

# Local Government Participatory Practices Manual

A toolkit to support public participation  
in municipal decision making

Information Publication

Resource Centre

Community Outreach

Electronic Bulletin Board

Public Meeting

Public Hearing

Open House

Workshop

Design Charrette

Focus Group

Survey

Participatory Television

Mediation Session

Citizen Advisory Group

Referendum

# FCM | International Centre for Municipal Development

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

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# Preface

Municipalities around the world are currently experiencing a period of dynamic change. Two of the foremost influences involved in this trend are the decentralization and democratization of governments. Many significant decision making powers and responsibilities are being devolved to the municipal level. In part this has occurred because of a realization that needs can be better addressed when services are delivered by agencies closer to their recipients. This shift depends on new relationships with the public through assessing local needs, integrating these needs into the decision making process, and developing ways to engage those affected into meaningful solutions.

Over many years Canadian municipalities have been the forerunners in creating systems which involve the public in local decision making. Across Canada, municipalities have developed innovative tools and strategies to facilitate this public consultation process.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities – International Centre for Municipal Development believes that Canadian Municipalities have a contribution to make internationally by sharing these strategies and tools with our colleagues and partners. It is our hope that this Local Government Participatory Practices Manual will provide a practical handbook to assist municipalities and organizations either starting a participatory process or already well experienced in the process of public participation.





# Acknowledgments

The preparation of this manual would not have been possible without the active support of a large number of Canadian municipalities, organizations and individual experts who contributed their time and shared their knowledge about participatory practices in local government.

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# Contents

<b>Federation of Canadian Municipalities</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Tips for inclusive consultation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Participatory Toolkit</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Information Publication .....	11
Resource Centre .....	15
Community Outreach .....	19
Electronic Bulletin Board .....	23
Public Meeting .....	27
Public Hearing .....	31
Open House .....	35
Workshop .....	39
Design Charrette .....	43
Focus Group .....	47
Survey .....	51
Participatory Television .....	55
Mediation Session .....	59
Citizen Advisory Group .....	63
Referendum .....	67
<b>Worksheets</b> .....	<b>71</b>
Worksheet 1 .....	72
Worksheet 2 .....	75
Worksheet 3 .....	80
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>83</b>





# Federation of Canadian Municipalities

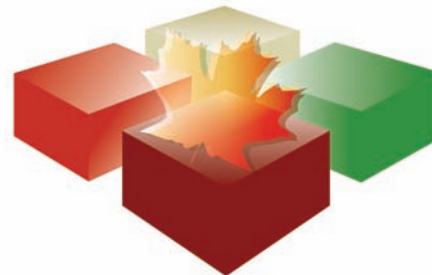
The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been recognized since 1937 as the national voice of municipal governments. FCM represents the interests of Canadian municipalities on policy and program matters within federal jurisdiction. Municipal governments constituting FCM's membership represent more than 20 million Canadians. FCM members include Canada's largest cities, small urban and rural communities and 17 major provincial and territorial municipal associations.

Since 1987, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' International Program has enabled Canadian municipalities to exchange information and practical experience with their counterparts in developing countries. Today, FCM is the leading organization for Canadian international municipal involvement.

The mission of the International Centre for Municipal Development, within the framework of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, is to serve municipal government internationally, to promote their power of action, to foster their economic opportunities, and to direct local energies in pursuit of sustainable development.

Our priority is the empowerment of municipal government as the preferred means to achieve effective governance and sustainable development. Our actions are based on the sharing of skills, technologies and knowledge in a cooperative manner. We recognize and respect racial and cultural differences, and we value the learning opportunities offered by the experiences of municipal governments within various historical, political, and cultural contexts.

Ultimately, we believe in the need to build bridges between municipal governments around the world as a means to improving living conditions of the citizens.





# Introduction

In supporting FCM's international programming, this Local Government Participatory Practices Manual is designed to contribute to the ability of municipal officials and staff to initiate or strengthen participatory practices in their own communities.

The public participation experiences of local governments have proved the many benefits of involving residents in policy, plan development, and service delivery of municipal governments.

However, public consultations have also taught local governments that residents are not "a public", but constitute a diversity of stakeholders including women, men, youth, seniors, etc. with an equally diverse range of knowledge, expertise, skills, realities, priorities and needs. Among them, women and men marginalized due to their gender, race, age, ethnicity, aboriginality, income, status, disabilities, and other factors are the majority of local residents and they are still not substantially engaged with local governments.

The non-involvement of women and marginalized communities with municipalities is a loss of the intellectual resources and resourcefulness of its many citizens. Local governments often do not reach out to women and marginalized communities during consultation processes and not enough information is provided to them about the municipality and its functions. Additionally, many women and marginalized communities need to be supported with childcare, transportation subsidies, interpreters, translations of materials, and accessible, familiar, and safe meeting places to enable their participation.

The real and meaningful participation of women and diverse communities enable municipalities to make well informed decisions that reflect the different realities and needs of all citizens. These decisions reduce inequalities and discrimination based on factors that currently marginalize many women and men. This in turn benefits the community as a whole and contributes to participatory democracy and inclusive and representative local governments. The development of formal and ongoing partnerships between municipal governments and

women's and marginalized groups is also key to ensuring inclusiveness of municipal consultation initiatives.

Engaging diverse women and men in municipal decision making can bring numerous benefits to local governments. These include improved services, economic development for women and men, re-vitalized neighborhoods and communities, greater safety and security for women and all residents, and contribute to healthy and vibrant villages, towns, and cities.

The Manual's first section is a Participatory Tool Kit, containing detailed descriptions of fifteen tools used to support public participation in local government. These descriptions are intended to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the steps required for planning and implementing each tool from the perspective of Canadian municipalities.

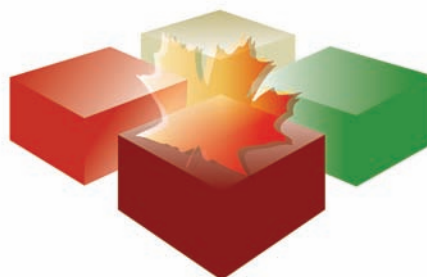
The participatory tools described in the Tool Kit cover several basic types of public participation. Some of the tools are most appropriate where a municipality is interested only in disseminating information to members of the public. Other tools allow a municipality to place greater emphasis on inviting public input and opinion. Finally, the Manual offers municipalities with tools that provide members of the public with a more formal advisory or decision making capacity. While the fifteen tools cannot be divided neatly into these three types, the order in which they are presented reflects a continuum from those tools focused on simple information sharing, to those providing the public with a stronger say in decision making.

Each of the tools described in the Tool Kit has been applied by municipalities across Canada in order to increase the transparency of decision making, improve the ability of decision makers to be accountable to the public, and to contribute to the continued democratization of local government. Participatory practices have succeeded in achieving these results by increasing the public's level of awareness of municipal planning issues and decisions, providing local government leaders with a greater appreciation for public priorities, and promoting greater public involvement in local government affairs.

In fact, the single most important message delivered by the Manual is that there exist an infinite number of creative paths that can be taken to engage the public in the municipal decision making process. In this regard, the Manual is meant to be used much like a toolbox, from which municipal officials and staff are free to make use of individual tools in ways and combinations that may be very different from the Canadian experience.

In this spirit of creativity, the Manual's third section offers a series of three worksheets intended to provide readers with an opportunity to explore the application of participatory tools to their own communities. These worksheets allow the reader to plan for and design a choice of three distinct tools, based on the realities and constraints of his or her community.

The Manual's last section identifies a range of resources on public participation in local government. The Additional Resources section includes a list of useful publications and internet resources relevant to inclusive public participation. All resources provided in this section contain website addresses to facilitate access.



# Tips for inclusive consultations

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Identify gender gaps, i.e. inequalities between women and men which have to be considered in the outcomes and follow-up actions.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.
- Support women's leadership initiatives, especially with young women, First Nations (indigenous) women, racialized and immigrant women, women with disabilities, etc.





# Participatory Toolkit

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# Information Publication

## What is it?

Successful public participation is based upon an informed public response. An **Information Publication** shares information in a readable and understandable format, thereby improving the public's awareness and understanding of a proposed action or project.

## Checklist for planning and distributing an Information Publication

### Selecting the target audience

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- Often a proposed action or project will affect segments of the population differently, thereby creating different interest levels within the community.
- Try and be as inclusive as possible when identifying which population groups might be affected by a proposed action or project. Will some groups such as women or older women and men be more affected?

### Defining the purpose of the publication

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- In the process of informing the public, a publication can also be used to notify the public about an upcoming event, or invite feedback from the public.
- For example, one method used successfully to elicit public feedback is to include a removable comment sheet with a pre-paid return envelope to be returned to the City.
- If a significant proportion of the affected population is from a linguistic minority, consider translating the information sheet and inserting it in the relevant ethnic or language newspaper.

### Selecting a method for disseminating information

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- Local newspapers, radio and television stations provide effective choices for reaching the public. They can also operate in a variety of languages.

- Displaying a publication in a newspaper is typically the most economical approach, though it is important to ensure that the newspaper reaches appropriate segments of the public.
- Distributing a brochure by household mail ensures that a wide cross section of a targeted population receives the information. This is particularly effective when trying to reach a targeted sub-group.
- Many municipalities publish their own newsletters, which are either mailed to the public and/or made available for pick-up at City Hall or community events.

### Selecting and training staffing

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- It is important for staff preparing the **Information Publications** to have professional writing skills and to be able to clearly illustrate issues without using technical jargon.
- Ensure the language used in publications, radio and television is sensitive to and inclusive of women and marginalized communities.

### Preparing the information for publication

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- Several Canadian municipalities distribute information about their projects and participatory processes a month in advance of the start of their participatory processes.
- Information increases the public's awareness of opportunities to participate and informs the public as to how their participation can be of assistance to a proposed project.
- **Information Publications** are also used to inform the public of the progress of a participatory process or to up-date community residents of pending decisions.

## Steps to take following publication of information

- It is helpful if public feedback related to the **Information Publications** is summarized and provided in a report or table. This includes feedback from any surveys that are included in **Information Publications**. Ensure that feedback also goes to the language-specific groups if they were consulted.
- From these responses, the municipality can also establish a mailing list of those persons interested in specific aspects of the proposed action or project.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The entire process associated with an **Information Publication** can require as little as two weeks, and as much as two to three months depending on its type and purpose.
- One week is typically devoted to preliminary work, including determining the type of publication and target group.
- Up to two weeks can be required to prepare material for the publication, depending on the level of detail and complexity of the information being provided.
- Preparing the actual publication can require one or two days if in-house resources are used, or up to two weeks if an outside publisher is used.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Identify gender gaps, i.e. inequalities between women and men which have to be considered in the outcomes and follow-up actions.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.

- A fairly simple publication prepared using in-house resources can be written and ready for distribution within one week. Allow for longer time if planning translation into other languages.
- Distributing the information may require at least two weeks if it involves formal notification of an upcoming event, or a request for feedback.
- Once the information has been distributed, follow-up activities may only be necessary where feedback is being received.

## Budgeting for an Information Publication

- The costs associated with publishing the material are dependent on the size of the target audience, translation if needed, and the type of publication being produced.
- It is helpful to investigate if “in-kind” contributions can be made from local media and publishing organizations, including donations of printing or advertising costs.

In addition to staff time, costs typically associated with producing an **Information Publication** are as follows:

- Publication costs for a newsletter
- Advertisements in the media
- Mail-out to selected participants
- Return postage for attached response cards or questionnaires
- Translation

## What are some of the benefits of an Information Publication?

- Distributing **Information Publications** can improve how residents, women and men, view their role in the process, thereby increasing their level of participation.
- Unlike other participatory tools, it often allows the public to absorb information in the comfort of their own homes and at their own speed.

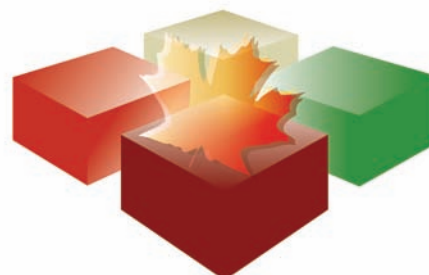
- **Information Publications** contribute to reducing miscommunication and public mistrust of hidden agendas.

### What are some of the limitations of an Information Publication?

- Considerable expertise is required of staff involved in writing and publishing an **Information Publication**.
- Costs can be significant if a publisher is contracted to produce the publication.
- While the tool is one of the best means of sharing information, it provides limited opportunities for public feedback.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Information Publication

Overall time frame required	2-5 weeks
Cost of planning and running	High
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	Moderate
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate





# Resource Centre

## What is it?

A **Resource Centre** offers a convenient location where members of the public can obtain or review material produced by the municipality in relation to a proposed action or project. Knowledgeable staff are often on hand to provide answers to any of the public's questions. Because of its informal, accessible nature, a **Resource Centre** is a valuable mechanism for increasing the public's knowledge of key issues and preparing them for upcoming public input into the participatory process.

## Checklist for Planning a Resource Centre

### Selecting the venue

- Since the intent of the centre is to inform the public, it is best placed in a location that receives considerable pedestrian traffic and is accessible to people with low mobility.
- Local malls, community centres, or City Hall are some of the common locations used for a **Resource Centre**.

### Selecting the target audience

- A **Resource Centre** is generally intended as a source of information for the entire population.
- Attention can also be given to the production of information for specific segments of the population, including communities with special language needs, women and men with disabilities unable to access public events, mothers with young children working outside the home, and others not normally involved in municipal affairs.

### Selecting and training staff

- Staff involved with a **Resource Centre** are typically experienced at working with diverse women and men and possess strong communication and listening skills.
- It is important that staff hosting the centre be aware of the issues involved in the project.

## Preparing information

- A **Resource Centre** typically provides background information on the issues surrounding the proposed action or project.
- Relevant maps, plans and staff reports can also be made available.
- Information is best distributed in the languages and reading formats of the intended users.
- Information provided to the public is best if it is clear and concise without too much detail given on matters subject to continual change.

- Any material that is subject to change during the process can be stamped DRAFT.

## Notifying the public

- The local media or **Information Publications** can be used to advertise the opening of the **Resource Centre**, providing its location, hours and types of material and assistance available.
- The Centre itself can be used as a way of notifying the public once the public has become familiar with it.

## Checklist for running a Resource Centre

### Setting up the facility

- The display and presentation of information is best set-up so to allow the reader to understand the issues on her/his own without having to be guided through it.
- Tables and chairs can be provided to allow the public to read the material of interest.

### The role of staff / consultants

- Staff can be on hand to assist with the distribution of material and to answer questions regarding proposed actions or projects.

- Consultants involved in the project and/or representatives of the proposed project can also be available to provide assistance with the public.
- Staff can also assist in recording the public's comments, by using comment sheets or suggestion boxes.

## Steps to take following the set up of a Resource Centre

### Responding to feedback

- A report recording the number of visitors to the centre and summarizing their comments can be made available to City Council, the general public, including the different communities of the town or city.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- Planning for a **Resource Centre** is likely to take 2 ½ weeks.
- One week is usually required to gather and prepare the material for presentation.
- Another week may be required to select the appropriate venue.
- Up to one week is required to set up the centre. Staff training can take place during this time.

## Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**
- **Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community.**
- **Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men.**

- The steps involved in planning for and running a **Resource Centre** are highly dependent upon the length of the process. Some Centres are used as an introductory information source during the preliminary stages of a participatory process; others continue to operate and offer information throughout the process.

## Budgeting for a Resource Centre

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Resource Centre**.

- **Notifying the Public:** advertisements in local media or through the use of **Information Publications**; use the community organizations outreach capabilities.
- **Production Costs** associated with preparing information: printing, photocopying and preparation of displays, handouts, and videos.
- **Additional Staff** or consultants needed to host the centre. Ensure they have the relevant language skills if necessary, including sign language.
- **Facilities:** room rental, office furniture, space and toys for children.

## What are some of the benefits of a Resource Centre?

- Since it is open for an on-going basis, the **Resource Centre** provides an opportunity for a large number and wide cross-section of the public to become better informed, including providing access to women with work schedules incompatible with typical consultative events.

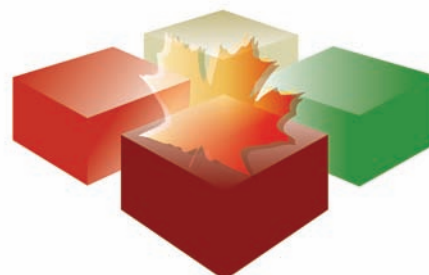
## What are some of the limitations of a Resource Centre?

- Feedback is limited to the number of people visiting the centre.
- Feedback is limited if publicity was not specifically geared to also reach women and marginalized communities.

- Women and men who are not easily mobile for a number of reasons such as due to responsibilities for children or the elderly, or on limited and low incomes, or with mobility disabilities will not be able to participate.
- Operating a **Resource Centre** can place a strain on staff and financial resources depending on the length of time the centre is used and the number of visitors received.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Resource Centre

Overall time frame required	6-7 months
Cost of planning and running	High
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	Moderate
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate







# Community Outreach

## What is it?

**Community Outreach** includes programs initiated by the municipality in which direct interaction with local women and men and opinion-leaders is sought. Outreach provides an informal and relaxed atmosphere to share ideas, improve the public's awareness and understanding of proposed action or project and to encourage interaction between the public and city members. Outreach can also encourage participation in communities that may not usually involve themselves in municipal affairs. Variations of this approach include visiting with individuals, workers, or groups in their homes, workplaces, or neighbourhoods. **Community Outreach** programs can also employ the use of several other participatory tools.

## Checklist for Planning a Community Outreach Event

### Selecting the target audience

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- Often a proposed action or project will affect segments of the population differently, thereby creating different interest levels within the community.
- In addition, there may exist segments of the population that characteristically do not participate. Be as inclusive as possible when identifying which population groups might be affected by a proposed action or project. Will some groups such as women or older or younger women and men be more affected? Will people who don't speak the country's official languages be more affected?

### Selecting and training staff

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- The number of staff needed for outreach activities often depends on the intent and scale of the program and the number of additional tools it includes.
- It is important that staff are familiar with the proposed issues being addressed by the outreach initiative and that they are comfortable interacting with women and men of different ages, abilities, cultures, etc. and replying to their concerns.

- Like all other tools, it is important to promote outreach programs in the local media, including ethnic and women's media, providing the times, dates and issues discussed in the program.

### Preparing information

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- Background information on the proposed action or project and, if available, summary documents of the participatory process and its findings can be beneficial.
- The information prepared is often oriented to the interests and issues of the specific groups being contacted by the outreach. Provide information in plain language and use diverse women's and community-based organizations to access their networks and expertise.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects different women and men due to their different realities.

## Checklist for running a Community Outreach Event

### The venue

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- There are many different ways to reach out to communities. It might involve using other participatory tools and their related venues.
- Community fairs are one venue that may generate public interest in displays and presentations about the proposed action or project. To ensure inclusion of different constituencies, community fairs can be organized in conjunction with local women's groups and community-based service organizations.
- Rather than a formal venue, simply visiting the community and meeting with its women and men can provide an opportunity to establish meaningful discussion with the public.

## The role of staff / consultants

- Rather than inviting the public to attend an event, staff play an active role in reaching out to the public and initiating participation.
- Often the targeted groups may not typically involve themselves in municipal participatory processes. Staff may have to identify and use other city officials or agencies that have more frequent contact with these groups. Developing ongoing partnerships with women's and community-based organizations helps in reaching out to those groups for specific events.

## Steps to take following a Community Outreach Event

- The results of an outreach program are often key elements to a participatory process and can become the foundation for further interaction with the community.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.

- Is it important that the results are reported to the City's Council and other interested parties involved in the process, including the affected community. Advertising the results in the local, community-based, and women's media can assist in notifying the community of the findings.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The process of planning, running and following-up on a **Community Outreach** can require approximately two to three weeks.
- At least two to four weeks are required to provide adequate notice to the public.
- During this time, relevant materials can be prepared.
- The set-up of the program depends upon the nature of the outreach program, but can be expected to take anywhere from one to four days.
- If additional tools are included as a part of the outreach program, the additional planning, running and follow-up time noted for each of the tools would have to be added to the program's overall time commitment.
- Depending on the nature of the program, the event itself can be expected to last from two to three hours to two days.
- Follow-up procedures can be expected to take three to five days if summary advertisements are to be released to the many different local media.

## Budgeting for a Community Outreach Event

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Community Outreach** program:

- Notifying the public: advertisements in the local media
- Translation into different languages
- Production costs associated with the preparation of information: the photocopying and printing of displays, handout, presentation, videos, etc.

- Additional staff or consultants required to coordinate or contact the targeted groups
- Women's groups and community-based organizations can be contracted to coordinate and contact specific communities
- Facilities: venue rental, outdoor tent rental, audio-visual equipment, equipment, etc.
- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to the public

### What are some of the benefits of a Community Outreach program?

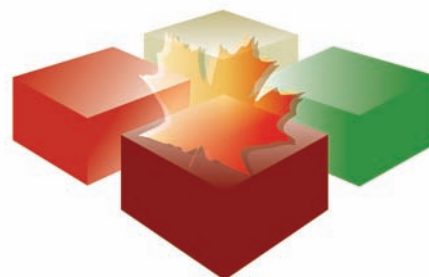
- A Community Outreach program is an important tool for ensuring participation from a wide cross-section of the population.
- It can also ensure balanced feedback from all segments of the public.
- It can facilitate the development of partnerships with women's groups and organizations of marginalized communities.

### What are some of the limitations of a Community Outreach program?

- Depending on the scale of the program, reaching out to communities can add significant time and financial costs to the participatory process.
- An outreach program requires high staff resources.
- Staff needs to be skilled at interacting with the public and have the ability to communicate and listen effectively.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Community Outreach Event

Overall time frame required	3 to 5 weeks
Cost of planning and running	High
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	Moderate
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	High





# Electronic Bulletin Board

## What is it?

**Electronic Bulletin Boards** make use of the internet to offer users with a website to post messages, and conduct discussions on a range of topics. This tool offers an affordable and easy to use option for sharing information and gaining feedback from members of the public with access to the Internet.

## Checklist for planning an Electronic Bulletin Board

### Selecting the target audience

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- Typically, **Electronic Bulletin Boards** are used to reach a wide cross-section of the entire population. Of course, this tool can only be used by residents with access to the Internet.

### Defining the purpose of the bulletin board

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- **Electronic Bulletin Boards** can be used to encourage contact with the public by offering phone numbers and addresses, to make available resources and information to all visitors, to develop a qualified list of volunteers, and to encourage discussion and debate on relevant municipal issues.
- It is important to define the purpose of this tool before proceeding ahead with its design.

### Designing the bulletin board

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- Considerable thought is typically given to the physical organization of the **Bulletin Board**.
- Most web pages for example, are actually a series of many pages. They begin with an “Index” page, in which choices, such as “Services”, “Newsletter” and/or “Resource Material”, are offered to the visitor. Each choice is often linked to another page.
- Ensure the web site is accessible to the visually impaired by providing for appropriate options on the site.

- It is best to define the intent, the type, and the amount of information needed for each page.
- It is also helpful to decide at this stage if there will be any unique items on the board, such as on-line forms that the user can fill out and directly e-mail to the municipality, or on-line discussion groups.

### Preparing information for the bulletin board

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- It is important to ensure that all data being gathered is in a format compatible with the software that will be used to produce the Bulletin Board. If not, it may be necessary to retype the information in the appropriate format.

### Notifying the public

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- Promotion of the **Bulletin Board** is important and may require the use of other forms of local media.
- Website addresses can be included in all contact information regarding the municipality in order to advertise the site.

### Selecting and training staff

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- In-house staff can generally develop a **Bulletin Board** if the municipality already has an Internet site. Otherwise, it may be necessary to contract consultants to develop the site.

## Checklist for running an Electronic Bulletin Board

### Posting the information

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- In posting a web site, it is necessary to ensure that all software used is compatible with each other and that any links between pages and email addresses are correct.

## Maintaining the Bulletin Board

- Information posted on a web site must be kept up-to-date. Constant updating will be required throughout the length of the participatory process.
- For example, e-mail and phone/fax numbers offered on the boards must be kept accurate.

## Steps to take following an Electronic Bulletin Board

- It is often possible to keep track of the number of people who have visited the site, and what parts of the site are the most and least active.
- This information can be useful in updating the site and ensuring that it is of the most use to the public.
- A report summarizing the amount of visitor activity generated by the site and any comments or suggestions received through e-mail can be presented to City Council for review.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- Planning for an **Electronic Bulletin Board** can require four to six weeks or more if it has to be developed in different languages.
- Three weeks can be devoted to defining the purpose and design of the board, and to gather and prepare necessary information.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.**
- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**
- **Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.**

- During this time, the local media can be used to promote the **Electronic Bulletin Board**.
- The remaining one to three weeks are often dedicated to making corrections, changes to the board's organization and ensuring that the board is operating.

## Budgeting for an Electronic Bulletin Board

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning an **Electronic Bulletin Board**:

- Notifying the public: including advertising in the local media
- Production costs associated with preparing information: printing and photocopying the relevant data; translation if necessary
- The purchase of compatible software
- The registration of the domain name
- Additional staff or consultant(s) hired to produce the board
- Follow-up report costs

## What are some of the benefits of an Electronic Bulletin Board?

- **Bulletin Boards** help users share information and views at little or no cost, and at a time and place convenient to the user.
- The tool can be very useful in posting large amounts of information, as well as receiving comments or suggestions on proposed projects.

## What are some of the limitations of an Electronic Bulletin Board?

- The production costs of a **Bulletin Board** can be high depending on the level of technology possessed by the municipality.
- Staff needs a high level of expertise and familiarity with the software and hardware involved.
- The value of the tool is limited by the ability of residents to make use of the Internet.
- There is a risk that messages posted by the public will be dominated by a small number of users.

## Snapshot of a Canadian Electronic Bulletin Board

Overall time frame required	4 to 6 weeks
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate







# Public Meeting

## What is it?

**Public Meetings** are a frequently used means of information exchange. **Public Meetings** represent the assembly of a large and wide cross-section of the population. The municipality shares information during a formal presentation, after which an opportunity is provided for public feedback through a plenary question-answer period.

## Checklist for planning a Public Meeting

### Identifying the target audience

- A **Public Meeting** can be used to attract members of the public from the entire municipality, though residents affected by a particular project can also be targeted.
- If you are planning to have neighbourhood or geographically-specific meetings, ensure that you are aware of the particular needs of women and men in that area and that the workshop design addresses factors that inhibit their involvement such as accessibility, interpretation, childcare, etc.
- Depending on the subject of the consultation and the kind of input required, public meetings can also be organized in partnership with women's groups, service agencies, and organizations of marginalized communities.

### Selecting a date, time and place

- **Public Meetings** are usually held in the evening, typically starting around 6 or 7:00p.m and lasting 2-3 hours.
- It is best if the venue is a recognized, local place such as a school, library, church or community centre and is close to the site of the proposed project. This will attract members of the public most closely involved in the proposed project or issue.
- Ensure the place is easily accessible by public transit and for women and men who have different mobility needs.

## Notifying the public

- A wide cross-section of the population can be reached by advertising in newspapers distributed in the community or region as well as on the radio and television. Advertisements are generally posted at least ten to fourteen working days in advance of the **Public Meeting**.
- Consider if the advertising needs to also be directed to the linguistic communities of the area and their neighbourhood newspapers.
- Attendance is strongest where advertisements clearly indicate the date, time and location of the meeting, the proposal or issue being addressed by the meeting, and a phone number for more information.

## Selecting and training staff

- Two to three staff can easily facilitate a **Public Meeting**. However, ensure that they are trained in facilitation skills and group dynamics.
- If there are language requirements, ensure staff can speak the relevant languages; or hire women and men who can.
- One way to prepare staff for a **Public Meeting** is to develop a list of questions that might be asked by members of the public. Staff can then take turns role-playing by posing the questions to one another.

## Preparing information for the public

- Information to be presented during the meeting typically outlines the purpose of the proposal, main issues affecting local women and men, the public's role, and alternative options.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects women and men differently based on their specific realities.

- Visual aids, such as slides, are most effective when they are large and clear enough for the room size.

## Checklist for running a Public Meeting

### Laying out the room

- A sign-in table can provide additional handout material for the participants to either pick-up and read or take home, as well as a brief questionnaire and comment sheets to encourage additional comments and feedback.

## Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.

- If needed, ensure materials are available in relevant languages and also for the visually impaired.
- Ensuring that information provided at the **Public Meeting** is stamped DRAFT and avoids too much detail on matters subject to frequent change will prevent any confusion due to changes that may occur later on.
- Attention to the placement of seats can influence the amount of interaction between participants. For example, placing seats in a semi-circular pattern will allow for some eye contact between participants and may increase interaction.
- In order to make up for the lack of interaction between staff and participants, some municipalities combine **Public Meetings** with **Open Houses** or **Workshops**, offering a more informal information session either prior to or immediately after the formal presentation.

### The presentation

- Information is typically provided by a formal presentation that lasts 30 – 45 minutes. Presentations can be made by the municipal staff as well as relevant women's and community-based organizations. If needed, hire a sign language interpreter.
- The presentation is followed by a question period open to the public.
- Microphones ensure that questions and answers are clearly heard.

### The role of staff / consultants

- Ideally, staff representing the city are directly involved with the proposal or issues being discussed in order to provide accurate responses to questions.
- Staff should take contact information from members of the public for later follow-up where they are unable to provide immediate answers.

## Steps to take following a Public Meeting

- A review and summary of the public’s comments can be documented and disseminated to staff or Council.
- A staff debriefing session the day after a **Public Meeting** can help identify areas that can be improved upon for the next meeting.
- A follow-up advertisement can be prepared to notify the public about results of the meeting.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The entire process usually requires a little more than three weeks.
- Week one can be devoted to initial preparatory work, such as selecting a place and time, clearly defining the issue, selecting staff, and preparing a public notice.
- Weeks two and three begin with placing a series of advertisements at least ten to fourteen working days in advance of the meeting. This time can also be devoted to preparing information for the public and providing orientation and training to staff.
- A single day is devoted to setting up and conducting a **Public Meeting**, including two to three hours for the meeting itself.

- No more than two additional days are required for follow-up activities.

## Budgeting for a Public Meeting

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Public Meeting**:

- Formal notification of the public, including advertisement in local media
- Production costs associated with preparing displays, handouts, and the presentation
- Facilities and operations, including room rental and audio-visual equipment
- Follow-up documentation
- Follow-up advertising to the public

## What are some of the benefits of a Public Meeting?

- **Public Meetings** require little expertise, and relatively few resources to plan for and manage.
- **Public Meetings** are one of the most commonly used methods for contacting and communicating with large groups of the population.

## Snapshot of a Canadian Public Meeting

Overall time frame required	3 weeks
Cost of planning and running	Low
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	Low
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	Moderate
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	Moderate
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

## What are some of the limitations of a Public Meeting?

- **Public Meetings** can generate adversarial relations between the participants and the staff particularly if the room is set-up with participants facing a “head” table.
- The large number of visitors in a formal setting limits interaction with municipal staff and constrains participation.
- Due to the lack of one-to-one interaction between the staff and the public, participants’ questions raised during the question forum may lead to arguments amongst the audience.



# Public Hearing

## What is it?

A **Public Hearing** is a legally required version of the **Public Meeting** at which a proposed action or project is presented with a possible solution, and reactions are received from the floor. Similar to **Public Meetings**, **Public Hearings** are often used to exchange information with the public. A **Public Hearing** is typically used to satisfy regulatory requirements. The formality of the event requires that participants usually read from or submit prepared statements. There are typically in place some methods of recording both the participant's verbal and written comments.

## Checklist for planning a Public Hearing

### Identifying the target audience

- A **Public Hearing** can be used to attract members of the public from the entire municipality, though residents affected by a particular project can also be targeted.
- If you are planning to have neighbourhood or geographically-specific **hearings**, ensure that you are aware of any special needs of women and men in that area and that the public hearing design addresses factors that inhibit their involvement such as accessibility, interpretation, childcare, etc.
- Depending on the subject of the consultation and the kind of input required, workshops can also be organized in partnership with women's groups, service agencies, and organizations of marginalized communities.

### Selecting a date, time and place

- **Public Hearings** are most often held in the evening, typically starting around 7:00 p.m. and lasting two to three hours.
- Typically, hearings are held in the City's Council chambers, but recognized local venues situated close to the site of a proposed project are also used. Ensure the place is easily accessible by public transit and for women and men who have different mobility needs.

- Provision of childcare will enable more women including single mothers to attend.

### Notifying the public

- Specifications for advertising the **Public Hearing** are often spelled out in legislation or regulations.
- Requirements include advertising in community and regional newspapers as well as on the radio and television at least two weeks in advance.
- The advertisements must clearly indicate the proposed project addressed by the **Public Hearing**, its date, time and location and municipal contact phone numbers.

### Selecting and training staff

- **Public Hearings** commonly involve City Council members as well as the municipal staff responsible for the proposed project.
- An effective way to prepare the staff is to develop a list of questions that might be asked by members of the public during the Hearing. Staff can then take turns role-playing by posing the questions to one another.

### Preparing information for the public

- Information provided to the public during the **Public Hearing** typically outlines the purpose of the project, the main issues related to the project, the public's role, and possible options.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects women and men differently based on their specific realities.
- Visual aids can be used to accompany an oral presentation, though these should be large and clear enough for the room size.

## Checklist for running a Public Hearing

### Preparing the room

- A sign-in table can provide additional handout material for the participants to either pick-up and read or take home.
- It is best if the information is stamped DRAFT and is not too detailed on matters that may be subject to frequent change. This will prevent any confusion due to changes that may occur later on.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.

### Role of municipal officials and staff

- Typically, the staff are seated at the front of the room with the audience in rows. This establishes a relationship in which the participants talk with those at the front rather than amongst themselves.
- If staff are unable to provide immediate answers to participants' questions, it is best if they have a notepad to take down participants' contact information for later follow-up.

### The presentation

- Information is typically provided by means of a 30 to 45 minute presentation.
- The presentation is followed by a question period open to the public.
- In addition to the question period, formal written statements are submitted by members of the public regarding issues being raised at the **Public Hearing**.
- If a large crowd is expected, microphones ensure that everyone is heard.
- Both the presentation and questions are normally recorded.

### Steps to take following a Public Hearing

- A summary of the public's comments, including written submissions received from members of the public, is normally documented and disseminated to staff or Council.
- A staff debriefing session the day after a **Public Hearing** can help identify areas that can be improved upon for the next meeting.
- A follow-up advertisement can be prepared to notify the public about results of the meeting.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The entire process usually requires approximately 3½ weeks.
- Week one can be devoted to initial preparatory work, such as selecting a place and time, clearly defining the issue, selecting staff, and preparing an advertisement.
- Weeks two and three begin with placing a series of advertisements at least ten working days in advance of the meeting. This time can also be devoted to preparing information for the public and providing orientation and training to staff.
- A single day is devoted to setting up and conducting a **Public Hearing**, including two to three hours for the meeting itself.
- Approximately three additional days are required for follow-up activities, particularly the requirement to reflect any formal submissions received by residents or organizations in proceedings.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Public Hearing

Overall time frame required	3½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	Low
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	Low
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	Moderate
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	Moderate
Level of knowledge gained by the public	Moderate
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

## Budgeting for a Public Hearing

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Public Meeting**:

- Formal notification of the public, including advertisement in local media
- Production costs associated with preparing displays, handouts, and the presentation
- Facilities & operations, including room rental, recording, audio-visual equipment
- Follow-up documentation and translation if needed
- Follow-up advertising to the public

### What are some of the benefits of a Public Hearing?

- **Public Hearings** require little expertise, and relatively few resources to plan for and manage.

### What are some of the limitations of a Public Hearing?

- **Public Hearings** can generate adversarial relations between the participants and the staff if the room is set-up with the public facing a “head” table.
- The necessity of requiring the public to read from or submit prepared statements leaves little room for interaction.
- Due to a lack of one-to-one interaction between the staff and the participants, questions raised during the question forum may lead to arguments amongst the audience.





# Open House

## What is it?

The **Open House** is an informal event that is best characterized as a tool for information exchange. An **Open House** is an occasion for the public to gather and discuss a range of topics with municipal staff, while allowing staff to gauge the opinion of a large number and wide cross-section of the population. Material related to a proposed project is typically shared with citizens through display panels set-up around the room and printed material that can be taken home. A distinctive feature of the **Open House** is the flexibility provided to the public, including flexible hours of operation allowing interested women and men to visit the event at their convenience. Its informality also encourages municipal staff and members of the public to interact freely.

## Checklist for Planning an Open House

### Identifying the target audience

- An **Open House** can be used to attract members of the public from the entire municipality, though residents affected by a particular project can also be targeted.
- Ensure that the **Open House** enables the participation of all women and men by addressing factors that inhibit their involvement such as accessibility, interpretation, childcare, etc.

### Selecting a date, time and place

- Holding **Open Houses** throughout the day, from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m., makes them more accessible to a greater diversity of residents, particularly women normally unable to attend shorter, more formal, evening events. Providing childcare with the Open House will enable more women to attend, especially low income single mothers. Having such events in the day will increase the participation of women and seniors who might be reluctant to go out at night.
- Making use of a recognized, local place such as a school, library, church or community centre also attracts a larger audience. Ensure the place is easily accessible by public transit and for women and men who have different mobility needs.

- Holding at least two **Open House** sessions allows for greater public involvement, particularly if one is held during a weekday afternoon and another during the day on a weekend.

### Notifying the public

- Advertising the **Open House** in community and regional newspapers, as well as on the radio and television two to three weeks in advance, reaches a wide cross-section of the population.
- Attendance is strongest where advertisements clearly indicate the date, time and location of the **Open House**, the proposal or issue being addressed, and municipal phone numbers for more information.

### Selecting and training staff

- Five to six staff can easily facilitate an **Open House**; some municipalities choose to use consultants.
- Due to the length of time needed to run an **Open House**, staff are often organized into shifts in order to prevent fatigue, with more staff scheduled in the evening hours when it is typically the busiest.
- Staff can prepare questions that might be asked by the public during the **Open House**, and can role-play by posing the questions to each other prior to the **Open House**.

### Preparing information for the public

- Information to make available during the **Open House** can outline the purpose of a proposal, the main issues affecting residents, the public's role, and alternative options.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects women and men differently due to their different realities.
- A video or slide presentation can be an additional way to present information to the public.

## Checklist for running an Open House

### Laying out the room

- Information is usually displayed on boards and arranged in a circle around the room so as to encourage a free-flow of participants.
- Providing chairs will likely inhibit the desired flow of the visitors.
- A table can be provided where visitors sign-in and where useful handout material is available to either read during the **Open House** or to take home.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.

- Ensuring that all information provided at the **Open House** is stamped DRAFT and avoids too much detail on matters subject to frequent change will prevent any confusion due to changes that may occur later on.
- A brief questionnaire and comment sheet, to provide additional comments and feedback to municipal staff, can be given to participants to fill out when leaving the **Open House**.

### The role of staff / consultants

- Providing staff with a notepad to take down contact information and other notes from members of the public will prove useful if staff are unable to provide immediate answers to questions.
- Casual dress and nametags best reflects the informal nature of the **Open House**.
- It is helpful to have representatives of the project available to meet one-on-one with the participants.

### Steps to take following an Open House

- A staff debriefing session the day after an **Open House** can help identify areas for improvement for subsequent **Open Houses**.
- A summary of the public's comments and feedback can be documented following the **Open House** for either staff or Council. Identify the comments made by women and those made by men and as this will generate a more appropriate response to each group.
- The public can be notified about the results of the Open House through an advertisement or newsletter.

### Planning your overall time commitment

- Roughly 3½ weeks are devoted to preparing, running and following-up on an **Open House**, with more time required depending on the level of prior experience.
- Week one can be devoted to initial preparatory work such as selecting a place and time, clearly defining the issue, and determining how to reach target audience, selecting staff, and preparing an advertisement.

- Weeks two and three begin with placing a series of advertisements in local media at least ten to fourteen working days in advance of the **Open House**, and are also devoted to preparing information for the public and providing staff orientation and training.
- The morning of the **Open House** is devoted to setting up the venue. The **Open House** itself typically runs for two to seven hours in the afternoon and evening.
- Follow-up activities require roughly half a week.

### Budgeting for an Open House

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning an **Open House**:

- Notifying the public, including advertisement in local media
- Production costs associated with preparing displays, handouts, presentations, video, slideshow, etc.
- Translation of materials
- Additional staff or consultant(s) hired to facilitate or coordinate

### Snapshot of a Canadian Open House

Overall time frame required	3½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	Moderate
Expertise required	Low
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	Moderate
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

- Facilities & operations, including room rental, refreshments, audio/visual equipment, materials
- Follow-up documentation
- Follow-up advertising to public

### What are some of the benefits of an Open House?

- The informality and extended hours of an **Open House** provide the public with the freedom to stay for as long or as little as they wish, and make participation more accessible to persons with small children, youth and seniors.
- The informal nature of the **Open House** makes it well suited for more direct public contact and discussion.

### What are some of the limitations of an Open House?

- An **Open House** requires considerable staff time.
- It can be difficult to ensure that the public is well represented.
- Public feedback may be limited since no specific questions are asked of participants.



# Workshop

## What is it?

A **Workshop** is another information exchange tool designed to address certain issues and share different points of view amongst a large number and wide cross-section of citizens. A main element of the **Workshop** is the organization of participants into small discussion groups, where individuals interact informally amongst themselves with the support of a trained facilitator. The discussion may revolve around a number of issues or one specific aspect of a broader issue.

## Checklist for planning a Workshop

### Identifying the target audience

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- A **Workshop** can be used to attract members of the public from the entire municipality, though residents affected by a particular project can also be targeted.
- Ensure that the Workshop is designed to include the needs of all women and men by taking into account issues of accessibility, interpretation, childcare, diet, etc.

### Selecting a date, time and place

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- It is best if the venue is a recognized, local place such as a school, library, church or community centre and is close to the site of the proposed project.
- Ensure the place is accessible by public transit and for women and men who have different mobility needs.
- **Workshops** are usually held in the evening or on weekends in order to attract a more balanced cross-section of residents, and require anywhere from two to three hours to a full day. Having workshops in the day will increase the participation of women and seniors who might be reluctant to go out at night..
- Providing childcare will enable more women to attend.

### Notifying the public

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- Advertising the **Workshop** in the community and regional newspapers as well as on the radio and

television media two to three weeks in advance is an effective way to reach a wide cross-section of the population.

- It is helpful for the public if the advertisements clearly indicate the proposed project addressed by the **Workshop**, its date, time and location and municipal contact phone numbers.
- Where the **Workshop** focuses on a specific group or community, a more targeted approach could be used to notify the public, including a direct mail-out, or advertisement in a community newspaper.
- Language considerations might need to be taken in account.

### Selecting and training staff

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- At least one staff person is required to facilitate discussions at each work station being set up for the **Workshop**.
- Training in group facilitation is vital, as well as developing a list of questions that might be asked of staff during the workshop.
- Workshops can also be conducted in partnership with women's groups, service organizations and organizations of marginalized communities.

### Preparing information for the public

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- Information to make available during the **Workshop** can outline the purpose of a proposal, the main issues affecting residents, the role of women and men, and alternative options.
- A video or slide presentation can be an additional way to present information to the public during the **Workshop**.
- An important component of the **Workshop** is a workbook that includes issues and questions to assist participants in discussing issues.

## Checklist for running a Workshop

### Laying out the room

- Background information on the proposed project is often provided around the room.
- Small groups of six to eight participants are organized around work stations consisting of a table and a small number of chairs.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold workshops where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.
- Support women's leadership initiatives, especially with young women, First Nations (indigenous) women, racialized and immigrant women, women with disabilities, etc.

- It is helpful to equip each work station with ample pens (bold, colourful and thick) and blank sheets for recording and illustrating ideas as well as an area such as a partition board to post the sheets.
- Workbooks can be provided to give direction and context to the discussions.

### The presentation and discussion

- An introductory address to participants as a whole is a common way of beginning the **Workshop**. It is helpful to identify the proposed project, its related issues, and the role of the public.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects women and men differently due to their specific realities.
- With the help of facilitators and workbooks, the smaller sub-groups are each given some carefully worded questions designed to draw out specific information.
- With the assistance of the facilitator, participants of each sub-group identify, discuss and prioritize ideas and suggestions in relation to a municipal project or initiative.
- The discussion is supposed to increase the group's understanding, raise the importance of the idea and its weaknesses. It is not a forum for criticism.
- The participants may then want to have a final wrap-up discussion on the ideas generated during the discussion.

### The role of staff / consultants

- Staff facilitators should be on hand for each workstation, including one or two roving facilitators to provide assistance if necessary. They can also be helpful in providing an overview of the discussions of all the workgroups.
- Staff recorders with clear printing skills should also be on hand with every group.

## Steps to take following a Workshop

- Review and summarize citizens' ideas in a report following the **Workshop**.
- Identify the participants' comments based on their gender, age, ethnicity, race, and other relevant factors. This will enable a greater understanding of the various residents and the appropriate actions needed.
- A follow-up debriefing session can often help staff identify areas that can be improved upon for the next **Workshop**.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The process of planning, running and following-up on a **Workshop** can require a total of roughly 3½ weeks.
- One week is devoted to preliminary preparation, including preparing an advertisement or a targeted mail-out.
- Weeks two and three begin by notifying the public, either through the media, or a targeted mail-out at least fourteen working days prior to workshop.
- These two weeks can be devoted to preparing information for the public and providing staff with basic orientation and training.
- One day is normally required to set up the workshop room and conduct the workshop, which can run from two hours to a full day.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Workshop

Overall time frame required	3½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	Moderate
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	Moderate
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

## Budgeting for a Workshop

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Workshop**:

- Notifying the public, including advertisements in local media or postage for targeted mail-out
- Production costs associated with preparing information, such as displays, handouts, presentations, video, slideshow, printing, photocopying
- Additional staff or consultant(s) hired to facilitate or coordinate
- Interpreters for specific language groups
- Facilities & operations, including room rental, refreshments, audio-visual equipment, workstation materials
- Follow-up report production costs (including translation if required)
- Follow-up advertising to public

## What are some of the benefits of a Workshop?

- A **Workshop** provides a creative environment that can inspire imaginative comments and suggestions.
- The high level of interaction encouraged by a **Workshop** allows the public to share ideas with each other and municipal staff.

## What are some of the limitations of a Workshop?

- It is important that the persons placed as facilitators be briefed fully as to the proposed project and be experienced at leading and encouraging group discussion.
- It is critical to hold training seminars for the facilitators before the **Workshop**.
- Depending upon the materials needed at the various sub-group tables, the cost of a **Workshop** can be considerable.





# Design Charrette

## What is it?

A **Design Charrette** is an exercise where community members, planners, architects, designers or artists work together to develop visual solutions for a proposed action or project. Unlike other information exchange tools, it provides individuals (women and men, youth, seniors, etc) with an opportunity to express their ideas in an artistic environment.

## Checklist for planning a Design Charrette

### Identifying the target audience

- A **Design Charrette** can be used to attract members of the public from the entire municipality, though residents affected by a particular project can also be targeted.
- Ensure that the **Design Charrette** enables the participation all women and men by addressing factors that inhibit their involvement such as accessibility, interpretation, childcare, diet, etc.

### Selecting a date, time and place

- Using a recognized local place such as a school, library, church or community centre that is close to the site of the proposed project tends to attract a large number and diversity of residents.
- Ensure the place is easily accessible by public transit and for women and men who have different mobility needs.
- Providing childcare will enable more women, especially low income single mothers, to attend.
- The venue must have enough space for several work areas to be set up where the drawing will take place.
- **Design Charrettes** are often held in the evening or on weekends in order to attract a more diverse audience, and require anywhere from two to three hours to two full days. Having workshops in the day will increase the participation of women and seniors who might be reluctant to go out at night.

### Notifying the public

- Advertising the **Design Charrette** in the community and regional newspapers as well as on the radio and television media two to three weeks in advance is an effective way to reach a wide cross-section of the population.
- It is helpful for the public if the advertisements clearly indicate the proposed project addressed by the **Design Charrette**, its date, time, location and municipal contact phone numbers.
- Where the **Design Charrette** focuses on a specific group or community, a more targeted approach could be used to notify the public, including a direct mail-out, or advertisement in a community newspaper.
- Language and accessibility criteria need consideration if relevant.

### Selecting and training staff

- Unless design professionals have agreed to provide their services, staff needs to have the appropriate skills needed to sketch out the public's thoughts.
- At least one member of staff is required for each work station. One to two additional staff are typically roving facilitators, moving from work station to work station.

### Preparing information for the public

- A background information package available during the **Charrette** is helpful to inform participants of the issues surrounding the proposed action or project.
- All information provided to the public is best if it is clear and concise without too much detail given on matters that may be subject to continual change.

## Checklist for running a Design Charrette

### Laying out the room

- Interaction is greatest when work stations are limited to six to eight people. Having a balanced number of women and men will ensure a more representative public..
- Each work station is provided with ample wall space to place large sketches.
- Refreshments are also a good idea to prevent the fatigue of participants.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Identify gender gaps, i.e. inequalities between women and men which have to be considered in the outcomes and follow-up actions.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.
- Support women's leadership initiatives, especially with young women, First Nations (indigenous) women, racialized and immigrant women, women with disabilities, etc.

### The presentation and discussion

- The event typically begins with a welcome introduction to all participants, outlining the proposed action or project as well as providing instructions on how to proceed with the **Charrette**.
- Participants break up into provided work stations after the welcoming address.
- The entire group of participants is brought together at various points during the **Charrette** and again at the end in order to share results.

### The role of staff / consultants

- Staff artists sketch the main themes generated by the groups.
- Additional staff members may be needed to record participants' comments to accompany the sketches.
- It is also a good idea to ask a few professional designers such as architects, engineers and urban designers with experience in the creative design process to attend and assist with the work stations. It is important to include women professionals among the consultants.

### Steps to take following a Design Charrette

- Some municipalities produce the images in a booklet, which is then made available for wide release to all citizens.
- This encourages further public review as well as opening the **Charrette** process to those unable to attend the meeting.

### Planning your overall time commitment

- The process of planning, running and following-up on a **Design Charrette** can require a total of roughly 3½ weeks.
- One week is devoted to preliminary preparation, including preparing an advertisement or a targeted mail-out.

- Weeks two and three begin by notifying the public, either through the media, or a targeted mail-out at least ten working days prior to the event.
- These two weeks can also be devoted to preparing information for the public and providing staff with basic orientation and training.
- One day is normally required to set up the room and conduct the **Charrette**, which can run from two hours to two or three days.
- Follow up activities require two additional days.

### Budgeting for a Design Charrette

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Design Charrette**:

- Notifying the public, including advertising in local media or postage for targeted mail-out
- Production costs associated with preparing information, such as displays, handouts, presentations, video, and slideshow

### Snapshot of a Canadian Design Charrette

Overall time frame required	3½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	Moderate
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	Moderate
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

- Additional staff, consultant(s), or interpreter(s) hired to facilitate or coordinate
- Facilities & operations, including room rental, refreshments, audio-visual equipment, work stations materials
- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to public

### What are some of the benefits of a Design Charrette?

- Successful **Design Charrettes** are one of the most productive participatory tools for generating creative ideas and solutions.
- A successful **Charrette** can often increase residents' confidence in developing solutions to problems in the community.
- The creative environments of **Open Houses** and **Workshops** make them very suitable opportunities for conducting a **Design Charrette**.

### What are some of the limitations of a Design Charrette?

- The materials required at the sub-group tables can add considerable cost to the production of a **Design Charrette**.
- Design skills are mandatory for a **Charrette**, requiring trained staff or the recruitment of design professionals.
- A **Charrette** requires significant staff time.



# Focus Group

## What is it?

A **Focus Group** is a meeting of a small number of formally invited individuals. These individuals are selected to represent a cross-section of a particular target group within the municipality. A carefully facilitated discussion allows for an exchange of information with the public, serving to provide the city with feedback on one or more specific issues. This feedback can provide an indication of the broader public interest and help to anticipate the public's reaction to a proposed action or initiative. The focus groups can also be men only, women only, involve both genders, or be linguistically and age specific.

## Checklist for planning a Focus Group

### Selecting a date, time and place

- A small, quiet room is often selected as the venue.
- In order to accommodate a cross-section of residents, **Focus Groups** are most often held in the evening, and, depending on the complexity of the issue, can require anywhere from two hours to a full day.
- Nonetheless, having workshops in the day will increase the participation of women and elders who might be reluctant to go out at night.

### Selecting the participants

- Typically, a **Focus Group** achieves the best results if the group includes 8 to 12 people representing a cross-section of the desired target audience.
- The target audience can represent particular communities or regions, socio-economic or demographic groups, or specific stakeholder interests impacted by a proposed or existing project.
- Selecting a representative group involves an intensive process of randomly identifying at least 300 residents forming part of the target audience, and carrying out a telephone survey in order to select interested and appropriate individuals. The telephone survey normally

ends once a sufficient number of candidates have been identified. Several additional people are often selected to serve as alternates.

- A recruitment guide is often designed to assist the interviewer with asking key questions to prospective **Focus Group** members.
- Selected participants and their alternates can be sent a formal notification by mail at least ten working days prior to the planned **Focus Group**.

### Selecting and training staff

- Intensive and specialized staff time will be required to prepare materials, conduct telephone interviews and facilitate the **Focus Group** discussion. For this reason, it is not uncommon to contract a professional interviewer and facilitator. These can also be provided by local women's groups, service agencies, and organizations of marginalized communities.
- An interview guide is typically developed to assist a group discussion facilitator. It is designed prior to the **Focus Group** meeting, and contains possible topics of discussion and key questions to stimulate discussion.
- Use of municipal staff will often involve training in the preparation and use of recruitment and interview guides, interviewing techniques, and facilitation skills.

### Preparing information for Focus Group participants

- Participants will likely require some background information on the issues to be discussed. This information can be made available during the **Focus Group** discussion.
- Wherever possible, provide information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. Show how the situation affects women and men differently due to their different realities.

## Checklist for running a Focus Group

### Laying out the room

- Participants usually sit around a table in a circular fashion, a design that maintains the group's attention and is more likely to encourage participation in discussions.
- A refreshment table offering food and coffee is a good idea to help the participants feel comfortable and prevent fatigue.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.
- Wherever possible, hold consultation meetings where women or particular communities gather already (i.e. low housing, coop housing, schools, childcare centres, shopping malls, recreations centres, coffee houses, etc.), and in settings that are accessible and comfortable for diverse women, First Nations (or indigenous) women, racialized communities, young women and men, elders, etc.
- Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.
- Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.
- Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.
- Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.
- Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.

### The discussion

- A facilitator usually works from an interview guide in order to maintain the direction and momentum of discussion.
- Smaller sub-groups can be formed in order to discuss specific sub-topics. These smaller groups can then report back to the entire group for a general discussion.
- Because of the importance of the discussion, **Focus Groups** are normally recorded.
- Identify comments by gender. Noting specific comments from women and men will generate a more adequate response to each group.

### Steps to take following a Focus Group

- Debriefing staff the day after a **Focus Group** can assist in ensuring better use of public participation tools in the future.
- One option is to review and summarize the recorded discussion in order to prepare appropriate documentation for staff, council or the public.
- Another option is to provide feedback to members of the **Focus Group**, as well as informing the general public of results through an advertisement.

### Planning your overall time commitment

- Approximately five weeks are required to adequately prepare for, conduct, and follow-up on a **Focus Group**.
- Following preliminary preparations such as clearly defining issues and securing a venue, a full week is likely required in order to define the target audience segments and develop a recruitment guide.
- A second full week can be devoted to interviewing and selecting **Focus Group** members and alternates.
- Weeks three and four can begin with formal written notification to selected participants at least ten to fourteen working days prior to the **Focus Group**. These two weeks can also be devoted to designing the

facilitator’s interview guide, and preparing discussion materials for participants. Staff orientation and training can also take place during this time.

- The **Focus Group** itself can take place at the beginning of the fifth week.
- Follow-up activities can require an additional two days.

## Budgeting for a Focus Group

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Focus Group**:

- Hiring additional staff or a consultant to conduct interviews and facilitate the meeting
- Production costs associated with preparing recruitment and interview guides or handouts
- Cost of interpretation and of running a **Focus Group** in another language or for the hearing impaired
- Mail-out to formally invite selected participants
- Cash or in-kind incentive to participants
- Facilities & operations, including room rental, refreshments, recording

### Snapshot of a Canadian Focus Group

Overall time frame required	5 weeks
Cost of planning and running	High
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	Low
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	Low
Level of knowledge gained by the public	Moderate
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate

- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to public

## What are some of the benefits of a Focus Group?

- The small number of participants provides the opportunity for the municipality to interact directly with the participants.
- It is an effective means of gauging public opinion from a small, representative group of women and/or men.
- The control exercised over the selection of participants limits the risk of having a discussion captured by unrepresentative interests.

## What are some of the limitations of a Focus Group?

- It is important to remember that **Focus Groups** are not intended to reach a large number of the public.
- They are only capable of gathering general opinions and are limited in their direct applicability to the entire public interest.
- A **Focus Group** can be demanding of staff time and requires a high level of expertise.
- **Focus Groups** can be relatively expensive in comparison to other tools.





## What is it?

A **Survey** is a tool typically used for exchanging information with the public. In addition to identifying and explaining issues involved in a proposed action or project for the public, the responses to **Survey** questions can provide hard data on the public's opinion by identifying the views of a cross-section of community residents. It can also be used to gather information about characteristics or attributes of a community.

## Checklist for planning a Survey

### Selecting and training staff

- Some knowledge of **Survey** design and interviewing techniques is necessary in order to draft, implement and interpret a **Survey**.
- The level of effort and expertise required to conduct a **Survey** leads many municipalities to contract outside assistance.

### Defining the target audience

- A first step is to define target audience segments based on demographic analysis, and the nature of the issue.
- Determine if the **Survey** will also be conducted in other languages and methods to enable the participation of a broad range of women and men.
- If the **Survey** will gauge general public interest on one or more issues affecting the entire community, then it is often best to administer it to as wide a cross-section of the population as possible.
- A small sample of approximately 300 participants selected at random is used when the Survey is intended to reflect the opinion of a cross-section of a specific population segment.

## Selecting the survey instrument

- Municipalities commonly use a mail-out **Survey** with a pre-paid return envelope, sent to targeted segments of the population or distributed randomly among all residents.
- Door-to-door interviewing is another means of surveying community residents, however the costs of this approach often make it unattractive.
- As an alternative, a telephone **Survey** provides an economical and effective means of identifying the views of community residents. Equal numbers of women and men should be interviewed.

- Placing a **Survey** in a local newspaper is another affordable method.

## Developing the Questions

- Proper wording of the **Survey** questions is an essential element of a successful **Survey**.
- Close-ended questions, as opposed to open-ended questions, can reduce the level of uncertainty for the participant and make the interpretation of the responses clearer. Close-ended questions are usually phrased so that the respondent may answer from a scale of choices such as “Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree”.
- Open-ended questions, or questions in which the participant can offer either a short or lengthy response, allow respondents to provide comments in their own words.
- Identifying the gender, age, status, ethnicity, etc. of the respondents to the survey will enable a better understanding of the reality of the many residents of the municipality.

## Testing the Survey

- A **Survey** must be tested before it can be widely distributed. It is best to use representatives from the population segment that the **Survey** is intended for. This will identify any questions or elements of the **Survey** that may need further clarification or redefining.

## Administering the Survey/Questionnaire

- The survey is administered by telephone, mail, or face-to-face interviews once it has been tested and finalized.

## Steps to take following a Survey

- Follow-up activities can include preparing one or more summary reports for staff and council.
- Advertisements or newsletters can be used to provide feedback to the public.
- Compiling and synthesizing **Survey** results includes preparing summary tables, calculating percentages and preparing graphs and charts to present the results of the **Survey**.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- Depending on whether responses rely on a telephone **Survey** or mail-out, the entire process, from planning to follow-up can involve five to seven weeks.
- The first week can be devoted to preliminary preparations and staff training. Preparation of the **Survey** instrument can also begin by defining target populations.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.**
- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**

- A second week can involve compiling a random sample of respondents and preparing **Survey** questions.
- Testing the **Survey** can take place during week three.
- Responses can be collected in a single week if an intensive telephone **Survey** is to use to administer the questionnaire.
- Alternatively, a mail-out **Survey** could require three full weeks.
- Once responses are received, a full week is devoted to compiling and synthesizing results into a report.
- Finally, the process concludes with two days of follow-up activities.

## Budgeting for a Survey

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Survey/Questionnaire**:

- Hiring additional staff or consultant to prepared questions and interview
- Production costs associated with producing a mail-out **Survey**
- Staff that speak the languages needed
- Mail-out to selected participants and return postage for mail-out responses
- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to public

## What are some of the benefits of a Survey?

- **Surveys** reach a large and diverse number of people.
- They can effectively indicate the interests of the population's often-silent majority.

## What are some of the limitations of a Survey?

- Typically, a trained interviewer is needed to undertake phone and personal **Surveys**.
- Staff need to have specific skills to develop the proper wording of the Survey's questions.
- Depending upon the chosen method for distributing the **Survey**, costs can be high.

## Snapshot of a Canadian Survey/ Questionnaire

Overall time frame required	5-7 weeks
Cost of planning and running	High
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	Moderate
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	High





# Participatory Television

## What is it?

The use of the public media is a key tool in exchanging information with residents. An increasingly common form of media is **Participatory Television**. Interactive media, such as phone-in television programs, allow for participation from diverse and often unreached groups. Such participatory media consultations can also be organized with ethnic and language specific media by bringing them into the consultation process as partners. This will enable the engagement of communities that are usually excluded.

## Checklist for planning a Participatory Television program

### Identify specific issues to be addressed

- It is best if the television program focuses on the key issues involved in the process.
- Trying to organize the television program around too many issues will leave little room for valuable discussion.
- Depending on the scheduled length of the television program and the number of issues involved in the process, it might be necessary to broadcast several shows, each concentrating on a specific issue.

### Selecting who shall be interviewed

- Providing televised interviews of the various stakeholders is a good way to introduce many of the issues involved in the process.
- Ensuring balance amongst the views expressed during the interviews can lead to a better-informed public and a more useful discussion.
- Ensure equal representation of women and men.
- Ensure that women and men from marginalized communities are also included as stakeholders.

## Preparing scripts

- The use of scripts can ensure that proper attention is given to all the necessary issues involved in the process.
- A script is typically prepared for each scheduled interview.

## Notifying the public

- The use of other forms of media, such as newspapers, radio or **Electronic Bulletin Boards**, can be an effective way to ensure that a wide cross-section of the public is informed of the television program.
- One to two weeks advance notice prior to the event is usually provided.
- Taped promotional video segments of City officials, such as the Mayor or Councillors, can be aired on the local television station before the broadcast date.

## Checklist for running a Participatory Television program

### Setting-up the television program

- Electronic town meetings can have a moderated panel to discuss and receive comments from the audience.
- The panel discussion can be mixed with taped interviews and/or video segments showing images of the area or of the proposed action or project.
- The general public can be included through phone-in opportunities for both interactive television and radio programs.
- A concluding poll of the public's response to the television program can be taken in order to gain an even greater indication of community opinion.

## The role of staff / consultants

- It is often useful to have staff members involved in the process available for comments or involved in the discussion itself.
- A neutral person, possibly a television personality, can be contracted to facilitate the program.

## Steps to take following a Participatory Television program

- Residents' comments are often recorded in a report and made available for both the City's Council and the public. Identify the participants' comments based on their gender, age, ethnicity and other relevant factors. This will enable a greater understanding of the different residents and the appropriate actions needed.
- Charts and tables can be produced by the television station indicating the estimated numbers of viewers.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The process of planning, running and following-up on a **Participatory Television** program can require 3½ to 4½ weeks.

## Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**
- **Make full use of partnerships with local women's organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach women who are marginalized in the community. Where appropriate, provide financial support to enable inclusive consultations.**
- **Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.**
- **Support women's leadership initiatives, especially with young women, First Nations (indigenous) women, racialized and immigrant women, women with disabilities, etc.**

- An estimated two days is required for the administrative tasks as well as the selection of issues, interviewees and the production of the scripts.
- One week is needed to film any supporting or inter-mixed video segments, such as interviews or promotional advertisements.
- If promotional advertisements are to be used, these will have to be filmed at least one to two weeks prior to the scheduled broadcast date of the television program to ensure enough notice is given to the public.
- Another week is required for final editing of the video segments.

## Budgeting for a Participatory Television program

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning for a **Participatory Television** program:

- Notifying the public, which may include the use of newspapers, radio, **Electronic Bulletin Boards** and/or promotional video segments aired on the television station days before the program's broadcast
- Production costs associated with the filming and editing of the video. These will often be charged by the television station
- Additional personnel required during the facilitation of the television program
- Follow-up report production cost

## What are some of the benefits of Participatory Television?

- **Participatory Television** is an effective and completely inclusive form of participation.
- Production costs can be minimized if the television station can make "in-kind" contributions.

## What are some of the limitations of Participatory Television?

- A successful **Participatory Television** program presents all sides of the proposed action or project. If important issues are not addressed, the public may lose confidence in the show's legitimacy.

## Snapshot of a Canadian Participatory Television Program

Overall time frame required	3½ to 4½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	low
Staff resources required	Moderate
Expertise required	Low
Level of knowledge required by the public	Low
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	Moderate







# Mediation Session

## What is it?

A **Mediation Session** is a voluntary process in which all parties in a conflict agree to try to resolve their differences. Often a problem may be the result of a simple miscommunication or misunderstanding.

A **Mediation Session** may be able to bring about a resolution and prevent the collapse of a proposed action or project where other information exchange tools have been unsuccessful. In the context of public participation, it offers a tool for engaging a small group of residents at a critical point in the decision-making process.

## Checklist for planning a Mediation Session

### Selecting the time, date and venue

- Typically, the sessions are held in the evening in the Council chambers of the City Hall.
- Depending on the nature of the conflict or the level of trust that has been breached, meetings can be held at a more neutral and accessible location.

### Inviting the participants

- The identity of the interested parties is usually already made clear due to the existence of the conflict.
- These parties are typically contacted and invited to attend or asked to send a representative to the **Mediation Session**.

### Preparing information for participants

- At this stage of the proposed action or project, the parties have likely already attended participatory events and are aware of the interests involved.
- It is useful to identify the various conflicting issues held by the parties invited to attend.

## Selecting and training staff

- It is best if the staff person selected to facilitate the session has experience with conflict resolution and is practiced at listening and communicating effectively.
- The person mediating should be selected by both parties and does not necessarily have to be a staff person.
- Mediators can be other experienced and respected women and men from the community.

## Checklist for running a Mediation Session

### Seating arrangement

- It is helpful if the seating arrangements for the facilitator(s) and the representatives of the parties involved are designed so that each person can see the other.
- Seating the participants across the table from one another encourages a “my side versus your side” way of thinking; Seating the facilitator(s) at the end or “head” of the table may be perceived as a statement of authority.
- A circular seating pattern ensures equality of viewpoints and ensures that eye contact is maintained.

### Sitting down together

- It is best to first clearly and candidly define the problem from each perspective. Often this involves a period of educating each of the parties.
- It is important to include real as well as perceived problems.
- Once the two perspectives have been introduced, participants confirm the accuracy of their perspective. This removes any doubt as to how the parties see the conflict.

- The parties then attempt to identify areas of agreement. This is best done by starting with small issues that all parties can agree upon. The discussion then builds on these areas of agreement, gradually enlarging common ground.

### Role of staff / consultants

- An important part of the mediator's role is to offer solutions and ways to resolve the conflict. If not a party to the conflict, the mediator's suggested solutions have a better chance of being accepted.
- The sessions can involve a staff member, a Councillor, or a trusted female or male leader from the community as the mediator.
- Other staff members may be asked to provide technical information during the session.

### Steps to take following a Mediation Session

- It is useful to prepare a summary of the events so that the parties can verify their positions and any agreements that might have been made.
- A report outlining the results of the session is typically presented to the Council for review.
- Public notification of the results may not be desirable for matters of confidentiality, which will have to be determined by the groups involved.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.**
- **Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.**

### Planning your overall time commitment

- The process of planning, running, and following-up on a **Mediation Session** typically requires 2½ weeks.
- Two weeks are usually required to send out invitations to the parties involved.
- During which time, the issues of the parties involved can be identified.
- Staff training, if necessary, can also take place during this time.
- One day is usually required to set up and conduct the session, which can run from two to three hours.
- Follow-up activities may take two more days.

### Budgeting for a Mediation Session

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning for a **Mediation Session** program:

- Inviting the parties, including postage if mail-outs are used
- Production costs associated with the preparation of any material: printing, photocopying, etc.
- Facilities: refreshments, audio-visual equipment, etc.
- Follow-up report production costs

### What are some of the benefits of a Mediation Session?

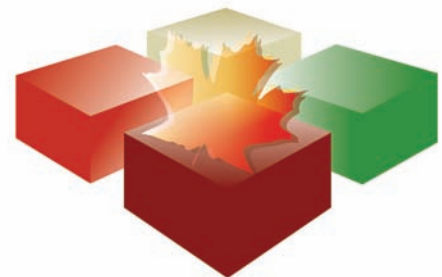
- The use of a **Mediation Session** may prevent the collapse of a proposed action or project.
- **Mediation Sessions** can often clarify the sources of conflict, which typically root from miscommunications or misunderstandings.

## What are some of the limitations of a Mediation Session?

- The sessions may be seen as an unnecessary delay in the decision-making process.
- Staff need to be skilled in communicating and listening, and possess the proper conflict resolution abilities.

## Snapshot of a Canadian Mediation Session

Overall time frame required	2½ weeks
Cost of planning and running	Low
Staff resources required	Low
Expertise required	High
Level of knowledge required by the public	High
Number of participants accommodated	Low
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	Low
Level of knowledge gained by the public	Low
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	High





# Citizen Advisory Group

## What is it?

A **Citizen Advisory Group** is another frequently used public participation tool. Groups are usually made up of a small number of community volunteers (women and men, youth and seniors, etc) who represent various interests, points of view and areas of expertise within the community. Groups can serve in a wide range of roles and often include the public in the decision making-process. Some of the more common roles include:

- As a preliminary step in defining a longer term process of public participation;
- As an indicator of the public's support for a proposed plan prior to its adoption;
- As a source of independent technical advice;
- As a body to review existing policies or procedures and recommend changes;
- As a decision-making body, charged with managing the development of a policy or action; and,
- As a watchdog to ensure that the municipality is fulfilling its commitments.

## Checklist for planning a Citizen Advisory Group

### Defining the purpose and scope of the Group

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- While the Group itself will be responsible for defining its precise terms of reference, the municipality can outline broad terms of references, including its expectations and the issue to be addressed by the Group.

### Selecting the Group members

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There are three methods typically used for selecting members:

- Members can be selected directly by either the municipality or a neutral third party, such as a local

elected body or by a committee of the municipality and relevant stakeholders. These methods offer a simple and efficient means for balancing the different interests represented in the community.

- Alternatively, Group members can be elected by members of the public at a **Public Meeting** organized specifically for this purpose. While it offers the greatest opportunity for citizen involvement in the selection process, this method is time consuming and risks leading to an over-representation of specific interest groups.
- Finally, the municipality can define selection criteria and make use of local media to invite residents to put forward names of candidates.

Regardless of which method you adopt, you should ensure that the Group has equal representation of women and men as well as the diversity of the municipality's residents.

### Confirming selected Group members

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- Candidates selected can be formally notified in writing at least two weeks prior to the first Group meeting.
- Limiting the Group to a maximum of 15 members will prevent it becoming too unwieldy to organize and reach consensus.

### Selecting and training staff

- An orientation session is appropriate where a staff member is selected to serve as Chair or Group member. Where the Group is composed entirely of citizens, staff will play only a supportive role. Some basic orientation as to the role of the Group will contribute to positive relations between Group members and staff.

### Preparing information for the Group

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- Municipal staff generally prepare information kits outlining the issues to be addressed by the Group in time for the first meeting. Information packages will also be required for any subsequent meetings.

## Checklist for running a Citizen Advisory Group

### Clarifying the Group's role and procedures

- The Group's first meeting can be used to clarify several aspects of its purpose and procedures.
- A chairperson can be selected from among the Group's members, rather than having one appointed by the municipality.
- The chair is typically someone that can encourage group discussion and work towards a consensus.
- The Group can choose between using consensus rather than voting to decide on issues.
- The Group can also agree on issues such as the confidentiality of any material provided to the group, since these will likely undergo considerable changes before being made public.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that, wherever possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, ethnicity, and other relevant socio-economic factors.**
- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**
- **Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.**
- **Plan meetings at different times of the day and not only evenings. Women might be more reluctant to go out at night and have many family responsibilities in the evenings.**
- **Ensure safety of consultation events such as lighted areas, easy access to public transportation, etc.**
- **Provide practical supports to help women, low-income residents, those with fixed incomes, etc. to attend meetings. Supports can include: transportation subsidies, childcare, translation, buildings that are accessible for women and men with disabilities, and food that is considerate of dietary restrictions for any number of reasons.**

### Schedule of the meetings

- It is best to decide if the meetings are to be scheduled on fixed dates or if they are to be called only when needed.
- Depending on the issue, a Group can meet as often as weekly, and as infrequently as once or twice a year.

### Role of staff

- The role of staff will likely be to provide support to the Group as questions arise that need further study.
- Staff may also want to assume the task of keeping a record of the Group's minutes.

### Steps to take following a Citizen Group Meeting

- Minutes of the meetings can be used to prepare a report for staff or Council.
- Informing the public of all results, especially the final outcomes of the Group will keep the public up-to-date on the Group's progress. This will ensure that the group reflects the public's sentiments and that the public will be educated along with the Group.

### Planning your overall time commitment

- Depending on the manner in which Group members are selected, the entire process for initiating the first meeting of the Group will require a minimum of three weeks, and a maximum of six weeks. Subsequent meetings will require approximately one week to prepare for, run and follow-up.
- Ensure equal representation of women and men, unless the group is specifically set up to promote women's participation and inclusion. Youth and seniors groups may also want to have participants who are specific to their particular experiences.
- Ensure that women and men from marginalized and low-income residents are also represented in Advisory Groups.

- Two days are required for the initial preparatory work such as determining the type of Group, choosing a method for participant selection, selecting support staff, and arranging for a meeting room often at City Hall. This stage can also include the selection of Group members where these are identified by the municipality or a third party.
- An additional 2½ weeks are required if the selection process involves advertising through the media in order to invite nominations from residents. 3½ weeks may be required if the selection process involves a **Public Meeting**.
- Once candidates are selected, two full weeks are required to notify and confirm Group members.
- During this time, one week can be devoted to preparing information for the Group and providing any necessary staff orientation and training.
- Once Group members have been confirmed, a full day is required for setting up and running each meeting, with the meeting itself requiring two to three hours.
- Two days are then required for follow-up activities between each meeting, and following the final meeting.
- Subsequent meetings will require approximately one week to prepare, run, and follow-up.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Citizen Advisory Group

Overall time frame required	3-6 weeks
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	Moderate
Level of knowledge required by the public	High
Number of participants accommodated	Low
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	High

### Budgeting for a Citizen Advisory Group

In addition to staff time, several budget items can be considered when planning a **Citizen Advisory Group**:

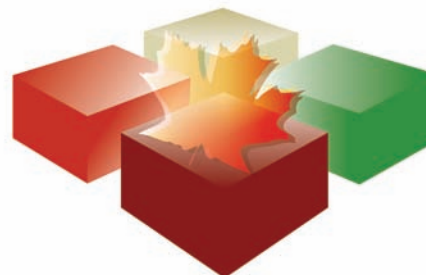
- Notifying the public (if necessary), including advertisement in local media
- Holding a **Public Meeting** (if necessary)
- Production costs associated with preparing information handouts, presentations prior to each meeting
- Facilities & operations, including accessible room rental and refreshments for each meeting
- Group member expenses, including local travel, childcare and meals for each meeting
- Follow-up report production costs and advertising to public for each meeting
- Final report and advertisement
- Much of the cost associated with a **Citizen Advisory Group** is based on the number of Group meetings
- Deciding which costs will be absorbed by the municipality and which, if any, will be the responsibility of Group members will avoid potential embarrassment and confusion

### What are some of the benefits of a Citizen Advisory Group?

- The members of a Group have the opportunity to become better informed about the issues before coming to conclusions, and have a better understanding of the consequences of their decisions.
- The municipality gains from the expertise, knowledge, and experience of the women and men in the Group.
- The municipality gains a public perception that is derived from a thorough analysis of the situation.
- **Citizen Advisory Groups** can become a helpful link back to the community that they represent.

## What are some of the limitations of a Citizen Advisory Group?

- There is a risk that the Group will not be perceived as adequately representing the broader public, or residents affected by a proposal.
- It is very important to keep the Group process open and visible to the public, so that when its final recommendations are presented, they are credible to the public.
- Depending upon the time frame given to the Group, costs can become considerable and staff time required can place a strain on staff resources.
- Depending upon the method chosen for selecting the Group members, the required set-up time can be high.





# Referendum

## What is it?

A **Referendum** is the process of referring a question to the public for decision by general vote. **Referendums** are legislated by the Provincial Government. There are two types of referendums: Those **Referendums** where the results can be legally binding and require Council to uphold or overturn a by-law; this type of **Referendum** is initiated by residents, and requires a minimum number of residents' signatures to be initiated. A by-law is approved where the minimum number of signatures is not collected. The second type of **Referendum** is that which a City Council can use the outcome to gauge public opinion. The results of this type of **Referendum** are not legally binding on the City.

## Checklist for Planning a Referendum

### Identifying the target audience

- The target audience involved in the **Referendum** will depend on whether a recently passed by-law affects the entire municipality, or specific areas within the municipality.
- The target audience includes residents of legal voting age in the relevant areas affected by a by-law.

### Initiating the referendums

- New zoning by-laws are advertised in the local newspaper, notifying the public that eligible voters may request that this by-law be submitted to a **Referendum**.
- The notice indicates the conditions to be an eligible voter and the minimum number of signatures needed to initiate a **Referendum**. The notice also indicates the location, date and time of a register to be opened to residents interested in requesting a **Referendum**.
- This notice must be published eight days prior to the opening of the register.
- The register is normally open for one full day, between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm.

- Eligible voters are able to consult the proposed by-law at city hall during regular service hours and during the hours of the registration process.
- Residents of voting age hoping to initiate a **Referendum** provide their name, address and signature in the register.
- Results of the register are provided to Council.

### Preparing the voters list

- Where the minimum number of signatures is provided, a voters list must be drawn up for the affected population.
- Residents are asked to verify that their name appears on the voter list.
- Residents should be informed about how to add their name to the list should it be missing.

### Selecting a place, date and time

- The timing and duration of the **Referendum** is generally prescribed in legislation, which often requires that it be held within 90 days of the adoption of the by-law, and take place between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm.
- A referendum is usually held on a day that allows for the greatest turnout of voters.
- Voting booths are normally located at a recognized, local place such as a school, library, church, city hall or community centre. These venues must be spacious enough to prevent crowding if a large turn-out should occur.

### Notifying the public

- Those registered on the referendum list receive a notice ten days prior to the vote, indicating which by-law is to be voted on, when and where the by-law can be consulted, the day, time and location of vote, and finally, the day and time where results will be compiled.

- Notices are placed in a local newspaper, and can be provided directly to all residents included on the voters list.
- The notice also includes a map of the concerned area. Voter eligibility is limited to residents living in this area.
- In addition to the required notice, the various coalitions promoting the YES or NO side also provide advertisements, door to door discussions, and **Information Publications**.

### Selecting and training staff

- Staff requirements are the same as a formal voting procedure. These include a returning officer and support staff to oversee the entire process.
- In addition, a ballot monitor and secretary must be present at each polling station.
- Specific duties are generally defined in legislation.

### Preparing the question

- The question is prepared by and approved by City Council.
- A clear and easily understood question will help legitimize the results of the **Referendum**.

### Tips on how to be inclusive

- **Ensure that information is provided in simple and clear language.**
- **Practice proactive strategies and reach out to women and marginalized women and men to ensure they are included.**

### Preparing information for the public

- The council may decide to allocate a budget for communication purposes.
- A printed voting list and instructions must be handed at each voting booth;
- Ballots must be printed, and the exact number must be recorded.

### Checklist for running a Referendum

#### Laying out the room

- The legislation will typically prescribe the requirements for the voting area.
- The voting area should be accessible to women and men with physical disabilities.

#### The role of staff / consultants

- The referendum is like a normal election, requiring a Returning Officer and support staff.
- A paid staff member must be present at each voting booth.
- Once the voting period is over, the ballot monitor counts the votes under the supervision of the secretary. Each ballot monitor places the result in a sealed envelope handed to the Returning Officer.

### Steps to take following a Referendum

- Results of the **Referendum** are announced publicly.
- Council adheres to the outcome of the **Referendum**, either adopting or rejecting the proposed by-law.

## Planning your overall time commitment

- The process must begin within three months (90 days) of the tabling of the proposed by-law.
- Two weeks to initiate a **Referendum**, including notifying the public about the need to sign a register.
- Two or three days are spent preparing notices for the **Referendum** itself.
- Up to three weeks are required to prepare and finalize the **Referendum** voting list.
- One week is required to prepare and approve the **Referendum** question.
- Two weeks are required to advertise the **Referendum**.
- Follow-up activities will likely require at least a full week.

## Budgeting for a Referendum

- The costs related to a **Referendum** vary greatly, and are based on the size of the area as well as the issue being addressed.
- Typically a budget is voted by Council to help pay for the **Referendum** and for communications.

### Snapshot of a Canadian Referendum

Overall time frame required	4-5 months
Cost of planning and running	Moderate
Staff resources required	High
Expertise required	Low
Level of knowledge required by the public	Moderate
Number of participants accommodated	High
Ability to reach a wide cross-section of the public	High
Level of knowledge gained by the public	High
Usefulness in acquiring public feedback	High

In addition to staff time, costs typically associated with a **Referendum** are as follows:

- Notifying the public to initiate a **Referendum**, and for the **Referendum** itself
- Production costs associated with the preparation of ballots
- Additional staff or consultants required supervise the voting procedure
- Facilities: venue rental
- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to the public

## What are some of the benefits of a Referendum?

- A **Referendum** is a democratic, inclusive tool, allowing all residents to take part in the decision-making process.
- The outcome of the process is definite and conclusive.

## What are some of the limitations of a Referendum?

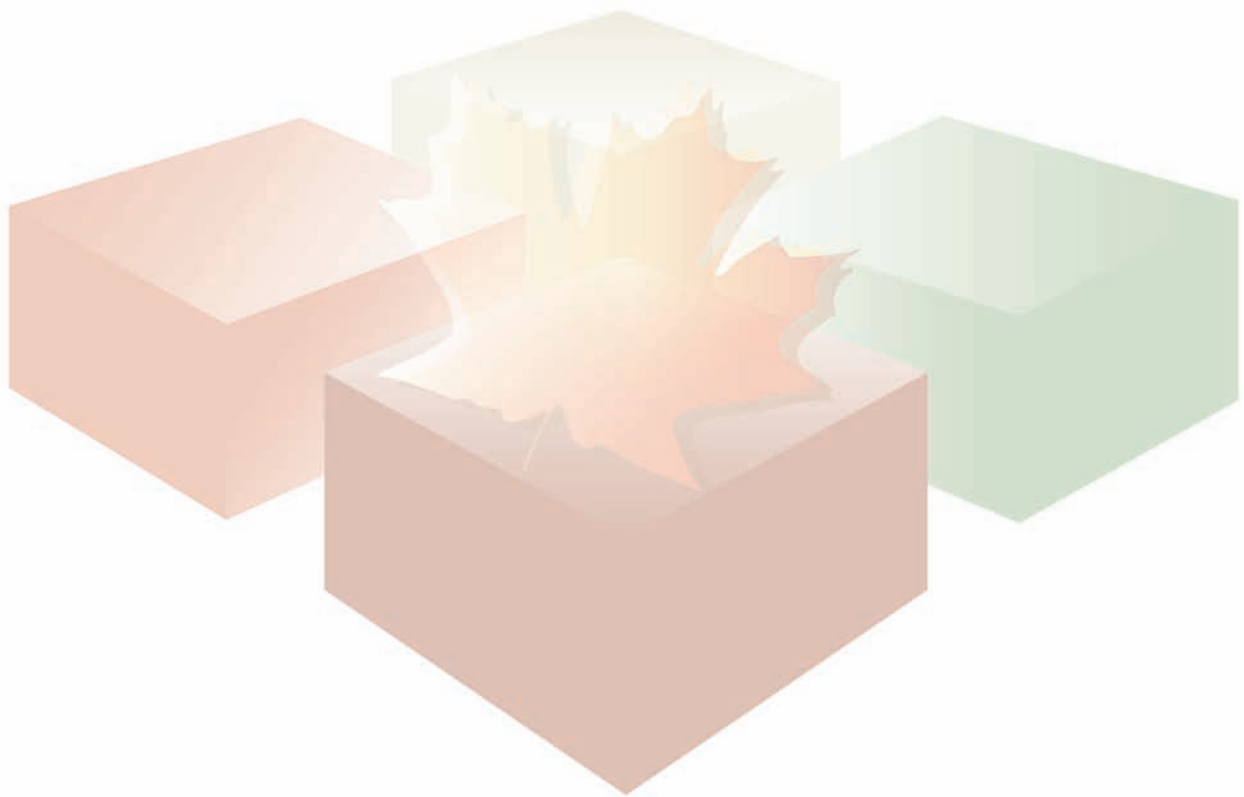
- The costs and time commitment associated with a **Referendum** are considerable.
- Significant staff resources are needed to undertake a **Referendum**.
- The results of a **Referendum** may prove divisive, since there is little opportunity for consultation and consensus building.



# Worksheets

Each of the three worksheets included in this section provides a review of the basic steps necessary to plan for and carry out a participatory tool. Each worksheet also includes tips and reminders intended to encourage you to conceptualize the tool in the context of your own municipality. The specific realities of your own municipality will often require a different approach to making use of these tools.

The choice of tools included in this section is intended to reflect the different purposes of public participation. Preparing an Information Publication (Worksheet 1) deals mainly with disseminating information to the public; Planning a Public Meeting (Worksheet 2) focuses on exchanging information with members of the public; and Organizing a Citizen Advisory Group (Worksheet 3) involves placing members of public in a formal advisory capacity.



# Worksheet 1 – Preparing an Information Publication

## 1. Purpose

In preparing an Information Publication, a first step is to identify the purpose for which the Information Publication maybe used in your City.

Typical roles played by an information publication include:

- Informing the public of an issue
  - Notifying the public about an up-coming event
  - Inviting feedback from the public
  - Other purpose
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## 2. Issues

What issues(s) will the Information Publication address

Is an information publication appropriate for this issue? Keep in mind that:

- Information Publications contribute to reducing miscommunication and public mistrust of hidden agendas.
  - Information Publications can improve how residents view their role in the process, thereby increasing their level of participation.
  - While the tool is one of the best means of sharing information, it provides limited opportunities for public feedback.
  - Costs can be significant if a publisher is contracted to produce the publication.
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## 3. Audience

Select a target audience for the publication

In selecting the target audience, consider the following groups:

- All members of the public
- Residents in a specific geographic area affected by a particular proposal
- Special interest groups affected by a particular proposal
- Groups or communities normally outside the mainstream of decision-making, including:
  - women in all their diversity
  - elderly and young women and men
  - linguistic and racialized communities and other marginalized women and men
  - low income communities
  - women and men with disabilities
  - women and men from First Nations communities

Consider preparing a list of communities or organizations to be provided with the information publication:

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## 4. Contents

### Prepare the publication's content

An Information Publication typically includes the following content:

- Description of background issue
- Information disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc.
- Language used is sensitive to and inclusive of women and marginalized communities
- Language is clear
- Rationale for involving the public in the consultation process
- Description of the participatory process
- Identification of planned events, dates and times
- Status report on the progress of a participatory process
- Up-date on important decisions and milestones in the process
- Contact information for the municipality

## 5. Format

### Select a publication format

The particular format will depend on the purpose, issue, audience and content, and will also be defined by time and budget constraints:

- Community or city newspaper article or insert
- Municipal / Department Newsletter
- Brochure
- Press release or bulletin
- Electronic format
- Other format

Consider encouraging public feedback as part of the publication through one of several methods:

- Insert comment sheets or survey that readers can tear out of the publication
- Dedicated phone lines advertised in the publication
- Electronic Bulletin Board address provided in the publication

## 6. Timing

### Select a date for disseminating the publication

In selecting a date consider the following:

- The release date is best if it coincides with key events occurring in the process.
- Where a publication is also being used to advertise a consultative event, it should allow for sufficient time to prepare the public.
- Ensure that feedback also goes to the language-specific groups if they were consulted.
- Allow for more time if planning translation into other languages.

### Establish the overall time frame

In preparing a workplan, keep in mind the following steps. Consider providing an estimate of days or weeks next to each step:

- Initial preparatory work \_\_\_\_\_
- Preparing written material \_\_\_\_\_
- Publishing time \_\_\_\_\_
- Translation time \_\_\_\_\_
- Distribution \_\_\_\_\_
- Follow-up activities \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Follow-up activities

Consider several options where a publication has provided opportunities for feedback:

- Ensure completed questionnaires are received from the public
- Record the public's comments and suggestions
- Identify the comments on the basis of gender, i.e. by the specific comments made by women and men
- Include the comments of the different publics in the next Information Publication

## 8. Budget

### Prepare a budget

Consider the following costs:

- Publication costs for a newsletter
- Advertisements in the media if in-kind contributions cannot be secured
- Translation costs
- Mail-out to selected participants
- Return postage for attached response cards or questionnaires
- Contracting a publishing house
- Additional part-time or full-time staff

## 9. Funding

### Identify funding for the Information Publication

Consider a range of mechanisms for funding these costs:

- Departmental funding
- Municipal funding outside department
- In-kind contributions (volunteer time, facility space)
- Sponsorship/cash donations
- Funding from senior levels of government
- International sources of funding
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



# Worksheet 2 – Planning a Public Meeting

## 1. Issues

A first step is to define the issue (s) to be addressed by the Public Meeting

Is a public meeting appropriate for this issue? Keep in mind that:

- Public Meetings are one of the most commonly used methods for contacting and communicating directly with large groups of the population.
  - Public Meetings offer an opportunity for municipalities to give a formal presentation to a large and wide cross-section of the population.
  - The large number of residents and formal setting limits interaction with municipal staff and constrains participation.
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## 2. Audience

Select a target audience

Possible audiences to consider include:

- All members of the public
- Residents in a specific geographic area affected by a particular proposal
- Special interest groups affected by a particular proposal
- Groups or communities normally outside the mainstream of decision-making, including:
  - women in all their diversity
  - seniors and young women and men
  - linguistic communities, racialized communities, and other marginalized women and men
  - low income communities
  - women and men with disabilities
  - women and men from First Nations communities (or indigenous people)

Consider preparing a list of communities or organizations to be invited:

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## 3. Venue

With the audience in mind, identify possible venues for a Public Meeting

In selecting a meeting place, have you considered the following factors:

- Familiarity of the venue to the public
- The proximity of the venue to public transport
- The accessibility of the venue to women and men with different mobility needs

- Proximity of the venue to a proposed project
- Size of the venue in comparison to expected size of audience
- The feasibility of childcare provision on site

Consider preparing a shortlist of possible venues:

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## 4. Timing

### Select a meeting date and time

Factors to consider in selecting a date and time:

- Sufficient time to notify the public
- Sufficient time to provide staff with orientation and/or training
- Sufficient flexibility to allow for participation by the desired audience
- Select a time of day and date that is convenient for the constituencies you want to reach, i.e. mothers and the elders might want a day meeting

### Establish the overall time frame

In preparing a workplan, keep in mind the following steps. Consider providing an estimate of days or weeks next to each step:

- Initial preparatory work \_\_\_\_\_
- Time required to advertise \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional staff training time \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting set-up \_\_\_\_\_
- Follow-up time \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Resource People

### Ensure adequate staff representation at the Public Meeting

When selecting staff, consider the following factors:

- At least one or two staff must have the time to devote to preparing for, participating in, and following-up on the Public Meeting
- Staff should be comfortable presenting and responding to the public
- Staff should be familiar with the issues affecting residents
- Ensure staff are both male and female
- Staff should be experienced in working with a wide range of communities
- Does the staff speak any of the languages your audience might?
- Part-time staff or a consultant may be required to supplement staff time

### Provide staff with basic training

At a minimum, training can involve:

- Introduction to the key issues being addressed
- Description of the affected community and key stakeholders
- Role-playing with questions likely to be asked by the public

Consider preparing a checklist of questions likely to be asked by members of the public during the planned Public Meeting:

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## 6. Contents

### Prepare information for the meeting

Keep in mind that information should identify the following:

- Purpose of the project/proposal
- Main issues related to the project/proposal
- The information should be disaggregated by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. to show how the situation affects women and men differently
- Members of the study/project team
- Ensure equal numbers of women and men
- Ensure that your consultation process is inclusive and reaches out to all
- Relevant evaluation criteria being used by the municipality
- Proposed steps in the process of public participation
- The public's role in the process
- Alternative options being considered

Consider the format or combination of formats that will be used to present information at the Public Meeting:

- Formal oral presentation
- Audio-visual accompaniment
- Summary report
- One-page bulletins
- Posters/visual displays
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Consider any additional information to be provided prior to the meeting:

- Distributing an information kit to residents
- Should the information material be in other languages?
- Ensuring media coverage of the issue prior to the meeting, including women's and ethnic media
- Disseminating an information publication.

## 7. Advertising

### Notify the public

Keep in mind that notices are short and generally outline the following points:

- The issue to be discussed at the Public Meeting
- Why the issue is important to women and men and how it impacts them differently
- Why public input is needed
- Time and dates of the Public Meeting
- A meeting agenda

Consider which combination of media will be most appropriate for reaching the target audience:

- Local newspapers
  - Community newsletters
  - Radio, including community radio
  - Television
  - Municipal / Department newsletters
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
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## 8. The Meeting

### Run the public meeting

Keep in mind the following considerations when running your public meeting:

- Asking members of the public to sign their names and provide contact information
- Seating arrangements of staff and members of the public
- Length and content of a formal presentation
- Opportunities for public feedback, including a question period
- Ensure that both women and men get to speak
- Clearly defining the role of staff and project representatives
- Providing additional information kits
- Asking participants to complete a questionnaire. Make sure the questionnaire requests information on gender, race, ethnicity, age, income range, etc, so you have disaggregated data and can take different needs into account.

### Follow-up steps

Consider actions to be taken once the Public Meeting has ended:

- Hold a de-briefing session with staff
- Write up the proceedings of the meeting, including public feedback and disaggregate the comments of the public by gender, race, ethnicity, age, ability, etc.
- Ensure completed questionnaires are received from the public
- Provide a summary report to staff and/or council and present the feedback based on the disaggregated data
- Prepare a public advertisement summarizing the meeting
- Consider the need for a second public meeting
- Consider the possibility of making use of a different tool or combination of tools

## 9. Budget

### Prepare an event budget

Consider the following costs:

- Advertisement
- Information and presentation production costs
- Translation
- Interpretation for the hearing impaired
- Staff training costs
- Additional staff or consultant(s)
- Facilities: room rental, refreshments, audio visual equipment
- Follow-up documentation and advertising
- Other costs

## 10. Funding

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Identify funding for the public meeting

Consider a range of mechanisms for funding these costs:

- Departmental funding
- Municipal funding outside department
- In-kind contributions (volunteer time, facility space)
- Sponsorship/cash donations
- Funding from senior levels of government
- International sources of funding
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

# Worksheet 3 – Organizing a Citizen Advisory Group

## 1. Issues

To organize a Citizens Advisory Group requires, as a first step, to define the issue (s) to be addressed

Is a Citizen Group appropriate for this issue? Keep in mind that:

- Citizen Groups are usually made up of a small group of community volunteers representing a range of points of view and areas of expertise.
  - Citizen Advisory Groups can become a helpful link back to the community that they represent.
  - A Citizen Group may not be perceived as adequately representing the broader public, or residents affected by a proposal.
  - Depending upon the time frame given to the Group, costs can become considerable and the process can place a strain on staff resources.
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## 2. Creation of the Group

Define the role for the Group

Consider the following options in defining an overall role for a Citizen Group:

- Measuring the opinion of women and men
- Sounding Board (providing general reactions and opinions)
- Independent technical review body
- Group asked to recommend change on existing policies or procedures
- Decision-making, managing Group
- Watchdog group, ensuring accountability and transparency on the part of municipal decision-makers

Select Group members

The broader audience being represented by the Group will depend on the particular issue being addressed, and could include any of the following:

- All members of the public
- Residents in a specific geographic area affected by a particular proposal
- Special interest groups affected by a particular proposal
- Groups or communities normally outside the mainstream of decision making, including:
  - women in all their diversity
  - elderly and young women and men
  - linguistic and racialized communities and other marginalized women and men
  - low income communities
  - women and men with disabilities
  - women and men from First Nations communities (or indigenous women and men)

To a large extent, the Group will be judged by the composition of its membership. Consider the following methods for selecting a balanced and credible group of Group members:

- Direct appointment by the municipality
- Direct appointment by a neutral third party
- Election by members of the public at a public meeting
- Appointments by the municipality based on nominations received from the public
- Ensure that the Group has equal representation of women and men as well as the diversity of the municipality's residents

Consider preparing a checklist of selection criteria to be used when appointing or seeking nominations for Group members:

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### **3. Resource People**

#### Select and train staff

Staff training will depend on the level of Staff involvement defined by the Group, and could involve the following:

- Basic orientation on the role of the Group is appropriate where the Group is composed entirely of residents.
- A more comprehensive orientation session is appropriate where a staff member is selected to serve as Chair or Group member.

### **4. The Meeting**

#### Prepare information for the Group's first meeting

Keep in mind that the Group may need background and technical information such as:

- Purpose of the project/proposal
- Main issues related to the project/proposal
- Disaggregate information by gender, race, age, income, status, etc. to show how the situation affects women and men differently
- Members of the study team
- Any relevant evaluation criteria being used by the municipality
- Proposed steps in the process of public participation
- The Group's role in the process
- Alternative options being considered in the process

#### Define an agenda for the first meeting

Consider including some of the following items in the agenda for a first meeting:

- Selection of a chairperson from among the Group's members
- Definition of a voting procedure
- Clarification of the Group's terms of reference
- Definition of role to be played by City staff
- Policy on confidentiality of material provided to the group
- Policy on funding for expenses incurred by Group members

- Schedule of subsequent meetings.

#### Follow-up activities

Several options can be considered once a Group meeting has taken place:

- Minutes of the meetings can be used to prepare reports for staff or Council
- Information Publications can be used to keep the public up-to-date on the Group's progress
- Particular attention should be paid to providing the general public with opportunities to review and evaluate any recommendations provided by the Group

## 5. Timing

### Establish the overall time frame

In preparing a workplan, keep in mind the following steps. Consider providing an estimate of days or weeks next to each step:

- Initial preparatory work \_\_\_\_\_
- Member selection process \_\_\_\_\_
- Confirmation of members \_\_\_\_\_
- Information for first meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional staff training time \_\_\_\_\_
- Support for first meeting \_\_\_\_\_
- Follow-up time \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Budget

### Prepare a budget

Consider the following costs:

- Notifying the public
- Holding a Public Meeting
- Information / presentation production costs (multiplied by the number of meetings)
- Member's expenses (multiplied by the number of meetings)
- Facilities (multiplied by the number of meetings)
- Follow-up report production costs
- Follow-up advertising to public
- Costs associated with extensions in the Group's mandate

## 7. Funding

### Identify funding for the Citizen Advisory Group

Consider a range of mechanisms for funding these costs:

- Departmental funding
- Municipal funding outside department
- In-kind contributions (volunteer time, facility space)
- Sponsorship/cash donations
- Funding from senior levels of government
- International sources of funding
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



# Additional Resources

## Suggested Printed Resources

Conner, Desmond M. 1994. *Constructive Citizen Participation: A Resource Book*. Victoria, BC: Development Press.  
<http://www.islandnet.com/~connor/resource.html>

Creighton, J. 1992. *Involving Citizens in Community Decision Making: A Guidebook*. Washington, DC: Program for Community Problem Solving.  
<http://www.ncl.org/ncl/pcps.htm>

Canadian Standards Association (CSA). 1996. *A Guide to Public Participation*. Etobicoke, Ontario: Canadian Standards Association.  
<http://www.cssinfo.com/info/csa.html>

Graham, Katherine A. and Susan D. Phillips. Eds. 1998. *Citizen Engagement: Lessons in Participation from Local Government*. Toronto, Ontario: Institute of Public Administration of Canada.  
<http://www.ipaciapc.ca>

Institute for Participatory Management and Planning (IPMP). 1993. *Citizen Participatory Handbook for Public Officials and other Professionals Serving the Public*. Monterey, California: IPMP.  
<http://www.ipmp-bleiker.com/>

Institute for Science and Technology Policy (ISTP). 1994. *Community Participation in Practice: Casebook*. Murdoch WA, Australia: ISTP, Murdoch University.  
<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/ABOUT/students.htm>

Institute for Science and Technology Policy (ISTP). 1994. *Community Participation in Practice: Workshop Checklist*. Murdoch WA, Australia: Institute for Science and Technology Policy, Murdoch University.  
<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/ABOUT/students.htm>

Institute of Science and Technology Policy (ISTP). 1994. *Community Participation in Practice: Listening to all the Voices*.  
<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/ABOUT/students.htm>

Institute of Science and Technology Policy (ISTP). 1988. *Community Participation in Practice: The Community Participation Handbook –Resources for Public Involvement in the Planning Process*.  
<http://www.wistp.murdoch.edu.au/ABOUT/students.htm>

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). 1997. *A Resource Book on Participation*.  
<http://www.iadb.org/exr/english/POLICIES/participate/index.htm>

Kubiski, Walter S. 1992. *Citizen Participation in the 90's: Realism, Challenges and Opportunities*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.  
<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/~ius/title.htm>

United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 1998. *Empowering People –A Guide to Participation*. New York, UNDP.  
<http://www.undp.org/csopp/paguide.htm>

The World Bank. 1996. *The World Bank Participation Sourcebook*. The World Bank, Washington DC.  
<http://worldbank.org/html/edi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm>

## Suggested On-Line Resources

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)  
<http://pin.org/iap2.htm>

Public Involvement Network (PIN)  
<http://www.pin.org/>

The Electronic Development and Environment Information System (ELDIS) Participation Home Page  
<http://nt1.ids.ac.uk/eldis/pr/pr.htm>

Netpower! How the Internet is Changing Politics:  
<http://www.us.net/indc/column2.htm>

Land and Resource Management Planning: Public Participation Guidelines  
<http://www.luco.gov.bc.ca/lrmp/guidelns.htm#APP2>

Public Participation in Canada: Development, Current Status and Trends  
<http://www.islandnet.com/connor/ppcanada/ppcanada.html>