

City of Edmonton
Department of Transportation Services

Review of Public Engagement 2015



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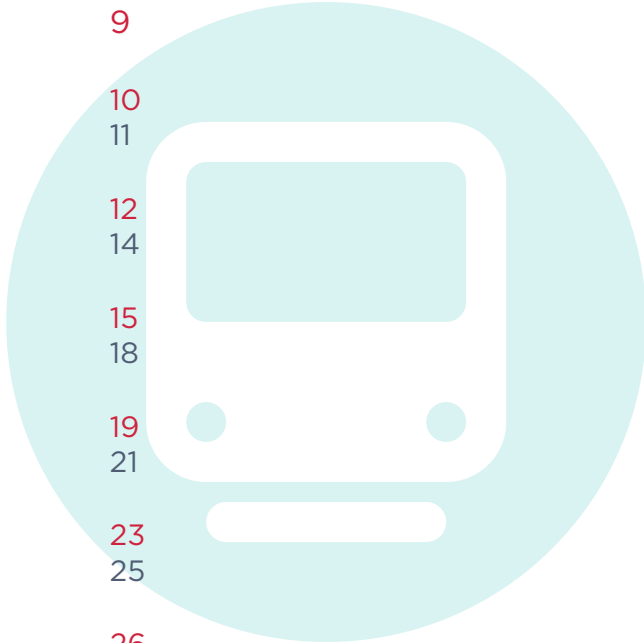
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Executive Summary

Overview of Study

A research team from the Centre for Public Involvement worked in partnership with the City of Edmonton to undertake a comprehensive internal study of public involvement in the Transportation Services Department at the City of Edmonton. The study was commissioned by the Department. This report summarizes the results of the research team's system-wide review of the scope and practices of public involvement in Transportation Services. The team gathered and analyzed data from several sources: interviews with and survey questionnaires of staff and administrators, case studies of public involvement from within the City of Edmonton and from selected North American cities, content analysis of Department documents, and a literature review of current theory and practice around the world. This report provides evidence that is intended to support ongoing improvement in the quality, responsiveness, and completeness of the Department's public-involvement activities. The main outcome of the study is a set of nine key challenges that Transportation Services faces as it pursues excellence in public involvement. This report explores the nine challenges in depth and provides a set of detailed short- and long-term recommendations for improving the practice of public involvement in Transportation Services.

Towards Public Involvement 2.0 in Transportation Services

Transportation Services manages complex, technical, long-term projects in which budget and timing changes have significant and expensive impacts on all its operations, including public involvement. This report is intended to provide insights into how the work and context of Transportation Services generate both challenges and opportunities for planning and carrying out public involvement. Further improvement of public involvement in Transportation Services will require the development of a comprehensive program of public involvement that builds on the important foundation that already exists in the Department and in the City of Edmonton. This foundation consists of the policies,

procedures, and tools that support and guide public involvement activities.

Public involvement is an evolving concept in an emerging, continuously changing field. Even within the City of Edmonton, the language used to describe and operationalize public-involvement practices is sometimes confusing. Some of the terminology having similar meanings in the area includes *public engagement, collaborative governance, civic renewal, participatory democracy, and citizen-centred change*. These terms have shades of difference in meaning, based on the degree of action implied for citizens. Public involvement is the broadest category of activities in this area.

We have defined public involvement in the context of the City of Edmonton as:

inviting, encouraging, and using contributions from citizens about important issues that affect them, in ways that lead to better decisions and improved democratic outcomes, as set out in Policy C513 (17 January 2006).

Some of the challenges that the City of Edmonton, along with all major cities, faces, as it pursues excellence in public involvement, are the following:

- To involve citizens in decision-making continuously and meaningfully, cities require a healthy, vibrant culture, along with widely supported political and social practices. Cities in North America are facing rapidly shifting demographics and complex problems, including infrastructure development, that require thoughtful, informed responses by citizens.
- Online public involvement has not yielded the positive results for which its promoters had hoped. Online participants can suffer from groupthink or seek influence out of proportion to their numbers. Methods of combining online information and interaction with face-to-face processes are necessary.
- Public involvement is an antecedent of civic renewal, but it is not a substitute for concrete change. Citizens and their governments must be prepared to follow up meaningful public-involvement processes with an action agenda.

Executive Summary



Despite these challenges and complexities, the positive outcomes and benefits of public involvement are substantial and well documented.

- Effective public involvement has the potential to build trust within society, to the extent that there is an increase in the sense that “citizen input matters” and that such input will have an impact.
- Although online public involvement has limits for creating representative groups of citizens, it can be used for attracting individuals and groups who otherwise would not participate in civic matters. A broad range of design strategies exists for online public involvement. Innovative and selective use, and appropriate design, are key.
- Structural change for enhancing public involvement can be accomplished in part through information systems. As decision-making in public organizations increasingly relies on computer-generated statistics and public opinion, methods of systematically and routinely incorporating citizen learning and preferences into decision-making can become easier.
- Proximity to institutions of higher education has allowed cities similar to Edmonton to attract the interest of young people who want to help shape new approaches to public involvement. Postsecondary students who participate in the civic life of the city while studying are more likely to make Edmonton their home after graduation.
- As innovative methods of public involvement are designed, Edmonton can draw on a rich civic history and culture of public involvement.

The recommendations in this report address nine key challenges for Transportation Services as it pursues excellence in the practice of public involvement. Each challenge is followed by recommendations. The recommendations point towards an evolved approach to public involvement we have called, *Public Involvement 2.0*. The expected benefits for Transportation Services of achieving *Public Involvement 2.0* are presented in **Table 1**.

Movement towards Public Involvement 2.0 will require a well-developed learning plan for staff and increased development of key skills and competencies. To support

this movement, evaluation criteria will need to be established, with the goal of creating a culture of best practices in which learning about public involvement is shared, recognized, and rewarded. *Public Involvement 2.0* will also require an advance in the effective use of information and communications technologies, including information systems and social media, for both internal and external audiences.

Table 1. Six Expected Benefits of Achieving Public Involvement 2.0

The research literature identifies six expected benefits of high-quality and comprehensive public-involvement practices in public organizations.

Legitimacy: Decisions that account for public values balance “fact-based” or “expert” decisions, and add legitimacy and depth to decisions.

Better decision making: Drawing on the diverse experiential knowledge of the public informs decisions that can then be made based on real needs.

Reduced polarization: Well-structured processes, with intentional opportunities for dialogue and deliberation, save time and resources by seeking “common ground” and by constructively uncovering and utilizing conflict. This increases “public-minded” decision making and responses to policy problems.

Improved capacity: Citizens acquire skills and competencies for listening, problem solving, and creative thinking.

Engaged citizens: Citizens develop a civic sense of purpose in their lives as they devote energy and time to shaping public policy.

Inclusiveness: Mechanisms are created to take advantage of the diversity of the population by reducing barriers to participation, especially for minority and underrepresented groups.

Summary of Research Methodology

The research methodology was designed to allow for formative evaluation. That is, our objective was to assess the current practices of public involvement within Transportation Services while introducing comparative views of theory and practice from elsewhere. The data gathered for the study included the following:

- 1** We carried out in-depth interviews with administrators and professional staff in Transportation Services.
- 2** We invited a random sample of 311 professionals involved with carrying out public-involvement activities in Transportation Services to complete an online survey questionnaire. Of these, 121, or 38.9%, completed the questionnaire, which can be considered a good response rate for a survey questionnaire of this kind. We took efforts to ensure that all branches of Transportation Services were represented by respondents. During the past two years, 115 respondents worked on at least one public involvement activity.
- 3** Nine case studies were written by the research team, using secondary sources such as Department documents, public reports, and media reports, such as newspaper articles.
- 4** Case studies describing public-involvement policies and practices in six Canadian cities and six U.S. cities were written by the research team using publicly available secondary documents and reports. The selected cities feature public-involvement approaches that can be compared for the purpose of understanding and refining Edmonton's approach.
- 5** Content analysis was carried out of selected Public Involvement Plans (PIPs) and other documents in Transportation Services.
- 6** A literature review was prepared by examining scholarly literature about public involvement generally and for public-transportation work specifically. The "grey" literature in the area, that is, literature combining practice-based and professionally oriented publications, was also consulted.
- 7** An Advisory Committee oversaw the planning and development of the project. The Committee's

membership included public-involvement professionals in the City of Edmonton and the City of Calgary, as well as professionals and administrators working in transportation and other areas of municipal management in both cities.

- City of Edmonton, Sustainable Development, Greg Heaton
- City of Edmonton, Community Services, Stephane Labonne
- City of Edmonton, Office of Public Engagement, Cory Segin
- City of Calgary, Office of Public Engagement, Noreen Rude
- City of Calgary, General Manager of Transportation, Mac Logan
- McMaster University, Dr. Julia Abelson
- City of Edmonton, Former Manager of Public Involvement, Jill Bradford-Green
- Edmonton City Council, Councilor Ben Henderson
- Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Elaine Solez

The first step of the study was reviewing the literature, which examined approaches to public involvement in municipal contexts but with special attention to public involvement practices associated with large infrastructure projects. The emerging results of the literature review helped to inform both the subsequent data-gathering strategy and the overall approach to interpreting data from the interviews and survey questionnaires. A first draft of the survey questionnaire was created, based on question items and topic categories that have been used by researchers in other jurisdictions. Data-gathering began with the interviews. Preliminary analysis of the interview transcripts was used in shaping the approach taken to refining and finalizing the survey-questionnaire items. The topics for the case studies were developed by following up on suggestions from interview respondents and members of the Advisory Committee.

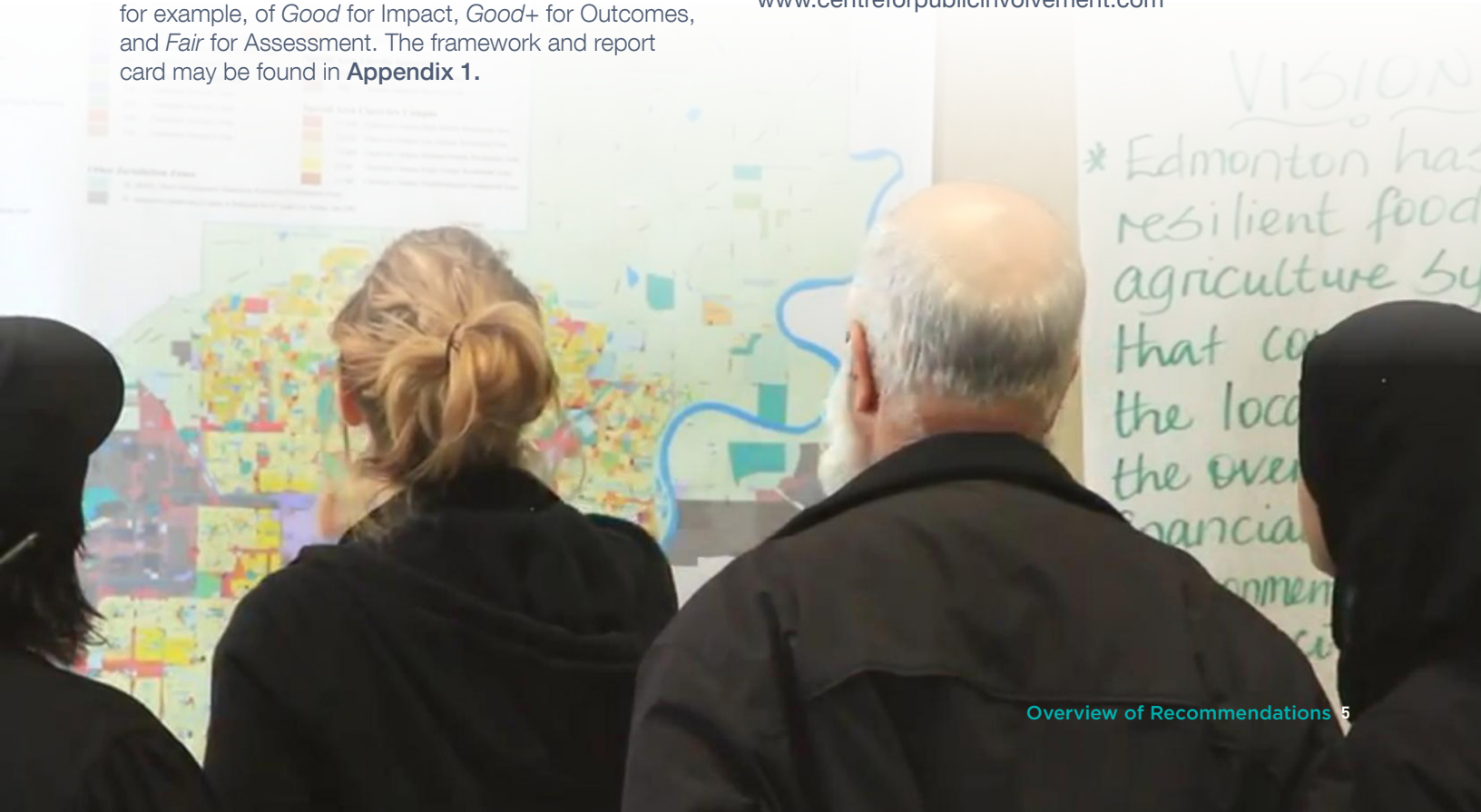
Individual members of the research team contributed to the literature review, carried out interviews, planned and administered the survey questionnaires, and drafted case studies. The full research team, supported by the Advisory Committee, participated in all stages of planning and carrying out the study's research plan, including data-gathering, analysis, and completion of the final report. The plan for the study was reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta.

Reading This Report

Following the statement and discussion of each of the nine challenges set out in this report, a list of recommendations is offered. The first part of the list is provided for the consideration of administrators and staff in Transportation Services. The second part of the list, headed “Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement,” offers recommendations that, if adopted, would contribute more broadly to the City of Edmonton’s efforts to pursue excellence in public involvement. Although not required for understanding this report’s recommendations, a conceptual framework was used to guide the development of our analysis of public-involvement practices in Transportation Services. The framework represents a service orientation to understanding public involvement. It consists of the three major components of service: Commitment, Conduct, and Outcomes. Nine criteria for excellent service are presented as a subset of these components. Based on the criteria for high-quality services presented in the framework, we drafted a “report card” that offers a snapshot of progress to date on public involvement in Transportation Services. The report card awards scores, for example, of *Good* for Impact, *Good+* for Outcomes, and *Fair* for Assessment. The framework and report card may be found in **Appendix 1**.

The study represents an analytical synthesis of the data gathered. It offers informed opinion about the practice of public involvement in Transportation Services, based on the available data, the mandate provided by Transportation Services, and the expertise of members of the research team. In the analysis of the primary data, obtained through the survey questionnaire and the interviews, we interpreted the results with an eye towards the ultimate goal of achieving excellence in public involvement. We used the data to acknowledge strengths of public-involvement practices in Transportation Services and to highlight areas in which improvements could be made. Further resources that support the recommendations in this report include public-involvement case studies, city case studies, and a literature review.

Please see **Appendix 2** for a summary of all recommendations in the report. See **Appendices 3** and **4** for a summary of case studies and public involvement studies. Full documents can be found online at the Centre for Public Involvement: www.centreforpublicinvolvement.com



Overview of the Recommendations

The recommendations presented following Challenges 1 through 5 are designed to encourage the embedding of public involvement more fully into the *organizational design* of Transportation Services. The recommendations associated with the respective Challenges propose the following:

- 1** Unifying the approach to communication about public involvement, both with the public and within the Department;
- 2** Increasing the budget for public involvement and clarifying the budgeting process by which resources are allocated for public involvement;
- 3** Signaling an organizational commitment to public involvement through explicitly and prominently referring to public-involvement priorities, skills, and outcomes in job descriptions, consulting contracts, and staff-recognition programs;
- 4** Fostering learning opportunities, a system-wide learning plan, and a learning culture; and
- 5** Measuring and rewarding excellence in public involvement.

In short, the recommendations associated with Challenges 1 through 5 encourage the development of an organizational culture in Transportation Services that takes into account a clear strategy of public involvement.

The recommendations associated with Challenges 6 through 9 propose improvements to the institutionalized processes for planning and carrying out public involvement activities and for making use of citizen contributions. These recommendations include:

- 6** Creating policies and procedures for public involvement across the lifecycle of Transportation Services projects;
- 7** Achieving a balance and range of perspectives on issues for which public-involvement initiatives are designed;
- 8** Encouraging the use of more active forms of public involvement as depicted on the public-involvement spectrum; and
- 9** “Closing the loop” with citizens about how their contributions were used in policy and decision making. It should be noted that this last set of recommendations, regarding closing the loop, represents an internationally documented “best practice.” As discussed under Challenges 1 and 5, closing the loop is a prerequisite for measuring and ultimately understanding the effectiveness of public involvement activities.



Public Involvement in Transportation Services

The City of Edmonton Context

The context of public involvement in Edmonton is vibrant and evolving. Efforts by City Council to involve the public in decision-making are supported by Policy C513, which establishes public involvement as a strategic requirement for staff. Policy C513 states that if governments are to represent citizens fully, then these same citizens must be involved in shaping public policy:

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

“Public Involvement,” City Policy C513,
17 January 2006

A framework for public involvement has been adopted within the City of Edmonton, with the support of the *Involving Edmonton* handbook. The Office of Public Engagement provides advice and expertise to departments as they seek to develop and use high-quality approaches to public involvement.

In addition to these policy and structural foundations, the City of Edmonton has built up a substantial reputation for involving citizens in important decisions piloting and experimenting with innovative methods of public involvement, as described below.

Edmonton is the first city in Canada to establish a research and development institute in partnership with a university. The Centre for Public Involvement, which completed this study, was established through a partnership with the University of Alberta to support practice and scholarship in public involvement, using the City of Edmonton’s policies and practices as the focus of its work.

In 2013, City Council established a City Council Initiative on Public Involvement as a means of extending citizen understanding of public involvement and identifying potential methods for improving approaches to public involvement. As Mayor Don Iveson stated, the City has:

Heard loud and clear that citizens have an increased expectation when it comes to public engagement. [T]he 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.

As part of the Council Initiative, the City has consulted with citizens to gather ideas and feedback about how to continue to improve public-involvement practices in Edmonton.

Edmonton has other key structures in place to support public involvement: a youth council, the Great Neighbourhoods program, and a longstanding network of community leagues.

- Edmonton’s NextGen is a group of young, passionate, community-minded individuals who are contributing to Edmonton by creating a city that attracts and gives voice to young Edmontonians. Edmonton also has a Youth Council that has a mandate to provide information and advice to City Council in relation to issues involving or affecting Youth.
- The Great Neighbourhoods program supports the City of Edmonton’s investment in the physical and social infrastructure of Edmonton neighbourhoods. The goal is to create vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods, building community capacity by working with residents and supporting their efforts to create the place they want their neighbourhoods to be, and coordinating City services and improving collaboration with other organizations and among City departments to deliver services in neighbourhoods more efficiently.
- Edmonton has 157 community leagues that foster involvement in Edmonton neighbourhoods and provide a mechanism for generating feedback on municipal issues.

Public Involvement in Transportation Services

Finally, the City of Edmonton has pioneered innovative and constructive public-involvement methods. These include:

- Since 2009, the City of Edmonton, in partnership with the Centre for Public Involvement, has carried out four Citizen Panels and one Citizen Jury. These deliberative bodies were formed by groups of citizens selected to represent Edmonton's demographic diversity. Over a period of several weeks, they learned about and made recommendations concerning significant policy issues, such as budget priorities, urban agriculture, online voting, and energy and climate. In each case, citizen recommendations were presented directly to City Council for consideration during decision-making. See, for example: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/municipal_elections/2012-jellybean-internet-voting-election-public-involvement.aspx.
- Edmonton is one of the first municipalities in Canada to launch an online citizen panel to allow for consultation with citizens on issues of broad public importance. The Edmonton Insight Community has approximately 2,300 members who comment on current and developing issues identified by the City of Edmonton.
- Edmonton's Open City initiative demonstrates a commitment to open and transparent government. It focuses on creating opportunities for interaction with citizens through social media and other technologies. The City provides a 311 service to ensure ongoing timely information to citizens and has implemented an online citizen dashboard, data sharing, and analytics that publicly report on the City's performance in key service areas.

The Transportation Services Context

Transportation Services is one of the City of Edmonton's largest departments, with a staff of about 3,300 and a broad portfolio of responsibility that includes Light Rail Transit (LRT) construction and maintenance, road construction, and the ETS bus service. The projects that Transportation Services undertakes are complex, technical, and long term. Transportation is a core city

function that requires substantial investment of the municipal budget. The activities of the Department are planned and conducted within legislative, policy, professional, and procedural frameworks that are defined by political decisions, technical standards, and professional codes and standards. In recent years, some areas of the Department's responsibilities, such as LRT planning and bike-lane construction, have become a focus of much public interest.

The magnitude of the Department's portfolio coupled with the impact of transportation decisions on citizens, offers Transportation Services both challenges and opportunities for involving citizens in the development of a well-designed, cost effective, and sustainable transportation system. This report recognizes the complex context in which public involvement in Transportation Services is practiced. It seeks to describe selected, but not all, aspects of the complexity for the purposes of making useful recommendations. In a separate survey conducted by the Centre for Public Involvement in the summer of 2014 for the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, respondents identified transportation issues as among the most important facing Edmonton in the next five years. Sixty-two percent of community-league respondents indicated that transportation issues were the second most important civic issue for community leagues. Corresponding to this perceived importance among citizens, Transportation Services has committed strategic and financial resources to pursuing excellence in public involvement. For example, the Department employs a full-time staff member, the Public Engagement Program Manager.

Transportation Staff Perception of Quality

Results from our interviews and survey questionnaires suggest that staff in Transportation Services see public involvement as an important part of their work. We asked respondents to rate public-involvement activities they have observed at work, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 4 considered by convention as a desirable target.

Figure 1 shows that staff rated the Department as having a high level of "overall commitment to public

Public Involvement in Transportation Services



involvement” (4.25/5) and a slightly lower level of “overall quality of public involvement” (4.05/5). The “overall usefulness of public input” (3.69/5) and “effectiveness of public involvement activities” (3.87/5) were positive, but not at the benchmark level of 4. This pattern of responses, characteristic of in-progress change management, suggests a public involvement policy that benefits from upper management commitment and that yields quality work. But the rank-and-file departmental professional does not appear to be equally persuaded of the work’s usefulness and effectiveness. (This relates to the first and third challenges that we will discuss shortly.)

Respondents were also asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = strongly disagree, and 7 = strongly agree, to the question, I would tell a friend that the Transportation Services Department engages the public about most of its important decisions. **Table 2** shows that respondents expressed general agreement with this statement (5.20/7).

In summary, staff in Transportation Services are informed about relevant issues related to public involvement. In addition, they recognize the Department’s emerging capacities to improve public involvement as a strategic priority.

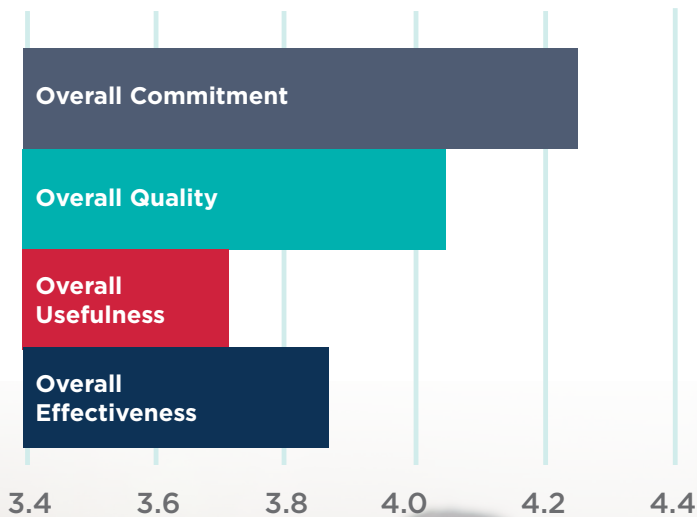


Figure 1. Staff Perception of the Quality of Public-Involvement Activities in Transportation Services - 5 point scale

Strongly Disagree	1.4%
Disagree	7.1%
Moderately Disagree	2.8%
Neutral	14.2%
Moderately Agree	23.0%
Agree	40.0%
Strongly Agree	11.3%

Table 2. Staff agreement that Transportation Services engages the public about most important decisions - 7 point scale





Challenges and Recommendations



Challenge 1: In pursuing excellence in public involvement, Transportation Services is facing rising citizen expectations.

“The central problem in most democracies is...that citizen expectations and capacities have undergone a sea change in the past 20 years, and our public institutions have not yet adjusted to the shift.”

-Matt Leighninger, Author and Public-Involvement Practitioner

Over the past two decades, there has been an increasing demand for public access to the planning and decision-making processes of governments and public agencies. This has been a consequence of many social changes, but among these are increasing access to information through the Internet and the rise of “expert citizens” who have a higher level of education and who have at their disposal more effective modes of communication. Access to online information and communication has increased the complexity and breadth of communication. There is a heightened sense in public discourse of the importance of the views of citizens and of the role of civil society. Allied with this growing sense of the importance of the citizen voice has been an increased interest in place-based and local knowledge.

The City of Edmonton has recognized rising citizen expectations for public involvement by passing Policy C513, creating the Office of Public Engagement and the Centre for Public Involvement, and launching the City Council Initiative on Public Involvement. Interview respondents at all levels of Transportation Services

stated that public involvement has taken up an incrementally increasing proportion of their time over the last decade. For staff members with a background in engineering, for example, this increase in demands requires not only more effort and time but the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

Scholars and practitioners argue that new approaches to public to involvement will require a commitment to two-way communication and to shared authority. Rather than organizing public-involvement activities to allow for the opposition and resolution of competing “positions” in decision making, public involvement can be structured to allow individuals and groups to compare and understand their differing “interests,” which can then be examined to uncover the extent to which these interests are shared.

Elected representatives, administrators, and staff are commonly skeptical about the capacity of citizens to inform planning. Conversely, many citizens are skeptical about the ability of public institutions to understand and respond meaningfully to citizen contributions. New methods, structures, technologies, tools, and networks can be used to bridge this gap between expectations for change on the one hand and caution on the other. Examples of these innovations from across Canada and internationally can be considered and will be mentioned in this report and highlighted in the accompanying case studies. A starting point to meeting rising expectations is through communications.



Recommendations

Challenge 1

- 1 Develop a public online portal or web page from which citizens can easily find up-to-date information about key Transportation Services projects and policies.** This resource should include information about the public-involvement activities that were associated with such projects. It could also be used to engage citizens for contributing to future Transportation Services projects.
- 2 Establish a visual communications Initiative.** Initiate some pilot work on selected projects in which visual and graphic design students, marketing students, and adult educators collaborate with engineers to implement some creative and innovative ways to share complex, technical information with citizens and stakeholders. See the Centre for Urban Pedagogy, in New York for examples of making policy accessible. This could be supported by the Centre for Public Involvement and the University of Alberta's Community Service Learning program.
- 3 Communicate success indicators in public involvement, learning opportunities, and ways to participate as described in the other recommendations in this report.**
- 4 Establish a Public-Involvement Citizens' Board for Transportation Services.** The Board would advise and support the Department as it oversees the development of its public-involvement program. Members of the Board could be selected using methods that the Centre for Public Involvement has employed to achieve representativeness for citizen panels and juries, that is, a Board that reflects Edmonton's demographics and diversity of opinion. The case of Portland, with an advisory committee comprised of both City staff and citizens called PIAC,

provides useful insights and resources for exploring this possibility <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/48951>. The City of Montreal has also piloted the use of borough-level citizen advisory councils. See **Appendices 3 and 4** for a summary of case studies.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- A. Develop and communicate a charter of roles, rights and responsibilities for planning.** This recommendation could be accomplished by, for example, establishing a "3 Rs" policy applying to rezoning and planning decisions, defining the roles, rights, and responsibilities for all participants. The charter could provide a guide for "rules of involvement"—a set of expectations for listening, information sharing, decision making, providing feedback, debating, and collaborating (Adapted from City of Vancouver Task Force).
- B. Establish an annual large-scale city-wide deliberative process for citizens on the top issue of the year, using both face-to-face and online involvement tools.** The top issue might be practical, focusing on implementation, such as routing new bike-lanes, or it could be broader and more values-based, such as developing principles for establishing the City's annual budget.

Challenge 2: In pursuing excellence in public involvement, Transportation Services is increasingly expected to employ a transparent and predictable budgeting process, but in some instances is not funded to do so.

“Life is not just a series of calculations and a sum total of statistics, it’s about experience, it’s about participation, it is something more complex and more interesting than what is obvious.”

-Daniel Liebeskind, Architect

Transportation Services must ensure adequate resourcing for public involvement and must build this into all project budgets. The Department has competing demands and priorities for public involvement. These demands come from community groups and citizens, and from administrators and elected representatives. Yet there are limits to the Department’s capacity to involve the public. Not all issues require the same level of public involvement. Sufficient resourcing cannot solely include funding dedicated to public involvement; it also requires support for overall organizational effectiveness and evaluation.

A senior engineer stated that even 10 years ago, public involvement was not a major area of activity in Transportation Services:

If you were to go back let’s say even a decade, not that long ago, a decade depending on how old you are that’s a short or a long time. But the City typically didn’t do a lot of what I’d call a large scale public involvement. It was more project based.

This has changed dramatically. Considerable resources are now devoted to public involvement activities. Our survey data revealed that 40% of respondents were now spending more than 10% of their time on public involvement, and 12% were spending more than 25% on public involvement. All but 15% of respondents were spending some time on public involvement. One engineer in the Department reported spending 75% of time on public-involvement activities.

Interviewee respondents emphasized the need for dedicated funding for public involvement and allocation of staff time for public-involvement activities. Funding is also required for media services in order to inform citizens about public-involvement activities. Contracting is required for specialized training for moderators and facilitators for public involvement. Respondents noted that in recent years, fewer specialists have been employed and Departmental staff have taken on the duties previously contracted out.

Challenge 2



Table 3 shows Department expenditures for public-involvement activities, for consultants, and communications activities from 2010-2012. These expenses were not for regular operations. Department staff are also working on public-involvement activities throughout the year, and we were not able to estimate these.

2010	\$498,990
2011	\$227,248
2012	\$453,043

Table 3. Expenditures for Public-Involvement Consultants and Contracted Services

These expenditures annually are estimated to be approximately 1/1000 of the total Transportation Service budget, which was \$488.7 million in 2013. Given the importance of this source of input into decisions that lead to citizen satisfaction, a higher total amount is justifiable on an annual basis. Transportation Services budgets for public involvement on a project-by-project basis. According to one manager, the public-involvement budget for capital projects can range from 1% to 20% of the project cost, depending on the perceived need and complexity. It may be desirable for transportation planners to make the budgeting process for public involvement more predictable.

Although the budget for public involvement is volatile in Transportation Services, staff indicate that appropriate attention and care are devoted to the implementation of public-involvement activities. **Table 4** shows staff responses to the question of how adequate resources

Inadequate Resources	3.3%
Weak Resources	10.7%
Fair Resources	25.6%
Good Resources	34.7%
Excellent Resources	11.6%
Not Sure	14.0%

Table 4. Staff Perception of the Adequacy of Public-Involvement Resources in Transportation Services

allocated for public involvement were. Almost half of staff respondents believed that resources were “good” or “excellent” (46%), suggesting that public-involvement activities that are approved are funded appropriately.

An open issue concerns quantifying the benefit generated from public involvement, which was noted by an interview respondent:

I think what would be really useful is to get...a sense of the value of the time spent in public involvement, in terms of...the feedback we get from citizens. What's the value in using that information to help in a positive way influence our decisions and outcomes?

Such a quantification of value does not exist at the moment. However, we argue that publishing performance indicators for the public should be the first step towards eventually allowing the City of Edmonton, at a corporate-wide level, to quantify the value of public involvement. This could be done by considering the benefits of public involvement that have been identified in the literature: increased legitimacy for decisions, better decision-making processes, reduced conflict, improved citizen capacity, and a strengthened culture of citizen involvement.



Recommendations

Challenge 2

- 1. Increase the overall budget dedicated to public involvement.** This can be accomplished over time as a process of reallocation of funds, as strategic priorities for public involvement are identified and it becomes clearer what the resource implications are for public involvement across the Department.
- 2. Dedicate a cadre of staff who will specialize and support public involvement throughout Transportation Services.** Staff specialists can be dedicated to managing public-involvement projects and to training other staff, developing a community of practice within Transportation Services, developing leaders in the area, and improving evaluation policies and practices.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- A. Develop a public-involvement process for reviewing new capital projects.** Such a review would be the first step in the project's potential for stimulating new roles for citizens in shaping the project.



Challenge 3: Transportation Services is struggling to combine excellence in engineering with excellence in public involvement.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

-Aristotle

The nature of the mandate of Transportation Services requires that a large proportion of its employees are either professional engineers or the technical and administrative staff who support the work of engineers. Among respondents to our survey questionnaire, 59% were engineers, senior engineers, and technologists. A further 10% of respondents were directors or branch managers, both positions tending to be filled by those who have trained in engineering or technology.

As a consequence of the mandate of Transportation Services and the professional competence and values of its staff, the core measures of success in the Department relate to achieving high-quality design and construction, managing budgets, meeting deadlines, and ensuring safety. Policy C513 adds an additional core measure of success — that of excellence in public involvement. Other departments in the City of Edmonton share this requirement, but Transportation Services bears a disproportionate responsibility in this regard, given the direct effects of its projects on the lives of citizens.

To this end, Transportation Services has invested significant time and resources into its public-involvement initiatives. Special resources exist within the Department to assist project leaders as they incorporate public involvement into major projects. Most Transportation Services participate to some degree in planning and carrying out public-involvement initiatives. However, a culture of excellent public involvement would be characterized by an understanding by all staff of the requirements, benefits, and implications of involving citizens in meaningful ways throughout the project

lifecycle. Within a culture of excellent public involvement, the principles and practices of involving citizens would be fully integrated into the Department's broadest strategies and goals. It would be reflected, too, in the Department's core measures of success.

Emphasizing public involvement can take time and cost money, and hence may be seen to stand at odds with existing core measures of success. At the very least, public involvement can be seen to require additional planning and funding that is not available or that might be diverted from existing project funds. As an interview respondent noted,

Some don't see the value or return on investment of spending money on public involvement; public involvement takes money from the project.

Other considerations that limit or detract from the creation of a culture of public involvement are as follows:

- Failure to integrate the allocation of time and resources to engineering requirements on the one hand and public-involvement requirements on the other.
- Uneven attempts to coordinate technical considerations in a project with the contributions made by citizens during the public involvement process.
- Low levels of funds provided for public involvement training, professional development, and capacity building for engineers and the technical and administrative staff who support the work of engineers
- Lack of effort to recognize individuals and teams for excellence in public involvement.

Challenge 3



The basic tension between the tradition of excellence in engineering and the new emphasis on excellence in public involvement is also reflected in the divergence in respondents' opinions about whether it is easy to incorporate citizen contributions into project decisions. Approximately 41% of survey participants disagreed with the statement, *In our projects, it is difficult to incorporate public input*. About 34% agreed with the statement, and 25% were neutral.

The overall balance or weighting of public involvement when compared with other factors was skewed towards technical considerations. An interview respondent stated,

I don't know about equal weight. We have to balance the public involvement and feedback with conflicting themes. There's no way we're ever going to make everybody happy. I would give more weight to the technical considerations and the dollars because we're responsible ultimately to the City as a whole. I would lean more towards giving a little bit [of] favour to the technical considerations and a little less favour to the public.

The tension between public involvement and technical considerations to which this respondent refers, and the means by which it is usually resolved, may be increased by a lack of clarity of the role that elected representatives play in identifying priorities. Another tension to be considered is between the emerging value of public

involvement in public organizations and the "guild" values of professional engineering. Sanctions exist within the profession, and more broadly in law, for deviating from practice standards. From the professional's perspective, care must be taken before adopting the advice or opinions of "lay" citizens. Efforts to rebalance engineering expertise and the value of public involvement may be restrained by requirements to address professional standards and even the risk of professional culpability in departing from established standards.

Interview respondents expressed the positive impacts of public involvement, but they also stated that integrating citizen contributions into the decision-making process for a Transportation Services project is difficult. They stated that that proposals by citizens may not be technically safe. Similarly, they stated that such proposals may not be relevant to the particular stage of the project lifecycle or the subjects being discussed. There may be little or no time or budget to implement such proposals. One interview respondent compared the values of engineers and of citizens, who for the respondent were represented or typified by planners:



Challenge 3



[E]ngineers are the same. We defend our designs, they defend their urban plans. It's a different skill set and a different mindset. So again, I'm not saying that you couldn't have a planner or couldn't have an engineer, but you have to have that mindset that you want to actually capture what the public concerns are and deal with that as opposed to try to attach yourself to any particular design or any particular plan. I brought through a couple of engineers who worked here for five or six months, and they said I can't do this because you put them in public meetings and they just don't do well period. You have to have a different attitude and a different mindset when you're out there in the public, and very good engineers. If you don't like doing that, if you don't like being in the public, and you don't like having to sit there and explain and consider other options the public might bring up you're going to have a real tough time being part of the program.

The significance of such problems was weighted differently by interview respondents. For example, one interview respondent suggested that having a public-involvement professional associated with a project made the difference. In terms of the time

required to capture, assess, and use citizen contributions, the respondent stated:

The one thing that I find the hardest on the plans that we're working on internally is actually documenting and analyzing the feedback that we get. Because it takes a fair bit of time. You get all of these survey forms, whether they're electronic or hardcopy, and then you have to do something with them and ultimately summarize them and figure out what to do in terms of balancing that with the technical aspect. So oftentimes having a public-involvement person helps a lot because they can digest that information and come up with some of the key themes. It's more of a summary for us that then helps to ease up on our workload.

In summary, some respondents cited the problems, tensions, and difficulties of public involvement as evidence that public involvement often provided only limited benefits for a project. If public involvement was of value, according to this argument, it was not for engineering purposes. On the other hand, other interview respondents argued that citizen contributions can beneficially and directly inform design considerations, although not always. Acquiring high-quality contributions from citizens depends to some extent on the public-involvement competence of staff.



Recommendations

Challenge 3

- 1 Review and update job descriptions and ensure that duties in public involvement are assessed as a part of performance.** Such duties should include the requirement to document and share learning about the effectiveness of public involvement.
- 2 Develop new public-involvement standards that are specific to the context of Transportation Services.** These standards would seek a level of excellence in relation to public involvement in complex technical areas and the communication of technical problems and topics to citizens. Such standards would be of interest and use in other City of Edmonton Departments and could be the basis for dissemination and collaboration activities with professional groups such as the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).
- 3 Ensure that citizens and Transportation Services staff have distinct roles and expertise in the public-involvement process.** This could be done through developing a guide or visual for use during public-involvement events. It could also be done by providing different examples to staff about the kind of contributions that citizens are in the best position to provide. Examples might include community- or geographic-specific knowledge, expression of citizen values, and statements of priorities and preferences.
- 4 Review the roles and responsibilities of external contractors.** Find a balance between using external public-involvement expertise and building internal skills, knowledge and capacity.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

A. With the Office of Public Engagement and the Centre for Public Involvement, establish an award of excellence in public involvement for engineers or students.

See an example from New Zealand: http://nzeeawards.org.nz/2014/Forms/NZEEA_EntryJudgingCriteria_Community-Engagement-2014.pdf The award could be the basis for developing a set of best practices for public involvement in engineering. A roundtable session featuring the work of award winners could be held as part of a developing community of practice.

B. Add corporate-wide evaluation of public involvement to the mandate of the Office of Public Engagement

Performance indicators will be the key to developing a common understanding between the City of Edmonton and citizens as to how well public-involvement is being carried out. The Office has the corporate-wide mandate that would enable it to carry the evaluation function as a permanent part of its portfolio.

Challenge 4: A culture of learning and innovation in the practice of public involvement has yet to be fully developed in Transportation Services.

“Management is about arranging and telling. Leadership is about nurturing and enhancing.”

-Tom Peters, Management Consultant and Author

Achieving excellence in public involvement requires departmental commitment and leadership. Public involvement is a rapidly evolving field in which core ideas and practices are revisited, adapted, and refined. Learning and innovation in public involvement are required to ensure that staff are contributing to the level of excellence.

Survey respondents collectively rated their personal knowledge and skills in public involvement midway between “fair” and “good” (Mean = 3.60/5). Forty-six percent indicated “good” knowledge and skills, with 39% indicating “fair,” and 6% choosing “weak.” Only 4% of respondents self-assessed their knowledge and skills at the level of “excellent.” The 3.6/5 mean response is below the nominal standard of “good” (4.0/5).

Only 41% of survey respondents stated that they have benefited from professional development or training opportunities in public involvement. Those who have benefited in this way offered a limited assessment of the opportunities available. The mean response was 3.46/5, which is about midway between “fair” and “good.” As shown in **Table 5**, only 4% of survey respondents who participated in professional development opportunities rated them as excellent. Of note, an orientation course in public involvement was offered some years ago at the corporate level, but it was cancelled in favour of a new approach to public involvement.

Inadequate	2%
Weak	8%
Fair	36%
Good	50%
Excellent	4%

Table 5: Assessment of professional-development or training opportunities available in public involvement

An interview respondent commented on the task of moderating discussion tables at an open house:

We had a plan and there were a lot internal meetings to devise a strategy around how we were going to facilitate those processes and who would lead. And we separated out the 12 to 15 citizens at different tables, and we all took responsibility for facilitating discussions at tables. We had a couple of techs at one and then an engineer at another, and we shared the burden and load. But for the most part it was done by sink or swim. We threw people into these experiences. I mean there was no formal training. [We had to] learn on the fly.

To respond to such expressions of need, informal and semi-structured learning opportunities are of great importance for organizational learning. They allow workgroups and individual staff to learn from the successes and challenges of others. Besides such learning opportunities, the Department and the City have manuals, guidelines, and other tools available for use in designing and carrying out public-involvement initiatives. However, staff in Transportation Services appeared to be largely unaware of the existence of these tools. About 80% of respondents indicated they were “not sure” whether such tools existed and another 16% indicated that they had no knowledge of the tools.

Challenge 4



In rapidly developing areas of knowledge and practice, collegial sharing is often at the centre of organizational learning. Sharing does occur within Transportation Services but not at an optimal level. Survey respondents moderately disagreed with the statement that, *We share information between workgroups in the department about managing public engagement* (3.89/7). About 27% disagreed with this statement, and about 47% expressed a neutral position. The significant combined disagree and neutral responses comprise nearly three-quarters of responses. Even with the ambiguity of the large percentage of neutral responses, it is clear that much more sharing of practice within the Department is possible and desirable.

Collegial sharing can also occur across departments. Survey respondents moderately disagreed, on average, with the statement that, *Our department shares information with other departments about how to conduct public engagement* (3.82/7). However, only 19% of respondents agreed with this statement, and about 56% expressed a neutral position. This result suggests that there might be no firmly established means

or venues for interdepartmental sharing about public involvement practices and current knowledge. For their part, interview respondents suggested that they would benefit from feedback on their public involvement practices and from the availability of guidelines for practice, including comparable practices from other cities.

Learning is an important part of an effort to improve and sustain excellence in public involvement. However, special attention should be paid to aggregating and transferring practice-generated knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Many organizations have benefited by establishing a community of practice, championed by management and established with formal supports and sustained through the interest and energy of staff. We received casual reports that a **community of practice** in public involvement existed but we had difficulty confirming meaningful and regular activities of this kind. Yet a formal community of practice is well suited to the area of public involvement, given the burgeoning nature of the field in which a great deal of useable knowledge has not been formalized.



Recommendations

Challenge 4

- 1 Create a public-involvement learning plan for Transportation Services.** The plan should identify the key skills needed by staff and should make reference to the internal and external opportunities for learning. The plan should have a budget and departmental resources for organizational learning. Create an innovation fund that staff can apply to use for testing and piloting new or adapted public involvement methods.
- 2 Offer leadership training to project managers to support excellence in public involvement.** This could be accomplished through the creation of a leadership module or short course to examine the changing nature of public administration in a context of rising citizen expectations. The emphasis would be on fostering new skills for encouraging diversity, defining new roles for citizens and staff members, building structures and process for collaboration, focusing on common purpose, supporting a creative and healthy civic society, and supporting a long-term vision for public involvement in the Department.
- 3 Develop a departmental campaign designed to educate and train staff in the principles and practices of excellent public involvement.** Part of the campaign could include creating incentives for recognizing excellent public involvement.
- 4 Ensure that one or more staff members are available within the Department to provide leadership on skill development, best practices, and innovation.** Learning should be included in job descriptions and performance evaluations.
- 5 Establish a community of practice (COP), with the purpose of collegially sharing experience and knowledge in public involvement.** The COP should possess adequate expert, administrative, and budget resources. Create online and physical archive tools to allow the COP, and workgroups, to retain, share, and learn from successes and challenges of others. Ensure that participation in the COP is included in job descriptions and assessed in performance evaluations.
- 6 Offer learning opportunities to citizens.** Learning resources, tools, modules, and short courses for citizens and community groups could be created to allow for a deeper public understanding and knowledge of the Transportation Services planning process and the contextual factors and challenges that influence communities. Learning opportunities for citizens would also provide new opportunities for staff to exchange views with communities. Potential partners for creating and offering learning opportunities would include the City of Edmonton Planning Academy, the Centre for Public Involvement, and the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. See [Appendix 5](#) for examples.
- 7 Support training in public involvement for engineering students.** Establish a collaboration between the University of Alberta Faculty of Engineering and the City of Edmonton, with coordination by the Centre for Public Involvement. The purpose would be to encourage engineering education to include principles and practices for public involvement.
- 8 Create a Digital Engagement strategy and plan for communications and engagement projects.** Create organizational ties to enable the use of open data and data analytics.

Recommendations: Challenge 4



Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

A. Increase civic literacy and civic education through such methods as citizen academies.

The goal for the learning would be to encourage citizens to understand the complexities, challenges and opportunities of involvement of decision-making in relation to key community issues. Outcomes of the learning would be high-quality feedback from citizens in subsequent public involvement activities. See **Appendix 5** for examples from across Canada

B. Create reporting tools and templates for sharing knowledge corporate-wide.

A first step might be to summarize the public involvement case studies developed for this report, using analytical categories such as context and catalyst, planning, engagement methods, impact, evaluation, and learning. A convenient format could consist of a report filled out as an online survey, with information about a completed public-involvement project entered and submitted into the database.



Challenge 5: Transportation Services is falling behind in its capacity to evaluate its public-involvement initiatives.

“Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of intelligent effort.”

-John Ruskin

Evaluation is critical to the success of public involvement in the long run. Evaluation can contribute to incremental progress in quality improvement of practices. Constructive evaluation also builds public trust in the public-involvement process by demonstrating a strong commitment to learning, improvement, and excellence. However, assessing the effectiveness of public-involvement efforts is not commonly undertaken in practice, as a scholar in the area notes in an examination of public-involvement practices in public organizations in the U.S.:

At present, there exist no systematic comparisons of citizen participation processes and methods, despite the fact that agency officials are increasingly required to engage the public.

(Nabatchi 2012, icma.org/Documents/Document/Document/303516).

The lack of attention to evaluation follows from the multi-dimensionality of public involvement as a concept. Evaluation relies on a clear determination of what quality means and how it should be measured. In addition, public involvement tends to take in many stakeholders with varying interests and concern, and the context for each public-involvement initiative differs significantly.

A large pool of criteria exists for measuring the two overarching dimensions of the *fairness* of public involvement processes and the *competence* associated with the design and execution of public-involvement projects. These measures are categorized into process and outcome criteria.

Process criteria include representativeness, transparency or perceived openness, process flexibility, independence, resource accessibility, task definition, structured decision making, early involvement, cost-effectiveness, convenience, satisfaction. *Outcome* criteria include influence on decisions and policies, impact on public trust, and staff and public awareness of and attitudes towards public-involvement practices (Rowe & Frewer 2000, “Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation.” *Science, technology & human values* 25, 1: 3-29). The inherent challenges of measurement in a social context require data collection for measuring such criteria to be planned at the early stages of a public involvement project.

Citizens with varying interests and expectations complicate the identification of the entire set of effectiveness criteria. However, in addition to the inclusion of some standard criteria, a survey of citizens and stakeholders can help to add additional relevant criteria and/or finalize the criteria chosen for a given project.

Background: The two citations on this page are an exception to the policy of not burdening the report with citations — there are included because of their usefulness and impact.



Challenge 5



This study can be an important first step towards improving evaluation of public involvement. We asked respondents in Transportation Services about their agreement/disagreement with this statement, *We do not measure the effectiveness of our public involvement activities*. The average response to this question was neutral (4.0/7). As shown in **Table 6**, an approximately equal percentage of people agreed (33.8%), disagreed (30.6%), or were neutral (35.5%). This mixture of opinion suggests that measuring effectiveness may not be receiving the attention it deserves and that there is an overall lack of consensus on whether it is undertaken.

The need for a better understanding of how the effectiveness of public involvement may be measured was mentioned in one of the interviews:

When do we and when can we say independently outside of the expectations of City Council that we have effectively engaged the majority of the public? To me that's another big question that we really need to talk about, because there's a perspective out there that you may have done better. But you still haven't quite done good enough, you haven't quite got to enough people, or you haven't really represented the people you should've engaged.

The *Involving Edmonton* handbook suggests that staff develop an evaluation plan as part of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP). Based on our review of public-involvement reports we concluded that inadequate attention was given to evaluation of the effectiveness of public involvement. In fact, we found few clear success indicators coupled with reports assessing whether the indicators had been met, along with intervening variables that might have influenced performance.

Strongly Disagree	0%
Disagree	16.5%
Moderately Disagree	14.1%
Neutral	35.5%
Moderately Agree	19.8%
Agree	13.2%
Strongly Agree	0.8%

Table 6. Agreement/Disagreement with the statement, "We do not measure the effectiveness of our public involvement activities."



Recommendations

Challenge 5

- 1 Create a multi-year public-involvement evaluation and performance-measurement framework.** Report annually or biannually to the public via the citizen dashboard. Include narratives of the history and assessment of public-involvement processes.
- 2 Determine key public-involvement success indicators, identify procedures for choosing success criteria in consultation with citizens, and choose appropriate data-collection methods.** While some success indicators can be considered as standard elements for all public-involvement projects, others can be chosen through consultation with citizens.
- 3 Ask staff and contractors to report on how citizen contributions from public-involvement activities were used, why, and why not.** Templates can be developed to standardize these feedback mechanisms across projects. See **Appendix 6** for some current City of Edmonton examples.
- 4 Communicate success indicators in public involvement.** These would be included and reported on the City of Edmonton's online Dashboard on Transportation Services.
- 5 Create metrics for demonstrating to citizens the likelihood that citizen contributions will influence decision-making and to what extent.** Present such metrics at the beginning and end of a public-involvement initiative.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- A. Implement an annual report card on public involvement.** Convene citizens, community groups, staff and administrators, and elected representatives to establish corporate-wide indicators of excellence and an evaluation framework. Report publicly on an annual basis on the work being done by the City of Edmonton to advance public involvement. This could also include development of involvement or democratic participation measures in the Citizen Dashboard.
- B. Propose a Transportation Services workgroup or team be awarded a corporate-wide award for their accomplishments in public involvement.** An example of such an award would be the City Manager's award.
- C. Host a corporate-wide annual meeting on evaluation methods and results from the preceding year.** Such a meeting would contribute to cross-departmental sharing of expertise.
- D. Appoint a staff member who would coordinate evaluation efforts in the Department with the Office of Public Engagement.** This would benefit both the Office in its efforts to improve its leadership across the City of Edmonton and contribute to a corporate-wide community of practice in evaluation.

Challenge 6: In its public-involvement initiatives, Transportation Services is contending with the management problems of decision lock-in, hang time, participant churn, and misaligned expectations.

“Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them.”

-Paul Hawken, Environmentalist and Author

The problems we identify in this challenge arise out of a particular characteristic of the context of Transportation Services. That characteristic is the long lifecycle of most Transportation Services projects. Design and construction projects can extend over many years. The long lifecycle creates distinctive management problems associated with the effective practice of public involvement. Before considering these problems in detail, we want to first describe their interrelations, by way of the stages of the project lifecycle.

Figure 2 describes the project lifecycle as depicted in Transportation Services and City of Edmonton documents. The stages are used for communication with citizens to indicate how far along a project is. The lifecycle has five stages, forming together the Project Stage Indicator Framework. For a given project, public involvement activities may be carried out at one or more of the five stages. However, most public involvement occurs at the Concept and Design stages.

Problems with managing public involvement arise from variations in how and when the stages of the project proceed. For example, the five stages of a project may vary in length of time, with one project having a long period of time devoted to the Strategy and Concept stages while another devotes a longer period of time to the Design stage. In addition, the stages are not always distinct, with the Build stage beginning before Design is complete. There can be gaps of time between stages, sometimes extending for several years. These variations in the length and progression of the stages are “normal

business” for Transportation Services, because projects are by their nature complex, dependent on changing technologies and economic conditions, and subject to shifts in political decision-making. For the management of public-involvement activities, four main problems arise, which we discuss in turn.

Decision Lock-In

Citizens who join a public-involvement initiative at one of the later stages in the project lifecycle may want to revisit decisions made at an earlier stage. Citizens who have become active in public involvement at the Design stage, for example, may want to reconsider the decisions already made in the Concept stage. When this happens, the problem of *decision lock-in* arises. Citizens who join the public-involvement process can become disillusioned because they feel their contributions have not been considered. They may seek to undermine or bypass public-involvement initiatives. Public distrust and even hostility may become evident.

Interview respondents suggested that it is important to continually assess the perspectives of key individuals and groups and ensure their commitment throughout the duration of a project. They also stated that it would be desirable to have a single staff member possessing skills and knowledge of the technical aspects of a project, as well as community consensus building, manage the public-involvement process, from Strategy to Operation. Regardless of staffing arrangements, interviewee respondents stated that management of public involvement must extend to the end of the project. It must provide citizens with feedback on how their contributions have been incorporated into final decisions.

The certainty that stems from decision lock-in is necessary for project progress; but it also reduces the flexibility for changes along the way. After preliminary



Figure 2. Stages in the Lifecycle of a Transportation Services Project

Challenge 6



engineering and concept approval, a large portion of a budget for a capital project is set. Establishment of the budget to build a capital project provides a level of certainty that the project will be realized in some form. The scope of public involvement necessarily changes as a project moves forward and decisions are taken, but citizens consulted later in the process often want to revisit decisions already taken. As one manager in the Department noted:

[For] bigger scale projects, where we're actually building new roadways or widening, for example, we'll hold an Open House on [a plan that is] 60% to 100% completed . . . to let the public know, and once again see if they have any major comments, which we mostly likely won't follow.

At this stage, the general project is already understood to be a “go,” the budget is locked-in, and the main design elements are complete. The same manager noted that with rehabilitation projects, funds are typically limited, “also we can't add anything extra...that the public's asking for.”

The scope of public consultation usually becomes more circumscribed as the successive project stages are completed. For example, after the Design stage, the purpose of public involvement will be to inform citizens about the broad directions of the project, although citizens may be invited to provide feedback about particular design elements, such as aesthetic choices for LRT stations, streetscape improvements, and landscaping.

Hang Time

The entire lifecycle of a Transportation Services project may span just six months. In this case, changing perceptions, shifting economic conditions, and fading memories may present no problem. In other cases, a project lifecycle may span more than 30 years, as in the case of the Mill Woods LRT expansion. For that project, the Strategy and Concept stages took place in the mid-1970s, followed by an extended hiatus, after which the Design stage, complete with budget, was approved in 2014. These variations in timing result in the problem

of hang time, which becomes evident in at least three difficulties.

The first difficulty is motivating citizens to provide input early in the project lifecycle, that is, the Strategy and Concept stages. Foundational changes in the project are possible during these stages, but many citizens cannot see the value of their participation when the outcome is many years out. An interview respondent in the Department describes a conversational scenario between staff and a citizen:

The first question asked is, “Are we building this?” “No.” “Oh, well, then I'm not interested. When are you going to build it?” “Well, maybe 15 to 20 years.” “I'll be moved by that time, so I don't care.” Then they leave.

Another respondent stated,

[A] lot of our concept planning projects don't have a specific construction schedule. It's really hard to motivate people to get engaged and involved. If it's construction and they know it's imminent and something's going to happen soon, then they show up.

The second difficulty created by hang time is that later in the lifecycle when detailed plans are released, citizen interest is increased but the key design decisions may well have already been made. Revisions at this stage can be costly. However, citizens tend to focus on such decisions because the outcome will be sooner than was the case in an earlier stage. An interview respondent, a transportation engineer, stated,

When it's a year or two years away a lot of people just don't show up. And then as we get down into preliminary engineering we hear a lot [of], “Well, when did you decide this?” “Two years [ago].” All of a sudden when people see the maps in the paper and [they think], “Holy cow, this is near my area.” Now they start showing up. And you wish some of these people [with] good ideas would've showed up at an earlier phase, maybe at the Concept or Strategy stage, but they show up when it's more immediate to them. A challenge is to try to get early involvement.

Challenge 6



The third difficulty that arises from the problem of hang time is that public attitudes towards a project are subject to change over time because of shifting economic or social conditions. In addition, the project parameters may alter over the course of a project due to similar shifts in conditions.

Participant Churn

A phenomenon related to hang time is participant churn. Citizens typically participate at different stages in a project's lifecycle. As a consequence, the views of those ultimately affected by decisions made during the Design phase may be very different from the views of those who were consulted at the Concept phase. Previously active citizens may have left the affected neighbourhood or leadership of community groups may have changed. New leaders bring different priorities and mandates related to particular projects. If a project's hang time is more than, say, five years, participant churn is inevitable.

Turnover of citizen participants was mentioned by an interview respondent who stated,

It's always a challenge in communities to have a constant [representation] of people. The turnover in the communities is high. So you get community leagues, they get a different set of people every year sometimes and I've got a four- or five-year project. Actually, if you start from strategic level to finishing we're talking eight, ten years. So I think you have to continually test the opinions of those particular stakeholder groups and make sure that throughout the course of the project that they're still onboard I guess. And part of that is making sure that they're informed.

Participant churn is not associated only with citizen participants. Through the stages of a project lifecycle, we can expect participant churn of the following: engineers, planners, administrators, elected representatives, and stakeholder groups.

Misaligned Expectations

When citizens learn at later stages in the lifecycle that they cannot change the main design elements of a project because of decision lock-in, they may feel dissonance because they realize that their expectation of strong influence in the design was not warranted. Had the same citizens been present at the Concept stage, they might have had a greater influence. The management problem of *misaligned expectations* sets in.

We point to two types of misaligned expectations. One concerns the timing of public involvement and the other the scope of public involvement. In terms of the misaligned expectations about timing, we have touched on this above in our discussion of decision lock-in, hang time, and participant churn. In terms of misaligned expectations about the scope of public involvement, citizens may expect broad scope for changes in a project, while the public-involvement process is designed for a much narrower scope. As one interview respondent noted,

When we go and engage the public, it's raising expectations about what they might be able to participate in, and really it's mostly just public information sharing.



Challenge 6



Another respondent commented,

So we're in a little bit of a tight spot in our group. A lot of the times when we do go out for public involvement it's more as information sharing to let them know what we're building, and, of course, it's never taken that way.

Such misaligned expectations match the observations in the City Auditor's *Public Involvement Audit* (2014). The City Auditor observes,

[P]ublic involvement for some major capital projects takes the form of conveying information, rather than inviting a two-way exchange of information... There is a need in any municipal government to align the policies and practices of public involvement with the expectations held by citizens and elected representatives. Contradictions exist between the expected nature and outcomes of public engagement and what actually takes place (Public Involvement Audit, May 22, 2014, 17).

The City Auditor's Report on Public Involvement (2014) identifies other areas in which the expectations of elected representatives for public involvement are not fully aligned with City of Edmonton policy, in particular, Policy C513 and the *Involving Edmonton* handbook, or with public expectations (*Public Engagement Audit* 2014, 3-ff). The most significant issue, other than misalignment of the public-involvement timeline with the project-management timeline, appears to relate to expectations of the scope of public involvement. City Council and administration expect public involvement to be used in instances in which public input can provide the greatest added value to a project, and public involvement is not envisioned for all projects.

Policy C513 suggests judicious application of public involvement, stating “[p]ublic involvement processes will be designed to involve the appropriate people at the appropriate time in the appropriate way through the completion and communication of a public engagement

plan for all processes” (C513, 1). Similarly, the *Guide for Project Managers* (City of Edmonton, 2010), states “Public Involvement is pursued where there is a meaningful and explicit role for the public to add value to decision-making” (p. 1).

As a project proceeds through its lifecycle, it is critical to manage “hand-offs” well within the department. An example of how hand-offs can create problems is provided by one of the professionals we interviewed,

I think what I'd like to have addressed is how the Transportation Planning group that does the overall Concept plan and is able to address the public concerns, how it can be easily passed onto us [Roads Department], because right now there is a large disconnect. When we go to the public we have to say, “The sidewalk's here because this other group told us it was going to be.” There's a large amount of disconnect when we go out to the public, we don't have the freedom to be able to change things because it was already decided on previously.

In terms of the frequency of misaligned expectations, we observed that problems from misaligned expectations arose in five of our nine cases studies. In four of these cases, the issues were significant enough to generate press coverage. This does not mean that more than half of the all projects in the department involve misaligned expectations. We selected cases to cover both controversial and non-controversial projects, and to cover cases dealing with different constituencies, including individual citizens, various communities, businesses, and other organizations. Nevertheless, when we take into consideration the total number of major projects conducted in recent years relative to the number of projects covered in our case studies, it is clear that misaligned expectations occur periodically, and “citizen pushback” associated with misaligned expectations occurred at least once or twice a year in the recent past.

Recommendations

Challenge 6

- 1 Specify priorities for public involvement by creating departmental guidelines to support engagement planning for different types of transportation projects across project lifecycles.** Not all Transportation Services projects require the same level of public involvement. Specifying which projects will require more in-depth public-involvement projects will allow for more predictable resource allocation and for the management of citizen expectations.
- 2 Develop procedures in Transportation Services to guide the development, review, and approval of all Public Involvement Plans (PIPS).** Such a process would include defining factors and circumstances that require the elevation of approval levels within the Department. It would also define procedures and expectations for progress and evaluation of reports on public involvement projects. In particular, it may be desirable to designate authority to a staff with engagement expertise to review and alter scopes of PIPs and develop Transportation Services departmental procedures to guide the development, review and approval of Public Engagement Plans (PIPS).
- 3 Identify projects that would benefit from a designated Transportation Services staff or team to remain with those projects over the entire lifecycle.** This person or team would be responsible for ensuring that handoffs and updates are carried out seamlessly over the course of the project.
- 4 Enable information sharing and tracking as part of an effort to maintain an institutional memory of public-involvement processes over project lifecycles.** Such a record could include transparent and prominent records of why particular decisions were made at each stage, recognizing input from citizens, and highlighting physical and logistical constraints. This could include electronic and physical templates.
- 5 Establish sunset clauses or other terms or conditions that lead to a mandatory process review for projects.** This would help ensure public-involvement work does not become outdated when implementation takes place. For example, if public involvement was done in the Concept phase and the project does not reach the Construction stage within five years, public involvement would need to be revisited and updated.
- 6 Develop and test new, creative, and innovative means to engage citizens in the Strategy and Concept stages.** One example of this would be to design an interactive tool or game to support citizen involvement and understanding. A board game was developed by TransLink in B.C to involve citizens in planning future development of the system.

Recommendations: Challenge 6

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- A. Assign a City of Edmonton staff member with expertise in public involvement to create dedicated, customized public involvement plan (PIP) forms in collaboration with Transportation Services.** The PIP for Transportation Services would have potentially distinctive requirements in terms of the scope, role of technical information and knowledge, and outcomes for public-involvement initiatives.
- B. Redefine the City of Edmonton's relationship to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues.** This can be done by strategically supporting public-involvement activities that can be held under the auspices of the community leagues, as appropriate.
- C. Ensure clear accountability as defined in City of Edmonton Administrative Procedure A1448.** This procedure indicates that all PIPs must be tested with a small selection of stakeholders or a sample of the public prior to finalization. It also refers to the role of the Deputy City Manager, a position that no longer exists.
- D. Use and promote the Project Stage Indicator for Public involvement.** The Project Stage Indicator provides a unified visual and functional approach across the City of Edmonton departments, helping decision makers in various branches and departments communicate the stage of development of a project to citizens. None of the eleven other cities we examined has a similarly intuitive and consistent unified framework for communicating the stages of a project's lifecycle. The suggestion here is to use this indicator as a way to record and remember in subsequent stages the types and information learned from public involvement done in earlier stages.
- E. Use opportunities such as post-election City Council orientation sessions to ensure that information is shared regarding key public-involvement events.** This would help to develop a dialogue among elected representatives and administrators in an effort to reduce misaligned expectations about the timing and scope for public-involvement projects.

Challenge 7: In its public-involvement initiatives, Transportation Services is not always able to acquire a balance and range of public perspectives.

“The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.”

-Alexis de Tocqueville

Project leaders necessarily must interpret and assess public input to provide a balance and range of perspectives to decision makers. Indeed, Policy C513 specifies that

a balance and range of public perspectives will be provided to decision makers for consideration in the decision process.

Acquiring such a balance and range of perspectives is a standard of practice that, by policy, must be demonstrated in designing and implementing all public involvement processes. However, it is desirable to reduce the amount of interpretation and assessment. This can be accomplished by seeking to optimize the diversity, range and clarity of public contributions. Optimization reduces the need for inference and provides a stronger informational and data foundation upon which to conduct assessment. Seeking representativeness further reduces inference, although acquiring truly representative input requires sophisticated approaches and special skills.

Three general practices promote the acquisition of a balance and range of public perspectives:

- Ensure that a diverse population of affected citizens and stakeholders is identified and encouraged to provide input;
- Identify and remove systemic barriers to participation for excluded groups and those whose voices are routinely underrepresented;
- Optimize the quality of input.

These best practices are not easily realized. Transportation Services project leaders actively embrace all three but to a greater or lesser extent and with mixed results. Selected improvements to existing practice and practice innovation should result in better public input, analysis, and reporting.

Reaching a Diverse Population

Many citizens and stakeholder groups are alert to and engage in public-involvement opportunities. However, some citizens and communities are neither alert nor engaged. Distance from political and policy discourse is a matter of choice for some. Many others are unaware of opportunities or insufficiently informed about how their interests are affected by emerging policy and project initiatives. Their lack of involvement skews participation and complicates efforts to meet C513’s standards of practice requirements.

We found that Transportation Services staff make significant efforts to encourage the public to provide project-related input. Our survey responses reveal that a variety of communication forms is used, ranging from top-listed road signs (62% of respondents said they used this method), press releases and public relations (56%), emails (58%), flyers (51%), advertising in print media (48%), to bottom-listed advertising on TV and radio (18%). Other methods, such as direct mail (43%), social media (42%), and advertising and promotions on the Web (47%), are also used with fair frequency. By these methods many citizens will be informed in some fashion about public-involvement activities initiatives.

However, survey results also show that Transportation Services respondents were non-committal about the statement that, *Most citizens are aware of the possibility of participating* (5.05/7, where 4=Neutral and 5=Moderately Agree). These responses suggest that there is room to improve public awareness about opportunities to provide input, and that at least part of the solution resides with the selection of communication modes used by the Department.

Transportation Services staff target their communications to the broad public and to specific cohorts to to inform affected citizens about opportunities for public involvement. The following cohorts are heavily emphasized: general citizens (85%), businesses (50%), and community leagues (53%). Other cohorts are much less targeted.

Challenge 7



A natural concern with such a broad focus is that important stakeholders and affected segments of the public may be unaware of involvement opportunities. Our survey data reveal that not all relevant stakeholders are likely to be engaged.

Departmental professionals were non-committal about the statement, *Our public-involvement activities often do not engage all relevant stakeholders* (3.62/7). A closer look at this response indicates that 26.5% of respondents agreed with this statement in different degrees and 30.6% of them were neutral.

We possess no empirical data revealing how much the communications focus on the general public, businesses, and community leagues affects these results. However, in-depth interview commentary suggests that partnering with community-league organizations is effective in reaching elements of the local citizenry but not all, and perhaps especially not systemically excluded cohorts. Communications targeted at the general public undoubtedly penetrate so far. Tapping into discrete social networks that exist apart from the business community and community leagues to more fully communicate involvement opportunities appears to be important.

Interview respondents expressed concerns over their periodic inability to attract an adequate turnout to public involvement events. There is value in high turnout and in a high response rate to general surveys. High turnout and high response levels can increase the probability that officials are exposed to diverse public perspectives. High turnout usually reflects a combination of heightened public awareness, interest, and mobilization that should elicit a broader range of opinion and interest. There are also political and event “theatrical” reasons for positively viewing and seeking to achieve high turnout and participation. Nonetheless, diversity and range of opinion are not necessarily affected by high turnout and high response rates, and representativeness certainly cannot be assumed to result. Seeking to maximize high turnout may actually result in lowering the ability of officials to acquire diverse and balanced input, a counterintuitive and unwelcome result. High turnout can obscure input from smaller and underrepresented cohorts and promote the tyranny of sheer numbers and of the loudest. These

circumstances may undermine diversity and balance of opinion.

Given the virtues of high turnout it seems best for officials to pursue the objective. Formally structured efforts to acquire truly representative public input can further reduce requirements to infer balance and diversity and can sharpen analysis. Officials can use representative sampling methodologies to select participants for workgroups, consultative meetings, citizen juries and forums, and surveys. Representative sample methods promote acquisition of diverse and broad input and promote input that is most likely to hew closely to the affected population’s perspectives. Representative sampling techniques, such as stratified sampling, may be too involved for run-of-the-mill involvement practice, but some consideration of representativeness is important. At the very least, staff should be able to acquire information on the basic social composition of communities and ideally about the structure of social networks and groups. This information should enhance understanding of who participates and who does not at open forums, group meetings, stakeholder involvement groups, and other more intimate gatherings that the Department convenes.

Removing Barriers

In certain circumstances efforts beyond identification of affected publics are necessary. Groups of citizens may face systemic barriers to participation. C513 acknowledges as much: “where appropriate, processes [should be] used to include the public who need support to participate.” Conditions such as lack of mobility, temporal availability, poverty, low proficiency in English, distrust in or alienation from the political system, alternative cultural understandings of governance and citizenship, cultural prohibitions, and the ennui of youth can confound efforts to obtain input from segments of the public. Our research reveals that Transportation Services is attentive to mobility barriers and addresses these through proper selection of venues. Staff routinely schedules involvement events at convenient times. Interpreters are employed in instances of anticipated need. What is not clear is whether the department consistently addresses the more difficult social and cultural barriers.

Challenge 7



Cultural knowledge of the excluded groups is frequently beyond the understanding and skills of project leaders and staff. Expecting staff to obtain such knowledge is probably unrealistic. Yet, to be successful in obtaining input from frequently excluded groups, cultural and social barriers must be appreciated and lowered. The surest ways to bridge cultural and social barriers is to acquire assistance from those who do understand these barriers and who can communicate with those who are excluded or whose voices are routinely underrepresented. This is done, if not with desired frequency. It is nevertheless also important for project leaders and others involved in receiving and analyzing inputs to understand the challenges of cross-cultural communications, possess knowledge of how to work with those who do possess cultural understandings, and have sufficient appreciation and skill to comprehend input. This requires diligence and patience.

Optimizing Inputs

Department staff are challenged in three principal ways in efforts to optimize quality input. First, they must choose appropriate approaches and tools. Second, they must competently employ these approaches and tools. This includes addressing inherent limitations and common problems associated with the approaches and tools of choice. Third, they must accurately capture and interpret results.

Our survey results indicate that Transportation Services staff have more experience with some public-involvement approaches than with others. Open Houses (69%) are most frequently used. Other frequently used approaches include Meetings with Stakeholders (63%), Meetings with Community Groups (54%), Collecting Surveys at Public Meetings (47%), Workshops (44%), Collecting Surveys Online (42%), Individual Interviews (31%), and Public Hearings at Council (21%). It is unclear whether use of Social Media (42%) serves as a means of soliciting participation, as a venue for acquiring citizen input, or both.



Challenge 7



Many interviewees find open houses valuable. Open houses reportedly achieve several things: less public surprise at construction, greater community understanding of a project, fewer public approaches to council members, and better departmental contact information available to the public. The focus is heavy on information provision and although information exchange occurs, open houses are reported to have limitations for consultation purposes and involved participation, and may elicit rushed and visceral (as opposed to reflective) contributions from citizens.

Further, there is relatively limited capacity to control for representativeness. We could not determine the extent to which open houses are used in combination with other approaches. This obviously occurs but we are left with the impression that in many instances open houses are a primary or sole involvement approach. The *Public Involvement Audit* (22 May 2014) suggested that open houses are the “default method” used in some City of Edmonton departments and that “there may be more appropriate methods” (p. i). In these instances, involvement efforts are likely to be suboptimal if the purpose is acquire a range and balance of citizen perspectives.

A distinction can be made between *open houses* on the one hand and, on the other, *public forums* and *town halls*, or similar open-invitation approaches in which a public exchange of views is featured. Our survey data did not identify public forums and town halls separately, but responses recorded for stakeholder and community group meetings suggest that open forums in which citizens provide officials with direct input on projects

and initiatives are fairly common. However, they do not appear to be especially popular with staff, and this is especially the case with public forums and town halls. Some interview respondents said that they found public forums and town halls flawed as approaches to capture balanced and diverse public input. Dominant speakers can express a narrow spectrum of opinion and owing to their dominance exclude or reduce expression of other perspectives. “Expert citizens” and others with broader agendas can capture or simply use these venues at platforms for their special interests. It is possible to have a tyranny of the majority in which minority opinion is submerged or debunked at the source.

Open forums can be influenced by passions of the moment. The City of Edmonton certainly recognizes these challenges, noting in the *Involving Edmonton* handbook that “people who have strong opinions will use the town hall format to influence others” and that “town hall meetings have serious limitations because the opportunity for dialogue and discussion are extremely limited” (p. 17). Given acknowledged problems and staff sentiment, town hall and other open public forums are undoubtedly under-utilized, and this may be to the detriment of obtaining quality input. Despite its caution, the clear subtext of *Involving Edmonton* is that town hall meetings are valuable. And, perhaps counter-intuitively, it is important to observe that social science has long recognized the functionality of conflict. Ideational conflict within managed forums can define issues and sharpen perspectives. The energy of debate and dialogue or deliberation can bring new ideas and new voices to the table. These outcomes are valuable to optimizing clear input and to promoting a range and diversity of public perspectives.

Challenge 7



The *Involving Edmonton* handbook addresses approaches and tools that can be used to achieve high-quality input. However, explicit direction for approaches and strategies other than open houses is limited. The only other process tools with explicit administrative direction are a *Sample Communications Strategy*, as an example in the handbook of Information Sharing, provided on pp. 65-67, and the eight bullet points on “Using Technology as a Public Involvement Tool” (a third of a page on p. 19). *Involving Edmonton* does provide eleven items listed as Consultation Process Tools (pp. 28 – 29), and six items listed as Process Tools for both information sharing and consultation (pp. 27 and 30), but users are not provided administrative advice regarding these other approaches. In brief, the City’s most complete administrative guide for public involvement is uneven and perhaps it is not surprising that practice is skewed. When the handbook was introduced it was ahead of its time, but an update of the handbook would be desirable now.

Achieving clarity of input is a two-way proposition. Citizens must be able to communicate their input to the Department, but it is also necessary for staff to comprehend the contributions so that they can accurately interpret and assess them. Basic listening skills are central to being able to effectively capture contributions – something that is widely acknowledged in the Department. Officials should possess some combination of contextual and historical knowledge relating to the community and the project at hand. This is acknowledged within the Department and in *Involving Edmonton*, but we believe that a greater effort should be made to collect, retain, and transfer this knowledge. Improving community knowledge may involve simple practices such as producing more complete and structured project documentation or increasing assessment of sources and commentary that focus on communities and cohorts. Adopting best practices ensure that important particulars and nuances are communicated between staff members when project responsibilities are handed off is another possible innovation.

Transportation Services staff described the importance of confirming their understandings of public input. This practice would seem to be especially important for approaches where staff collect information. A member of the Advisory Committee introduced a related consideration: clarity through negotiation. Clarity in this instance would be achieved through a negotiated settlement. This approach to clarity resides on the right hand side of the continuum (i.e., Consultation, Active Participation) and as such may apply only to select involvements. The key point is that negotiation is also an avenue to achieve clarity and to promote balance and diversity. Naturally, to serve C513’s purposes, the parties to any negotiation must include representations from all affected constituencies. And, while city staff will negotiate on behalf of the department they also have responsibility of ensuring that the excluded and underrepresented have sufficient voice at the table.

Internal and External Inclusion

Finally, it is important to underline that including the excluded in public-involvement activities does not guarantee that they will be heard or can influence others. This difficulty is described as “internal exclusion.” If the excluded are to have voice and to influence discourse they must possess the ability and opportunity to express their views. This suggests at least some form of development and coaching, and perhaps animation, is necessary. It will be difficult for project leaders themselves to build such competencies, but the department and the city have some responsibility if they are serious about obtaining input from the excluded. Project leaders do have the responsibility to be alert to internal exclusion and to see that efforts are made to capture the input and hoist perspectives that might otherwise be submerged or lost. This is true in open forums and also true when interpreting, assessing, and communicating input. To the extent that participation by the excluded is anticipated, project leaders should also plan involvement approaches that give the excluded opportunity for a stronger voice. Group meetings, individual interviews, and facilitated input in representative venues such as citizen juries can be used for this purpose.

Recommendations

Challenge 7

- 1 Employ social-science methods drawn from marketing and social-network analysis to develop practical models of community social structures.** These can provide guidance in identifying affected social networks and groups.
- 2 Create demographic-data resources and a geo-spatial map for the purpose of identifying networks of citizens who are least likely to participate in a public-involvement initiative.** The data and map could be developed with the support of Data Analytics, City of Edmonton. Open Government methods can also support this recommendation.
- 3 Tap the “street knowledge” of affected citizens and stakeholders through outreach efforts.** This process could begin with city, business, and community-league sources, and extend to other known constituencies.
- 4 Ensure that stakeholder and community contact lists used by Transportation Services are inclusive and reflect updated demographic information.** These lists can be used to identify affected citizens.
- 5 Develop links and routinize communications with leaders of key social networks and stakeholder groups within communities.** This could be done either directly or through other City of Edmonton agencies or reliable community agents. Work with these leaders by identifying and developing information packages for different groups and sharing draft PIPs with them. Identify staff with appropriate cultural and social knowledge who can communicate with and promote sensitivity in engaging the participation of excluded and underrepresented groups.
- 6 Increase the capacity and knowledge of Transportation Services staff to appreciate, understand, and address systemic barriers to participation.** As part of this effort, ensure that resources are allocated to identify and remove barriers and to support more diverse participation, such as providing childcare, transportation, language translation and having varied scheduling. Provide coaches for excluded and underrepresented groups so that they can more effectively provide input. See **Appendix 7** for a chart on systemic barriers that could be part of a training module and learning resource for Transportation Services staff.
- 7 Encourage staff to use alternative or additional and complementary approaches to open houses with reference to the limitations of open houses to provide diverse and ranging public perspectives.** Provide staff with knowledge, expertise, encouragement to use an open public forum, instead of an open house.
- 8 Encourage use of a wider range of public involvement approaches and tools.** As part of this effort, new approaches and tools for public involvement could be promoted through the public-involvement community of practice (suggested under Challenge 4, recommendation 5).
- 9 Routinize the best practice of returning to the public to clarify or confirm staff understandings of citizen contributions.** The purpose of this practice is to increase the quality and clarity of information received from citizens. As a consequence the range and diversity of input is reduced. For return

Recommendations: Challenge 7



meetings with citizens, consider the use of controlled conflict and negotiation as techniques for facilitating input clarity.

- 10 Develop a procedure for determining when and how to use citizen juries, citizen panels, or other “representative sample” methods of involving the public.** Such methods can be especially useful for generating citizen contributions on more specific or technical issues.

in Public Involvement

- A. Adapt resources developed in Transportation for use corporate wide.** For example the current *Involving Edmonton* handbook does not include resources for understanding and addressing systemic barriers to public involvement.
- B. Revise the current Public involvement Plan (PIP) to include an additional set of lines identifying Stakeholders Informed or Consulted, and justifying the proposed coverage of affected citizens, including the number of citizens planned to be reached in these groups.** The PIP could also include a line discussing the selection and suitability of media to be used in the project.



Challenge 8: Transportation Services is finding that the public-involvement spectrum, while useful, requires selective and strategic use.

“The improvement of understanding is for two ends: first, our own increase of knowledge; secondly, to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others.”

-John Locke

Within the policy framework of C513 and the guides to practice represented by the *Involving Edmonton* and the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) protocols, public involvement projects can vary in size, significance, and complexity. When a public-involvement project is being designed, the public-involvement spectrum is often consulted. The spectrum was created by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and it is prescribed in C513 and *Involving Edmonton*. The continuum is a valuable tool for setting the public involvement project in a context.

As used by the City of Edmonton, the spectrum’s categories of Sharing Information, Consultation, and Active Participation allow a practitioner to decide what level of public impact is being contemplated. The original IAP2 version of the spectrum also describes public-involvement goals, commitment to the public, and sample techniques that are associated with varying design choices. However, questions can arise in how the spectrum is interpreted and used.

Interview respondents, for example, described public involvement primarily in terms of a one-way mode of communication, that is, within the assumptions of the Sharing Information and Consultation categories of the spectrum. Transportation Services does use the spectrum more broadly in selected instances. For example, the Community Traffic Management Planning Committees invite citizens to design potential solutions to the problem of higher-than-expected traffic volumes, non-local shortcutting, and excessive vehicle speeding. Such a public-involvement activity is associated with the Active Participation category of the spectrum. It involves a significant commitment of time and effort both for citizens and staff.

Customization adds to uncertainty for planners. Tension between standards and flexibility is unavoidable because, as an interview respondent noted:

[B]y policy and best practice, we believe every PIP needs to reflect the specific circumstances of the situation. If it’s infrastructure, for example, the tools and way we talk about LRT in Chinatown, and who we talk to, is very different than Millwoods. Very different contexts and needs. We develop standardized approaches (like the bike lanes have now), but they give us the ability to customize to the needs of projects.

How much public involvement is sufficient in a project is a pervasive question expressed by both interview and survey respondents. The extent of public involvement carried out can depend on the origins and objectives of a project. In particular, projects can start from within the Department, from an expressed public concern or outcry, from City Council, or from elsewhere within the City of Edmonton. Many projects arise from needs identified through a user survey by Transportation Services. In such cases, the extent of the project is initially undetermined, so the Department defines the initial terms of involvement.

Survey respondents indicated that they found it difficult to match the public-involvement design, and its placement on the spectrum, with the scope and purpose of the project in its context. One survey respondent stated,

The purpose of the involvement and the scope of what is being consulted on should be more clearly defined. Maybe the consultation needs to begin earlier with an information session.

Matching the public-involvement project to an appropriate level on the spectrum is difficult:

We don’t necessarily have a procedure or a guideline that tells us exactly what to do. But we’re starting to gain a lot of experience and that’s helping us evolve to these new creative ideas. So I think in terms of an output it would be great to have something that’s a little bit more tangible to say: maybe some kind of instructions that Council could provide, to say if you’re working on this type of project this is where the bar is set. Because right now that bar is only set

Challenge 8



after the project is complete, and then somebody comes back and says you should have done this, and that's too late. So you need to set the bar at the front end of the project. It's challenging to do that.

Referring to the “Walterdale Bridge” case, an interview respondent stated that matters related to the placement of the public-involvement project on the spectrum should be determined at the beginning of the project lifecycle:

I think you want to try and settle upfront at the beginning where on this spectrum they are in terms of Consultation? Are they on the Information side? Generally, the public wants to be active participation on everything. I think at the front-end you've got to be specific about what is it that you can decide, have that conversation and understand maybe there's some concessions or some areas of decision making that you can allow the public to have. Like I don't want them designing the bridge.

As a rejoinder to the expressed desire for consistent application and clarity regarding public involvement expectations of the City and the Department, some uncertainty may be unavoidable, as noted by another respondent:

[I]t's important to note...that [public-involvement] strategies are not political strategies. There will always be uncertainties and politicians will always react to their constituents. Basically, we can develop a `standard plan,` and even set a target for participation. No one will care that we are following `standards` when an issue pops up. They don't like it with engineering standards. It will certainly be an issue with involvement standards.

This leads to a phenomenon that we have called *spectrum compression*. This simply means that a large proportion of the public-involvement projects in Transportation Services are at the Information level of the spectrum. More active levels of involvement for

citizens, in the categories of Consultation and Active Participation are quite rare. The category of “Active Participation - Delegating decision making to build responsibility” remains, to date, unutilized.

Evidence of spectrum compression as we describe it can be found in the 21 PIPs that we reviewed. Each project was placed on a five-level hierarchy, as shown in **Table 7**. Twenty-one projects were designed within the Inform (information sharing) level of the spectrum. Then 19 of the 21 projects also moved towards the category of Consultation (testing ideas). In the category of Consultation (collaboration), there is a steep drop. Only 3 projects moved to this level of involvement for citizens, and only one project was in the category of Active Participation.

This summary confirms that the Active Participation level of the spectrum is used infrequently. This is not to state that there are no examples of Active Participation, but further exploration of spectrum compression could contribute to improved practice in public involvement in Transportation Services.

Category of Involvement	Number <small>(of 21 total)</small>
Sharing information- <i>To build awareness</i>	21
Consultation- <i>Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge</i>	19
Consultation- <i>Collaborating to build commitment</i>	3
Active Participation- <i>Sharing decision-making to build ownership</i>	1
Active Participation- <i>Delegating decision-making to build responsibility</i>	0

Table 7. Category of public involvement for 21 cases.

Recommendations

Challenge 8

- 1 Provide opportunities for in-depth public involvement by citizens in Transportation Services planning.** Transportation Services staff would engage periodically with citizens and stakeholders to identify top priorities for in-depth involvement on Transportation policies or projects. An example of an in-depth public involvement process would be the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges. See http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/environmental_stewardship/citizens-panel-energy-climate.aspx
- 2 Create departmental guidelines to support planning for the depth of public involvement to be used.** Such guidelines would show how different types of projects should find an appropriate place on the spectrum.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- A. Update *Involving Edmonton*.** A revised handbook could include using context and examples from Transportation Services such as the Structured Stakeholder Interest Group (SIG) used by Transportation Services. Information and guidelines could also be added to support the effective use of digital public involvement including a critical analysis of the limitations of digital methods.
- B. Involve citizens in the visionary elements of the City of Edmonton's planning.** Excellent work was done on involving the public in the creation of the Transforming Edmonton documents. Taking up the momentum of that work would allow for the continued involvement of citizens in shaping the City of Edmonton's highest level plans and priorities.
- C. Implement participatory budgeting.** Techniques and process for public involvement in budgeting have been refined in cities around the world. Edmonton could be among the few cities that adopt participatory budgeting as a recurring annual event.

Challenge 9: Closing the information loop with citizens is emerging as a significant gap in public involvement practice in Transportation Services.

“Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy, and mutual valuing.”

-Rollo May, Psychologist

A public-involvement project is not finished until citizens are informed about the fate of their contributions in relation to decision making. “Closing the loop” is critical for building trust, capacity, and a sense of legitimacy for citizens. Citizens must be informed about how their contributions made a difference. If decision-making was uninfluenced by citizen involvement, reasons should be stated.

Closing the loop requires a clear evaluation strategy that tracks citizen contributions in relation to policy changes and decision making, in concert with an effective communications strategy for sharing outcomes with citizens. To this end, C513 states,

Participants will know what is included in the discussion and what isn't, and what decisions will be made or have been made, and who will make the final decision.

Beyond the City of Edmonton, “closing the loop” with citizens is widely considered a best practice. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) identifies it as one of the core values of excellence, stating, “Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.” Similarly, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) states the principle that practitioners must, “Ensure that each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.”

Our case studies suggest that closing the loop is not a consistent practice in Transportation Services. One interviewee respondent stated,

[T]hat's probably the one minor, I wouldn't say a failing. What I should say is we did let [citizens] know that we would be taking this before Council. We did notify them when the Council meeting was and told them that they

could request to speak. But that was the extent of letting them know how that continues. So we really didn't close the loop. And you know maybe part of that was because there was no action out of it, but you're right, there was a little bit of a hole left there.

Another interviewee had similar views about the bike lanes case:

One thing might be nice to get some feedback on about what we need to do a better job at I think is...going back to those communities and saying, “Here's what we implemented, here's the input we received from you, and here are some of the changes that we incorporated.” I think that's something we need to improve on.

We asked survey respondents about their agreement/disagreement with the statement, *We do not communicate with the public about how our decisions have been influenced by their input.* As shown in **Table 8**, about two-thirds of respondents who expressed a non-neutral position on this issue disagreed with the statement (49%). About one-third of respondents (26%) agreed to some extent. Despite moderate disagreement with this statement (3.59/7), the overall response pattern shows a noticeable divide of opinion on this important issue.

Strongly Disagree	5.8%
Disagree	21.5%
Moderately Disagree	21.5%
Neutral	24.8%
Moderately Agree	14%
Agree	10.7%
Strongly Agree	1.7%

Table 8: Agreement/Disagreement with the statement, “We do not communicate with the public about how our decisions have been influenced by their input.”

Challenge 9



A survey respondent highlighted the importance of closing the loop with staff as part of the broad goal of maintaining positive relations with citizens:

We are the public face of the City when engaging citizens in these activities and asking for their input. If we have no intention of using the feedback in decision making in a way that we can communicate to the public, then we are put in a difficult position with respect to maintaining positive relations with the public when we seem to have just “gone through the motions.”

Transparency is essential to the successful execution of a communications strategy. But it is even a more fundamental issue to the overall long term success of public involvement initiatives. Lack of transparency on the public involvement process can dissuade citizens from participation, which in turn undermines the representativeness of those who participate. One major area where transparency is critical, is how citizen contributions map onto project decisions. Survey respondents only moderately agreed with the statement that, *The consultation activities clearly outline how public input will be considered in decisions* (5.34/7).

This overall response suggests that there is room for improvement in this area. In a transparent process, citizens would have access to summarized data on what citizen contributions were received, what was used or dismissed, and the reasons for those decisions.

Process and impact transparency go hand in hand with a proactive communications strategy that constantly keeps citizens abreast of their inclusion and impact on decisions. Cities need to exhibit this impact to all citizens, whether they are involved or affected by specific decisions and projects. The effect of such proactive communications strategies for public involvement can be assessed and monitored through longitudinal surveys. As noted in the *Involving Edmonton handbook*, citizens need not be overwhelmed with information overload in the name of transparency. Instead, transparency should aim to become a means to a more meaningful inclusion of citizens and the ensuing decision-making process, and eliminating decision-making “black boxes.” In this sense, pursuing the development of transparent processes for public involvement creates part of the infrastructure required for more successful inclusion of citizens in decisions that affect them.

Recommendations

Challenge 9

- 1 Adopt the widely acknowledged best practice of analyzing what citizens contributed, how this did or did not influence decision-making and policy, and the reasons.** One way to do this is to create an “impact tree,” which provides an overview of public input and its impact on decisions. The impact tree is a visual summary of citizen contributions received, overarching themes, relationships between ideas and themes including potential overlaps and conflicts, and decision outcomes, including reasons. See **Appendix 6** for examples.
- 2 Close the loop with staff.** In this way, the successes of public involvement can become common knowledge and a point of pride.
- 3 Consider sending delegates to the annual meeting of the IAP2, to share learning and accomplishments from the previous year.** A similar presentation could be made first within the developing community of practice in Transportation Services.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

A. Create opportunities to disseminate examples of closing the loop to administrators and staff in other City of Edmonton departments. Sharing the outcomes of public-involvement projects provides an exemplary model within the City of Edmonton.





Appendices

Appendix 1



Conceptual Framework and Report Card

We conducted a detailed review of the literature to arrive at the conceptual framework shown below. The framework is based on a service orientation. It breaks public-involvement processes into Planning, Engagement, Impact, and Assessment/organizational learning. Conduct (or practice) is preceded by Commitment and followed by Outcomes.



Figure 1. Our Framework for Public Involvement

We then used the framework as the basis for producing a “report card” on public involvement in Transportation Services. We used the results of both the interviews and the survey questionnaires to score the report card. As shown in **Table 1**, the strongest areas, which we marked as “Good+”, include Planning, Buy-in, and Outcomes. Assessment is scored as “Fair.” The lower score for Assessment is based on the need for better organizational learning from experiences and more formal involvement assessments at project completion, as well as further training.

Part 1. Evaluation based on Framework Components		
Planning	Conscientious effort shown. Some updating recommended.	GOOD +
Engagement	Public well-informed and consulted. Deeper participation suggested.	GOOD -
Impact	Case studies document impact and learning.	GOOD
Assessment	More sharing of learning and formal assessments needed.	FAIR
Buy-In	Clear, consistent internal support. Recommend more recognition.	GOOD +
Support	High-level expertise present. More training and staff desired.	GOOD -
Outcomes	Surveys and cases indicated positive and improving outcomes.	GOOD +

Table 1. Summary Report Card.
Assessment Scale: Inadequate (1), Weak (2), Fair (3), Good (4), Excellent (5).

Appendix 2



Governance and Management

- Specify priorities for public involvement by creating departmental guidelines to support engagement planning for different types of transportation projects across project lifecycles.

- Develop procedures in Transportation Services to guide the development, review, and approval of all Public Involvement Plans (PIPS). Such a process would include defining factors and circumstances that require the elevation of approval levels within the Department.

- Increase the overall budget dedicated to public involvement. This can be accomplished over time as a process of reallocation of funds, as strategic priorities for public involvement are identified and it becomes clearer what the resource implications are for public involvement across the Department.

- Dedicate a cadre of staff who will specialize and support public involvement throughout the Transportation Services.

- Identify projects that would benefit from a designated Transportation Services staff or team to remain with those projects over the entire lifecycle.

- Enable information sharing and tracking as part of an effort to maintain an institutional memory of public-involvement processes over project lifecycles.

- Establish sunset clauses or other terms or conditions that lead to a mandatory process review for projects. This would help ensure public-involvement work does not become outdated when implementation takes place.

- Create departmental guidelines to support planning for the depth of public involvement to be used. Such guidelines would show how different types of projects should find an appropriate place on the spectrum.

Organizational Learning and Capacity

- Create a public-involvement learning plan for Transportation Services. The plan should identify the key skills needed by staff and should make reference to the internal and external opportunities for learning.

- Offer leadership training to project managers to support excellence in public involvement. This could be accomplished through the creation of a leadership module or short course to examine the changing nature of public administration in a context of rising citizen expectations.

- Develop a departmental campaign designed to educate and train staff in the principles and practices of excellent public involvement.

- Ensure that one or more staff members are available within the Department to provide leadership on skill development, best practices, and innovation. Learning should be included in job descriptions and performance evaluations.

- Establish a community of practice (COP), with the purpose of collegially sharing experience and knowledge in public involvement. The COP should possess adequate expert, administrative, and budget resources.

- Offer learning opportunities to citizens. Learning resources, tools, modules, and short courses for citizens and community groups could be created to allow for a deeper public understanding and knowledge of the Transportation Services planning process and the contextual factors and challenges that influence communities.

- Create a Digital Engagement strategy and plan for communications and engagement projects. Create organizational ties to enable the use of open data and data analytics.

- Develop new public-involvement standards that are specific to the context of Transportation Services. These standards would seek a level of excellence in relation to public involvement in complex technical areas and the communication of technical problems and topics to citizens.

- Consider sending delegates to the annual meeting of the IAP2, to share learning and accomplishments from the previous year. A similar presentation could be made first within the developing community of practice in Transportation Services.

- Support training in public involvement for engineering students. Establish collaboration between the University Of Alberta Faculty Of Engineering and the City of Edmonton, with coordination by the Centre for Public Involvement.

- Ensure that all public involvement responsibilities and duties are included in job descriptions and performance evaluations.

- Review the roles and responsibilities of external contractors. Find a balance between using external public-involvement expertise and building internal skills, knowledge and capacity.

Communications and Transparency

- Develop a public online portal or web page from which citizens can easily find up-to-date information about key Transportation Services projects and policies.

- Communicate success indicators in public involvement, learning opportunities, and ways to participate as described in the other recommendations below in the public online portal and elsewhere.

- Close the loop with staff. In this way, the successes of public involvement can become common knowledge and a point of pride.

Evaluating Effectiveness

- Create a multi-year public-involvement evaluation and performance-measurement framework. Report annually or biannually to the public via the citizen dashboard. Include narratives of the history and assessment of public-involvement processes.

- Determine key public-involvement success indicators, identify procedures for choosing success criteria in consultation with citizens, and choose appropriate data-collection methods.

- Ask staff and contractors to report on how citizen contributions from public involvement activities were used, why, and why not.

- Create metrics for demonstrating to citizens the likelihood that citizen contributions will influence decision-making and to what extent. Present such metrics at the beginning and end of a public-involvement initiative.

- Adopt the widely acknowledged best practice of analyzing what citizens contributed, how this did or did not influence decision-making and policy, and the reasons. One way to do this is to create an “impact tree,” which provides an overview of public input and its impact on decisions.

Building Citizen and Community Capacity

- Establish a Public-Involvement Citizens’ Board for Transportation Services. The Board would advise and support the Department as it oversees the development of its public-involvement program.

- Implement a process or procedure for achieving agreement on PIPS for major projects, with community members and stakeholders.

- Ensure that citizens and Transportation Services staff have distinct roles and expertise in the public-involvement process.

- Provide opportunities for in-depth public involvement by citizens in Transportation Services planning. Transportation Services staff would engage periodically with citizens and stakeholders to identify top priorities for in-depth involvement on Transportation policies or projects.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Employ social-science methods drawn from marketing and social-network analysis to develop practical models of community social structures. These can provide guidance in identifying affected social networks and groups.

- Create demographic-data resources and a geo-spatial map for the purpose of identifying networks of citizens who are least likely to participate in a public involvement initiative.

- Tap the “street knowledge” of affected citizens and stakeholders through outreach efforts. This process could begin with city, business, and community-league sources, and extend to other known constituencies.

- Ensure stakeholder and community contact lists used by Transportation Services are inclusive and reflect updated demographic information. These lists can be used to identify affected citizens.

- Develop links and routinize communications with leaders of key social networks and stakeholder groups within communities. This could be done either directly or through other City of Edmonton agencies or reliable community agents.

- Increase the capacity and knowledge of Transportation Services staff to appreciate, understand, and address systemic barriers to participation.

- Encourage staff to use alternative or additional and complementary approaches to open houses with reference to the limitations of open houses to provide diverse and ranging public perspectives.

- Routinize the best practice of returning to the public to clarify or confirm staff understandings of citizen contributions. The purpose of this practice is to increase the quality and clarity of information received from citizens.

- Develop a procedure for determining when and how to use citizen juries, citizen panels, or other “representative sample” methods of involving the public. Such methods can be especially useful for generating citizen contributions on more specific or technical issues.

Innovation and Stewardship

- Develop and test new, creative, and innovative means to engage citizens in the Strategy and Concept stages.

- Encourage use of a wider range of public-involvement approaches and tools.

- Establish a visual communications Initiative. Initiate some pilot work on selected projects in which visual and graphic design students, marketing students, and adult educators collaborate with engineers to implement some creative and innovative ways to share complex, technical information with citizens and stakeholders.

Towards Corporate-Wide Excellence in Public Involvement

- Develop and communicate a charter of roles, rights and responsibilities for planning. This recommendation could be accomplished by, for example, establishing a “3 Rs” policy applying to rezoning and planning decisions, defining the roles, rights, and responsibilities for all participants.
- Establish an annual large-scale city-wide deliberative process for citizens on the top issue of the year, using both face-to-face and online involvement tools.
- Develop a public-involvement process for reviewing new capital projects. Such a review would be the first step in the project’s potential for stimulating new roles for citizens in shaping the project.
- With the Office of Public Engagement and the Centre for Public Involvement, establish an award of excellence in public involvement for engineers or engineering students.
- Add corporate-wide evaluation of public involvement to the mandate of the Office of Public Engagement. Performance indicators will be the key to developing a common understanding between the City of Edmonton and citizens as to how well public involvement is being carried out.
- Increase civic literacy and civic education through such methods as citizen academies. The goal for the learning would be to encourage citizens to understand the complexities, challenges and opportunities of involvement of decision making in relation to key community issues.
- Create reporting tools and templates for sharing knowledge corporate-wide. A first step might be to summarize the public-involvement case studies developed for this report, using analytical categories such as context and catalyst, planning, engagement methods, impact, evaluation, and learning.
- Implement an annual report card on public involvement. Convene citizens, community groups, staff and administrators, and elected representatives to establish corporate-wide indicators of excellence and an evaluation framework.
- Propose a Transportation Services workgroup or team be awarded a corporate-wide award for their accomplishments in public involvement. An example of such an award would be the City Manager’s award.
- Host a corporate-wide annual meeting on evaluation methods and results from the preceding year. Such a meeting would contribute to cross-departmental sharing of expertise.
- Appoint a staff member who would coordinate evaluation efforts in the Department with the Office of Public Engagement.

- Assign a City of Edmonton staff member with expertise in public involvement to create a dedicated, customized public involvement plan (PIP) forms in collaboration with Transportation Services.

- Redefine the City of Edmonton's relationship to the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues. This can be done by strategically supporting public involvement activities that can be held under the auspices of the community leagues, as appropriate.

- Ensure clear accountability as defined in City of Edmonton Administrative Procedure A1448. This procedure indicates that all PIPs must be tested with a small selection of stakeholders or a sample of the public prior to finalization.

- Use and promote the Project Stage Indicator for Public involvement. The Project Stage Indicator provides a unified visual and functional approach across the City of Edmonton departments, helping decision makers in various branches and departments communicate the stage of development of a project to citizens.

- Use opportunities such as post-election City Council orientation sessions to ensure that information is shared regarding key public-involvement events.

- Adapt resources developed in Transportation for use corporate wide. For example the current Involving Edmonton handbook does not include resources for understanding and addressing systemic barriers to public involvement.

- Revise the current Public involvement Plan (PIP) to include an additional set of lines identifying Stakeholders Informed or Consulted, and justifying the proposed coverage of affected citizens, including the number of citizens planned to be reached in these groups.

- Update Involving Edmonton. A revised handbook could include using context and examples from Transportation Services.

- Involve citizens in the visionary elements of the City of Edmonton's planning. Excellent work was done on involving the public in the creation of the Transforming Edmonton documents.

- Implement participatory budgeting. Techniques and process for public involvement in budgeting have been refined in cities around the world.

- Create opportunities to disseminate examples of closing the loop to administrators and staff in other City of Edmonton departments. Sharing the outcomes of public involvement projects provides an exemplary model within the City of Edmonton.

Appendix 3



City Studies Summary

In this section, we review twelve US and Canadian cities in terms of their overall orientation towards PI as well as their public involvement practices in the transportation domain. The selected cities are: Edmonton, Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal, Portland, San Francisco, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Chicago, and New York. The selection of the reviewed cities was vetted by the project's advisory committee.

Six major Canadian cities were chosen to provide an overview of the status quo of public involvement in large Canadian cities. The US cities were chosen from major cities or those with notable public involvement practices. The six selected US cities cover a range of populations and include cities with populations lower, similar to, or higher than Edmonton to capture the diversity of public involvement activities across different population sizes.

The review for each city starts with summary statistics from the latest Canadian (2011) and US (2010) census data. The administrative structure for each city is then briefly described to lay out the governance context within which public involvement is carried out for each city. This is followed by an introduction of the city's overall orientation and strategy towards PI, with a separate section on PI in the transportation domain. The role of Non-city organizations in PI is also briefly examined for each city and case studies from cities are introduced when available.

Key demographic and non-demographic comparative statistics for each city are also provided in Table 1. Demographic data come from the latest national censuses and other data come from more recent years.

These reports provide a descriptive account of PI practices within each selected city and are limited in terms of completeness by the availability of relevant information on these practices on the World Wide Web.

The review of the chosen US and Canadian cities offers the following insights:

- 1 The City of Portland has created a Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC), comprised of city authorities and community representatives to provide guidelines for the conduct of the City's public involvement activities and institutionalize its commitment towards public involvement. The City also involves community advisory groups in public involvement projects and seems to delegate some decision making regarding the conduct and evaluation of PI to citizens through these advisory groups.
- 2 The City of San Francisco has specific provisions to reach its sizeable Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations in its public involvement efforts. In addition, Technical Advisory Committees (TAC), and Community Advisory Committees (CAC) are used to coordinate plans across different stakeholder organizations and consider community input in decisions. The idea of an ongoing Citizens Advisory Community has also been pursued by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). This organization has appointed an 11-member Citizens Advisory Committee that meets monthly and is responsible for providing input on "nearly all matters that go before the Transportation authority Board [of Directors]". They are also responsible for publicizing transportation projects and plans to the city's neighborhoods and soliciting their input.
- 3 Two notable principles of engagement in Minneapolis are 1) participants design participation, and 2) known effect of participation. The former recognizes the need for citizens to have a say on how public engagement is carried out, and the latter highlights the need to close the loop by communicating project outcomes with citizens.

Holding community meetings and informal outreach activities at diverse areas (e.g. grocery store gathering room and dental clinics, state fairs and community events) to encourage public participation is also noteworthy in Minneapolis. Co-hosting community meetings with a local community partner to develop trust and credibility with the community is a lesson drawn from the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project.

4 St. Louis has been striving to plan citizen participation in a comprehensive way so as to avoid duplication of efforts at the local level. In addition, the citizen engagement principles in their long-range transportation plan recognize the right for citizens to be informed of how decisions are made and have their perspectives considered. One specific principle, *i.e. 'a right to voice their perspectives,' seems to imply that the onus of participation is put on citizens in long-range decisions, rather than the City being actively committed to ensuring public participation. St. Louis has valuable experience in "active participation", from its 'St. Louis Great Streets project', where citizens participated in designing their own streets.*

5 Throughout the City of Chicago, City Departments and representatives, non-profit organizations, media organizations and universities have fostered a culture of engaging with the public across a wide variety of different initiatives. The City of Chicago uses a variety of different Advisory Committees to engage with its residents. In particular, its Community Development Advisory Committee provides a key function namely advising the City on the citizen participation process and identifying the needs and priorities of neighborhoods.

Aside from major agencies, other non-profit organizations work towards building capacity of residents to ensure they can be more involved in public involvement initiatives that relate to transportation issues. Chicago is also one of the few cities that are involved in participatory budgeting.

6 NYC does not appear to have a central public involvement strategy. There are multiple formal public participation mechanisms through formal advisory bodies for different sectors, as well as Public Involvement Plans for compliance with federal and state laws, following the mandated templates. Citizens' advisory bodies are mechanisms to voice citizen's views to leaders. For transit and transportation, the most prominent advisory body is the Permanent Citizen's Advisory Committee (PCAC). This committee conducts public meetings and forums, runs research and employs professional transportation planners. Their role is essentially to be an independent watchdog and critic of the New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority. NYC uses the terms "Public Engagement" to refer to campaigns that encourage beneficial citizen behavior.

7 According to Calgary's definition of public engagement as a purposeful dialogue between the City and stakeholders, information sharing is not considered as a type of public engagement. Managers use a series of worksheets that helps them assess the appropriate project impact level, the suitable level of engagement and the relevant stakeholders. Calgary's use of a contemporary and social-media friendly communication approach reflects its attempts to appeal to the city's overall young population. The City's Engage! web portal provides a single online destination where citizens can learn about and participate in public engagement projects.

8 Vancouver's approach to public engagement goes beyond the concept of "collecting public input to improve City decisions". This city feels the need to encourage citizens engaging with themselves and their communities as well as with the City decision makers. As a result, the City is investing in infrastructure that can nurture such "connectedness". One step towards this goal was the creation of an online public participation portal and citizen panel, *i.e. Talk Vancouver. Citizens need to register on the website to be able to discuss issues*

and participate in projects. This initiative is part of the City's digital strategy that aims to enhance multidirectional digital connections among citizens, employees, businesses, and government.

- 9** Toronto provides examples of large-scale public involvement projects. The Big Move public involvement project and the criticisms surrounding it show that even extensive public involvement initiatives may not be immune to the challenges of public involvement with large populations with diverse perspectives.
- 10** The City of Ottawa appears to be aiming to create a more consistent approach to public consultation. Moving from a case by case approach to a formalized consistent process is a challenge many cities have faced as they move towards better public involvement practices.
- 11** In Montréal, public involvement has a more participatory approach due to a political culture which demands active public involvement and consultation. Several boroughs have piloted citizens advisory councils, and the City has procedure in place that allow citizens to petition for public consultation at the borough or City level. The Office de Consultation Publique en Montréal (OCPM) coordinates and tracks public involvement and reports annually on PI activities, outcomes, and budgets. The President of the OCPM is the closest analogue to a City PI Manager. Nevertheless, public involvement is not still centralized as each transportation, planning and transit agency and department also conduct their own activities which are not necessarily recorded by the OCPM.

Appendix 4



Summary of Edmonton Public Involvement Case Studies

Twin Brooks and Burnewood Area Projects: Cancelled after Public Consultations

This case illustrates the impact that public involvement can have at the design phase of a project. Normally, only public input at the concept phase can impact the go/no go decision and the budget. Public input at the design phase would instead lead to design modifications, but would not lead to a “no go” decision. This case moved the go/no go decision and budget to after public consultation about particular implementation design elements were shown to neighborhood residents. The public did not like the implementation plans, and on the basis of this reaction from the neighborhoods, City Council declined funding the project. This is a very useful learning case, for understanding the relationship between the design process, when a go/no go decision is made together with budgeting, public involvement, and the kind of influence it can have at the design phase. The case also raises the questions: what is the value of public involvement, and when will council see a project as having done enough public involvement.

Walterdale Bridge Public Involvement Case Study

In this case, the public perceived that they may have missed opportunities for contributing to preliminary concept design planning, when in fact those opportunities did not appear to have ever existed. There was a significant jump from the information sharing and idea testing information garnered from surveys in the concept planning done in Phases I and II of the Public Involvement Plan, respectively, and the presentation of the proposed bridges in Phase III,

where the idea of (1) a signature bridge and (2) the route were already set as faits accomplis. As residents realized how far along the process was, some of them became increasingly anxious and discontented, creating pushback websites or voicing group concerns to the media. One extreme view of this process could be summarized as “going in with a preconceived plan - ‘This is the plan,’ and ‘shoving it down their throats’ as we’ve been told in a number of cases” (quoting from an interview with a City transportation professional). At another extreme, extensive public involvement for the \$155 million project was done at all stages of the process, the stakes were high, multiple stakeholder groups had divergent interests, and in such situations, it is not possible to satisfy “all the people all the time.” The most accurate characterization of this case probably lies somewhere in between. It likely would have been desirable to include more opportunities for the public voicing of preferences for two key decisions taken early in the process (building a signature bridge and the route), not just about choosing between four signature bridge designs. At a minimum the case illustrates the need for transparency about the public involvement process (including stakeholder outreach about events, explanation of project decision-making, and consultation at the strategic level).

Edmonton SE to West (Valley Line) LRT Expansion

Originally proposed in 1977 with a projected budget of \$101 million, the city pushed the “reset button” for the plan in 2009 following development of the City’s “The Way Ahead” Strategic Vision, the “Way We Grow,” municipal development plan, the “Way We Move” transportation plan, and the LRT Network Plan. Public involvement activities on this project have been extensive and thoroughly documented. Multiple positives from public participation include the process of naming the line, choosing themes for stop/station elements, provision

of bicycle parking, further encouragement of Park 'N' Ride, etc. Some areas of pushback included frustration of some citizens with dismissive responses to concerns and lack of clarity about the decision process elements. The archiving of the extensive documentation could also have been done in a more user-friendly manner (e.g., more consistent file names, clearer organization). But despite the unprecedentedly long hangtime and participant churn, problems (arising from potential misaligned expectations) appear to have been kept to a minimum. A special aspect of this case, associated with its massive scale (\$1.8 billion projected), is that it demonstrates the need to mobilize public support to secure funding from provincial and federal governments. This means that goodwill – or pushback – generated during the public involvement process has a direct impact on financial viability. Recognizing this issue, Transportation Services, the City, and the Mayor implemented several highly innovative advocacy elements to help secure funding from the province, including the #yeg4LRT campaign, the “#saddonivenson” thread of tweets and associated coverage, effective use of traditional media, and a political “full court press.” This activity resulted in a commitment of \$600 million in support of the project from the Province of Alberta. Particularly interesting in this case is the leveraging of social media, which highlights opportunities and requirements for new styles of communications with such media.

Converting to a Freeway: 149th Street Interchange at Yellowhead Trail

Because of the extent of this project (with options ranging between \$200 million and \$400 million), two distinctive features were used in this public involvement process. (1) Public involvement feedback about particular alternatives was collected as an input to and in parallel with concept planning. (2) Stakeholder

Input Groups were used, together with open houses, targeted interviews, and Internet questionnaires. The process generated both a desirable outcome and positive sentiment toward the process. The final recommendation was a \$200 million “right- in, right-out” style of intersection (departing from the original expectation of a full interchange for perhaps twice as much).

99th Street Rehabilitation/Streetscape Project Public Involvement Case

Sometimes an issue can fall in the cracks, sometimes problems can emerge from the cracks. This case illustrates both, when a critical need was only recognized while already fixing cracks in 99th Street. Scona Road Widening and Landscaping work was proceeding under the direction of Transportation Services, but impromptu reaction from city residents and the Old Strathcona Community League about the impact on 99th Street prompted a rearguard action to streetscape 99th Street. This streetscape project was led by the Office of Great Neighborhoods. Major structural changes to “streetscape for walkability” were ruled out because many repairs and modifications had already been completed to accommodate moderate-speed car traffic (e.g., it was not feasible to take out concrete that had just been poured to rearrange for trees). Nevertheless, the City was responsive to citizen concerns, but too late in the process for a comprehensive solution that balanced the competing goals of walkability and drivability.

Bicycle Routes Public Involvement Case Study

It may be forward thinking to support bicycle transportation in principle, but do you want bike lanes in your neighborhood? Beginning in 2010, Edmonton began ambitious support of bicycles as a mode of transportation in Edmonton. The first phase simply converted

portions of existing city streets to bike lanes, and this phase met with resistance, beginning in Ward 10. Bike lanes were “jammed into” commuter roads, and were either not used or created obstacles, reducing lanes for automobile traffic and parking for businesses. Early public involvement activities were confined to communicating what was to happen, and some citizens felt that their input was not receiving due regard because key decisions had been taken prior to the public consultation (an example of “decision lock-in” from the main report). Casual observation of Edmonton residents reveals a general understanding of why we should like bicycles as a transportation mode, but also occasional annoyance with new bicycle lanes cannibalizing commuter traffic lanes or parking spaces. Early public involvement did not “pave the way” for bicycles, because it took key decisions for granted for 125 kilometers of road city-wide and 77 kilometers of connector network bikeways, with an estimated cost of \$34,300,000 and only encouraged feedback on smaller more cosmetic matters. Citizen reaction with council members ultimately has led to rethinking of bike lanes and their roll-out.

Complete Streets Public Involvement Case

Subsequent to the issues raised in the 99th Street Rehabilitation case, and the need for multimode coordination evidenced in the Bicycle Routes case, Edmonton developed the Complete Streets Program. The desirable Complete Street version of a street with maximum diversity in user types and transportation modes would be a street that accommodates the safe and efficient movement of cyclists, pedestrians, transit users, motorists, buses, and trucks. In this effort, public involvement was effectively considered. Curiously, the number of individuals that provided data for this type of abstract policy, which may influence many future projects, is less than for more concrete and immediate large cases.

The Goods Movement Strategy Public Involvement Case

This case demonstrates the effective collection of up-to-date information on truck movement patterns and their trends in Edmonton and

created opportunities for industry participants to have a voice in the development of the Goods Movement Strategy. The public involvement activities were effective in (1) identifying potential stakeholders and promoting their participation, (2) utilizing a variety of commentary techniques to elicit stakeholder views, and (3) incorporating public input into policy. A well-planned and organized transportation system for goods movement is critical for Edmonton to fulfill its role as a transportation, industrial, and commercial hub for Northern Alberta and rural Western Canada, and this project provides critical information for coordinating planning for future regional development.

“The Way We Move” Transportation Master Plan Public Involvement Case Study

The Way We Move is a 30-year transportation master plan for Edmonton, released in 2011, as an update to the 1999 Transportation Master Plan. This is one of the six aligned strategic goals for the city of Edmonton’s 10-year “The Way Ahead” Strategic Plan towards the City vision, which in turn aligns with the Province of Alberta’s 2008 Capital Regional Plan. The Way We Move has seven transportation strategic goals, including transportation and land use integration, access and mobility, transportation mode shift, sustainability, health and safety, well-maintained infrastructure, and economic vitality. This master plan provides a framework which helps to set goals and build consistency in Transportation planning. This case is foundational to all the other cases, and this master plan is referenced in all the cases we studied, as well as most other transportation projects in the past five years. There is emerging consistency in the use of The Way We Move in public involvement plans to help situate specific planning projects in the broader context, though there are exceptions. Unfortunately The Way We Move cannot itself be used as a model for public involvement because its involvement activities were conducted before the Involving Edmonton policy was fully implemented, including the process of developing a Public Involvement Plan. Nevertheless, the case does provide an example of a city aligning its vision for transportation with other elements of planning for the city and for the province.

Appendix 5



Citizens' Academies & other Capacity Building Programs

CITY OF EDMONTON

CIVIC SPACES

In Edmonton, The Centre for Public Involvement partnered with the Edmonton Multicultural Coalition on a pilot project called “Civic Spaces.” This project supported the civic and political engagement of immigrants and refugees in Edmonton. Civics 101 educational workshops 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. Participants identified key issues, and met candidates in the 2013 Edmonton General Election and other members in their ward.

centreforpublicinvolvement.com/work/archives/2013/09/26/edmonton-multicultural-coalition-pilot-project/

PLANNING ACADEMY

The City of Edmonton has developed a Planning Academy to help citizens understand and participate in the planning process. Participants will also better understand the roles, rights and interests of all parties involved in the planning and development process. The Planning branch of Sustainable Development offers a series of 3 courses with an instruction manual and instruction. 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.

edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/planning-academy

CIVICS IN THE CITY

The City of Edmonton Office of the City Clerk provides a number of civic learning initiatives for citizens, including youth and children. In the fall of 2014, the City Clerk’s Office initiated two new workshops: 1) Understanding City Hall, takes members of the public through the Council decision-making journey; 2) City Hall High, a program with high school students, provides experiential learning about municipal government and democracy.

City Hall School is another site of civic learning where elementary students come to City Hall for hands-on, inquiry based learning. Students interact with Councillors and City staff to gain an understanding of municipal government and their City.

edmonton.ca/city_government/city_organization/office-of-the-city-clerk.aspx

Citizens' academies and other training programs can help build up the local "skill base" needed to support engagement. In some places, the skills are there but so spread throughout the community that it isn't easy to find the people who could be helpful. Within City Hall, these skills are sometimes limited to a small group of public employees working out of departments for neighbourhood services or human relations.

CIVICS 101 TORONTO

Civics 101 Toronto is a civic literacy pilot developed to educate Torontonians about how the City government works: their role in local government, how decisions are made, planning, finances and elections. In 2009, the program was just one component of the City Manager's Strategic and Corporate Policy Division's Civic Engagement strategy. Toronto Civics 101 sessions cover the basics of City government (6 sessions over 3 months). Participants learn to consider the information and issues important in making decisions about programs, services and budgeting to best meet the needs of citizens. See the website to explore the learning guides and read the report on this initiative.

www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=25e1acb640c21410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD

OTTAWA CITIZEN ACADEMY

This volunteer-run organization fosters discussion and civic education as a foundation for meaningful and constructive engagement, interaction and action. CA is interested in "citybuilding" - with fun and passion. CA offers safe places for citizens to learn about issues that affect them, their neighbourhood and their city. CA provides a space to share resources and ideas that inspires participants and gives them access to information, opportunities for learning, and best practices from other places. A 5-week Civics Boot Camp, covers municipal governance, budgeting and land use planning, and applied projects. Small groups plan civic action and make their pitch to a panel of community leaders who provide feedback on the plans. See website for resources for civic engagement, diversity and inclusion, and dialogue.

citizensacademy.ca

CITYSTUDIO VANCOUVER

In this 'innovation hub' inside City Hall, staff, university students and community members co-create, design and run projects. The goal of CityStudio is to experiment with the ways cities are co-created. CityStudio teaches students the skills needed to collaborate on real projects in Vancouver with City staff and community stakeholders. CityStudio brings together stakeholders, defines problems and creates solutions while improving student skills and keeping talent in the city. They aim to create a culture change at City Hall and demonstrate future possibilities.

citystudiovancouver.com

Appendix 6



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
The City of Edmonton

3RD Floor City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2R7
Phone (780) 496-8178
Fax (780) 496-8175

Date
[name]
[address]
Edmonton, AB [pc]

Dear Jury Member:

Thank you again for your participation on the Citizen Jury on Internet Voting. The process provided us with valuable information and ideas for the implementation of this type of technology.

In November 2012, we promised to provide our response to the Jury's nine recommendations. The recommendations were reviewed by Administration and I am pleased to provide our responses to you. We will continue to review the recommendations and consider how they can be implemented if they choose to use internet voting in the future.

As you know, we are preparing for the 2013 civic election; I would encourage you to participate fully in the election and associated activities. Particularly, I would like to invite you to participate in the test of the election processes August 6, 2013 at City Hall. We will be testing our processes for Nomination Day and for Voting Stations. If you are interested in participating please call the Elections office at 780 442 VOTE (8683) and speak to Sandi Harpham to obtain more details. If you would like to work the election please check out our website at edmonton.ca/elections.

On behalf of the City of Edmonton, I would once again like to thank you for your participation and congratulate you for being part of this very important process.

Sincerely,

Alayne Sinclair
City Clerk

Enc.



Following City Council's decision not to implement internet voting, the City Clerk sent each Jury participant a letter outlining how the City was responding to their recommendations. Here are the first two pages of the letter.



1. Usability of Registration System

Citizens' Jury Recommendations	City's Response
Must be simple, easy & fast	The Jelly Bean Election provided an opportunity for the City to test online registration and determine further improvements. Based on those findings, and the feedback from the Jury, the Election Team developed new requirements such as an easier way to provide proof of identity, simpler registration form, simpler PIN, an online password reset capability, etc. In addition, we continue to monitor the industry to ensure we are aware of changes or enhancements to registration systems.
Alternate registration methods could be explored	The Election Team has explored and is monitoring new alternate registration methods. For example the Liberal Leadership race had a different registration process for its internet voting which occurred this year. Another example being explored is the use of internet-voting kiosks to register in person but vote online.

2. Smart Phone/Tablet Friendly

Citizens' Jury Recommendations	City's Response
Voting and registration using data connection on phone and phone browser i.e., iPhone, Android, Blackberry	The Election team is aware of the increasing demand for services that are accessed through mobile devices. To that end we are developing requirements for an online census to occur in 2014. Voters also would like to access the election systems in such a way. When internet voting occurs a fundamental business requirement is that the system must be functional on the most common devices in use.
Site built with slower data connections in mind (minimize graphics).	Another fundamental business requirement of the internet-voting system will be that it must work well with slower connection speeds, possibly 56K modems.

3. Research and Evaluation

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82 APPENDIX 5. Links to Consultation

RECOMMENDATION	REPORTS					
	Stakeholder Interviews I	Stakeholder Interviews II	Citizen Panels	Public Survey	Other	
1. Establish the Edmonton Food Council (EFC) by June 1, 2012	X	X	X			
2. Explore the creation of an Edmonton Food Charter						MDP
3. Provide appropriate supporting resources to the EFC	X	X				
4. Work with the Edmonton Food Council and various partners (such as Northlands, the University of Alberta, NAIT, and others) to provide multiple learning opportunities on key food and urban agriculture topics and initiatives	X	X	X			
5. Work with partners such as Northlands to enhance existing capacity for information sharing amongst the many organizations, businesses, agencies, and institutions involved in food and urban agriculture	X		X			
6. Create a single portal for a wide range of food and urban agriculture information and education.	X	X	X	X		
7. Assess and map Edmonton's food system assets	X		X			
8. Support mentorship and training for urban agriculture	X	X	X			

APPENDIX 5 - LINKS TO CONSULTATION

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FINAL, Prepared by One World Inc. - March 31, 2010

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http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/FRESH_October_2012.pdf

The Table of Contents from the Evaluation of the Edmonton's City Panel.

Appendix 7



Barriers to Participation and Potential Solutions*

Categories of Exclusion	Barriers to Participation	Potential Solutions
<p>Cross cutting barriers: can be applied to all of the following categories</p>	<p>Sense of worth: People living in poverty or with disabilities, women, sexual minorities, and people of colour or from ethno- cultural communities have been stigmatized, belittled and marginalized, for some, much of their lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce in multiple ways that input is valuable. • Hire facilitators and staff who are sensitive and skilled at drawing people into the process. Alternatively, sensitize facilitators and staff through adequate training. • Hold special pre-sessions for people from these groups to start to voice their opinions in smaller, safer environment. • Create “speakers’ lists” to be kept by person sitting beside the facilitator, keeping track of how many men and women, white and non-white people speak. If dominant groups outweigh others, priority should be given to those of non-dominant groups who wish to speak.
<p>Economic: Poverty is by far, the most pervasive and cross cutting issue that excludes people from society.</p>	<p>Time: Working three jobs to support a family makes participating in an event almost out of the question.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult target population about event times that work for them. • Respect end-times. • Provide food and childcare. • Hold event near work or homes of population.
	<p>Social and cultural access: People from different classes inhabit different spaces in society and those with lower socio-economic status are less likely to have experienced civic participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a space for the event that is inhabited by the target population(s). • Work with trusted community partners (i.e. non-profit organizations). They may be able to arrange a pre-meeting space so that participants can arrive in a group. • Hold event on main public transit line with regular services at times of the event OR provide transportation services.
	<p>Economic access: This is perhaps the easiest to overcome from the standpoint of an organizer of citizen engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide remuneration for lost work time, childcare, transportation, etc. • Provide food and/or childcare at the event. • Provide an honorarium.
<p>Ethno-cultural and newly arrived Canadians: Many of the barriers mentioned in the economic category also apply to these groups as they are generally more at risk of living in poverty.</p>	<p>Citizenship: By virtue of the phrase “citizen engagement” members of communities who are not yet full citizens are excluded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use alternative words to “citizen engagement” in outreach material (e.g. people, the public, community members) OR clarify what is meant by citizen engagement.
	<p>Language: English and French may not be the first language of ethno-cultural and newly arrived Canadians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translate written material into appropriate languages. • There are many options for event-based translation: whisper translation (one-to-one); group translation on the side; or official translation may be necessary for large groups.
	<p>Social and cultural barriers: People of different cultural backgrounds inhabit their own unique space in communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the social spaces, places of worship, newspapers, and other places of gathering and communication and use them to host events and perform outreach.
	<p>Framing: This will have a large impact on who attends, as different groups may value and perceive issues differently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See section b) of Chapter VII on Framing.

* Source of this chart is from 2008 article by Amanda Sheedy, Citizen Engagement Handbook. Canadian Policy Research Network.

Categories of Exclusion	Barriers to Participation	Potential Solutions
<p>Stereotyping age: Youth are idolized, and yet those who are too young or too old are discredited.</p>	<p>Legitimacy: Youth are stigmatized as being naïve and the elderly as being out of touch with contemporary times. Thus both of these groups are often excluded from discussions and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define concepts and frame the problem in ways youth can understand and relate to. • Adapt process in ways that youth will not be intimidated to speak up (e.g. small group discussions and reporting back in large plenary).
<p>Ability: The needs of people living with disabilities are often overlooked, which consequently excludes them.</p>	<p>Physical access: There are a surprising number of public spaces that cannot accommodate a wheelchair.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that event space is accessible and advertise it as such. • Set up the event space to accommodate those in wheelchairs (i.e. table height).
	<p>Transportation: Getting to and from events poses unique challenges to people living with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give sufficient notice of event for people to plan their adapted transport OR provide adapted transportation for them.
	<p>Communication: Depending on the person's disability, they may need assistance communicating with a group of people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On registration forms, ask people with special needs to specify what they will need to participate, using respectful language. • Provide translation into Braille and sign language services (determining need before event).
<p>Gender: While 50% of the population is female, women are still underrepresented in positions of power, and policies do not necessary reflect their needs. With regards to lesbians, gays, trans/bi-sexuals, and others, their rights and freedoms are still being negotiated at the state level.</p>	<p>Parenting: While times are slowly changing, women still carry a disproportionate responsibility for childcare and parent care, placing a greater burden on their time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide childcare or elder care money to participating parents. • Or provide childcare (and even elder care) at the event (ask people to register ahead of time).
	<p>Legitimacy: People who do not fit the dominant model of “male” or “female” are stigmatized and generally face problems of legitimacy in the face of authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See potential solutions for “Sense of worth” barrier above

