communication			
• Advertising			
• Web development and maintenance			
• Web-casting sessions			
• Print materials			
• Presentation materials			
Participant Costs			
• Travel			
• Child care			
• Translation/interpretation			
•			
TOTAL			
Soft Costs			
• Project team costs			
• Special event HR costs			
• Additional internal consulting costs			
Financial TOTAL			

Data Tracking Template

Project/Process: _____

Information collected is to be stored/recorded in Consultation Manager. Contact the Office of Public Involvement to add this Public Involvement Project.

DATE RECORDED	SOURCE OF INFORMATION (INDIVIDUAL, ORGANIZATION SUBMISSION, EVENT, WEB SITE, ETC.)	KEY POINTS OR MESSAGES	HOW WAS INPUT USED? WHY OR WHY NOT?

Communication Strategy Template

Project/Process: _____

Use this template to strategize about and track your information sharing processes. Contact your Commications Officer to work through this with you. See Appendix Four: Sample Communications Strategy.

Communications Issues/ Opportunity	
Background	
Communications Environment	*Key Factors*
Communications Objectives	
Desired Communications Outcomes	
Target Audiences	*Who are your primary audiences? Secondary?*
Key Communications Messages	
Strategic Communications Approach	
Communications Products/ Tools	e.g. handouts, use of web site, advertisement

	Action	Details	Timing
Communications Actions Plan and Timelines			

Measurement and Evaluation	

Summarize this information in the Public Involvement Plan.

Evaluation Strategy Template

Project/Process: _____

Evaluation criteria/indicators of success for the process. Ask decision makers and stakeholders about their indicators of success.	This will be a successful process if...."
Are the criteria relevant and meaningful to the project, tied to the project objectives and outcomes, and the Core Commitments and Standards of Practice?	
What specifically are you evaluating about the Public Involvement Process?	
What methods will you use? Are you using quantitative or qualitative evaluation methods?	*Ensure the methods you use match the types of information you are trying to gather and are appropriate to the people you are talking to.*
Who would best provide the required information?	
How information will be used, recorded, tracked and analysed? And by whom?	
How will the interim and final evaluation results be used?	
How will you communicate evaluation results?	
How will you take action on improving this or other processes?	

Risk Assessment Template

Project/Process: _____

ID #	STATEMENT OF RISK	RISK EFFECT	RISK PROBABILITY (0-5)	RISK SEVERITY (0-5)	RISK OWNERSHIP	INDICATORS OF RISK SITUATION	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
	Sample: Short time line for consultation	Alienates the community Complaints to council	4	5	City	• Inadequate feedback • Public input not included in recommendation	When timelines are short, work with community to design quick turn around process by having them outline what would be acceptable in the context.

Core Commitments and Standards of Practice Checklist

Project/Process: _____

For each statement assess whether the standard of practice is being addressed or met.

| COMMITMENTS AND STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	NO	SOME WHAT	YES
Our Commitment to Citizen Engagement: The City of Edmonton believes that a key element of representative democracy is that people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.			
Public involvement processes will be designed to involve the appropriate people at the appropriate time in the appropriate way through the completion and communication of a public involvement plan for all processes.			
The continuum of public involvement will be used to ensure involvement processes align with the scope, complexity, and outcomes of the decision being made.			
A balance and range of public perspectives will be provided to decision makers for consideration in the decision process.			
Processes will be appropriately resourced to ensure effective implementation.			
Our Commitment To Honouring People: The City of Edmonton Public Involvement process design will ensure people are treated with respect, honesty and integrity.			
The purpose and goal of the public involvement will be identified at the outset of the process.			
Participants will know what is included in the discussion and what isn't, what decisions will be made or have been made, and who will make the final decision.			
Timing, location, and format will reflect considerations for effective participation.			
Where appropriate, outreach processes will be used to include the public who need support to participate.			
Our Commitment To Accessible Involvement: The City of Edmonton will ensure public involvement processes are accessible to the public.			
Information is accessible: • It is always provided the simplest form possible—in plain language or understandable graphic formats.			
• Translation or interpretation services are provided when necessary.			
Information is readily available so the public can participate in an informed discussion.			
Facilities are accessible: • Location and physical accessibility are always considered.			

Readiness Test

Project/Process: _____

Completed on: _____ By: _____

Answering the following questions will enable you to assess whether your public involvement process is ready to go.

READINESS STATEMENT	NO	SOME WHAT	YES
We can confirm the decision has not been made and there is a purpose for the publc involvement process.			
We know what information the decision makers are looking for and how they will use it.			
We have a clear understanding of what we need to know from the public.			
There is adequate time for a meaningful process.			
We have a project budget and have identified the resources we need to enable us to sponsor an effective process.			
We have developed a communication strategy.			
We have a clear understanding of the project decision.			
We have identified potential stakeholders and their level of engagement.			
We have assessed the timing of our project to ensure appropriate participation.			
We have done a risk identification and assessment.			
We have identified a project spokesperson.			
We have coordinated our process with other city processes to ensure we don't overwhelm the public.			
We have assessed the public involvement climate:			
• We have identified any historical aspects that might affect the involvement process.			
• We know who was out there last and how that might affect how the public responds to us			
We have developed an evaluation process that provides for amending the process if it isn't working.			
Our process clearly aligns with the Commitments and Standards of Practice for Public Involvement.			

At this point, you should identify how many responses are in the NO or SOMEWHAT category and whether they are significant enough not to proceed with the project. For all statements, you should have a plan for how to move them to the YES column.
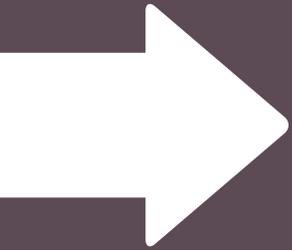
Section Four:
Public Involvement Plan

4

Section Four:

Creating a Public Involvement Plan

It is now time to design the Public Involvement Plan or to put all the pieces together in a coherent strategy.

By taking the data you have gathered to this point and inserting it in the template, you will create a strategic Public Involvement Plan.

It is very important to test this design with a sampling of stakeholders and provide them with the opportunity to make recommendations for changes to the process that will reasonably reflect their needs. (Testing the Design Tip)
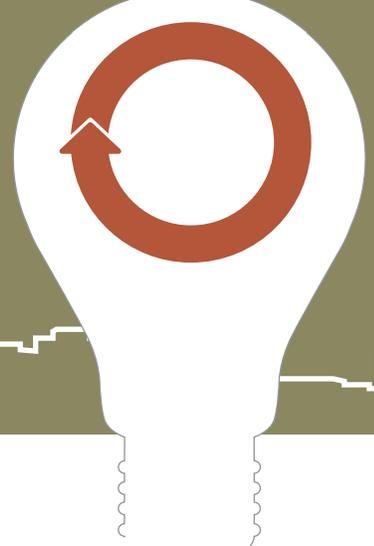
Involving Edmonton Public Plan

Project: _____

Department/Branch Responsible: _____

Project Manager: _____

Consultant (if applicable): _____

Draft or Final Plan: _____

Other city participants or partners: _____

The Public Involvement Input Commitment is:

[ ]

This plan has been vetted through the Public Involvement Readiness Test (p. 54)

_____ Sign off

Background:

DESCRIPTION OF THE OVERALL PROJECT OR INITIATIVE:	
THE DECISION BEING MADE IS:	
DECISION MAKERS	_____ will make the final decision based on recommendations from _____
THE SCOPE (IMPACT, AND COMPLEXITY) OF THIS DECISION IS:	
THE TIMELINE FOR THIS DECISION IS:	
THE PUBLIC IS BEING INVOLVED IN BECAUSE:	

LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT:

This process predominantly fits in

INFORMATION SHARING	CONSULTATION		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
• Sharing information to build awareness	• Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	• Collaborating to develop solutions to build commitment	• Sharing decision making to build ownership	• Delegating decision making to build responsibility

THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION BEING SOUGHT IS:	
HOW WILL INFORMATION BE USED IN THE DECISION MAKING?	

Public Involvement Methods Strategy

Potential Participants	Proposed Level of Involvement (InformationSharing, Consultation, or Active Participation)	Involvement Strategy

Special Outreach Strategy

Public requiring Outreach	Strategy

Resource Strategy

Public Involvement Budget

Staff/Contractors	
Technical information and materials	
Communication	
Logistics	
Participant Expenses	
Total Expenses	

Staff time for

Event planning and participation	
Special meetings	
Communication with stakeholders	
Display preparation	

Data Management Strategy

Information collected is to be stored/recorded in Consultation Manager. Contact the Office of Public Involvement to add this Public Involvement Project.

| INFORMATION GATHERED	HOW IT WILL BE RECORDED/MANAGED/INTEGRATED INTO PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Communications Strategy

Target Audience	Key Messages and Timing	Information Sharing Tool

Evaluation Strategy

What are the indicators of success for the public involvement process?	
What will we measure or evaluate about the public involvement process?	
When and how?	
What will we do with the results of the evaluation?	
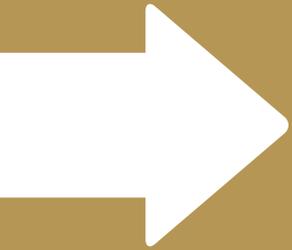
Section Five :
Appendices

5

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

Appendix One: City Policy 513

City of Edmonton Public Involvement

AUTHORITY: City Manager   **CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED: January 17, 2006**

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Edmonton's Public Involvement Practice is guided by the Public Involvement Framework which outlines the strategic approach to be used in all City hosted public involvement processes. The Framework includes the Core Commitments and Standards of Practice, the Continuum of Public Involvement and the Public Involvement Roadmap.

The trademarks of City of Edmonton Public Involvement processes will be:

- Clear purpose
- Consistent approach
- Commitment to Involve

Clear purpose is achieved through the use of the *Continuum of Public Involvement.*

Consistent approach is achieved by using the *Public Involvement Roadmap.*

The commitment to involve is achieved through the following *three core commitments*.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The City of Edmonton believes that a key element of representative democracy is that people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

OUR COMMITMENT TO HONOURING PEOPLE

The City of Edmonton Public Involvement process design will ensure people are treated with respect, honesty and integrity.

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE INVOLVEMENT

The City of Edmonton will ensure public involvement processes are accessible to the public.

1. DEFINITIONS

Public: The most general and inclusive term for participants of public process in the municipal context. This term includes individuals, not-for-profit, community and corporate organizations.

Involvement: The term used to cover the continuum of purposes or phases for engaging the public in municipal issues. The continuum includes sharing information, consultation to test ideas and collaborating to build solutions and active participation in decision making.

Public Involvement: Will be used to represent the various methods of engaging the people of Edmonton in discussions about civic matters that affect them.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees will be expected to take a strategic approach for every project in which public involvement is a consideration by using the Public Involvement Framework which includes:

Standards of Practice:

Those involved in designing and implementing public involvement processes will demonstrate the following standards of practice:

Citizen Engagement

- Public involvement processes will be designed to involve the appropriate people at the appropriate time in the appropriate way through the completion and communication of a public involvement plan for all processes.
- The continuum of public involvement will be used to ensure involvement processes align with the scope, complexity, and outcomes of the decision being made.
- A balance and range of public perspectives will be provided to decision makers for consideration in the decision process.
- Processes will be appropriately resourced to ensure effective implementation.

Honoring People:

- The purpose and goal of the involvement will be identified at the outset of the process.
- Participants will know what is included in the discussion and what isn't, and what decisions will be made or have been made, and who will make the final decision.
- Timing, location, and format reflect considerations for effective participation.
- Where appropriate, outreach processes are used to include the public who need support to participate.

Accessible Involvement

- Information is accessible:
  - It is always provided the simplest form possible—in plain language or understandable graphic formats.
  - Translation or interpretation services are provided when necessary.
- Facilities are accessible:
  - Location and physical accessibility are always considered.
- Information is readily available so the public can participate in an informed discussion.

The Continuum of Public Involvement

SHARING INFORMATION	CONSULTATION		ACTIVE PARTICIPATION	
Public Involvement Building Blocks				
Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Delegating decision making to build responsibility
The purpose of this level of involvement is:				
To present information to the public about issues that may affect them	To provide information and receive feedback or comment	To involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	To partner with stakeholders in the development of recommendations	To give stakeholders the responsibility for making the decision

The City of Edmonton Public Involvement Roadmap

1. Understanding the overall project
2. Defining the purpose and outcomes of public involvement
3. Clarifying the public involvement commitment
4. Public involvement process details
5. Developing the public involvement plan

Appendix Two: Administrative Directive

Public Involvement

NUMBER: A1448

DELEGATED AUTHORITY: BYLAW 12005, CITY ADMINISTRATION BYLAW 10(D)

DEPARTMENT: OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

DATE: MAY 15, 2008

STATEMENT

The City of Edmonton is committed to the providing a standard of excellence to the citizens and public for all public involvement events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to provide employees with guidelines for a consistent approach when there are City sponsored public involvement processes.

APPLICATION

This directive applies to all City departments reporting to the City Manager and all City employees including full-time, part-time, temporary and provisional employees in addition to City hired Consultants. This also applies to the Office of City Auditor.

LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITIES

Public Involvement Policy C513

Appendix Three: Administrative Procedure

Public Involvement

> **NUMBER: A1448**
>
> **DEPARTMENT: OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**
>
> **DELEGATED AUTHORITY: DEPUTY CITY MANAGER**
>
> **CONTACT: OFFICE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (780.944.0300)**
>
> **DATE: MAY 15, 2008**

DEFINITIONS

Consultation Manager: Web-based software used for the express purpose of recording, documenting, tracking, evaluating and reporting on public involvement processes.

Involvement: The term used to cover the continuum of purposes or phases for engaging the public in municipal issues. The continuum includes sharing information, consultation to test ideas and collaborating to build solutions, and active participation in decision making.

Public: The most general and inclusive term for participants of public process in the municipal context. This term includes individuals, not-for-profit, community and corporate organizations.

Public Involvement: Will be used to represent the various methods of engaging the people of Edmonton in discussions about civic matters that affect them.

Public Involvement Plan (PIP): The strategic process/plan developed to frame the public involvement required to engage the public in municipal issues.

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Employees will be expected to take a strategic approach when public involvement is considered by demonstrating the Standards of Practice identified in Public Involvement Framework.

When Public Involvement is included in projects, employees will develop a Public Involvement Plan (using the worksheets in Attachment 1 of this handbook). Further information about public involvement can be found at www.edmonton.ca/publicinvolvement.

All Public Involvement Plans will be tested with a small selection of stakeholders or public prior to finalizing.

Consultation Manager will be used to record/store all material related to public involvement efforts. The Office of Public Involvement is responsible for providing employee access.
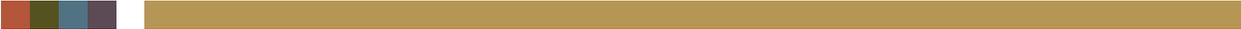
Appendix 4: Sample Communications Strategy

A supportive communications strategy will contribute to the success of your public involvement process. The strategy should consider how to promote public involvement opportunities to key audiences, how to share information about progress with key decision-makers (i.e. Council) and other audiences, and how to report back what was heard and what was done with the input.

The communications strategy should be tailored to meet the unique circumstances and requirements of the overall public involvement process. However, there are a few basic principles and elements that should be considered for all processes.

Your corporate communications contact can be a valuable resource in developing and implementing the communications strategy.

BACKGROUND

- List key points that should be considered when determining how and when you should communicate information about the project to key stakeholders. This should summarize the discussion used to develop the public involvement program, and include information on how the decision being made will impact key stakeholders, and background on previous interactions/studies with the community.

Example background points:

- *Over the last 20 years, there have been on-going discussions with the XXX communities about various high-profile transportation projects.*
- *X options are under consideration for the facility. All provide for XXX stalls, but some offer reduced property requirements by reducing potential screening/buffer zones.*

AUDIENCES

- List the internal and external audiences that need to receive information about the public involvement program. This should include the participants who need information about how to participate in the process, and those who need information about its progress (e.g.. decision-makers, and front line staff).

KEY MESSAGES

- Developing key messages is a significant component of the communications strategy. It's important to ensure these messages clearly indicate the role input from public involvement will take during the decision-making process.
- The messages should indicate the links between the decision to be made and how it links with the overall city vision.
- The messages should indicate a willingness to listen, and why it is important to participate.
- The messages used to promote participation should never indicate a preference for a pre-determined outcome. They should always support the openness and transparency of the process.

OBJECTIVES

- Communications strategies developed in support of public involvement processes typically include objectives like promoting participation in the process, increasing awareness of initiatives to address key city issues, and providing appropriate information to ensure participants have the information they need to provide meaningful input.

- Objectives should be specific and measurable. If your area has completed similar studies in the past, you may have benchmarks that can be used to measure the success of your process.

Sample communications objectives:

- *To support the public involvement program by encouraging and promoting participation in the process:*
  - *750 open house attendees; 2,500 web survey responses*

- *To support the credibility of the consultation process:*
  - *Media relations — 50% balanced stories, 25% positive, 25% negative*
  - *75% of open house respondents rate the meeting as useful and informative*

TOOLS AND TACTICS

- The tools and tactics will vary depending on the scope of the project, decision-makers, and the audience. For example, if you are working on a local issue, your tactics will be more focused on reaching a neighbourhood or geographic area, but if you need participation from a user group (e.g. cyclists), you will need to use a different set of tactics.
- Your tools and tactics should address information needs for project team members, participants and decision-makers.
- They should consider how to communicate progress on the project (e.g. briefing notes/memos), how to promote participation (advertisements, direct mail), ensure participants can provide educated and meaningful input (e.g. a workbook to help complete a questionnaire), and they should consider how to report back on what was heard and how it was incorporated into the decision-making process (mail-out a booklet with results).
- Remember to consider the amount of time it will take to develop, produce and implement your tools. Assign responsibility for producing the materials.
- A number of templates have been created for public involvement initiatives. Over time, these will help Edmontonians recognize public involvement opportunities.

Sample tools and tactics:

ITEM	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
Circulate direct mail post-card with information about web questionnaire and open house dates to households/businesses within the study area	*Final draft — Sept 23* *Art layout — Sept 26-27* *Print — Oct 1* *Mail house — Oct 7* *Arrive in mailboxes by Oct 14*	*Joe*
Update web site with questionnaire, detailed maps, etc.	*By October 1*	*Jill*
Street signs with open house dates (6 in key locations)	*Order by September 1* *In place by October 1*	*Joe*

People are bombarded with information and messages everyday. They will need to see or hear a message several times before it will register. Use a mixture of tools (like newspaper ads, street signs, mail notices, etc) to reach your audiences and ensure your message reaches them several times.

When contemplating traditional newspaper advertisements to promote an event, remember that you will need to begin advertisements at least one week advance notice before the event, and the advertisement should be repeated at least two or three times in the same publication.

Web sites, brochures, and posters can be excellent tools, but they are not useful unless people know they exist. Consider how these products will be circulated and shared with the intended audiences.

Note the demographics and specific social circumstances of the audiences you need to reach. You may need to arrange to have your project information or advertisements translated into another language, or you may need to consider using non-traditional ways to reach your audiences (e.g. use web advertisements instead of traditional newspaper advertisements to reach younger audiences).

Key stakeholder and community groups are excellent resources. Consider asking them to review your communications strategy and recommend other ways to reach your audiences. They can also provide valuable advice on the materials that are produced for the process (ex. Reviewing consultation materials to advise if the information is complete, and/or easy to understand).

Consider asking your stakeholder groups to share information about the process with their contacts; however, do not expect the stakeholders to be the only means to share information about your project.

BUDGET

• Define costs to produce and implement the communications strategy (to produce products and ensure appropriate manpower).

EVALUATION

• Define how you will evaluate the communications strategy and ensure you have reached your objectives.

Appendix Five: Open House Logistics Checklist

Project/Process: _____

Purpose of Open House: _____

Date and Time: _____

☑	Item	Person Responsible	Date to be completed
	BOOK FACILITY		

❑ Facility name: _____

Location: _____

Facility contact person: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____   Email: _____

Rental Fee: $ _____   Occupancy size: _____

Handicap accessibility: ____Yes ____No   Features: ____Restrooms   ____Adequate Parking

| | **ORDER REFRESHMENTS** | | |

❑ Contact person: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____   Email: _____

Time of delivery: _____   Approximate cost: _____

| | **PREPARE ADVERTISEMENT** | | |

❑ Prepare draft notice of Open House (public notice, flyer)

❑ Coordinate internal review of notice

❑ Prepare final notice

| | **PROMOTE EVENT/NOTIFY CITIZENS** | | |

❑ Add to public calendar in Consultation Manager

❑ Direct mailing to citizens on project mailing list

❑ Public notice in local newspaper(s)

❑ Add to Project web page/site, if applicable

❑ Telephone calls to notify key community leaders

☑	Item	Person Responsible	Date to be completed
	STAFFING		
☐	Identify staff to attend Open House		
☐	Assign roles		
	PREPARE MATERIALS		
☐	Handouts, other informational materials		
☐	Display materials (e.g. poster boards, PowerPoint presentations, etc.)		
☐	Sign-in sheets		
☐	Exit interview/participant evaluation forms		
☐	Name tags for staff		
☐	Signage for outside room to identify presence		
☐	A/V equipment (projector, laptop, screen)		
	PLAN LAYOUT		
☐	Number of tables for displays		
☐	Number of flipcharts		
☐	Registration table		
☐	Refreshment table		
	SUPPLIES		
☐	Flipcharts with paper		
☐	Flipchart markers		
☐	Pens		
☐	Box for completed exit interview/participant evaluation forms		
☐	Visual equipment (projector, laptop, screen)		
☐	Audio equipment (microphones, speakers)		

Other: _____

NOTES: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____