



## CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL AND REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, April 24, 2012  
5:30 p.m.  
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025  
City Council Chambers

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### 5:30 P.M. STUDY SESSION

SS1. Discussion of Below Market Rate Housing Program

### 7:00 P.M. REGULAR SESSION

ROLL CALL – Cline, Cohen, Fergusson, Keith, Ohtaki

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### A. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

A1. Presentation: Citizen Commendation for Kathy Barron

A2. Proclamation: West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week  
([Attachment](#))

#### B. COMMISSION/COMMITTEE VACANCIES, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

B1. Library Commission quarterly report on the status of their 2 Year Work Plan

B2. Parks & Recreation Commission quarterly report on the status of their 2 Year Work Plan

B3. Consider appointment to the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District for a term ending December 2013 ([Staff report #12-068](#))

#### C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1 (Limited to 30 minutes)

Under “Public Comment #1”, the public may address the Council on any subject not listed on the agenda and items listed under the Consent Calendar. Each speaker may address the Council once under Public Comment for a limit of three minutes. Please clearly state your name and address or political jurisdiction in which you live. The Council cannot act on items not listed on the agenda and, therefore, the Council cannot respond to non-agenda issues brought up under Public Comment other than to provide general information.

#### D. CONSENT CALENDAR - None

#### E. PUBLIC HEARING

E1. Adopt the revised 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2012-13 through 2016-17  
([Staff report #12-067](#))

**F. REGULAR BUSINESS**

- F1.** Review, discuss and affirm the City of Menlo Park Community Engagement Model  
([Staff report #12-066](#))
- F2.** Consider state and federal legislative items, including decisions to support or oppose any such legislation, and items listed under Written Communication or Information Item

**G. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT – None**

**H. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION – None**

**I. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – None**

**J. COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS**

**K. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 (*Limited to 30 minutes*)**

Under "Public Comment #2", the public if unable to address the Council on non-agenda items during Public Comment #1, may do so at this time. Each person is limited to three minutes. Please clearly state your name and address or jurisdiction in which you live.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

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At every Regular Meeting of the City Council/Community Development Agency Board, in addition to the Public Comment period where the public shall have the right to address the City Council on the Consent Calendar and any matters of public interest not listed on the agenda, members of the public have the right to directly address the City Council on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Mayor, either before or during the Council's consideration of the item.

At every Special Meeting of the City Council/Community Development Agency Board, members of the public have the right to directly address the City Council on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Mayor, either before or during consideration of the item.

Any writing that is distributed to a majority of the City Council by any person in connection with an agenda item is a public record (subject to any exemption under the Public Records Act) and is available for inspection at the Office of the City Clerk, Menlo Park City Hall, 701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025 during regular business hours. Members of the public may send communications to members of the City Council via the City Council's e-mail address at [city.council@menlopark.org](mailto:city.council@menlopark.org). These communications are public records and can be viewed by any one by clicking on the following link: <http://ccin.menlopark.org>

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# Proclamation

## WEST NILE VIRUS AND MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL AWARENESS WEEK APRIL 22, 2012 THROUGH APRIL 28, 2012

WHEREAS, West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can result in death or severe debilitation for humans, horses, birds, and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, West Nile virus resulted in eight deaths in California residents, and sickened over 155 others; and

WHEREAS, adequately funded mosquito control, disease surveillance, and public awareness programs are the best ways to prevent outbreaks of West Nile virus; and

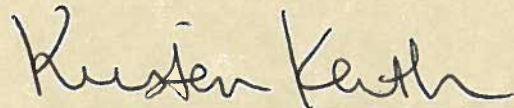
WHEREAS, mosquitoes continue to be a source of illness, death, and human suffering; and

WHEREAS, professional mosquito control based on scientific research has made great advances in reducing mosquitoes and the diseases they transmit; and

WHEREAS, the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District works with other public health agencies to reduce pesticide risks to humans, animals, and the environment while protecting human health; and

WHEREAS, West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week will increase the public's awareness of West Nile virus and of the importance of integrated management in controlling mosquitoes and other vectors in San Mateo County.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Menlo Park that the week of April 22 through April 28, 2012, be designated as West Nile Virus and Mosquito and Vector Control Awareness Week in the city of Menlo Park.



Kirsten Keith, Mayor  
City of Menlo Park





# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Council Meeting Date: April 24, 2012

Staff Report #: 12-068

Agenda Item #: B-3

**COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: Consider Appointment to the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District with a Term Ending December 2013**

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## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the appointment to the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District ("District") with a term ending December 2013.

## BACKGROUND

The District consists of 13 representatives from 13 member cities of which Menlo Park is one. In June of 2005, Ms. Valentina Cogoni was appointed to represent the City of Menlo Park and in December of 2006, was reappointed for a four year term.

Typically, the District sends a letter advising the City that the representative's term is about to end and requesting that the Council make an appointment/reappointment for their representative; neither the District nor the City staff recalls receiving such a letter. City records reflect no action taken by the City Council to consider an appointment in 2010. As with the City Advisory Bodies, Ms. Cogoni has continued to serve during this period in which a replacement was not considered.

The appointment to this seat can be made for a term of two or four years. Since the 2010 appointment was not made, Ms. Cogoni has expressed her interest in continuing to serve the District as Menlo Park's representative. Staff is suggesting reappointment of Ms. Cogoni with a term ending December 2014 as this would complete a four year term had the appointment been made in 2010.

## IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

There is no impact to City resources associated with the appointment.

## **POLICY ISSUES**

The Council does not currently have a written policy regarding the process of appointing/reappointing representatives to regional boards. As time permits staff should develop a policy for consideration by the City Council.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This item is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).



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Margaret S. Roberts, MMC  
City Clerk  
Report Author

**PUBLIC NOTICE:** Public Notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None





# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Council Meeting Date: April 24, 2011  
Staff Report #: 12-067

Agenda Item: E-1

**PUBLIC HEARING: Adopt the Revised 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2012-13 Through 2016-17**

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## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council adopt the revised 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal years 2012-13 through 2016-17.

## BACKGROUND

For many years, the City conducted a project priority process in the early planning stages of developing the annual budget, to determine which studies and capital projects would be funded in the upcoming fiscal year. Beginning in fiscal year 2010-11, this process was replaced with the development of a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). A 5-Year CIP provides a more useful long-term planning tool, increasing clarity regarding project status by distinguishing between funded projects, proposed projects, planned projects and unfunded projects. An additional purpose of the CIP is to ensure resources are optimally prioritized in each fiscal year. The CIP is intended to incorporate the City's investments in infrastructure development and maintenance (i.e. capital improvements), with Comprehensive Planning and other significant capital expenditures adding to, or strategically investing in, the City's asset inventory. Studies and capital expenditures less than \$25,000 are not included in the CIP.

An updated 5-Year CIP for the upcoming fiscal year through fiscal year 2016-17 was presented to the Council on March 13<sup>th</sup>. At that meeting, proposed plan updates were explained and Commission input was reviewed. The major cause for revisions from the previous year's plan was the dissolution of the City's Redevelopment Agency. The 5-year Redevelopment Implementation Plan, the community-driven plan which determined project priorities for the agency for 2010-2015, had included over \$10 million in projects such as vital improvements to flood control along Atherton Channel; streetscape improvements; and transit station planning activities. The loss of this important infrastructure funding source resulted in a substantial re-prioritization of the City's 5-Year CIP, and raised questions about the adequacy of remaining resources for future capital projects for the City as a whole.

In addition, staff discussed concerns about the many Comprehensive Planning and technology projects included in the CIP without an identified funding source or strategy. Until a funding plan for these types of projects is developed, the General Fund CIP will be used as the source of funding. The annual \$2.2 million transfer from the General Fund was intended only to provide an appropriate level of funding for maintenance of the City's infrastructure. Use of the General Fund CIP for other projects will rapidly draw

down the fund balance and threaten the upkeep of the City's infrastructure, resulting in higher infrastructure maintenance costs in the long term.

Because the changes to the CIP document since it was presented in March are limited in scope, only the updated pages (including the Capital Improvement Plan Summaries that constitute Appendix A of the document) are attached to this Staff Report. The entire updated document can be found on the City's website.

## **ANALYSIS**

This report provides Council with the proposed 2012-17 plan which includes various time frame and/or funding changes for certain projects as presented in the March 13<sup>th</sup> draft.

Revisions described in this report were largely the result of the coordination and scheduling of various Comprehensive Planning projects. The title of the **Housing Element Update**, which was advanced as a priority project in the current fiscal year, was changed to clarify the scope of the project as covering the two previous planning periods (**RHNA 3 & 4**). RHNA stands for the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. A better cost estimate was available for this first update, so the budget for this project was increased from the original \$300,000 to \$400,000. A second project was added to the 2012-13 fiscal year, **Housing Element Update (RHNA 5)**, with a budget of \$100,000. This distinct project is needed based on Housing Element State law and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) implications and will result in a preferred 8-year cycle for future updates. Once this project is complete, the comprehensive update of the General Plan can be launched. Therefore, the **General Plan Update** project is advanced from the previous CIP schedule to begin in 2013-14. The project is expected to be completed in the time-frame of this 5-Year CIP. The cost of \$1.5 million for the General Plan Update project is an estimate based on the assumption that any potential land use changes in the M-2 area would be covered through the separate specific plan.

The **CEQA and Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) Guidelines** project which includes a minor update of the City's Transportation Impact Analyses (TIA) Guidelines is pushed back until after the General Plan Update. The same delayed timeline is true also for the **M-2 Area Plan**, which is scheduled to begin in 2016-17. The M-2 Area Plan would require further funding to be completed in the subsequent fiscal year.

### **New Funding Structure for Comprehensive Planning Projects**

The 2010-11 CIP included a "placeholder" category of Comprehensive Planning Projects and Studies to be developed in conjunction with the Community Development Department's long term planning process work plan. The City's current Comprehensive Planning effort, the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan, is funded through the current fiscal year from General Fund Reserves. This year's updated CIP includes more specificity in the comprehensive planning project category, both in the scope and timeline of these projects, but does not yet include a designated long term funding source or strategy.

Generally, comprehensive planning policies rely on development fees as a source of funding for such projects. Since Comprehensive Planning is considered a public service typically provided in a full-service city, this connection of funding and expense is often left unspecified. To date, the City has used General Fund reserves as the source for such projects, as most development fees are revenues of the General Fund. However, maintenance of updated comprehensive plans is an integral part of a sound long-term fiscal strategy. A sustainable budget cannot be achieved without appropriate funding of Comprehensive Planning programs and projects.

For these reasons, Staff recommends the introduction of a General Fund transfer specifically for the large Comprehensive Planning projects outlined in the 5-year CIP. Although the average cost of such projects is over \$500,000 annually for the next five years, a \$250,000 transfer is recommended as a starting point for this transfer in fiscal year 2012-13. Although this amount is somewhat isolated from the 2012-13 budget process, new development revenues are anticipated for the fiscal year, and that funding will be integrated into the General Fund budget as a whole. Segregating this sum for future Comprehensive Planning projects will help fund the heavy demand identified in the 5-Year CIP, and begin to recognize these expenditures as an important part of the City's annual fiscal plan. Staff will continue to consider options for addressing both general and specific funding needs for these projects in the future.

### **Funding source for Technology Upgrades**

As mentioned in the March presentation of the 5-Year CIP, significant technology upgrades represent another category of capital outlay for which a designated long term funding source or strategy has not been identified. When the City began the practice of transferring General Fund dollars into the General Fund CIP in 2006, the appropriate amount of the transfer was based upon estimates of annual infrastructure maintenance needs with infrastructure defined as City buildings, roads, parks and physical assets. Similar to the Comprehensive Planning projects discussed above, these projects were not considered within the General Fund CIP transfer amount, yet are being funded in large part through this source. Staff is currently considering several options for addressing this funding imbalance, and will bring forward a proposal in the near future that may create a separate funding allocation for technology projects, or require an addition to the \$2.2 million currently transferred for infrastructure.

### **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

The purpose of early review and approval by the City Council of the 2012-13 capital improvement projects is to enable the distribution of staff hours and other resources that will be dedicated to capital projects in the development of the City Manager's proposed budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Ultimately, the choices that the City Council makes about service levels and projects will determine where City resources are budgeted. The total new appropriation in the CIP for the 2012-13 fiscal year is \$9,052,000 coming from various funds.



## POLICY ISSUES


Staff recommends that the Council adopt the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan, which includes proposed capital and Comprehensive Planning projects through fiscal year 2016-17. Staff also recommends that the budget provide for an annual transfer from the General Fund to partially fund Comprehensive Planning projects included in the 5-Year CIP.

The proposed budget for 2012-13 will include the capital needs delineated in the plan for the upcoming fiscal year only. This portion of the budgeting process, leading to Council adoption in June, represents no changes in City policy. Future capital budgets will continue to be appropriated on an annual basis, as the 5-Year CIP is updated to reflect current conditions and opportunities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental review is not required for adoption of the 5-year CIP and the individual projects listed in the plan. Certain projects, however, may be subject to environmental review before they are implemented.

  
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Carol Augustine  
Finance Director

  
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Charles Taylor, P.E.  
Public Works Director

**ATTACHMENT:** Revised pages of 2012-17 CIP document:  
• Appendix A Tables  
• Revised Project Description Pages

**Appendix A**  
**Capital Improvement Plan Summaries**

NOTE: The 3 tables presented on the following pages provide the same listing of proposed projects sorted (1) by category, (2) by funding source and (3) by responsible department.

**Projects by Category**

	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					TOTAL
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Streets &amp; Sidewalks</b>						
Civic Center Sidewalk Replacement and Irrigation System Upgrades	0	0	0	0	400,000	400,000
Sidewalk Master Plan Implementation	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000
Sidewalk Repair Program	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000
Street Resurfacing	225,000	5,270,000	230,000	5,270,000	250,000	11,245,000
Streetlight Painting	0	0	75,000	0	0	75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$625,000</b>	<b>\$5,670,000</b>	<b>\$705,000</b>	<b>\$5,670,000</b>	<b>\$1,050,000</b>	<b>\$13,720,000</b>

<b>City Buildings</b>						
Administration Building Carpet Replacement	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Administration Building Emergency Generator	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Belle Haven Child Development Ctr. Carpet Replacement	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Belle Haven Child Development Center Outdoor Play Space Remodel	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
City Buildings (Minor)	275,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,475,000
Main Library Interior Wall Fabric Replacement	0	0	150,000	0	0	150,000
Menlo Children's Center Carpet Replacement	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
Police Parking Lot Security	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$590,000</b>	<b>\$410,000</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$2,250,000</b>

**Projects by Category**

	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					TOTAL
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Traffic &amp; Transportation</b>						
El Camino Real/Ravenswood NB Right Turn Lane	0	0	1,350,000	0	0	1,350,000
El Camino Real Lane Reconfiguration Alternatives	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
High Speed Rail Coordination	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
Middlefield Road at Ravenswood Avenue Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Middlefield Road at Willow Road Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Safe Routes to Oak Knoll School	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000
Sand Hill Road Improvements (Addison/Wesley to I280)	0	0	0	0	TBD	TBD
Sand Hill Road Signal Interconnect	0	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Willow Road Improvements at Newbridge and Bayfront Expressway	900,000	0	0	0	0	900,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>	<b>\$1,400,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$2,825,000</b>

<b>Environment</b>						
Commercial Energy Efficiency Program Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
El Camino Real Tree Planting	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Energy Audit of City Administration	40,000	TBD	0	0	0	40,000
Sustainable/Green Building Standards Cost Benefit Analysis	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$270,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>

<b>Water System</b>						
Automated Meter Reading	0	0	50,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	2,450,000
Emergency Water Supply Project	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	4,000,000
Urban Water Management Plan	0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000
Water Main Replacements	2,700,000	0	0	300,000	2,200,000	5,200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,700,000</b>	<b>\$2,000,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	<b>\$3,400,000</b>	<b>\$11,700,000</b>

**Projects by Category**

	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	TOTAL
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b>						
Bedwell Bayfront Park Restroom Repair	0	0	0	95,000	0	95,000
Burgess Pool Deck Repairs	0	0	135,000	0	0	135,000
Burgess Pool Pump Ladder	28,000	0	0	0	0	28,000
Jack Lyle Park Restrooms - Construction	0	0	40,000	200,000	0	240,000
Jack Lyle Park Sports Field Sod Replacement	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
La Entrada Baseball Field Renovation	0	0	0	0	170,000	170,000
Park Pathways Repairs	0	0	0	0	200,000	200,000
Park Improvements (Minor)	120,000	120,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	630,000
Willow Oaks Dog Park Renovation	0	50,000	250,000	0	0	300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$148,000</b>	<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>\$555,000</b>	<b>\$425,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$1,873,000</b>

<b>Comprehensive Planning Projects &amp; Studies</b>						
CEQA and FIA Guidelines	0	0	0	0	35,000	35,000
General Plan Update	0	500,000	500,000	500,000	0	1,500,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 3 & 4)	400,000	0	0	0	0	400,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 5)	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000
M-2 Area Plan	0	0	0	0	500,000	500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$535,000</b>	<b>\$2,535,000</b>

<b>Stormwater</b>						
Chrysler Pump Station Improvements	80,000	320,000	0	0	0	400,000
Corporation Yard Storage Cover	0	0	0	0	300,000	300,000
Middlefield Road Storm Drainage Improvements	0	0	0	350,000	0	350,000
Storm Drain Improvements	160,000	175,000	175,000	185,000	185,000	880,000
Trash Capture Device Installation	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$240,000</b>	<b>\$495,000</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>	<b>\$595,000</b>	<b>\$485,000</b>	<b>\$1,990,000</b>

**Projects by Category**

	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	TOTAL
<b>Other/Miscellaneous</b>						
Automated Library Materials Return	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Gas Collection System Repair	0	0	100,000	0	0	100,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Leachate Collection System Replacement	0	100,000	900,000	0	0	1,000,000
Bike Sharing Program Cost Benefit Study	0	0	30,000	0	0	30,000
City Car Sharing Program Study	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
City Facilities Telephone System Upgrade	295,000	0	0	0	0	295,000
City Website Upgrade	0	0	0	75,000	0	75,000
Council Chambers Audio/Video Equipment	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
Council Chambers Mics/Voting Equipment	60,000	0	0	0	0	60,000
Downtown Irrigation Replacement	170,000	0	0	0	0	170,000
Downtown Parking Utility Underground	100,000	100,000	4,550,000	0	0	4,750,000
Downtown Streetscape Improvements	0	0	25,000	150,000	0	175,000
El Camino Real Median and Side Trees Irrigation System Upgrade	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000
Improved Infrastructure for the Delivery of Electronic Library Services-Study	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000
Installation of Electric Plug In Recharging Stations Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
Library RFID Conversion	29,000	29,000	0	0	0	58,000
Overnight Parking App	0	0	0	0	70,000	70,000
Parking Plaza 7 Renovations	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Parking Plaza 8 Renovations	0	0	0	0	250,000	250,000
Radio Replacement	130,000	195,000	26,000	100,000	195,000	646,000
Sand Hill Road Pathway Repair	0	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$979,000</b>	<b>\$791,000</b>	<b>\$5,631,000</b>	<b>\$640,000</b>	<b>\$515,000</b>	<b>\$8,556,000</b>
<b>FISCAL YEAR TOTALS</b>	<b>\$9,052,000</b>	<b>\$10,336,000</b>	<b>\$9,516,000</b>	<b>\$10,010,000</b>	<b>\$6,835,000</b>	<b>\$45,749,000</b>



**Projects by Funding Source**

Funding Source	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					Total
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>General Fund - CIP</b>						
Available Balance	4,615,000	4,664,000	2,987,000	4,183,000	3,178,000	
Revenues	2,460,000	2,350,000	5,400,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	14,000	16,000	18,000	20,000	22,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Administration Building Carpet Replacement	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Administration Building Emergency Generator	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Automated Library Materials Return <sup>1</sup>	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000
Belle Haven Child Development Center Carpet Replacement	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Belle Haven Child Development Center Outdoor Play Space Remodel	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
Burgess Pool Deck Repairs	0	0	135,000	0	0	135,000
Burgess Pool Pump Ladder	28,000	0	0	0	0	28,000
Chrysler Pump Station Improvements	80,000	320,000	0	0	0	400,000
City Buildings (Minor)	275,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,475,000
City Facilities Telephone System Upgrade	295,000	0	0	0	0	295,000
City Website Upgrade	0	0	0	75,000	0	75,000
Civic Center Sidewalk Replacement and Irrigation Upgrades	0	0	0	0	400,000	400,000
Commercial Energy Efficiency Program Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
Corporation Yard Storage Cover	0	0	0	0	300,000	300,000
Council Chambers Mics/Voting Equipment	60,000	0	0	0	0	60,000
Council Chambers Audio/Video Equipment	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
Downtown Irrigation Replacement	170,000	0	0	0	0	170,000
Downtown Parking Utility Underground <sup>2</sup>	100,000	100,000	2,750,000	0	0	2,950,000
Downtown Streetscape Improvements	0	0	25,000	150,000	0	175,000
El Camino Real Median and Side Trees Irrigation System Upgrade	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000
El Camino Real Tree Planting	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Energy Audit of City Administration Building	40,000	TBD	0	0	0	40,000
High Speed Rail Coordination	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000

**Projects by Funding Source**

Funding Source	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					Total
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>General Fund - CIP Continued</b>						
Improved Infrastructure for the Delivery of Electronic Library Services-Study	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000
Installation of Electric Plug In Recharging Stations Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
La Entrada Baseball Field Renovation	0	0	0	0	170,000	170,000
Jack Lyle Park Sports Field Sod Replacement	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
Library RFID Conversion	29,000	29,000	0	0	0	58,000
Main Library Interior Wall Fabric Replacement	0	0	150,000	0	0	150,000
Menlo Children's Center Carpet Replacement	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
Overnight Parking App	0	0	0	0	70,000	70,000
Park Improvements (Minor)	120,000	120,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	630,000
Park Pathways Repairs	0	0	0	0	200,000	200,000
Police Parking Lot Security	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000
Radio Replacement	130,000	195,000	26,000	100,000	195,000	646,000
Sand Hill Road Pathway Repair	0	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
Sidewalk Repair Program	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	600,000
Storm Drain Improvements	160,000	175,000	175,000	185,000	185,000	880,000
Street Resurfacing	0	2,000,000	0	2,000,000	0	4,000,000
Streetlight Painting	0	0	75,000	0	0	75,000
Sustainable/Green Building Standards Cost Benefit Analysis	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000
Trash Capture Device Installation	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000
Willow Oaks Dog Park Renovation	0	50,000	250,000	0	0	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,397,000</b>	<b>4,011,000</b>	<b>4,186,000</b>	<b>3,485,000</b>	<b>2,120,000</b>	<b>16,199,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	4,664,000	2,987,000	4,183,000	3,178,000	3,536,000	

<sup>1</sup> For this project, \$60,000 will be donated from the Friends of the Library

<sup>2</sup> City to be reimbursed from PG&E with Rule 20A revenues shown in 2014-15

<b>Bedwell Bayfront Park Landfill</b>						
Available Balance	2,830,000	3,330,000	3,770,000	3,350,000	3,970,000	
Revenues	800,000	850,000	900,000	950,000	1,000,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	300,000	310,000	320,000	330,000	350,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Bedwell Bayfront Park Gas Collection System Repair	0	0	100,000	0	0	100,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Leachate Collection System Replacement	0	100,000	900,000	0	0	1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,100,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	3,330,000	3,770,000	3,350,000	3,970,000	4,620,000	

**Projects by Funding Source**

Funding Source	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					Total
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Bedwell Bayfront Park Maintenance</b>						
Available Balance	710,000	567,000	417,000	261,000	4,000	
Revenues	7,000	5,000	4,000	2,000	0	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	150,000	155,000	160,000	164,000	170,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Bedwell Bayfront Park Restroom Repair	0	0	0	95,000	0	95,000
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	95,000	0	95,000
Ending Fund Balance	567,000	417,000	261,000	4,000	(166,000)	

<b>Construction Impact Fees</b>						
Available Balance	890,000	1,335,000	780,000	1,225,000	670,000	
Revenues	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Street Resurfacing	0	1,000,000	0	1,000,000	0	2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	0	1,000,000	0	1,000,000	0	2,000,000
Ending Fund Balance	1,335,000	780,000	1,225,000	670,000	1,115,000	

<b>Downtown Parking Permits</b>						
Available Balance	1,790,000	2,045,000	2,307,000	2,575,000	2,649,000	
Revenues	380,000	390,000	2,200,000	410,000	420,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	125,000	128,000	132,000	136,000	140,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Downtown Parking Utility Underground <sup>1</sup>	0	0	1,800,000	0	0	1,800,000
Parking Plaza 7 Renovations	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Parking Plaza 8 Renovations	0	0	0		250,000	250,000
<b>Total</b>	0	0	1,800,000	200,000	250,000	2,250,000
Ending Fund Balance	2,045,000	2,307,000	2,575,000	2,649,000	2,679,000	

<sup>1</sup> City to be reimbursed from PG&E with Rule 20A funds revenue shown in 2014-15

<b>Highway Users Tax</b>						
Available Balance	1,482,500	2,137,500	1,042,500	1,742,500	702,500	
Revenues	880,000	905,000	930,000	960,000	990,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Street Resurfacing	225,000	2,000,000	230,000	2,000,000	250,000	4,705,000
<b>Total</b>	225,000	2,000,000	230,000	2,000,000	250,000	4,705,000
Ending Fund Balance	2,137,500	1,042,500	1,742,500	702,500	1,442,500	

\*The Traffic Congestion Relief Fund was eliminated from this table. The fund balance of \$32,500 will be transferred to the Highway Users Tax Fund balance.

<b>Measure A</b>						
Available Balance	260,000	370,000	195,000	345,000	135,000	
Revenues	960,000	990,000	1,020,000	1,050,000	1,080,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	700,000	720,000	740,000	760,000	790,000	

**Projects by Funding Source**

Funding Source	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					Total
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Measure A - Continued</b>						
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Bike Sharing Program			30,000	0	0	30,000
Cost Benefit Study	0	0				
City Car Sharing Program Study	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
El Camino Real Lane Reconfiguration Alternatives	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
Middlefield Road at Ravenswood Avenue Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Middlefield Road at Willow Road Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Safe Routes to Oak Knoll School	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000
Sand Hill Road Improvements (Addison-Wesley to I280)	0	0	0	0	TBD	TBD
Sidewalk Master Plan Implementation	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000
Street Resurfacing	0	270,000	0	270,000	0	540,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>445,000</b>	<b>130,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>1,325,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	370,000	195,000	345,000	135,000	325,000	

<b>Measure T</b>						
Available Balance	190,000	192,000	194,000	196,000	8,196,000	
Revenues	2,000	2,000	2,000	8,000,000	20,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Burgess Pool Locker Room Expansion Design	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Ending Fund Balance	192,000	194,000	196,000	8,196,000	8,216,000	

<b>Rec-in-Lieu Fund</b>						
Available Balance	225,000	375,000	525,000	635,000	585,000	
Revenues	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Jack Lyle Park Restrooms - Construction	0	0	40,000	200,000	0	240,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>240,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	375,000	525,000	635,000	585,000	735,000	

<b>Sidewalk Assessment</b>						
Available Balance	240,000	222,000	208,000	198,000	193,000	
Revenues	180,000	185,000	190,000	195,000	200,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	18,000	19,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Sidewalk Repair Program	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	900,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>180,000</b>	<b>900,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	222,000	208,000	198,000	193,000	193,000	

**Projects by Funding Source**

Funding Source	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					Total
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Storm Drainage Fund</b>						
Available Balance	50,000	57,000	64,000	71,000	(272,000)	
Revenues	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Middlefield Road Storm Drainage Improvements	0	0	0	350,000	0	350,000
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	350,000	0	350,000
Ending Fund Balance	57,000	64,000	71,000	(272,000)	(265,000)	

<b>Transportation Impact Fees</b>						
Available Balance	3,190,000	2,205,000	2,820,000	1,385,000	1,300,000	
Revenues	50,000	850,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000	135,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Sand Hill Road Signal Interconnect	0	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
El Camino Real/Ravenswood NB Right Turn Lane	0	0	1,350,000	0	0	1,350,000
Willow Road Improvements at Newbridge and Bayfront Expressway <sup>1</sup>	900,000	0	0	0	0	900,000
<b>Total</b>	900,000	100,000	1,350,000	0	0	2,350,000
Ending Fund Balance	2,205,000	2,820,000	1,385,000	1,300,000	1,215,000	

<sup>1</sup> This project is expected to receive an \$800,000 grant from C/CAG, included in revenues in 2013-14

<b>Public Library Fund</b>						
Available Balance	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	
Revenues	0	0	0	0	0	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ending Fund Balance	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	

<b>Water Fund - Capital</b>						
Available Balance	8,715,000	4,406,000	3,170,000	3,832,000	3,092,000	
Revenues	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	409,000	36,000	38,000	40,000	42,000	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
Automated Meter Reading	0	0	50,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	2,450,000
Emergency Water Supply Project	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	4,000,000
Urban Water Management Plan	0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000
Water Main Replacements	2,700,000	0	0	300,000	2,200,000	5,200,000
<b>Total</b>	4,700,000	2,000,000	100,000	1,500,000	3,400,000	11,700,000
Ending Fund Balance	4,406,000	3,170,000	3,832,000	3,092,000	450,000	

**Projects by Funding Source**

<b>Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection</b>						
<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Comprehensive Planning Projects Fund</b>						
Available Balance	(102,000)	(602,000)	(1,102,000)	(1,602,000)	(2,102,000)	
Revenues	0	0	0	0	0	
Operating Expenditures and Commitments	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Recommended Projects</b>						
CEQA and FIA Guidelines		0	0	0	35,000	35,000
General Plan Update	0	500,000	500,000	500,000	0	1,500,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 3 & 4)	400,000	0	0	0	0	400,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 5)	100,000					100,000
M-2 Area Plan	0	0	0	0	500,000	500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>535,000</b>	<b>2,535,000</b>
Ending Fund Balance	(602,000)	(1,102,000)	(1,602,000)	(2,102,000)	(2,637,000)	

\*This fund could possibly have future fee revenues through reimbursement agreements with developers.

<b>FISCAL YEAR TOTALS</b>	<b>9,052,000</b>	<b>10,336,000</b>	<b>9,516,000</b>	<b>10,010,000</b>	<b>6,835,000</b>	<b>45,749,000</b>
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**Projects by Responsible Department**

<b>Responsible Department</b>	<b>Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection</b>					<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	
<b>Public Works - Engineering</b>						
Automated Meter Reading	0	0	50,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	2,450,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Gas Collection System Repair	0	0	100,000	0	0	100,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Leachate Collection System Replacement	0	100,000	900,000	0	0	1,000,000
Chrysler Pump Station Improvements	80,000	320,000	0	0	0	400,000
Commercial Energy Efficiency Program Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
Civic Center Sidewalk Replacement and Irrigation System Upgrades	0	0	0	0	400,000	400,000
Corporation Yard Storage Cover	0	0	0	0	300,000	300,000
Downtown Parking Utility Underground	100,000	100,000	4,550,000	-	-	4,750,000
El Camino Real Tree Planting	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Emergency Water Supply Project	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	4,000,000
Energy Audit of City Administration Building	40,000	TBD	0	0	0	40,000
Installation of Electric Plug In Recharging Stations Cost Benefit Analysis and Plan	0	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
Jack Lyle Park Restrooms - Construction	0	0	40,000	200,000	0	240,000
Middlefield Road Storm Drainage Improvements	0	0	0	350,000	0	350,000
Parking Plaza 7 Renovations	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Parking Plaza 8 Renovations	0	0	0	0	250,000	250,000
Sand Hill Road Pathway Repair	0	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
Sidewalk Master Plan Implementation	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000
Sidewalk Repair Program	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000
Storm Drain Improvements	160,000	175,000	175,000	185,000	185,000	880,000
Street Resurfacing	225,000	5,270,000	230,000	5,270,000	250,000	11,245,000
Streetlight Painting	0	0	75,000	0	0	75,000
Sustainable/Green Building Standards Cost Benefit Analysis	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000
Trash Capture Device Installation	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000
Urban Water Management Plan	0	0	50,000	0	0	50,000
Water Main Replacements	2,700,000	0	0	300,000	2,200,000	5,200,000
Willow Oaks Dog Park Renovation	0	50,000	250,000	0	0	300,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,935,000</b>	<b>\$8,745,000</b>	<b>\$6,820,000</b>	<b>\$8,195,000</b>	<b>\$5,185,000</b>	<b>\$34,880,000</b>

**Projects by Responsible Department**

Responsible Department	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					TOTAL
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Public Works - Maintenance</b>						
Administration Building Carpet Replacement	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
Administration Building Emergency Generator	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000
Bedwell Bayfront Park Restroom Repair	0	0	0	95,000	0	95,000
Belle Haven Child Development Center Carpet Replacement	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Belle Haven Child Development Center Outdoor Play Space Remodel	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
City Buildings (Minor)	275,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,475,000
Downtown Irrigation Replacement	170,000	0	0	0	0	170,000
Downtown Streetscape Improvements	0	0	25,000	150,000	0	175,000
El Camino Real Median and Side Trees Irrigation System Upgrade	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000
Jack Lyle Park Sports Field Sod Replacement	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
La Entrada Baseball Field Renovation	0	0	0	0	170,000	170,000
Council Chambers Mics/Voting Equipment	60,000	0	0	0	0	60,000
Council Chambers Audio/Video Equipment	75,000	0	0	0	0	75,000
Main Library Interior Wall Fabric Replacement	0	0	150,000	0	0	150,000
Park Pathways Repairs	0	0	0	0	200,000	200,000
Menlo Children's Center Carpet Replacement	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
Park Improvements (Minor)	120,000	120,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	630,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$975,000</b>	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$960,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$3,945,000</b>

**Projects by Responsible Department**

Responsible Department	Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection					TOTAL
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
<b>Public Works - Transportation</b>						
Bike Sharing Program Cost Benefit Study	0	0	30,000	0	0	30,000
City Car Sharing Program Study	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000
El Camino Real/Ravenswood NB Right Turn Lane	0	0	1,350,000	0	0	1,350,000
El Camino Real Lane Configuration Alternatives	0	75,000	0	0	0	75,000
High Speed Rail Coordination	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
Middlefield Road at Ravenswood Avenue Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Middlefield Road at Willow Road Intersection Reconfiguration Study	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000
Safe Routes to Oak Knoll School	50,000	0	0	0	0	50,000
Sand Hill Road Improvements (Addison-Wesley to I280)	0	0	0	0	TBD	TBD
Sand Hill Road Signal Interconnect	0	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Willow Road Improvements at Newbridge and Bayfront Expressway	900,000	0	0	0	0	900,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>	<b>\$1,430,000</b>	<b>\$180,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$2,885,000</b>

<b>Community Development (Planning)</b>						
CEQA and FIA Guidelines	0	0	0	0	35,000	35,000
General Plan Update	0	500,000	500,000	500,000	0	1,500,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 3 & 4)	400,000	0	0	0	0	400,000
Housing Element Update (RHNA 5)	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000
M-2 Area Plan	0	0	0	0	500,000	500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$535,000</b>	<b>\$2,535,000</b>

<b>Community Services</b>						
Burgess Pool Deck Repairs	0	0	135,000	0	0	135,000
Burgess Pool Pump Ladder	28,000	0	0	0	0	28,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$163,000</b>

**Projects by Responsible Department**

<b>Fiscal Year Project Funding Projection</b>						
<b>Responsible Department</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Police Department</b>						
Overnight Parking App	0	0	0	0	70,000	70,000
Radio Replacement	130,000	195,000	26,000	100,000	195,000	646,000
Police Parking Lot Security	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>	<b>\$195,000</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$265,000</b>	<b>\$756,000</b>

<b>Library</b>						
Automated Library Materials Return	120,000	0	0	0	0	120,000
Improved Infrastructure for the Delivery of Electronic Library Services-Study	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000
Library RFID Conversion	29,000	29,000	0	0	0	58,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$149,000</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$215,000</b>

<b>Management Information Systems</b>						
City Facilities Telephone System Upgrade	295,000	0	0	0	0	295,000
City Website Upgrade	0	0	0	75,000	0	75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$295,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$370,000</b>

<b>FISCAL YEAR TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,052,000</b>	<b>\$10,336,000</b>	<b>\$9,516,000</b>	<b>\$10,010,000</b>	<b>\$6,835,000</b>	<b>\$45,749,000</b>
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**Housing Element (RHNA 3 & 4)**

The Housing Element is a policy document within the General Plan that provides direction on the provision of housing in the City. Regular updates of the Housing Element are mandated by State law. The update includes identification of potential housing sites, background report, goals and policies, rezoning of property and environmental review. In addition, the following other elements of the General Plan will likely need to be updated in order to maintain required consistency: Land Use, Transportation and Circulation, Open Space and Conservation, Safety and Seismic Safety, and Noise.



	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	TOTAL
<b>Comprehensive Planning Projects Fund</b>	400,000					400,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>400,000</b>					<b>400,000</b>

**Housing Element (RHNA 5)**

After completing the Housing Update for the previous planning periods (RHNA 3 & 4), the next update will need to be completed in late 2014 in order to maintain an 8-year cycle for future updates instead of 4-year cycles. The goal is to complete this Housing Element Update (RHNA 5) and then launch the comprehensive update to the General Plan.



	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	TOTAL
<b>Comprehensive Planning Projects Fund</b>	100,000					100,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>100,000</b>					<b>100,000</b>



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## COMMUNITY SERVICES

Council Meeting Date: April 24, 2012  
Staff Report #: 12-064

Agenda Item #: F-1

**REGULAR BUSINESS:** Council Review, Discuss and Affirm the City's Community Engagement Model

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### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review, discuss and affirm the City's Community Engagement Model.

### BACKGROUND

In January 2007, the City Council held a team building and goal setting workshop where Council identified nine goals, including improving community engagement. In October, 2007, the goal statement was finalized to say:

*Create meaningful opportunities for community members to have a voice in City decision-making and engage in dialog with each other in order to help City Council and staff understand community values, needs and concerns and develop policies, programs and services that are responsive to them.*

Staff formed a Community Engagement Team that more clearly defined the work needed to accomplish the goal and recommended to Council creating a Community Engagement Manager position and developing a Community Engagement Plan for Menlo Park. The position was filled in May, 2008. As a first step in developing the plan and grounding it in established Menlo Park best practices, needs and concerns, the Community Engagement Manager conducted over 40 interviews with Council members, Commission Chairs, community residents and staff. The themes identified from these interviews formed the basis of the draft Community Engagement Plan which was officially adopted by Council in September, 2008. Since then, the Community Engagement Plan has been updated regularly (see Attachment A for the 2011-12 Update).

One major strategy in the Community Engagement Plan involves use of a consistent, systematic approach for designing community engagement processes. A Community Engagement Model and Guidebook was developed in 2008 and staff receive annual

trainings on the model to support development of open, inclusive community engagement processes designed to result in lasting public judgment.

Since implementation of the model, the following community decisions, among others, have utilized this approach:

- El Camino Real / Downtown Specific Plan
- Pedestrian Caltrain Undercrossing
- Wells – Only Emergency Water Service Plan
- Sidewalk projects
  - Woodland
  - Safe Routes to School
  - Santa Cruz
- Willows Area Traffic Plan
- Downtown Parking
- Sharon Heights Pump Station
- Youth Basketball Gender Policy
- Hamilton Avenue Housing Project
- Redevelopment Area Implementation Plan
- Kelly Park Design
- Commission Work Plans
- Council Goal Setting
- Ringwood Overcrossing

In January, 2010, the Community Engagement Manager position was merged with the Community Services Director position and reduced to .25 FTE as a part of the budget process that eliminated the ability to provide full-time community engagement services. At that time the budget for community engagement was also reduced from \$110,000 to less than \$30,000, including merging the quarterly newsletter, MenloFocus, into the activity guide, published three times per year. Funding for other proactive publications and community outreach activities was eliminated as well, such as funding to develop a comprehensive social media campaign for the City.

Since these reductions, the City has continued to utilize a largely decentralized approach to communications and community engagement with departments responsible for most communication and engagement activities with guidance, oversight and review by the Community Services Director. The Community Engagement Plan (Attachment A) is implemented as funding allows.

## **ANALYSIS**

The City of Menlo Park Community Engagement Model forms the foundation of the City's communications strategies and is designed to:

## **1. Reflect three basic stages of Public Participation Planning**

### **Stage One: Decision Analysis**

1. Clarify the decision being made (develop the problem or opportunity statement)
2. Decide whether public participation is needed and for what purpose (determine the level of engagement needed)
3. Identify any aspects of the decision that are non-negotiable, including expectations for who makes the final decision
4. Identify the stakeholders and their interests (determine the scope of the project)

### **Stage Two: Process Planning**

1. Specify what needs to be accomplished at each public step
2. Identify what information people and process facilitators need to build public judgment
3. Identify appropriate methods for each step

### **Stage Three: Implementation Planning**

1. Develop a supporting communications plan
2. Plan the implementation of individual activities
3. Plan the input analysis process

Stages One and Two are summarized below. Stage Three involves implementation of the engagement activities.

### **Stage One**

1. **Begin each process with a well-defined problem or opportunity statement**

*Here are two examples of problem statements:*

#### **Willows Area Traffic Study**

Residents of the Willows neighborhood have been working with the City of Menlo Park regarding concerns about cut-through traffic and other traffic issues that impact the quality of life in the neighborhood. Through the Willows Traffic Task Force, residents recommended an area-wide traffic study to explore ways to improve the quality of life in the area by managing traffic speeds and volumes.

#### **Your City Your Decision**

The City of Menlo Park faces a \$2.9 million budget shortfall in 2006-2007. This gap represents 10% of the City's annual operating budget and will widen over time if nothing is done. Short-term savings and lower impact cuts made over the last four years have not been enough. A permanent solution to Menlo Park's budget crisis is needed and will involve many tough choices and trade-offs.

## 2. Clearly identify the level and purpose of community engagement

Levels of community engagement have been described by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as including a spectrum of activities demonstrating varying levels of public participation in decision-making depending upon the goals, time frames, resources and level of public interest in the decision. The model prescribes process designs that clearly define expectations within appropriate level of this spectrum (Attachment B).

## 3. Clearly identify what stakeholders are deciding and what is not negotiable about a decision

Examples of “givens” include:

### ***Willows Area Traffic Study***

- The project area is defined as the residential area between US 101, Willow Road, Middlefield Road, Woodland Avenue and Manhattan Avenue, including a small portion of the City of East Palo Alto (see map on reverse).
- Cut-through traffic is defined as any traffic generated outside the project area and traveling through the project area to a destination outside the project area.
- Implementation of any traffic calming measures approved as a result of this study will comply with the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP), beginning with the Resident Survey for Trial Installation. For more information on the NTMP, see [http://www.menlopark.org/departments/trn/ntmp\\_final.pdf](http://www.menlopark.org/departments/trn/ntmp_final.pdf)

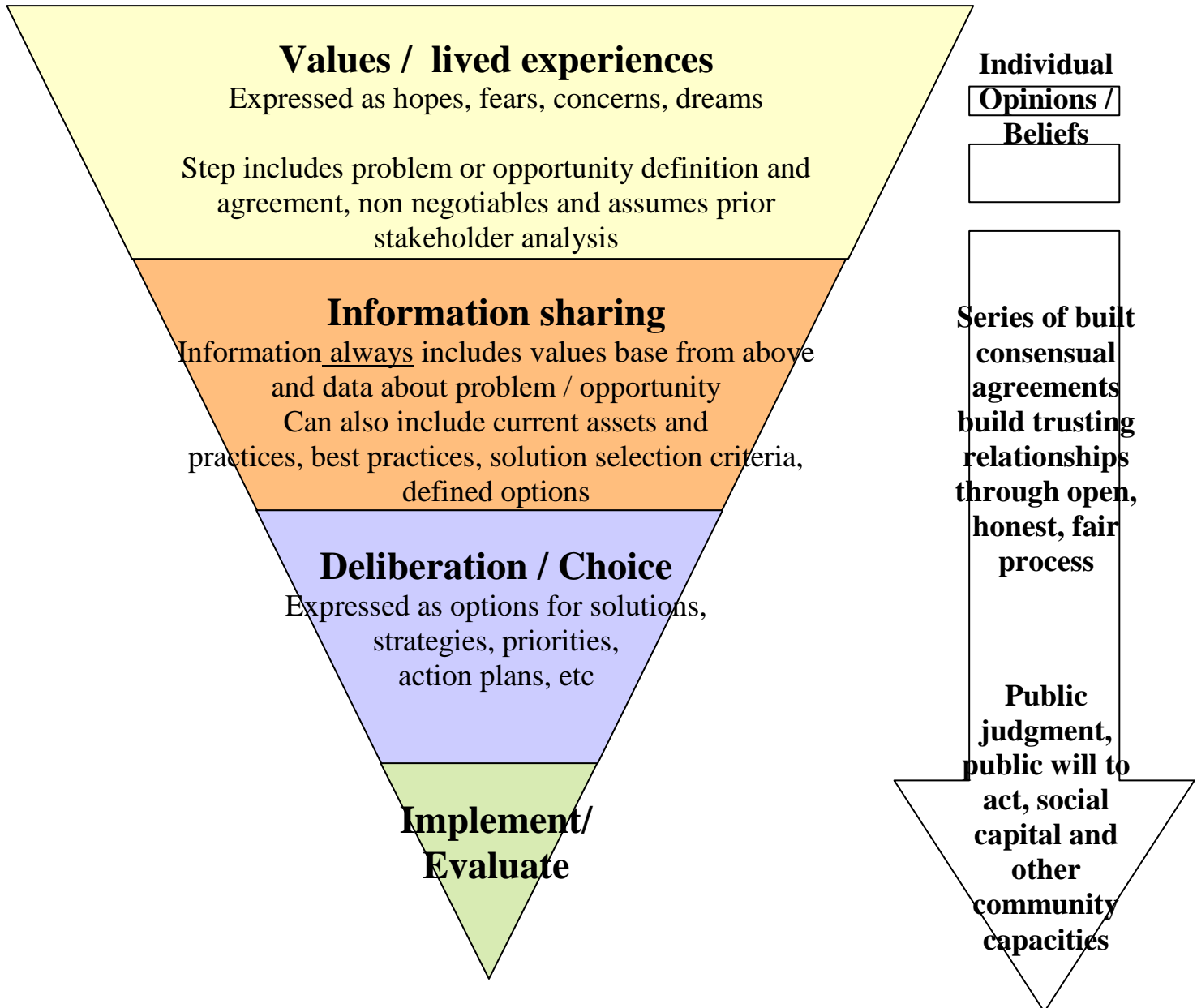
### ***Caltrain Bike Tunnel***

- This phase of the project is designed to identify the best potential location only.
- The tunnel, if eventually built, will utilize grant funding.
- Easements (“rights of way”) need to be established for a tunnel and its approaches in order to allow for public access. The land between the railroad tracks and El Camino Real is not currently available for public access as it is owned by Stanford University. Establishing an easement or future right of way is the first step needed before financing and design work on a tunnel can begin.

4. **Identify stakeholders and their interests** – Generally, the lengthier the list of stakeholders and the longer the list of potential interests, the longer the process and the more comprehensive the outreach needed to achieve public judgment.

## Stage Two

Steps 1. – 3. Transform individual opinion to public judgment, using a defined Sequence of Decisions that looks something like this:

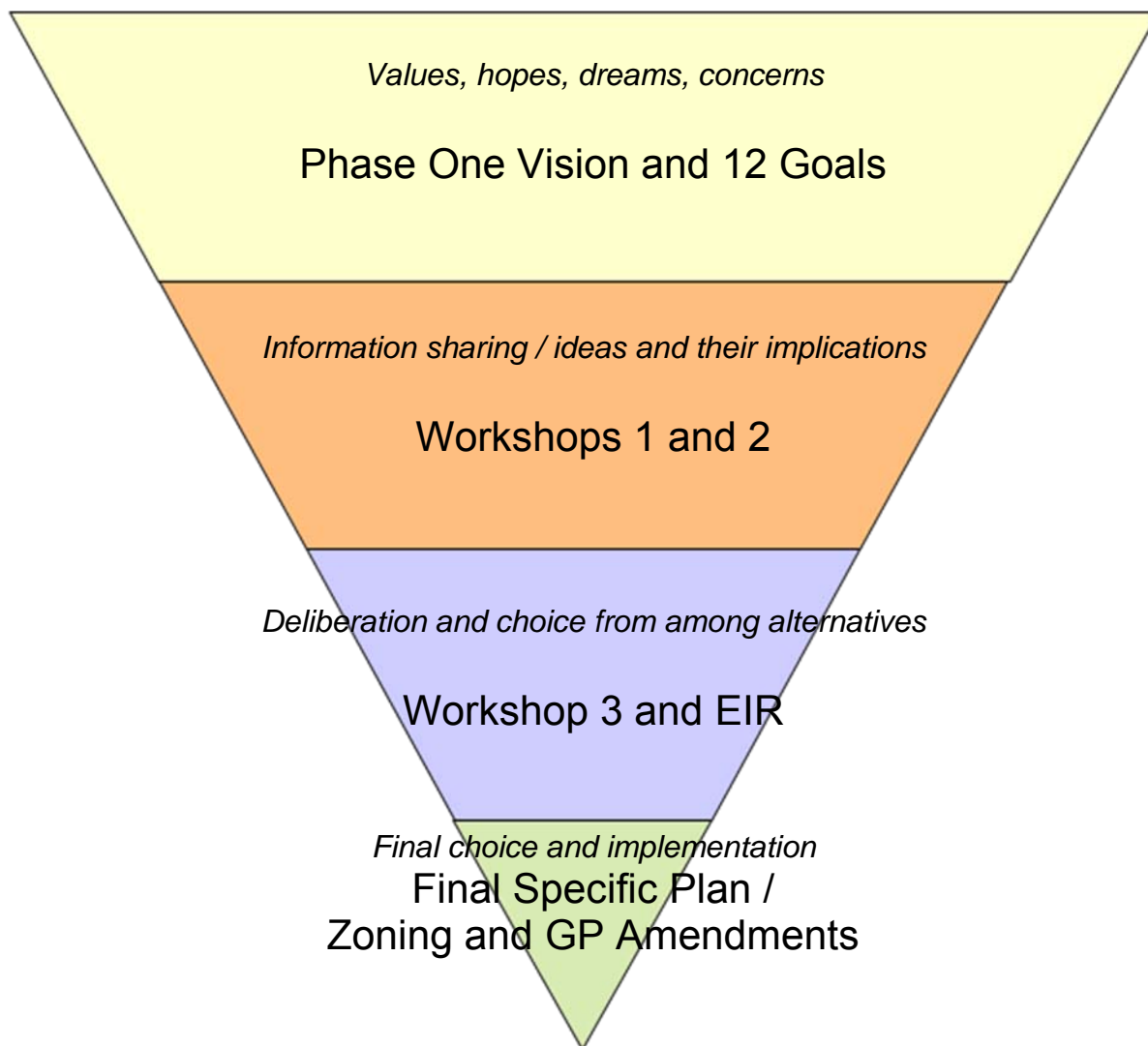




The Sequence of Decisions is the conceptual framework for the City's Community Engagement Model and builds upon the decision analysis done during Stage One. Working through the steps of Stage Ones ensures that the Sequence developed results in a process that fits the particular needs of the problem or opportunity, the level of community engagement needed and the scope of stakeholders and their interests. Grounded in research and best practices for development of public judgment, the Sequence of Decisions is designed to:

1. Develop legitimate, lasting and supportable public decisions that are distinguished from public opinion (public opinion is not dependent upon factual information and consideration of broader interests).
2. Community judgment is not the same thing as consensus – it consists of a shared sense of public priorities or a decision everyone agrees to live with, even though they may have had to give up something they wanted and did not achieve their solution of first choice in order to accommodate as many interests as possible.
3. Provide equal opportunity for everyone to influence the outcome
4. Give participants the ability to find common ground and discuss choices other than yes or no
5. Encourage solutions representing multiple alternatives
6. Allow “win-win” results without a vote to reinforce sense of community

Example of a Sequence of Decisions: El Camino Real / Downtown Specific Plan



**Stage Three**, steps one through three, includes the implementation of the plan developed during stages one and two above and generally involves more staff and consultant work and less policy level decision making and guidance by the Council.

**Expectations for community engagement processes**

The Menlo Park Community Engagement Model is NOT a cure for conflict or a magic bullet. Community engagement does not always result in decisions making everyone happy. It does mean those who most oppose a decision will understand why it was made and will often go along, however reluctantly, because they had an opportunity to be heard. In fact, community engagement activities often seem to “generate” conflict as they are designed to surface conflict and provide a productive way to manage and

resolve conflicts and controversy. The long term outcome of meaningful community engagement is increased trust in local government and an increased sense of community.

Menlo Park's bi-annual community surveys show that residents support the City's community engagement efforts. Survey results for 2010 show Menlo Park ranking above the national benchmark of 250 other communities for "opportunities to participate in community matters." Menlo Park's sense of community ranks "much above" the benchmark cities in the national survey.

Given this data and the success of the model as it has been implemented in numerous community processes over the last three years, staff recommends Council discuss and affirm the community engagement model and supporting communications plan included as Attachments A and C.

### **Broadening community engagement through a managed online system**

Recently staff participated in a seminar sponsored by the Alliance for Innovation to learn more about online forums that are civil, legal and cost effective. Peak Democracy provides support for almost 700 online public comment platforms that utilize best practices aligned with the City's community engagement model and would allow our online forums to be free of profanity, personal attacks, and impertinent comments. Peak Democracy uses their in-house staff and patent-pending software to monitor every comment, and follow the order and decorum of a government hearing to maintain civility. The City of Palo Alto's Open City Hall is a local example that has operated successfully for several years. More information is available at [www.peakdemocracy.com](http://www.peakdemocracy.com). Staff would also appreciate Council's feedback on whether pursuit of this expansion of community engagement opportunities is of interest.

### **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

The FY 2011 – 2012 Budget for community engagement activities is \$75,000 and includes:

- \$35,000 for Media Center coverage of Council meetings and the contract with Granicus
- \$8000 for the annual contract with Comcate (the City's 24/7 on-line customer service management system)
- \$5000 for MenloFocus printing and postage
- a \$10,500 grant to the Media Center for community programming
- and \$16,000 for the community survey.

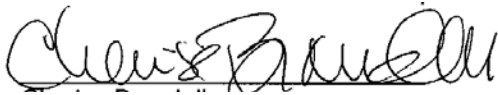
Community engagement processes require extensive staff time and / or project funding for consultants at the department level. Purchase of the Peak Democracy Open Town Hall online forum product would be less than \$7,000 per year.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Menlo Park Community Engagement Model outlines an approach to designing community processes that could be used to influence a wide variety of policy decisions.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

No environmental assessment is required.



Cherise Brandell  
Community Services Director

## **PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A: 2011-12 Community Engagement Plan
- B: International Association of Public Participation Spectrum of Community Engagement
- C: Menlo Park Community Engagement Model Guidebook





# **Community Engagement Plan**

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**City of Menlo Park**  
**Community Engagement Plan**

**2011 - 2012**



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## Guiding Values and Principles

The City of Menlo Park Community Engagement plan is based on four guiding principles supported by best practices and City of Menlo Park organizational values:

- 🌳 **Open vs closed** – information will be shared proactively throughout the community in a two-way system including information giving and information receiving, with the underlying belief that all those who are affected by decisions have the right to be involved in them.
- 🌳 **Decentralized vs centralized** – we will empower departments to create their own communications systems where needed, complimenting an open system and providing the most practical means of communicating in a complex organization. Departmental messages will be consistent with and coordinated with Organizational key messages.
- 🌳 **Proactive vs reactive** – We will tell our story rather than wait for someone else to do it and capitalize on opportunities rather than rely on others to interpret our actions, issues, services and programs.
- 🌳 **Strongly themed vs scattered messages** – we will support, reinforce and reflect the goals of Council and Departments as one organization with one unified purpose communicating a consistent message.

## Background

On January 6, 2007, the City Council held a full-day retreat for the purpose of team building and goal setting for the next two years. At this session the Council identified nine goals, including community engagement. In October, 2007 the goal statement was finalized to say:

*Create meaningful opportunities for community members to have a voice in City decision-making and engage in dialog with each other in order to help City Council and staff understand community values, needs and concerns and develop policies, programs and services that are responsive to them.*

Staff formed a Community Engagement Team that more clearly defined the work and recommended to Council creating a Community Engagement Manager position and developing a Community Engagement Plan for Menlo Park. This position was filled in May, 2008. As a first step in developing the plan and grounding it in already established Menlo Park best practices, needs and concerns, the Community Engagement Manager conducted over 40 interviews with Council members, Commission chairs, community residents and staff. The themes identified from these interviews form the basis of the Community Engagement Plan.

## The Plan is designed to:

- 🌳 Outline the City of Menlo Park's commitment to community engagement
  - 🌳 Define what community engagement means for the City of Menlo Park
  - 🌳 Describe effective strategies for enhancing community engagement practices
  - 🌳 Provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of community engagement efforts and making continuous improvements based on this evidence
- 



## How this plan is organized:

### The Community Engagement Continuum

Community engagement has been described by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as including a spectrum of activities demonstrating varying levels of public participation in decision-making depending upon the goals, time frames, resources and level of public interest in the decision.

**Major sections** of this plan reflect the levels of engagement described in the *IAP2 Spectrum* (note that each level incorporates the goals of prior levels).

	Public Information		Community Engagement		
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Typical goals	Provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding services, problems, alternatives and / or solutions	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and / or decisions	Work directly with the community throughout the process to consistently understand & consider concerns and aspirations	Partner with residents in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and choice of the preferred solution	Place final decision-making in the hands of residents
Promise to community	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed. Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will work to ensure that your concerns & aspirations are directly reflected in alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
Sample strategies	Web sites, news releases, fact sheets	Focus groups, surveys, meetings	Workshops, deliberative polling	Commissions, committees, participatory decisions	Delegated decisions, ballots

Each section in this plan is further organized by:

**Initial finding** - Concerns and issues the plan needed to address were identified through a series of Council, community and staff interviews (40) conducted in May and June, 2008 (interview guides included as Attachment 1). Interview results were analyzed and the resulting ideas for issues, approaches, best practices and context were used to build the plan.

**Goal** – Each issue also suggests a goal or outcome that makes evaluating the success of the plan more explicit. All goals suggested by the issues identified in the interviews are included in a program outcome logic model creating a framework for evaluating the work and is included in the evaluation section beginning on page 26. Suggested measures for the goals are also included.

**Most recent evaluation results** – Based on the suggested measures, this section includes the most recent evaluation results.

**Best Practice** – If good thinking has already been done somewhere else on the best way to reach our goals, here's what we're adapting to fit Menlo Park's situation.

**Menlo Park Strategy** – Here's how we are addressing the issue and working toward reaching the goal, keeping in mind that good plans adapt and change as conditions change or new learning occurs.

**Next step activities** – As much as possible, we define the specific steps needed to implement the strategy and suggest a time frame for continuing to move forward.

## **A word about communication “theory”**

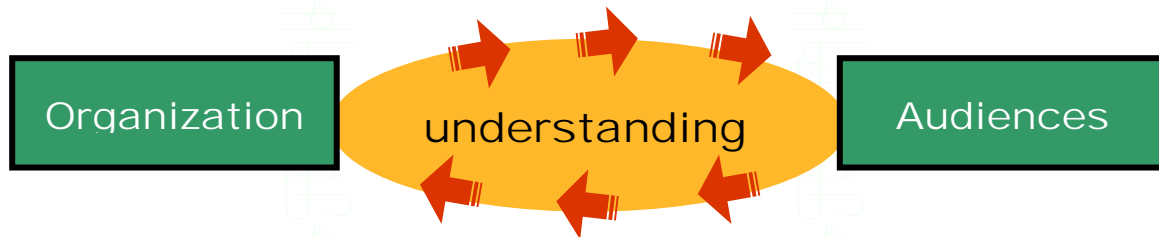
We're all just trying to create meaning

It's useful to ground any communications and community engagement plan in the basic theory of how human communication works. Generally and most basically, the public communications strategies included in our plan involve the process of creating meaning in the minds of one another (community to organization, community to community and organization to community). Those meanings may or may not correspond to the meanings we, or the community, intend to create. But our goal is to avoid misunderstandings as much as possible.

## Communication always has a purpose

Most of the time we communicate for a purpose. We intend to get a point across, persuade, prompt action or build relationships. However, we also transmit messages that are unintentional. We do this through our actions, including organizational activities that seem to contradict our intentional communications, through the image our facilities present to the community, and even through our body language.

This plan addresses only the strategies employed for intentional communications but includes both outgoing communications (called public information) and incoming communications (called community engagement). The plan does not include emergency communications strategies or “image” strategies such as graphic design standards or signage.



# Inform (Spectrum level 1)

## Outgoing Communications / Information Giving Strategies

### **Key messages are needed**

#### **Key finding**

Overall, interviewees for the communication / community engagement plan felt that the City of Menlo Park would benefit from a refinement and focusing of overall messages supporting the organization's image as an open, proactive, responsive and responsible local government. Several also felt that the City should lead efforts to create a more clearly defined community image.

#### **Goal**

Promote the open, responsive and responsible philosophy of Menlo Park City government through development and use of organization-wide key messages; determine what is important about Menlo Park culture that we want to highlight.

#### **How we'll measure this goal**

Residents and businesses in Menlo Park rate Menlo Park City government as open, responsive and responsible and express confidence and trust in their local government.

#### **Most recent evaluation results**

The 2010 community random sample, +/- 5% accuracy, survey showed: 58% feel the value of services for taxes paid is good or excellent (above the national benchmark but down from 64% in 2008); 53% rate the direction the city is taking overall as good or excellent (similar to benchmark but down from 59% in 2008); 55% rate job MP does at welcoming citizen involvement at good or excellent (similar to benchmark but down from 59% in 2008); 90% rate the overall image or reputation of MP as good or excellent (much above benchmark but down from 92% in 2008); 84% rate the services provided by the City of MP as good or excellent (above benchmark but down from 86% in 2008).

#### **Best practice says**

Expert communicators say that a public information program built on strong themes is more effective than one with scattered and unrelated messages. Communications should support, reflect and reinforce the goals of the organization as established by Council and Executive Management to underscore the idea of one organization with one common purpose.

### **Menlo Park strategies**

Work with the City Manager and Executive Staff to clarify organizational and Council goals and develop key messages supporting these. Use these key messages to frame all public information and community engagement efforts. These messages should help us describe our “brand” to the community, help capture what is unique and special about Menlo Park and differentiate us from other governmental agencies and service providers

### **Next steps**

- Continue use of regular meetings to clarify key messages for all major communications tools as needed
- Continue messaging and tools integrating City-wide goals and priorities into ongoing communications, including methods described in this plan as well as departmental communications
- Continue pilot “branding” effort in Community Services Department to update the overall graphic look of the City, and, when completed, assist other departments in integrating to a city-wide standard
- Continue supporting Departments in refining their key messages

## ***Proactive communication is vital***

### **Key finding**

Proactive public information prevents confusion and misunderstandings about services and policies. Interviewees consistently felt that we could do more to “blow our own horn” and prevent confusion and misinformation with a more proactive outgoing communications program.

### **Goal**

Proactively promote understanding of basic services and how to access them; proactively promote the “good news” of the City organization (project completions, survey results, awards, balanced budget, etc)

**How we’ll measure this goal:** Menlo Park residents report satisfaction with City services and ratings for Menlo Park as a place to live.

### **Most recent evaluation results**

The 2010 community random sample, +/- 5% accuracy, survey showed: 90% rate the overall image or reputation of MP as good or excellent (much above benchmark); 84% rate the services provided by the City of MP as good or excellent (above benchmark).

### **Best practice says**

The interview research of Menlo Park community members, Council and staff indicates that the most effective methods for getting information out include:

- Direct marketing (including a regular City newsletter)
- E mail
- Traditional print media (news releases)
- Anything that emulates face-to-face interaction (includes group presentations and other meetings, phone conversations, etc)

### **Menlo Park strategies**

No matter the medium being used to disseminate service and policy messages out to the community, several overall principles are important:

1. Use service and policy related *key messages* to keep specific communication vehicles focused
  2. Use straight forward, friendly *accessible language* to keep messages clear
  3. Choose communication vehicles fitting intended *audience' needs*
  4. Keep the communication *timely*
  5. Use *multiple methods*
1. *Key messages*: Key messages are based on the specific purpose of the communication. We ask ourselves, when developing communication vehicles, “what do we want our audience to think, feel, and / or do after they receive the message?” We strive to define a minimal number of short (two sentence) key messages for each situation, keep them positive rather than defensive, provide validation of facts when needed and, whenever possible, focus on our overall key messages.
  2. *Accessible language* means we avoid jargon, techno-speak or acronyms: If we must use technical terms we always offer explanations.
  3. Meet *audience needs*: We strive to include an audience analysis when planning for specific communications vehicles, including thinking about: where people who are interested in this service or policy go for information, the easiest way for them to access this information and what about the service or policy benefits them most. Answers to these questions drive the format, distribution and timing of the method.
  4. *Timeliness*: As much as possible we strive to achieve a “just-in-time” approach to communications, providing information as people need it in order to maximize relevance and usefulness. We are especially diligent about being the first and best source of *bad* news.
  5. *Pervasive and diverse methods*: Given the diversity of community members and the constant bombardment of other communications vehicles from other sources, whenever possible we strive to utilize a



combination of multiple vehicles providing consistent messaging in many formats.

### Specific Communication Vehicles:

- Direct marketing – includes any vehicle that is distributed widely or to very specifically defined audiences. This was the preferred method of many interview participants, who said:
  1. *Please increase the budget for this*
  2. *Most effective vehicle, even better when tied to an email list*
  3. *Use bright paper and big post cards*
  4. *Legal looking notices are very easy to ignore*

- People believed that among the most useful direct mail pieces were the *Department project materials* (such as those produced by Community Development and Community Services) and overwhelmingly supported continuation of these.
- *City newsletter* – the community interviews indicated broad support for reinstatement of the *MenloPark.Info* newsletter (or similar), on at least a quarterly basis. A newsletter was thought to be an effective way to share policy and service information broadly and easily, if done well with plenty of graphics, informal language and relevant topics. Current community engagement program budget allows three or four issues per year, presumably quarterly. Interviewees preferred an 8.5x11 four page format, not a multi-fold “newspaper” style version (first issue, fall, 2008).

Since the Fall of 2008, quarterly issues of the *MenloFocus* newsletter have been published. This will in 2011-12 as an insert in the *Activity Guide* to promote distribution and longevity. An annual budget report will be sent separately in August of each year.

- Other printed materials that were mentioned as useful included:
  - *Brochures* describing individual policies or services (strategy includes a consistent graphic look for all these done individually by departments).
  - *A regular budget publication* supports a key message around responsible financial management and tax payer accountability (done annually in August, beginning in 2008).



accessible and staff update them regularly. Resources for this task may need to be identified outside of existing staff as staff find it difficult to keep up with project updates given other higher priority responsibilities.

- **Direct Connect** – Interviewees were also supportive of continuing to utilize this tool for communicating with community members. Staff have learned more about additional system capabilities and are utilizing the system’s accountability functions more proactively. Group emails are now generated from this system. FAQ’s have been added as well. An I-phone app was developed in the Fall of 2011, was piloted with several internal and external test users and will go live once the icon is approved by Apple and Google.
- **Regular survey input (as opposed to a “blog”)** We strategically use “surveymonkey” for regular community input through project mailings and through e-mail.
- **Regular web streaming and cable casting of community and Council meetings** – continuing to facilitate more open and transparent engagement.

➤ **Media relations**

- **News releases** – Our proactive news releases are structured around the one or two key points we want to make, stated as short, positive statements defining the program or issue. The most important information always appears first. Anything that is not factual information is stated as a quote from the City Manager or other Executive level staff or Council members. We anticipate the tough questions and attempt to address them in the release and make an effort to prepare follow-up quotes or talking points for staff or Council members who may be interviewed (these are structured to begin with the key point or conclusion then provide an example or supporting information; they conclude by explaining what it means to residents). Email is used to issue releases, enabling all media outlets to receive the information simultaneously. CCIN receives a copy and releases are sent directly to subscribers.
- **Media briefings** – We use media briefings / news conferences for the most important topics when we feel it is important for our spokesperson to speak directly to the public or when we have multiple spokespersons we need to feature, where information is particularly complex or controversial and presenting it to all media

at once is not just more efficient but more “fair”. We would also consider media “field trips” as appropriate.

- **Overall media training / media policy development** – A draft media relations policy has been developed and training in the policy as well as basic tips on writing news releases and responding to interviews is scheduled for spring, 2012. Crisis communications will receive a separate policy and training.

➤ **Face-to-face**

- **Meetings** – Meetings include any type of personal briefing, small group gathering or more formal large group presentation. We treat ALL of these events as opportunities for two-way communication and explicitly gather valuable information in response to whatever key messages we are sending. Whenever possible, meetings include a “takeaway” or printed piece reiterating the key messages and providing access to more detailed information. Meetings occur in a setting most comfortable to the intended audience. As much as possible, we also take advantage of opportunities to address existing groups.
- **Phone trees** – Many interviewees described the usefulness of a phone call in getting information out from person to person. This vehicle is currently structured similarly to the email group vehicle mentioned above, where staff leverages existing relationships by working with established and informal community groups’ phone lists to send information to the group’s “gatekeeper” or key contact for distribution.
- **Media Center programming** – Use of the Peninsula Media Center for more proactive “video” programming is listed here with the face-to-face methods as the strength of this vehicle lies in the ability to personally reach people in their homes. To date, limited time and budget have prohibited use of this strategy.
- **Community events** – Whenever possible departments have a presence at community events such as the concert series, block parties, farmers’ market and other community activities in order to increase visibility of City staff in more casual and “fun” venues and provide for more opportunities to interact with the community in settings unrelated to issues or projects.
- **Displays and exhibits** – Whenever possible departments set up unmanned displays in places that get lots of foot traffic, such as the libraries, Administration Building Lobby, Rec. Center, Safeway, etc. where information can be picked up casually.

- **Emergency Notification System** – We will work with the Police Department and City Manager to determine appropriate uses for this system, including more aggressive marketing of the service in order to include more residents on the list.



## Audience / Methods Matrix

This matrix helps identify the primary methods for communicating with the City of Menlo Park’s key audience groups. The matrix can help to identify the “highest impact” methods (those reaching a larger number of key audiences) and provides a framework for prioritizing strategies in situations of limited resources.

Primary methods	Key Audiences				
	Residents	Business interests	Organized community groups	Council	Staff
Dept. project materials	X	X	X	X	X
City newsletter	X	X	X		
Other print	X	X	X		
Email groups /subscribers	X	X	X		
CCIN (Council email)	X	X	X		
Website	X	X	X	X	X
City Manager e-forum	X	X	X		
News releases	X	X	X		
Media briefings	X	X			
Meetings	X	X	X	X	X
Phone trees	X	X	X		
Media Center programming	X				
Events and Displays	X				

# Consult / Involve / Collaborate (Spectrum levels 2-4)

## Community Engagement Strategies

(any strategies or processes involving community stakeholders in problem-solving or decision-making who are not typically part of the decision process)

### ***People must feel like their input matters***

#### **Key finding**

Overall, interviewees for the communication / community engagement plan felt that the City of Menlo Park's most successful community engagement processes succeeded in part because participants could see a clear connection between their input and the results. "Failed" processes were described as those not reflecting participant input or not resulting in a completed project.

#### **Goal**

Clarify expectations from the beginning of community engagement processes so that participants understand where on the spectrum processes are and then clearly link input with results in a "you said... so we did..." format.

**How we'll measure this goal:** Participants feel that they have opportunities to participate in community matters (and other assessments of community engagement processes).

#### **Most recent evaluation results**

The 2010 community random sample, +/- 5% accuracy, survey showed: 75% rate opportunities to participate in community matters as good or excellent (much above benchmark); 73% rated MP's sense of community as good or excellent (much above the benchmark); 29% attended a local public meeting in the past 12 months (similar to benchmark).

#### **Best practice says**

IAP2, whose members are community engagement experts from around the world, says that more important than determining the level of community empowerment in decisions is defining the "promise" implicit in each level of the spectrum. They say "... (promises) not defined or understood clearly by participants and decision makers, will result in dissatisfaction and disillusionment. At all public participation levels promises should be clear – and promises should be kept." IAP2 also says "there should always be follow-up to close the loop about what happened and why."

### **Menlo Park strategies**

Utilize a community engagement model that explicitly determines how community input will be used and expresses that expectation early and often. Use processes that utilize technical information and deliberation to move from individual opinion to public judgment.

### **Next steps**

- Update Model Guidebook and Tool kit for Menlo Park community engagement decisions (done fall, 2010)
- Provide refresher training to staff in model and tool kit (winter, 2010 and spring 2011)
- Provide overview to new Council member(s) on model and guidebook (January, 2012 workshop) **Not completed**
- Support implementation of the model (ongoing)
- Make it a practice to collect contact information for process participants at all opportunities and report the results of a decision to those providing input (ongoing)

## ***🌱 Clear roles and responsibilities are needed for those involved in community engagement processes***

### **Key finding**

Interviewees, especially staff and Commission members, felt there was a lack of shared understanding of which processes and procedures involve what type of community engagement and how engagement was to be achieved. Related to this was the finding that information which could make roles and responsibilities clear was not available or needed to be clarified, especially where it concerned responsibilities of different stakeholders (Council, Commissions, residents, staff) to one another.

### **Goal**

Clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders at the outset (especially the role of Commissions in community engagement). For each process specify what the promises are to the various stakeholders about their role and input.

### **Best practice says**

IAP2 calls this clarification of roles the “promises” implied in each level of community engagement and even define this in the organization’s code of ethics as “we will carefully consider and accurately portray the public’s role in the decision making process.” The organization calls on all community engagement practitioners to hold themselves and others involved in processes to this standard.



### **Menlo Park strategies**

Utilize a community engagement process model that explicitly determines the role of various stakeholders. Express those expectations early and often during process implementation.

### **Next steps**

- Work with Council, Commission representatives and City staff to clarify roles and responsibilities of Commissions (through workplan process).
- Support implementation of the model (ongoing).
- Continue implementing commission workplan process and integrate community engagement role for commissions (ongoing – Commissions are formal CIP engagement vehicle, for example)

## ***🌱 Informed residents and opportunities for real dialogue lead to “better decisions”***

### **Key finding**

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that good information as well as a chance for stakeholders to hear from one another and weigh pros and cons of options were the most important aspects of reaching a lasting and implementable community-based decision. They felt that less polarization would result if more information was available sooner and that processes needed to include opportunities for “real dialogue, not three-minute angry speeches”.

### **Goal**

Provide community engagement process participants with the information and opportunities needed to engage in a meaningful way. This means factual information provided proactively, in digestible forms and formats. It also means meetings constructed to engage people in small groups with adequate time for dialogue (at least two-thirds of the meeting), as well as a series of meetings, if needed.

### **Best practice says**

Daniel Yankelovich, national expert on public judgment, says individuals and communities (including our global community) go through three stages when developing a lasting judgment from original uninformed opinion.

### Stage One: Consciousness Raising

People learn about an issue and become aware of its existence and meaning.

### Stage Two: Working Through

People must actively engage and consider making a change; a time-consuming step, depending upon the emotional attachment to the change that needs to be made. Information and dialogue with others can speed up this step.

### Stage Three: Resolution

- A. Cognitive resolution – people must clarify fuzzy thinking and grasp the consequences of various choices so people can move to Emotional Resolution;
- B. Emotional Resolution – people confront ambivalent feelings, accommodate unwelcome realities and overcome the urge to avoid the issue because they must reconcile conflicting values and, finally;
- C. Moral Resolution – people overcome the need to put their own needs above their “ethical commitments”

It will be our goal to explicitly structure the phases and methods of our engagement processes to meet the requirements of developing public judgment (see Community Engagement Guidebook and Tool Kit).

### Menlo Park strategies

Continue providing information quickly and in ways that are tailored to users' needs so that there are consistent and predictable means of sharing information needed for public judgment (see proactive communications strategies, above). Continue ensuring that all information presented in community engagement processes is well-defined, timely, fair, clear and transparent, including information on how decisions will affect stakeholders and impacts of alternatives, both positive and negative.

### Next steps

- Support implementation of the model (ongoing)
- Ensure that all community engagement process meetings include adequate time for community dialogue and structured focus questions that build to public judgment

## ***Increased, broader participation leads to implementable decisions***

### Key finding

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that the best processes also included high levels of participation from many different groups. They felt that many previous

processes were dominated by “political self interests” and that more could be done to increase participation more completely representing the community, especially Belle Haven residents and parents of young families. There was a clear perception that “when a lot of people engage solutions are richer, more creative and new expertise is revealed” and that a “middle ground between the two extremes that traditionally split our community” could then be found.

### **Goal**

Increase both the breadth and depth of resident participation in community engagement processes.

### **Best practice says**

Experts in community engagement, such as the Harwood Group and the Pew Foundation, say that it’s a myth that people are apathetic and that’s why meeting turnout is dominated by special interests. They also say that it is not always true that the “silent majority” is satisfied.

Experts’ suggestions for increasing participation beyond the predictable and recognized interests include:

- Remember that people have to be able to clearly connect the subject of the process to their daily lives –tell them why they should care
- Recruit diverse stakeholders directly and personally or through people they know and trust
- Move the process into people’s homes or neighborhoods whenever possible
- Partner with civic or other existing groups with a broader community agenda (including time at their regular meeting)
- Use church bulletins and newsletters or ask pastors to make announcements to get people involved (or meet right at churches that include minority congregations)
- Partner with Home Owners or Neighborhood Associations
- Get the word out through local schools, especially in the Belle Haven area

### **Menlo Park strategies**

We will continue extensive and diverse outreach for all broadly impactful processes. Outreach committees, when their charge is clear, have proven helpful in supporting these efforts. We continue to structure community engagement processes so they are open, accessible and compelling to as many impacted stakeholders as possible.

We keep meetings focused on stakeholder input, meet in the community in comfortable places (including people’s homes or businesses) and use direct and personal recruiting whenever possible. We have lots of ways for people to be involved (including duplicate meetings when needed), and allow plenty of time to

ensure a variety of voices are heard. If it appears that transportation and / or child care would boost attendance with specific underrepresented groups, we attempt to find creative ways to provide these aids to participation.

When non-English speaking stakeholders are involved we actively accommodate those interests with our electronic translation system.

### **Next steps**

- Support implementation of the model (ongoing)

## ***🌳 Council participation in and use of community engagement processes has a major impact on process outcomes***

### **Key finding**

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that Councils' approaches to community engagement processes had a major impact, not only on whether the final decisions were seen as "fair" and "representative," but also on community attitudes about the City, in general. There was common agreement that community engagement processes had the potential to heal political divisions and most interviewees were hopeful that Council would refine the City's approach to support this community building outcome.

### **Goal**

Support Council in developing a consistent, predictable and transparent community engagement approach that includes clarification of their role in each process.

### **Best practice says**

As in other key findings identified above, best practices indicate that a clear definition of roles and expectations in advance of a process and repeated clarification of roles and expectations during a process can go a long way toward improving relationships and trust in a more explicit "do what we said we would do" manner.

Carl Neu, in his January 2008 workshop with Council, suggested their role is to:

1. Identify and focus issues needing to be addressed
2. Facilitate sharing of information and communication on relevant issues
3. Develop consensus and ratify that consensus
4. Maintain support for actions taken

### **Menlo Park strategies**

In addition to strategies already mentioned, such as ensuring that all information presented in community engagement processes is well-defined, timely, fair, clear

and transparent, and including information on how decisions will affect stakeholders and impacts of alternatives, we engage Council more deeply in major processes in order to support them in clarifying their role, defining expected outcomes and identifying possible sources of conflict in advance.

#### **Next steps**

- Provide overview of Model and copies of Guidebook and Tool Kit to new Council member(s) (Not completed)

**🌳 Council, Commissions and staff have the desire to engage the community in meaningful processes; other capacities to improve processes need to continue to be built**

#### **Key finding**

Interviewees overwhelmingly agreed that *when* departments were provided or had allocated adequate resources for community engagement processes they were very successful but help was needed in order to meet the increasing expectations that community engagement would be used for an ever-increasing number of community decisions (the proposed residential guidelines process and Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee work were specifically mentioned as areas where there appeared to be a disconnect between staff capacity and Council expectations).

#### **Goal**

Ensure that Council, Commissions and staff have the support and resources they need to design and implement meaningful community engagement processes.

#### **Best practice says**

Experts such as the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning say that community engagement efforts are most successful when open, honest and fair community decision-making is embraced as a way of doing business in an organization, as a set of pervasive attitudes and values, rather than a set of practices that are only used when conflict is expected.

#### **Menlo Park strategies**

The Community Engagement Manager will continue providing “consulting” support to departments and their Commissions when needed. We will continue the practice of building funding for outside community engagement support into project budgets. We will continue to support ongoing training for staff and Commission members.

#### **Next steps**

- Support implementation of the model (ongoing)

# Empower (Spectrum level 5)

## Community Capacity Building Strategies

### Key finding

Interviewees did not directly address what might be needed for Menlo Park to truly adopt an empowerment level of community engagement, but several did share their ultimate aspirations for what an empowered community would look like and do:

- *The best projects are when neighbors come to us and we simply act as consultants and they do the project themselves*
- *We won't even be talking about engagement because it will be so embedded in the culture*
- *There is stunning talent in this community that could be harnessed*

### Long Term Goal (5-10 years)

When appropriate, promote and support neighborhood and resident leader capacity building so that residents are empowered to take responsibility for developing and implementing their own projects, plans and activities. These more community driven projects are also known as “public work” initiatives.

### Best practice says

Robert Chaskin, author of several studies of community empowerment and the “capacities” needed in order for a community to truly “empower” residents with the final decision-making authority needed for true public work, says five main capacities contribute to empowered residents:

- A sense of community (community can be a neighborhood or “city”)
- Access to resources
- Problem solving skills
- Networks (described as “bridging” social capital which includes “vertical” relationships with other community leaders who may have more official power or authority, and “bonding” social capital which includes the “horizontal” relationships residents have with people “like them” in terms of their power or status)

- Hope for change

Other experts describe this level of engagement as “identifying and mobilizing community assets” and as “developing capacities and resources for community decisions and *actions*” (see McKnight and Kretzmann, 1997).

### **Menlo Park strategies**

Building trust and helping the diverse communities within Menlo Park develop the capacity and infrastructure for successful community action takes a long time. Before individuals and organizations can gain influence and become players and partners in public work, they may need additional resources, knowledge and skills. Our strategies at this level in the Spectrum include determining how best to provide these resources as conditions for empowerment evolve. The most common strategy for this type of empowerment is to provide support for neighborhood organizing and support for the development and implementation of neighborhood plans, which has occurred with the reassignment of the Community School Director to this function for 25% of his time as well as the repurposing of the Onetta Harris Community Center as a neighborhood problem-solving resource center.

One challenge to plan for when this stage of community engagement starts to become more fully realized will be the maintenance of realistic expectations about the level of staff support that can be provided to community driven initiatives.

### **Next steps**

- Convene the cross-departmental team (code, police, housing, Community Services) to continuing refining the emerging neighborhood capacity building strategies (completed Fall, 2011).
- Build upon the National Night Out and begin forming block groups and schedule initial block level cleanups (Clean up held spring, 2011)





# Community Engagement Evaluation Plan

## Approach

Although almost everyone can agree that effective community engagement results in improved community decision making and achievement of community acceptance for potentially controversial decisions, it's hard to find anyone who can describe in concrete terms how to actually measure the success of community engagement efforts.

Two primary approaches are recommended by scholars (see the Kettering Foundation, the Harwood Institute) for evaluating community engagement efforts:

1. **A performance indicator system** judges success based on identified attributes of “successful” community engagement activities, including factors involved in the decision making process (it allows full stakeholder participation, it is accepted as legitimate by stakeholders), mutual understanding among internal and external stakeholders, trust and confidence in the sponsoring agency, and the acceptance of the actual decisions that are made.
2. **A program outcome or program logic model** judges success based on identified outcomes measures, or the results the program is expected to achieve, such as whether or not residents know how to access city services or feel they are well informed about decisions, knew about opportunities to participate or feel that the City considers community input when making decisions.

## Menlo Park strategies

We utilize the performance indicator system to evaluate individual activities and community engagement processes and utilize the program outcome / logic model to evaluate the overall impacts of the community engagement program.

## Next steps

- Continue evaluating all processes with the new standardized performance indicator instrument.
- Continue implementing the evaluation plan supporting the community engagement program logic model (below).



## Community engagement program logic model (FY 2011 – 2012)

This model specifies the evaluation strategy for the Menlo Park Community Engagement Plan.

Strategies	Immediate outcomes	Indicators	Short term outcomes	Indicators	Long term outcomes	Indicators
Clarify key messages	Organizational values are clarified and key messages developed	Key messages are defined	Key messages appear in all Menlo Park communications vehicles	Consistent look and messages in communications	Residents feel that Menlo Park City government is open, responsive and responsible	High ratings on biannual resident survey
Regular newsletters, web updates, media releases, other communication vehicles	High quality info on City policies and programs available to residents	High resident satisfaction with communication methods and messages	Residents know how to access City services, are well informed about decisions	High resident satisfaction with City service quality and accessibility	Improved City services, high quality of life	High resident satisfaction with the community overall on biannual survey
Media policy / media relations training	Responsive media policy defined and understood by staff	Media policy approved, staff trained	Staff respond confidently to media requests	Staff report support for media relations as satisfactory	Media relations and city coverage are positive	Positive, extensive media coverage of City issues and information
CE Model Guidebook and Training	Engagement approach reflects resident preferences, and best practices	Guidebook and training completed and understood by staff, commissions and Council	Clear process plans and expectations, high quality public dialogue processes	Consensus achieved; resident satisfaction with decisions	Public will is built for lasting decisions, high engagement in community processes	High resident satisfaction with City engagement processes and decisions (survey)
Effective community engagement processes designed and implemented	Staff and Council understand community values, needs and concerns	High participation in workshops and other events (representative of demographics)	City policies, programs, services are responsive to resident values, needs, concerns	Consensus regularly achieved; resident satisfaction with decisions	Improved City services, high quality of life	High resident satisfaction with the community overall on biannual survey
CCIN and Direct Connect refinement	Residents have direct, 24/7 access to service help, questions and a forum for input	Direct Connect response goals are met, CCIN system goals are met	Council and staff have support, skills and resources needed for effective constituent response	Response goals are met and staff and Council rate support as satisfactory	Residents feel that Menlo Park City government is open, responsive and responsible	Low conflict; public will built for City decisions
Support provided for City departments' engagement efforts	Departments have resources needed to provide inclusive processes that create public judgment	High participation in workshops and other events (representative of demographics)	High quality public dialogue	Continuing engagement in processes (# of participants is high throughout)	Improved City capacity to engage residents in decisions impacting quality of life	Low conflict; public will built for City decisions; satisfaction with services

## International Association of Public Participation Community Engagement Spectrum

Levels of community engagement have been described by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as including a spectrum of activities demonstrating varying levels of public participation in decision-making depending upon the goals, time frames, resources and level of public interest in the decision.

The *IAP2 Spectrum*, below, describes levels of community engagement across the top and typical goals or purposes for those levels down the rows, as well as the implied expectations the community will have at that level and the typical methods of engagement used (note that each level incorporates the goals of prior levels).

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Typical goals</b>	Provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding services, problems, alternatives and / or solutions	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and / or decisions	Work directly with the community throughout the process to consistently understand & consider concerns and aspirations	Partner with residents in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and choice of the preferred solution	Place final decision-making in the hands of residents
<b>Promise to community</b>	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed. Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will work to ensure that your concerns & aspirations are directly reflected in alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice & recommendation into decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
<b>Sample methods</b>	Web sites, news releases, fact sheets	Focus groups, surveys, meetings	Workshops, deliberative polling	Commissions, committees, participatory decisions	Delegated decisions, ballots





**City of Menlo Park**  
**Community Engagement Model**  
**Guidebook and Tool Kit**

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# **City of Menlo Park**

## **Community Engagement Guidebook and Tool Kit**

**Spring, 2011**



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## Introduction

### How this guidebook is organized

The guidebook has three major sections – An overview of basics; detailed “how-to” steps for implementing the Model’s three stages; and a Tool Kit of various community engagement process methods. Included in green boxes are examples for many of the how to steps.

### **More than you ever wanted to know about..... everything**

These brown boxes provide the research and best practices background supporting the methodology of the steps in the guidebook. Not necessary for doing the work, but fun to know if you care about the “science” of community engagement.

### Sources

The ideas in this guidebook have many sources including formal trainings, loads of books, professional organizations and the experiences of members, best practices and plain old “in the trenches” experiences. Much of the knowledge is cumulative but when a source is known, it is cited. Much of the knowledge and language comes from the firm of KezziahWatkins, whose principals have been doing community engagement process work in communities across the country for over 30 years.

## Core Values and Basic Principles

### What community engagement is / isn't

Community engagement is any process involving residents in problem solving or decision making or using public input to make better decisions. The ultimate goal of community engagement is to make decisions reflecting a lasting public or community judgment. The long term outcome of meaningful community engagement is an increase in trust in local government and the replacement of a sense of alienation with a sense of community.

This does not mean community engagement always results in decisions that make everyone happy. It does mean that those who most oppose a decision will understand why it was made and will often go along, however reluctantly, because they had an opportunity to be heard.

Community engagement is not a substitute for decision making by an organization or elected body, but should be an important influence upon it.

Community engagement is also NOT public relations, although some of the tools are similar.

Most of all, community engagement is NOT a cure for conflict or a magic bullet. Often, community engagement activities surface conflict and provide a productive way to manage and resolve conflicts and controversy.

Here's what residents of Menlo Park said community engagement means to them:

- We really want to know the answer and do something with it so people feel heard
- People feel they've been listened to even if they don't agree with the outcome
- Residents feel that City Hall belongs to them
- Constant nurturing of relationships
- Convert people from outsiders to insiders
- Residents do not feel betrayed
- People are informed about core / underlying issues; less likely to be polarized
- Trust increases



It's clear that in Menlo Park people expect, even demand, that we use community engagement at least routinely, if not for every decision we make. There are no hard and fast rules for creating community engagement that meets all these expectations, but there are some core values to ground us, some best practices to suggest approaches, and some tried and true tools to support meaningful engagement. The purpose of this guidebook and tool kit is to be a reference for implementing effective community engagement processes meeting these core values and basic principles.

## Core values and principles

The International Association for Public Participation, an international leader in community engagement, has developed Core Values for use in the development and implementation of community engagement processes. These core values include:

- Community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process
- Community engagement includes the promise that the community's contributions will influence the final decision
- Community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers
- Community engagement seeks out and facilitates the involvement of all those potentially affected by or interested in a decision
- Community engagement provides participants information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Community engagement communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

## Open / Honest / Fair

Experience also shows several important principles which, if followed, always contribute to successful processes:

- The decision making process is **open** to everyone, with every person given an equal opportunity and encouragement to participate
- There is a genuine intent to truly listen to what people have to say and to reflect their concerns in the final decision; all information, including the potential positive and negative impacts of any proposed solution, is **honestly** provided to everyone, equally.
- All voices are equal and considered **fairly**.
- An organization's role is to state and clarify the need for the decision or the problem to be solved, not to sell a particular solution
- There is no "general public" there are many publics who care about many different things
- Effective community engagement is more an attitude than it is the methods used

## Roles and responsibilities

One common source of confusion when thinking about designing effective community engagement process involves questions about roles and responsibilities. Council and Commission members and appointed City staff are in these positions of authority because they are good at solving problems and making decisions... if residents are going to be making decisions, what's the job of Council, Commissions and staff?

Valuing and using community engagement is not a substitute for or abdication of decision making in public organizations. No one charged with ultimate authority and responsibility should simply turn over decisions to the publics they serve. This would certainly betray a trust placed with those authorities and may even be an irresponsible breach of the organization's charge or mission. So what's a responsible leader to do?

The community engagement model presented in this guidebook defines **leaders' roles** in this way:

- Identify the problem to be solved (we describe this as selling the problem, not the solution)
- Make sure that the problem is effectively communicated to the publics who could be impacted by possible solutions
- Decide what role public participants will play in the decision making process and what elements of a decision are not negotiable
- Decide how, and to what level, community engagement will influence the decision
- Hear first hand and genuinely consider the ideas, wants and desires of people when making the final decision
- Hold to the process outcomes and allow no compromising on an open, honest and fair process
- Absolutely refrain from any old-fashioned “deal cutting”

The community engagement model presented in this guidebook defines **staff roles** this way:

- Serve as information-givers, using technical expertise and professional experience to describe options as well as their pros and cons, and benefits and implications in order to make sound decisions possible
- Serve as facilitators, not necessarily of meetings, but in designing and carrying out community engagement processes
- Develop recommendations that are sound, fair and politically supportable by the decision-makers by helping people turn uninformed opinion into public judgment
- Track input and provide feedback on results to the participants and the decision makers
- Act as champions for community engagement in general and for specific processes overall in order to facilitate building trust and a sense of community

If a **Commission or Community-based Committee** is involved, their roles should be defined this way:

- The key here is to be careful not to create a process that pits the responsibilities of standing committees and boards against the responsibilities we're placing on participants
- Bring experience and perspective to bear in helping to define the problem or opportunity the process is being designed to address
- Promote attendance and participation, especially through personal contact
- Host meetings and attend and participate in others
- Honor the process results in their decision making and incorporate them into recommendations to Council
- See appendix A for sample "charges" to Commissions and Project / Advisory Committees

**Residents and participants** have a role, too:

- Choose to participate (or not) in any process involving a decision impacting them
- Keep in mind that by not participating they are consenting to the final decision made by others, no matter what that is
- When participating, provide honest input, listen respectfully to others and work hard to reach compromises on difficult issues

## When to do it

There is no absolute formula for determining which decisions should include the community. Different issues and different situations will call for different levels of engagement and different engagement methods. The three phase process planning steps in the next section of this Guidebook will help you sort this out in the most effective way. Generally, though, community engagement is the right approach when decisions involve conflicting and / or competing public values or goals, such as:

- We're considering changes in use or deletions of service (or people will have to give up something they think of as a "right")
- We're dealing with environmental issues
- A project is perceived to have impacts on people's property rights, property values, quality of life or safety (keeping in mind that it's people's perception of the facts that matters more than the "facts" as staff might define them)
- We wouldn't want it in our backyard, wouldn't understand it without our inside knowledge or it wouldn't seem fair if it wasn't our idea (does it impact some people more than others?)
- The decision involves trade offs or weighing of one value in comparison with another (aka conflict!)
- Community support would help achieve a goal (such as community building)
- There is an existing legal or administrative requirement for engagement

Community engagement is **NOT** advisable if:

- We have absolutely no choice about what to do
- There is a crisis which needs to be handled immediately
- Nobody cares about the issue (but we should *always* check this assumption)
- We absolutely will not pay attention to what the community says

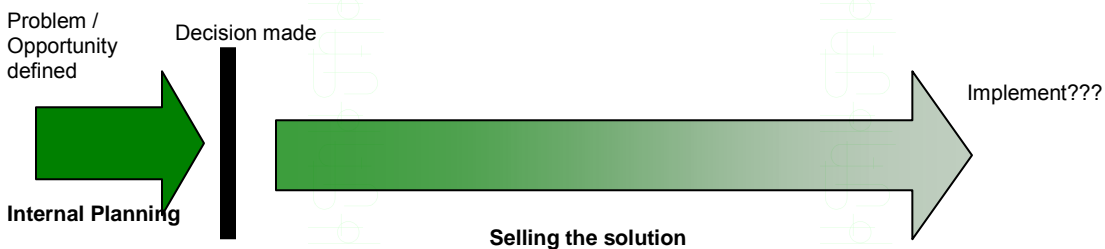
## A Key Question:

**Will community engagement mean it takes longer to do projects?**

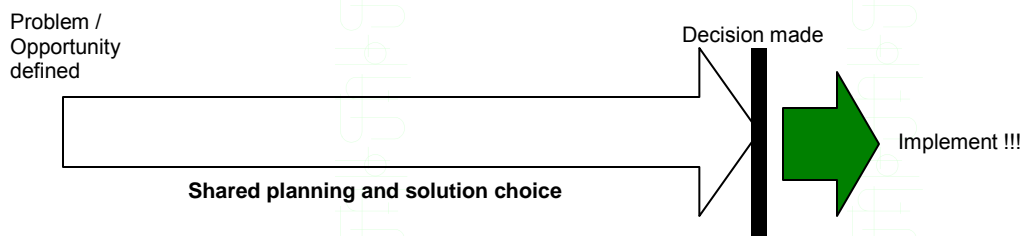
## Here's the answer!

Although it may feel like it takes longer because more time is spent up front in the planning stage, there is MUCH less time spent defending decisions that, in some cases, never get to the implementation stage. When organizations do a good job of involving people in discussing the problem or opportunity and the alternatives on the front end, less time needs to be spent in selling the final solution. Implementation becomes much less tenuous.

### Traditional / Unilateral Decision



### Decision made with community engagement



## Stages of Public Participation Planning

There are three basic stages in planning a meaningful community engagement process. Each stage also includes a series of steps that look something like this:

### Stage One: Decision analysis

1. Clarify the decision being made (develop the problem or opportunity statement)
2. Decide whether public participation is needed and for what purpose (determine the level of engagement needed)
3. Identify any aspects of the decision that are non-negotiable, including expectations for who makes the final decision
4. Identify the stakeholders and their interests (determine the scope of the project)

### Stage Two: Process planning

1. Specify what needs to be accomplished at each public step
2. Identify what information people and process facilitators need to build public judgment
3. Identify appropriate methods for each step

### Stage Three: Implementation planning

1. Develop a supporting communications plan
2. Plan the implementation of individual activities
3. Plan the input analysis process
4. Honor and evaluate the process

## Stage One: Decision Analysis

### Problem or opportunity defined

The very first step in designing any community engagement process is to define the problem that needs to be resolved or the opportunity we need to take advantage of. This sounds like it should be easy, but it's not. You'd be surprised how often problems and issues are defined in "solution" language – in such a way that a solution is implied from the start. Misunderstanding the problem is also a common trouble spot for community engagement processes.

An easy way to begin is to ask the process planning team to brainstorm the consequences of doing nothing. What would happen if the problem wasn't solved or the opportunity not pursued? Here we need to keep in mind whether or not doing nothing would be irresponsible, given our mission. If doing nothing is not an option, we have a real problem that needs to be addressed.

Put down on paper not just how the team sees the problem, but how those impacted by the issue might describe it in a problem or opportunity statement. **Keep asking "why is that a problem?"** until you reach the most fundamental level possible. This statement will be used to draw people in to the process. It should link with their self interest at the broadest level and help us "sell" the problem as a way of compelling people to participate.

We all look at situations through our own "lenses". The key to getting a problem statement right is to see the problem as those whose lives will be affected by a solution will see it. We should always consider testing our assumptions about this with a few interested residents, Commission or Council members.

A good problem or opportunity statement should:

- Clearly establish the goal the project is designed to accomplish in it's broadest terms
- Be concise
- Be factual
- Be framed in language everyone can understand
- Not suggest solutions (for example, don't say "traffic calming on Main Street is needed." Say: "Traffic speeds are excessive on Main Street and it is not safe for pedestrians or bikers")

The problem statement will be included in every piece of information we produce for a process. We should present it both visually and verbally at the beginning of every meeting we hold. It will serve to focus attention on the reason for the process and the goal everyone is trying to achieve.



## Here's an example of the evolution of a problem statement:

### Iteration #1:

Santa Cruz Avenue has a PQI below the City's standard.

*Why is that a problem?*

### Iteration #2:

The road is rough and causes wear and tear on automobiles. It's not very attractive and it's difficult to drive on.

*Why is that a problem?*

### Iteration #3:

A rough road can cause drivers to have difficulty controlling their car and contributes to accidents – there are schools in the area and children walk along the street.

(Then, the fundamental nature of this problem is that the road is increasingly unsafe for drivers and pedestrians and must be fixed)

### *Final Problem Statement:*

Santa Cruz Avenue is one of the top five most-used streets in Menlo Park, especially for east-west traffic and as an emergency vehicle and school route. But the project area is also one of the worst roads in the City. It's crowded, left turns are difficult, and the road surface is really rough. Poor drainage in the area makes the situation worse and often results in flooding and standing water. All these conditions are causing concern for safety of people who drive on or walk near the road and something must be done to solve these problems.

### **Here's another example:**

#### **Your City Your Decision**

The City of Menlo Park faces a \$2.9 million budget shortfall in 2006-2007. This gap represents 10% of the City's annual operating budget and will widen over time if nothing is done. Short-term savings and lower impact cuts made over the last four years have not been enough. A permanent solution to Menlo Park's budget crisis is needed and will involve many tough choices and trade-offs.

## **More than you ever want to know about..... the importance of problem statements**

Experts say that public problems persist largely because we confine ourselves to debating solutions for them. We don't get past arguments about what to do. This happens because we don't take time to understand the problem well enough to deal with the fundamental issues. How we should respond to a problem should be the last matter we discuss. To progress toward solving a problem, we need to step back from solutions. Before we can identify and evaluate our options, we need to understand exactly what the problem is, what's at stake, and why it's so difficult to come up with an effective, supportable response.

Fox and Miller (1996) call this important problem definition step "situation-regarding intentionality" (p. 123) which they believe is important to assure that the public process is about something, about contextually situated activities, and brings participants closer to the common ground of public interest over self-interest: "By connecting their claims to a situation, discussants are better able to direct everyone's attention to the public policy question that matters most: What should we do next?"

They say that situation-regarding intentionality promotes a "higher level of generalization" (the public interest) than the standpoint of the "atomistic, utility-maximizing individual" (self-interest).

Yankelovich (1998) also discusses the importance of framing the issue as the first step in deliberative processes designed to develop public judgment. He says, "Citizen engagement requires elaborate preparatory work. The first step is to define the policy issues from a citizen, rather than an official, perspective" (p. 6).

The National Issues Forum (1996) believes "people only become involved when they see a connection between what is valuable to them and the issues of the day. So problems or issues have to be named in terms of what is most valuable to people, that is, in public terms" (p. 2).

Good problem statements do all these things to make a process effective, and so that is always where we start.

## Level and purpose of community engagement defined

What level of community engagement is right? Levels of community engagement have been described by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) as including a spectrum of activities demonstrating varying levels of public participation in decision-making depending upon the goals, time frames, resources and level of public interest in the decision.

The *IAP2 Spectrum*, below, describes levels of community engagement across the top and typical goals or purposes for those levels down the rows, as well as the implied expectations the community will have at that level and the typical methods of engagement used (note that each level incorporates the goals of prior levels).

	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Typical goals</b>	Provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding services, problems, alternatives and / or solutions	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and / or decisions	Work directly with the community throughout the process to consistently understand & consider concerns and aspirations	Partner with residents in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and choice of the preferred solution	Place final decision-making in the hands of residents
<b>Promise to community</b>	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed. Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will work to ensure that your concerns & aspirations are directly reflected in alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice & recommendation into decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
<b>Sample methods</b>	Web sites, news releases, fact sheets	Focus groups, surveys, meetings	Workshops, deliberative polling	Commissions, committees, participatory decisions	Delegated decisions, ballots

Deciding what level of engagement will occur involves seriously considering the impacts of the problem as it was stated in step one. It also involves thinking about the level of involvement needed for the decision to have “legitimacy” – that is what level of engagement is needed so that the decision can be implemented once it is reached – what level will make the decision “count”? Usually the greater the public concern, the higher the level of engagement needed.

The level of engagement will also depend upon factors like resources and time frames available for process implementation. It’s also helpful to consider these questions:

- Do you want the people involved to just give you information about how they perceive the problem and whether or not something should be done about it?
- Do you only want their advice on how you should approach the solution?
- Are you investing them with the authority to make the final decision?

Sometimes it can help to define the Givens (see below) when determining how much of a final decision is actually open for debate or input.

One fun way to think about levels of engagement is to compare it to how you might describe dessert options to your dinner guests:

**Inform:** “We’re having chocolate cake for dessert tonight.”

**Consult:** “I was thinking of serving chocolate cake for dessert. Would that be OK?”

**Involve (phase one):** “What type of dessert would you like tonight – sweet or salty?”

**Involve (phase two):** “OK, you said sweet; I’ve looked at what’s in the cupboard and we could have cake or ice cream or cookies... what do you think?”

**Involve (phase three):** “OK, you said you wanted ice cream, do you have any flavor preferences?”

**Involve (final decision):** “ We’re having chocolate ice cream based on your input.”

**Collaborate:** “Let’s sit down together and figure out what we want for dessert tonight – we could make it together.”

**Empower:** “Here’s \$20, go out and buy or make dessert for us tonight” OR “We will vote on which dessert to have from this menu of choices.”

## Project Givens

The next step in decision analysis is to identify any aspects of the decision that are non-negotiable, including expectations for who makes the final decision; this further refines the thinking done in the previous step.

Givens are the elements of a decision that the organization would be irresponsible putting up for discussion. Considering the City's or your department's mission, are there any conditions you would be irresponsible to let anyone else decide? Are there any responsibilities we have that we cannot let anyone jeopardize? What solution could people come up with that we would never be able to implement (the "why not's" become the givens)?

Sometimes it's helpful for the project team to think of givens as "curbs" or "the box" within which the community will make a decision. It tells people what the boundaries are.

Usually, givens describe legal, moral and ethical, safety or financial constraints we face and must honor. They should never be just our preferences and should never be used to manipulate a process. We should also make sure what we think the constraints really are – if residents want to raise money to increase the budget for a park improvement project, isn't it really the City's contribution to the project that is a given rather than the total budget? Givens should be tested with Commission members or interested residents to make sure we're not including any assumptions. Givens should always be formally submitted to the Council for agreement (and, ideally, formal approval) before a process begins. Even more valuable would be for Council to assist in the development of the Givens especially when they will be the ultimate determiners of what decision making can be delegated.

Keep the list as short as you can.

The only Given that is **ALWAYS** included is a process one: who will make the final decision. If there are several steps that must occur before final action and implementation, this process Given should include those as well. Participants need to be very clear about what will happen with what they say.

### *Givens will be stated early and often*

Just like the problem statement is developed at the beginning of a process, Givens are clearly stated at the outset, in all communications about the process, and at every meeting.

## Examples of givens:

### *Willows Area Traffic Study*

- The project area is defined as the residential area between US 101, Willow Road, Middlefield Road, Woodland Avenue and Manhattan Avenue, including a small portion of the City of East Palo Alto (see map on reverse).
- Cut-through traffic is defined as any traffic generated outside the project area and traveling through the project area to a destination outside the project area.
- Implementation of any traffic calming measures approved as a result of this study will comply with the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP), beginning with the Resident Survey for Trial Installation. For more information on the NTMP, see [http://www.menlopark.org/departments/trn/ntmp\\_final.pdf](http://www.menlopark.org/departments/trn/ntmp_final.pdf)

### **Your City Your Decision**

Serving as a framework for the residents of Menlo Park to help set budget priorities are a list of conditions which must be met:

- The City budget must be balanced.
- The safety of Menlo Park residents will not be compromised in any way.
- State and federal mandates must still be met.
- Financial indebtedness must be honored.
- Prior votes of the people must be honored.
- Services will be provided to professional management standards.
- City staff and Council want to hear people's ideas about what services are the priority; the City will decide HOW those services will be delivered; and
- The City Council will make the decision on the final budget.

## **Stakeholders and their interests (determine the scope of the project)**

The third step in the decision analysis stage is to identify a list of people who might want to be involved --everyone from individuals to groups, from early supporters of a specific solution to those you may not yet have heard from. Who will probably care about the issue or project? These are your stakeholders. You'll also make a list of what they are likely to care about.

**Stakeholders are...** groups and individuals who will be affected by or who will likely care about the problem or opportunity to be addressed. Don't forget your internal interests like other City departments and the news media. Assume that all stakeholders you can think of have an interest in participating and let them decide if they'll get involved or not.

**Interests are...** the things the stakeholders care about.

These lists will help you determine the scope and complexity of your process. If there are many stakeholders, you'll need more methods for engagement and those methods will need to accommodate a larger number of people. You might even need to repeat methods to make sure everyone has an opportunity to be involved. You'll also be relying more on the media to get the word out to a broader audience if the stakeholder list is long.

If the list of interests is long, understand that the problem is complex, so the solution and the process will also be complex, so plenty of time will be needed to develop that solution and weigh in on its implications.

Short lists may indicate you'll just need one meeting or even just a cup of coffee with a few key people!

These lists are not intended to serve as exclusive lists of participants, but serve three purposes:

- Helps you see the problem / opportunity as those affected will
- Gives you an initial contact list for project promotion and communication; and
- Hot issues you may need to begin gathering background information about

Use your project team to make these lists, then ask others, including some of the stakeholders, to provide input as well. Think about adding to the lists as you work through the rest of the process design steps.

Then, take one more look at the problem as you've defined it. Does your understanding of the problem / opportunity still hold? Do you have any new insights now that you've thought through who's likely to care and what their concerns might be?

## Examples of stakeholders and interests:

### Willows Area Traffic Study

#### Stakeholders

- The “traveling” public
- Neighborhood homeowners and renters
- Area school students, parents and staff
- Utility companies
- News media
- Police and Fire Departments
- Neighborhood activists (listed individually)
- Residents of nearby neighborhoods
- Runners
- Bicyclists
- Adjacent park users
- City Public Works Department
- Area businesses

### Willows Area Traffic Study

#### Interests

- Safety of the roadway
- Ease of travel
- Impact on residential areas
- Noise
- Cut-through traffic
- Decision-making process
- Pedestrian safety
- Underground utilities
- Speed limit
- Drainage
- Sidewalks
- Trees
- Safety of the neighborhood
- Accessibility of the neighborhood



## **More than you ever want to know about..... stakeholders**

Experts say that a productive public discussion depends on making sure all perspectives on the problem are incorporated into its descriptions and the generation of potential solutions. The problem outline must fairly and sympathetically encompass the outlooks of every segment of the public. Granted, this comprehensiveness is not to be realized perfectly. For people to feel the discussion process is fair and will serve their interests better than more adversarial strategies, they need to be assured that their particular views will receive an honest hearing.

Briand (1995) believes that because no single gathering of citizens can include everyone, the full diversity of a community will not be reflected in any single outreach technique. However, the community's full diversity can be captured through a well-planned process. He observes, "This means that public discourse participants must guard against the temptation to believe their views are representative. Because it's impossible to assemble a truly diverse group of citizens, participants should discover what other community members think, so even if they aren't physically present, the group will take their views into account" (p. 27).

Fox and Miller (1996) say: "It is expected that in an authentic discourse, the stances and viewpoints of participants will undergo alteration. One may endorse the provisional results of a given discourse, if one has had an equal chance to influence that discourse, even if one's own points did not prevail."

This step is vital to the success of later steps. Briand (1995) states, "It is hardly possible to overrate the value...of placing human beings in contact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar...Such communication has always been, and is peculiarly in this present age, one of the primary sources of progress" (p. 29).

Making sure we're including diverse stakeholders also helps ensure that different perspectives hear from and are influenced by one another's needs and wants – people are much more likely to participate in a give-and-take around a compromise when their "adversary" is another resident, not City staff.

## A Handy Tool

A chart like this can be used for recording stakeholders and their interests:

### Stakeholders and their Interests Matrix

Stakeholders					
Interests					

## Stage Two: Process Planning

### Coming to Public Judgment

An overarching goal for all community engagement processes is the development of public judgment, also called public will or political will, that allows a community-based decision to be seen as legitimate, politically supportable, and so, implementable.

Public judgment is distinguished from public opinion that is not seen as legitimate, lasting or implementable, largely because public opinion is not dependant upon factual information and core values. We all hold opinions about lots of things. Some of our opinions are fact based and some are developed based on media headlines, rumor, word-of-mouth and other often-questionable sources like blogs or wikis. Opinion alone is NOT good for problem solving. Opinions can and should change easily as more and different information and perspectives about an issue emerges.

Judgment, on the other hand, does not change by the introduction of inconsequential information, largely because judgment is linked to our central beliefs and values. The Pew Partnership for Civic Change says that a public judgment consists of a shared and common sense of our public priorities:

*Judgment is not the same thing as complete agreement or consensus. Nor is it simple compromise. Rather, a public judgment represents a shared conclusion about what is best, all things considered. A public judgment never loses sight of the importance of the good things that may have to be assigned relatively less emphasis in order to resolve a conflict. Accordingly, it insists they be respected insofar as possible.*

*In practice, a public judgment is achieved when people can say phrases such as 'what we can all live with' or 'what everyone can go along with.' Of course, in some cases a public judgment may prove elusive. There is no guarantee political opponents will acknowledge the validity of each other's needs and concerns. But a public judgment is a practical objective, attainable through patient and persistent deliberation.*

Daniel Yankelovich is an international expert on public judgment and the process people go through to develop it. Our process planning steps are based, in part, on his research and recommendations (see *Coming to Public Judgment*, 1991) which say our fundamental beliefs *can* be changed by information but the information must be so compelling that it requires us to re-examine principles we have held over time and are emotionally attached to. We make this change in stages that involve, as Yankelovich says, “confronting ambivalent feelings, accommodating unwelcome realities, overcoming the urge to avoid the issue

because it involves reconciling conflicting values, and, then, finally, overcoming the need to put our own needs above other ethical commitments.”

This means that the shared decision-making embodied in community engagement processes needs to take into account the fundamental values and beliefs held by community residents as well as the conflicts (both personal and interpersonal) that come with rethinking community opinions. It also needs to provide information so residents can develop judgment about issues and decisions ahead. And, it needs to include opportunities for people to discuss and collectively weigh the meaning of the choices facing them.

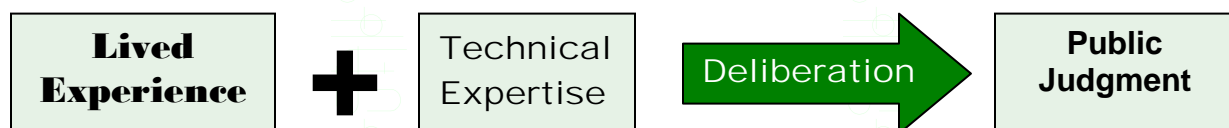
So, in order for a community engagement process to result in a public judgment, it must include:

- Factual information and opportunities to clarify it
- Deliberation – the opportunity to hear other perspectives, ideas and values
- Discussions framed as “what can we do to solve this problem?” rather than “how did we get into this situation?”
- Discussions focused on achieving the goal of a solution, rather than arguing from entrenched positions

For these reasons we structure community engagement processes in a sequence of decisions that helps people move through the phases needed to come to public judgment.

### **How the sequence of decisions works**

Community engagement works best when there is a partnership between local governments and residents, each bringing valuable information to the solution. Government staff bring factual information and technical analysis. People who will be impacted by the solution bring their “lived experience,” relating how the situation / solution has or could impact their lives. The ultimate result is a decision that’s responsible and politically supportable (a public judgment).



## **More than you ever want to know about.....public judgment**

Experts say that political questions are not factual and that reliance on technical experts and reason-based scientific knowledge shuts down public discussion, as there is no way to argue with the “scientific method.” They say public questions are different from scientific or technical questions because they are questions we must face without conceptual “yardsticks” by which to measure them or by “banisters” of accepted values. They are questions to which reasonable answers emerge in the course of argument, and to which there is no “truth” determined by someone else (Arendt, 1968).

Benjamin Barber (1985) has said, “It is a kind of ‘we’ thinking that compels individuals to reformulate their interests, purposes, norms and plans in the mutualistic language of public goods. ‘I want X’ must be reconceived as ‘X would be good for the community to which I belong’— an operation in social algebra for which not every ‘X’ will be suitable” (p. 171).

Goodsell (1990) believes this expression of public interest arises directly from the need to find ways to accomplish self interest through the cooperation of others. He argues that those advocating on behalf of the public interest at least claim to be decent and respectful of community norms. Other sorts of claims, such as those that occur in market exchanges, do not carry such implications. Speakers claiming to represent what the public wants invite others to join the appeal with broad arguments beyond self-interest. Goodsell says participants in this sort of discourse make meaning together and, in doing so, become serious about the public interest (p. 113).

Isaacs (1999) believes that dialogue and the discovery of common interest are linked more closely. He says dialogue achieves breakthroughs “by deepening the ‘glue’ that links people together. This ‘glue’ is the genuine shared meaning and common understanding already present in a group of people. From shared meaning, shared action arises” (p. 10). Isaacs says that this is particularly true under conditions where the stakes are high and the differences abound, where people harden their positions and then must advocate for them. To advocate is to speak for your own point of view, your own interests. Issacs says, “dialogue, as I define it, is a conversation with a center, not sides. It is a way of taking the energy out of our differences and channeling it toward something that has a greater common sense,” (p. 19).

Mary Parker Follett (1994) says this dialogue has even greater advantages than ordering individual thought in preparation to be shared. She says “the great advantage of discussion is that thereby we overcome misunderstanding and conquer prejudice” (p. 43). “If the multiplicity and complexity of interrelations of interests and wants and hopes are to be brought to the surface to form the substance of politics, people must come more and more to live their lives together.”

## What about “consensus”?

Sometimes, if issues are very controversial and thoroughly grounded in adversity, with hostility and values that absolutely conflict, reaching consensus on the best solution may not be possible. Deliberation can still develop informed judgment about the problem even if grudging agreement can't be reached.

Many times, though, consensus can be achieved on the best solution to the problem. Not to be confused with absolute unanimity, consensus can be described as an agreement that everyone agrees to live with, even though people may have had to give up something they wanted and did not achieve their solution of first choice.

Consensus is reached through deliberation. It is a series of agreements built one at a time until the final resolution is reached. Each party involved in consensus decision-making should be able to describe his or her state of mind at its conclusion as:

*“I understand what most of you want to do. That alternative is not my first choice, and I would like to do something else, I've had ample opportunity to have my views heard and to try to convince others to do what I want to do, but I haven't been able to. So, since this process has been open and fair, I'll go along with what most people want to do.”*

### Consensus assumes several things:

- There is common ground among competing / conflicting interests
- An overriding goal can be identified and agreed to
- People who disagree need not be enemies or adversaries
- There is legitimacy to every perspective
- People will work to accommodate each other's needs so that everyone gets more of what they want

## **The heart of any process – Sequence of Decisions**

The first step of Stage Two involves defining the Sequence of Decisions (see figure below) needed to reach public judgment on the issue or opportunity. We'll then select the appropriate engagement methods based on that sequence and the potential participants identified in Stage 1. In this step, we think through all of the information, including community values and concerns, as well as expert technical information, that people need in order to weigh the choices and do the hard work of coming to judgment.

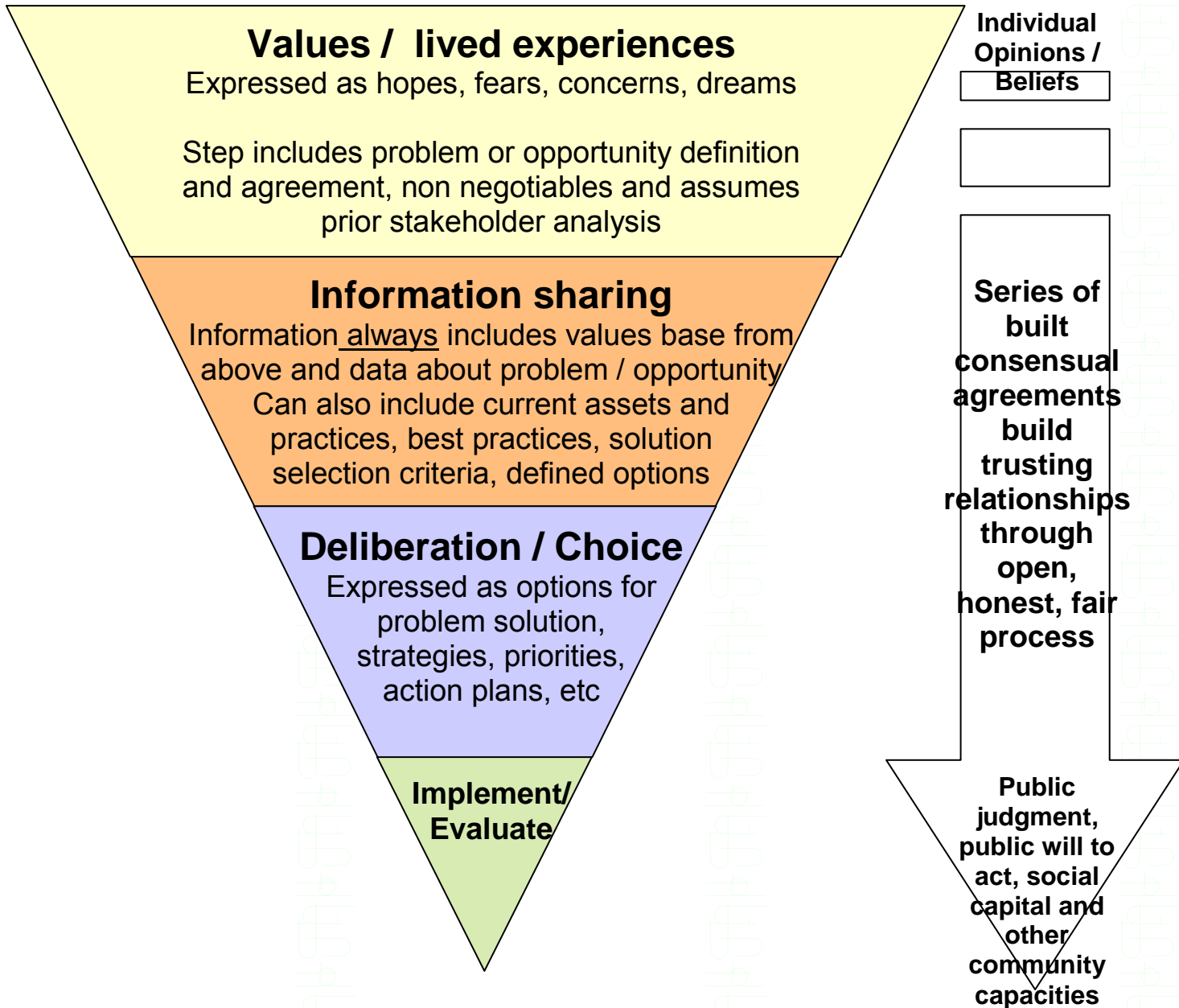
Community engagement processes, if they are to coalesce individual interests and opinions into group judgment and will to act, should always begin with the big picture where public interests, expressed as people's values, adhere in the definition of the problem. This is also the place where broadest agreement begins and can serve as the basis for a series of built consensual agreements that become more and more specific (and so, more conflict laden). This is why we spent some extra time writing a problem statement that was broad and connected with people's self-interest.

As discussions and decision points proceed through the process, topics and choices should become increasingly focused and specific. The graphic below represents the Sequence of Decisions, which reflects the general progression of decision points for most public deliberation processes, as they move from the "largest" value level with broadest agreement to the more finite level of concrete and workable options.

As we move through thinking about people's values, fears, concerns and hopes, then through the sharing of that information as well as any technical information about the situation and possible options for "what to do next" to the choice phase, people weigh the information-based options, hear from one another and work through their choice, ending the sequence with implementation of the solution. Structuring the back and forth flow of information and discussion in this way enables project planners to apply suitable methods and anticipate communication needs for each step.

Depicting the Sequence of Decisions in an inverted pyramid conveys the flow of discussion from broad and general to the specific selection of a preferred option. The completed sequence will be the template upon which we will overlay the engagement methods used at each step and then to overlay the information and communication strategies supporting each level in the progression toward judgment.

# Community Based Decision-Making Sequence of Decisions





## **Listening for Values – an important starting point**

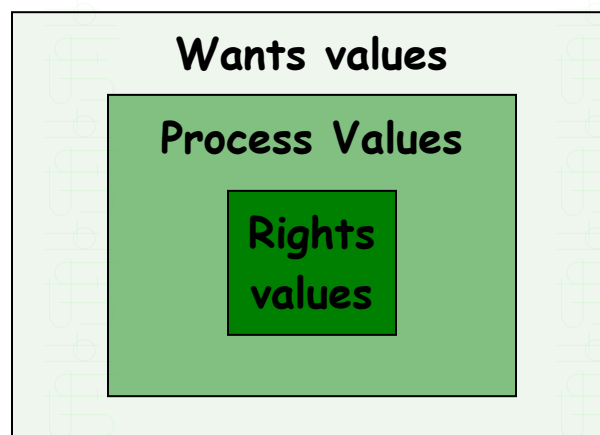
Community engagement processes begin at the top of the sequence by first uncovering the broadest, biggest and most opinion-based level of thinking and information, which we refer to as values but are generally expressed as concerns, hopes and fears, sometimes called “lived knowledge” -- it’s what people know without factual information from what they have personally experienced. This implies that the kind of questions we ask people at this first stage of a process should be those that do not need facts or data in order to be answered and can be expressed as hopes, fears, concerns and desires.

All of us hold certain values, things we believe are important, which influence the way we live our lives. Some of these values are preferences, or “wants” values such as “I want ball diamonds in all City parks.”

Values drive people to action, so it’s important to know what values are driving the people involved in our processes. This helps us understand their perspectives and concerns. This, in turn, helps guide us in developing alternative solutions which are most likely to match those preference values. People may have relatively strong “wants” but many times they are willing to accept others’ “wants” enough to modify their own.

There are also values that focus on process, and people generally consider these more important than “wants” values. In the United States, for example, fairness is a widely and strongly held process value. Most people believe that community engagement processes should be “fair” -- everybody should have an equal say and everybody should be given equal treatment. When values that deal with the fairness of a process are violated, people become very unhappy and our processes lose legitimacy. If any stakeholder group perceives a process as unfair – we need to take a time out to correct the situation.

Even more strongly held than process values are “rights” values which have to do with things that are sacrosanct, like the right to express an opinion or the right to have a vote that counts equally with every other vote cast. Rights are core values that must be honored in any process.

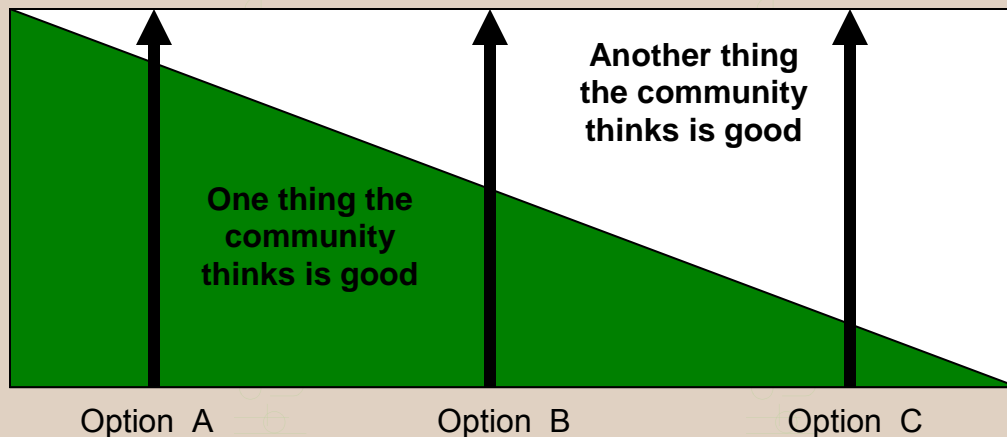


When we get responses to questions throughout our processes, whether verbal or written, we should listen for values. We can do this through listening for consistent preferences, often-used words and recurring themes. We need to make special note if we hear comments that focus on process or rights values, and make changes to our process if we hear these consistently.

## More than you ever wanted to know about..... values

Most public policy issues involve values conflicts, where the best policies strike a workable balance between two (or more) conflicting needs, desires or beliefs. When only one values dimension, such as cost, risk, feasibility, etc, is being considered we have a good example of a question for technical experts to handle on their own.

Ultimately, expertise and scientific study can inform values choices but there is nothing about expertise that provides a basis for making fundamental values choices. Community engagement processes can help us discover the relative importance stakeholders assign to the values choices that underlie a particular decision. More and more tools exist that attempt to provide ways for process organizers to quantify values conflicts (see Tools and Methods section).



Good community engagement processes help people understand that policy dilemmas involve tensions between values, or how to do one good thing without jeopardizing another good thing, so it always helps if questions are not framed to focus on “good” vs “bad”. No matter what we call the values conflicts involved in decisions, recognizing them will help people understand their differences and reach a balance that most people can live with. It helps people talk more clearly and constructively about what they want. Greater clarity, understanding and respect about agreements and differences usually results.

Another key is keeping discussion from focusing on “positions” and instead on the underlying values and interests for those expressed positions. There are usually more ways to satisfy interests than to bridge conflicting positions. A focus on values and interests can reduce conflicts and differences, minimize the divisiveness of creating “winners and losers” and encourage people to be more constructive.

### Here’s an example:

*Value:* I think children are vitally important to our community.

*Interest:* I want the health of our children protected.

*Position:* I want a legislated limit on the amount of mercury in our water supply.



This is another place where asking “why” helps you move up the chain to the broader levels of possible agreement from positions through interests to the underlying values.

## Focus Questions

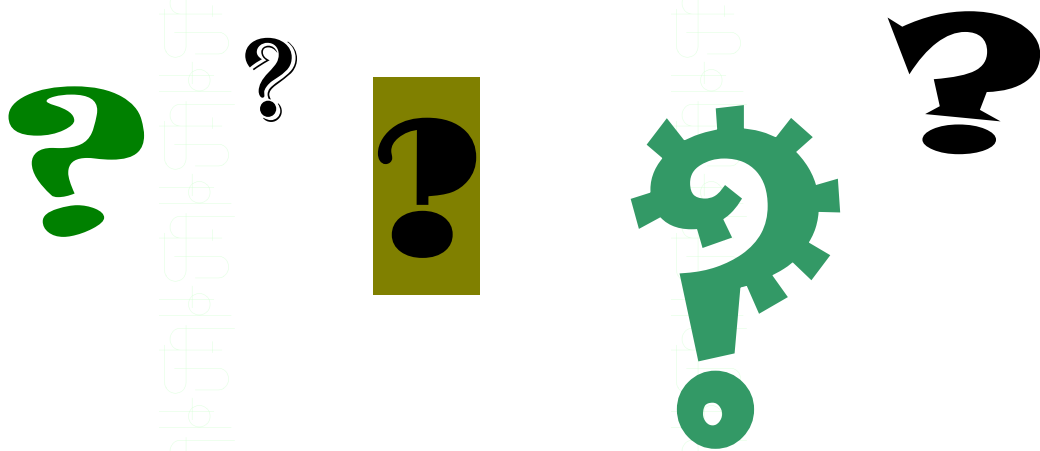
Each step in the sequence of decisions will always include one or more focus questions. A focus question is a tool developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs that ensures that the purpose of that process step is clear to everyone. We will develop focus questions for each step in the sequence of decisions, including those steps done internally.

To develop focus questions we ask: What do we need to know / what will people need to know from us to complete this process step? Then, we will create a specific question to be asked and answered through the methods we will choose later.

Good focus questions are strategic (see Appendix A, page 75) and:

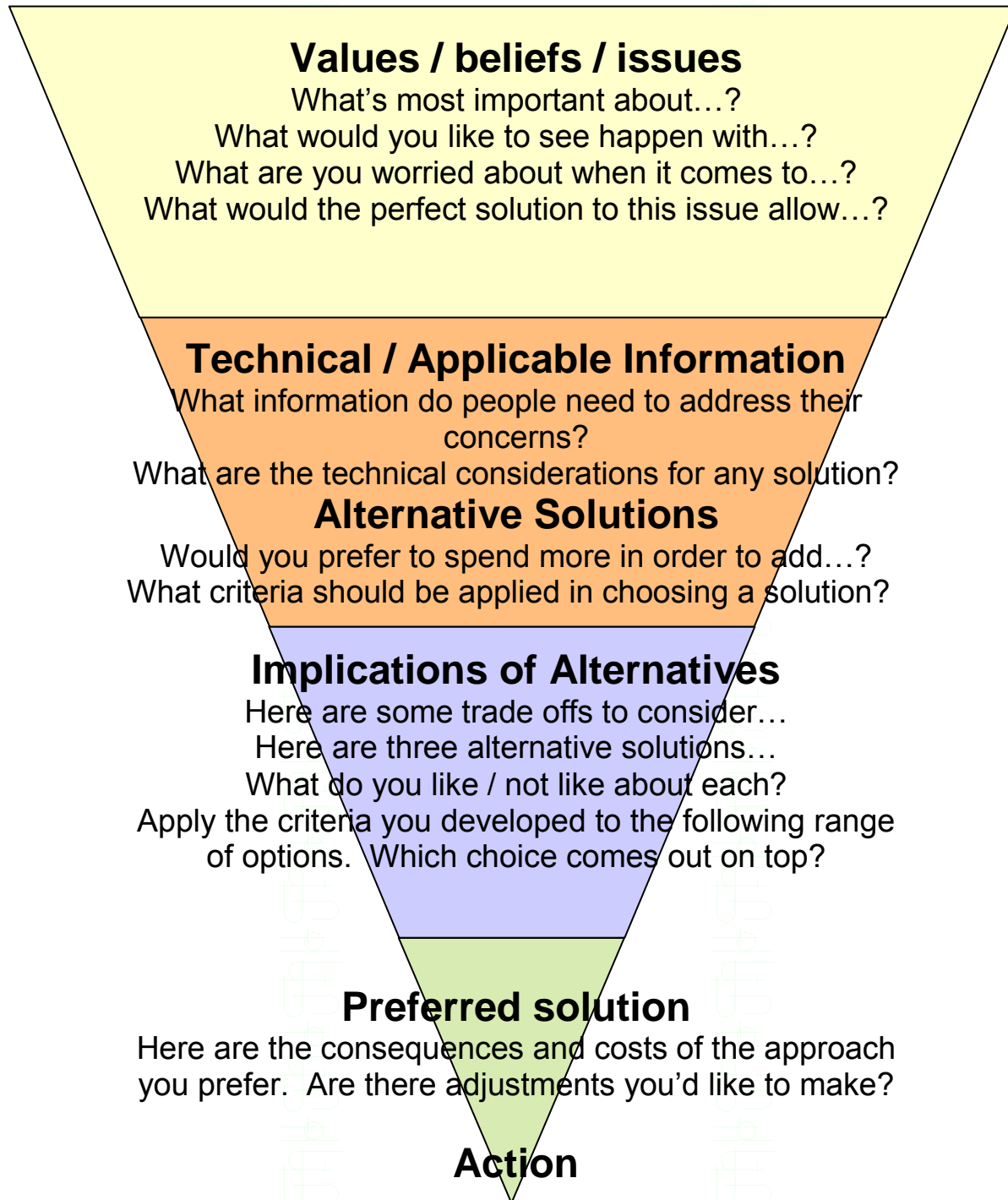
- **Are open ended** – *“List the greatest hopes and concerns you have about this project.....”*
- **Are impossible to answer with a “yes” or a “no”** – *“What suggestions do you have for increasing the safety of school children as they come and go along this roadway?”*
- **Are framed for a positive response** – *“What are the most important elements in the proposed design options and why do you think so?”*
- **Are neutrally worded** – *“What do you believe are the advantages and disadvantages of (insert options)?”*

More examples of focus questions are included on page 32.



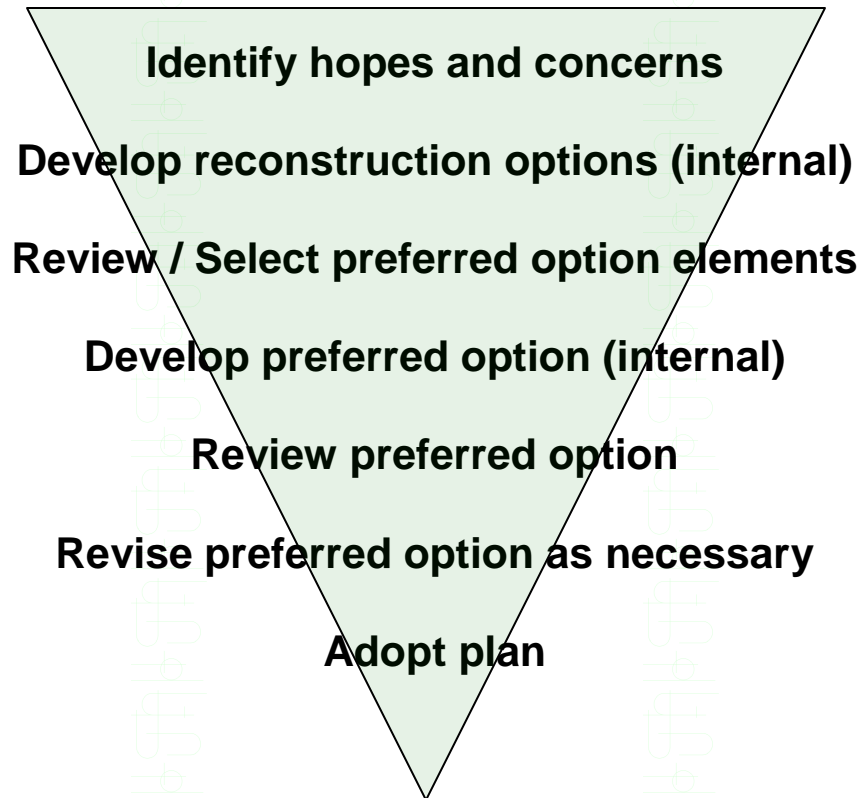
# Sequence of Decisions

## Typical focus questions



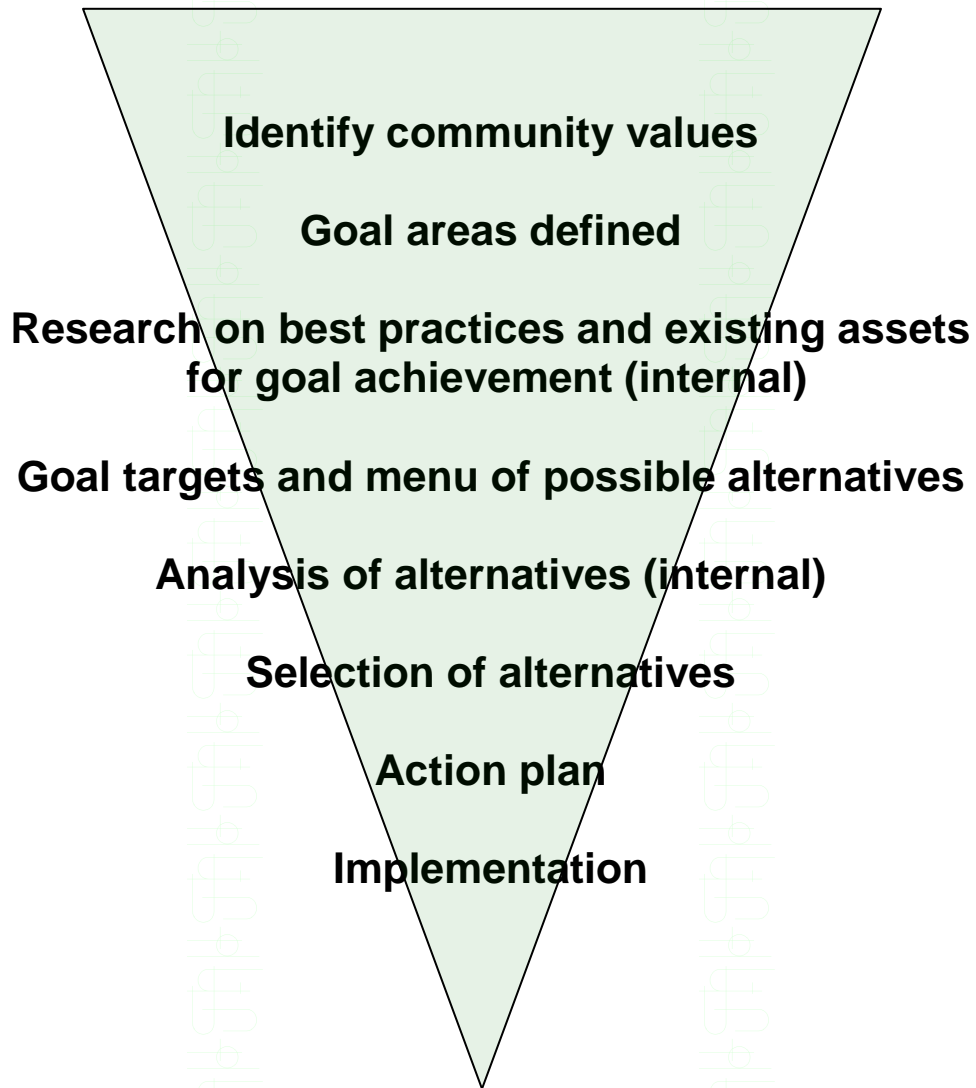
**Examples of Sequence of Decisions:**

**Street Reconstruction Project**



**Examples of Sequence of Decisions:**

**Community Vision or Planning Process**



## Process Design – important things to consider

We're almost ready to actually design the community engagement process and select the methods and tools that work best for each type of decision and each type of stakeholder.

This is a good time, though, in any process to go back and review the cumulative factors that are all converging at this point in our planning.

Here's why:

- The nature of the problem or opportunity drives the givens (and the givens can also help define the problem...) that will apply to the project decisions and the initial list of likely stakeholders and their interests
- The problem and givens drive the sequence of steps, determining what people will influence, what information is needed from them and what information we need to provide so that we all develop judgment
- The problem, givens, scope of the initial list of likely stakeholders and interests, and the sequence of decisions drive the selection of the methods for process steps; and
- The design of the process steps drives the communication strategy that will promote and support the process.

## Fundamentals

As we decide specific methods for each step in the sequence of decisions, there are a few fundamentals to bear in mind:

- **The broader the scope of the problem and the greater the number of stakeholders, the more repetitive methods we will need** – one workshop won't accommodate all the interests we need to hear from in a broad process. We need several, spread out geographically, with identical agendas, providing multiple opportunities for participation. All results then get combined.
- **The process needs to be structured for deliberation** – it's essential as people sort out option choices
- **Cast a wide net at the beginning of a project** – we need to use lots of different methods of communication and involvement in the earliest phases and spend more time at this stage to engage people initially.

- **Use personal contacts for recruitment** – printed materials alone won't communicate the importance of participation. Nothing works as well as personal contact either from staff or from a source known to those we're reaching. The most effective method, by far, is friends asking friends.
- **Move process activities to where people are** – Expecting people to always use our timetable and our venues will result in very few faces we don't recognize. To find out what lots of people think, we need to go to them, where they already are. It's especially important to make sure those most impacted by a decision can participate easily. Sometimes things like food, childcare, transportation or even a small stipend help promote attendance.
- **Good community engagement processes bring out conflict** – Remember that conflict and an accommodating atmosphere are not mutually exclusive. It's better to have the issues on the table so they can be addressed proactively, rather than to have them surface at decision time.
- **Use consensus techniques as much as possible** – choose methods that reinforce people working together for a common goal; avoid "voting" and work instead toward a series of built agreements

### **Evaluating Options**

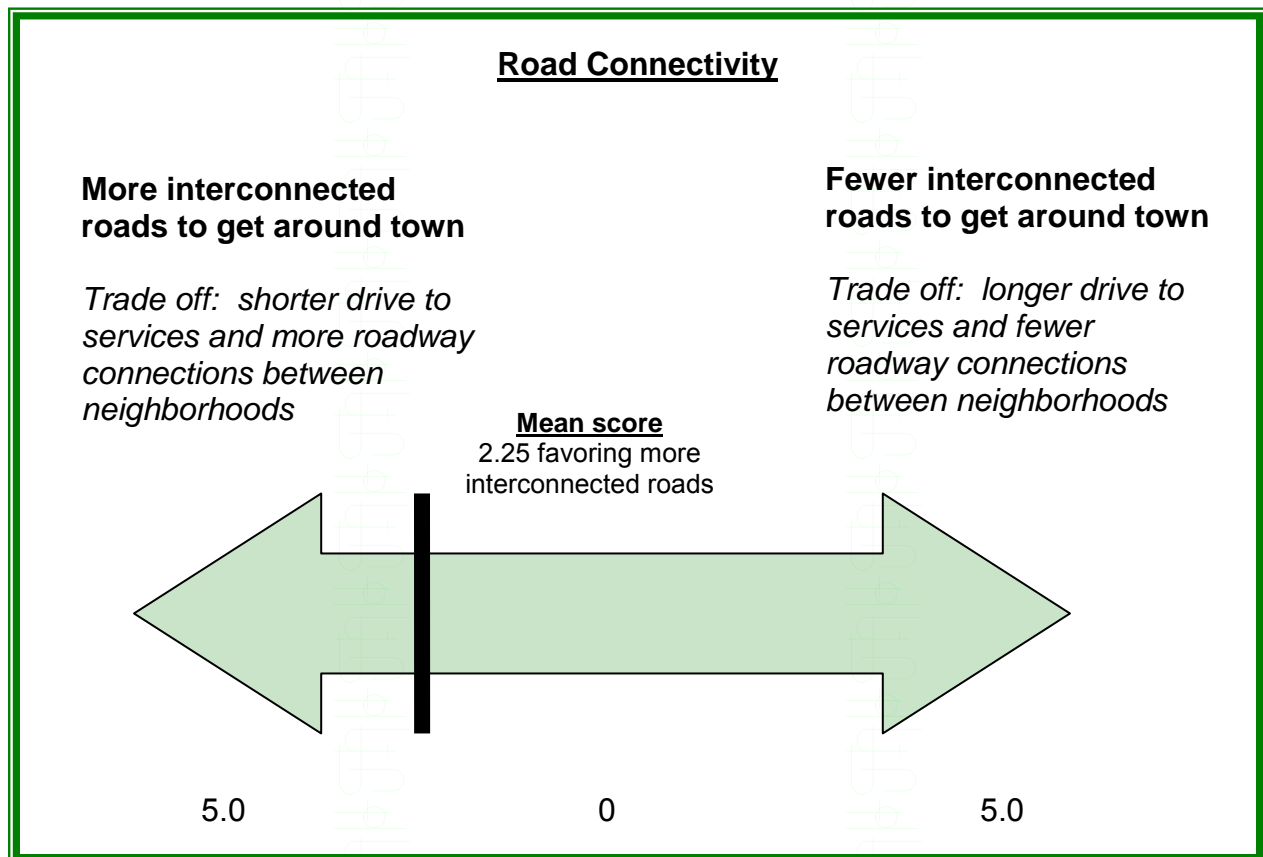
- Alternative solutions to the problem your process is addressing need to be considered and evaluated as objectively as possible.
- One way to do that is to establish a set of criteria early in the process against which to weigh each alternative. While you are thinking about what information you need to provide to people at each step in the process as well as what information you need to get from people, you should consider whether "criteria for decision making" questions fit in that mix.
- If you are dealing with a question that starts out broadly but will eventually narrow to a specific controversy as adverse impacts on a specific neighborhood or community group emerge, development of decision evaluation criteria in advance can be helpful.
- The idea is that if people have a hand in crafting the criteria, agree it is a fair set of standards and agree on how they will be applied, you will go a long way toward establishing fairness of outcome, even though not everyone will be happy once the applied criteria lead to a specific conclusion.



Here's an example of how a criteria chart might work for a park design project

<b>City Park Criteria</b>	<b>Option A</b>	<b>Option B</b>	<b>Option C</b>	<b>Option D</b>	<b>Option E</b>	<b>Option F</b>
<b>Ease of access to park</b>	X		X			X
<b>Separation of ball fields and play grounds</b>		X	X	X		X
<b>Buffering from neighborhood impacts</b>		X	X			X
<b>Weekend access</b>		X	X	X		X
<b>At least two ball fields</b>	X	X			X	
<b>Soccer field</b>						
<b>Unprogrammed spaces</b>	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>Safety for ball players</b>		X	X	X		X
<b>Improvements to play ground areas</b>	X			X		
<b>Picnic facilities</b>	X	X	X	X		X

- You can evaluate options in a workshop or open meeting setting. Always try as hard as you can to have more than two options; dealing with only two choices means that people divide in favor of one and opposed to another, creating winners and losers; often the best solution is some combination of choices.
- If there are only two choices, structure the question to ask what parts of each option people like best and what gives them concern about both, rather than asking which option people like best.
- It's also possible to evaluate alternatives by using a visual preference system that asks people in small groups to decide their group's level of support for a variety of different scenarios. The scores of all small groups are then compiled into a mean score for each scenario, providing valuable guidance to staff in developing a final plan.



## **Pitfalls of a Committee with “outcome” decision authority**

When local governments think about involving the community in a decision, the first approach considered often includes appointing a committee. There are some disadvantages to this that we should always consider:

- You’ll never be able to appoint everyone who believes his or her interests should be represented.
- Asking Committee members to serve as “representatives” of a constituency is an almost impossible assignment. The traditional committee is usually composed of people who are used to making decisions, so they will be likely to make them - expressing their own preferences rather than communicating effectively with their constituents. This effectively renders other opportunities for public influence by the “non-committee” public meaningless. This scenario has the potential to make everyone angry – people who feel that their input was ignored and committee members whose decisions about outcomes may be overturned by the final decision making body.
- As soon as there is a committee they are viewed by others as “insiders” who have been co-opted and their work becomes suspect.
- One important outcome of community engagement is relationship building – why limit this to a select few who most likely already have a relationship?
- Committee recommendations represent the judgment that they have developed as individuals in the course of becoming informed. Any consensus they reach likely represents only the consensus of those individuals, not necessarily among those who have not had the same information and dialogue. This makes a final “public judgment” and so, a politically supportable decision, unlikely.

### **Best case scenario – the Committee has “process” decision authority to:**

- Ensure that all voices are equal in influencing a decision rather than appointing some to be – or to be perceived as – more equal than others.
- Agreeing to a clear charge for the committee (in writing) and including in that charge: affirming the design of specific input methods; recruiting others to participate; hosting meetings and other gatherings; affirming findings of the public input activities; attending and participating in public meetings, workshops, etc.
- Being diligent in keeping everyone informed about how their input was used in developing the final resolution.

### **Sample Advisory Committee Role and Responsibilities in Community Engagement**

The X Advisory Committee will fill an essential role in the development of the (project name). Working in partnership with the consultant team and staff, the Committee will help ensure that the community engagement process is based on both community dreams and on technical analysis and achievable possibilities. Specifically, Committee members will:

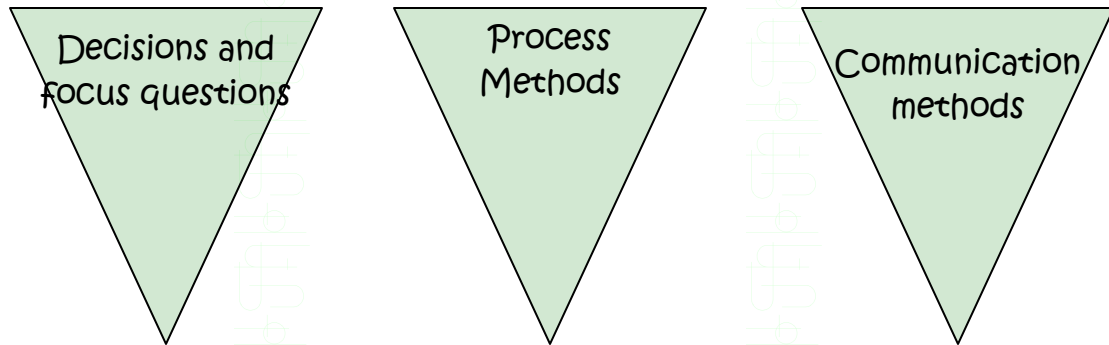
- Serve as a sounding board for plan ideas
- Serve as a liaison to your respective constituencies or the community at large
- Promote participation in planning events to your constituencies and to the community at large
- Attend meetings of the Committee and public planning events; and
- Do your best to achieve Committee consensus on community engagement process elements and serve as a strong voice for process implementation. In the event that consensus on process elements is not possible, unresolved recommendations will be sent to the (X Commission / Council) for final resolution.

**Here's a TIP:**

**Always spell out the role of a committee or a commission in the givens**

## Finally – designing the plan

One good way to map out a process plan that includes the communications techniques for each step (we'll do that next) is to start with three sheets of flip chart paper with the triangular sequence of decisions shape on each.



- 1.** On the first sheet, write the decisions and their focus questions in order, from the broadest at the top to the final decision at the bottom. It will help to number each decision step. This sheet is the framework for the details you fill in on the other sheets.
- 2.** On the next sheet, number from top to bottom to correspond with the steps on the first sheet, then list all the process methods you'll use for each step, including internal ones (see page 34 for a chart of the best methods for each general process step and Section III for the Methods Toolkit).
- 3.** On the third sheet, again with decision step numbers from top to bottom, apply the communication methods you'll use at each step.

Finally, apply a calendar. Given what you've decided to do at each step, how much time is required for each? Continue to adjust the calendar until it is manageable.

Doing this with your entire project team creates a project outline that identifies how much time and resources are needed to accomplish the intended results as efficiently and effectively as you can.

## Example of a Project Outline: Roadway Reconstruction Project

### 1. Identify Hopes and Concerns (May – July)

- Focus questions: What would you like to see as Main Street is redone? What would you be worried about?
- Engagement methods
  - Door-to-door personal conversations / interviews along the length of the project area as well as a postcard survey on case residents were not available for interviews
  - Noon-time briefing meetings at gathering places around the community
  - Table at local mall for “stop by” interviews and conversations
  - Hotline phone number answered by a real person to take comments and answer questions
  - Initial series of three identical workshops to present problem, givens and conduct an “around the room” identification of issues and concerns related to the project
  - Survey on the City website
- Communication methods
  - Project newsletter to all residents and businesses within ½ mile of project area plus adjacent neighborhoods
  - Project newsletter and survey on website
  - Project engineer appearance on local radio call-in show

### 2. Site Analysis / Development of Construction Options

- Focus questions: Are there physical constraints on roadway reconstruction? What reconstruction elements best achieve the hopes and best avoid the concerns expressed in Step One?
- Engagement methods
  - Internal work by City Engineers
- Communication Methods
  - None (internal step)

### **3. Discussion / Selection of Preferred Options**

- Focus questions: Based on what people said they wanted and are concerned about, and based on your own beliefs and experiences, which of these options for each element do you prefer?
- Engagement methods
  - Three repetitive workshops (identical format and agenda) held in two weekday evenings and a Saturday morning at a school near the project area. Information on choices presented included: upgrade street lights or leave as is; maintain two lanes widen to three or widen to four; reduce or increase speed (specific options provided) ; install sidewalks on one side, the other or both, or none.
- Communication methods
  - Second issue project newsletter with options / response card
  - Second issue newsletter on web page w/ response option
  - Newspaper article

### **4. Develop Preferred Options**

- Focus question: Based on the choices people made in Step Three, how should the roadway be reconstructed to best include those preferred elements while meeting professional design standards?
- Engagement methods
  - Internal work by City Engineers
- No communication methods (internal step)

### **5. Review Preferred Options**

- Focus questions: Have we got it right? Are there major changes that must be made to achieve what people said they wanted?
- Engagement methods
  - Final workshop that presented preferred option. Discussion produced agreement to change one element.
- Communication methods
  - Third issue project newsletter with options / response card
  - Third issue newsletter on web page w/ response option

### **6. Adopt reconstruction plan**

Formal public hearing and Council vote with supporting announcements.

## Overview of Community Engagement Methods

See Section III for a complete tool kit of methods. This chart provides an overview of the best methods for each major phase of the sequence of decisions.

<b>Public Participation Methods</b>		
<i>To solicit opinion only, with minimal judgment</i>	<i>Individual judgment without deliberation</i>	<i>Individual / group judgment with deliberation</i>
Surveys: written, telephone and in person at community events; on websites; in newspapers and newsletters; as postcards	Personal interviews	Community connectors
Individual / small group interviews and personal conversations (with interview formats and data recording methods)	Television with call-in / email responses	Meetings-in-a box
Focus groups / community roundtables	Mailing / newspaper insert / bill stuffer with response forms	Focus groups / community roundtables
Public forums		Existing community and neighborhood organizations
Existing community and neighborhood organizations (data recording methods)		Workshops / charettes / design workshops
Other website responses	Other website responses	Open meetings



## Stage Three: Implementation Planning

### All you need for success!

You've analyzed your decision and the reasons for a community engagement process; you've worked through your sequence of decisions and have a logical process plan that will build public judgment; now, the last thing you need to do in order to prepare for a successful community engagement process is Implementation Planning.

This involves four steps:

1. Developing a supporting communications plan
2. Planning the implementation of individual activities
3. Planning the input analysis and data tracking process
4. Determining the evaluation activities and a feedback loop

### Developing a supporting communications plan

This is an absolutely essential step in the development of a successful process, and it needs to be built into the plan from the beginning, not as an afterthought. In fact, communication should happen before, during and after every step. Extensive communications to support the process:

- Helps people understand the problem or opportunity and link it to their lives
- Lets people know the process that will be followed to make the decision
- Encourages broad and active participation in the decision-making process
- Keeps participants and other community members informed as the process progresses
- Announces the results of the process and how those results were influenced by community engagement

At the beginning of a process it is important to take a marketing approach because you've got things to "sell," such as the problem / opportunity; how it affects people; the importance of participating; and the open, honest and fair process that will be used to make the decision.

It's often a good idea to develop a short "definition piece" – a handout that defines the project and process and helps promote involvement. This piece should be distributed as widely as possible at the beginning and throughout the process as new people join in. It should include "the Big Three" of community engagement process communications:

1. The problem or opportunity statement
2. The givens
3. The process steps and time frames

That way, everyone will know from the beginning why the process is being undertaken, the constraints on the decision making and how they can participate.

A simple graphic with project name and logo helps make your communications more recognizable and fun. It doesn't need to be fancy – clip art will work!

### **Revisit your stakeholder matrix to identify targets for your marketing**

With all of our busy schedules and the thousands, if not millions of messages bombarding us all every day it takes a lot of effort and creativity to get the attention and interest of people we want to reach. Personal recruitment and “target” marketing are key.

By far the most effective way to get people to participate in your process is to have those people personally invited by someone they know, either through a phone call, letter, postcard, email, social media, e-vite (or better yet, all!).

### **The One-to-Many Method**

A good method for accomplishing personal recruitment is called the one-to-many method. All you need to do is get a group of people, say 30, to each commit to personally recruiting five of their friends, neighbors, co-workers to attend your meeting or event. That's 150 people who have been personally invited, and chances are a good portion of them will respond. A key to making this method more successful is to ask your original contacts to fill out a form documenting who they will contact, and then following up with them to make sure those contacts have been made.

Other non-traditional, personal methods include:

- Personalized letters / post cards
- Telephone trees
- Direct mail
- Door hangers
- Short articles in neighborhood, organizational or church newsletters
- Short presentations at neighborhood get-togethers
- Flyers in grocery stores
- Movie theater announcements
- Road way “Burma Shave” signs (especially good for road related projects)
- Facebook “likes”
- Tweets – “Hey – I'm going to x meeting right now; join me!”

### **Keep it simple**

The primary goal of the communications part of your process plan is to make sure people understand the problem and how it affects their lives. That means it's very important to talk with people like you would talk with your own neighbors, using words that real people use. Avoid jargon, government-speak and technical terms that a limited number of people understand.

### **Work with the media**

It's important to give everyone equal opportunity to get involved, even if they don't appear on our stakeholder / interest matrix, so you also need to work with local media to get the word out. Before you begin your process, set up a meeting with the newspaper reporters who cover our community. At the meeting, share the problem or opportunity statement, the givens and the process plan and ask for help in promoting the process so that as many people as possible can get involved.

### **Communications during the process**

After your first blanket of communications to welcome people into and promote the process, you need to have ongoing ways to report on the issues, information and dialogue during your process so that everyone will know what is being discussed and decided as the process unfolds. Throughout the process you also need to provide a feedback loop so that people will know what you did (or could not do) with what they've told you.

An effective way to do this is with a project newsletter, short meeting summaries, or email blasts which help clarify issues, document progress and make sure everyone has full access to all information.

Although they can't provide a method for deliberation, initial newsletters can elicit ideas about the project that are based on belief and opinion, such as people's hopes for solutions, concerns about impacts or implied values.

Using a project newsletter involves an initial investment of time to develop as broad a mailing or email list as possible, and adding to it throughout the project. Make sure it's not the only communications tool for your process, but do use it regularly to let people know the opportunities to get involved.

Be strategic about electronic updates and meeting summaries through email, since not everyone is comfortable with or has access to a computer (your stakeholder list can help identify when this method works and when it doesn't).

Throughout the process, remember to keep the newspaper informed and encourage attendance at as many meetings as possible.

## Communicating the process results

When your process is finished it's important to communicate the results. People also need to be reminded about the process that was followed, what was decided, and the next steps for implementation.

The most important thing when communicating results is letting people know how what they told you through the process was used in the final decision. If they see no relationship between what was said and the process outcome, it's unlikely they will ever participate again. So, organizing messages in a "here's what you said so here's what we did" format, in writing, electronically and verbally, is best. You might also need to include "here's what you said and here's why we couldn't do it" messages. One of the biggest complaints from people who are asked to get involved in community engagement processes is: "Nobody told us what they did with what we said." Let's make sure we close the loop!

Also at the end of a process, you might want to host a celebration or "thank you for participating" event that would personally acknowledge folks who participated.

### Key Messages for Community Engagement Processes

"Solving (or not solving) this problem could directly impact you by..."

"We need your help in making these decisions."

"It won't be possible to make everyone happy."

"Not everyone will be able to get his or her first choice; we'll need to be open to compromise and improvement."

"We would be irresponsible if we didn't assure the following givens..."

"The givens provide the 'box' within which this decision will be made. It's a pretty big box, but it does define where we need to concentrate."

"Here's what you said, so here's what we did (or did not do and why)."

## Planning the implementation of individual activities

Stage three, Step Two involves planning for your individual community engagement activities.

### Location and site logistics

The meeting logistics are very important to consider in an open, honest and fair community engagement process. Some things to consider include:

- **Adequate notice** – people need time to arrange child care or possibly transportation
- **Location familiarity** – choose sites where people customarily feel welcome or that are familiar to most people
- **Parking** – is it convenient?
- **Accessibility** – is there full access to people of all abilities?
- **Physical comfort** – people are put off by cold meeting rooms, poor acoustics and uncomfortable seating
- **Varied meeting times** – people have different commitments; often it is appropriate to hold the same meeting at different times and in different locations
- **Space for work** – will the meeting space accommodate the number of people likely to attend? Is there space for easels and presentation materials, and a flip chart to record what people have to say?
- **Accommodations for those who might not otherwise participate** – such as child care and transportation
- **Amenities** – refreshments (don't have to be fancy) help set a friendly, open tone for meetings; you should also make sure people are personally welcomed at the door and consider using name tags that can also be helpful in setting a welcoming tone

### Agenda and format

Forget the usual public meeting where people get “talked at” for the entire time and then are allowed to ask questions only if some time remains. It can sometimes be good to start the meeting with questions; list them on a flip chart for all to see. Then have presentations, followed by addressing any of the questions that remain.

At a workshop, where people will be asked to do work and accomplish results, presentations have to go first so that people have the information they need to do the work. A good rule of thumb, though, is to plan for no more than one-third of your total time for presentations of information. Consider mailing or emailing participants detailed information ahead of the meeting.

However you design the meeting, it is a good idea to post and review the agenda at the beginning so that people know what to expect. If you expect the meeting

to be highly charged, you can also ask the group to agree to the agenda so that if someone later tries to derail it, you can reinforce the group's agreement.

Remember, also, to begin every meeting with the Big Three: problem, givens, process.

### **Ground rules**

Meeting ground rules help to establish a courteous and respectful tone and help place responsibility for a productive meeting with the participants. They can also help ensure understanding of the process, allow agreement to the process and charge the group with the responsibility for the success of the process.

Sample ground rules include:

- You have a responsibility to say what you think
- You have a responsibility to listen carefully and with respect to others
- Try hard not to dominate the discussion, and, if necessary, ask others not to
- Help keep the record accurate
- Help keep the group on time and on track
- Agree to try your best to reach decisions by consensus
- Be open to compromise and improvement; accept what you can live with, even though it may not be your first choice
- Can you agree to these ground rules?

### **Group Memory**

Group memory refers to the record kept of a group's discussion and or meeting results. It's best to use flip chart paper or projected computer documents so everyone can see the record of what's being said and have a chance to correct it if necessary.

If your meeting involves small group work, it's important that all groups bring their work back in group memory form to use in reporting out to the larger group.

In addition to the work that's on the meeting agenda, it's helpful to ask people to fill out a form giving their ideas and preferences regarding the project because it allows people to individually register their thoughts, and it gives you a record of what's on people's minds.

## Planning the input analysis and data tracking process

Stage Three, Step Three involves thinking ahead about how you will manage and analyze all the input you collect.

Questions you will need to think about in developing your data analysis plan include:

1. What form will the data be in and what were you hoping the data would tell you? (This should be easy if you used your sequence of decisions correctly.)
2. Who will be responsible for crunching the data?
3. What format will you use to report the data back out to stakeholders?
4. How will you store the raw data (you should be ready to share the notes, surveys, transcripts or whatever form the data was collected in...)?

### Tips on qualitative data analysis

A lot of the data that is collected in community engagement processes is “qualitative,” in the form of ideas or comments or open-ended responses to questions as opposed to “quantitative data” or things that can be counted. Qualitative research places more emphasis on the “quality” of the data and is often analyzed using a “thematic” approach that follows a process that looks like this:

#### “Prefiguring” the field

Analysis of qualitative data begins before it is collected by being aware of the theoretical responses to your focus questions and anticipating what you may find.

Pre-figuring the field runs the risk of us only finding out what we want to find by only looking for specific responses, or by being blind to other issues that arise. By being aware of these pitfalls we can maintain openness and be attentive to issues that are not expected. Being aware of our own values, ideas and pre-judgments as “researchers” is known as reflexivity.

#### Iteration

Iteration means moving back and forth between data collection and analysis. In qualitative research it is difficult to cleanly separate out data collection or generation from data analysis because there is movement back and forth – every new piece of input we gather helps us shape the next steps in the process. Find someone on the team who likes to deal with detail – whomever starts the data analysis will need to read and re-read the raw written input to begin to identify themes, patterns and meanings.

Researchers often write analytical notes to themselves about the data they're currently collecting and analyzing and then use these notes to inform the next bout of data collection. These analytical notes include things like:

1. The identification of patterns and themes based on categories defined by the sequence of decisions
2. Working out the limitations, exceptions and variations present in the responses
3. Generating tentative explanations for the patterns and seeing if they are present or absent in other settings or situations
4. Using our knowledge of the community to provide deeper understanding of responses and their relationship to participants' motives, meanings and behaviors.

### **Triangulation of analysis**

It is very rare for qualitative data to be collected all in one go, then processed and analyzed. If this happened we might criticize the process for not being true to the context in which it was generalized. One way of producing believable, credible and trustworthy data analysis is to use “triangulation” which simply means we look for confirmation or consistency of our conclusions across different input methods in different settings.

Although computer programs are available to do this analysis, it's also possible to do this with several people grouping “things that go together” based on key ideas, common words or levels of information that support other ideas.



## More than you ever wanted to know about.... “reliability”

Sometimes the validity or reliability of a process is challenged as not statistically representative of the community. The following points can help you respond to these concerns:

- **Validity** – as well as words like ‘reliability’ and ‘generalizability’ are used by researchers to evaluate the soundness or trustworthiness of a research design and the resulting conclusions. It’s important to stress that community engagement is NOT social research in and of itself, although similar approaches may be used.
- **It’s about community judgment** – Community engagement is not designed to simply measure where people are in their thinking at a given moment (one of the most common goals of social research); community engagement processes are designed to develop public judgment about an issue or opportunity. These processes are designed to be deliberative and result in stronger community relationships of trust between residents and government and among residents themselves.
- **Qualitative data** – as we said above, a lot of the data collected in community engagement processes is qualitative and so achieves its validity and reliability through the richness of the detail as well as the breadth and depth of the information. Although methods for collecting the data are not usually statistically valid (although demographics information can be collected to help demonstrate the representativeness of the stakeholders involved), qualitative methods are often more reliable for community decision making because of their detailed, scaffolded nature (building to public judgment from public opinion).
- **Community decision making is most like “participatory action research”** – because of its assumptions that multiple realities exist in communities. Participatory action research is most often used for “finding solutions to practical concerns as well as developing knowledge” (Morse, 1997). Participatory research is a “self-conscious way of empowering people to take effective action toward improving conditions in their lives” (Dey, 1993). This kind of research is purposefully more than data gathering.
- **Public judgment vs public opinion** – Daniel Yankelovich, known for his work on public judgment, makes a clear distinction between quantitative “statistically representative” public opinion polling and public judgment reached through a deliberative community engagement process. He views public opinion as “popular impulses at a particular time,” likely to be inconsistent and subject to change. He defines public judgment as “a particular form of public opinion that exhibits (1) more thoughtfulness, more weighing of alternatives. More genuine engagement with the issue, more taking into account a wide variety of factors than ordinary public opinion as measured in polls and (2) more emphasis on the normative, valuing, ethical side of questions than on the factual, informational side” (Yankelovich, 1991).

### **Honor and evaluate the process**

Stage Three, Step Four involves ensuring that your process results are utilized by the final decision makers as determined in Step One. This step also includes evaluating your efforts and using the feedback to make changes and improvements for the next process.

There is no more important element in community engagement processes than honoring the process when the final decision is made. If we engage an often-skeptical citizenry in a process we have positioned as genuine and have promised people they will influence the outcome, it is absolutely essential that the true intent is to honor that outcome. Not to do so will set trust back MUCH more than not having done a community engagement process at all.

### **Honoring the process involves:**

1. Staff presenting the recommendation to the appointed bodies and reflecting exactly what people who participated in the process believe it was intended to include.
2. Sometimes there are circumstances that constrain us from reflecting the outcome of the process precisely – timing, budget, and applicable regulations are possible examples. These circumstances should have been included in the givens. If they have arisen during the process, they should have been communicated to participants for consideration. If they have emerged since people developed the recommendation, make sure people know how things have changed and why -- BEFORE submitting the recommendation.
3. Appointed bodies, such as committees or commissions, which will review the recommendation, should be aware of and involved in the process all along. Their obligation is to act on the recommendation upholding the commitment made to the process.
4. The Council is where final accountability for honoring most processes will rest. It's possible that people who are not pleased with the final outcome will try, privately or publicly, to apply pressure on decision makers to override the process. Succumbing to that pressure may momentarily satisfy those who apply it but will create outrage among those who counted on the dedication of elected and appointed officials to keep their word. The opposite is also true – publicly stating and keeping a commitment will be recognized and acknowledged and community values and partnerships will be strengthened.

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the process should be conducted both internally and externally. Hopefully, at every opportunity you've asked process participants to let you know how you're doing. Make sure to write down incidental feedback you get along the way and include it in the final evaluation of the process.

### Individual methods evaluations

*Typical post-meeting evaluations often include questions like:*

1. How did you hear about the meeting?
2. What prompted you to attend?
3. What was of greatest value to you about the meeting?
4. What suggestions do you have for meeting improvement?
5. Did you feel your input was welcomed?
6. Room for other comments
7. Room for name, email and or address (but make it optional – have a separate list for signing up for mailings and email blasts)

### Post-process evaluations

An evaluation of the entire initiative is often valuable. A short survey e/mailed to all participants can also double as a thank you and can help you understand what people valued about the process as well as what they'd recommend you not repeat. You can also use your outreach committee or another group of participants to help you review the process. Make sure that you include questions about how people received information about the project so you'll know what communication methods are working best.

*Typical post-process evaluations often include questions like:*

1. Did you feel that ideas and recommendations from the process were considered by decision makers?
2. Did you feel there was sufficient opportunity for learning about the topic and for deliberating with other community members about solutions?
3. Was the process open, honest and fair?
4. Was the process well-managed?
5. Would you participate in another community decision making process?
6. Was getting involved easy? If not, why not?
7. Was communication about the process adequate and accessible?

### **Internal evaluation with the team**

An internal evaluation is also helpful. Convene everybody who helped with the project, including Council members if appropriate.

*Typical internal evaluations often include questions like:*

1. What worked / what would we definitely repeat?
2. What project elements would we change or eliminate?
3. What did evaluation forms or feedback indicate were strong elements that should be retained / repeated? Eliminated or improved?
4. Were participants “representative”?
5. Was there early involvement from a majority of our identified stakeholders?
6. Did the process genuinely influence the final decision?
7. Were process decisions made in a transparent and open way?
8. Was the process as cost effective as possible?
9. Was the process result accepted as legitimate by stakeholders?
10. Did various groups of stakeholders understand others’ concerns?
11. Was the key decision improved through the process?

### **Don’t forget to say thank you!**

Next to honoring the process, the most important piece of follow-through is to express your thanks to participants – each and every one! It’s more powerful for people to receive individual letters of thanks than for a generic thank you to appear in the newsletter or in a newspaper ad. Other ideas for thanking people include:

- Include the names of all participants in the final written report
- Post participants names on the City Website with thanks
- Thank people after every meeting, including asking people to give themselves a round of applause

# Methods Tool Kit

## General rules of thumb for selecting methods

- **Tailor your methods to your process needs** – if your analysis of stakeholders and interests shows you have many of each, you'll need many methods to give everyone a fair opportunity to be involved; if your list of interests and issues is small, you can effectively use just a few methods – a few phone calls or a coffee with a couple of folks might even be enough!
- **Remember your initial methods need to be aimed at opening lines of communication with all your stakeholders** – later on in the process the purposes of the methods will change – they may expand to accomplish hands-on work, express a choice about options, etc.
- **Make participation easy and friendly for people (not staff...)** – also remember that one of our objectives with community engagement is to build positive relationships in the community.
- **Aim for deliberation** – get people talking to each other as much as possible so that they hear and express different perspectives.
- **Use consensus as much as possible, choose methods that reinforce groups working together toward a shared goal** – avoid placing people in “voting” situations or other techniques that make people choose “sides” on an issue. Work, instead, toward a series of built agreements.
- **Select methods that are as personal as possible** - If there is one approach that should be included in every process, it is face-to-face discussion and deliberation. Solving community problems / addressing community needs means that there are differing opinions, beliefs, values and experiences that need to be considered along with relevant technical information. These life experiences can be written down and shared or communicated some other way, but there is no substitute for people hearing from one another how they view the same issues and opportunities. In fact, in evaluations of many processes over the years, when people are asked what was most valuable about a session, respondents overwhelmingly say it was “hearing from other people.”

With the last rule of thumb in mind – selecting methods that are as personal as possible, the **Toolkit of Methods** is organized, roughly, from the most personal to the least personal approaches.

### **Informal interviews and personal conversations**

- Use personal conversations to understand preferences and values
- Listen non-defensively to fully understand what people are telling you
- Don't "call people in" – go to them
- If you can take the time, door-to-door visits are very effective
- Be sure to talk with those you feel are your strongest opponents; you need to understand their perspectives as well
- Interviewing is a very effective method when there are issues which people may be uncomfortable talking about in public gatherings; it can provide a safe way for people to express fears that we need to be aware of
- Use unconventional sites for informal "man-on-the-street" input: community events or popular local gathering places where your identified stakeholders are likely to hang out

### **Formal interview system**

- A formal system of interviews can be set up to engage people early and include those that may be unlikely to attend a meeting
- Develop a set of focus questions / discussion points so that you are consistent in each interview and can better analyze responses and tabulate results
- Tell interviewees you'll be sharing what you hear
- Establish a method for recording and distributing the information
- Remember that people often find out about issues and projects from one another; enlist the help of those you interview in spreading the word and ask who else cares about the issue and add them to your list
- Talk with food – make it friendly and social

#### **Here are a couple of creative examples of interview techniques:**

Tent Talks: set up a tent or canopy in a neighborhood park or school parking lot; serve picnic food and encourage people to talk with Council members, Commissioners or staff about the project.

Lawn Chair Parade: choose a neighborhood where you would like to get input and have Council members, Commissioners or staff walk door-to-door with lawn chairs in the evening – people end up gathered on various front lawns talking over issues.

Dinner and Dialogue: residents put their names in a drawing at City Hall or other sites. The host who wins the drawing gets to invite 20 guests for a dinner attended by City staff and Council members.

## Community Connectors

- The idea for Community Connectors grew out of the understanding that people would be more likely to attend a meeting if invited by a friend
- Community Connectors are folks who agree to host a small gathering of their friends, neighbors, colleagues, even family, to talk about the project or issue
- About 10 to 12 is a comfortable number for a discussion, although larger groups work as long as everyone can see and hear one another
- Connector hosts invite anyone they'd like to, and set the date and time that's convenient for them; we provide a facilitator, background information and materials and then document the discussion
- Staff present information, such as the problem or opportunity, the process that will be used to solve it, any "givens" and background information about the project that people might need for good decision making as well as the focus question(s) you'd like them to answer as part of the discussion
- Take notes or ask people to fill out a card or form with their responses
- Keep track of what's said at every meeting as well as the neighborhood the meetings are held in and as participant demographic information
- Follow-up with a mailing or short summary to participants about what was said at all the meetings
- This method is time consuming and staff-intensive – presenter / facilitators need to be fully prepared so that information giving and gathering is the same
- The strength of this method is that it gets a lot of people who would not normally participate involved, ensuring the participation of people other than "special interests". It also builds relationships with people and truly engages them in constructive deliberation on issues
- Be careful not to rely on this as your only method
- Not everyone who might want to have a say will necessarily be invited to a session so you'll need to schedule some "open" meetings with the same agenda and materials as the hosted meetings



### Meetings-in-a-box

- This method is similar to Community Connectors in that it encourages small group meetings in people's homes or through already established groups, such as existing civic organizations or clubs
- All the materials for the meeting are literally contained in a box: a discussion outline, written and or video (computer link or DVD) information, response forms and even some packages of microwave popcorn; this self-contained approach allows for a turn-key meeting which residents can host on their own
- Since the meetings are designed to be self directed, with no staff present, the issue to be discussed with this method should be straight-forward. The information must be clear and choices laid out in simple terms; the possibilities of misinformation or misunderstanding must be minimal
- Meetings-in-a-box are great for asking people about their values and hopes for the future and other topics that are not as dependent upon factual information
- Extensive promotion to encourage meeting hosts to volunteer, as well as coordination and follow up are required.

### Focus Groups / Roundtables

- This is not a method that provides statistical accuracy reflecting the community's demographics because people "self select" in agreeing to participate. Results, however, are reliable in that if they are consistent across groups the same results can be expected from the larger population
- Focus groups don't ask people to reach agreement on anything; in fact, disagreement should be encouraged so that a range of thinking on a topic can be understood
- This kind of discussion is good for probing for values, beliefs, what people would and wouldn't support and why. So you should use focus groups and roundtables early in a process to help define issues, and probe attitudes about the problem / opportunity and potential solutions
- Sometimes, if all you need to do is explore attitudes toward an issue or assess the information about a topic that people have or need, a series of focus groups may be all the process you require



- Groups can be made up of people known to you or random residents; often, open registration can be encouraged so that anyone who wants to participate can do so
- Each group should have 10 to 20 participants
- Groups can be balanced by geography, age, ethnicity, gender, interest or other characteristics
- Recruit a few more people than you need for the group as not everyone who signs up will come. Make the recruitment as personal as possible. Invite by telephone, direct mail, email from someone with a relationship or other personal invitation
- Be clear about why you're asking people for their participation and what will happen with what they say
- Once participants have agreed to attend, send a follow-up confirmation letter or postcard and place a reminder call or email a day or two ahead
- Develop a discussion guide to get at the issues you want to explore and use a neutral, trained discussion leader
- Serve refreshments and keep the tone informal
- Use flip charts to record the input but don't attribute opinions to specific individuals
- Extend the offer to keep people informed of what happens next and then do it. Most people who agree to participate are interested in the issue
- This is a time-intensive method but is great for building relationships with people; if the process continues beyond this step, discussion participants can often help to rally others to participate in subsequent activities

### **Workshops**

- Workshops are great for getting real work done; structure the agenda so something is accomplished
- Often, the work of a workshop is best done in small groups, enabling every participant an easy opportunity to influence the group's work and minimizing the "grandstanding" that often takes place in large group settings

A typical workshop agenda looks something like this:

<b>Meeting Agenda Tasks and Timing</b>		
<b><i>One third: Information</i></b>	<b><i>One third: Group deliberation</i></b>	<b><i>One third: Group report out</i></b>
Provide participants with factual / background information in a variety of formats and with as much creativity as possible	People work in small groups to reach consensus on recommendations / goals/ suggestions, depending on the workshop focus	Small groups report out their work to the larger group. Meeting facilitator highlights common themes

- Workshops are good for developing options for solutions or responding to options already developed
- If you're asking for possible solutions, promote creativity
- If there are options to be assessed, use the techniques described in the "evaluating options" section on page 36.
- Be sure to give the small groups one or two specific focus questions from your sequence of decisions to answer
- Provide written, step-by-step instructions for small group work to each participant. Also deliver the instructions verbally before groups start work
- Sometimes it is a good idea to structure the work to produce multiple answers. Ask for the "five most important elements or features," or the "six most critical needs" or similar.
- Workshops allow people to move from their individual perspectives to consideration of a small group's assessment to the larger group's sense of the issue; they are structured to help take off the personal "blindness" and reinforce the larger context of the issues at hand.
- You might consider getting complex information out ahead of time so participants have time to digest it and you save workshop time (and people don't feel that the meeting is too presentation-heavy)

- Holding a workshop or a series of workshops takes a lot of preparation and organization; invitations to attend should be issued in as many different ways as possible and as personally as possible – the more personal the recruitment, the better the attendance.
- A series of workshops is usually preferable to a single event because people then have multiple opportunities to attend and can choose the most convenient – aggregate attendance from multiple workshops is likely to be much greater than for a single workshop.
- We also know that variations in the time of day and the day of the week appeal to different groups – parents of young children and seniors prefer day time meetings and weekends, for example. Attendance always increases when venues in neighborhoods or other comfortable locations are chosen.



### **Charettes / design workshops**

- A charette is much like a workshop in that it accomplishes hands-on work. Charettes are usually associated with design issues, such as site specific plans at either a single area or site or neighborhood level.
- A charette is an intensive exercise that takes place over a couple of days and often includes a cadre of experts working in design teams who review all pertinent information, then get to work producing round after round of draft plans that get more and more specific and more responsive as they are reviewed by participants.
- Wider public review can occur, for example, each evening of the charette after teams do their daily work; review is done by anyone interested in the work as well as design experts.

- A charette can be expensive, since fees, meals and lodging are often provided for design teams; it can also be an energizing way to generate excitement for implementation.
- A great feature of this technique is the opportunity for a tour or experience of the problems / opportunities needing to be dealt with (see Field Trip, below).

### Field Trips / Tours

- As with a design charette / workshop, an on-site review of existing conditions that pertain to a project and its issues can be invaluable. Tours provide first hand observations and should be open to anyone with an interest.
- Program and policy questions can also benefit from field trip – on-site experiences of current and proposed conditions (best practices or examples elsewhere) are irreplaceable for developing judgment about issues. If an on-site tour is not possible, video or photo tours are a good substitute.



### Open Meetings

- Open meetings are good any time in a process as long as they are carefully structured and have a clear purpose. Early on, they can help clarify issues and make sure project information is delivered directly to people that are interested rather than relying on “misinformation by rumor”; later in the process, you can review what’s been accomplished so far and ask for reaction
- This format is best for general discussion of issues – it’s not a good format for issues which can be highly controversial or emotional. If information is presented, it should be brief – allocate no more than 1/3 of the total meeting to presenting information and leave the rest for discussion and response. Discussion should be framed to elicit constructive responses and should have a skilled facilitator.

- An open meeting can be used at the beginning of a project to identify hopes and concerns because people need only minimal project background to express these opinions about what they like and what their concerns are.
- In groups of about 20 to 30 it's possible to use something called Nominal Group Technique – an around the room chance for every participant to briefly express what he or she would like to say. Participants can “pass” as well.
- For larger numbers it is often more effective for small groups to work together to produce lists of issues, hopes and concerns which are then reported to the larger group.
- Issue invitations in every way available: organizations' newsletters, news media announcements, direct mail, websites, e-mail, personal phone calls. Direct mail is not always as effective as we'd like – we shouldn't count on a significant turnout as a result of direct mail.
- Recruit groups and individuals to help spread the word; without a doubt personal contact is the best way to turn people out
- The more informal the setting and the tone, the more relaxed participants will be; officials who are present should be introduced but should sit among the audience rather than at a head table or behind a dais and should be there as listeners and observers, not participants.
- Be cautious of limiting discussion to designated topics; you might miss something important, or might create antagonism if people have come to talk about something specific you're disallowing; we need to let people get their points across.
- Open meetings held in a series can reach a conclusion / result; if the issue is narrow enough to be handled in a single meeting, one session may be all you need if facilitated discussion can propose and reach agreement on a solution.
- Make sure to keep two records of this and all kinds of community meetings:
  1. A sign in sheet with name, address and email so you know who was present and can keep in touch if you need to
  2. Keep a record of the general discussion and compile written responses

### **Public Forums**

- Public forums are similar to open meetings - people assemble at a designated time to discuss a topic; however, the discussion is not structured to reach any conclusion, but is designed to surface various perspectives or to generate solutions; its most appropriate use is, therefore, at the beginning of a process.

- Forums let people hear various points of view directly from each other, and can often bring out points of agreement; they can also demonstrate the complexity of an issue and how many different interests are affected.
- Set expectations early in the meeting that no conclusions will be reached; let people know that the forum is designed for people to hear from one another so they'll prepare to speak. It's critical to frame the issue or problem as constructively as possible – in terms of what needs to happen to make things better.
- Spend the minimal amount of time at the beginning with a welcome; keep background information on the topic as brief as you can since the purpose is to let people hear from each other.
- It's appropriate and encouraged to include decision makers at the forum to hear the issues first hand, but avoid a "head table" or dais room set up; officials are introduced at the forum's beginning so that people know they are present, but sit scattered in the audience rather than in a visible group and act as observers, not participants
- If the forum is an extremely formal one, or if it's essential to anticipate how much time will be needed by speakers, you can ask people to sign up ahead of time as they arrive; less formal, less intimidating formats are usually preferable; people can simply stand or move to a microphone to speak, facing the audience rather than the moderator.
- Be cautious about setting absolute time limits for speakers; often people will conform to limits but you'll have to be prepared to stop the speaker who doesn't relinquish the floor. It's better to suggest a time limit, note how many people would like to speak and keep people accountable to one another. After a few speakers you can ask the group whether they believe a time limit should be imposed; any limitations then belong to the group.

### Open houses

- The format for an open house involves having information available at a specific site, usually over the course of several hours or multiple days, to allow people to attend at their convenience and to respond to what they learn.
- The open house format allows for one-on-one, site specific questions to be handled by the technical staff; it does not, however, allow people to hear from one another and facilitate understanding of other points of view.
- Hold open houses in convenient, safe, comfortable and non-intimidating locations; try places in addition to or other than City Hall or the Council Chambers – somewhere in the area affected by the project is best.

- Use personal invitations as much as possible as well as through the media and through project e/ mailing lists. Greeting people at the door really makes them feel welcomed.
- Usually, open houses include display stations covering information about various aspects of the project / problem / solution options. Equip each station with a flip chart easel and pad for people to record comments or ask questions.
- Individual written response forms will encourage comments from those who don't want to write what they think for anyone else to see.
- Project staff do need to be present to respond immediately to questions. If it's not possible to provide answers on the spot, make sure to get back with people as quickly as you can.
- Open houses are not conducive to deliberation in the way that workshops are; in fact, people may be suspicious that you're holding an open house in lieu of an open meeting in order to "divide and conquer." One solution to this perception is to hold the open house over the course of several hours, adding an open meeting component at the end of the designated time; this allows people the opportunity to say whatever they want without restriction.
- An open house / workshop combination is also a possibility, with the open house providing the background information before people get to work.
- Open houses work at any point in a longer process: at the very beginning to explain background and ask for response; in mid-process to review and ask for response to options being considered; or near the end to review the whole project, process and results.
- Be cautious about relying on an open house to provide guidance about people's preferences and responses to issues; open houses work best as one of many process methods.

### **Public Hearings**

- Yes, you will still have to have public hearings. It's due process and often legally required. But, traditional public hearings are not effective public process, so don't have them until the very end of a project process.
- The settings for traditional public hearings are very formal, people must stand at a microphone with their backs to their fellow residents and publicly state



their position or plead with Council to do whatever it is they're about to do (or not). They're very emotional and do not generally promote civic interchange.

- When a problem / opportunity / project has gone through a community engagement process to determine people's preferences, when the process has been open, honest and fair, there should be no surprises when it comes time to hold the required public hearing; everyone should be familiar with what's to be recommended and with the likely outcome.

### **Logistics to consider for any kind of meeting**

- Try to avoid private meeting or conference rooms where not everyone is customarily welcome
- Make sure people know how to get to the meeting
- Make sure parking and access are convenient
- Make sure the space is physically comfortable
- Make sure acoustics allow everyone to be easily heard and the room has the flexibility you need for your planned activities
- Provide refreshments if you possibly can
- Greet people at the door
- Consider using name tags, they can help set a friendly tone

### **History Wall**

- A history wall is a useful tool at open houses, workshops, open meetings and public forums. The "wall" is usually located outside or to the side of the meeting space and people are asked to contribute to it in some way to build a sense of community history.
- A history wall serves to ground participants in the larger context of the community and reminds people "we're all in it together."
- People can be asked to include on the wall: when they arrived in the community; one or two events of significance to them or the community during a certain time period relevant to the project; their responses to certain key events in the community or other creative focus questions that reinforce the idea of a shared community culture. Try a "vision" wall at the beginning of a project and ask people to actually draw what they'd like the final solution to look like or do for the community.

### **Community Organizations and the "rubber chicken circuit"**

- It's often a challenge to engage people who don't have a direct interest in an issue as well as those who have an obvious interest. If your process needs to include the general sentiments of many community constituencies, take



advantage of organizations / agencies / places where they already gather. Engaging people on their own turf makes participating more convenient for them and can broaden participation. Many of these folks are active in the community but may not have a particular position on the issue.

- Community groups that are effective contact points include neighborhood organizations, school support groups and, possibly, general civic organizations such as Rotary. In many communities churches are a good way to contact populations that might otherwise be hard to reach.
- Attending civic meetings can give you a rapid feel for how the community views the issues. Visit these groups to describe the problem / opportunity and ask for full participation. You can also use the time to ask for responses that don't need information or use response forms to be filled out individually.
- Often organizational newsletters will provide some space for articles or updates. Organizations may even be willing to make their membership or board lists available for a mailing.
- In some cases it might be appropriate and effective to ask organizations to co-sponsor project workshops or other meetings. People are most likely to attend if they're invited by a group they're already involved with and trust.
- While working with community organizations has obvious advantages, there are also disadvantages: it requires intensive staff or volunteer effort to cover all the potential groups and compile their input; it can't be used as a substitute for other process methods which might need to include deliberation or longer discussion.

### **A Physical Presence**

- Community events, festivals, celebrations and activities are great places for interacting with people, particularly if it's important that everyone in the community have an equal and convenient way to get involved.
- Colorful displays are effective in drawing people in to get information about the project and process and how they can participate as well as an easy way to ask for responses that can be opinion / belief based and don't need much background information.

### **Citizen Juries**

- This technique is one that selects a demographically representative sample of twelve or more community members who can devote several days to a project or problem. It shares with a design charrette or workshop an intensive time schedule where the group meets with experts over the course of several days.
- At the end of the time the “jury” is to come to a conclusion about the best course of action recommended to solve the problem / address the issue.
- The same advantages and disadvantages existing for task forces exist for citizen juries – there is really no way to assure that the conclusions the jury reaches will represent the conclusions of the community as a whole.

### **Future Search Conferences**

- This type of conference has been used in some communities to deal with long range questions such as the development of a community vision. Its strength is that the method takes place over a long weekend, so the work is accomplished relatively efficiently.
- A major weakness of the method is it recommends that a designated number of people (60) serve as appointed representatives. While this assures that numbers are manageable, it also means that some people who want to participate will be left out and may not feel that their views were adequately represented. It can also mean that an opportunity to build support for the outcomes will be lost. Remember – open, honest and fair.
- If you consider this approach, take another look at the “Pitfalls of a Committee” on page 33.
- It’s possible that this approach could be combined with periodic public review and comment so that adjustments could be made to conform with broader community preferences.

### **Newspaper insert / mailer with response form**

- This approach is closely related to a mailed survey; it provides written information to be considered by individuals who then have an opportunity to respond with written open-ended comments to be mailed back or by filling out a printed form for mailed return.
- People who have taken the time to read the information and return a response develop individual judgment about the issues; they don’t have an opportunity to benefit from the thinking of others which might sway their own response, but each respondent clearly has something to say.

- Even if response is low to this method, it serves as an easy opportunity for participation. We need to carefully consider if the investment is worth the return.

### The Web

- It's a must! Our use of project pages is a model for the rest of the world to follow – we need to keep these as updated and attractive as possible in order to maximize their effectiveness. Always make sure the problem / opportunity statement, givens, process outline, background information and process so far, as well as opportunities for future involvement, are highly visible.
- Using the web to receive questions regarding the project or individual comments about the hopes, issues or concerns also works well. We should, however, use caution when including unattributed responses. If we are using the site to respond to questions, it must be monitored daily.

### Surveys

- Surveys of any kind – random sample telephone or mailed surveys, general mailed surveys or e-surveys such as surveymonkey (the City is a subscriber to this service) – are useful tools for finding out how people perceive a problem or issue, what their individual opinions are about proposed solutions and whether they support or oppose a particular course of action. One caution about them is that they are opinion-based and should never replace face-to-face deliberation and the negotiation of solutions.
- Random sample surveys have the advantage of replicating, on a smaller scale, certain demographic characteristics so we can compare responses from various groups.
- Professionally administered random sample surveys can be expensive to conduct; telephone surveys are typically most expensive but usually can be completed more rapidly than random sample mailed surveys, which require repeated follow-up mailings to produce a statistically reliable response.
- General mailed surveys or e-surveys provide the opportunity for everyone in the community to respond, often an important attribute when your process needs to consider everyone's preferences; paper versions are not inexpensive since they are usually mailed to every household. Results for both general mailed and e-based surveys cannot be considered a statistically valid sample of the community although results often have statistical reliability.

- Another form of surveying is an insert in a local paper or our City newsletter which appears three times a year in the Activity Guide. These formats can include background information and a way to respond either with a mail-back coupon or an email address for comments.
- A survey conducted early in a process can include as a last question, “Would you be willing to attend a focus group (workshop) about X? May we contact you?” This approach has had great success in other communities.
- Always remember that a survey solicits opinion; it does not develop informed judgment and is not a substitute for deliberative decision-making.

### **Time Out**

- This is not a method you’d ever want to plan for, but if you need to, call a time out. If a situation is so controversial that allowing things to proceed without intervention will only make things worse, it’s time to step back and reassess what’s happening.
- A time-out call should only be used if the situation is significantly serious and if allowing things to go forward would be irresponsible. A time period for the time-out should be named and people should understand what, if anything will be done during the time out period.

## Final Tips and Ideas (just in case...)

**What happens if a group “rebels” in a meeting and doesn’t want to follow your agenda?**

**Don’t try to suppress comments or over-control (it might backfire!)** – People who come to meetings have things on their minds that they care about and want to express – if they didn’t, they wouldn’t come to the meeting. Be flexible and find another way to accomplish what you need to do at the meeting.

Always use flip charts or other recording systems to help reinforce for people that they have been heard and their comments are valued.

**How can we avoid meetings or a process being controlled by a special interest?**

**Reaching people who aren’t readily engaged is a challenge** – but there are several things that might help:

- People need to understand the subject at hand as it relates to their everyday lives; tell them why they should care
- Recruit people directly and personally
- Move the process to people’s living rooms; recruit people to host small discussions among their neighbors and friends
- Go find people where they already gather together; partner with civic groups, etc
- Have lots of ways for people to get involved
- The more you ask the question the more answers you get; a series of meetings with duplicate agendas provides more opportunities and makes attendance more convenient

**If the number of participants is small, does that mean the process isn’t valid?**

**There is no magic number that makes a process legitimate, so don’t be absolutely driven by numbers** – Consider using a survey to supplement participation, particularly at an early step when opinion and belief are appropriate responses. Another idea is to take what we’ve heard in the process so far and “field test” it through the “rubber chicken circuit”, neighborhood groups and other existing places where people gather.

**How can we “disarm” 11<sup>th</sup> hour opponents who show up to defeat a recommendation developed through an engagement process?**

**11<sup>th</sup> hour opponents will always be there** – Our best strategy is to stress the multiple opportunities for participation when making the final presentation. We should be spending at least as much time describing the process used to reach the recommendation and the multiple communication vehicles used to promote it as the presenting the recommendation itself.

We also need to encourage people who have been involved in the process to attend the Council meeting where the issues will be decided to support their recommendations and the process.

**Lastly –**

**Remember that you’ve got a team you can brainstorm with for solutions to other issues that arise!**

## Appendix A – Asking Strategic Questions

Strategic questioning is the skill of asking questions in a dialogue setting that helps people discover their own ideas and strategies for change. Strategic questioning involves a special type of question and a special type of listening – a strategic question opens up all participants in a dialogue to other points of view.

### Key features of strategic questioning:

- It creates knowledge by synthesizing new information from that which is already known by participants in the dialogue
- It is empowering – ownership of new information stays with the person answering the question and also empowers the group
- It releases the blocks to change and to new ideas
- It facilitates people's own response to change
- It creates answers that may not be immediately known but may emerge over time
- A strategic question is NOT – a suggestion disguised as a question (as in “why don't you.....?”)

### Strategic questions:

1. Assume motion on the issue (meaning they assume the person / group wants to move forward)
2. Create options (more than two)
3. Avoid “why” (which forces people to defend an existing position)
  - a. “What keeps you from working on \_\_\_\_\_?” vs “Why aren't you working on \_\_\_\_\_?”
4. Avoid yes / no answers
5. Empower – ie “What would it take for you to change on this issue?” “what would you suggest to improve this proposal.”

### Strategic questioning has two levels:

1. Level 1 – questions that describe the problem or issue in an open and unbiased way for a common understanding of the dialogue's “center”
  - What are you most concerned about related to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What are the reasons for \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What effects of this situation have you noticed?
  - What do you know for sure and what are you uncertain about?
  - How do you feel about the situation?
  - How would you describe the problem you / we are trying to solve?

2. Level 2 – questions that create new information

- What would you like to see happen with \_\_\_\_\_?
- How can the situation be changed for it to be as you would like it?
- What will bring the current situation toward the ideal?
- How might those changes come about? Name as many ideas / alternatives / options as possible.
- How could you reach that goal?
- What prevents the community from \_\_\_\_\_?
- What resources already exist that could support this change / solution?
- What support would be needed for the community to make this change?

Other examples of strategic questions to help move a dialogue toward resolution include:

- Here's the evidence we're / I'm basing our / my conclusions on....what are we / am I missing?
- Can you give me some examples of that?
- What have you seen that leads you to those conclusions?
- What information is missing that might help us understand the problem more completely?
- What is emerging that we can all agree on?
- What are our underlying assumptions about this idea or situation?
- How would you define this problem?
- What do you think other people care about most in relation to this problem?
- What would an ideal solution help us do?
- What else could we do?



