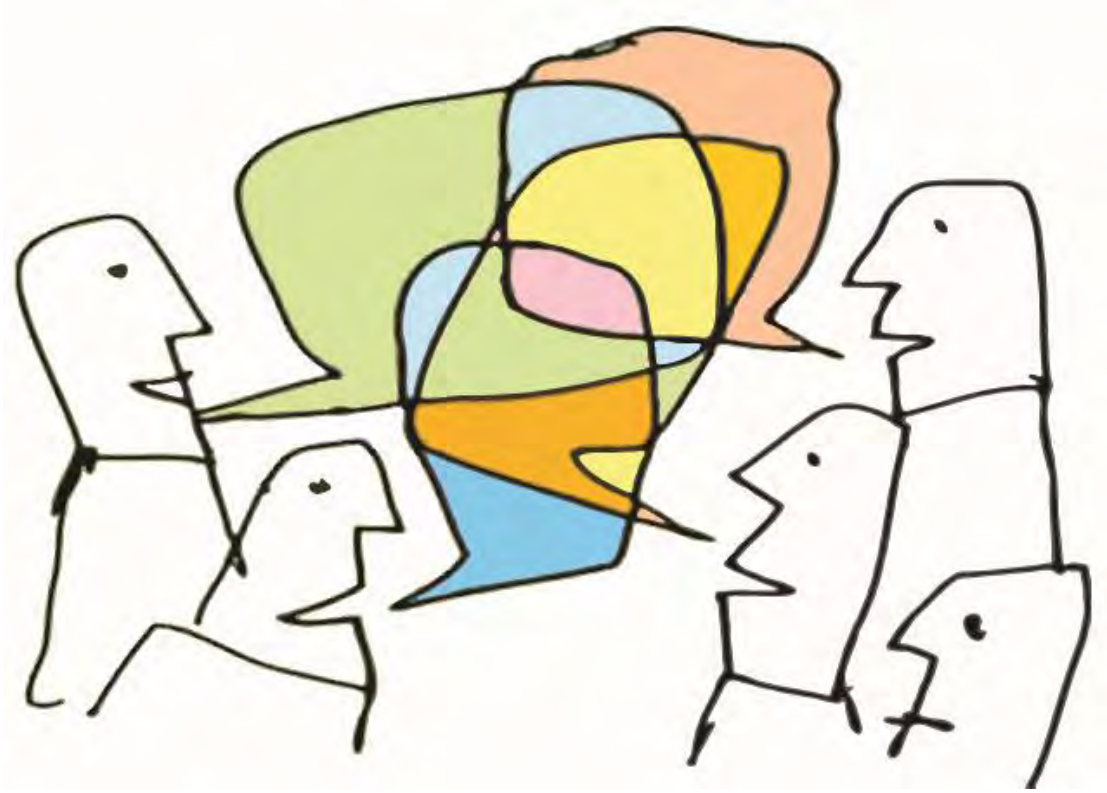
POWELL RIVER
REGIONAL DISTRICT



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The Powell River Regional District recognizes the importance of its electorate and engaging them in actively sharing their perspectives and values on issues facing the Regional District. Further, the Regional District wants its services and projects to be considered relevant and successful by the people they are intended to benefit. To ensure this, the perspectives and opinions of citizens are rooted in the local government policy that affects them.

Public engagement plays a critical role in the deliberative democracy process. It can assist in providing information to support decision-making, give a voice to the people, increase public confidence, and ensure that resources are targeted effectively. However, ineffective engagement can do more harm than good by creating unrealistic expectations, damaging trust, or polarizing points of view. As the Regional District advances public engagement, directors and staff must be confident about when and how to engage with the public. A public engagement framework is an important tool to help guide the engagement process.

Background

The Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia published Report 11, *Public Participation: Principles and Best Practices for British Columbia*. The Auditor General defined public engagement as, "When a government reaches out to private or public organizations or directly to the public to seek their participation in the decision-making process, the government is said to be engaging in public participation". He went on to say, "Government is normally under no formal obligation to engage citizens between elections, unless it has been required to do so by the courts, legislation or other requirement. Most governments, however, recognize the value in aligning their decisions with the views of the electorate". Many of the aspects from the Auditor General's Report are contained within this framework.

What is Public Engagement?

Public engagement is an ongoing process involving communication and interaction between the Regional District and its residents. Public engagement facilitates information exchange, discussion, debate, and decision-making. Through the process, all parties become better informed about the range of views on issues and proposals, and more involved in the Regional District's decision-making processes. Effective public engagement results in decisions that are more sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values. While many benefits of community engagement are long-term, the process is not a quick fix but an investment with a wide range of risks and costs as well as benefits.

Public engagement includes a range of methods reflecting the degree to which those involved are able to influence, share or control the decision-making. This progression ranges from the Regional District simply providing information, to exchanging

information and ideas, to working together collaboratively. Effective public engagement requires that the process fit the purpose, the unique characteristics of the project or issues, and the members of the public who are interested in the project or issue.

There is no single "public" but rather a number of publics who may emerge at any time during the life of a project or issue depending on their particular concerns and interests. The public changes for each issue, and tends to increase in numbers at key decision points.

Potential Benefits of Public Engagement

- Identifies stakeholders – Public engagement helps identify those with an interest in the issue being discussed.
- Defines goals and objectives – Public engagement helps define practical goals and objectives that all can agree on.
- Improves information – Public engagement ensures a free flow of valuable information to all participants.
- Views are exchanged – Participants become aware of others' views. Dialogue with others assists in reaching solutions which all can agree on.
- Better decisions – Decision makers can better understand the impact of their decisions.
- Legitimacy – People are more likely to accept a decision made when they have taken part in creating the solution.
- Reduces challenges – Open public engagement processes can result in better citizen "buy-in".

Potential Drawbacks of Public Engagement

- Time consuming – Engagement can be time consuming, slowing down decision-making processes.
- Costs – Engagement can be resource intensive (financially and staff wise).
- Unrealistic expectations – Public engagement can lead to people expecting shared decision-making power with the Regional District Board. If their solution is not adopted, these individuals may criticize the process.
- Fair representation – Participants who participate may not represent all relevant views to issues being discussed. The interests of a few active people can be seen as overruling the silent majority.
- Inaccurate information – Participants may have strong opinions that are based on inaccurate information. All information provided by participants must be carefully assessed.

What Public Engagement Is Not

The goal of effective public engagement is not 100% consensus or agreement. Successful public engagement is having people come away from the process either in support of the project/issue, or if not in support, coming away saying, "I don't agree or support this, but I understand it."

When to Start Thinking About Public Engagement

Whenever you are even thinking about starting, stopping, or changing an initiative, project, program, plan or policy.

The more complex the issue, the greater the need for public engagement.

Public engagement strategies should be an integral part of Regional District actions from the very beginning. Although individual public engagement activities may not be implemented until later in the decision-making process, the design of a public engagement strategy should occur as part of the overall strategic approach to an anticipated Regional District decision. For example, in thinking about whether to make changes to a Regional District asset such as a regional park, staff should analyze the appropriate level of public engagement when the concept of the park is first discussed. An early assessment of public interest will inform when and how much to engage the public in the design and implementation of the change. The level of public engagement can range from keeping the public informed to involving the public's participation in the decision-making process. Involving the public early and on the appropriate level helps create buy-in in both the process and the final decision.

Public Engagement Cornerstones

Many local governments across Canada have established varying degrees of internal guidance as to when and how to engage with the public. Examining the Regional District Strategic Plan, the reasoning and rationale for public engagement can be drawn from the Values Statement.

- Integrity
- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Responsiveness
- Transparency
- Respect
- Leadership
- Honesty
- Community
- Excellence

These cornerstones can build a culture and value of public engagement within the Regional District. These cornerstones can help qualify or characterize processes while allowing flexibility in approaches.

Public engagement is becoming viewed as an instrument of good governance. As the Regional District moves to value greater public sector transparency and accountability, public engagement becomes vital to the governance relationship with the Regional District's citizens.

Roles and Responsibilities

Good engagement requires the involvement of many different roles within a project and a coordinated team effort between the project lead, elected officials, staff and other resources. For elected officials, public engagement is commonly seen as a mechanism to support transparency and accountability. It is more than giving information and

receiving feedback — it is a deliberate commitment that government makes to its public and stakeholder groups to listen and to be influenced within expressed limits.

Directors and staff play an important role in facilitating public engagement and share in the responsibilities.

Directors

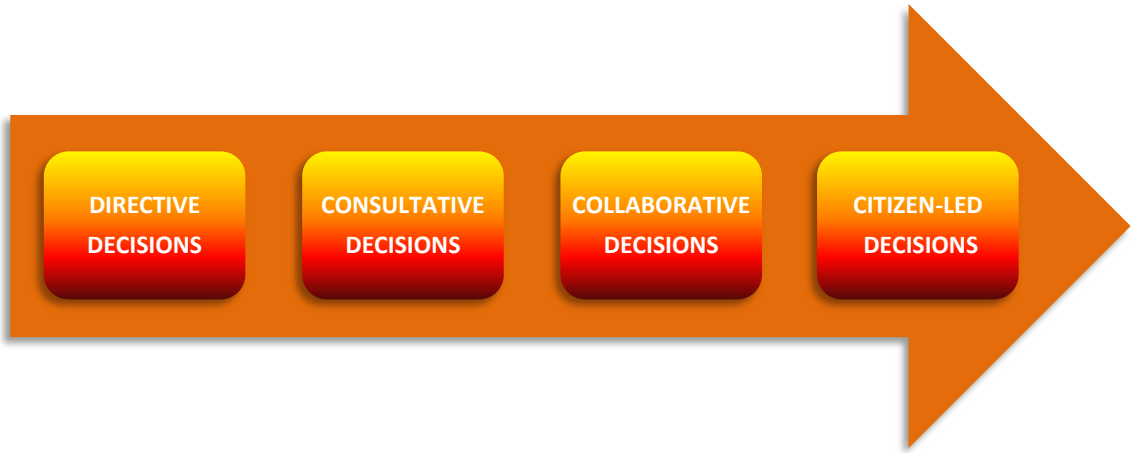
- Understand and respect the public engagement framework.
- Ensure the public engagement framework is utilized wherever applicable.
- Promote and are frontline for any public engagement framework initiatives.

Staff

- Understand and respect the public engagement framework.
- Ensure the public engagement framework is utilized wherever applicable.
- Provide directors with the necessary support to promote and be frontline for any public engagement framework initiatives.

Types of Decisions

Public engagement is integrally linked with decision-making and approaches to engagement must reflect the type of decision that is being made. Most decisions can be classified as directive, consultative or collaborative. Decisions are classed as citizen-lead in cases where decision-making authority has been given directly to the public.



1. ***Directive Decisions***

Are those made by a person authorized to do so, and are issued to others simply to inform them that a decision has been made. Examples of this type of decision include:

- There is an urgent need to respond immediately (e.g. emergency / disaster response).

- A person in authority is acting within their authority (e.g. police carrying out their duties).
- The decisions are routine and are accepted as part of the local government's operations (e.g. intergovernmental referrals or grant funding requests).
- The decisions are dictated by law (e.g. improvements to water treatment).
- The decisions have substantial effect only on those who have already agreed to be affected through some form of contract (e.g. employment, volunteerism, accepting elected office). In these cases, the Regional District is acting within its authority and is expected to implement the decision efficiently.

2. Consultative Decisions

Are made by the Regional District by involving input from the community and have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Public notification and input are required by law. The decision is a known concern of other parties, or is likely to have a significant impact on other parties (e.g. a proposed regional service).
- The decision affects moral or emotional expectations of the community (e.g. expansion of a facility/capital asset structure).
- The decision affects the "comfort envelope" (lifestyle or habits) of citizens (e.g. land use bylaws).
- People perceive there are risks associated with the decision (e.g. approving a "half-way" house to support convict rehabilitation).
- Board requests public input prior to making the decision (e.g. public buildings or open space management).

3. Collaborative Decisions

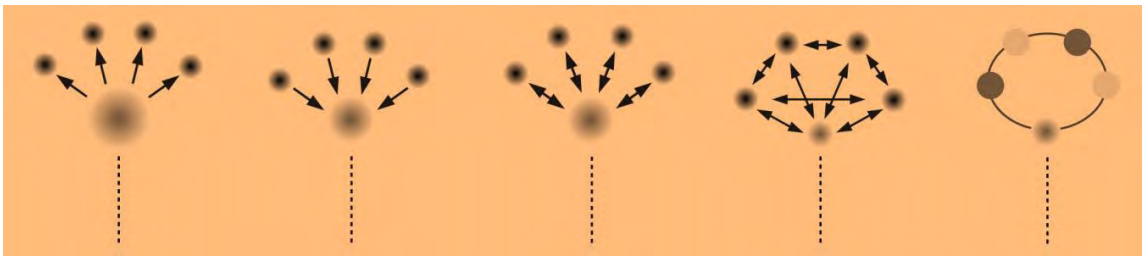
Are those made by the Regional District in partnership with members of the community, other local governments, communities, organizations or individuals to deliver services or to respond to long-term challenges. In these collaborative situations, the Regional District agrees to share the decision process with those at the table. Usually, those at the table must consult with their constituencies as part of the process. Collaborative processes are becoming more common because they can create greater "buy-in" and even "co-investment" (i.e. partners) from those at the table. Collaborative processes have been used in subdivision planning, business revitalization zones, recreational facility development and inter-governmental agreements.

4. Citizen-lead Decisions

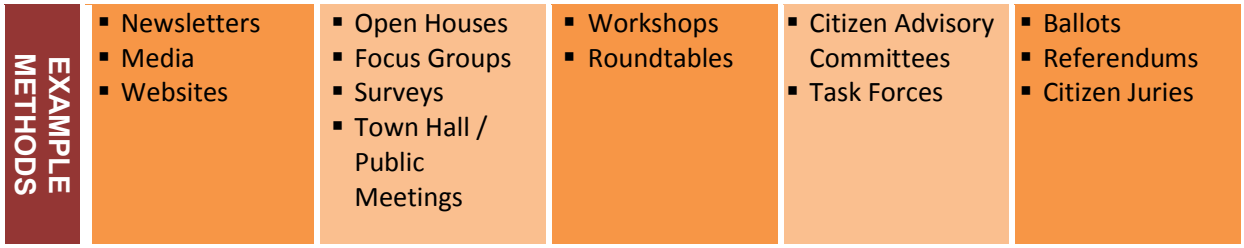
Are made when the Regional District empowers citizens, communities or subsets of the public to assume full responsibility for decision-making. In these cases, the Regional District may act as a technical resource but does not actively participate in the decision-making process, and agrees to respect and execute the resulting decision. A referendum about a newly proposed service is an example of citizen empowerment and citizen-lead decision-making.

PRRD Public Engagement Progression

As with any progression of public participation, the key goal is to align the project scope, process and techniques within the Regional District governance of decisions. In many public participation experiences, the process may incorporate a flow within the progression. Clearly understanding where in the progression any given decision can be made will undoubtedly result in the building of wide spread public trust.



	Inform and Educate	Gather Information	Discuss	Engage	Partner
OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	To provide balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public.	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	To facilitate discussions and agreements between public parties to identify common ground for action and solutions.	To create governance structures to delegate decision- making or empower the public.
PRRD COMMITMENT	To inform the public.	To listen to and acknowledge the public's concerns.	To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns.	To seek advice and innovations from amongst various public parties.	To work with the public to implement agreed-upon decisions.
PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITY	To become informed and educated.	To take an active role in keeping oneself informed and up to date.	To be open to other points of view and work with PRRD elected officials and staff and other members of the public.	To put aside personal agendas and participate honestly in discussions.	To work with PRRD elected officials and staff to implement agreed-upon decisions.



Source: Auditor General of British Columbia 2009 (PRRD modified version)
Report 11: Public Participation: Principles and Best Practices for British Columbia

As previously mentioned, the type of decision to be made has implications for the engagement approach. The degree to which the public is involved in decision-making processes reflects a progression that includes the five levels of engagement.

Progression 1 - Inform and Educate

The public is provided with balanced and objective information about a project or activity in order to help them understand the problems, alternatives and/or solutions. This level is characterized by one-way communication and usually involves distributing information aimed at raising awareness and understanding. Here, the public is least likely to influence decision-making.

Progression 2 - Gather Information

Public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions is sought. There is two-way communication with information being shared with the public and opportunities for feedback provided. The intent is to raise awareness and understanding about a project or activity and to receive and consider public comments. At this stage, the Regional District and the public have the opportunity to listen to and learn about each other's plans, views, issues and expectations.

Progression 3 - Discuss

The Regional District works directly with the public to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered. Two-way communication increases and the public has more influence on decision-making. At this level, feedback from the public is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.

Progression 4 - Engage

The Regional District reaches out to the public and there is joint planning and shared decision-making. Here, the public participates in the analysis of issues, contributes to the development of alternatives, and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.

Progression 5 - Partner

The Regional District empowers citizens to initiate and make final decisions. Citizens take ownership of the process and are accountable for the outcomes of the decisions, and the Regional District accepts and implements decisions. Citizens act independently and the Regional District may provide technical and/or financial support.

Deciding a Degree of Involvement in Decision-Making

Before designing a public engagement program it is important to determine the desired degree of public engagement. This is impacted by the purpose of engagement and the type of decision to be made.

What Degree is Most Appropriate?

Public engagement will not be the same for every initiative – decisions involving the public are based on a number of factors such as the initiative (e.g. scope, complexity, profile, concern, impact), the decision (e.g. nature and timing) and the citizens (number, degree of interest).

Less involvement is appropriate when:

- Interest in the issue is vested in one or a few interest groups.
- Perspectives are generally well understood and can be taken into consideration.
- The issue requires consistency with established professional or technical standards.
- Legislative or regulatory guidelines define and/or limit the level of public involvement.

More involvement is appropriate when:

- Several groups have an interest in the outcome of the issue.
- Consensus among these groups is uncertain.
- The issue is value-based and carries a high need for social acceptance.

Before making a decision about the degree of engagement it is important to be clear about the main purpose of the public engagement program. Is it to inform; gather information and views; discuss through a two-way dialogue; collaborate in making a decision about a complex issue; or delegate decision-making to interest groups or members of the public? As well, the degree of engagement may vary depending on the nature of the public, particularly if there are many different stakeholders. For instance, it may be appropriate to simply inform geographically distant stakeholders that a project will be undertaken, while those living nearby might be involved in a more collaborative process.

The Planning Process

In order to be most effective, it is important to engage the public as early as possible in the project development process. This can have a tremendous positive impact by saving time and money and helping to build public trust and support for a project or issue.

Typically, an effective planning process covers six steps.

1) Getting started.
    - Define the project / issue / opportunity.
    - Identify the stakeholders.
2) Defining the methodology.
    - Identify the goals and objectives.
    - Determine the level of engagement.
3) Implementing the plan.
    - Identify logistics.
    - Create the budget.
4) Making the decision.
    - Review stakeholder input and other relevant data to make informed decision.
5) Communicating the results.
    - Inform the stakeholders of outcomes and decisions.
6) Evaluating the outcome.
    - Report the successes and challenges of the public engagement process.

Tools and Resources for the Planning Process

Step 1 - Getting Started

DEFINE THE PROJECT / ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY AND REQUIRED DECISION
What is the purpose and objectives?

OUTLINE THE CONSTRAINTS (WHAT IS NEGOTIABLE, WHAT IS NOT?)
What are key issues?

IDENTIFY YOUR INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
Who needs to be involved? Who will be a part of the project team? List names or departments.
Who can contribute to a solution that will meet the needs of the stakeholders and public?
How will the Board be involved? Have key Directors been given the checklist package to complete? Have key Directors been invited to discuss the engagement process?

IDENTIFY YOUR EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS		
Who do we need to involve? List names. e.g. Individuals, public interest groups (ethnic community associations, stewardship societies), specific demographic groups (youth, seniors), marginalized, hard-to-reach populations, industry associations and individual industries, scientific, professional, educational, voluntary associations, school board, regional, First Nations, provincial, or federal government or agencies.		
Is a partnering option possible with other levels of government? Identify who and how.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are there potential sensitivities to consider that other government agencies might note? Explain. e.g. design, timing, or implementation.	Yes ☐	No ☐
Are we striving for balanced participation by inviting diverse public opinion and groups? Provide details.	Yes ☐	No ☐

Readiness Checklist

The following checklist is designed to help the engagement planning and project team determine their level of readiness to engage the public. Review and respond to the statements as a group. The more "yes" answers equate to a greater likelihood that the engagement process will be meaningful, effective and successful. The checklist can also help the group identify areas where more work is needed before beginning an engagement process (i.e. statements marked "no" or "somewhat").

ENGAGEMENT READINESS CHECKLIST			
	No	Somewhat	Yes
The issue and/or question triggering the engagement process has been clearly defined.			
The questions to be asked or the decision sought from the public has been identified.			
The decision has not been made already.			
The public is identifiable, accessible and willing to participate.			
There is an internal commitment to meaningful public engagement.			
There is a willingness to respond to public input.			
There is sufficient time to conduct a meaningful engagement process.			
There are sufficient internal resources (e.g. human, financial) to conduct a meaningful engagement process.			
A project lead has been identified.			
The engagement process has been coordinated with other Regional District processes.			
The potential benefits of conducting a public engagement process have been identified.			
The risks of conducting a public engagement process have been analyzed.			
An engagement process plan has been developed.			
The engagement process aligns with the Regional District's guiding principles for public engagement and communications.			

Step 2 - Defining the Methodology

Is Empower An Appropriate Degree?

The Degree of Engagement Checklist, presented on the following page, provides direction about the appropriate degree of involvement for a project or issue. The checklist does not include *Partner* as this decision requires unique consideration. In cases where the decision has been made to delegate responsibility for a project to a public group or body, the public group will be deciding on the extent to which they inform, consult, involve or collaborate, using a similar checklist to help them decide. Considering the following questions will help the Regional District Board and staff decide on whether or not an empowerment degree is appropriate. In order to proceed with this degree, the team should be able to answer "yes" to all questions relevant to the situation.

EMPOWERMENT QUESTIONS		
	Yes	**No**
We want to empower citizens and groups to manage the process or make the decision.		
Legislation permits this delegation of authority.		
If delegating a process to citizens or groups, they must have accepted the challenge.		
We will implement decisions and/or solutions generated by citizens and groups.		

If empowerment is not the appropriate degree of engagement, proceed to the Degree of Engagement Checklist.

Degree of Engagement Checklist

The results of this checklist will provide a general sense of the degree of public engagement appropriate for the project or issue. Complete the checklist with all members of the project team and then discuss the results to help develop a common understanding of the engagement program. Rank the degree of agreement of each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, and put a checkmark in the appropriate column for each statement. Complete the calculations at the bottom of the checklist.

DEGREE OF ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST	1	2	3	4	5
SCOPE					
The size and/or scope of the project or issue are significant.					
The number of people affected by the issue or project is significant.					
The people affected by the project are located in a variety of areas.					
The project or issue affects a range of publics and/or stakeholder groups.					
COMPLEXITY					
The project or issue is unique and challenging.					
The project involves a variety of stages and/or components.					
A significant number of people or groups have strong and/or opposing opinions about the issue or project.					
PROFILE					
The project or issue has high visibility.					
CONCERN					
There are aspects of the project or issue that have previously generated concern in the community.					
There are concerns about cost, aesthetics and nuisance factors.					
There are concerns about effects on health, safety and the environment.					
There are concerns about taxpayer expenditures or taxes in general.					
The nature or focus of the project or issue is controversial.					
IMPACT					
The project or issue will have a direct impact on lifestyles or habits.					
The issue significantly affects the rights and entitlements of community members.					
There will be an impact on property values.					
The project or issue is likely to affect quality of life for some citizens.					
Step 1 – Count the number of checkmarks in each column					
Step 2 – Multiply number of checkmarks (Step 1) by weight for each column (X1 … X5)	***X1***	***X2***	***X3***	***X4***	***X5***
Step 3 – Record results from Step 2 in red boxes					
Step 4 – add the total weighting for each column (red boxes)					
Step 5 – Divide total weighting sum by 18					
AVERAGE SCORE					
Cross-reference the average score from the checklist with the PRRD Public Engagement Progression to identify the appropriate degree of public engagement for the project. Because each degree has a different obligation and outcome, the final public engagement strategy may involve more than one degree of engagement.					

PRRD Public Engagement Progression			
Inform and Educate Score: 1 to 1.9	**Gather Information** Score: 2 to 2.9	**Discuss** Score: 3 to 3.9	**Engage** Score: 4 to 5
One-way communication to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	Two-way communication where information is shared and opportunities for public feedback are provided. Requires a response from the public, but limited opportunity for public dialogue.	Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues, aspirations and concerns are consistently understood. The public has more influence on decision-making and public feedback is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.	Reach out to the public in a process that involves joint planning and shared decision-making. The public participates in the analysis of issues, contributes to the development of alternatives, and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.
Promise to the Public			
We will keep stakeholders informed.	We will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, aspirations and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with stakeholders and the public to ensure that their concerns, aspirations and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced decisions.	We will look to stakeholders and the public for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (Public Participation Spectrum, 2000)

Once the degree of engagement has been determined, review the Engagement Tools and Techniques matrix in Appendix 1 to identify appropriate engagement tools and techniques.

Step 3 - Implementing the Plan

Public Engagement Logistics Checklist

Project/Process			
Date:		Time:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date		
☐ Book Facility				
Facility Name				
Location				
Facility Contact Person:				
Phone Number:				
E-Mail:				
Rental Fee: $$			Occupancy Size	
Wheelchair Accessible: ☐ Yes ☐ No			Restrooms ☐	Parking ☐
Other:				
		Estimated Costs:		

	Person Responsible	Completion Date	
☐ Order Refreshments			
Contact Person:			
Phone Number:			
E-Mail:			
Time of Delivery:			
Items Ordered:			
Other:			
		Estimated Costs:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date	
☐ Prepare Media Campaign			
Contact Person:			
Phone Number:			
E-Mail:			
Other:			
		Estimated Costs:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date
☐ Staffing		
☐ Identify Staff to Participate	☐ Assign Roles	
Other:		
	Estimated Costs:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date
☐ Prepare Materials		
☐ Handouts, other informational materials		
☐ Display materials (poster boards, PowerPoint, etc.)		
☐ Sign-in sheets		
☐ Name tags		
☐ Signage for outside to identify presence		
☐ Participant evaluation forms		
Other:		
	Estimated Costs:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date
☐ Plan Layout		
☐ Number of tables for displays	☐ Refreshment table	
☐ Number of tables for participants	☐ Head table	
☐ Registration table		
Other:		
	Estimated Costs:	

	Person Responsible	Completion Date
☐ Supplies		
☐ Flipcharts with paper	☐ Box for completed evaluation forms	
☐ Flipchart markers	☐ A/V equipment (projector, laptop, screen, mics, etc.)	
☐ Pens		
Other:		
	Estimated Costs:	

Notes:

Create the Communication and Media Plan

Communication	Required?	
Print Ads	Yes ☐	No ☐
Radio Ads	Yes ☐	No ☐
TV Ads	Yes ☐	No ☐
Banner Ads on Web	Yes ☐	No ☐
Regional District Website	Yes ☐	No ☐
Topic-specific Interactive Mini Sites (Dedicated Pages Within Regional District Website)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Press Release	Yes ☐	No ☐
Direct Mail	Yes ☐	No ☐
Site Display (Notification Signs, Grant Funder Signs, etc.)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Newsletter	Yes ☐	No ☐
Displays in Other Locations (e.g. Booth at a Fair)	Yes ☐	No ☐
Pamphlet/Postcard	Yes ☐	No ☐
Personally Addressed Letter	Yes ☐	No ☐
One-Page Flyer/Poster	Yes ☐	No ☐

Notes:

Create the Public Engagement Budget

Hard Costs	Proposed Budget	Final Costs
Consultants/Contractors Public Engagement Consultant Communications Consultant		
Data Gathering Public Opinion Polls/Surveys Online Surveys		
Technical Requirements Computer Analysis Process AV Equipment		
Logistics Facilities Refreshments		
Communication Advertising Website Development and Maintenance Web-casting Sessions Print Materials Presentation Materials		
Sub-Total:		

Soft Costs	Proposed Budget	Final Costs
Project Team Costs		
Special Event HR Costs		
Additional Internal Consulting Costs		
Sub-Total:		

Other	Proposed Budget	Final Costs
Sub-Total:		
TOTAL:		

Step 4 - Making the Decision

Once all stakeholder input has been collected, it is time to make a decision on the project / issue / opportunity. All of the public input received as well as other critical information that has been researched or collected now needs to be reviewed. This will assist the decision-makers in determining the course of action. Incorporate constraints, legislation, regulations, bylaws and policies into the recommendation; ensure validity.

Step 5 - Communicate the Results

Once the public engagement process is completed, it is important to inform internal and external stakeholders of outcomes and decisions. Stakeholders value the follow-up and rationale for the decision. Effective reporting to the public should include:

- What decisions were made.
- Why those decisions were made.
- How public input was used.

Communicating the Results – Things to Consider
Who do you need to communicate the decision and rationale to?
How do participants, decision-makers and others (e.g. media) wish to receive the information?
How will you report the findings from your engagement process? What findings will you present? What format will you use? How will you distribute the findings?
How will you manage feedback / reaction to the decision and rationale?

Step 6 - Evaluating the Information

Once you have completed your public engagement process, it is important to determine its effectiveness and how it may be improved in the future. It is recommended that the lead on the project coordinate the completion of the following evaluation worksheet by all team members and share with the project team.

Evaluation Tool for Internal Use	No	Partially	Yes
The public engagement process was followed.			
The issue/question was clearly defined before starting.			
Constraints were assessed and dealt with appropriately.			
The level of engagement was applied effectively.			
The outcomes were achieved satisfactorily.			
Were the key issues addressed?			
A public engagement lead for the process was identified early.			
Support from colleagues was evident throughout.			
Appropriate stakeholders were identified.			
A variety of techniques were considered to reach and involve stakeholders.			
Were the engagement tools and approaches effective?			
Did the engagement process provide the stakeholders with sufficient opportunity to participate?			
Identified stakeholders participated.			
Were the stakeholders satisfied with the engagement process?			
The public involvement was appropriate and added value.			
Was the process for recording and analyzing stakeholder input satisfactory?			
The reporting process was developed and administered.			
Project results were communicated to all stakeholders.			
Time spent by staff in preparation, delivery, and follow-up: a) Number of hours estimated b) Were these estimated hours budgeted? c) Number of actual hours d) If a gap, why?			

Budget a) Estimated costs (staff time plus other) $ b) Were these estimated costs budgeted? c) Actual costs $ d) If a gap, why?			
Did the public engagement process stay within budget?			
Was the engagement process managed effectively?			
Was the timeline for the engagement process realistic?			
Was the staff time allocated sufficient?			
What can be improved for next time?			
What went well, and would you do it again?			

APPENDIX 1

Public Engagement Tools and Techniques

The following tables provide examples of tools and techniques that may be used in public engagement processes. The information has been organized by the degree of public engagement that the tool or technique will provide. Tips for effective execution, and an overview of the potential benefits and risks have been included for each tool or technique.

Inform and Educate

At the basic degree (Degree1), the public is informed about a project or activity. This degree is characterized by one-way communication and typically involves the distribution of information aimed at raising awareness and understanding. Here, the public is least likely to influence decision-making.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES – DEGREE 1			
- INFORM and EDUCATE –			
Tools & Techniques	***Tips***	***Benefits***	***Risks***
PRINT MATERIAL • Brochures • Newsletters • Fact sheets • Backgrounders	• Content should be in plain language and easily understood • Content must be unbiased and objective • Must be visually appealing • Should be concise – typically between 8 and 12 pages	• Ability to reach a large target audience • Opportunity to provide a lot of information at a relatively low cost • Reduces time required to verbally repeat the same information	• Preparation of materials can be time consuming and costly • Limited ability to communicate complex information • Reach depends on mailing or email list and distribution network • Material may not be read by target group

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PAID PRINT ADVERTISING • Advertisements • Newspaper inserts • Mail box drops	• Ensure that the type of print media and timing of advertising effectively reaches target audience • Design needs to be striking and stand out from other advertisements or inserts	• Allows message to be specifically customized and ensures accuracy • Opportunity to reach a wide range of the population • Ability to segment certain sections of the population • Provides opportunity to include comment form	• Can be cost prohibitive
ELECTRONIC MEDIA • Radio • Television	• Ensure that messages are carried on a range of stations to capture different segments of the population • Consider lower cost or free advertising on community radio or cable channel or internet video options	• Potential to reach a wide and varied audience • Ability to manage the message	• Can be cost prohibitive • Difficult to track audience reach
NEWS RELEASES	• Provide additional background information or press kits with news release • Offer to speak with media to provide additional information	• Effective means of informing media of project and public engagement process • May encourage media to cover project in more depth • Language from news release may be used directly in articles	• News organizations determine the amount of coverage • No direct control over final content of article
NEWS CONFERENCES	• Ensure that presenters are well informed and trained in media relations	• Generates additional interest in a project or issue • Can increase the amount of coverage given to a project or issue • Allows the story to be told directly	• Limited newsworthy events • Potential to increase negativism if the project or issue is controversial

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STATIC EXHIBITS/DISPLAYS • Shopping centres • Schools • Community Hall • Library • Fairs	• Must be visually interesting to attract attention • Content should be straightforward and in plain language • A staffed display generally attracts more notice • Ensure that staff are well informed about the project or issue • Provide additional support material (e.g. print material, background documents) • Offer opportunities for comment (e.g. flip charts, response forms)	• Effective means of providing general information • Opportunity to identify people and groups interested in participating in the process • May reach the public not ordinarily interested in participating	• Staffed displays require significant staff time commitment
PUBLICITY • Public service announcements • Featured stories • Media coverage • Community calendars	• To generate free publicity, project or issue must be presented in a newsworthy manner	• Newspaper, radio and television reach the broad public • Free publicity offers opportunities for coverage in expensive medias • Information presented in media may have higher credibility among public	• Coverage may be limited if media do not consider the project or issue to be newsworthy • No direct control over media coverage

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WEBSITE • Dedicated website • Web page on host site	• Ensure that the site is user-friendly and easy to navigate and that the information is presented in a simple and straightforward manner • Update the site on a regular basis • Offer opportunity to provide feedback	• Reaches very large audience and is accessible at the public's convenience • Capable of providing in-depth information • Ability to provide visual and auditory information • Opportunity to provide links to other relevant websites • Effectively collects and organizes feedback from public • Low cost method of distributing general information	• Poor design can limit the effectiveness • Not all individuals have access to the internet • Challenge keeping information on the website current

APPENDIX 1

Gather Information

At the next degree (Degree 2), communication becomes two-way and information is shared with the public and opportunities for feedback are provided. The intent is to raise awareness and understanding about a project or activity and to receive and consider public comments. At this stage, the Regional District and the public have the opportunity to listen and learn about each other's plans, views, issues and expectations.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES – DEGREE 2			
- GATHER INFORMATION –			
Tools & Techniques	***Tips***	***Benefits***	***Risks***
PRINT MATERIAL • Brochures • Newsletters • Fact sheets • Backgrounders	• Content should be in plain language and easily understood • Content must be unbiased and objective • Must be visually appealing • Should be concise – typically between 8 and 12 pages	• Ability to reach a large target audience • Opportunity to provide a lot of information at a relatively low cost • Reduces time required to verbally repeat the same information	• Preparation of materials can be time consuming and costly • Limited ability to communicate complex information • Reach depends on mailing or email list and distribution network • Material may not be read by target group

APPENDIX 1

PAID PRINT ADVERTISING • Advertisements • Newspaper inserts • Mail box drops	• Ensure that the type of print media and timing of advertising effectively reaches target audience • Design needs to be striking and stand out from other advertisements or inserts	• Allows message to be specifically customized and ensures accuracy • Opportunity to reach a wide range of the population • Ability to segment certain sections of the population • Provides opportunity to include comment form	• Can be cost prohibitive
OPEN HOUSES • Exhibits and displays • Information discussions	• Host on days and times that encourage attendance • Advertise event in advance • Ensure that displays and exhibits are visually appealing and provide information in plain language • Provide public feedback forms	• Increases awareness and educates public in an informal setting • Provides opportunity for direct interaction and relationship building • Ability to correct misinformation and to explore public opinion • People may feel more comfortable expressing views in a relaxed setting	• Verbal public comment is difficult to record

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TOWN HALL / PUBLIC MEETINGS • Information presentations • Question and answer session	• Advertise event in advance • Keep information presentation short • Use visuals • Provide significant time for questions and answers • Provide response forms for individuals reluctant to speak in public	• Provides understanding of public opinion and concerns • Facilitates open communication with the public	• Difficult to determine level of participation in advance • A limited number of participants have the opportunity to speak • Question and answer session may be difficult to manage, particularly if the project or issue is controversial • Potential for tension between opposing stakeholder groups
TELEPHONE SURVEYS / POLLS	• Should be administered by a third party external organization to avoid perception of bias	• Ability to randomly sample within a target population • Opportunity for statistically valid results • Provides input from public not actively involved in a project or issue • Provides balance to self-selected survey results	• Can be cost prohibitive depending on the size of the population and the length and complexity of the survey

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HARD-COPY SURVEYS / QUESTIONNAIRES • Mail or fax-back	• Develop distribution strategy to target sample population • Provide a variety of options for submission to increase response rate • Provide drop boxes in key locations (Community Hall, library) to increase response rates • Give information about confidentiality • Pre-paid postage increases response rate	• Provides opportunity for both qualitative and quantitative feedback • Solicits feedback from a cross-section of the public and stakeholders • Statically valid results may increase credibility	• Response rate is unpredictable • Printing and distribution can be expensive • Analysis can be time consuming • Risk of campaigns from activist or organized groups • Budgeting may be difficult due to variable response rate
ON-LINE SURVEYS / QUESTIONNAIRES	• Ensure that design and language of web survey is straightforward and user friendly	• Accesses broad range of residents • Individuals can complete and submit survey at their leisure • Low cost to produce and administer • Response rate higher than mail-back surveys • No additional data entry is required	• Expertise is required to design and post on-line surveys • Risk of campaigns from activist or organized groups

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INFORMATION HOTLINE • Pre-recorded project information • Staffed line	• Pre-recorded message should include access to appropriate contact information and voicemail option • Hotline number should be well publicized • Dedicated staff person should be knowledgeable and a skilled communicator	• Helps public locate individuals who have the information they require • Provides a means for receiving public comment • Can readily update information about project or specific activities • Gives appearance of accessibility	• Staff must be prepared to reply to public information requests promptly and accurately • Inappropriate responses from phone line staff can produce a negative reaction from the public
BRIEFING PRESENTATIONS • Civic organizations • Local clubs • Staff • Conferences	• Groups and organizations may be looking for keynote speakers • Ensure that presentation is easy to understand and captures the interest of the audience • Use visuals • Include question and answer session	• Information can be controlled • Opportunity to receive comment and feedback from participants • Same presentation can be used for different groups • Cost effective • May reach public that are indifferent otherwise	• Topic may not be relevant to audience
EMAIL / INPUT LINK ON WEBSITE	• Design a system for organizing and responding to email and website submissions • Develop methodology for analyzing responses to make data useful	• Can be used to contact and notify stakeholders • Allows public to provide comment at their leisure	• Significant amount of time required to read and respond to responses • Response is unpredictable

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INTERVIEWS • One-on-one meetings • Telephone interviews	• Prepare an interview guide with standardized questions for consistency and comparability • Provide respondent with information about the purpose of the interview and how the input will be used • Provide information about confidentiality	• Provides an understanding of each respondent's issues, concerns and preferred outcomes • May provide guidance for future public engagement activities • Provides standardized framework for collecting and analyzing input	• Scheduling and conducting individual interviews can be time consuming
FOCUS GROUPS • Moderated small group discussions	• Prepare a moderator's and recorder's guide for consistency and comparability • Use open-ended questions to inspire interactive discussions • Recruit participants with a cross-section of interests	• Effective for soliciting public and stakeholder insights, perspectives, opinions and preferences • Can be used to test public's reaction to key messages and decision options • Relatively cost effective	• Success of the focus group is dependent on the moderator's skill
SMALL GROUP MEETINGS	• Emphasis should be on informality • Statements or presentations should be extremely brief	• Information environment encourages relaxed and positive discussions • Buildings relationships	• Significant time commitment required to reach a large audience

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COMMUNITY FAIRS • Exhibits and displays • Interactive activities • Informal discussion • Celebratory atmosphere	• Plan events and activities that are attractive to target audience • Logistics must be comprehensive and detailed • Make certain that the event is adequately staffed • Be prepared for crowds	• Builds awareness • Attracts media coverage • Tone of the event is positive • Encourages informal information sharing and relationship building	• Difficult to organize and execute • Public must be motivated to attend • Requires significant time commitment from staff • Can be costly
WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS • Letters • Written statements • Position papers	• Can request formal response in addition to independent submissions	• Provides qualitative input from organized groups and general public • Typically more in depth than survey and questionnaire responses	• Content analysis can be difficult and time consuming
EXPERT PANELS • Experts from different perspectives • Moderated panel discussion	• Ensure that the moderator is skilled and non-biased • Provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions following the panel discussion • Establish and communicate rules for participation	• Raises new issues, clarifies points of view, identifies various interests • Stimulates further discussion with the public • Opportunity for balanced dialogue	• May heighten public concerns by highlighting issues and problems • Panel presentations can be academic and difficult to understand • Requires substantial planning and financial resources

APPENDIX 1

Discuss

Moving through the progression, two-way communication increases and centers on established and mutually accepted objectives. At this degree (Degree 3), the public has more influence on decision-making and feedback from the public is analyzed and incorporated into alternatives and outcomes.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES – DEGREE 3			
- DISCUSS –			
Tools & Techniques	***Tips***	***Benefits***	***Risks***
WORKSHOPS • Interactive working sessions focused on specific topic or issue	• Provide background materials and technical information • Include a cross-section of interests • Clearly define tasks and the desired outcomes • Design activities to motivate participants and achieve desired outcomes • Provide facilitators and recorders for each working group	• Can build credibility and buy-in • Useful for dealing with complex issues and topics • Participants collectively become involved in definition of issues and problem solving • Fosters a team environment among stakeholders • Opportunity to receive detailed input from participants	• Preparation of materials can be time consuming and costly • Limited ability to communicate complex information • Reach depends on mailing or email list and distribution network • Material may not be read by target group

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ROUNDTABLES • Small group discussions from large group meeting	• Ensure that a skilled facilitator manages each of the roundtable discussions • Provide a recorder for each discussion group • Present discussion summaries when large group reconvenes	• Facilitator can probe and solicit more in depth feedback about issues, concerns, preferences • Level of comfort among the public may increase in smaller setting • Facilitator helps to ensure more equitable participation	• Cost of hiring professional facilitators and recorders can be cost prohibitive
SMALL GROUP PROCESSES • Brainstorming	• Ensure that the facilitator is skilled • Clearly identify objectives and desired outcomes • Develop approach for recording and analyzing input	• Encourages groups to generate creative ideas and solutions • Promotes understanding and consensus building • Builds relationships • Diminishes potential conflict by providing a structured format and safe environment for sharing feelings, opinions and perspectives	• Evaluating input can be difficult
CHARETTES • Prolonged, facilitated meeting to achieve mutual agreement	• Ensure that a range of public/stakeholders participate • Ask participants for a commitment to the process until consensus has been reached • Plan exercises and activities that generate creative ideas • Outline objectives and indicate how input will be used	• Effective mechanism for achieving a consensus among conflicting groups or interests • Encourages joint problem solving • Fosters understanding of positions held by other groups • Buildings cooperative relationships	• Effective only when participants have sense of urgency or priority • Requires significant time commitment from participants • Beneficial only if there is a willingness to implement outcomes

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Engage

This degree (Degree 4) is characterized by joint planning and shared decision-making. Here, the public participates in the analysis of issues, contributes to the development of alternatives, and directly influences recommendations, decisions and outcomes.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES – DEGREE 4			
- ENGAGE –			
Tools & Techniques	***Tips***	***Benefits***	***Risks***
CONSENSUS BUILDING TECHNIQUES • Nominal group • Delphi panels • Deliberative dialogue • Public value assessments	• Use techniques that are simple and straightforward • Allow sufficient time to reach consensus • Determine degree of consensus necessary to move forward • Ensure that the decision-making authority is committed to the consensus	• Cultivates compromise among diverse interests • Generates structured decision-making • Emphasis is on problem solving to reach mutually satisfactory outcome • May help avoid later conflicts	• Consensus may not be achievable • Group must be open to compromise

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ADVISORY COMMITTEES • Group of stakeholders providing direct input on an on-going basis	• Ensure that the committee roles and responsibilities are defined and agreed in a mandate • Provide equitable access to resources and information • Recruit and interview potential participants • Ensure that stakeholders represent a cross-section of affected publics, points of view or fields of expertise	• Provides an indication of public views and concerns • Participants serve as a connection to interest groups • Participants become informed before decisions are reached • Facilitates cooperation and understanding among various interests • Builds relationships	• Financial and human resources requirement can be substantial • Committee members required to dedicate substantial volunteer time
TASK FORCES • Group of stakeholders formed to accomplish specific assignment	• Participants should represent range of interests and perspectives • Stakeholders should have credibility with public • Specific task, desired outcomes and anticipated timeframe should be clearly established • Provide access to information and experts • Strong leadership is necessary	• Provides opportunity for differing interests to reach compromise • Resulting products or recommendations typically have credibility with the public	• Substantial time is needed for preparation • Requirements for staff support may be considerable • Substantial commitment of volunteer time required by participants

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STUDY CIRCLES • Small group meeting to find solutions to a specific problem	• Provide necessary background information before the meeting • Ensure that participants represent a broad range of perspectives • May require multiple meetings	• Provides opportunity for enhanced understanding and communication • Generates problem solving through collaborative study • All participants have an equal opportunity to contribute	• Skilled facilitator is required • Preparing background information can be costly and time consuming
THIRD PARTY FACILITATED CONFLICT RESOLUTION • Mediation • Negotiation • Arbitration • Conciliation	• The third party facilitator must be acceptable to all parties • Clearly define the role of the facilitator • Ensure that the facilitator is thoroughly informed • Determine in advance how recommendations will be used	• Effective when interdependent parties cannot reach agreement • Can result in agreements that are supported by all parties • Communication and understanding among conflicting parties may be improved • Focuses conflicting parties on substantive issues	• Can be time and labour intensive • To be successful, all parties must be committed to the process and have a willingness to compromise • Mutually agreeable resolution may not be reached

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation Toolbox (2000)