

## James Bay Cree Governance Project

The James Bay Cree needed broad community input on governance, in order to negotiate with provincial and federal authorities, and look at their internal governance processes.

The Cree Governance Working Group sponsored facilitated sessions in 10 remote communities and four cities where Cree live.

They carefully crafted questions that community people could answer and that would give them the kind of information the leadership could use.

More than 1000 people answered the question “What values do we want to hold in Cree governance in the future?” and contributed suggestions to nine questions about the structure of government they would like to see.

43 face-to-face workshops were held where people brainstormed their ideas and clustered them together in patterns that they named.

A Facebook page with discussion questions was set up, and a web survey with open-ended questions gathered more responses.

The leadership took all the ideas, drew them together, and wrote them up in facilitated sessions. The results have been used in several levels of negotiation since, and the community trusts that the leadership is holding their values.

## Thistle Patrol in Edmonton's Natural Areas

A group of Edmontonians regularly get together to pull weeds other invasive plants from natural areas in Edmonton's Mill Creek and Fulton Ravine.

The Thistle Patrol started in Mill Creek Ravine south of Whyte Avenue. Some of the group weeds only creeping (Canada) thistle while others weed all noxious weeds and exotics like small Manitoba maple

and cotoneaster from among the native plants.

When the group finishes a 'Thistle Patrol', they often go for a walk to see what native flowers can be found, and learn more about the plants, animals, bugs and birds found in the Mill Creek and Fulton.

Volunteers are always welcome to join in on a current project or take on a new one.

## Evolving Infill – City of Edmonton

Evolving Infill sought to use public engagement to generate new ideas and opportunities for changing how the City supports residential infill (new houses in older neighbourhoods) and accommodates population growth in the coming years.

Evolving InFill used a new approach to public engagement: the project started by asking Edmontonians about their own experiences with residential infill and to suggest changes to how we might support infill in the future. Typically, the process would have been to ask Edmontonians for reactions to something the City has already proposed.

The project reached out to and connected with more than 1,000

Edmontonians; connected with people in multiple ways (public events, online through Peak Democracy, providing take home conversation guides), and used a phased engagement approach that relied on a smaller group of stakeholders to help provide ideas.

While it took to gain buy in and to gain trust from stakeholders not used to a new process, the Evolving InFill engagement process was successful in laying the ground work for Edmonton's Infill Roadmap. The Roadmap contains 23 actions to support more infill through a variety of process, communication, and regulatory changes. The City has committed to starting all 23 actions in the Roadmap within the next two years.

## Strathern DC2 Rezoning – City of Edmonton

When City Council approved the Concept Plan for Strathern Station, it created new development opportunities in the Strathern Heights community. Resulting development plans requested zoning changes to allow higher residential and commercial densities.

Prior to an application for development, City of Edmonton Planners created a community working group that included one Strathern community league board representative, two property owners with properties directly adjacent to the proposed development, two Strathern business owners and four community residents at large. The working group was instructed to act on behalf of the community in discussions with the developer. The community working group was an important success for the project. It improved communication

between all stakeholders, and improved working relationships.

Despite the creation of a community working group, the general public continued to be included and the City's engagement process held community wide public meetings. Individual community members are also encouraged to contact the City of Edmonton.

When an application for the development with public input was ready, the working group reviewed the application and a second public meeting was held and input from that meeting worked into the application. This was followed by a public hearing and the submission of the application for development to City Council.

## The Art of Hosting - Upper Arlington

In early 2009, the City of Upper Arlington and the Upper Arlington Public Library brought together a diverse group of about 35 individuals from the city, the schools, churches, library, business leaders, the chamber of commerce, community service groups and community activists for a three-day retreat with the calling question: How can we nurture a shift in public discourse to a place where all voices are encouraged, heard with respect and kindness and have our passions and visions meet in shared responsibility for our community's future?

The Art of Hosting focuses time and attention on creating a welcoming space for meetings to occur and where everyone has a voice in creating the outcomes. Instead of the leaders being the "hero," sharing the solutions to an issue, they become the "host" of a conversation where citizens explore and find the answers together.

The outcome of the retreat was a group of diverse individuals united in improving community conversations in Upper Arlington. The group continued to meet regularly and formed a Community of Practice with guiding principles, as well as an "Art of Hosting in a Box" briefcase filled with tools that enabled trained facilitators to work more easily. Community members volunteer to facilitate based on their availability.

## Virtual Interactive Planner - Cary, North Carolina

The Town of Cary launched the Virtual Interactive Planner in 2010. This online tool helps guide citizens and other customers through the town's development process.

The planner allows customers to obtain information about the town's development plans by entering an address or other identifying information about a property.

The program uses the town's Geographic Information System to display the path of development for that site. Customers have a choice of using an animated version or a text-only version of the user interface.

Virtual Interactive Planner also provides residents with development-related resources, such as downloadable applications, fee schedules, definitions, information about properties and other useful links.

The idea came about in 2008 when the Cary Town Council started discussions about better ways to communicate the development process to developers and citizens. The council gave direction to the town's staff to develop a program that would address the issue. The staff, in collaboration with a private IT company, developed and launched VIP.

In the future, developers are planning to include a live-chat feature to the program and create a mobile version of it.

## **Bow to Bluff Initiative - Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community**

Bow to Bluff was an independent citizen initiative to create a great public space in Calgary. The innovative engagement process helped people re-imagine the public corridor along the Sunnyside LRT line from the Bow River to McHugh Bluff, and was adopted by the City in 2012 to help transform their engagement processes.

In February 2011, a group of independent citizens approached the Ward 7 Office with an idea to engage their fellow citizens in the revitalization of the public corridor along the Northwest LRT line from the Bow River to the McHugh Bluff.

Subsequently, with the support of City staff, the Bow to Bluff partnership was established, with the citizen group comprising members from the Great Public Spaces group of Civic Camp and the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association.

Council approved funding to develop a design framework from citizen input and a comprehensive process guide to support other community-driven improvements to public spaces across the city. Engagement techniques – including an engagement storefront, community Sounding Boards and a series of design workshops engaged over 2,500 citizens in just seven weeks.

## What the B\*ke – City of Edmonton

Edmonton's Transportation Planning embarked on the 2014-18 Bicycle Infrastructure Plan, an aggressive program to install nearly 23 km of on-street bike infrastructure. This program involved almost 2,000 Edmontonians at meetings and using online engagement tools.

While many people were already involved, there was a desire for citizens to have a greater role in the decisions being made. The project included new approaches to public engagement to make the process more transparent and include more opportunities for citizens to influence where and how the bike projects will be built.

This approach leads to better bike route decisions and is now being used for Strathcona and Downtown routes. Citizens have had an opportunity to provide input on locations and they've helped shape the criteria used to choose the route. They will also discuss how the route should be designed, and

the tradeoffs that will need to be made to fit everything into their communities. These efforts are supported by a program that communicates why we need the bike infrastructure, and why we need more travel options as the city grows and traffic gets more congested.

This experience has strengthened the branch's commitment and approach to meaningful citizen engagement, and it has had a significant impact on other projects and programs. Project Managers are more proactive and cognizant of the need to engage with the public early, and they are connecting what they've heard to the decisions they are making.

## WinterCity Strategy – City of Edmonton

Edmonton's WinterCity strategy is about creating pride in Edmonton winters, thinking differently about winter and creating a world-leading winter city.

The WinterCity engagement process was designed and led by a "think tank" which includes community leaders and City staff. The public engagement process was creative, diverse and broad in its reach; it offered participation based on degree of interest and ability to participate, and took into account the characteristics of each community.

During in-person sessions, participants were asked how they saw themselves being involved, and what role they would like to play. The process was planned but also responded to emerging needs and interests; engagement was targeted and but also broad and open. It included traditional meetings, the use of social media, the first online crowdsourcing tool for the City of Edmonton, untraditional luncheons

in pubs/restaurants, and creative dialogue that brought together people that normally do not get together.

The engagement process itself became an important part of shifting Edmonton's winter culture. In engaging and consulting on how to become a great winter city, the WinterCity team began the process of getting there.