

# A Changing Landscape

## EXPLORING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

*A Review For Edmonton Federation Of Community Leagues (EFCL)*

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
Executive Summary.....	4
1. Background, Context, and Unique Role of EFCL .....	7
2. Introduction .....	11
A. Opportunities and Challenges of Civic Engagement.....	11
B. Foundations of Civic Engagement - A Sense of Community and Social Capital.....	17
C. A Framework for Civic Engagement.....	18
3. Understanding Key Issues in Civic Engagement.....	20
A. Research and Gathering Evidence to Advance Practice and Scholarship .....	20
i. Trust, Citizen Learning and Feedback Mechanisms.....	21
B. Methods, Processes, and Handbooks .....	21
C. Representation? Who decides? Who participates?.....	22
D. Impact on Decision Making.....	23
E. The Digital Age .....	25
F. Conflict and Polarization .....	26
G. Political Context and Leadership.....	26
H. Institutionalization .....	27
4. Key Themes in Civic Engagement.....	29
A. Civic Infrastructure: Building a Foundation for a “Culture of Engagement” .....	29
i. Charters, Continuums, Core values and Principles .....	29
B. Planning and Design of Civic Engagement .....	31
i. Place Making and Urban Planning – Building on Local ‘Expert’ Knowledge.....	31
ii. Public or Citizen Deliberation.....	32
iii. Civic Learning and Capacity Building.....	35
iv. Civic Dialogues and Community Conversations.....	39
v. “Making Democracy Fun” and Improving Civic Health.....	41
C. Advocacy and Civic Engagement.....	42
D. Youth Engagement .....	43
i. Are Community Leagues and EFCL ready to Engage Youth in Political and Civic Life?.....	43
ii. Big Ideas about Youth Involvement .....	45
iii. EFCL and Youth Engagement .....	46

E.	Diversity and Inclusion .....	47
i.	Building supports and networks for inclusion .....	49
ii.	Representation and Recruitment for Diversity .....	49
iii.	Addressing Barriers to Engagement.....	50
F.	Digital Engagement in a Civic Age .....	51
i.	Adding Inclusion via Digital Engagement .....	53
ii.	Online Citizen Panels.....	53
G.	Evaluation and Assessment .....	55
i.	Two Examples of Specific Evaluation Research .....	56
ii.	Evaluating Advocacy .....	56
iii.	Evaluation Framework .....	57
5.	Additional Emerging and Innovative Practices .....	58
A.	Civic and Public Education .....	59
i.	An “Invitation to be Involved” - Partnering with Universities and Centres of Civic Engagement .....	59
ii.	Conferences and Learning from “Big Thinkers” .....	60
iii.	National Centre for Dialogue and Deliberation, Civic Health Clubs and other Big Ideas .....	60
iv.	Civic Spaces Project – Centre for Public Involvement and Edmonton Multicultural Coalition .....	61
B.	Participatory Budgeting .....	62
i.	Profile on PB: Toronto Community Housing.....	63
ii.	Profile on PB: Youth Lead the Change .....	63
C.	Arts-based, Innovative, and Visual Approaches .....	64
i.	Infographics, visual tools for civic engagement, and Storytelling .....	64
ii.	Community mapping and Place making .....	64
iii.	Projects for Public Space - Placemaking .....	64
iv.	Exploring civic issues and community through photography and art .....	65
v.	Citizens Panels and Reference Panels connected to Policy Making .....	66
vi.	Organizations and Resources for Community Building .....	67
D.	Examples of Effective use of Technology .....	68
i.	Civic Debate Wall .....	68
ii.	Edmonton Insight Panel.....	68
iii.	Creating Digital Spaces for Civic Engagement (Blog, Twitter, #YEGEngage).....	68
E.	Participatory Planning .....	68

6. Conclusion..... 70

Appendices..... 72

Appendix A - Profiles of Civic Engagement and Involvement..... 72

Appendix B - Additional Resources ..... 81

Appendix C - Types of Civic Engagement ..... 84

Appendix D - How do leaders in the field describe deliberation? ..... 85

Appendix E - Strategies for engaging 20-30 year olds ..... 86

Appendix F - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Community Connections Conference..... 88

Appendix G - Using Graphic Illustration to Explore Dialogue and Deliberation ..... 89

Appendix H - Twelve “C’s” for Sustaining Civic Work ..... 90

References ..... 91



# A Changing Landscape: Exploring Civic Engagement

## Executive Summary

This civic engagement review identified five key areas for EFCL and Community Leagues to consider in their work, and in creating their Five Year Strategic Plan. These key areas are:

### 1. The Critical Role of EFCL and Community Leagues

- The structure and history of EFCL and community leagues situates them in a unique and critical position to participate in the discussion of civic issues, and provide opportunities for civic engagement in Edmonton.
- Strengthening and expanding opportunities in civic engagement will positively impact other EFCL and league priorities such as increased membership, profile, diversity and inclusion, influence with the City of Edmonton, developers and other organizations, and capacity building of leagues.

### 2. Social Capital and Sense of Community

- Declining membership in local community associations is a key factor in the loss of opportunities for citizens to engage around political issues.<sup>1</sup>
- There is a need for community-based associations to provide civic engagement opportunities and programs that develop community members' social capital. These initiatives contribute to civic life by building citizens' civic skills and helping them to develop well-connected positions, broad-based social networks and the skills to use them.
- EFCL and leagues are ideally situated to strengthen neighbourhood networks. Building networks of trust, reciprocity and rapport provide a foundation to strengthen civic skills, foster a sense of agency, advocate on behalf of neighbourhoods, and create a potential for action.

- EFCL and leagues are in a unique position to address inclusion and diversity, strengthen civic skills, and foster a sense of agency and potential for action.

### 3. Advocacy, Civic Learning, and Capacity Building

- Advocacy is often part of a broader practice of civic engagement. Advocacy is a key part of a “process that gives voice to specific civic engagement agenda items and issues.” (National Dialogue Alliance)
- There are opportunities for EFCL and leagues to strengthen and improve advocacy, and to have an impact on City plans, projects, initiatives and decisions.
- There is a need and an opportunity for EFCL, the City and leagues to create and support well designed civic engagement opportunities for dialogue and deliberation.
- There is a need and an opportunity to develop **intentional** civic engagement opportunities that are not tied to providing input on any specific community or city decision, but rather designed to build knowledge, skills and capacity. These can include:
  - Opportunities for civic learning and capacity development through issues guides, citizens’ academies, community dialogues, public deliberation, and digital engagement.
  - Building skills through fun, experiential tools like games and simulation activities.
  - There are limitations, and possibilities involved with advancing the use of digital engagement. There is a need to critically assess the strengths and limitations and gather evidence of the impacts.

### 4. Building a “Culture of Civic Engagement”

- The research demonstrates that critical work in civic engagement requires more than advancement of methods and practices. It also requires organizations, governments, and associations to ‘institutionalize civic engagement.’ Some examples are charters, frameworks, core values, policies, organizational models, and processes, all of which can be summed up as ‘civic engagement.’
- Organizations, cities, and practitioners are seeing the critical importance of community-based research to gather evidence that will advance practice of civic engagement. The City of Edmonton and EFCL can support testing and providing evidence to advance research and practice.
- There is an opportunity for EFCL and leagues to develop knowledge of core values and principles of excellence in civic engagement, and to use these core values to inform practice.

- Strategic partnerships play a critical role in innovative and comprehensive work in civic engagement. In the City of Edmonton there are important and established organizations and networks that can support and sustain advancement of civic engagement.

## **5. Innovation and Leadership**

- There are great opportunities for EFCL and the City of Edmonton to shift the conversation in Edmonton about civic engagement and profile the work they are doing.
- EFCL and the City of Edmonton can play a key leadership role in advancing civic engagement, particularly in the Canadian context. There are many excellent examples of models that are available for EFCL to use, as well as examples of projects, and organizations (many in the United States) that are implementing civic engagement projects and practices. Many of these organizations are community-based and have similarities to Edmonton's leagues. EFCL and leagues can build on these examples for their work.
- EFCL and leagues, in partnership with CPI and City of Edmonton, could play a key role in supporting and improving the evaluation of processes, outcomes, and impacts of civic engagement.

It is important to note that these key areas for EFCL to consider in civic engagement are consistent with input from participants in the community league member focus groups. For example, a member of the community league member focus group suggested a model for community leagues as a fully engaged hub for communication, engagement, and action. In this example, the Community Leagues (CL) are at the core, and the activities that impact the league members, the broader neighbourhood and community surround it. Community league member focus group participants also emphasized a vision for community leagues that is strongly rooted in community with a sense of history and place. Ideally, as was emphasized in the focus groups and the accompanying discussion, community leagues balance social engagement with programs for all ages, and they are involved in neighbourhood planning and development, (for example, land use planning) and political life.





## **1. Background, Context, and Unique Role of EFCL**

The Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL), in partnership with the City of Edmonton, is developing a Five Year Strategic Plan (2014-2018) and conducting a Civic Engagement Review as part of this preparation. The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI) completed a review of the literature and summary report to support this project.

EFCL recognizes the importance of civic engagement to increase its effectiveness and the effectiveness of the community leagues, and to maximize quality of life in neighbourhoods. EFCL has committed to work to engage with community leagues and help leagues engage with their members and neighbourhood residents on civic issues. EFCL has demonstrated their interest in building theoretical understanding and skills to support community leagues in civic dialogue, deliberation, and decision-making.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this review and summary report is to assist EFCL to review its roles and responsibilities, and identify emerging opportunities in civic engagement.

A community league member described Edmonton's community leagues as a "gem," with Edmonton as the first city to implement this structure, and be at the helm of the unique design. Edmonton community leagues are rooted in a vibrant and long history, which provides a strong foundation for civic engagement. Currently there are 158 leagues—the oldest dating back to 1917 and the newest league formed in 2013. EFCL is interested in a civic engagement review that identifies key processes, methods for implementation, and evaluation of impact. EFCL is committed to addressing challenges that are common among leagues, which were identified by EFCL in project planning meetings<sup>3</sup> and noted by focus group participants. These challenges include:

- declining memberships and community participation
- changing demographics; and
- understanding how other organizations represent interests



Overall, through its civic engagement review and strategic planning, EFCL strives to respond to the greatest opportunities and the challenge of addressing on-going capacity, planning, sustainability, and energy for the next generation of leaders. The EFCL strives to address the opportunities and challenges related to its capacity and that of its leagues to engage and advocate effectively.

### ***Why examine civic engagement and community leagues? Why now?***

EFCL is interested in civic engagement in four key areas: civic issues that relate to leagues; processes for determining priority issues; decision-making and representation of views; and developing the greatest opportunities for civic engagement.<sup>4</sup> This review explores innovative and emerging practices in civic engagement and connects major findings to inform recommendations for action for EFCL and community leagues. It concludes with five key areas for EFCL and Community Leagues to consider in their work. The *Executive Summary* summarizes these key areas and provides supporting commentary (see pages 4-6).

The EFCL conducted a civic engagement review to inform their planning. The EFCL is committed to working with the community leagues to support neighbourhoods to be informed about civic issues, and to develop positions to effectively inform and influence civic decision making.

The City of Edmonton has a policy and framework to support civic engagement. Specifically, public engagement efforts of City Council and Administration are supported by the Office of Public Engagement (OPE). OPE supports City departments in “providing consistent, quality approaches to public engagement processes and events.”<sup>5</sup> City of Edmonton Policy C513,<sup>6</sup> “*City of Edmonton Public Involvement*,” framework and handbook, and *Involving Edmonton*<sup>7</sup> describe this public involvement further. The City of Edmonton has recently created two digital engagement opportunities, including the *Engaging Edmonton* online discussion<sup>8</sup> (from which “City officials will consider all input in their decision process,”) and the *Edmonton Insight Community*, (an “online, ongoing panel of citizens advisors” with opportunities to connect online and face-to-face).<sup>9</sup> These knowledge sharing opportunities and connections are necessary to address the ‘lack of information’ that impedes democratic processes, while it increases inclusion and diversity in decision-making.<sup>10</sup>

The current context of civic engagement in Edmonton is vibrant. Edmonton is one of the first municipalities in Canada—after Vancouver — to launch new initiatives like *Edmonton Insight Community* to connect with residents through online public engagement tools. As Mayor Don Iveson declared, the City has “heard loud and clear that citizens have an increased expectation when it comes to public engagement” and “the more opportunities [the City] can offer people to contribute in ways that are meaningful and easier for them, the better outcomes we will see on decisions that affect our neighbourhoods and our city.”<sup>11</sup> In 2013, City Council established a *City Council Initiative on Public Involvement* which is testament to the City’s ‘readiness’ for civic engagement and priority of public involvement and civic engagement in the current context of Edmonton. Edmonton is also the first city in Canada to have a Centre for Public Involvement, a specific organization to make intentional and deliberate connections between research and practice and to advance innovation, the models and frameworks section will expand on this further.

The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI), conceptualized in 2009, is an organization founded through a partnership between the City of Edmonton and the University of Alberta in response to a recognized need for decision-makers and the public to seek, consider, and apply the most effective means for public

involvement. The expertise of each partner creates a cooperative, collaborative environment. CPI is actively engaged in research and implementing many contemporary examples of civic engagement. Through its partner organizations, CPI provides leadership in understanding and applying innovative public involvement ideas, practices and technologies for citizen participation and deliberation, with the objective of enhanced decision-making at all levels.

This literature review and summary report emerged as part of a broader project aimed at reviewing the work of leagues and EFCL for their civic engagement strategy and practices, and examining civic engagement more broadly to inform their work. CPI conducted this literature review and assessment of public involvement and civic engagement.

Understanding key themes is a strategic starting point to support EFCL and community leagues' vision to strengthen civic engagement and to achieve more effective advocacy and representation. This strategic starting point necessitates an understanding of the key themes and areas in academic and grey literature in order to deepen understanding of both theory and practice. This review explores existing research and scholarship that illustrates the opportunities of civic engagement, as well as analysis and potential responses to the challenges of civic engagement. Therefore, this report draws on the extensive body of literature that includes peer-reviewed, academic journal articles and scholarly texts, as well as books, articles, websites, and resources developed by organizations to explore key issues and support civic engagement and community building. This evidence, combined with timely information, knowledge of the complexities of involving citizens in public processes, and illustrations of emerging practice, will inform planning and programs.

This civic engagement review is situated in the context of initiatives to engage citizens in community deliberation and decision making in Edmonton, Alberta, across Canada, and internationally. The field of civic engagement has grown over the past decades, with advances in local and global initiatives. Therefore, the parameters of this report extend to learning from international, national, and local organizations that are advancing the scholarship and practice of public engagement.

This report is structured into sections in **four key areas**. The **first sections**-- *Executive Summary; Background, Context, and Unique Role of EFCL; and Introduction*-- explain the purpose and outcomes of the report and set the stage for further discussion. This sets the stage, summarizes key findings, and puts forward a **Framework for Civic Engagement**. The **second sections**-- *Key Issues in Civic Engagement, and Key Themes in Civic Engagement*-- provide an overview of *Key Issues*, which include: Research and Gathering Evidence to Advance Practice and Scholarship; Methods, Processes, and Handbooks; Representation; The Digital Age; Conflict and Polarization; Political Context and Leadership; and Institutionalization. The *Key Themes* include Civic Infrastructure: Building a Foundation for a "Culture of Engagement;" Planning and Design of Civic Engagement; Advocacy and Civic Engagement; Youth Engagement; Diversity and Inclusion; Digital Engagement in a Civic Age; Evaluation and Assessment. These sections provide an overview of overarching themes from the literature.

The **third section**, titled *Additional Emerging and Innovative Practices*, discusses emerging and best practices, and provides evidence of the theory in practice. Selected organizations and practices serve as case studies in this section, and other organizations are highlighted at the end of the report. These profiles and case studies are for EFCL to use to examine their own approaches and maximize the effectiveness of

strategies to engage members and reach out to citizens who are less connected or face barriers to involvement. These additional emerging and innovative practices include exploration and selected case study examples in Civic and Public Education; Participatory Budgeting; Arts-based, Innovative, and Visual Approaches; Civic Engagement in the Digital Age – Effective Use of Technology, and Participatory Planning.

The **fourth section** includes the *Conclusion; Profiles of Civic Engagement and Involvement (Projects and Organizations); Additional Resources; and References*. These sections highlight major findings and concluding perspectives that contribute to the **Framework for Civic Engagement**, with implications for future planning. The selected organizational profiles and resources provided are to enhance future research and planning for EFCL. Links to selected resources provide ideas for next steps to continue this conversation and support on-going organizational development.

A simple, yet deep insight from this civic engagement review is a strong reminder that ***people will share their perspectives and big ideas in formal discussions and informal encounters***. Often this information sharing happens when citizens are ***invited to be involved***. It is through planned events and in these everyday connections *with* and *in* neighbourhoods that EFCL will develop a strong vision that balances broad-based involvement, responds to shifting demographics, and reflects deep engagement in future planning on civic issues of importance to leagues and communities.

***Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.*** --Jane Jacobs



## 2. Introduction

### A. Opportunities and Challenges of Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is a prominent issue for community organizations and government—including municipal governments—in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> Meaningful and effective community consultation and participation are critical for local governments and community organizations, along with the need for supports for capacity building, strengthening partnerships, and on-going evaluation.<sup>13</sup> In increasingly complex times, there is a need to examine critically the ways that organizations have been involved in engaging citizens and reaching out to increase membership. Although challenges are prevalent and are frequently discussed in popular discourse—challenges including polarization and conflict over issues, diversity and inclusion, advocacy vs engagement, and questions of representation—there is a gap in identifying foundations of some of these critical issues, and potential strategies to address them.<sup>14</sup> EFCL and community leagues face additional challenges of responding to rapidly changing urban demographics, and decreasing volunteerism.

This summary report of the civic engagement review explores key issues as well as the methods and structures that various organizations use to encourage participation, involvement and engagement from the public on civic issues. This report also provides insight from other organizations to understand different ways of responding to complex, and often competing, requests for input, and the growing need for exemplary theory and practice of civic engagement.

#### *Challenges*

There are significant challenges and opportunities in civic engagement. The key issues specific to civic engagement include questions of democracy, such as voter decline and cynicism—particularly with youth—citizens' lack of trust that their involvement will have an impact or will result in change, as well as

challenges of diversity and inclusion and involving people in decisions that impact their lives.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, there are complex community challenges, such as poverty and inequality, that impact civic engagement. These challenges require careful attention. In considering sustainable solutions to the most complex or “wicked problems,” there is an urgent need for place-based policy making, informed by the “combined insights and actions of multiple actors learning about what works in particular places, and how to make things happen ‘on the ground.’”<sup>16</sup>

Civic engagement has become increasingly complex. This complexity is compounded by information overload, rapidly changing demographics, multifaceted and technical civic issues, aging populations, changes participation and volunteering, rapid growth and increased diversity of neighbourhoods, and declining volunteerism.<sup>17</sup> This current complexity is amplified by rapid access to information and technology, and the increasingly high expectations that municipal governments have on citizens to provide immediate responses to shape municipal planning on multifaceted issues. Often this input is requested of citizens without providing them with sufficient time or well-balanced resources to provide informed, reasoned input. This information is essential to understand the issue and provide a reasoned response. Edmonton, as a city, is also facing rapidly shifting demographics, and complex problems that require thoughtful, informed responses and a healthy, vibrant culture of civic engagement.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to these challenges, there is an urgent need to address different ways that citizens understand information and civic issues, to hear their views on an issue, and recognize that often polarized positions exist with resulting tensions. Some citizens may have highly relevant ‘lived experience’ or formal education to inform decision-making, but there may be a wide range of levels of understanding on a particular issue. The processes of civic education and engagement take time and exploration of new ways to work with the public on a continuum or cycle of learning—information sharing, consultation, and careful deliberation.

Furthermore, exclusion and marginalization are serious barriers that limit the impacts of civic processes. There is a need to build trust, and address diversity and inclusion in who participates. It is critical to create spaces for deliberation to occur and to strengthen these “deliberative atmospheres” so that “average” citizens can participate in the political process.<sup>19</sup> While there are efforts to broaden the scope of public participation and involvement, it is an ongoing challenge to ensure that there is a chance to hear diverse voices, and that democratic processes are inclusive and accessible in traditional face-to-face settings, and in the new digital age of increased electronic or online engagement.<sup>20</sup> There is a need to examine the causes and current conditions of exclusion and participation through a critical, theoretical lens, there is also a renewed call for evidence-based practice of the most effective and inclusive civic engagement.

Explorations into the barriers to civic engagement reveal that a sense of isolation and powerlessness to respond to issues facing their communities often hinder citizens’ involvement in civic and public life.<sup>21</sup> For example, studies in the US illustrate that a lack of connection between people and their public institutions and leaders, impedes volunteering and charitable giving, and weakens the democratic core of communities.<sup>22</sup>

It is important to note that the experiences of civic engagement practitioners offer insight into different approaches to civic engagement and the rationale for different activities or methods. However, it is important to acknowledge the resource implications for civic engagement, and the costs of supporting materials for learning. Although a full discussion of civic engagement activities is beyond the scope of this

report, CPI is interested in continuing the conversation about how to assess civic engagement tools and resources that might be most effective for different contexts, questions, budgets and timelines.

This report offers suggestions for ways that organizations or individuals can provide input and have their input make a difference, but it is not an exhaustive exploration of the limits and strengths of these activities. Factors such as limited time bring up critical questions about breadth and scope of engagement, and what ‘counts’ if it is not broad-based. What do you do if time is limited? How do you work with the time frame you have? Limit the scope? The information interviews offer insight into how to respond to this issue. As the interview respondents suggested, they report on the input that they have, and strive to be clear that more broad based engagement is needed. See ***Emerging Ideas from Key Informants*** for more information and a flowchart.

### ***Opportunities***

Despite all of these challenges, the positive outcomes of civic engagement are substantial. Effective civic engagement has the potential to build trust that citizen input matters and will have an impact, and thus address major barriers to engagement such as cynicism or distrust in the process. Civic participation can “effect changes in political attitudes and behavior” as it cultivates trust and builds mutual understanding “between citizens, decision makers, and governing institutions.”<sup>23</sup> Civic engagement makes a difference in the civic life of communities by “developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation” to foster the “quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.”<sup>24</sup>

Community-based conversations and research are becoming essential components of local government and community planning.<sup>25</sup> Organizational leaders who work in the field of civic engagement and were interviewed for this review, stressed the importance of current research and reliable data to support civic engagement.<sup>26</sup> How do community organizers motivate-- and better yet inspire - citizens to engage? Rapid change requires new ways of thinking and ‘action’ learning to plan and respond to this shifting landscape.<sup>27</sup> What are the strategies that are emerging in the rapidly changing context that will enhance civic skills to create a culture of civic engagement and continue to build and shape a movement?<sup>28</sup> This review explores these civic skills and overarching questions. The substantial challenges facing urban centers are not unique to our city, but the unique and changing landscape of Edmonton requires a dynamic response that is tailored to building a *culture of civic engagement* in Edmonton.

### ***‘Civic Renewal’ and New Opportunities to Engage***

With increased understanding of the importance of engaging the public, local community leaders and municipal decision-makers are more frequently seeking input from community members.<sup>29</sup> This means that there are increasing opportunities for citizens to engage and provide input through their neighbourhood associations and community leagues.

Scholars and innovators have called for a “civic renewal” where organizations and governments “invest in civic skills and organizational capacities for public problem-solving on a wide scale” including “...policy design and attention to systems that support democratic processes.”<sup>30</sup> As Gibson emphasizes, “civic engagement requires broad civic renewal that works across a wide variety of sectors, populations, initiatives, and fields to revitalize our democracy.” Democratic renewal requires moving beyond the ‘tactics’ of civic engagement like voting, volunteering, and outcomes, to focus attention on the ***process*** of civic engagement.<sup>31</sup> Critical factors in this process include an exploration of the motivation or incentive for ***ordinary people to come together to deliberate and take action on problems or issues that they***

***themselves have identified as important, and to take action in ways that they consider appropriate.***

These actions may involve volunteering, voting, activism, or organizing. A citizen-created cultural shift is a powerful way to conceptualize and operationalize civic engagement.<sup>32</sup> Rather than ask people to “plug into” existing pre-determined programs, initiatives or campaigns, citizen centered approaches help people form and promote their own views and influence decisions, build capacity and develop open-ended civic processes.<sup>33</sup>

The growing body of work examines the research and practice of civic engagement and presents options for addressing the key challenges.<sup>34</sup> As this review highlights, further innovations are happening at “all levels of government, and across public, private, non-profit, and non-governmental spheres.”<sup>35</sup>

***Deliberation—a key component of civic engagement—allows citizens to consider not only facts and hard data, but the less ‘technical’ considerations such as values and emotions to arrive at a balanced judgment or a decision.***<sup>36</sup> Deliberative civic engagement processes, when properly understood and implemented, can help address the “most complex social, political, and economic challenges of our time.”<sup>37</sup>

Deliberation, as part of public involvement, also applies to organizations like EFCL as they work with community members to decide on a ‘position’ to bring forward to inform decisions. It is important to consider the facts and hard data, and the values that inform these positions. CPI’s research has identified that public involvement is critical to successful planning, implementation, and evaluation across sectors, including transit, health, environmental, and housing sectors, and benefits serve both citizens and organizations. Public involvement enables citizens to identify their concerns about an issue that affects them; it enables governments to address their concerns by making modification to projects and initiatives, and it is instrumental in developing public support for implementing decisions and it is essential to a fair and democratic society.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Situating Civic Engagement, Public Involvement, Participation, and Advocacy***

**Civic engagement is part of a broad spectrum of public involvement** and has both the benefit and challenge of dynamic definitions and ways of understanding how the theory may be applied in practice.<sup>39</sup> For more detailed information on the distinctions between public participation, civic engagement, and advocacy, see **Appendix C**, and the following descriptions. These terms are often used to describe similar, or interrelated processes. Civic engagement, based on public participation, can transform the relationship between citizens and their governments to better use the creativity, energy, knowledge, skills and resources of community members. Processes for public participation, and a continuum of civic engagement can range from simple information sharing to building skills and opportunities for more formal advisory and decision-making capacity.<sup>40</sup> Particularly important to EFCL, *Involve UK* highlights the ways that public participation can shape how communities face “complex challenges which require citizens and governments to work together to build a shared vision of a sustainable future.”<sup>41</sup> When done well, public participation, as a key component of civic engagement, can help to:

- Identify solutions to complex problems
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public spending and services
- Promote social cohesion and social justice, and address conflict
- Build the confidence and agency of individuals and communities
- Improve well-being and reduce social problems



The focus on public involvement to enhance civic engagement that promotes cohesion, addresses conflict, and builds confidence and agency of individuals and communities is highly relevant to EFCL planning. A strong sense of community and social capital further strengthen these elements, and subsequent sections of this report will explore this in more depth.

Citizen engagement includes public participation, public involvement, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and collaborative governance, as well as online and digital variations of engagement. ***While there are distinctions in the purpose, breadth, and techniques of participation between each, at the base they all recognize and build upon a fundamental right of all citizens to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.***<sup>42</sup> Across definitions, a defining feature of civic engagement is the emphasis on working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference.<sup>43</sup> See **Appendix C** for more definitions and descriptions of components of civic engagement.

Civic engagement involves values, knowledge, skills, and motivation,<sup>44</sup> as well as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern” which can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation.<sup>45</sup> As Thomas Ehrlich—a scholar who has collected essays from national leaders who have focused on civic responsibility and higher education—describes, part of a moral and civic responsibility is to recognize one’s part of the “social fabric,” to be part of the process of making informed judgments, and taking appropriate action.<sup>46</sup> It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in the community to solve a problem, or interact with intuitions of representative officials, or voting. The underlying principle is that a citizen should have the ***ability, agency, and opportunity*** to participate comfortably in different types of civic acts. This review examines civic engagement as it encompasses broadly defined practices and outcomes that can inform activities, services, and programs,<sup>47</sup> as well as long-term planning and policy making. The literature also explores motivations and benefits of engaging in civic life, impacts on ***individual and collective processes and actions that address public issues***, and the importance of trust, empowerment, and action.<sup>48</sup> The link between theory and practice to advance the scholarship is a core component of civic engagement.

### ***Strengthening Opportunities for Deliberation – a Critical Component of Civic Engagement***

Civic engagement that is *deliberative* can have profound impacts on democracy. Although civic engagement can take many forms—individual volunteerism, organizational involvement, electoral participation, etc.—“deliberative civic engagement,” is more specific. It is defined as “processes that enable citizens, leaders, and government officials to come together to engage in constructive, informed and decisive dialogue in public spaces” about public issues. **Civic engagement that is *deliberative* is intentional about creating opportunities for developing a broad understanding of civic issues, through the specific process of deliberation, and can lead to taking action to address common concerns.**<sup>49</sup> It can “foster respective communication among diverse groups of citizens, public officials, civic leaders, and others.”<sup>50</sup> Deliberative civic engagement addresses many of the key challenges listed in the introductory section of this report, such as polarization and conflict, and it shifts from individual to collective engagement. The potential is immense, but there is a need to develop and support these intentional opportunities and provide places for this civic engagement to occur; these are supports that EFCL is uniquely positioned to provide.

As communities face complex issues, public deliberation has *demonstrated* value beyond direct public policy. John Gastil, a Communications professor at Penn State University, and a prominent writer on democracy and civic engagement, stresses the importance of building a *culture of deliberation* in communities and societies. He emphasizes the importance of civic engagement for deliberative democracy.<sup>51</sup> **Researchers also emphasize that, while deliberative decision-making can result in public action,<sup>52</sup> it can also integrate on-going knowledge building. Developing this knowledge is part of a long-term process of learning that can inform further deliberation and decision-making.<sup>53</sup> This focus on foundational learning and knowledge creation is critical to EFCL because of its demonstrated potential for long-term impacts.** Local capacity is also built within communities through deliberative civic engagement.<sup>54</sup> This emphasis on building *within* rather than *for* communities is critical to the work of EFCL. Citizens who are involved in the process of learning and building community often know unique details of the neighbourhood context that can impact planning, and they are more likely to support implementation if they are part of the process. In contrast, community members may resent or resist being ‘informed’ of decisions that did not include them in the process. Overall, long-term learning and capacity building *within* and *between* community leagues contributes to a more informed and engaged citizenry.

### ***The ‘State of the Field’ of Civic Engagement***

There is increasing attention to research surrounding civic engagement including gathering evidence to support advancement of practice. The fields of focus include deliberation, dialogue, public participation, youth engagement and civic studies.<sup>55</sup> These possibilities for civic engagement and change are evident in the commitment to “broad democratic values and efforts to meaningfully engage people in public processes,” but big challenges remain.<sup>56</sup> These questions include specific explorations of implications for practice and theory, such as design of online deliberation,<sup>57</sup> but there are broader overarching questions about the scope of the work, the importance of ‘naming’ and understanding how the language is used, and determining goals.<sup>58</sup> Three key research areas have been highlighted in the literature that could inform planning for EFCL. These thematic areas include the scope of the field, challenges faced in the field, and promising future directions, which will be discussed throughout this report, and elaborated on in subsequent sections.<sup>59</sup>

There is a growing body of academic writing and literature developed by scholars and practitioners that discusses opportunities and challenges of civic engagement, with attention to key issues and what “works” in practice.<sup>60</sup> Civic engagement activities and behaviors can “influence public matters.”<sup>61</sup> Previous research has also shown that individual engagement may build skills, knowledge and network connections, and may lead to more participation. In comparison, civic involvement focuses on the benefits for both individual, community, and even for the institutions that serve civil society.<sup>62</sup> The link between civic engagement activities and increased participation, civic involvement, and influence on public matters is important to consider. These potential outcomes provide evidence that the services and programs of EFCL, and EFCL’s own civic engagement, can have an impact on civic life. The connection between individual and collective learning, for *deliberation*, capacity building and potential for action is significant to EFCL’s planning. A closer look at the literature, coupled with the stories of ‘lived experiences’, suggests that citizens themselves can also provide a more nuanced understanding of ways to strengthen opportunities for civic engagement, including participation, partnerships, and shared knowledge.

## B. Foundations of Civic Engagement - A Sense of Community and Social Capital

This section looks at *social capital*<sup>63</sup> and a *sense of community* as concepts that are very relevant to community leagues in their current and potential roles in strengthening networks, developing shared values, trust, and overall civic and political engagement. In neighbourhoods, there are opportunities to relate to others with shared values, and to connect in a secure environment; two key elements of a “sense of community.”<sup>64</sup> This idea was expressed in many ways in the focus groups. The connection between knowing neighbours, and becoming involved in civic issues, is in the media as a key component of overcoming isolation and *malaise*.<sup>65</sup>

One way of understanding these neighbourhood connections and a sense of belonging is by taking a close look at a theoretical concept called *sense of community*, which has four key areas that can be broadly applied to civic engagement.<sup>66</sup> *Sense of community* involves relationships and connections with people that are central to community development, and may be related to a geographical or conceptual place. Sense of community also includes elements of ***identity, belonging, and membership*** that are important components to consider in strengthening community cohesion and exploring the potential for civic engagement across generations and sectors. The characteristics of cohesion and stability are essential to building a *sense of community*.<sup>67</sup> Further, “a feeling or connection that individuals have with where they live and the relationships they have established” is critical to exploring relationships between generations and how they understand their community and issues that relate to their lives.<sup>68</sup> To summarize, themes mentioned in the focus groups as greatest strengths of leagues, such as fostering a sense of belonging and membership, are also core components to building a *sense of community*. A foundation of trust and *social capital* are also critical to building a sense of community. EFCL and leagues are well positioned to strengthen a sense of trust and connection which in turn will enhance opportunities for civic engagement.

Over the past two decades, the topic of *social capital* has been widely explored as a key part of the literature on civic engagement. Strong social capital can be a ‘bridge’ or ‘bond’ that unites people within and across communities; however, it can also exclude others.<sup>69</sup> These connections among individuals, social networks, and norms of reciprocity<sup>70</sup> can contribute to health, safety, low neighborhood crime rates, and they can enhance participatory democracy and policy innovation.<sup>71</sup> Putnam, a political scientist and Public Policy professor at Harvard University, also maintains that the declining memberships in local community associations in the US is a key factor in the loss of opportunities for citizens to engage around political issues.<sup>72</sup> This loss affects opportunities for civic engagement.

Declining membership and involvement are critical issues for EFCL and community leagues. “Community organizing and advocacy groups know the importance of civic engagement and social capital for their communities and for effectively creating change” which is also why building “bonding” relationships among members and “bridging” relationships with other constituencies is an important aspect of their work.”<sup>73</sup> Civic engagement initiatives, or programs that develop community members’ social capital, contribute to civic life by building citizens’ civic skills and helping them to develop well-articulated, broadly based social networks and the skills to use them. Another key topic in civic engagement is helping people to be informed about issues and explore how they might be involved. Strengthening social capital and fostering a sense of community contributes to networks and connections to open spaces for citizens to become informed. Being informed can enhance decision-making processes and save time, money, and help to address conflict.

The community leagues are ideally situated to strengthen neighbourhood networks and bonds because they have the connections and relationships with community leagues and the mandate to develop these neighbourhood bonds. The EFCL can support leagues and provide tools for engagement. These opportunities to build networks of trust, reciprocity and rapport, strengthen civic skills, and develop resources, are useful for promoting civic engagement and addressing an array of problems.<sup>74</sup> A foundation of trust is essential to civic engagement to foster a sense of agency and a potential for action.<sup>75</sup> These networks, resources, and skills can also help citizens imagine themselves as a vital part of a collective civic landscape – including voting, volunteering, urban planning and development—and have an impact on decisions in order to create a positive future for their neighborhood.

There is also a role and great opportunity for EFCL to build trust and rapport with their members, the community leagues, and to develop training and supports for citizens to participate in informed deliberation and decision-making. EFCL's supports for communication and outreach from community leagues to their members and the broader neighbourhood will help to build awareness that opportunities for participation and civic engagement exist, and provide a clear invitation to be involved. As mentioned earlier in this report, the power of an *invitation to be involved* has been articulated in the literature as a way to enhance inclusion and diversity, across generations. This communication provides an entry point for citizens to 'see themselves as part of the picture' of civic engagement.

### C. A Framework for Civic Engagement

As a result of this research and review, we have developed a framework for civic engagement. This framework for civic engagement is intended to serve as a foundation for developing a long-term plan that involves citizen-centered approaches to activities and policies to support a "culture of civic engagement." The model integrates core components of the civic engagement review.

This civic engagement framework emphasizes six interdependent elements. Civic engagement involves **1) Research and Scholarship; 2) Civic Learning and Capacity Building, including building civic literacy skills; 3) Advocacy; 4) Deliberation; 5) Innovation and Practice; and 6) Continuous Assessment and Evaluation.** It is important to note that all of the elements are components of civic engagement, and they are interconnected rather than sequential. Understanding the issue provides a foundation for outcomes. The EFCL is interested in how civic engagement can build capacity for broader influence and change.

A foundation of trust and rapport, developed through a *sense of community* and *social capital*, are essential to civic engagement. EFCL and the City of Edmonton can strengthen bridges between theory and practice through collaboration and partnership, and attention to place and context.

This research report emphasises that effective civic engagement calls for a process of dialogue, deliberation, and shared knowledge, with attention to diversity and inclusion that can enhance planning and policy development. The **Framework for Civic Engagement** illustrates that advocacy is one part of civic engagement, but there are many opportunities in civic engagement more broadly, such as fostering civic literacy and skills through including civic learning and capacity building. The Framework can be used by EFCL to identify interconnections between the various components of civic engagement, and to strengthen planning and programs.

The components of the ***Framework for Civic Engagement*** will be elaborated on in the content of this report. The next section provides an overview of key issues to set the foundation for further exploration of key themes in civic engagement.





### **3. Understanding Key Issues in Civic Engagement**

This section explores key issues in civic engagement in more detail. These issues include the following areas: research, methods, representation, challenges and opportunities of the digital age, conflict and polarization, and political context and leadership.

#### **A. Research and Gathering Evidence to Advance Practice and Scholarship**

There is a growing need in civic engagement to gather evidence and connect theory with practice. Despite significant advancements in the field, there is a need for evidence about the impacts of civic engagement. In particular, there is a need to evaluate the impacts on decisions, on communities, on who participates and how they participate.<sup>76</sup> This evidence is vital to understand the root causes of the issues and inform ongoing research and practice. Evidence should inform learning about methods, processes, impacts, and changes in opinion and attitudes overall. Finally, there is a need for research models of civic engagement that involve those that are implementing and designing public involvement within government and organizations, and designing research and evaluation.

The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI) in Edmonton has been researching public involvement since CPI's inception in 2009. Current research, while continuing to examine methods and processes, is also looking at how to develop national infrastructures, organizational cultures, and systems to institutionalize engagement. This research also articulates the need for scholarship and gathering evidence to advance the field in all areas, including the impacts of civic engagement, particularly in the digital age.

There is a need for evidence-based research and testing at the community level to enhance the body of knowledge in the field of civic engagement, and further theoretical and practical evidence are needed to overcome barriers and improve practice. There is also a need for research models that ensure that those implementing and designing public involvement within government and organizations are also involved in undertaking research. There are opportunities for the EFCL to work with other organizations like the Federation of Calgary Communities (FCC) and Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO) to explore research that has already been done by other organizations, share background information on civic issues, and share approaches to representation. There are resource limitations, but other organizations are conducting research on pressing issues that could inform EFCL's work as they share background information to support learning about civic issue with members, gather their views, and develop positions. The impacts of individual vs collective civic engagement are also an important consideration. Therefore, it is important to learn about different methods, processes, and how to evaluate the effectiveness of civic engagement. For example, CPI conducts pre-and post-program surveys of their Citizens' Planning Circles and other initiatives to measure changes in citizens' opinions and attitudes through civic engagement.

Evaluation and assessment are challenges in research. These challenges include the time and tools to research methodologies, to conduct exemplary assessments, and to carefully consider "What does success look like?" in terms of results and outcomes, but also in potential for learning and building capacity to meet future goals. A subsequent section on evaluation discusses these challenges and metrics.

#### **i. Trust, Citizen Learning and Feedback Mechanisms**

Organizations, local community groups, and post-secondary institutions are all contributing to civic learning and capacity building, and there are promising theoretical foundations and practices to support learning, advocacy, innovation, and on-going assessment. It is exciting to report that over the past decades, there is an increased interest to engage with citizens to inform civic planning.<sup>77</sup> Trust and empowerment are foundations for a civic engagement movement that involves individual and collective action, with the ability to acquire and process information relevant to formulating opinions on civic matters; voice and debate opinions and beliefs related to civic life within communities or publics; and to take action.<sup>78</sup> As is highlighted in the subsequent section, core values of public participation also call attention to communicating back to members how their input will be used. This requires setting up feedback mechanisms and ensuring that rigorous evaluation. EFCL is uniquely positioned to help advance this work and contribute new knowledge to the field of civic engagement because they have the potential to have their 'finger on the pulse' of civic life, through their relationships with leagues, community organizations, and the City of Edmonton.

### **B. Methods, Processes, and Handbooks**

The literature on public involvement spans multiple methods and strategies and developed to respond to different purposes and needs. Some examples of these methods are outlined by Ziegenfuss, who identifies twelve methods of involving citizens that range from individual (e.g. Ombudsperson) and team-specific representatives (e.g. Advisory Boards) to large-scale data collection initiatives (e.g. town hall meetings), and other methods including consultations, citizen juries, citizen panels, consensus conferences and deliberative polling.<sup>79</sup> There are a number of methods, including information gathering,<sup>80</sup> framework design for using public involvement in transportation policies, and involving citizens in a particular issue such as effective use of broadband internet,<sup>81</sup> and all to build citizens' knowledge and their capacity to



engage with the issues. Resources to support these methods and processes (eg. an “issues guide” that provide balanced information)) enhance citizens’ abilities to provide informed input on civic issues for future planning.

Civic planning processes rely on civic collaboration, or a process of shared decision-making in which all parties have a stake in the problem. The vast scope of the number of methods and processes related to civic engagement indicate that there is a need to explore methods, continually examine their effectiveness, and gather evidence to inform how they may be improved to maximize benefits, impacts and outcomes of civic engagement. Sherry McGee is a scholar at Wilfred Laurier University who wrote her dissertation on civic engagement in municipal contexts. McGee has written extensively about the theory and practice of community engagement as a democratic process in municipal contexts, with a focus on Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta. She also explores cities with existing community engagement policies and examines innovative models, such as civic engagement initiatives in Kitchener and Guelph, Ontario.<sup>82</sup> As will be discussed in a later section, reviewing ‘emerging’ practices in the field and civic engagement methods that have been applied in ‘real life’ contexts are essential elements of assessment.

The EFCL can gather evidence and contribute to methods and processes in the field of civic engagement by ***building a culture of civic engagement***. Although there is a plethora of handbooks on civic engagement, an ongoing challenge is in the lack of institutionalization, frameworks, or a ‘culture of engagement,’ that can enhance implementation of these resources. In other words, in order to use the handbooks to support civic engagement, an ‘organizational culture’ needs to support this approach and provide resources for the complete cycle of planning, implementation, facilitation, and evaluation.

Matt Leighninger is the executive director of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium (DDC),<sup>83</sup> and senior associate for Everyday Democracy. Leighninger recognizes the growing numbers of methods and processes for civic engagement and cautions against ‘reinventing the wheel’ at a time of rapid proliferation of techniques and practices in the field. Leighninger stresses that there is a need for research in the field to avoid misusing terms. Many advocates, practitioners, researchers and local leaders do not recognize the similarities between their work and similar efforts in civic engagement happening elsewhere because of the terms assigned to the divers methods.<sup>84</sup> Many practitioners also indicate that they need to learn more about the purpose and benefits of the different approaches or methods, and when to use them. Leighninger chart outlining many different models and methodologies illustrates the many organizations working in deliberative civic engagement that EFCL can refer to as they develop their plans.<sup>85</sup> At the end of the report are links to different models and resources (See pages 74-86).

The next section explores connections between theory and practice, and highlights the need for more evidence about who participates in civic engagement, and in what ways. This body of literature provides another layer of context to planning for civic engagement.

### **C. Representation? Who decides? Who participates?**

Representation is a key issue that is central to research and practice of civic engagement. For example, who is involved in decision-making processes? Is it interest groups, the ‘usual suspects’ or ‘ordinary people? How and in what ways are processes accessible for marginalized or diverse groups to be included or involved? The challenge of participant selection for specific public involvement opportunities highlights

vital questions:

- What are the limitations and possibilities of working with informed, engaged stakeholder interest groups?
- Who may have a preexisting analysis and agenda?
- Who may have a less-informed, less-engaged but potentially more open-minded “ordinary people” through random, representative selection?<sup>86</sup>

It is important to note that representation is not an either/or dichotomy, but part of a bigger picture of quality of life in the neighbourhood. The limitations of time and outreach are acknowledged in the work of the Federation of Calgary Communities (FCC) and other organizations that offer insight into approaches that are sensitive to timelines and barriers (See *Emerging Ideas from Key Informants*). These are important questions to consider as EFCL moves forward.

Numerous scholars explore tensions that arise from competing interests, and the importance of inclusivity.<sup>87</sup> If buy-in from interest groups is essential to project success (as is often the case), then they cannot be excluded. However, in many cases a process that includes some randomly selected participants, and others selected to represent the demographic composition of the community, or “Stratified Random Selection” of citizens, has been found to be highly effective. Various specialists on public involvement<sup>88</sup> all found representative citizens’ feedback to be useful, and possible, especially with the new possibilities of emerging communications technology. In other words, when considering representation, careful attention to who participates, and how to be inclusive in planning, processes and outreach, are essential to civic engagement.

See the section titled “Diversity and Inclusion” for further discussion and strategies that could be explored by EFCL and leagues (See page 50). The following section looks more closely at impacts of civic engagement on decision-making.

#### **D. Impact on Decision Making**

The impacts that civic engagement has on decision-making is an issue of ongoing interest and critical importance. Three key components that are crucial to decision making are the opportunity to pose and respond to questions, time for analysis, and attention to core values. This is a process that takes time, and the EFCL is often given a tight 2-3 week timeline to provide input on civic issues. This tension is evidence that there is a need for on-going civic learning to work with community members to learn about issues over time, without tight deadlines for providing input on a specific decision. Civic engagement in deliberative forums provides opportunities for citizens to ask questions, to ensure that topics and decisions are not rushed, and to explore key values that are at stake for the issue.<sup>89</sup>

Civic engagement opportunities that intentionally provide spaces for deliberation also create an atmosphere where citizens can express their values through conversation as they talk about their opinions and rationale for holding a position on an issue. Facilitators of civic engagement events can “explicitly” include these key values and personal stories and “bring [them] into the discussion to inform analysis.”<sup>90</sup> The intentional focus on civic engagement activities that are attentive to decision-making processes can also include elements of ‘choice’ and ‘dilemma activities’ which are “scenarios designed to help participants walk through how different decisions might play out, and what core values would be implicated in these

decisions.”<sup>91</sup> The National Issues Forum ((included in the profiles) and discussed in detail in the *Community Conversations and Dialogue* section below, provides an example of how choice and core values can be part of civic engagement dialogue. Citizens’ Planning Circles also provide opportunities for this level of interaction.

Analysis, another key component of decision-making, is an essential aspect of civic engagement. Civic engagement activities that involve deliberation create a “shared information base, [for] clarifying values, identifying options, weighing pros and cons of possible solutions, and making decisions.”<sup>92</sup> Opportunities for citizens to articulate opinions and arguments, with opportunities for disagreement, are also a critical part of civic engagement and decision-making. Although many civic engagement processes benefit from face-to-face interaction, evidence demonstrates that opportunities for ‘reasoned discussion’ can occur online, as well as face-to-face, and often “direct evidence” is tracked in online forums where contributions are typed and therefore easily recorded.<sup>93</sup> This tracking, whether face-to-face or online, is an important component of assessment and evaluation of participation and process.

Considering arguments, and weighing pros and cons of proposed solutions are important factors that inform decisions.<sup>94</sup> Information shared by citizens as ‘evidence,’ or examples to support their statements, often includes cited sources, or stories.<sup>95</sup> These examples, shared by citizens, are often from mass media and may be posted as links online to news stories and sources of information. These examples may support decision-making, but it is important to assess the validity of their sources. While it is important to challenge our assumptions about whose knowledge counts, it is also vital to consider how personal stories and experiences are relevant to the issues and how they can draw connections between evidence and arguments. It is essential to critically explore and assess how ‘real life scenarios’ can be weighed against other forms of data or information to consider possible outcomes and solutions. Inclusion of various sources of information, accompanied by critical analysis, can support citizens to work through potential scenarios as part of the process of decision-making.

EFCL can draw on this literature to consider how best to provide opportunities for civic engagement that can lead to informed decision-making. Two aspects of planning that are particularly relevant to EFCL are *information* (i.e. evidence to support citizens learning by providing sources of well-researched information on the topic)) and *process planning* (including civic engagement activities and processes).). Ideally, processes designed to support decision-making provide space for participants to explore core values, to consider positions and arguments, and examine evidence. This evidence can include case studies, and personal stories or examples from media shared to connect theory with ‘real life’ application. However, a ‘critical lens’ is essential to assess sources of bias and consider the value of both scholarly, peer-reviewed work, and citizens’ local place-based knowledge. EFCL can support civic engagement by developing issues guides that provide balanced perspectives on civic issues that informs deliberation and impacts decision-making. EFCL can also provide critical insight and help citizens explore and assess the sources of information, power and influence, as well as potential bias. Developing learning guides and this level of support for community members’ learning about civic issues takes time and resources. However, some of these learning guides may already be developed and could be used by EFCL, and there are opportunities to partner with organizations to develop materials together. Issues guides, as sources of information, are discussed in a later section of this report (See page 41).

Vivid examples of how civic engagement impacts decision making, and work that still needs to be done, can be found in the work of “Abundant Communities” advocate Peter Block and other writers on community development.<sup>96</sup> For example, perspectives on voter turnout, and beliefs that citizen input ‘counts’ sheds light on a key aspect of civic engagement. Block claims that in order to counter the disbelief people have that their input can affect the future, “our work is to build the capacity of citizens to be accountable and become creators of community.”<sup>97</sup> He offers important insights on how to create communities where citizens are able to shift their understanding of where power resides, and develop their own opportunities to be involved. Block highlights that change can happen when citizens make choices to care, be accountable for the well-being of the collective, and acknowledge that community grows out of the possibility of citizens to enact change. In other words, community is built through local knowledge and opportunities to engage. As Block argues, ordinary citizens who choose to care and take action, not simply through specialized expertise, or great leadership, are able to build community.<sup>98</sup> EFCL and leagues should work with community members to examine the impacts of their input on civic issues. For example, they could develop opportunities and resources so that community leagues are able to host important and well facilitated conversations on civic issues through Study Circles (described in a subsequent section on civic learning) (See page 38). The following discussion focuses on digital or online engagement.

## **E. The Digital Age**

The vast growth of the internet in the past two decades has resulted in a substantial increase in communication about issues of public concern.<sup>99</sup> The benefits of online civic engagement are many, including new tools and ease for citizens to gain information, and more spaces for conversation. However, despite great potential, there are trade-offs and a need to examine how these spaces might be more inclusive and “deliberative.”<sup>100</sup> Some of the key challenges to digital or online civic engagement include: limits and benefits of anonymity,<sup>101</sup> critical questions of who has access to the technology, how income impacts who can participate online, how age and formal education levels might impact who participates in this form of public consultation, and who is included or left out of these techniques or processes.<sup>102</sup>

The “landscape of civic technologies” that affects how people engage in civic life is rapidly evolving.<sup>103</sup> With rapid advances in technology, different modes of involvement are possible, including online voting, campaigns, messaging and online volunteering, which can enhance “reasoned, purposeful and interactive” communication.<sup>104</sup> As is outlined in a subsequent section, “Digital Engagement in a Civic Age,” various authors provide insight into the strengths and limitations of new forms of media and technology, for example, attentive to access, privilege, power, authority, and influence.<sup>105</sup> A common belief is that internet developments and the presence of online domains have significantly influenced the field of civic engagement and social interactions between citizens. Digital engagement has immense potential to re-shape politics.<sup>106</sup> However, questions of scale, inclusion, and logistical constraints are three key challenges to consider for digital design to create online spaces that facilitate effective civic engagement and public deliberation.<sup>107</sup> Technology is often seen as a solution to problems, such as access to information, that online engagement tools alone may not solve. There is a need to gather more evidence to know how technology increases accessibility, supports increased participation, and improves participants’ perceptions of transparency. These themes will be discussed in detail later in this report.

## F. Conflict and Polarization

Some methods or structures of civic engagement, such as public hearings and town hall meetings, often pit citizens against one another rather than foster dialogue and deliberation or the development of collective solutions. Further, we are witnessing that communities are often divided over big issues.<sup>108</sup> It is therefore vital to create intentional opportunities for citizens to develop skills for dialogue and deliberation, develop new opinions, and examine tradeoffs. Civic engagement can promote cohesion, address conflict, and build the confidence and agency of individuals and communities, thus mitigating tensions around polarization and conflict. Further, opportunities to learn and be informed about civic issues can enhance opportunities for dialogue between citizens, and foster decision making processes that save time, money, and help to address tensions.

Strengthening social capital and fostering a sense of community, as discussed earlier in this report, contribute to networks and connections for citizens to be informed, build foundations of trust, and listen and respond to differing points of view. There is a need for organizations like EFCL and the City of Edmonton to create, implement and foster learning and deliberation. This is important for EFCL because it will support citizens and communities to work across differences and divisiveness, and move from conflict or polarized views to create a ‘third way’ as they imagine new options or ways to respond to civic issues. See the section on *deliberation* and *diversity and inclusion* for further discussion on this topic (See page 34, and page 50). Focus group and survey respondents identified infill development and urban sprawl and key issues where addressing divisiveness will be needed.

**Civic collaboration** is premised on the idea that politics does not have to be a “sum-zero game” with winners and losers,<sup>109</sup> rather, it is possible to imagine new possibilities.<sup>110</sup> Even with issues that are divisive, it is possible to constructively explore differences and develop a joint strategy for action.<sup>111</sup> The underlying belief is that if people are brought together in constructive ways, and with appropriate information, they can create not only authentic visions and strategies for addressing joint problems, but also overcome limited perspectives of what is possible.<sup>112</sup>

## G. Political Context and Leadership

The important role of leadership in creating an effective organizational culture of civic engagement, with an emphasis on public involvement, has been highlighted in the literature, and is highly relevant to EFCL planning. In the literature, leadership development is presented as an essential strategy for building community capacity, along with organizational development, community organizing, and organizational collaboration.<sup>113</sup> Denhardt and Campbell explore transformational leadership models in organizational change literature, and emphasize the importance of an awareness of goals and values, at both central and local government levels.<sup>114</sup> For example, some writers stress that there is a need for more reflexivity in public administration planning,<sup>115</sup> while others emphasize the need for clear and consistent central government policy, guidance and support.<sup>116</sup>

Leadership, political context, and organizational culture have significant impacts on public involvement.<sup>117</sup> For EFCL planning to enhance civic engagement, it is important to note that public developers may be more

willing to engage in certain types of public involvement, depending on the political context.<sup>118</sup> Not surprising, the relationship between stakeholder interest groups, including political parties and elected leadership, is important. If the interest groups believe that public involvement will help their cause strategically (i.e. if the public is already sympathetic to their goals) they are more likely to support citizen deliberation; otherwise, they may try to disrupt the process.<sup>119</sup> This point is relevant to EFCL planning as they review and assess leadership, representation, and inclusion, because neighbourhoods may have citizens who are more invested in particular civic issues or interests, and opportunities and methods for citizen input may be shaped by the issue and political context.

Assessing organizational change readiness and long-term organizational or institutional support is also essential to set the stage for public involvement and civic engagement. The urgency of the issue to the general public, interest groups and elected leadership, and the affinity between elected leadership and particular stakeholder interest groups, may play a role in the acceptance of particular models for civic engagement that are focused on inclusion and broad based input. *Institutionalization*, highlighted in the next section, supports and strengthens organizational capacity for leadership in civic engagement, and for planning and responding to current contexts.

## **H. Institutionalization**

This next section highlights the need for institutionalization, or building an organizational culture that supports and fosters civic engagement. A significant finding in this review is that there is an interest in “institutionalizing” deliberation, which is a key component of civic engagement to expand the scope and scale, and connect this movement to other democratic practices like advocacy.<sup>120</sup> The interest in “movement-building” provides evidence that there is a need for frameworks to support this research and practice, and to build a “culture of civic engagement.”

There is an ongoing need for organizational excellence and consistency in the field of civic engagement. Explicit core values, charters, frameworks and guiding principles can define expectations and aspirations; help to guide the process of identifying where an organization is currently; support citizens to understand the commitment from the organization, and expectations of the civic engagement process; and map where citizens and organizations aspire to be. For example, processes based on IAP2’s core values for public participation are rigorous, and have been shown to be “successful” and “respected” when the processes include citizens in planning, and provide evidence back to participants about how their input was—or will be—used. <sup>121</sup> As highlighted in the evaluation and assessment section of this report, it is fair for citizens and organizations to question who is doing the evaluation, and what counts as ‘evidence’ of success.

EFCL and community leagues could use core values, such as those developed by IAP2 for public participation, to help members understand their own organizational processes, to support citizens to understand how they are involved, and to define what excellence in engagement looks like. For example, a core value of public participation includes a belief that those who are affected by decisions have a right to be involved in the decision making process, and that participants will know how their input will be used. EFCL can use these core values to examine their own organizational work with the City and to work with leagues and members to talk about how and in what ways they have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them, and to communicate and provide feedback on how their input will be used. It is

fair for citizens to ask for evidence and to have a demonstration of how their input was used, or not used, through rigorous feedback loops. These core values and guiding principles can be used from an organizational standpoint, to understand what kind of input citizens are giving, and to guide their expectations in terms of communication about how their input will be used. It is important to note that civic engagement is about building and maintaining relationships. Organizational commitment and communication are key factors for developing a successful organizational culture of public involvement and civic engagement.<sup>122</sup>

The ***Framework for Civic Engagement***, developed from this civic engagement review, is an example of how civic engagement may be “institutionalized,” which can shape the processes and programs of an organization. The examples of core values, principles, and charters, outlined the following section, offer further insight into applying these organizational guides.





## 4. Key Themes in Civic Engagement

### A. Civic Infrastructure: Building a Foundation for a “Culture of Engagement”

#### i. Charters, Continuums, Core values and Principles

There are many excellent models and frameworks that organizations have developed to guide and support excellence and consistency for civic engagement. These core values, charters, continuums, and guiding principles aim to provide an overarching guide or map for an organization. EFCL and community leagues can build capacity of members by using these resources to work with members to explore exemplary practices and to assess how they engage members of their community. Resources can help assess how EFCL is engaging with leagues and with the City of Edmonton.

This section includes three examples of resources, but there are countless others to guide planning, process and evaluation. The examples included here are the IAP2 Core Values, IAP2’s Spectrum of Public Participation, and the National Park Services Charter of Public Involvement. Critical questions to ask are: *What purpose do frameworks serve? How can they be used to work with citizens to understand the level of input a civic engagement process involves?* Frameworks guide planning and design, and to assess where an organization is presently, where they are going, and what steps are required to get there.

#### ***The IAP2 Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation***

Some of the most frequently cited and adapted models for civic engagement have been developed by IAP2, the *International Association for Public Participation*. IAP2 developed the *Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation*<sup>123</sup> to use for developing and implementing public participation processes to “help inform better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.” These core values were developed with international input to “cross national, cultural and religious boundaries.” These seven core values include

- 1) the belief those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process;
- 2) a promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;
- 3) attention to sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers;
- 4) seeking and facilitating the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision;
- 5) including input from participants in designing how they will participate;
- 6) provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and
- 7) communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.<sup>124</sup>

The core values were designed to define expectations and aspirations of the public participation process, and can be used by EFCL and leagues for this purpose. Processes based on these values are recognized by IAP2 as the most “successful” and “respected,” as demonstrated in the *State of the Practice Reports*.<sup>125</sup>

### ***IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation***

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation<sup>126</sup> provides a framework for measuring increasing levels of public impact. This framework emphasizes the goals of public participation, and provides examples of techniques. IAP2 stresses that successful public involvement is “an art and science that makes stakeholder engagement work for everyone involved.” Their promising practices of guiding members and organizations to “win-win decision making” involves a combination of education, professional development and advocacy.

The “Spectrum of Public Participation”<sup>127</sup> provides a range of goals, promises to the public, and techniques. Levels of public impact include: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering. This continuum of public impact provides an entry point for EFCL to evaluate their own goals, commitment to community leagues and the public, and to consider various techniques and foundations for civic engagement.

### ***Charters***

Charters are an example of how organizations outline objectives and principles, but they can be labour intensive to develop. There is an opportunity for EFCL to examine the charters that other organizations have developed, and how they guide their work in civic engagement. National Park Services<sup>128</sup> in the USA is an example of how civic engagement can be inspired by various organizations. The National Parks Services articulates their commitment to civic engagement in a charter that calls for all service units and offices to embrace civic engagement as the essential foundation and framework for creating plans and developing programs. They stress that it is more than just a formal process to involve people – *it is an institutional commitment to actively involve people in the mission, public planning process, interpretive and educational programming, and contribute directly to preserving significant resources*.<sup>129</sup> This example demonstrates the importance of a vision that extends across units or leagues.

Charters, policies, and frameworks from other cities across Canada and the USA could also inform the work of EFCL in civic engagement. Other examples that EFCL could explore include **Civic Engagement Values**

**Frameworks,<sup>130</sup> Civic Involvement Committees<sup>131</sup> and Place Based Public Policy.<sup>132</sup>** A small sample is included in this report, but a more comprehensive scan of these existing and emerging ideas could inspire and help to develop EFCL planning.

In evaluating its own work, EFCL may examine or think about engagement with members and the City of Edmonton, or other partners, with guidance from charters and frameworks. They can use these tools to assess where they are currently on the spectrum or cycle and where they hope to be. It is important to read these frameworks and resources with a critical eye and to assess how they might be applied or adapted in a particular setting. With sufficient background information on civic engagement, and support from specialists in the field of public involvement, organizations like EFCL may also choose to develop models and frameworks based on their mandate and goals that will guide their work.

## **B. Planning and Design of Civic Engagement**

### **i. Place Making and Urban Planning – Building on Local ‘Expert’ Knowledge**

In civic engagement in general, and particularly in citizen deliberation, citizen expertise is not intended to replace the expertise of technical experts, as the roles are different. These tensions related to ‘who’s knowledge counts’ exist, but as the literature explains, through information that has been developed to share expertise, such as learning guides, citizens are informed in order to deliberate and provide input into planning. These learning guides may contain ‘expert’ insight and knowledge, as well as different responses or perspectives on an issue, and they encourage further discussion and deliberation. In other words, citizens have context-specific knowledge that can inform planners and about factors that might increase successful implementation, decrease costs, avoid errors, and citizens input can improve project designs.<sup>133</sup> Though they are not intended to replace technical experts, citizens have substantial experience from which to draw on, and with supportive learning materials, they can provide important and informed input into planning.

The ‘local expertise’ or wisdom that citizens have about their own neighbourhoods is part of a movement called “place making” in which citizens explore neighbourhoods and ‘place’ and help to inform design choices. See sections on *learning guides*, *arts-based*, *innovative and visual approaches*, and *placemaking* for more information on these topics. EFCL can promote local knowledge through their “live local” movement, and neighbourhood focus, model placemaking, and design opportunities for citizens to share their knowledge of the community.

As Matthew Dance (2014) describes in *Place, Identity and Public Consultation*,<sup>134</sup> recent public engagement processes in the City of Edmonton demonstrate how the importance of place can enhance a process of learning and engaging the public to create meaningful projects. From Community Walking Maps, based on understanding of neighbourhoods, to downtown development and bike paths, there is expert knowledge that citizens can contribute to shape the scope and scale of urban development, and reduce tensions between project planners and citizens.<sup>135</sup>

Flexibility is critical to ensure that program planning, design and tools meet the needs of the public. This adaptability requires close attention to the complex dynamics of participation and administration, and an understanding the organizational systems and supports that are in place.<sup>136</sup> Further public involvement that balances structure (tools and systems) and agents (people and leadership) are important for successful civic engagement.<sup>137</sup>

The following section explores the process and planning of public or citizen deliberation in more depth.

## **ii. Public or Citizen Deliberation**

As outlined in previous sections, challenges with civic engagement include increasingly complex issues, and the tensions that arise when there are strong opinions and positions on civic issues. Public involvement designed to allow citizens to learn and deliberate can address this challenge.

Deliberation involves a diverse group of participants, in open and accessible processes of reasoned discussion with opportunities for deep reflection.<sup>138</sup> Balanced information provides a foundation for learning to inform deliberation, and moves beyond conversation. Flexibility and opportunities for public deliberation are important aspects of design for public involvement in civic issues. These opportunities for citizens to respond and deliberate about specific civic concerns demonstrate the ideals of democratic participation,<sup>139</sup> inclusion, and social justice.<sup>140</sup> As highlighted in the introduction, this deliberative public involvement in civic issues can increase understanding of public problems, and through exploration, citizens can generate potential solutions. For example, public involvement can inform planning to improve roads and decrease the operational costs,<sup>141</sup> or inform planning for bike lane development.<sup>142</sup> With clear purpose and careful planning, public involvement in civic engagement can help to manage uncertainty, encourage problem solving, build capacity and resiliency, prepare citizens to adapt to change, generate support for decisions, and contribute to developing high quality projects, plans and policies.

It takes time, balanced informational materials, diverse participants and perspectives, and processes to provide informed input, rather than rushing to take a 'position' on a potentially divisive issue.<sup>143</sup> These challenges require a response that addresses these issues of participation and conflict. The origins of deliberation grew out of this need, and in the past decades, there has been a growing body of literature and range of practices that respond to these issues, and highlight research and practice of deliberation.<sup>144</sup> Research demonstrates that citizens can make reasonable decisions, have a role that is distinct from scientific or technical experts, and provide meaningful input if they have information materials that provide sufficient context and history, and if these material offer fair perspectives with room for citizens to deliberate.<sup>145</sup>

Effective deliberation requires that "a diverse group of participants take part in an open and accessible process of reasoned discussion during which they 'reflect critically on a matter,' consider the strengths and limitations of alternative solutions to a problem, and aim to arrive at a decision or judgment based not only on facts and data, but also on values, emotions, and other less technical considerations."<sup>146</sup> It is different from a discussion, open house, or workshop in distinct ways. It provides a forum *for careful, reasoned and informed explorations* of an issue, addresses issues of marginalization because it requires a diverse group of participants, and considers values and technical information in order to come to a reasoned response. For more examples of how leaders in the field of civic engagement define and discuss deliberation, see **Appendix D**, (p. 87).

Deliberation can address key challenges in civic engagement because it involves public interactions that move from conversation to deeper levels of communication.<sup>147</sup> Attention and effort to diverse participation is an important part of deliberation. EFCL is in a key position to support leagues to develop or create opportunities for citizen and community deliberation city-wide, as part of their civic engagement processes and planning. The EFCL could develop a process for leagues to use to bring together a diverse group of

participants who would take part in an open and accessible process of reasoned discussion during which they “reflect carefully on a matter.”<sup>148</sup> EFCL is uniquely positioned to support community leagues in neighbourhoods. These leagues have built relationships within the community and can help identify a diverse group of participants.

Deliberation involves facilitated interactions that can be flexible – from formal face-to-face interactions, to less formal activities, and there is a range of formats for effective deliberation.<sup>149</sup> Approaches to deliberative civic engagement are similar in their “respectful and rigorous communication about public problems” and share these common steps:

- Creating a solid information base about the problem, including storytelling and shared personal experience
- Identifying, weighing, and prioritizing key values at stake in an issue;
- Identifying a broad range of potential solutions to the problem;
- Weighing pros, cons, and trade-offs of the solutions through the systematic application of relevant knowledge and values to each alternative
- Arriving at the best decision(s) possible in light of what was learned through deliberation (if in a decision-making body), or the arrival of independent judgment(s) (if not in a decision-making body) which may be followed by action-planning to implement these ideas<sup>150</sup>

In other words, creating a solid foundation, and carefully planning process and design are fundamental steps of civic deliberation,<sup>151</sup> and they affect recruitment, participation,<sup>152</sup> and communication.<sup>153</sup>

There has been extensive research done on the impacts of deliberation, such as extensive inquiry into the question: “Does deliberation make better citizens?” Nabatchi’s collection of examples of ‘democracy in motion’ offers critical ideas to consider in evaluation and outcomes.<sup>154</sup> For example, Kinney considers deliberation’s contribution to community capacity building, and the potential policy impacts of deliberative civic engagement.<sup>155</sup> Beyond immediate, measureable impacts, deliberation is a critical process in civic engagement, as it creates space for critique, or listening and responding to views,<sup>156</sup> it advances the theory and practice of civic engagement,<sup>157</sup> and it provides opportunities for citizens and officials to engage in public meetings.<sup>158</sup>

Leighninger<sup>159</sup> describes four characteristics of successful deliberative civic engagement to help map the process. He argues that deliberative engagement is an “ongoing development of democracy” rather than a new idea.<sup>160</sup>

Four key characteristics of successful deliberative civic engagement:

- 1) They assemble a large and diverse “critical mass” of citizens, or a smaller, demographically representative set of people to serve as a proxy for the larger population.
- 2) They involve citizens in structured, facilitated small group discussions, accompanied by large forums to share conclusions and move from talk to action. Traditionally these meetings were face-to-face, but new online tools are being used, and may inform or complement face-to-face discussion.
- 3) In these meetings, participants have the opportunity to compare values and experiences, and consider a range of policy options, information, and relevant arguments. This is the

“heart” of deliberation where a diverse group can decide together what they think should be done about a shared concern.

- 4) The purpose of these activities is to produce tangible actions and outcomes. This may focus on seeking change within organizations or in public attitudes/behaviors, or on applying citizen input to policy and planning decisions.<sup>161</sup>

It is important to note that this process requires planning and a time commitment, and is part of an on-going, long-term strategy to support civic learning. The four characteristics apply across the many terms used for deliberative civic engagement – *civic engagement, public engagement, democratic governance, citizen participation, participatory democracy, public involvement, citizen-centred work, public work, and public deliberation*. However, true deliberation has a *critical* component that includes space for critique, listening and responding to views. If that is missing from the process, practitioners may use the same language, but it is not truly deliberative.

In Canada, there are still few examples of Citizen Deliberations used in actual policy or decision-making contexts. Some examples include the BC and Ontario Citizen Assemblies, CPI and City of Edmonton’s Citizens Panels’ and Edmonton Citizens’ Jury, Mass LBP Citizen Reference Panels, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town halls, which are meant to be “discursive settings, where citizens are expected to explore their interests and engage in problem solving” with the goals of learning and participation.<sup>162</sup> There is need for additional work by organizations and governments to test and further develop citizen and public deliberations in practice. EFCL can take a leadership role in this area in partnership with others.

Citizens’ Juries are an example of a deliberative civic engagement process. They provide participants with learning materials to ensure that they have the information that they need to deliberate effectively. Citizens’ Juries originated in 1974 in the United States.<sup>163</sup> The Jefferson Center—a non-profit organization—initiated the use of the Citizens’ Jury, which is defined as “the use of randomly selected citizens to participate in a deliberative method...” that is now used internationally.<sup>164</sup> The idea behind Citizens’ juries is that given enough time and information, ordinary people can make decisions about complex policy issues. Through the Citizen Jury process, citizens can come to a “yes” or “no” position, or provide recommendations on an issue.

The Centre for Public Involvement, in collaboration with the City of Edmonton Elections Office and Office of the City Clerk, implemented the Citizens Jury on Internet Voting project, which brought together 18 randomly selected citizens from Edmonton to discuss the questions: “Is Edmonton ready for internet voting?” The Citizens’ Jury allowed the participants to learn in depth about one or a number of issues relevant for the public.<sup>165</sup> This process is also based on the belief that a representative group will reach similar conclusions to a much larger group.

The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI) collaborated with the City of Edmonton to implement the first attempt at a Citizen Jury, directly tied to a policy decision process, in Canada. This involved an innovative and effective public involvement plan to increase the public’s knowledge of electronic voting processes, assess electoral readiness, and identify concerns and information needs about the adoption of this new technology.<sup>166</sup> As CPI describes, a Citizen’s Jury is a viable decision-making model, which promotes the direct involvement of citizens in decisions about strategic planning, policy development, or technology assessments. It is usually made up of 12- 24 jurors, who are randomly selected members of the general public. The jurors hear evidence and proposals from experts, review the information presented, question

the expert witnesses and engage in deliberation, to make recommendations on the issue or problem under consideration. Unlike focus groups and surveys, this method of public engagement allows the participants to represent their views directly to policy-makers.

The idea behind Citizens juries is that given enough time and information, ordinary people can make decisions about complex policy issues. The citizens' jury allows the participants to learn in depth about one or a number of issues relevant for the public. Deliberative Polls are another example of civic engagement. For deliberative polls, "stakeholder and/or advisory groups are formed to create and review balanced, accurate, and comprehensive briefing materials" that are provided to participants in advance, and then participants attend a plenary session at the event where they can ask questions of experts that they have developed in small groups. The process is intended to be more like a conversation between the participants and the panelists than a lecture, and findings about the value of these processes indicate that participants feel more informed and that they generate significant knowledge.<sup>167</sup>

The challenge with citizen deliberation for policy making is that in Canada, they are still relatively new to decision makers and there is still a need to gather additional evidence of how they affects learning and decision-making. These processes are more useful when there is a longer time frame.

### **iii. Civic Learning and Capacity Building**

Opportunities for learning and building skills to engage effectively are central to civic engagement. Evidence shows that increased civic knowledge builds efficacy and a sense of trust that citizen involvement will have an impact.<sup>168</sup> There are projects and programs being developed to address this need and increase citizen knowledge of key community and civic issues. There are also new experiential and structured programs to deepen understanding and skills to be actively involved. As Nicholas Longo<sup>169</sup> a scholar in community, education, and service-learning stresses, there is a growing interest and need for knowledge that is "genuinely co-created through reflective public action."<sup>170</sup> The implications of these findings is that learning that happens *with* and *in* communities, informed and shared by a collective struggle to understand and address increasingly complex problems, will ground theory in practice and provide a foundation of support for further action. An interest in dynamic, collaborative engagement, where knowledge is co-created through a reflective process, emphasizes the value of a cycle of learning based on adult education principles that considers action, reflection, and further action. The following examples demonstrate the long history of civic learning, and illustrate the ways in which some of these models have been adapted to fit contemporary contexts and respond to current civic issues. EFCL is well positioned to develop and implement study circles or similar models. Survey results and focus group participants identified this type of sustained civic learning and capacity building as key need.

#### **a. Study Circles**

Another example of civic learning is the study circle. Study circles involve long-term opportunities to learn about issues and strengthen relationships with other learners. Study circles originated in 19th century Sweden and are still used extensively as an important means of involving citizens. Study circles have been utilized by a diversity of organizations and communities in the United States, Canada, and Australia. A model from Tennessee developed in the 1930s demonstrates the potential for working with people in communities (e.g. Highlander Folk School, established in 1932).<sup>171</sup> Founded on trust and support, this model brings together people with "common concerns, provides a safe place to talk about problems and local issues, and supports them in finding solutions through a democratic exchange of ideas."<sup>172</sup> The idea behind this model is that a learning circle builds a base of collective experience that is "co-created based on



people's stories.”<sup>173</sup> Unique to this example of civic learning is that “conversation begins where people are, and then grows out of these experiences.”<sup>174</sup>

At the same time, in the 1930s in Canada, the Antigonish movement, which blended adult education, cooperative organizing, and community development to improve local economic and social circumstances in Nova Scotia, demonstrated the power of these “small learning communities with deep relationships,” with ‘kitchen table meetings’, or ‘study circles’ that challenged learners to be active, rather than passive participants in their learning and in pushing back against the toughest challenges in their communities. As Father Thompkins expressed, ‘Ideas have hands and feet,’<sup>175</sup> and Horton stresses that the process of making decisions helps people learn.<sup>176</sup> An example from present day to facilitate community learning and deliberation is CPI Citizen Planning Circles, in which citizens come together over a period of weeks or several weekends over the course of months.

Study circles are designed to provide an environment for a small group of citizens to deliberate on a particular set of issues or strategies to address a civic concern or issue that is a high priority for them. Study circles are effective for deliberation about complex topics and typically involve citizens meeting multiple times to examine in depth the questions that are the focus of the involvement process.

### **Citizen Planning Circles- Modern day Study Circles**

The Centre for Public Involvement (CPI) uses Citizen Planning Circles<sup>177</sup> to create deliberative opportunities to engage citizens in learning and informed decision-making. For example, a recent CPI project involved a Citizen Planning Circle to deliberate and provide input to the task force on community sustainability project. The Citizen Planning Circle is a citizen process, based on concepts and techniques of Study circles.

Citizen Planning Circles and Citizens’ Juries are two examples of citizen deliberation processes that provide participants with balanced information and perspectives to support inclusion and looking at issues from multiple perspectives. Access to balanced information can be provided in the form of educational resources or case studies, and organizations can develop networks of resource people who facilitate learning through presentations and discussion from various points of view.

A Citizen Planning Circle is a group of people who are purposely selected to be broadly representative of a community by age, gender, and/or other criteria. They are typically convened to inform an important community decision or aid in the development of a public policy or plan. A Planning Circle meets together to learn from each other and from experts about a particular topic. The Citizen Planning Circle format is relevant to EFCL planning because it brings citizens together to “learn, deliberate, and provide careful and informed insight to decision-makers in the form of recommendations detailed in a public report”.<sup>178</sup> See page 36-37 for the description of Citizens’ Juries provided in a previous section for more information on this process.

To address challenges of hearing competing interests and widely ranging views, strategies such as concurrent deliberations, followed by deliberations across views or groups,<sup>179</sup> and other processes like Civil Dialogue<sup>180</sup> may be considered for certain issues. Civil Dialogue is discussed in greater detail in the *Resources* section.

### **b. Community Conversations and Dialogues**

Community conversations and dialogues are vital to civic engagement. Processes that facilitate and create intentional opportunities for civic engagement “grounded in real-world experiences”<sup>181</sup> have the potential to: 1) engage in dialogue with community members who are impacted by decisions; 2) open spaces to think more clearly about policy choices; 3) illuminate the power of a different kind of politics to address contentious issues; 4) draw connections between learning as active participants and imagine how learning can be different, liberating, and can lead to action or change. Many of these dialogue processes have accompanying toolkits to lead community organizers and facilitators through the guiding questions and process. Two examples of formats for public dialogue are Civil Dialogue, described in the *Resources* section, and designs for public engagement by the National Issues Forum are described here:

#### **National Issues Forum (NIF)**

National Issues Forums (NIF)<sup>182</sup> is one of the strongest examples of work done to develop dialogue or discussion resources for communities. They are a US based nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums set up for citizens to consider public policy issues. They bring people together to learn and deliberate about common problems. Forums may focus on an issue such as health care, immigration, or diversity. The forums provide a way for people of diverse views and experiences to develop a shared understanding of problems and to seek out common ground for action. Forums are facilitated, and use an *issue discussion guide* to frame the issue and present the overall problem, along with three or four broad approaches to the problem. Forum participants work through the issue by considering each approach, examining strengths and concerns, and the costs and consequences with that approach. Some topics include budget priorities, educating and developing youth, and healthcare. See the *Profiles* section at the end of this report for more details (See page 74).

### **c. Programs for capacity building and civic education**

There are some key programs being developed to support citizen skill, knowledge and capacity to effectively be involved in providing quality input and understanding the complexities and challenges of decision making and community issues. Highlighted below are **some interesting Canadian examples including the City of Edmonton Planning Academy, CPI's Civic Spaces project, Citizen's Academy in Ottawa, and City of Toronto's Civics 101**. Another interesting example that includes students in civic engagement is the City of Edmonton City Hall School,<sup>183</sup> a weeklong, inquiry based, hands-on learning experience for Grade 1 – 9 students. Students experience municipal government through simulated City Council sessions, a visit to the Mayor's office and by working with Councillors, social workers, Edmonton Police Service, historians and other City employees. These initiatives are evidence of the potential of up and coming work, and great opportunities for EFCL to be involved. While some civic engagement processes focus on planning, others are about supporting broad citizen understanding of involvement and city decision making including key topics like budgeting. These programs are designed to increase citizen skills and knowledge, rather than giving input on a particular issue.

Some examples are as follows:

#### **City of Edmonton Planning Academy**

The City of Edmonton has developed a Planning Academy<sup>184</sup> to help citizens better understand and participate in the planning process, and better understand the roles, rights and interests of all parties involved in the planning and development process. The City of Edmonton's Planning Academy offers a series of courses designed to provide a better understanding of the planning and development process in

Edmonton. The Planning branch of Sustainable Development offers a series of 3-6 hour courses, facilitated by city staff. Participants receive a manual, instruction, and snacks. Sessions include discussions and "real life" activities to increase participants' understanding of topics such as Land Use Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation. Participants can earn a 'Certificate of Participation' by completing the three core courses and one elective course.

### **Ottawa Citizen's Academy**

The Citizen's Academy (CA) in Ottawa, Ontario<sup>185</sup> provides a forum for a range of perspectives, dialogue, and a new way of collaborative thinking, that can shift citizens towards creating an inclusive, flourishing city. CA provides ways of thinking about "city building" in a creative, on-going process, and civic "learning, works, and conversations." They offer a 5-week Civics Boot Camp, with sessions on municipal governance, budgeting and land use planning. Additionally, the program offers a practicum, where small groups plan civic action and make their pitch to a panel of community leaders who provide feedback on the plans. This organization's profile is also included in the final section of this report (See page 74). This is a collaborative community based organization or effort in which the City is a partner but it is not organized or run by the City.

### **City of Toronto, Civics 101**

Civics 101Toronto<sup>186</sup> was a civic literacy pilot, developed in 2009, to educate citizens about how City government works - their role in local government, decision-making, planning, finances and elections. It brought together 175 randomly selected participants in a special learning series. The program was just one component of the City Manager's Strategic Plan and Corporate Policy Division's Civic Engagement strategy. The City of Toronto also published a series of learning guides about how decisions are made, the roles of Councilors and the Mayor, elections, and more. Civics 101 is highlighted in the organizational profiles at the end of this report. See the website to explore the learning guides and read the report on this initiative.

### **Civic Spaces CPI**

The Centre for Public Involvement partnered with the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition in 2013 on a pilot project designed "Civic Spaces" <sup>187</sup> to support the civic and political engagement of immigrants and refugees in Edmonton. The project included a Civics 101 visually based educational workshop that provided participants with the tools and opportunities to understand government in Canada on municipal, provincial and federal levels. The project also involved a second component that developed an Open Space Forum for multicultural community members to meet and dialogue with elected officials and candidates. Participants identified key areas for discussion, and then met and had a dialogue with candidates from the 2013 Edmonton General Election. See more about this project in the *Diversity and Inclusion* section (See pages 50-54).

There is still need for extensive research on the short- and long-term impacts of citizen capacity building programs including on-going citizen involvement and shifts in attitudes and opinions. There are opportunities to develop more experiential, hands-on and visually based programming to support diverse community member involvement in these capacity building programs. This is a key area that EFCL and leagues could support or develop in partnership with other organizations or the City of Edmonton. More opportunities for experiential and hands-on learning within these programs are areas of interest of CPI and have potential for innovation. **CPI is also gaining more evidence of the connections between theory**

and these methods ‘in practice’ and can work with EFCL to explore the various strengths and limitations of the approaches, and factors like the issue or topic, questions being asked, scope of the discussion or project, and timelines.

***d. Deliberative Learning and Discussion/ Issue Guides***

As explained previously, well-researched information enhances learning about civic issues by demonstrates multiple perspectives and views on an issue. Issues guides for civic and community learning can provide balanced, diverse perspectives, using plain language and a range of resources for citizens and communities to learn about important issues or topics. Examples of these resources are included here, and EFCL could develop their own issues guides to support community leagues to learn about topics of relevance to neighbourhoods. **Promising approaches for EFCL might be to develop study materials and case studies on civic issues that the leagues could use for information nights that build capacity to talk and work on pressing public issues.**<sup>188</sup>

**National Issues Forum (Deliberative Learning)**

National Issues Forum,<sup>189</sup> outlined in a previous section is an example of deliberative learning. Deliberative learning is an approach to education that emphasizes dialogue, inquiry, and choice making. Participants explore complex topics in-depth, consider diverse perspectives on these topics, identify and work through tensions inherent to those views, and attempt to arrive at reasoned judgment. When used to support students’ development as citizens, deliberative learning takes on a public dimension; students grapple with issues of public significance in order to arrive at a shared decision.

**CPI Issue Guides**

“Issue guides” can inform citizens on different facets of a civic issue and can ensure they are prepared to deliberate.<sup>190</sup> These ‘issue guides’ provide access to different information and perspectives, accessibility of information, and opportunities for small group discussion to reduce marginalization and exclusion.<sup>191</sup> Imagine an issue guide, developed by EFCL for the leagues, entitled **“Well designed and Healthy Neighborhoods: Tools for Finding Common Ground.”** CPI researchers have developed issues guides, also referred to as discussion guides, for numerous projects, including an issue guide for a Citizen Planning Circle on “Effective Use of Rural Broadband Internet Service” which can be viewed on the CPI website at <http://centreforpublicinvolvement.com/>. See also CPI’s “Citizens’ Guide to Energy and Climate Challenges” and “Internet Voting in Canada.”

**iv. Civic Dialogues and Community Conversations**

Dialogue contributes to capacity building skills and counters marginalization because rather than making decisions based on power or coercion, dialogue emphasizes a decision-making process that involves all participants and explores options.<sup>192</sup> A variety of perspectives and backgrounds enrich the discussion and validate the outcomes.<sup>193</sup> The purpose of using dialogue is to build trust, mutual understanding and relationships. Citizens can communicate and deliberate about the factors that impact community life, and their views on civic issues.

Dialogue is an important process in civic engagement, and vital to organizations, because it can build trust and rapport and lead to deep deliberation on key civic issues and a range of potential responses, and it can also address issues of exclusion and marginalization, build knowledge and understanding about complex issues, and generate innovative solutions to problems. Dialogue is a deliberate process that assumes that participants are ready to work hard, that they come prepared to learn, and that youth and adults have

abundant life experiences to share.<sup>194</sup> There is an underlying assumption of trust and honesty that deepen as safety is established and participants take the time to reflect. This process is particularly relevant to EFCL planning because it has the potential to set a foundation for future action.

Dialogue and subsequent deliberation that can address issues mentioned earlier, like polarization and exclusion. For example six key outcomes are: 1) resolving conflicts and bridging divides; 2) building understanding and knowledge about complex issues; 3) generating innovative solutions to problems; 4) inspiring collective or individual action; 5) reaching agreement on or recommendations about policy decisions and; 6) building civic capacity, or the ability for communities to solve their own public problems. In dialogue, an opportunity for engagement is the key.

**Through facilitated dialogues around key questions, unique community dynamics and relationships in communities can be examined through the lens of real events and build a shared history of place.<sup>195</sup> Citizens can explore how these dynamics affect the identities and choices of community members.**

Dialogue between generations can also explore the networks that exist in the community, and uncover possibilities for mentorship and dialogue to enhance civic engagement.<sup>196</sup> EFCL and leagues could work with citizens to explore how these dynamics impact the choices of community members.

These dialogues can be designed to develop a deeper understanding of how and in what ways networks exist in the community, and explore in greater depth the impact that mentorship and dialogue may have on civic engagement. Dialogue can spark ideas about other relevant questions that might be asked across generations to strengthen civic engagement.

**Community based organizations** provide some of the best practical examples of using and facilitating dialogues. *Portsmouth Listens*, described below, is an example of an organization doing this work. It addresses issues of building trust and rapport between participants, and is based on a process of sharing ideas and listening to the experiences of others. *BCCIC (British Columbia Council for International Cooperation)* provides another example. It is important to note that community dialogues are often accompanied by learning guides, which are highlighted in the previous section on civic learning (See page 37).

### **Portsmouth Listens**

*Portsmouth Listens*, based in New Hampshire, is an example of a partnership between local citizens, the City of Portsmouth, neighbourhoods, and the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>197</sup> They are actively involved in developing an “effective, inclusive approach to involving residents in deliberative dialogues and learning about topics identified by communities. One of these examples is “Getting to and from and around Portsmouth” where citizens explore the question “What are the characteristics of a sustainable transportation system to make Portsmouth the best place to live, work and play for all our residents, workers and visitors?”

Another example from *Portsmouth Listens* is the City Master Plan. These community master plans serve as guiding documents for policy, and generally are developed under the authority of the Planning Board. The Master Plan describes the present and future state of the city. What is critical to note about this example in Portsmouth is that the Master Plan becomes a key policy document for community leaders to use in making well-informed decisions about local issues ranging from future development, open space protection and affordable housing to transportation and community facility infrastructure needs. The Portsmouth Listens project provides evidence that citizens can be involved in the development of the ‘Master Plan’ for the city.

In this case, there are unique opportunities for residents, businesses, local organizations, and other key stakeholders to provide their input into city planning.

### **Community-based Deliberative Dialogue**

Deliberative Dialogue, or public deliberation, is a technique to engage citizens in discussions of public policy. The BC Council for International Cooperation has used deliberative dialogues to engage with members, and they provide a video of the process on their website.<sup>198</sup> As they explain, deliberation provides an opportunity to consider complex issues in more depth than is allowed by typical public consultation processes, and goes beyond public meetings or announcements that are not sufficient to engage the public in complex issues. Jacquie Dale, deliberative dialogue trainer and facilitator with One World Inc., describes the importance of the process in these terms: while public planners may have been working on a policy issue for year, the demand on citizens can be for immediate feedback or decisions.<sup>199</sup> Dale's explanation of deliberative dialogue offers insight for EFCL to consider in their planning for civic engagement. **As she notes, "members of the public need time to work through difficult issues; deliberation provides a way to help do this."**<sup>200</sup> This statement is an excerpt from the CCIC resource article on public deliberation, "Opening Dialogue, Opening Minds: Encouraging Citizen Engagement" featured on BCCIC website.

### **v. "Making Democracy Fun" and Improving Civic Health**

New literature highlights games and experiential education as key components of civic learning. Josh Lerner's 2014 book, *Making Democracy Fun: How game design can empower citizens and transform politics*, illustrates the importance of overcoming 'boring meetings with no clear outcome or decisions,' and repetitive lectures and presentations, by introducing games with exemplary design. These games can demonstrate team challenges for collaboration or competition in public meetings, with clear rules, measurable progress, and engaging visuals.<sup>201</sup> Experiential opportunities like these also demonstrate the complexity of civic issues. Games can "animate people, challenge their assumptions, and establish collaborative social ties."<sup>202</sup> Lessons of game design can be extended to understand and rethink or redesign participatory processes to foster more informed and active participation.

#### ***Some interesting examples:***

##### **Civic Health Club**

One unique example from Denver, Colorado in the United States was developed by an organization called *Warm Cookies for Revolution*. A **Civic Health Club**<sup>203</sup> is designed to support citizen and communities to improve their civic health like going to a gym to improve physical health. These clubs support citizens in fun and creative ways, and engage them in conversations that highlight 'where we are' and 'where we hope to be' on issues related to environment, education, and government. Through "fun and fact-based" discussions, these conversations are built on the belief that "we all have the capacity to understand and take part in the decisions that affect our lives." The civic health clubs address civic structures and systems that are not working, while exploring how they could look different - in vibrant and creative ways.<sup>204</sup> It is important to note that these conversations explore alternative views and build capacity for decision-making and action, but are not necessarily tied to providing input for a specific decision. See the calendar and descriptions on their website for examples of the types of activities they do to foster civic health.<sup>205</sup>

### **The Engagement Game Lab**

The Engagement Game Lab is a vivid example of an innovative way for people to participate in civic life and “expand the study of citizenship in the digital era.”<sup>206</sup> Players engage in online digital activities like mapping, and their contributions are recorded as reports. Citizens, as game players or mappers, can then compare their reports with others. The intention is to see actions and ideas through “social sharing, communication, and recognition of local issues.” The goal is to increase engagement and information exchange.

### **City Creator - Community Building Simulations (Warm Cookies for the Revolution)**

There are a number of tools that can be used to talk about city planning and spark ideas for experiential civic education. One of these simulations is “City Creator” which allows players to move pieces to create and change city infrastructure.<sup>207</sup> Other activities that an organization called Warm Cookies of the Revolution conducts in their civic health clubs use to build and improve civic health include building a Lego® city or participating in an obstacle course to understand city planning, in the city of Denver, Colorado.

### **TransLink- Involving Citizens in Transportation Planning**

A board game created by TransLink has been developed to involve citizens in model transportation planning. The object of the game is to “understand the public’s vision for how public transportation should be provided and paid for in the next 10 years”<sup>208</sup> *It’s Your Move* is an interactive consultation game designed as an board game, and developed into an online game which serves as an interactive consultation tool, produced and incorporated into an online consultation space.<sup>209</sup>

In addition, a bus simulator app that maps bus transit in the City of Vancouver can help citizens explore routes and engage in conversations about transportation planning.

These examples illustrate the creativity with which organizations and citizens are embracing the possibilities of civic engagement. The next section discusses advocacy, another key part of civic engagement.

## **C. Advocacy and Civic Engagement**

How, and in what ways, is advocacy part of civic engagement? Or, does civic engagement differ from advocacy? The terms sometimes are used interchangeably, but the distinctions have important implications for planning and action. The Federation of Calgary Communities (FCC) has developed a flowchart with key questions to consider. They have shared this flowchart as a resource for EFCL to examine, and have provided insight into advocacy and civic engagement. See ***Emerging Ideas from Key Informants*** for further discussion and the flowchart.

The National Dialogue Alliance<sup>210</sup> also explores questions about how advocacy fits in to the continuum of civic engagement. Civic engagement is concerned, overall, with enhancing opportunities for individuals and groups to be *informed*, and to participate in civic life.<sup>211</sup> Advocacy, or the strategies that organizations or groups use to impact change, is part of the “process that gives voice to specific civic engagement agenda items and issues.”<sup>212</sup> Recent literature on measuring impact on advocacy indicates that there are new developments, including reports, tools and guides, to help funders and organizers understand what advocacy is, and how to evaluate its success. Ranghelli’s review highlights a body of work related to public policy advocacy, but she notes that the strategies that organizing groups use to impact change can also be

included under the umbrella of ‘advocacy.’ These include research and policy formulation, media outreach, educating legislators, and reframing public debates, and points out that this body of research and resources are relevant for organizing.<sup>213</sup>

For example, Ranghelli’s recent report on measuring impact of advocacy and civic engagement includes an overview of important benchmarks identified by *The Alliance for Justice*. It emphasizes that benchmarks for evaluating advocacy should include:

- 1) **Outcome benchmarks**, such as whether a policy or nonpartisan electoral result was achieved.
- 2) **Progress benchmarks**, such as if key activities accomplished, and incremental results that lead toward an advocacy outcome.
- 3) **Capacity-building benchmarks**, or outcomes that strengthen an organization’s ability to advocate.

Although these benchmarks are related to fund development, they also affect knowledge and organizational capacity building. For example, the review outlines indicators of success, which are difficult to measure, that include **increased knowledge of political process, raising awareness around an issue, leadership and relationship development**. Ranghelli stresses that, “[these] outcomes build the capacity of organizations and increase their likelihood of succeeding in the next advocacy effort” to influence decision-makers.

To summarize, advocacy can include a range of activities such as media outreach, research, and helping to frame civic debates. The outcomes, though they may be a challenge to measure, include capacity-building benefits and outcomes, and awareness building around an issue. What is important to note is that EFCL activities extend far beyond ‘advocacy’ to include on-going member training, and developing opportunities to learn more about civic issues. As citizens become more aware of civic issues, they are able to deliberate and provide informed input on decisions that impact their lives. The EFCL is committed to working with leagues to take positions and provide input that are informed and can influence decisions. However, this process takes time, and sometimes the requests for input have short timelines of several weeks. To address this barrier, EFCL can work with community leagues to develop resources and a plan for civic education that build this knowledge base over time. EFCL can support leagues to develop positions based on what is important to neighbourhoods, even when there is not an urgent need to make immediate decisions on a specific issue. This knowledge building and knowledge sharing increases opportunities for citizens to participate, and builds capacity and skills that citizens require to engage in effective deliberation.

## **D. Youth Engagement**

### **i. Are Community Leagues and EFCL ready to Engage Youth in Political and Civic Life?**

Meaningful and effective involvement of youth is a critical need in civic engagement, and there is an ongoing need for research to gather evidence from youth about their civic and political engagement. This section highlights key aspects of youth engagement.

Youth are often told what to do, or are involved in community processes in a manner that the Freechild Organization calls “token participation.”<sup>214</sup> Significant to EFCL, researchers and practitioners are demonstrating that listening to youth and engaging them in dialogue is a significant starting point. Involving youth could lead to more positive youth engagement and important contributions to civic issues.<sup>215</sup> As various reports including work from the *Centre of Excellence in Youth Engagement* illustrate, youth engagement involves “the meaningful participation and sustained involvement” in an activity or in community life.<sup>216</sup> Youth engagement also



contributes to strengthening local skills and capacity building, decision-making, and social responsibility that contributes to building resilient communities. Youth engagement involves encouraging critical analysis of their identity in order to develop a politicized understanding of themselves as individuals and their position in society.<sup>217</sup> This increased understanding of self-awareness and a shift to social awareness leads to concepts of citizenship for youth. It explores how youth can affect barriers or challenges and develop skills to positively impact their own lives.<sup>218</sup>

A framework developed by *The National League of Cities*<sup>219</sup> from the US outlines four critical elements for successful youth initiatives: the setting, structure, strategy and support. *Authentic youth civic engagement: A guide for municipal leaders, (AYCE report)*<sup>220</sup> developed by the National League of Cities in 2010, provides insight for involving young people in municipal government that can be applied to EFCL for working with leagues to enhance civic engagement and leadership.

The AYCE report is a compilation of insights from knowledge and expertise shared by more than 300 youth development experts, academics, municipal leaders, community organization partners and young adult and youth leaders from across the USA. It draws key findings from a focus groups, surveys and interviews conducted in 2008 and 2009. Although these findings are from the US context, they provide evidence of the impacts of engagement and demonstrate that youth engagement matters. The findings also provide ideas to support EFCL designing and planning more meaningful youth engagement.

The outcomes from this youth engagement report are critical insights for EFCL and community leagues in engaging a younger demographic. For example, drawing on experiences of communities with “robust youth engagement initiatives,” the guide describes authentic youth civic engagement (AYCE) as engagement in which young people:

- are seen as valuable participants in the work of local government;
- are prepared to take on meaningful roles in addressing relevant issues; and
- work in partnership with adults who respect, listen to and support them.<sup>221</sup>

Key findings in this *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement Report* are:

1) In cities and towns that promote a strong youth voice in local decision-making processes, youth work side-by-side with municipal officials and other adult allies to make their communities better places to live.

2) Through partnerships, young people and adults focus on "youth issues," such as school safety, afterschool opportunities and use of public space, *as well as* local economic development plans, "green" initiatives and other issues that affect the entire community.

3) The impacts of youth involvement are substantial – they often lead to budget savings, increased support for city decisions and more informed or “wiser” policy and program choices.

4) Youth who are engaged in meaningful civic engagement opportunities tend to do better in school and avoid risky behaviors; they are more likely to vote, volunteer and become lifelong civic leaders as adults.

The *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement Report* also includes **ten key points for planning for youth engagement**, which are included in **Appendix E** of this report.

A key area for learning for EFCL and community leagues from the AYCE report is that for civic engagement to be authentic, it will involve sufficient time to attract and support youth and provide opportunities for skill building and meaningful opportunities or ‘authentic tasks’ related to issues of concern. There are exciting opportunities for partnerships and collaborations to engage in ‘authentic tasks’ with City of Edmonton Next Gen and Edmonton Youth Council.

Numerous studies have identified that cynicism and lack of trust in formal politics can lead to a lack of interest and faith in conventional politics and political participation of youth. However, there is also general concern for youth civic engagement and increased interest in best ways to support youth to participate more broadly in civic life.<sup>222</sup> Some examples of these efforts are illustrated in initiatives in the UK and USA, and in Canada, by organizations that are working to involve youth in building or creating services that are responsive to youth and community needs. Advocates for youth participation and true youth-adult partnerships argue that **youth should be co-creators of knowledge at the core of the full cycle of decision-making, planning and evaluation.**

## **ii. Big Ideas about Youth Involvement**

Critical research and programming related to youth involvement is also happening in Edmonton. In 2010, the CPI conducted a comprehensive review of youth engagement with NextGEN and the City of Edmonton.<sup>223</sup> This literature review supported NextGEN’s youth strategy, called *Connect, Care and Contribute*. In this strategy, active youth participation and engagement were identified as essential parts of building the city’s social capital, and citizens sharing talents, gaining skills, making a difference, and expressing what matters to them.<sup>224</sup>

The synthesis report developed by CPI<sup>225</sup> included many case studies, information interviews, and a literature review of research papers and reports detailed much of the literature and research on youth civic and political engagement. The report emphasizes that there is not a “one size fits all” approach to civic engagement and recognizes the importance of developing opportunities for youth to participate as co-creators in political and civic spheres. This project was sparked from the belief and evidence of voter decline amongst youth, that many young people are disengaged from civic and political arenas – a trend that has the attention of many academics and policymakers in Canada and internationally. While EFCL and community leagues may be concerned that youth, in general, are disengaged from political and civic activities in their communities, studies into such involvement contradict this belief and illustrate nuances in the ways in which youth seek to become involved.<sup>226</sup> Consequently, there are opportunities for EFCL and the leagues to challenge the idea that there is overall apathy among youth, especially in issues that matter to young people. In fact, the study found that in some cases, youth were even more involved than their older Canadian counterparts were. *The Youth Engagement Report*<sup>227</sup> also explored what other organizations are doing to engage youth. “Snapshots of Involvement” highlight real-life exciting programs and initiatives aimed at engaging youth. Additionally, recommendations for both policy and practice were developed. The full study is available from CPI.

CPI's research identified key ideas about youth involvement that include evidence that youth are involved in many informal political activities across Canada and globally. The results of the study, which are most relevant to EFCL, are that youth are interested in participating and volunteering. With this in mind, there is strong rationale for intentionally developing resources to educate youth for involvement, and providing leadership to explore key areas like strategies for engagement and connections between civic and political involvement. The study also explored social media and its impact on youth participation. It found that social media is not the exclusive means by which to engage youth. Focus group participants reiterated this finding, emphasizing that EFCL could be most effective in outreach by using multiple forms of communication to reach a diversity of citizens, across ages and other factors.

There are key areas of learning for EFCL to consider. One of these areas is to provide leadership to test new strategies for engagement and explore ways to engage youth. Findings from previous reports on youth engagement, coupled with the responses from non-member focus groups, offer a starting point for EFCL to move theory into practice.<sup>228</sup> A finding from the literature also points to a gap in tracking and reporting on youth involvement, which indicates that EFCL could have a key leadership role in tracking this data. EFCL and community leagues can network directly with Next Gen<sup>229</sup> and other organizations, to enhance EFCL's civic engagement strategies and inform their business planning. In addition, in the next section there are ideas for how to intentionally involve post-secondary students in community leagues and EFCL.

### iii. EFCL and Youth Engagement

The review on youth engagement previously conducted by CPI challenged the broad claim that youth are not interested in engagement.<sup>230</sup> However, the ways in which they become involved have challenged the effectiveness of traditional institutional means of participating, being involved and engaging. Recognizing the authentic involvement of youth requires knowledge of how youth want to partake as citizens. This finding has direct implications for EFCL and community leagues. It is a call to action for community leagues to talk with youth and to embrace them as both co-creators and partners in renewing civic and democratic spaces.

Previous studies have found that youth are engaged in political activity, but they may choose informal forms of participation. Age also plays a significant role in civic participation. For example, youth may believe in the idea of democracy<sup>231</sup> but they are looking for ways to engage that they feel are most relevant to their lives.<sup>232</sup> Examples that have been identified for involvement and volunteering include contributions to education and research, coaching, refereeing and fundraising as activities, and opportunities to build job skills, participate in activities with friends, and explore their strengths.<sup>233</sup> These findings may contribute to EFCL and community leagues' understanding of how and in what ways youth might want to be involved in their own neighbourhood and leagues. **This evidence of engagement indicates that critiques of the decline of youth in political spaces is not completely accurate, and may in fact reflect a narrow understanding of engagement.**

Other key findings from youth involvement in the CPI study and in the *Authentic Youth Civic Engagement Study* in the USA are relevant to enhancing EFCL civic engagement more broadly. Fostering broad participation and involvement in civic engagement initiatives cannot be isolated, or completed by a single organization or federation. Rather, the practice of involvement needs to be facilitated and fostered in all aspects of young people's lives, through discussion and debate at home, in schools, communities, and in

civic organizations. However, there is a need for institutions, both governmental and community-based, to examine their own approaches in order to question how effective they are at reaching out to youth and acknowledging the strengths that young citizens bring to public discourses and policy spheres.<sup>234</sup>

The growing shifts in youth involvement suggest that youth are open to sharing the ways that they want to be involved. The question brought forward from a full civic engagement of youth process was, “who is listening?”<sup>235</sup> These questions provide a foundation for action recommended by the AYCE study.

- Provide mentorship and opportunities for youth to be involved in the most pressing civic issues.
- Consider how, and in what ways, youth might be interested in being involved in civic issues that matter to them, in their neighbourhoods. Ask them directly, and listen to their responses.
- Involve youth in the full planning cycle.

An excellent visual reference to imagine public involvement and decision making, especially across generations, is the Freechild organization cycle of youth and adult partnership.<sup>236</sup> This offers a different way of thinking about the fluidity of the process, and the need for youth to be full partners throughout the planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of the engagement process and any planned events.

EFCL may extend these recommendations to explore and track existing networks with youth in neighbourhoods, and explore *if* and *how* they are involved, *how they would like to be involved*, and *who is listening to their perspectives*. Based on the findings from the literature review, EFCL could ask for input on how youth wish to be involved, and provide direct invitations. The question of ‘who is listening’ was also raised in EFCL review in the non-member focus group. Participants emphasized that it is vital to know that their perspectives and voices have been heard, in terms of responding to their feedback and following through on ideas that they shared about what would motivate them to become league members, or connect with the leagues in their neighbourhood.

See **Appendix E** for the perspective of a young person on “Strategies for Engaging 20-30 year olds.”

## **E. Diversity and Inclusion**

A critical challenge and opportunity of civic engagement is to ensure diversity of information, ideas, perspectives and participants. A related challenge is to ensure commitment of organizations and communities to reflect on and evaluate these components of their civic engagement practice. Although neighbourhoods and organizations make genuine efforts to be inclusive, and may *think* they are including many voices in their civic engagement work, this may not always be the case. Often these citizen participants are self-selecting for specific issues that they feel are relevant to them. As a result, they may have very similar perspectives on civic issues. The literature on civic engagement and diversity indicates that attention to diversity and inclusion must include questions about planning and process that are attentive to diversity and demographic differences, including gender, race, education, and other socioeconomic classifications.<sup>237</sup> Special mechanisms or tools for reflecting on diversity and inclusion are critical to this process. Ideas to guide this reflection and subsequent action are included below.

**Scholars raise many questions to guide thinking about inclusion that are highly relevant to EFCL and leagues.** Key issues that come to the fore in civic engagement are: who participates, and how might organizations think critically about strategic ways to recruit and retain members and or participants. Siu

and Stanisevski offer insight into civic engagement processes like deliberation in multicultural contexts, and how to address inequality, exclusion and marginalization.<sup>238</sup> For example, Siu and Stanisevski offer an overview of important issues, such as reciprocity and the effectiveness of various strategies to enhance participant confidence and inclusion.<sup>239</sup> Two key questions are: *How can we foster greater inclusion of diverse participants in civic engagement? How can we enable civic engagement across cultural differences?*

<sup>240</sup> **These are important questions to guide EFCL's planning for diversity and inclusion.**

There is a growing body of literature on ways to think about how diversity and inclusion can look in practice, and promote the civic engagement contributions of Aboriginal individuals and communities, youth, seniors, new immigrant communities, and others.<sup>241</sup> Addressing diversity and inclusion requires strategic recruitment, increased understanding of who participates and careful attention to literacy and language. Tangible efforts to use visual and image-based communications may also support inclusion. For example, CPI provides supports to participants to enhance participation through providing translators and partnering with organizations who work with youth and newcomers.

In public deliberation, there is an important distinction between *external exclusion*—"many ways in which individuals and groups are purposely or inadvertently left out of public deliberations"—and *internal exclusion*—"ways that participants in civic engagement lack the ability to influence the thinking of other participants" in a civic engagement process.<sup>242</sup> These examples of how participants can be excluded provide evidence that a focus on building capacity and civic learning, as mentioned earlier in this report, can enhance broad-based participation. Increased knowledge of differences in communication, preferred methods of participation, and learning styles could also enhance the work of EFCL and community leagues.<sup>243</sup> There are many strategies to work across privilege, with attention to culture and social class. **Storytelling, translation, and increased use of visual materials are examples that could strengthen EFCL's ability to build an inclusive community**

While there is a risk of exclusion in civic engagement, there is also a challenge of perceived 'representation,' as highlighted previously in this report. For example, a group of citizens with a vested interest in a civic issue may come together to take a position (or gather input to make a decision) that is supposed to represent, "the public"<sup>244</sup> Though a community or interest group might feel that everyone is 'welcome to show up if they want to,' civic engagement that is attentive to diversity and inclusion systematically questions where the barriers lie, and how they might be addressed. Previous research demonstrates that there is not a "one-size fits all" model of engagement. For example, factors such as age and background impact engagement, and different approaches are required to attract a diverse population to become involved with political issues, voting and volunteering.<sup>245</sup> Theory and evidence from organizational work suggests that there is a need to explore the intersections of participation, and consider- '*Who is at the planning table? Who is not involved? Who should be?*'<sup>246</sup>

There are also deep-rooted questions about participation and inclusion that researchers continue to ask – *Can citizens really participate as equals? How can barriers be addressed?* These questions do not have simple answers, but they are part of the broader reflection on diversity and inclusion. However, despite the need to be aware of the challenges, there are many documented benefits and possibilities to bringing diverse groups together. For example, Siu and Stanisevski stress the empathy and increased 'open-mindedness' that are often demonstrated when people from varying socio-economic backgrounds come together in a shared space to share opinions and ideas and participate in civic processes.<sup>247</sup>

In a recent PE Task Force on Engagement, The City of Vancouver explicitly articulated a focus on broader representation, diversity, and inclusion. The City of Vancouver engagement report clearly outlines their focus on broader representation of women, urban Aboriginal groups, and immigrant populations.<sup>248</sup> The City of Vancouver report outlines guiding questions to consider that EFCL could also refer to in their planning processes. One example is a review of current strategies that are already being used to engage potential members, to be representative of the city's demographics. Other literature draws attention to visible minorities, socio-economic differences, education levels, religious groups and social classes as a first step in beginning to change how organizations structure their own engagement.

Schools and community networks are often cited as important locations for civics education programming and for connecting with families.<sup>249</sup> EFCL has opportunities to consider how community members participate, and engage in learning about the types of neighbourhoods – or the type of society they wish to build. Community soccer registration and school events may also be natural points of meeting and connection with a broad cross-section of the neighbourhood families. The rationale for building a diverse and inclusive membership and enhancing broad civic literacy is clear. As Milner points out, “Democracy is ... stronger in a community blessed with a substantial stock of civic literacy... Stronger in the sense that levels of [formal] political participation are higher; stronger, too, in the sense that policy decisions are more likely to take into account the full gamut of interests”.<sup>250</sup>

#### **i. Building supports and networks for inclusion**

There are numerous strategies and approaches to enhance inclusion in civic engagement planning and processes. While payments, gender quotas, and incentives have been used to increase inclusion and diversity, in specific civic engagement initiatives, studies show that “proactive, network-based recruitment”<sup>251</sup> is often most effective to increase inclusion and diversity, particularly in public meetings. As Siu describes, **one approach is for organizers to map the different networks within the community, with attention to the groups of people least likely to attend or participate.**<sup>252</sup> The key idea is to connect with the leaders in these networks (informal and formal) who have already established trust and credibility.<sup>253</sup> This method also raises questions of community members' perceptions of the organizing body (e.g. the profile or image of EFCL),<sup>254</sup> and emphasizes the power of social capital mentioned in the introduction, or the need for taking the time to build trust and rapport.

#### **ii. Representation and Recruitment for Diversity**

There is increased knowledge about the questions of ‘representation,’ including methods such as random selection and how to achieve greater representation, but it is a much discussed issue with multiple facets. A report developed by the *Deliberative Democracy Consortium* emphasizes these issues. For example, different types of recruitment may include random selection, based on demographics of neighbourhoods, while scholars and practitioners also debate the benefits of targeted outreach to marginalized groups and individuals, or purposive methods that take into account the topic and who might be impacted.<sup>255</sup>

Mao and Adria,<sup>256</sup> researchers from CPI in civic engagement, point to the importance of selection as a core component of some civic engagement processes in order to address the issues of representation and marginalization.<sup>257</sup> An important finding in their work is that participant selection is a critical component in the design, operation, and outcomes of public-deliberation events. Mao and Adria examine a contemporary issue in Edmonton that is highly relevant to EFCL planning. They explore how the City of

Edmonton selected the members of its *Citizen Panel on Budget Priorities* in 2009 to inform Edmonton's 2010–2011 budget. For this initiative, the organizers used a process of random selection stratified by gender, age, length of residence in the city, educational attainment, and income. This selection method was used to learn from distinct views and from different groups of citizens. **EFCL may consider partnering with the City of Edmonton or CPI on specific projects related to civic engagement that require a similar approach to representation.** The next section covers possible responses to overcome barriers to engagement.

### iii. Addressing Barriers to Engagement

There are many systemic, structural and perceived barriers to engagement. Dave Meslin, a 'community catalyst' and speaker with the National Speakers Bureau, offers insight into some of the 'big picture' barriers to engagement in a TEDtalk called "Antidote to Apathy: 7 barriers to engagement." He challenges the idea that apathy is the biggest barrier to engagement.<sup>258</sup> He argues that a lack of engagement should not be attributed to a lack of interest or indifference about issues; rather, it is a result of a "complex web of cultural barriers" that need to be collectively dismantled.<sup>259</sup> A key point to consider in engagement is that citizens can be intentionally excluded. To counter this exclusion, Meslin argues for deliberate efforts to address the need for accessible public spaces, increase media about civic and political processes that provides contact and event information. For example, it is essential to include information about where events take place, websites, and times, and campaign information so that citizens can be informed and involved.

When citizens have opportunities to be involved, they can do extraordinary things. As Meslin emphasizes, heroic efforts are *collective* and involve 'ordinary citizens' as volunteers, often responding to an invitation to be involved. This idea that ordinary citizens are capable of doing extraordinary things when they have opportunities to be engaged in civic life, is a message that EFCL and leagues can reinforce. Meslin stresses that processes such as elections need to be revisited to ensure that they are accessible and that barriers are addressed.<sup>260</sup> An additional barrier to engagement is that charitable status often limits the advocacy work done by some organizations. Resources like Meslin's seven-minute video can be used by EFCL and the City of Edmonton to inform citizens of their rights to engage in civic spheres, and to discuss how they might work together to dismantle obstacles. As well, EFCL and City of Edmonton can use these types of resources to review their own practices as they focus on inclusion and address barriers to engagement.

There are other logistical challenges or barriers to engagement. For example, current practices suggest a need for innovation and new models to address challenges of time, resources, staffing, and competency constraints.<sup>261</sup> Sharp and Anderson<sup>262</sup> also outline some of the key barriers of representativeness, recruitment and resources, and provide new ways of thinking about ways that large city councils can do more than two-three research exercises a year to be informed on views of the community on important issues. For example, as they stress, current practices such as telephone and mail surveys often require external organizations for design and implementation, while online approaches offer new avenues for citizen consultations and research.<sup>263</sup> Comprehensive and practical suggestions to address barriers also include offering childcare, food, transportation, and translation for meetings or public events.<sup>264</sup>

Research compiled by *The Deliberative Democracy Consortium* illustrates how in addition to different methods of recruitment, other factors can impact participation. Once there is a diverse group of

participants selected, there are important questions to consider about how to achieve acceptable levels of equality given a group of citizens with unequal status, different levels of information, education, and communication skills.<sup>265</sup> Key findings in this research suggest that “trained moderators, appropriate venues, and well planned discussion groups” are key factors that contribute to equity in public processes of engagement.<sup>266</sup> Good facilitation and design can enhance public discussion, by ensuring that there is space for different people to speak, and a process that encourages listening and contributing ideas to the discussion.

There is a need for on-going conversations about addressing barriers to civic engagement. EFCL can provide leadership with community leagues to explore these questions. The *International Centre for Municipal Development* has developed a list of additional considerations that are critical areas that EFCL can also use to support inclusion. These are:

- Ensure that, when possible, information is disaggregated by gender, race, income, ethnicity and other relevant socio-economic factors.
- Provide information in simple, clear language, and consider translation if needed. Use images and key words.
- Partner with local organizations to access their networks and expertise and reach new audiences.
- Plan meetings at different times of day, and try both weeknight and weekend events to maximize participation. Potential members may be reluctant to go out at night, and schedules vary.
- Provide practical supports to help students, lower income residents, seniors and families with young children to attend meetings. Supports can include transportation, childcare, translation, and selection of foods that are considerate of dietary restrictions.
- Whenever possible, plan outreach or consultation meetings where people gather already (this can also enhance outreach to particular communities). For example, EFCL and community leagues could include information about league membership on the first day of school, soccer sign-up nights, in new community members’ welcome baskets, at seniors’ events, conferences.<sup>267</sup>

## F. Digital Engagement in a Civic Age

Vast growth of the internet over the past 20 years has led to a massive increase in information available to citizens about public issues and an explosion of tools for groups and organizations, individuals and communities to interact online to discuss these issues.<sup>268</sup> However, with this increase in potential comes accompanying risks and limitations, including the challenges of accessibility, and of moving from ‘conversation’ to creating a space for deeper *deliberation* about public issues that matter on an international scale.<sup>269</sup>

Davis and Chandler offer a comprehensive discussion of **key questions** to consider, including the benefits and limitations of online vs face-to-face interactions. They also pose a detailed set of questions to consider for technical and process design.<sup>270</sup> They organize their compressive synthesis in a chart that considers the following: 1) purpose (why is it being designed); 2) population (who will be involved); 3) spatiotemporal distance (how and when participants will be interacting); 3) communication medium (how will communication occur) and 4) deliberative process (what will occur between participants). Additional considerations are around facilitation –moderated vs un-moderated and identifiability (identifiable or anonymous). **In terms of using technology, determining purpose is a key factor.** For example, brainstorming and general discussion are less demanding than decision-making and belief formation.



These questions are investigated in the literature and can help to guide decisions based on goals and outcomes (such as a collective vs individual decisions, beliefs or ideas).

Laura Black, a Communications Studies professor, studies public deliberation, dialogue and conflict in small groups.<sup>271</sup> She has developed a full report of the problems and challenges of online deliberation. She argues that it is necessary to deeply question to what extent digital media can offer potential opportunities for deliberative decision making.<sup>272</sup> Her overview of methods, such as text-based chat, web conferencing, and games and virtual worlds, is balanced with reflection on possibilities and challenges of deliberative design. Black offers ideas for overcoming common barriers with examples, such as *Minnesota E-Democracy's Issue Forum* response to limitations of online conversations and posts, which demonstrate that periodic e-newsletters to summarize issues and highlight aspects of the discussion can encourage sustained online participation.<sup>273</sup>

Despite the many opportunities available with online civic engagement in the digital age, researchers have explored the question of who participates in digital engagement, and have discovered that there is still a higher proportion of high income, highly educated people with 'privileged access to participate online. The unequal access to technology contributes to the "digital divide," specifically, and an "information gap" in public policy in general.<sup>274</sup>

Two other issues in digital engagement in a civic age are that there is a proliferation of tools for purchase, which limits who can afford and access these resources, and the tendency to see technology as a quick fix. Other challenges include the high volume of data available through online means, and expectations of immediate engagement and responses. As is outlined next, close attention to purpose, design and inclusion in digital engagement are key considerations.

Manosevitch offers three lines of inquiry as key areas to consider in the design and study of digital engagement.<sup>275</sup> These are:

- 1) Technical design features matter: the digital environment is rich with possibility, but creative ideas need to be balanced with careful attention to design that facilitates effective public deliberation. Examples include using technology to enhance, rather than replace, face-to-face deliberation such as using gaming technologies to reveal some of the intricacies of civic planning processes,;
- 2) Processes matter in design: for example, online platforms can generate a massive number of 'online comments' but without features to enhance discussion, these might be very general, and without features to enhance deliberation they do little to inform policy making;
- 3) Research needs to focus on broader implications of this work on democracy and citizenship.<sup>276</sup>

In assessing the field on online digital engagement, Manosevitch calls for further research which focuses on "gathering evidence to assess the impact of participation in online deliberative initiatives has on political orientations that are necessary for maintaining healthy democratic societies."<sup>277</sup> This ongoing assessment is needed to evaluate the impact of digital design for online engagement, and to assess key issues highlighted in this report, such as diversity and inclusion, and encouraging more and different people to participate. In this way, online forums can be more 'accessible' than in-person, but important questions

remain. These questions include who has access to this technology, and the impact on participants' perceptions of transparency and trust in the process, and trust in government.

### **i. Adding Inclusion via Digital Engagement**

To address the need for diversity and inclusion, opportunities have been identified that open spaces for marginalized groups to participate using digital means. For example, Cohen, who researches new media technologies, digital engagement and youth (focusing on Black and Latino youth in the United States), has found that “cell phones, video games, and social media have changed the way young people organize politically, creating a new domain of political action that the researchers call participatory politics.”<sup>278</sup> Her research demonstrates the benefits of increased access to smart phones and other digital devices to lessen the “digital divide.” Though it is important to be attentive to issues of access to technology, the opportunities for “broader political conversation”—that is “different from political mobilization in the past” with fewer gatekeepers—are important to consider in planning.<sup>279</sup> For example, in the case of Cohen’s work with youth—and an option for EFCL’s planning for future civic engagement opportunities—community members make and share videos, offering new ways and spaces to engage community members in conversation on civic issues.

### **ii. Online Citizen Panels**

An example of digital engagement in a municipal context is an online citizen panel that illustrates a new model for local government consultation and research.<sup>280</sup> However, questions of scale, inclusion, and logistical constraints are three key challenges to consider for digital design to create online spaces to facilitate effective public deliberation.<sup>281</sup> There is notable potential to these forms of civic engagement, though there may be fears that “special interest groups might ‘hijack’ the process” or that “elected members might try to influence the outcomes by ‘stacking’ panels with their supporters.”<sup>282</sup>

#### **Australian Online Citizen Panel**

An example from an Australian study demonstrates the learning that can come from gathering evidence about the possibilities, limits, and risks of various approaches, and how to address them. Pilot results from an online panel in Australia demonstrate the growth and potential for a “continuous, multi-purpose online panel, built specifically for the organization” that address “frustrations, challenges and expense of other citizen consultations and research.”<sup>283</sup> This municipal model, funded by the local government association, was an 18-month project established by three city councils, engaging 300 citizens in consultations and research.

This Australian study demonstrates that when digital models, such as an online citizens’ panel, are used effectively, citizens are satisfied with their participation and will continue to be involved. This overview of the research and evaluation of an online panel provides evidence of using online tools to establish multiple councils with the aim of learning and disseminating knowledge, and overcoming barriers. As the Australian example demonstrates, there were a high number of participants in the online panels, who were excited to engage in this way, with sustained participation. It is also possible to identify and track participation, which serves to evaluate and assess this method.<sup>284</sup> These online tools are innovative ways to enhance citizen participation in local government, decision-making, and policy development.<sup>285</sup>

## City of Edmonton's "Edmonton Insight Community"

As described in the introduction to this report, Edmonton is one of the first municipalities in Canada to launch online public engagement tools to connect with citizens. The *Edmonton Insight Community*, is an "online, ongoing panel of citizen advisors" with opportunities to connect online and find out about how to connect face-to-face to discuss civic issues and opportunities. This knowledge sharing and connection is necessary to address the barrier of 'lack of information' that impedes democratic processes, while it increases opportunities for inclusion and diversity. To read more about the *Edmonton Insight Community* or join the forum see the City of Edmonton "Edmonton Insight Community" website.<sup>286</sup> CPI will collaborate with the City to gather further evidence regarding impacts of the panel overall, including assessing who participates and the impact of that participation.

## Peak Democracy Inc.

The City of Edmonton is piloting the use of *Peak Democracy* in their current engagement work about infill development.<sup>287</sup> Peak Democracy Inc.,<sup>288</sup> founded in 2007, created an 'Open Town Hall' as a cloud-based online civic engagement platform to diversify public participation. It can be used with other social media, supports multiple languages, and a range of mobile access such as texting. The format used enables government leaders to increase public trust in their governance. This Open Town Hall differs from crowd sourcing because it allows governments to monitor the public engagement process, focus on feedback from constituents, keep the dialogue civil and legal, and not overwhelm staff in ways that can frustrate residents. It also provides real-time insight and reporting. Peak Democracy has worked with over 100 government agencies across North America to power over 1,500 online forums that have attracted over 200,000 online attendees, and have garnered a user satisfaction rating of over 95%.

## Other Examples of Online Tools and Resources

Another example of online tools to support citizen learning and involvement, are municipal budgeting apps. One example is the app developed by the City of Calgary in partnership with a technology company. This app—free to download from itunes—is designed to be an easy, "one button" option for citizens to participate in and learn about the city's financial planning process.<sup>289</sup> A key challenge with online apps related to budgeting is that there is limited collective deliberation where citizens can weigh different priorities in a community context.

## How can EFCL implement online engagement tools?

- Video stream meetings, or a keynote addresses from an AGM
- Create a Google 'Political Hangout' to encourage online interaction
- Partner with CPI or City to develop and promote online tools
- Develop interactive data about leagues and members
- Encourage members to participate in webinars on key topics
- Explore the development or use of online games or simulators for members to develop further understanding of key communities issues

The *Civic Mapping Project*<sup>290</sup> is another example of a strategy to address civic education that uses data, partnership and analysis of evidence by a broad audience to understand civic engagement trends and influence.<sup>291</sup> Other online tools provide data about Edmonton demography that can enhance outreach or

guide discussions about neighbourhood demographics.<sup>292</sup> As part of Vancouver's 2014 Engaged City initiative,<sup>293</sup> planners have created *Talk Vancouver*<sup>294</sup>—an online space for civic participation. The website connects community members with the latest City initiatives and invites the public to participate in studies and discussions to hear citizens' views and ideas.

The *Seeking Community*<sup>295</sup> website is an example of using technology for civic engagement, and to "imagine: city planners designing neighborhoods to increase social capital; elderly people staying in their neighborhoods for another 5 years; mental health rates declining because neighbours are caring for each other and creating a greater sense of connection and belonging together..." *Engage! E-magazine*—Tamarack's monthly e-publication<sup>296</sup>—includes resources and articles on collaboration and community engagement. Civic Engagement TO<sup>297</sup> provides an overview of how the City of Toronto is focusing on civic engagement with special initiatives to involve youth and immigrant populations. Taking IT Global<sup>298</sup> connects youth around the world to discuss issues and take action. Other scholars review the limitations and possibilities merits of using the internet for data collection,<sup>299</sup> different ways of using technology to share information with the public,<sup>300</sup> intuitional design and technology,<sup>301</sup> and e-government.<sup>302</sup>

As this section highlights, there are numerous digital tools and resources developed to enhance civic engagement. For a list of some of the key current tools available to organizations, see the white paper on *Online Public Engagement Platforms*<sup>303</sup>. Despite this vast proliferation of tools, there is a need for further evidence and careful analysis about purpose for these tools. It is critical to ask how these tools are used, by whom, and with what impact. Further to this discussion, it is critical to assess who is included and excluded in these processes, and in the evaluation of their use and impact.

Other tools can be used to track demographics that will provide a baseline for planning. One of these resources is *Tracking the Trends*.<sup>304</sup> Edmonton's new online community demographic sites have information on gender, Canadian citizen or non-Canadian citizen, employment, and student/retired status. They offer an overview or 'first glance' of neighbourhood demographics that could support EFCL's planning.

## **G. Evaluation and Assessment**

Organizations, centers, foundations, and institutions have compiled a vast body of literature that explores ways to assess organizational impacts generally, and some measures that address civic engagement specifically.<sup>305</sup> This critical research is being done to measure organizational outcomes and impact related to civic engagement. Researchers and practitioners are interested in assessing the impact of key aspects of civic engagement, including satisfaction with process, influence on decision-making, demographics of participants, impacts of processes on civic learning and on trust in government organizations, and political efficacy.

Julia Abelson, a professor at McMaster University, and former contributor to the *Canadian Policy Research Network* (now closed) is a key writer on the evaluation of public engagement. Dr. Abelson is also currently supporting a research project being undertaken by City of Edmonton Transportation Services and CPI. Dr. Abelson researches the design and evaluation of public engagement processes to inform health system decision-making and analyzes the roles of public values in health policy. She has worked closely with decision-makers in provincial, regional and local government levels.<sup>306</sup> Her research report on assessment, with colleague Francois-Pierre Gauvin, "*Assessing the Impacts of Public Participation: Concepts, Evidence and Policy Implications*" provides a comprehensive discussion of the theory and practices of evaluation, and highlights three key points in summary.<sup>307</sup> These are:

**First**, there is a plurality of approaches to public participation evaluation, divided by the participants, goals, and driver (driven by theory or users). There is still a lot of work to be done to assess these approaches.

**Second**, the scholars note that although outcome-oriented studies report important positive impacts like “increased levels of interest and knowledge of public issues; improved capacity for future public involvement; increased propensity for social bond formation; and improved trust of fellow citizens,” and despite years of documenting public participation experiences, the practice of public participation evaluation is still relatively new.<sup>308</sup>

**Third**, progress is the improved rigor of public participation evaluation, and the impacts on civic literacy and policy, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

**These findings demonstrate that EFCL and community leagues in partnership with CPI and City of Edmonton, could play a key role in supporting and improving the evaluation of processes, outcomes, and impacts of civic engagement.**

#### **i. Two Examples of Specific Evaluation Research**

Some studies measure leadership development in ways that are highly relevant to civic engagement. They examine and illustrate the importance of public policy leadership skills, knowledge, and shared experience between organizational leaders and ordinary residents.<sup>309</sup>

Other studies use survey models to gauge knowledge and skills developed from participation in leadership training, public speaking, chairing meetings, conducting research, planning strategy or other skills. EFCL could explore ways to measure inputs and outcomes of their civic engagement work including, changes before and after league training or capacity building, mentorship, or evaluation of trainings.<sup>310</sup>

There is also a wide array of evaluation and assessment strategies for measuring the specific impact of civic engagement processes. The Community of Waitakere in New Zealand has developed a comprehensive, practical *Literature Review of Evaluation Methods and Methodologies*<sup>311</sup> that municipalities can use to develop their own metrics for programs and services for civic engagement. It is a comprehensive review of evaluation research and methodologies related to community development and it offers theoretical foundations and methods for assessing processes and impacts of civic engagement.<sup>312</sup> This literature stresses the difference between evaluating advocacy work and direct program or service delivery<sup>313</sup> because “advocacy strategies evolve and change over time” with shifting activities and outcomes. Further, external forces and conditions affect the outcomes.<sup>314</sup> Discussion and analysis of evaluating advocacy and policy work may be of particular relevance to EFCL.

#### **ii. Evaluating Advocacy**

Impacts or results of advocacy can be particularly difficult to measure. For example, assessing advocacy work requires timely feedback to determine impacts.<sup>315</sup> Coleman’s collection of examples of interim advocacy outcomes provides further insight into evaluation focused on advocacy.<sup>316</sup> Key outcomes to measure include strengthened partnerships and alliances, organizational capacity, collaboration, new donors, organizational visibility and recognition, media coverage, and public and political will.<sup>317</sup> Reisman and colleagues<sup>318</sup> provide a current guide to advocacy and policy evaluation with frameworks for developing evaluation tools. Appreciative inquiry, empowerment evaluation, and measures of social value and social capital provide insight and examples of the “why and how” of evaluation.<sup>319</sup> Another evaluative method that may be of particular interest to EFCL and leagues is empowerment evaluation. The

collaborative and participatory nature of empowerment evaluation is often ‘internally led,’ and involves “meaningful participation of those being evaluated.”<sup>320</sup> Numerous scholars have worked on developing and summarizing ten principles of empowerment evaluation that include democratic participation, social justice, improved participation, community ownership, community knowledge, evidence-based strategies, capacity building, organizational learning, and accountability.<sup>321</sup> Evaluation tools such as empowerment evaluation can be used if the higher-level goal is stronger and more connected communities. This approach considers the ***systems, strategies and outcomes*** as categories for planning.

### **iii. Evaluation Framework**

A key question at the heart of assessment is “How can EFCL measure success or impacts in civic engagement”? *Collective Impact*, developed by Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement<sup>322</sup> offers another potential metric by which to define and measure success in civic engagement. Collective Impact emphasizes the value of multiple organizations looking for resources and innovation through the same lens.<sup>323</sup> This attention to shared learning through “continuous feedback loops” is a supportive process with the potential for action from a “unified and simultaneous response.” EFCL could provide the “backbone of support” as the organization with staff and skills to initiate and coordinate conditions for collective impact among leagues or in the City. The five conditions of collective impact offer ways for EFCL to define and measure civic engagement and impact with community leagues. These are: 1) a common agenda; 2) shared measurement; 3) mutually reinforcing activities; 4) continuous communication; and 5) backbone of support. Four key phases of collective impact also offer an effective evaluative framework that necessarily considers components for success: governance and infrastructure; strategic planning; community involvement; and evaluation and improvement. Drawing on these four phases that outline the actions/impacts of civic engagement, EFCL could work with these metrics to evaluate their own levels of involvement with community leagues and the City of Edmonton. The next section turns to more examples of new and emerging practices.



## 5. Additional Emerging and Innovative Practices

There is a need for further discussion and critical analysis of ‘innovation’ in civic engagement. Innovation broadly understood, includes “old practices” used in new ways or contexts. It is, however, a challenge to define what it means to be ‘innovative’ in the civic engagement field, and to push beyond innovation that is limited to ‘methods.’

There is a need for investing in research to gather evidence of the innovation of a practice, approach, or framework.

The *Homeless Hub*, a research-based organization, outlines key differences between ***emerging, promising and best practices*** that offer critical distinctions to understand advances in civic engagement.<sup>324</sup>

*They define these terms as follows:*

A ***Best Practice*** is an intervention, method or technique that has consistently been proven effective through the most rigorous scientific research (especially conducted by independent researchers) and which has been replicated across several cases or examples. To be a ‘best practice,’ an intervention must be able to show that it produces better results than other approaches and that is a practice that can potentially be *adapted with success* in other contexts and/or scaled up to a systems-wide approach.

An intervention is considered to be a ***Promising Practice*** when there is sufficient evidence to claim that the practice is *proven effective at achieving a specific aim or outcome*, consistent with the goals and objectives of the activity or program. Ideally, promising practices demonstrate their effectiveness through the most rigorous scientific research; however, there is not enough generalizable evidence to label them ‘best practices.’

**Emerging practices** are interventions that are new, innovative and which *hold promise based on some level of evidence of effectiveness or change that is not research-based and/or sufficient to be deemed a ‘promising’ or ‘best’ practice*. In some cases, this is because an intervention is new and there has not been sufficient time to generate convincing results.<sup>325</sup>

**The Framework for Civic Engagement developed in this report, emphasizes that innovation is interconnected with institutionalization and broader policy or frameworks for support. Innovation and emerging practices continue to inform process and evaluation.**

Some of the best emerging and innovative practices are highlighted by McGee, a scholar at Wilfred Laurier University who wrote her dissertation on best practices for civic engagement in municipal contexts. These ideas—elaborated on in the next section—include innovative engagement processes like participatory decision making about budgets and resources (using the method of “participatory budgeting” which is discussed in a subsequent section of this report) in the City of Guelph.<sup>326</sup> She explores “best practices” of community engagement principles, strategies and policy in two key areas: 1) understanding theoretical mechanisms of change which include values, principles and frameworks, with attention to diversity and empowerment; and 2) facilitating processes and resources for implementation to move this theory into action (e.g. community partnerships and champions).<sup>327</sup> These findings inform the work of citizen engagement and municipal planning, and could be applied to ECFL and Edmonton to develop and implement civic engagement. The next section discusses partnerships, bridging learning and community engagement.

## **A. Civic and Public Education**

### **i. An “Invitation to be Involved” - Partnering with Universities and Centres of Civic Engagement**

Advances in research focused on community engagement and service-learning offer new insights that bridge academic and community research and practice. A comprehensive review of the literature on civic engagement in education<sup>328</sup> highlights the challenges and promises of civic engagement and service-learning research and practices, and takes a careful look at how people become involved in civic issues.<sup>329</sup> Current research stresses vital aspects of motivation – in other words, who responds to invitations to participate in service? Strong motivators for civic involvement include: *helping others, making a difference, and doing something about an issue*. Often an invitation to be involved, or to serve the local community, is motivation to become involved in civic issues; citizens are not necessarily driven, at least initially, by ‘wanting to change policy.’ This invitation to be involved is a first step toward learning more about issues, and taking action.<sup>330</sup> Nicolas Longo<sup>331</sup> offers an initial survey of seven projects that link university Centers of Civic Life, Centers of Civic Engagement, and humanities courses with projects that facilitate community visioning, and generate community-wide conversations on public issues. These examples can inform EFCL planning and potential future learning partnerships.

Community Service-Learning (CSL) and community engagement demonstrate publicly engaged ‘pedagogies’ that aim to educate for “civic responsibility through reciprocal partnerships” in academic and community settings. Centres of service-learning and civic engagement on university campuses offer infrastructure and support for potential partnership and internships that could benefit EFCL or other



community-based organizations. In addition, emerging trends in the current context shape the importance of collaborative processes of learning. Collaboration and deliberation are especially timely with increasing diversity in communities, potential of using new technology, and the interest that young people have to affect change through “concrete social action.”<sup>332</sup>

Longo’s ideas of how deliberative projects can provide opportunities for students to take leadership in their local communities provide concrete suggestions for partnerships that could be highly valuable to EFCL.<sup>333</sup> For example, university students could work with community leagues to “lead dialogues about complex issues;” be involved to amplify “voices of young people on public issues, or capture the stories of elders in a community.”<sup>334</sup> Ideas for putting this deliberation into action include forums, photography, dance, and film, poetry, or community art to facilitate community deliberations.<sup>335</sup>

With this research in mind, **EFCL may explore opportunities to partner with centres in formal education, such as Community Service-Learning (CSL),<sup>336</sup> or Centres of Urban Planning, and intentionally bring post- secondary students onto the boards of leagues as a required part of their education.** A focus group participant who first heard about community leagues in a university urban planning course mentioned this idea.

## **ii. Conferences and Learning from “Big Thinkers”**

There are numerous examples of conferences that showcase the work of prominent scholars in the field of civic engagement. For example, the *Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service* hosts the “Frontiers” conference with seminal speakers and organizations that are demonstrating deliberative civic engagement research and practice.<sup>337</sup> The 2014 conference highlights Josh Lerner, the Executive Director of Participatory Budgeting Project, and Gloria Rubio-Cortes, the president of the National Civic League. EFCL can follow the work of key speakers in the field and be aware of the spaces where current writing and practice is being discussed.

Another example is of a conference that EFCL and leagues could potentially host in partnership with the City of Edmonton. An example, from Minneapolis, the “Community Connections” conference is designed to build strong connections between cities and communities. It also focuses on collaboration to build capacity in civic engagement and City building. The “Community Connections” conference is an excellent example that may resonate with EFCL and leagues. This collaboration between community leaders, residents, elected officials, and City staff is an intentional opportunity for collective learning and building capacity for civic engagement. The 2014 event had the theme of a *Building a City for All* and brings in big thinkers to advance work being done. See **Appendix F** for the link to contents of the program and report, and a mock EFCL conference poster for envisioning an Edmonton possibility.

## **iii. National Centre for Dialogue and Deliberation, Civic Health Clubs and other Big Ideas**

Unique ideas abound for creative ways to engage in civic education. For example, an organization called “Warm Cookies of the Revolution” in Denver, Colorado, has created a “Civic Health Club.”<sup>338</sup> The concept is based on a vision to “make civic health clubs as an important infrastructure for growing our communities’ capacity to really practice democracy, as a more regular part of our cities and towns.” There are clubs, malls and theatres in towns, so why not design a fun place to learn how and why you can take part in civic life? Civic health clubs are a way to add action and fun to “exercise our civic health.”<sup>339</sup>

Activities that they conduct to build and improve civic health include building a Lego city or participating in an obstacle course in the city of Denver, Colorado. The theory behind the civic health club is to engage citizens in fun and creative ways. The organizers describe civic health as “a measurement of how well we participate in our community as citizens.” They ask: *Are citizens engaged in decision-making processes? When it comes to our environment, our education, our government, our work/life balance, our health, and our systems of justice...do we have power? Do we know how to affect change? Are our needs and hopes being met?* The idea is to recognize that people have work, families and other commitments, but they can and will participate in meaningful, fun approaches. The civic health clubs address civic structures and systems that are not working, while exploring how they could look different - in vibrant and creative ways.<sup>340</sup>

Other innovative ideas that may require grants and funding include an online discussion space created by the **Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at NC State University**. The *Issues Commons* is an online portal that includes challenging questions, ideas to connect and to take action on, and a ‘voices’ section that illustrates current perspectives in the field. As the site describes, it is intended to provide a way to understand the “most pressing challenges in education, economy, health, and our environments.” The *Emerging Issues Commons* was created to “help citizens work together to better understand the issues that matter most, and contribute innovative solutions.” They describe their *Emerging Issues Commons*<sup>341</sup> as a “groundbreaking online and in-person civic engagement platform designed to inspire citizens in North Carolina to think through ideas, data, and stories of people and communities grappling with change.”<sup>342</sup> This approach to posing questions, and tracking responses on an online forum, is an innovative way of engaging a broad spectrum of respondents to join their choice of ‘hot topics’ and provide their input on emerging issues. EFCL could adapt this idea to profile voices of community members—both experts and ‘ordinary citizens’—on various topics, provide a forum with key questions and resources to understand current civic issues, and spark innovative thinking around the most prevalent issues in Edmonton neighbourhoods.

#### iv. **Civic Spaces Project – Centre for Public Involvement and Edmonton Multicultural Coalition**

The *Centre for Public Involvement* partnered with the *Edmonton Multicultural Coalition* on a pilot project called “Civic Spaces”<sup>343</sup> to support the civic and political engagement of immigrants and refugees in Edmonton. The pilot project involved two components. First was a *Civics 101* visually based educational workshop that provided participants with the tools and opportunities to understand government in Canada on municipal, provincial and federal levels. This workshop was designed to increase participant knowledge of ways to be involved civically, including during elections.

The second component of the project was an *Open Space forum* designed for participants to meet and dialogue with candidates who ran in the 2013 Edmonton General Election. Eighty participants attended. They identified key issues for discussion and had opportunities for dialogue with those in their ward. This project is an example of opportunities for inclusive civic engagement. CPI is hoping to continue and expand this project with the *Edmonton Multicultural Coalition*, an Edmonton based non-profit, and is open to working with other partners.

## Opportunities for EFCL

EFCL could systematically plan a variety of opportunities for community members to learn about civic issues. Community Leagues could provide spaces for citizens to express their opinions on possible actions and policies.

**What need is it addressing?** Opportunities like a ‘civic health club’ provide a non-formal yet structured meeting place to learn about issues like transportation or infill. Time is then provided to discuss issues when there is not an immediate decision to be made. For example, the community leagues could host an “infill tour” observing ‘promising practices’ in infill development, as well as key issues, and how they might be addressed. They could also explore the community for fun, through an outing not linked to a specific decision or “hot topic.”

**Costs or resources required** – City planners, students in planning and design, and other knowledgeable members might act as tour guides, in order to facilitate discussion and point to key areas to consider in future planning. The ‘civic health club’ could make use of existing league facilities.

**Other Opportunities for EFCL** – EFCL could partner with the CPI to learn about civic issues and processes, explore ‘what happens behind the scenes at City Hall’ and support on-going civic engagement. A pilot project could include a *Civics 101* component, designed and facilitated by CPI, to work with community leagues. It would be an opportunity to increase knowledge on how citizen input can inform municipal planning and decision-making.

**What need is it addressing?** A ‘civic spaces’ partnership could build on CPI and the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition’s existing knowledge of inclusion and provide participants with the tools and opportunities to understand municipal government. Community leagues could focus on a key issue, like transportation, and participants could meet and dialogue with city planners related to civic issue that is relevant to their neighbourhood and league.

**Costs or resources required** – This unique form of civic engagement would benefit from partnership for facilitation and coordination. Working with CPI, EFCL could benefit from civic engagement resources like “*Civics 101*” workshops that have been tested, and could be adapted to meet the needs of EFCL members. Learning can be shared across leagues and with other organizations.

## B. Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a democratic process first developed in Brazil in 1989, in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. “It’s a tool to empower everyone to make decisions about how their city’s money should be spent,” with more than 1,500 participatory budgets around the world, most at the city level.<sup>344</sup> The participatory budgeting process was created to meet the need for increased citizen involvement in how resources would be allocated in their neighbourhood. It also responds to a need to develop a deep understanding of the process of deliberation that is required to understand trade-offs and to determine collective priorities. It addresses the issues and challenges of greater citizen engagement in determining priorities for their community and results in budgets that reflect their input into decisions about resource allocation.

### **i. Profile on PB: Toronto Community Housing**

A Canadian example helps to illustrate participatory budgeting in action. For more than a decade, the Toronto Community Housing residents have used a PB process to decide how to spend capital funds to improve their communities.<sup>345</sup> In 2014, the total PB budget for all buildings and developments was \$5 million. Key features of the process include:

- 1) Residents plan their own meetings and building tours to get familiar with the projects needed in their community;
- 2) Residents get information about the history of capital repairs and money spent in their buildings in the past, as well as a list of capital projects planned for their community;
- 3) Final decisions will be made about the allocation meeting;
- 4) One delegate and one alternate per development reviews all priorities and vote for the ones that get funded. Residents choose one priority per building.

The City of Guelph also has used PB, which demonstrates the inclusive, citizen-led process of deciding how to allocate resources, after determining priorities based on evidence of current needs. EFCL could support leagues in similar processes to work with community members and area residents to decide on priority projects and spending.

### **ii. Profile on PB: Youth Lead the Change**

PB can enhance one of the key areas of interest of EFCL: Youth engagement. For example, in 2014, the City of Boston launched a unique PB process to engage Boston youth<sup>346</sup> directly in deciding how to spend \$1 million of the city's capital budget. Through participatory budgeting, young people were able to identify projects to improve their communities, vet those projects, consider trade-offs, and vote on how to spend the allocated money.

## **Opportunities for EFCL**

EFCL could work with community leagues and the City of Edmonton to address the issues and challenges of greater citizen engagement in determining priorities for their community and budgets that reflect their input into decisions about resource allocation. Planning for this form of civic engagement begins with a pivotal PB question: **"Do you have a good idea that will improve your community?"** From this starting point, citizens can explore the opportunities and trade-offs that arise with different choices, and how to inform community members about the different options in order to determine priorities that meet the neighbourhood needs.

**What need is it addressing?** This is an opportunity to engage in a democratic process in a community to determine priorities for capital improvements and investments into shared community resources, community centers (or leagues), schools, parks, libraries, and other public spaces. PB offers a new way to make decisions about publicly funded projects, with community member directly involved in decisions about resources and spending. What kinds of projects could EFCL and Edmonton neighbourhoods consider? This process offers ways to engage citizens in planning at a municipal or neighbourhood level.

**Costs and opportunities** – CPI has facilitated PB processes and presented to graduate students who are eager to explore this participatory process. EFCL could work with CPI and a graduate student researcher to examine how PB could be used with leagues to inform resource allocation and planning.

## **C. Arts-based, Innovative, and Visual Approaches**

### **i. Infographics, visual tools for civic engagement, and Storytelling**

*Vancouver's Campaign to End Homelessness* provides examples of new ways of connecting with citizens through image and graphics of statistics and data.<sup>347</sup> The *Digital Centre for Storytelling*,<sup>348</sup> the *Toronto Centre for Storytelling*,<sup>349</sup> and 350.org<sup>350</sup> also provide resources for shared learning, increasing connections across generations and backgrounds, and learning more about civic issues. Visual approaches to sharing data and information address some key issues in civic engagement. They can enhance inclusion, address some technical issues of who has access to different modes of communication (such as online), and support civic learning. Image-based resources provide a creative, accessible entry point for discussion. They can be content rich without relying on formal, technical language or knowledge of specific terms. See **Appendix G** for an example of an infographic used to illustrate the process of deliberation.

### **ii. Community mapping and Place making**

As the *Project for Public Spaces* (PPS) organizers assert, “[b]uilding inclusive, healthy, functional, and productive cities is perhaps the greatest challenge facing humanity today. There are no easy solutions. And yet a key part of the puzzle lies right in the heart of the world’s urban areas: the public spaces.”<sup>351</sup> Community mapping involves processes where citizens work together to explore the assets and challenges in their own neighbourhoods. Many organizations provide support for organizations, such as *The Centre for Community Mapping* (CCM)<sup>352</sup> in New Brunswick, which collaborates with local organizations to provide interactive mapping applications for educational and environmental mapping. They work with local stakeholders and partner with organizations to secure grant funding for larger mapping projects. Community mapping can also be ‘low tech’ with flip chart paper and markers, as community members illustrate their own communities building on local knowledge and evidence, with a series of guiding questions. Other processes of mapping and placemaking are outlined in the following sections.

Many organizations promote community understanding of public spaces and place. The following example highlights the concept of ‘placemaking’ and describes an organization that works on projects with the public to explore their neighbourhoods. The example could be used by EFCL and community leagues to understand how citizens use their space and what makes neighbourhoods unique. Having a sense of the neighbourhood profile, and what citizens’ value can also inform future input on decisions about planning and development.

### **iii. Projects for Public Space - Placemaking**

The Project for Public Spaces<sup>353</sup> is a non-profit planning, design and educational organization. It is dedicated to helping people create and sustain spaces that build stronger communities. In their words, they explore great public spaces “where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends run into each other, and cultures mix.” They describe them as the “front porches” of our public institutions – libraries, field houses, neighborhood schools. These are the places where we interact with each other and government. When the spaces work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. They ask, ‘*What makes some places succeed while others fail?*’ They specialize in what they call “small-scale neighbourhood building.”<sup>354</sup>

In evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, PPS has identified that successful ones have four key qualities: they are *accessible*, people are *engaged in activities* there, the space is *comfortable* and has a good image, and it is a *sociable* place—one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. PPS developed *The Place Diagram* (which can be seen on their website) as a tool to help people in judging any place. They start by choosing a place that they know: a street corner, a playground, a plaza outside a building, and evaluate that place according to the four main criteria. The place is explored through a number of *intuitive* or *qualitative* aspects. They then consider the aspects that are quantifiable by statistics or research. The PPS offers resources on their website that EFCL and community leagues can use to explore space and place in communities.

#### **Opportunities for EFCL to Support Leagues**

EFCL could work with leagues to go into communities and explore place and space. A ‘bike tour’ that includes a range of ages and family structures could be organized to examine existing trails and green spaces, and identify areas that need attention.

**What need is it addressing?** A bike tour or an interactive community-mapping walk could end at the community league where participants could discuss observations and create a large-scale map with suggestions for planning.

**Inclusion and diversity** - This process engages citizens across age and background. It can also include children, new community members, and multiple languages.

**Costs or resources required** – City planners, historians, students in planning and design, and other knowledgeable local community members might act as tour guides, in order to facilitate discussion and point to key areas for consideration. This process requires support for facilitation and discussion, and to move from discussion to ‘next steps’ if community members’ voices will help guide decisions.

#### **iv. Exploring civic issues and community through photography and art**

There are multiple creative opportunities to engage community members to learn about civic issues. These include visual approaches like *Photovoice* and other artistic means.

##### **Photovoice**

Photovoice, developed in 1992, is described by *Community Toolbox* as process in which people – usually those with limited power due to poverty, language barriers, race, class, ethnicity, gender, culture, or other circumstances – use video and/or photo images to capture aspects of their environment and experiences and share them with others.<sup>355</sup> The pictures can then be used, usually with captions composed by the photographers, to reveal the realities of the photographers’ lives for the public and policy makers and to spark change. The concept of Photovoice is applicable to civic engagement because it is based on the belief that a deep understanding of the way the world works helps us to understand how society, politics, and power relationships affect one’s own situation.

PhotoVoice.org<sup>356</sup> is an organization that uses this technique to build skills within disadvantaged and marginalized communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods. It is an opportunity for participants to represent themselves. They also create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change.<sup>357</sup> Manuals, like “A Practical Guide to Photovoice: Sharing pictures, telling stories, changing communities,” developed by the *Prairie Women’s Health Centre of*

*Excellence* in Winnipeg, offer practical guidance and ways of seeing how these processes could be used to enhance civic engagement and community health.<sup>358</sup> CPI has also used photographs in their public involvement projects. In the one of their projects, citizens brought photographs of places that they loved in their neighbourhood to begin the conversations about civic issues.

### **Story and Visual Art**

Storytelling and visual art provide other ways for EFCL to engage community members in civic issues. A simple idea is a story-board, or a visual depiction of a key issue. This technique uses a theme like “Great place, and Lousy place” in the neighbourhood to get citizens drawing, thinking, and telling stories about civic issues like neighbourhood development and green spaces.<sup>359</sup> There are many organizations that work with citizens through the process of sharing stories. Patti LaCroix, at Catapul Media,<sup>360</sup> and other storytellers, use these methods to engage citizens in telling their personal and organizational stories with long-term vision of social justice and social change.

### **v. Citizens Panels and Reference Panels connected to Policy Making**

Some examples of civic engagement are collaborations with the intention of informing policy. The Edmonton Citizens’ Panel, an example shared below, was a partnership between CPI, Alberta Climate Change Dialogue (ABCD), and the City of Edmonton. The panel directly connected with the City of Edmonton’s commitment that they would seriously consider their recommendations in developing an Energy Transition Plan and support implementation of the City of Edmonton’s *Way We Green*.

### **Edmonton’s Citizens’ Panel on Energy and Climate Challenges**

In 2012, fifty-six diverse citizens from Edmonton participated in a Citizens’ Panel on Energy and Climate Challenges.<sup>361</sup> Participants learned about climate change and energy vulnerability from balanced materials and presentations by experts. The Citizens’ Panel members came together at the invitation of the City to make recommendations to Administration and Council, with the City’s commitment that they would seriously consider their recommendations in developing an energy transition plan. The Panelists worked together over six day-long sessions, and developed a final report with their recommendations for the City of Edmonton. This full report and all materials are online at City of Edmonton. This is an example of an innovative public involvement process convened by the City of Edmonton’s Office of Environment in partnership with Alberta Climate Dialogue (ABCD) and the Centre for Public Involvement (CPI).

### **The British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform**

In 2011, *Vitalizing Democracy* developed a case study of British Columbia’s Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform and shared it on *Participedia*. As the case study describes, the *Citizens’ Assembly in Electoral Reform* was a body created by the government of British Columbia, Canada in 2004. The Citizens’ Assembly investigated and recommended changes to improve the electoral system of the province. The body was composed of 160 citizens selected at random from throughout the province. These members met approximately every other weekend for one year to deliberate about alternative voting arrangements. The Citizens’ Assembly recommended that the province’s First Past the Post (FPTP) system be replaced by a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system. Although the recommendation was ultimately defeated with 62 percent of voters opposing the change, this case study demonstrates that citizens can be a key part of the process. This example is significant because the task of creating an electoral system entrusted to ordinary citizens rather than politicians or experts. This example is meaningful to the City of Edmonton and EFCL because it serves as a reminder that despite the outcome, ordinary citizens have the capacity to be engaged in civic and political processes.

## **vi. Organizations and Resources for Community Building**

The *National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation* has compiled a comprehensive webpage of best resources particularly for a wide range of practitioners and contexts.<sup>362</sup> These resources include some scholarly research, facilitation guides, and tools for civic engagement. A compilation of literature and strategies for deliberation and engagement, developed by John Gastil,<sup>363</sup> is also highly relevant to EFCL planning for civic engagement.

New ideas to help citizens see themselves as part of the process for change in fun and impactful ways are under development. For example, emerging ideas in Alberta include Calgary's "3 Things for Calgary." In this initiative, city members share ways to be involved in their neighbourhood, and challenge others to do the same; it could be for their street, neighbourhood or for the entire city. They are then challenged to do these things, and challenge others to do the same.

### **a. Asset Building**

The process of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)<sup>364</sup> is a strategy for strengthening community by linking micro-assets to the macro-environment. It draws out the strengths and successes in a community's shared history.<sup>365</sup> A succinct overview of the guiding principles and five key assets, include 1) individuals; 2) associations; 3) institution; 4) physical assets (land, buildings, space, and funds); and 5) connections. Many organizations use this participatory approach to build on assets found in the community and mobilize individuals, associations, and institutions. The power lies in local drivers of development processes, and leverages additional supports. The emphasis on social relationships, evident in formal and informal associations, is consistent with the literature that stresses the importance of 'social capital'<sup>366</sup> in existing local associations and networks, and the value of building trust and reciprocity. Putman<sup>367</sup> details much of the literature and research on social capital with a main connection – social relationships are an asset.

*A guide to creating neighborhood information Exchange: Building communities by connecting local skills and knowledge*,<sup>368</sup> developed by The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, provides detailed information that can guide organizing and community-level development. Topics that are significant to EFCL planning include how to identify a core group of volunteers, manage programs, mobilize people to become members, develop funds and use local networks for publicity.

### **b. A Resource for Citizens and Officials in Public Meetings**

The importance of civic engagement in public meetings is critical, and is a relevant topic for EFCL and community leagues. Gastil offers a critical synthesis of theory, process design, and strategy in *Citizens and Officials in Public Meetings* <sup>369</sup> that provides insights to link experts with lay citizens, and bridge discourse and action. Recommendations and examples for organizing include deliberative meetings with elected officials, and sequenced forums (with foundational work on public meetings). As he stresses, "holding a series of public meetings can be a complete waste of time" if there is not a direct or indirect influence on policy, themselves, [the organizers or participants] or anything else.<sup>370</sup> At the same time, public meetings have the potential to change our social and political landscape.<sup>371</sup>

### **c. Other key Examples of Organizational Resources**

A variety of accessible resources and training opportunities are available to EFCL and other organizations. *Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations*<sup>372</sup> offers advocacy training workshops, while *Tamarack Institute* and *Vibrant Communities*<sup>373</sup> have *Profiles of Advocacy and Citizen-led Engagement* <sup>374</sup>and offers podcasts, training webinars, and modules on advocacy and civic engagement.<sup>375</sup> *Vibrant Communities*<sup>376</sup> also features podcasts and papers on innovative approaches to engagement, and the role of government in community engagement.



These are just some examples of resources to advance civic engagement. Additional resources for community building are included at the end of this report.

## **D. Examples of Effective use of Technology**

There are many exciting examples of civic engagement and effective use of technology. This section highlights a few of these options, but note that this is a small selection of innovative technological opportunities. For an overview of new online tools and new ways to engage online see *Online Public Participation Platforms and Applications*,<sup>377</sup> a paper that reviews public participation and the services and platforms that are available. These include new apps, games, and features. Other online engagement methods are outlined below.

### **i. Civic Debate Wall**

Innovative ideas discussed on the *National Centre for Deliberation and Dialogue* (NCDD) forum include the *Civil Debate Wall* at the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. A civic debate wall can be 'live' or virtual and provides a space for citizens to respond to key questions, share ideas and discussion. The discussion forum describes it as a "mouthwatering high-tech tool for engaging people face-to-face and virtually in local, national and international issues." Imagine the possibilities for EFCL and other organizations!<sup>378</sup>

### **ii. Edmonton Insight Panel**

This innovative online panel is discussed in the introduction of this report.

### **iii. Creating Digital Spaces for Civic Engagement (Blog, Twitter, #YEGEngage)**

There are numerous opportunities for EFCL to work with the City of Edmonton to highlight their civic engagement initiatives on a Blog or through Twitter and other online modes. For example, the City of Toronto has created an online information blog to share information with city residents as soon as decisions and agendas are happening.<sup>379</sup> A blog provides up-to-date preliminary decision information from the City Clerk's Office to the public about council meeting minutes. Motions from council sessions are posted live to agenda items on the city council website and revisions are added as they are made during meetings. Additionally, the Toronto City Clerk Twitter feed posts the agendas and decisions of both the council and its committees live. With over 12,000 followers, the tweets reach many residents in live time. The *TO Civic Engagement Twitter*<sup>380</sup> feed conveys instant messages about public consultation and civic engagement opportunities in the city. These initiatives demonstrate the opportunities for involving city residents through technology that is applicable to their daily lives.

## **E. Participatory Planning**

Participatory planning is "a process by which a community undertakes to reach a given socio-economic goal by consciously diagnosing its problems and charting a course of action to resolve those problems."<sup>381</sup> Specialists or experts are required only in facilitating roles. The final creation is locally developed and implemented, rather than imposed by experts outside the community. The benefits include inspiring people to participate in something that they have designed and are ready to implement. At times technical expertise may contribute to the process, but ultimately it is 'owned' by the community. This participatory planning process is consistent with FCC's approach to strengthening community development to enhance civic engagement. Facilitators may work with community members to develop initial ideas and a framework for a project, but the planning is facilitated by the members of the community.

There is abundant theoretical and practical training on participatory local planning and management, from multiple sources, that can guide civic and community organizers. Key principles include bottom-up rather than top-down approaches to planning, flexibility and an adaptability that recognizes the dynamic nature of community, building confidence in local knowledge (not deferring to experts), and keeping plans simple and relevant to the neighbourhood. <sup>382</sup>

### **Opportunities for EFCL**

With the goal of supporting leagues, there is a role for EFCL to help facilitate local input into civic issues, and consider methods of learning about these issues in ways that are widely understood. With this perspective in mind, EFCL can support the training needs of newly elected executive community league members in what participatory planning looks like, and how to structure and support participatory decision-making.

**What need is it addressing?** The participatory planning process has implications for all community members and development planners. Planning techniques often keep people out of the planning process, which limits community buy in and erodes trust. Participatory planning shifts the focus to local community members as decision-makers.

**Inclusion and diversity** – Highly skilled members in particular areas of city planning expertise may be at the planning table, or there may be an urgent need for training material and introductions to simple local planning methodologies and techniques that can be used at the community level.

**Costs or resources required** –EFCL could work with city planners and the leagues to explore civic issues and potential responses. EFCL could work with leagues to identify and prioritize key areas for training, and provide support for assessing local expertise.

These examples are just a starting point for EFCL to imagine possibilities for using these forms of civic engagement.



## 6. Conclusion

There are exciting opportunities for EFCL and community leagues to share knowledge with other institutions and community-based organizations, to learn from successes and effective practices. Input provided from community members themselves emphasizes that a diversity of ways of being in dialogue *with* and *in* communities will illicit the most dynamic response.

Three words to describe meaningful, responsive engagement that were highlighted in the literature and in focus groups are: ***diverse, intentional, and dynamic***. Through civic engagement, EFCL has an opportunity to strengthen communities and participate in civic government. Through this process of exploring the possibilities and challenges of civic engagement, EFCL aims to continue to enhance its relationship with community leagues and citizens to encourage greater participation in civic life. An ongoing cycle of civic engagement will support community-based research, ongoing planning to support community development, and developing strategies to involve a broad base of citizens in decision-making processes. Measuring success requires gathering ongoing feedback to share information for planning future programs and policy. For additional ideas for sustain engagement see **Appendix H**.

From the literature, there is strong rationale for civic engagement that is focused on both process and project outcomes. As was emphasized in this review, it is important to move beyond tactics and strategies to understand the root problems of issues such as barriers to involvement, to test theories and processes, and gather evidence that will inform future research and practice. This review offers practical and achievable ideas for *why* and *how* to plan and evaluate civic engagement. Over the past decades, researchers, community-based organizations and scholars have developed strong guiding principles for building just and sustainable democracies. The City of Edmonton and EFCL have demonstrated their commitment to increasing civic involvement through various committees, studies, and policy recommendations. The challenge now is extending what we know, and lessons learned from current practice, to plan for future civic engagement.

As highlighted in the introduction to this report, we have developed a framework for civic engagement as a result of this research and review. This ***Framework for Civic Engagement*** provides a foundation for developing a long-term plan that involves citizen-centered approaches to activities and policies to support a “culture of civic engagement.” The model integrates core components of the civic engagement review.

This *Framework for Civic Engagement* emphasizes five interdependent elements. Civic engagement involves **1) Research and Scholarship; 2) Civic Learning and Capacity Building, including building civic literacy skills; 3) Advocacy; 4) Deliberation; 5) Innovation and Practice; and 6) Continuous Assessment and Evaluation.**

A foundation of trust and rapport, developed through a sense of community and social capital, are essential to civic engagement. EFCL can strengthen bridges between theory and practice through collaboration and partnership, and attention to place and context.

This research report demonstrates that effective civic engagement calls for a process of dialogue, deliberation, and shared knowledge, with attention to diversity and inclusion that can enhance planning and policy development. The *Framework for Civic Engagement*, provided in the *Introduction* of this report, illustrates that advocacy is one part of civic engagement, but there are many opportunities in civic engagement more broadly, such as fostering civic literacy and skills through civic learning and capacity building. The *Framework* is designed for EFCL to identify interconnections between the various components of civic engagement, and to strengthen planning and programs.



## Appendices

### Appendix A - Profiles of Civic Engagement and Involvement (Projects and Organizations)

#### *The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform*

<http://participedia.net/en/cases/british-columbia-citizens-assembly-electoral-reform>

This initiative has been developed into a case study by Vitalizing Democracy in 2011, shared on Participedia. As the case study describes, the Citizens' Assembly in Electoral Reform was a body created by the government of British Columbia, Canada in 2004. This initiative has been called an innovative experiment in deliberative democracy. The Citizens' Assembly was asked to investigate and recommend changes to improve the electoral system of the province. The body was composed of 160 citizens selected at random from throughout the province. These members met approximately every other weekend for one year to deliberate about alternative voting arrangements. Although the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly, to replace the province's existing First Past the Post (FPTP) system with a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system was ultimately defeated with 62 percent of voters opposing the change, this case study demonstrates that citizens can be a key part of the process. This example is significant because the task of creating an electoral system was given to ordinary citizens rather than politicians or experts. This example is meaningful to the City of Edmonton and EFCL because it serves as a reminder that despite the outcome, **ordinary citizens have the capacity to be engaged in civic and political processes.**

#### *City of Edmonton Planning Academy*

[http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/urban\\_planning\\_and\\_design/planning-academy.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/planning-academy.aspx)

The City of Edmonton has developed a Planning Academy<sup>383</sup> to help citizens better understand and

participate in the planning process, and better understand the roles, rights and interests of all parties involved in the planning and development process. The City of Edmonton's Planning Academy offers a series of courses designed to provide a better understanding of the planning and development process in Edmonton. The Planning branch of Sustainable Development offers a series of 3-6 hour courses, facilitated by city staff. Participants receive a manual, instruction, and snacks. Sessions include discussions and "real life" activities to increase participants' understanding of topics such as Land Use Planning, Urban Design, and Transportation. Participants can earn a Certificate of Participation by completing the three core courses and one elective course.

### ***Citizens Academy (Ottawa)***

**<http://www.citizensacademy.ca/>**

The Citizen's Academy in Ottawa, Ontario is a volunteer-run organization based on a belief that a wide range of perspectives, dialogue, and a new way of collaborative thinking can shift citizens towards creating a city where everyone flourishes. CA is based on a belief that understanding and education are precursors to meaningful and constructive engagement, interaction and action to build a better city. CA is interested in "city building" – which may not be easy, but the idea is to have fun. As they describe, it doesn't have to be large in scale, but it requires passion. For changing cities, city building is a creative, on-going process that evolves continuously. Through its focus on civic "learning, works, and conversations", Citizen's Academy offers safe places for citizens to listen, learn, and understand issues that affect them, their neighbourhood and their city. They provide a space to share resources and ideas that inspire you, give you access to information, opportunities for learning, and best practices from other places. CA also offers a Civics Boot Camp over the course of five weeks. The sessions cover municipal governance, budgeting and land use planning, and a practicum, where small groups plan civic action and make their pitch to a panel of community leaders who provide feedback on the plans. The website provides links to tools and resources for civic engagement, diversity and inclusion, and dialogue.

### ***National Issues Forum (NIF)***

**<http://nifi.org/>**

National Issues Forums (NIF)<sup>384</sup> is a nonpartisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for the consideration of public policy issues. The purpose of NIF is based on the idea that people need to come together to reason and talk — to deliberate about common problems. Forums focus on an issue such as health care, immigration, Social Security, or ethnic and racial tensions. The forums provide a way for people of diverse views and experiences to develop a shared understanding of problems and to search for common ground for action. Forums are led by trained, neutral moderators, and use an issue discussion guide that frames the issue by presenting the overall problem and then three or four broad approaches to the problem. Forum participants work through the issue by considering each approach; examining what appeals to them or concerns them, and also what the costs and consequences with that approach. Some topics include Budget Priorities, Educating and Developing Youth, and Health care.

### ***Citizens Academy***

**<http://www.citizensacademy.ca/>**

The Citizen's Academy in Ottawa, Ontario<sup>385</sup> is a volunteer-run organization based on a belief that a wide range of perspectives, dialogue, and a new way of collaborative thinking can shift citizens towards creating a city where everyone flourishes. The foundation of this organization is the belief that education is critical to meaningful and constructive engagement, interaction and action to build a better city. CA provides ways of thinking about "city building" in a creative, on-going process. Through its focus on civic "learning, works, and conversations," Citizen's Academy offers safe places for citizens to listen, learn, and understand issues that affect them, their neighbourhood and their city. They provide a space to share resources and ideas to inspire community members, and provide access to information, opportunities for learning, and best practices from other places. They also offer a 5-week Civics Boot Camp, with sessions on municipal governance, budgeting and land use planning, and a practicum, where small groups plan civic action and make their pitch to a panel of community leaders who provide feedback on the plans. Their website has tools and resources for civic engagement, diversity and inclusion, and dialogue. This organization's profile is also included in the final section of this report.

### ***Civics 101 Toronto***

**<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=25e1acb640c21410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>**

Civics 101Toronto<sup>386</sup> is a civic literacy pilot developed to educate Torontonians about how the City government works their role in local government, about decision -making, planning, finances and elections. In the spring of 2009, 175 participants from across the city of Toronto were randomly selected to attend Toronto Civics 101, a special learning series. The program was just one component of the City Manager's, Strategic and Corporate Policy Division's Civic Engagement strategy. That strategy has three key directions: strategic and sustainable engagement and participation; corporate support and coordination; and promotion of equity, outreach and inclusion in engagement practices divisionally and corporately. Toronto Civics 101 covered the basics of City government and each session (6 sessions over 3 months) was designed to build on the preceding sessions. Participants were encouraged to consider the information and issues important in making decisions about programs, services and budgeting to best meet the needs of Torontonians. The City of Toronto published a series of learning guides that provide introductory information on how decisions are made, the roles of Councilors and the Mayor, elections, and more. Civics 101 is highlighted in the organizational profiles at the end of this report See the website to explore the learning guides and read the report on this initiative.

### ***Civic Spaces CPI***

**<http://centreforpublicinvolvement.com/work/archives/2013/09/26/edmonton-multicultural-coalition-pilot-project/>**

The Centre for Public Involvement partnered with the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition on a pilot project designed "Civic Spaces" <sup>387</sup> to support the civic and political engagement of immigrants and refugees in Edmonton. The project included a Civics 101 visually based educational workshop that provided participants with the tools and opportunities to understand government in Canada on municipal, provincial and federal levels. This workshop was also designed to increase the knowledge of participants to be involved in elections and civic life. A second component involved an *Open Space forum* designed for participants to meet and dialogue with candidates who ran in the 2013 Edmonton General Election.

Participants identified key issues for discussion and then also had the opportunity to have a conversation with others in their ward area. See more about this project in the Diversity and Inclusion section.

### ***National Coordinating Centre on Public Involvement***

**<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>**

This center, based in the UK, supports universities to engage with the public. The website provides links to information and services. They consult with institutions who are trying to develop more effective support for engagement including leadership workshops with senior staff, and providing content for conferences and events. They also develop training programs to support engaged practice, and run training the trainer sessions. They host an annual Engage conference, and have NCCPE networks including the *Public Engagement Network*. This website has ideas for thinking, planning, and acting including recruitment and ideas for capacity building and training. They have developed a “Manifesto of Public Engagement” that can be accessed at <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/manifesto-public-engagement>.

### ***Involve UK***

**<http://www.involve.org.uk/>**

Involve, founded in 2004, works closely with public organizations at a local, national and international level to transform how they engage with citizens. Through both research and practice they “seek to radically transform the relationship between citizens and their governments to better use the creativity, energy, knowledge, skills and resources of all.” They have done work with the UK Home Office, Ministry of Justice, the World Health Organization, the European Commission, the OECD and numerous Local Authorities. They have We have developed the case for public participation, produced practical guidance on how to engage effectively, explored innovative practices of engagement, and are currently researching to understand how and why citizens engage. Their research covers both the practice and theory of engagement and is grounded in work and experience. Their website includes case study profiles that EFCL can use as resources to explore different components of civic engagement.

### ***Center for Engagement and Neighborhood Building***

(Alliance for Children and Families) **<http://alliance1.org/ce/about>**

The Alliance for Children and Families’ Center for Engagement and Neighborhood Building is designed to unite stakeholders of all types in studying and promoting values that recognize that all individuals, families, and communities, no matter how challenged, possess aspirations and strengths that can be the foundation for meaningful, lasting change. The Alliance established the Center to form a strong network of ‘settlement houses’, community centers, and human-serving organizations, to generate neighbourhood solutions that arise from the collaboration of community residents. The foundation of the Centre’s practice is authentically engaging individuals in identifying their own strengths, aspirations, and solutions. The core idea is that building on individual and community assets and engaging neighbors and constituents as decision makers creates more lasting and effective change than a model where outside “experts” conceive and impose solutions.



## ***University of the Streets***

**<http://www.concordia.ca/about/community/initiatives/streets-cafe.html>**

University of the Streets Café organizes public conversations in cafés and community spaces across Montreal. The program is free and open to participants of all ages, all backgrounds, and all levels of education. University of the Streets Café reinvents the idea of the ‘university’ by creating spaces for lifelong learning, critical thinking and community engagement in local neighbourhoods. The conversations are slightly more structured than those you might share with your family, co-workers or friends, but the underlying idea is the same: A group of interested and open-minded people comes together to talk. Each conversation has a volunteer moderator, who ensures the event flows smoothly, and a guest, who kicks off the conversation by sharing his/her perspective on the key question that is chosen for the event. At the end of the event, participants are invited to submit their ideas for topics for subsequent conversations.

## ***Civics 101***

**<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=25e1acb640c21410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>**

Toronto Civics 101 is a civic literacy pilot developed to educate Torontonians about how the City government works, their role in local government, about decision -making, planning, finances and elections. In the spring of 2009, 175 participants from across the city of Toronto were randomly selected to attend Toronto Civics 101, a special learning series. The program was just one component of the City Manager's, Strategic and Corporate Policy Division's Civic Engagement strategy. That strategy has three key directions: strategic and sustainable engagement and participation; corporate support and coordination; and promotion of equity, outreach and inclusion in engagement practices divisionally and corporately. The participants, selected from over 900 applicants, attended six sessions during a four month period. The topics in Toronto Civics 101 covered the basics of City government and each session was designed to build on the preceding sessions. Participants were encouraged to consider the information and issues important in making decisions about programs, services and budgeting to best meet the needs of Torontonians. The City of Toronto has also produced a series of learning guides that provide introductory information on how decisions are made, the roles of Councilors and the Mayor, elections, and more. See the website to explore the learning guides and read the report on this initiative.

## ***Portsmouth Listens***

**<http://www.portsmouthlistens.org/>**

Portsmouth Listens is a group of committed local citizens working in conjunction with the City of Portsmouth, the City's neighborhoods, and the Chamber of Commerce to develop an effective, inclusive approach to involving residents in the development of the new City Master Plan. Portsmouth is initiating a community effort to update the City's Master Plan. Community master plans, developed under the authority of the Planning Board and outline by state statute, serve as important policy guides for many New Hampshire municipalities. Master Plans describe what the community is today, as well as what it wants to be in the future. In Portsmouth, the Master Plan will be a key policy document for community leaders to use in making well-informed decisions about many vital local issues ranging from future development, open space protection and affordable housing to transportation and community facility infrastructure needs.

Development of the new Master Plan is expected to be a two-year process, with many opportunities for residents, businesses, local organizations, and other key stakeholders to provide their input. Portsmouth Listens is a cornerstone of this effort.

### ***Café Politique***

[http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/u2011/cafe\\_speakers.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/outreach/u2011/cafe_speakers.html)

This is a series of monthly gatherings convened by a partnership between researchers at the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Institute for Policy Research (MIPR) during the 2011 Manitoba election, focused on bringing citizens and experts together to talk about election engagement in public venues, such as coffeehouses, schools, bookstores, shopping centres and restaurants through Manitoba. The Café Politique sessions were held for nine months leading up to the election, with discussion touching on a range of issues, such as the political engagement of youth and other demographics with traditionally lower voter turnout rates and the rules and regulations of the provincial voting process. Additionally, a series of academic lectures by scholars from across various Canadian academic, political and journal spheres were held to prompt questions among the citizen conversations and challenge common-held thinking about politics in the province of Manitoba. The café sessions were part of the U2011 Series committed to not only increasing debate but also to “raise the level of *knowledge and awareness* of politics in Manitoba, so that more citizens may engage meaningfully in the democratic process.”

### ***Next Up***

<http://www.nextup.ca/>

Next Up is a program aimed at helping emerging young leaders aged 18 - 35 develop their skills in order to engage *hands-on* with civic and political issues in their communities. The program began in British Columbia and has expanded into cities in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Each location has its own advisory committee, consisting of 12 to 14 leaders from local organizations that work directly with youth, and a coordinator tasked with the responsibility to plan each year’s schedule of sessions. The leadership training focuses on popular education approaches to teaching young people skills that prepare them take up key leadership roles in the community, equipping them with knowledge needed to be actively engaged in community decision-making, such as how to structure a debate on an issue, use social media to generate awareness of issues and events, launch and manage a campaign, and work with media to deliver press releases. While other programs for youth are geared towards developing entrepreneurial and networking skills, Next Up focuses on teaching the skills required to become civically and politically active and tackles issues from various topics and disciplines including political economy, power structures, gender, social justice, and environmental sustainability, to combine both theory and hands-on work. The sessions are taught by local leaders from the non-profit, business and public sectors with a commitment to bringing about social change. In Next Up pedagogy and practice, the focus is building and being a part of the community in order to engage politically to bring about social change.

## ***Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement***

**<http://tamarackcommunity.ca>**

Founded in 2001, Tamarack is a charity that develops and supports learning communities to help people collaborate and to co-generate knowledge that solves complex community challenges. Their deep commitment is to end poverty in Canada. Tamarack has three learning communities - each with their own site, learning events, and communities of practice. They each center around a specific topic, though all three are complimentary to one another. Here is a little more about each of them:

*Tamarack CCI (Communities Collaborating for Impact)* is a learning community for collaborative leaders utilizing a multi-sector approach to solve complex challenges.

[www.tamarackcci.ca](http://www.tamarackcci.ca)

*Vibrant Communities Canada* is a Learning Community for cities with comprehensive poverty reduction strategies led by multi sector roundtables.

[www.vibrantcommunities.ca](http://www.vibrantcommunities.ca)

*Seeking Community* is a Learning Community to recapture the idea of community and make it a guiding force in organizing our neighbourhoods and institutions; and, for envisioning policies that foster wellbeing.

[www.seekingcommunity.ca](http://www.seekingcommunity.ca)

Communities Collaborating for Impact: What might be possible for a network of community champions who are committed to leading - and learning - together? Could they: advance a movement for community well-being; revitalize local food systems; or, champion the voice of youth in planning for the future? Might these leaders become a united force for social change?

Tamarack CCI is a Learning Community for collaborative leadership professionals who are charting new ways to engage people from multiple sectors to work together. This diverse wisdom is the catalyst for creating innovative solutions to the most complex challenges facing communities. Ultimately, the focus and purpose of the Tamarack CCI Learning Community is to facilitate the networking of 1,000 collaborative leaders who are working towards positive impact in their communities. This is a group of leaders who share their knowledge and experience with each other to advance the knowledge and practice of this field.

## ***City of Edmonton Youth Council***

**<http://public.tableausoftware.com/profile/#!/vizhome/EdmontonDemographics/EdmontonMeasures>**

The City of Edmonton Youth Council (CEYC) is an initiative that aims to provide opportunities for young people to advise City Council and administration on issues and projects that concern youth. The CEYC General Assembly, with approximately 35 young people aged 13 to 23, meets monthly to review and give feedback to city policies as they are developed, to plan events and activities for youth in Edmonton, and to develop their own initiatives targeting social issues that interest young people.

### ***The Intergenerational Centre, Temple University***

**<http://templeigc.org/>**

Since 1979, this centre has created and implemented innovative intergenerational program models that mobilize people of all ages to support one another and address critical social issues in their communities. Programs are national and local, focused on both national and local in scope: fostering immigrant integration; supporting families and children; and building community capacity for community members to participate in their neighbourhoods. The Center is an incubator of new ideas and models. They combine lessons from on-the-ground work in communities with cutting-edge research and best practices. The outcomes of this work fall under three categories -- program tools, research, and training, -- and include an intergenerational toolkit, program manuals, training CDs/DVDs and videos, as well as an e-course and research publications. They combine lessons from on-the-ground work in communities with cutting-edge research and best practices. The outcomes of this work fall under three categories -- program tools, research, and training, -- and include an intergenerational toolkit, program manuals, training CDs/DVDs and videos, as well as an e-course and research publications.

### ***OneWorld Inc. – Engaging in People in Productive Dialogue***

**[www.publicengagement.ca](http://www.publicengagement.ca)**

This group of consultants based in Ottawa work with groups to facilitate dialogue and engagement. Their website has resources and articles about engagement as a process of working collaboratively and developing relationships based on clear and respectful two-way communication. In their words, there can be many reasons for conducting an engagement process – to inform, to consult, to involve, to facilitate learning, to collaborate or to empower. They work with groups to clarify goals, discuss how to reach the people you want to engage, and how best to support effective participation in that process. One World uses a range of approaches to design effective engagement processes, with outcomes and objectives in mind.

### ***Cities of Migration Matchmaker Program– Matching Citizens with “Double Cultural Background”***

**[http://citiesofmigration.ca/good\\_idea/matchmaker-matchmaker-make-me-a-match/#sthash.midE8sNo.dpuf](http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/matchmaker-matchmaker-make-me-a-match/#sthash.midE8sNo.dpuf)**

For residents and citizens with a migrant background, the boardrooms and decision tables of civic institutions are often neither accessible nor familiar spaces. Members of new or minority communities may not have forged the connections to social and professional networks that are often associated with these institutions. Figuring out how to open doors can be an enormous obstacle to entry and to sustained civic engagement. For over a decade, addressing this issue has been the prime concern. The “cities of migration” project, in the Netherlands, has developed a board matching service that recruits and trains professionals with a “double cultural background” to become board members, advisors and consultants within the cultural sector and local non-profit institutions. In this example, in the Netherlands, people with a double cultural background are “people who are at home in the Netherlands, but are also rooted in one of its many other cultures.” This network includes a range of backgrounds including people from Suriname, Turkey, the Dutch Antilles and

Morocco. This initiative focuses on the strengths – participants bring much-needed professional skills, ranging from strategic management to marketing and communication to finance.

***Centre for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)***

**<http://welcometocup.org/>**

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses design and art to improve civic engagement. CUP projects demystify the urban policy and planning issues that impact our communities, so that more individuals can better participate in shaping them. The idea behind CUP is that increasing understanding of how these systems work is the first step to better and more diverse community participation. CUP projects are collaborations of art and design professionals, community-based advocates and policymakers, and our staff. Together they take on complex issues—from the juvenile justice system to zoning law to food access—and break them down into simple, accessible, visual explanations. The tools they create are used by organizers and educators all over New York City and beyond to help their constituents better advocate for their own community needs.

## **Appendix B - Additional Resources**

New ideas are being developed to help citizens see themselves as part of the process for change. For example, emerging ideas in Alberta include Calgary's "3 Things for Calgary." In this initiative, city members share things ways to be involved in their neighbourhood, and challenge others to do the same: It could be for their street, neighbourhood or for the entire city. They are then challenged to do these things, and challenge others to do the same.<sup>388</sup> EFCL and community leagues could issue a similar challenge in communities in Edmonton, focused on civic engagement initiatives in their own neighbourhoods.

Many organizations are using innovative approaches to building community and increasing neighbourhood connections that enhance civic engagement. Food Share<sup>389</sup> has an "Engage" section on their website with photos, events, stories, and resources, and they offer workshops on facilitation, exploring community assets, and community mapping, often with food as a key topic and points of connection. They have developed comprehensive workshop models on civic issues like mapping food systems and land use that they are willing to share. EFCL and community leagues could use these facilitation guides and community mapping models to develop skills in civic engagement.

A Tool Library<sup>390</sup>, or shared trailer with hammers, saws, rakes, and other shareable tools, is a unique development in Vancouver that was also mentioned in EFCL focus groups as an ideal strategy to build community and offer a very tangible shared service to community leagues. It offers real portable 'tools' to get out and be part of the community gardens, participate in local building projects, and meet neighbours.

Maker Labs<sup>391</sup> are another contemporary example of a shared space where citizens can come together to learn new skills and create projects together. These projects may involve crafts like quilt making, with sewing machines and fabric ready to use, or a place to come together to learn how to use a 3-D printer. There may be opportunities for EFCL and community leagues to use their own facilities as creative spaces like these to provide a 'forum' for informal conversation, storytelling, and connection, which can spark conversations about local issues and strengthen bonds for deeper engagement.

These are just a sample of resources for EFCL to see possibilities for building civic engagement in neighbourhoods. Local libraries are also increasingly being recognized as public spaces, community hubs and centres of civic engagement.<sup>392</sup>

### ***Civil Dialogue***

Civil Dialogue (CD)<sup>393</sup> is a structured format for public dialogue that provides a tool to build bridges across the chasm of public viewpoints. CD can be used in multiple contexts to help people communicate in civil and productive ways, especially when they face "hot topics" and need to employ "cool heads." The Institute of Civil Dialogue provides support for planning civil dialogue sessions. In a Civil Dialogue session, volunteer participants consider a provocative statement and have the opportunity to embody a position on the statement ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly." Participants are asked to follow guidelines for civility that are explained by the facilitator. The dialogue is then extended to the broader audience who are encouraged to respond with their own opinions and questions.<sup>394</sup>

***Toronto City Learning Guides*** - The City of Toronto has developed a set of learning guides for civic engagement. For more information, see their website at:  
<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=9632acb640c21410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

**Open data- Key Tabs-** These search tabs, developed by the City of Toronto, are an example of how to access more information on civic issues. See the website at: <http://tabstoronto.com/search/?query=in+fill&advancedsearch=Basic&fromDate=&toDate=&decisionBodyId=0&itemStatus=>

### ***Toolkits, Case Studies and Facilitation Guides***

In the *Local Government Participatory Practices Manual*,<sup>395</sup> a comprehensive, practical toolkit to support public participation and decision making, the *International Centre for Municipal Development Public*<sup>396</sup> provides tips for civic engagement through inclusive consultation. The toolkit includes complete descriptions of process design for participation, worksheets to guide the process, and a comprehensive reference guide of resources. Detailed descriptions provide rationale and support for both the 'why' and 'how' of citizen engagement, from open houses, to design charrettes, electronic bulletin boards, and forming citizen advisory groups to increase participation in the civic sphere. Each of the 15 tools described in this resource have been applied by municipalities across Canada to increase transparency in decision making. The tools are organized to demonstrate a continuum from simple information sharing, to inviting public input and opinion, to those focused on providing opportunities to build information and skills for a stronger voice in decision making.<sup>397</sup> The authors also emphasize the value of these processes to "improve the ability of decision makers to be accountable to the public" and to contribute to democratic processes of local government<sup>398</sup> - two areas of keen interest for EFCL.

Citizenship DRC<sup>399</sup> developed a case study series *Citizens in Action*<sup>400</sup> that offers unique perspectives on community organizing, civic engagement and accountability. These examples of civic engagement demonstrate interactions that move from conversation to deeper levels of communication and deliberation. References for relevant resources are included alongside evidence that demonstrates citizen actions and outcomes. Recommendations and key learning is clearly articulated and the authors develop key ideas for civic engagement with accountability at the core. As they emphasize, "building accountability between numerous actors with diverse and contradictory interests requires an on-going process of negotiation and engagement."<sup>401</sup> *Champions of Participation: Engaging Citizens in Local Government*<sup>402</sup> is a compilation CD and set of resources and lessons that draws on experiences, developed in different global contexts, of the challenges and potential for bringing together citizens to participate in local governance. The creators develop lessons around leadership, vision, and the right of citizens to be informed, and provide recommendations for how shared experiences can shape policy and practice.

The *Community Toolbox*<sup>403</sup> is an organization in the UK that provides free, on online resources for building healthy communities, and tools for civic engagement, like Photovoice, elaborated on in the *Arts-based, Innovative and Visual Approaches* section of this report. The goal is to link people, ideas, and resources.

Online resources developed the *Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*,<sup>404</sup> are useful to understand both purpose and activities, and the implications for developing a strategic plan with civic engagement at the core. This resource includes online maps of where civic education is occurring, and visual graphics to demonstrate findings from survey results of reasons youth may or may not vote. The *Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement* uses these online tools to track and illustrate links between civic education and voting, and surveys on civic issues, such as trends in youth voting. Their ongoing research explores trends in civic engagement education and capacity building, and tangible actions or outcomes. EFCL and community leagues could develop similar resources

and tools to track metrics in their own civic engagement processes, such as youth involvement in various neighbourhood leagues.



## Appendix C - Types of Civic Engagement

(SOURCE: INVOLVE UK at <http://www.involve.org.uk/>)

There are a number of different ways to think about civic engagement. Broadly, *civic participation* exists outside formalized political structures and includes volunteering, working with others to solve a community problem or serving in local organization. However, *civic engagement* may have very different individual and social benefits.

Involve UK makes a strong case for understanding public participation as the foundation for community engagement based on research and practice. This link between theory and practice is a core component of civic engagement. For this review of civic engagement, some of the key types of civic engagement are outlined here, with working definitions:

- **Public Scholarship:** Engage in research that serves the public interest and has community or societal benefits. Examples: Community-University partnerships, Urban Planning programs, Chambers of Voluntary Organizations research initiatives.
- **Community Development:** Identify and increase the human or economic assets of a community through philanthropy and fundraising, community building, civic leadership, grassroots alliances and other means.
- **Community Service and Volunteerism:** Address the immediate needs of our social and ecological communities.
- **Deliberative Learning:** Deliberative learning is an approach to education that emphasizes dialogue, inquiry, and choice. This concept will be developed in depth in a subsequent section.
- **Public participation:** Democracy where citizens are able to take and influence the decisions that affect their lives.
- **Advocacy:** Mobilize influence on public policy through formal political channels, advocate for a cause, protest, or stay politically involved.

## Appendix D - How do leaders in the field describe deliberation?

Source: National Coalition for Deliberation and Dialogue (NCDD) compiled these quotes about deliberation. They can be found at: <http://ncdd.org/rc/item/1572>.

Deliberation is 'the kind of reasoning and talking we do when a difficult decision has to be made, a great deal is at stake, and there are competing options or approaches we might take. It means to weigh possible actions carefully by examining what is most valuable to us.'

- Kettering Foundation, [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

'[Public deliberation] is a public consideration about how problems are to be defined and understood, what the range of possible solutions might be, and who should have the responsibility for solving them.'

- Nancy Roberts, *From 'Public Deliberation: An Alternative Approach to Crafting Policy and Setting Direction' in Public Administration Review*, vol. 57, no. 2 (124-132). 1997.

'Deliberation...is a form of thought and reflection that can take place in any kind of conversation [including dialogue, debate and discussion].'

- Daniel Yankelovich, *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation*. 1999.

'Deliberation refers either to a particular sort of discussion-one that involves the careful and serious weighing of reasons for and against some proposition-or to an interior process by which an individual weighs reasons for and against courses of action.'

- J.D. Fearon, *From 'Deliberation as discussion.'* In J. Elster (Ed.), *Deliberative Democracy* (pp. 44-68). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998.

'[Deliberation] is the act of considering different points of view and coming to a reasoned decision that distinguishes deliberation from a generic group activity.... Collective 'problem-solving' discussion is viewed as the critical element of deliberation, to allow individuals with different backgrounds, interests and values to listen, understand, potentially persuade and ultimately come to more reasoned, informed and public-spirited decisions.'

- Julia Abelson et al., *From 'Deliberations about deliberative methods: issues in the design and evaluation of public participation processes,' Social Science & Medicine* 57 (2003) 239-251.

'Public deliberation is simply people coming together to talk about a community problem that is important to them. Participants deliberate with one another – eye-to-eye, face-to-face, exploring options, weighing others' views, considering the costs and consequences of public policy decisions.'

- National Issues Forums, [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org)

'Public deliberation is a means by which citizens make tough choices about basic purposes and directions for their communities and their country.' - David Mathews, Kettering Foundation; *from Public Deliberation in America*, [www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

'[Public deliberation is] social learning about public problems and possibilities.'

- Robert Reich, *From Public Management in a Democratic Society*

## **Appendix E - Strategies for engaging 20-30 year olds**

- 1) Invite them:  
*Young people enjoying doing things but they need to feel like they are supposed to be there. Approach young people and invite them to be involved in civic conversations and events.*
- 2) Reminders  
*Do not stop at just one invite. Follow-up. Send reminders. This is especially important for the first few times.*
- 3) Involve them in the planning  
*When young people are involved in planning events, they will often bring their friends out with them. By including young people in decisions, they will also feel more invested and committed to the organization. And you will also be more likely to plan an event that would appeal to a younger demographic, because they would be part of the planning.*
- 4) Plan events that would appeal to a younger crowd  
*Be creative. There is so much happening that in order to attract a new audience you have to do something unique and interesting.*
- 5) Communicate how they communicate  
*There are many forms of communication available to communities. Some methods are more effective than others, depending on whom you are trying to reach. Using a wide variety of messaging tools is a good idea, but ensure that your social media and posters are intentional and effective.*
- 6) Partner with businesses and organizations that are already popular with young people  
*There are restaurants and events that already appeal to young people. For example, Next Act Pub is often full of young people, and Rapid Fire Theater is well attended by people in their twenties. Working with groups such as these would attract a younger age group while supporting local organizations/businesses and increase name recognition for your brand.*
- 7) Don't leave people standing alone  
*Encourage organizers to go around and talk to people who are new or are standing alone. It is intimidating to join a group when everyone knows each other already. Introduce yourself to them and talk to them a bit. It will help them become part of the community.*

Source: Ideas and youth perspective shared by, Michaela Mann, staff at CPI 2014

## **10 Ways to Keep Youth Engagement Authentic**

- 1) Adults want youth at the table because it will add value.
- 2) Opportunities balance work, learning and fun.
- 3) Opportunities are connected as part of a system; youth can move easily from one to another.
- 4) Training and skill building match the opportunities youth will have, and the challenges they will tackle.
- 5) Training and skill building are built into all projects.
- 6) Youth driven initiatives try to maintain a ratio of four-eight youth for every adult.
- 7) Adult driven initiatives try to maintain a ratio of one young person for every four-six adults.
- 8) Enough time is taken for youth to learn about the issues and complete projects.
- 9) Youth have access to decision-makers in official settings.
- 10) Opportunities are meaningful (not add-on, or make-work projects)

**Source: *Authentic youth civic engagement: A guide for municipal leaders* (National League of Cities, 2010)**

## Appendix F - Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues Community Connections Conference

Common Ground: A City that Works for All

Over 500 community leaders, residents, elected officials and city staff will attend the first “Common Ground: A City That Works for All” on Saturday, March 22nd.

This year’s conference theme – **Common Ground: A City That Works for All** - aims to explore ways to build organizational capacity – to strengthen organizational and communication skills, better understand how we can work with and influence city government, and build broad-based efforts that involve all segments of our increasingly diverse spectrum of neighborhoods and communities.

You can view the [Conference Program Book](#) for additional details.

[Conference workshops](#) are organized around four themes:

- **Making the City Work for Me:** Helping Residents Better Understand and Influence City Government
- **Thinking Bigger:** Collaborations Will Get You There
- **Finding Common Ground:** Gathering Diverse Communities Around the Table to Share Common Goals
- **Running an Effective Organization:** Managing Your Work, Finances and Communications

Find out more about the conference at <http://www.efcl.org>

This conference is a collaboration between the City of Minneapolis and an organization that is very similar to EFCL.

This mock-up is based on a conference organized in Minneapolis. See their advertising, conference program, and final report at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/conf/index.htm>

**Edmonton**



## Appendix G - Using Graphic Illustration to Explore Dialogue and Deliberation

(Source: [http://ncdd.org/rc/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Goals\\_Comic\\_fullpage.jpg](http://ncdd.org/rc/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Goals_Comic_fullpage.jpg))



Graphic created by Sandy Heierbacher, NCDD (August 2009). Its content is a slightly adapted version of the "Goals of Deliberation" figure in *Beginning with the End in Mind: A Call for Goal-Driven Deliberative Practice* (Summer 2009, Public Agenda's Center for Advances in Public Engagement), by Martin Carcasson of Colorado State University's Center for Public Deliberation, available at [www.publicagenda.org/cape](http://www.publicagenda.org/cape).

## Appendix H - Twelve “C’s” for Sustaining Civic Work

National Centre for Dialogue and Deliberation <http://ncdd.org/rc/item/5247>. see also <http://www.civicpartnerships.org/>

**Community:** Do people believe the process will be open—that anyone can join and contribute at any time? Do they believe it will be inclusive—that all perspectives and interests will be represented? Do they believe people will be “community-minded” and “public-spirited”? Do they believe shared goals will take priority over particular ones?

**Connection:** Do people have a personal stake or interest? Does it matter to them? Do they feel a sense of personal responsibility? Will they avoid responsibility or accept it? Will what they do be a high-enough priority relative to their careers, families, social life, etc.?

**Capacity:** Do people feel they have something to contribute? Do they have resources they can bring to bear: experience, creativity, time, energy, stamina, etc.?

**Choice:** Do people see multiple possibilities for acting, or do they feel constrained by pre-determined options?

**Change:** Do people believe their efforts will have an impact? Will their involvement make any difference? Is their contribution wanted/needed/valued?

**Consequences:** Do people believe the benefits will outweigh the costs? Are they prepared to take necessary risks? Do they fear adverse repercussions?

**Control:** Do people feel a sense of personal efficacy, competence? Do they feel they personally can influence what is done and how it is done?

**Cooperation:** Do people believe others will join the effort and do their share of the work? Will they help rather than hinder one another? Will they complement each other’s efforts?

**'Correctibility':** Will the effort be flexible and adaptable? Or will stubbornness or rigidity prevent people from admitting and learning from mistakes?

**Communication:** Will there be full and frequent exchanging of information between organizations, between citizens, and between each of these and their representatives in government? Will there be feedback? Who is doing what?

- What results are we getting? How much progress are we making? Of what sort? How do we know? What evidence do we have? How is it being measured?
- What actions or steps do we need to start taking? What do we need to do that we haven’t done? Who will do what by when?
- What things should we stop doing? What actions are we taking that we shouldn’t be taking?
- What things should we continue doing? What actions are we taking that we should keep on taking?

**Celebration:** Will people’s efforts and successes be recognized and rewarded (especially in the beginning, when progress may be slow or fitful)?

**Continuity:** Do people believe enough of their fellow community members will become and stay engaged over time so that they can disengage—transfer their responsibilities to others—as they reach the limits of their time and energy? Is there a “plan for succession”? Will new leaders be developed and new followers recruited?



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# Endnotes

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- <sup>3</sup> EFCL Civic Engagement Review Planning Documents and Notes from the Winter General Meeting
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- <sup>5</sup> See more about City of Edmonton Office of Public Engagement at [http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/city\\_organization/office-of-public-engagement.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/office-of-public-engagement.aspx)
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- <sup>7</sup> See Involving Edmonton at [http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/PDF/city\\_procedure.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/city_procedure.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> See *Engaging Edmonton* at <http://www.engagingedmonton.ca/>
- <sup>9</sup> Check out *Edmonton Insight Community* at <https://www.edmontoninsightcommunity.ca/Portal/default.aspx>
- <sup>10</sup> See Siu and Stanisevski (2012), p.84
- <sup>11</sup> See "New from the City of Edmonton" *Edmonton Launches Innovative New Online Public Engagement Tool* access at
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- <sup>14</sup> See Nabatchi (2012) for various authors' work on these issues.
- <sup>15</sup> See Nabatchi et al (2012) collected essays in *Democracy in Motion* for a full overview of the issues
- <sup>16</sup> Bradford (2005), p.4
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- <sup>20</sup> White (1997), p.23; Sharp and Anderson (2010)
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- <sup>23</sup> Lukensmeyer and Torres (2006), p.23
- <sup>24</sup> Ehrlich (2000)
- <sup>25</sup> Sharp and Anderson (2010);Bradford (2005)
- <sup>26</sup> Interviews with key informants conducted by CPI 2014
- <sup>27</sup> See Holmgren (2014) Accessed at <http://markholmgren.com/2014/05/22/becoming-a-learning-organization-part-two/>
- <sup>28</sup> Epp (2008) describes the ideas of 'reskilling' and learning skills required for civic engagement.
- <sup>29</sup> Bradford (2005)
- <sup>30</sup> Gibson (2004); Harwood (2004), p. 2 in the Case Foundation "Citizens at the Centre: A new approach to civic engagement" research report.
- <sup>31</sup> Gibson (2004)
- <sup>32</sup> Gibson (2004), p. 2
- <sup>33</sup> Gibson (2004), p.2
- <sup>34</sup> For examples of some of the challenges, key criticisms, and responses, see Collingwood and Reedy (2012), p.233-237
- <sup>35</sup> Nabatchi (2012), p. 7
- <sup>36</sup> Gastil (2005), p.164, in Nabatchi (2012), p.7
- <sup>37</sup> Nabatchi (2012), p.5
- <sup>38</sup> Davies, Blackstock and Rauschmayer (2005)
- <sup>39</sup> It is important to preface this exploration of civic engagement by acknowledging that the term "civic engagement" has both the benefit and challenge of dynamic definitions and ways of understanding how the theory may be applied in practice. The practices of civic engagement have been studied across disciplines, including urban planning, psychology, political science, adult education, and digital media. Over the past decades, scholars and practitioners have developed terms and concepts, often used interchangeably: democratic participation, citizenship, community engagement, and service-learning.
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- <sup>67</sup> Sousa ( 2006); Chavis and Pretty (1999); Kinston, Mitchell, Florin and Stevenson, (1999)
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- <sup>70</sup> Putnam (2000)
- <sup>71</sup> NCRP – accessed at <https://www.ncrp.org>; see recent literature on measuring impact
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