Salt Lake City
Public Engagement Guide

For use by all City Departments, Divisions, and Employees as they engage the public in City decisions

Based on principles from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and on past public engagement experience in Salt Lake City

April 2012

Salt Lake City
Public Engagement Guide

Executive Summary

As the most local level of government, city government has the advantage of being close to the people it serves. With responsibility to provide services such as streets and sidewalks, police and fire service, water and waste, garbage and recycling, parks and open space, and planning and permitting, Salt Lake City has significant influence in the lives of its residents and tens of thousands of others who commute or travel to the city. Each day, Salt Lake City receives requests, inquiries, complaints, and input on existing, new, and future services, programs, and projects. In addition to the natural flow of information into the city, project managers and coordinators in various city departments regularly reach out to the community for input. The communication between the City and the population it serves is an ongoing dialogue on hundreds of different topics. By exercising good public engagement practices, city government becomes a vehicle for participatory democracy.

There are many city activities that require some level of public engagement such as proposed ordinances to create or change a law, the development of new city facilities and infrastructure, planning petitions such as rezones and conditional uses, and the development and implementation of a variety of special projects, programs, or services. This Public Engagement Guide is a tool designed to assist city employees in determining the scope of public engagement necessary for a project and to plan for and conduct successful public engagement. There is no prescription or set formula that dictates how public engagement should occur. However, by understanding basic principles of public engagement and then applying those principles to your specific project, you will increase the likelihood that your project will be understood and supported by the public.

Developed in conjunction with the Open Government Initiative, this guide draws upon principles of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and on lessons learned from past public engagement activities in Salt Lake City. The guide opens with some basics on the "who," "when," and "how" of public engagement. Then, it introduces the six basic steps to public engagement: plan, notify, educate, listen, follow through, and adapt. Finally, the appendix contains a summary checklist, worksheets for assessing the public impact of a project and recommended level of public engagement, and a sample project timeline.

Every project is unique. This guide serves as a framework for public engagement but does not obligate the City to follow any specific process for any particular project.

For questions about this guide or assistance in implementing its principles, please contact the Mayor's Office at (801) 535-7704.

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Who is Responsible for Public Engagement?

There are several types of City actions that may benefit from expanded and early public engagement. These projects are carried out by various City departments.

- Public facility siting, design, planning
- Major policy decisions
- City planning initiatives
- Transportation initiatives
- Significant expenditure of public funds
- Significant change to public assets
- New or changed taxes or fees
- Issues of significant public interest
- Issues involving conflicting public values
- Issues with City-wide impacts
- Issues involving "not in my neighborhood" attitudes
- New services or programs within a department

In Salt Lake City, ***Department Administrators and Project Managers*** have joint responsibility to:

- identify which City actions need public engagement,
- decide the appropriate level of public engagement, and
- design and implement the public engagement process.

However, all Salt Lake City employees are expected to operate by the eight values in the following "How We Do Business" policy of the City to promote open government and strengthen public engagement:

HOW WE DO BUSINESS

MISSION STATEMENT:
Government functions best when it is open, inclusive, responsive and accountable for its actions. Communities are strong when residents understand and participate in the civic process; have access to accurate, reliable information; and are able to place confidence in their public officials. Transparency in government is the basis for accountability, fact-based decision-making, public trust, and informed participation.

EXPECTATION STATEMENT:
It is the expectation of the Salt Lake City Administration and City Council that Salt Lake City employees will conduct themselves with these values in mind.

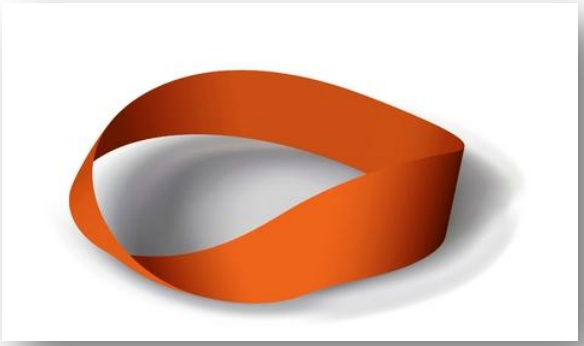
Serve	Serve the community
Inform	Provide the public with information it needs to participate in a meaningful way
Listen	Value every comment
Include	Involve those affected by a City decision in the decision-making process
Collaborate	Strive for solutions that address everyone's needs to the extent possible
Be Proactive	Solicit input early—both internally and externally—in order to come to an informed decision
Problem-Solve	Allow problems to be opportunities for creative solutions
Respond	Let the public know how its input affected the City's decision

When to Start Thinking About Public Engagement

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

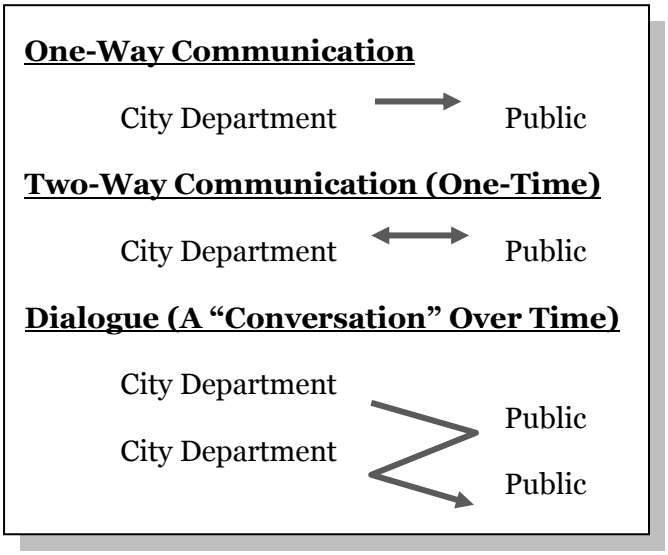
Ongoing vs. One-Time Public Engagement

Not all public engagement activities are one-time activities aimed at a single project. The City is constantly contacted with complaints and recommendations on various City policies and procedures. ***City Department Administrators are encouraged to review how open and responsive their departments are to the ongoing stream of various public input regarding their services, programs, and operations.*** Relatively simple tools and policies (such as web pages requesting feedback, and internal policies on recording and regularly analyzing public feedback) can increase the degree to which a City Department is open to dialoguing with the public about services paid for by their taxes. Writing out certain policies, the rationale behind them, and how they fit into the grand scheme of a department's operations can also increase the degree to which a department is perceived to be open and responsive to the public.



Getting to Dialogue

For issues or projects that generate a high volume of interest, public engagement becomes a dialogue that is a two-way conversation. In dialogue, the City and the public both speak and listen. Ideas are shared and discussed. There is a flow of information, insights, and opinions. Dialogue is more than one-way and one-time communication; it is a conversation that occurs over time. The following figure illustrates three types of communication with the public. Consider the benefits of dialogue compared to one-way and one-time communication, especially on projects that are complex or large in scope or impact.



Six Basic Steps to Public Engagement

There is a popular learning activity about the nature of communication: Students form a line. The teacher whispers a predetermined message to the first student who then whispers it to her partner who whispers it to his partner and so on until the message has reached the last student. The last student shares the message with the class. Then, the teacher repeats the original message to the class. Often, the final message is greatly distorted from the original. As the message is transmitted, pieces of it can be heard incorrectly, interpreted incorrectly, remembered incorrectly, and repeated incorrectly. Likewise, there are many points along the public engagement process where communication can break down. ***It is important to make clear connections from one point in the public engagement process to the next, tying the process together in a way that preserves the integrity of public messages to decision-makers and wins the public's confidence that the City has utilized an effective participatory process.***

Six Basic Steps to Public Engagement

1. Plan
2. Notify
3. Educate
4. Listen
5. Follow Through
6. Adapt

These six steps to public engagement provide a basic framework for engaging the public: plan, notify, educate, listen, follow through, and adapt. Each step is a key element of good public engagement and is explained in greater detail in the following sections. Though public engagement generally follows this order, at times you may find it necessary to combine steps or repeat steps in a series of activities. For example, the Planning Division has adopted a practice of notifying the public about a project early on. Planning listens to the interests and concerns of the community. Community concerns then help set the parameters of the project during the planning phase.

Step 1: Plan

The first step is to design a public engagement plan that fits the scope of your project. This requires activities such as (1) identifying the decision-makers and dates when formal decisions will be made, (2) determining the level of public engagement based on the scope/impact of the project, and (3) determining which "public" to target and how to engage them, and (4) developing a timeline to achieve the remainder of the public engagement steps.

Develop your plan early to allow time to notify the public, educate the public, listen to their input, follow through with the input, and adapt your plans as unforeseen needs emerge. Provide a minimum of two weeks notice for public engagement activities; ideally, provide 45 days or more to give community organizations time to forward the notice to their members. Work backwards from target dates for final decisions to determine how much time the public engagement effort will require. For small projects, begin planning your public engagement effort at least 2-3 months before final decisions are to be made; medium and large projects will require additional time.

Who are the decision-makers and when will formal decisions be made?

Identify who will make the formal decisions about the project. Elected officials? Administrators? Boards or commissions? Work groups? Ad-hoc committees? Some decision-making processes are outlined in City Code whereas with many projects, a formal process is not clearly outlined and a unique plan is developed for that particular

project. ***Also, identify specific requirements for recommendations and public input.*** Does the decision-making process require a recommendation from a group? Does the process require any specific public engagement activities such as notification or hearings that lead up to the decision? ***Determine when formal decisions will be made and what required activities must lead up to that point.*** This information will help you understand more about the scope of the project and how much additional public engagement should be done. It also forms the foundation for a timeline which can be shared with the public.

Who are the stakeholders?

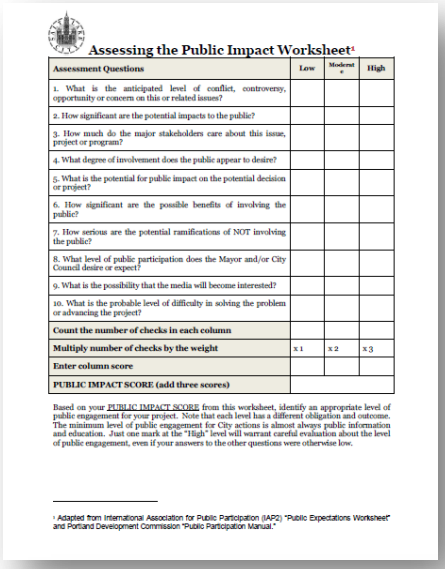
The term "stakeholder" refers to anyone who has a stake, or interest, in an outcome. This includes both people who will benefit from the project and people who could be adversely affected by it; it includes employees who have a stake in making the project successful and residents who will be impacted by the project outcomes; it also includes other City departments, other governmental agencies, non-profit community groups, and businesses. ***Take a moment to brainstorm all of the potential stakeholders of your project—people who either have something to gain or something to lose as a consequence of decisions made about the project. Ask yourself: Who is doing the planning? Who is providing input? Who is giving approvals? Who is paying? Who is doing the work? Who will be impacted by the outcomes? And who should know about the project? From your answers, develop a list of stakeholders who should be engaged in the project.*** This is a group of organizations and individuals who you can name on a list. Though the general public does have a stake in the outcome and they are considered stakeholders in the broad sense of the term, the "stakeholders group" is a distinct list of people who can be engaged on the project. While the "public" should be informed and engaged on a project, the stakeholders group generally spends more time and effort contributing throughout the project.

Think about both external and internal stakeholders. External stakeholders include other governmental agencies, non-profit community groups or special interest groups, businesses, and individual residents. Stakeholders can also be any person or organization that has the power to block the decision or project. There may be a natural inclination to avoid this type of stakeholder but including them in the public engagement effort creates needed buy-in. ***There are several ways to involve external stakeholders ranging from simple notification to involving them directly in the planning and execution of the project. Plan to involve external stakeholders adequately throughout the project.*** Your list of stakeholders may grow as the project progresses and individuals or groups show interest in the project. Be flexible enough to involve new stakeholders at any time.

There are numerous interdependencies between city departments and divisions. Early and systematic consideration of the internal stakeholders for your project can help to identify issues before they become critical. ***Involve other city departments (internal stakeholders) during your planning phase. Consider sending an e-mail or holding an initial coordination meeting to present the basics about the project to various departments and to ask representatives if there are special needs for coordination.*** While some city departments may play a direct role in your project, others such as the Mayor's Office and City Council Office, may benefit from foreknowledge of the project, and even provide assistance in your public engagement activities.

What level of public engagement is needed?

The amount of public engagement needed varies depending on the nature and scope of the project. ***In general, the higher the anticipated levels of public interest/concern and public impact, the more extensive the public engagement process should be. The "Assessing the Public Impact" and "Determining the Level of Public Engagement" worksheets in the appendix of this guide can help you identify an appropriate level of public engagement for your project.*** You may choose to run through the exercise of assigning levels and a score for your project, or you may choose to simply use the questions as a mental checklist. In the end, the appropriate level of public engagement is a judgment call and is a decision which may need to be revisited as the public engagement and decision-making processes move forward.

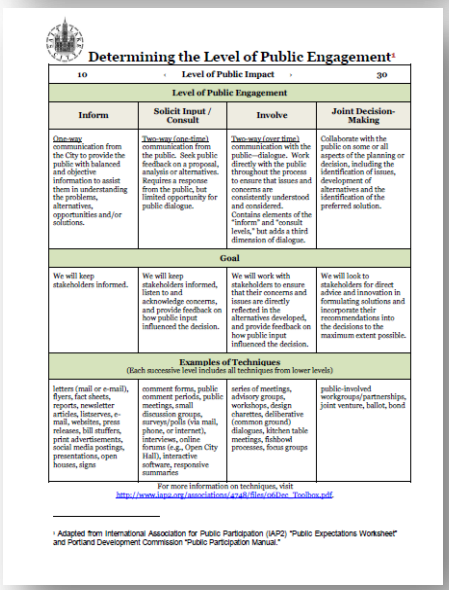


Assessing the Public Impact Worksheet[1]

Assessment Questions	Low	Moderate	High
1. What is the anticipated level of conflict, controversy, opportunity or concern on this or related issues?			
2. How significant are the potential impacts to the public?			
3. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue, project or program?			
4. What degree of involvement does the public appear to desire?			
5. What is the potential for public impact on the potential decision or project?			
6. How significant are the possible benefits of involving the public?			
7. How serious are the potential ramifications of NOT involving the public?			
8. What level of public participation does the Mayor and/or City Council desire or expect?			
9. What is the possibility that the media will become interested?			
10. What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem or advancing the project?			
Count the number of checks in each column			
Multiply number of checks by the weight	x 1	x 2	x 3
Enter column score			
PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE (add three scores)			

Based on your PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE from this worksheet, identify an appropriate level of public engagement for your project. Note that each level has a different obligation and outcome. The minimum level of public engagement for City actions is almost always public information and education. Just one mark at the "High" level will warrant careful evaluation about the level of public engagement, even if your answers to the other questions were otherwise low.

[1] Adapted from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Public Expectations Worksheet" and Portland Development Commission "Public Participation Manual."



Determining the Level of Public Engagement[1]

10 · Level of Public Impact · 30			
Level of Public Engagement			
Inform	**Solicit Input / Consult**	**Involve**	**Joint Decision-Making**
One-way communication from the City to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Two-way (one-time) communication from the public. Seek public feedback on a proposal, analysis or alternatives. Requires a response from the public, but limited opportunity for public dialogue.	Two-way (over time) communication with the public—dialogue. Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. Contains elements of the "inform" and "consult levels," but adds a third dimension of dialogue.	Collaborate with the public on some or all aspects of the planning or decision, including the identification of issues, development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Goal			
We will keep stakeholders informed.	We will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to stakeholders for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
Examples of Techniques (Each successive level includes all techniques from lower levels)			
letters (mail or e-mail), flyers, fact sheets, reports, newsletter articles, listserves, e-mail, websites, press releases, bill stuffers, print advertisements, social media postings, presentations, open houses, signs	comment forms, public comment periods, public meetings, small discussion groups, surveys/polls (via mail, phone, or internet), interviews, online forums (e.g., Open City Hall), interactive software, responsive summaries	series of meetings, advisory groups, workshops, design charettes, deliberative (common ground) dialogues, kitchen table meetings, fishbowl processes, focus groups	public-involved workgroups/partnerships, joint venture, ballot, bond

For more information on techniques, visit http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf.

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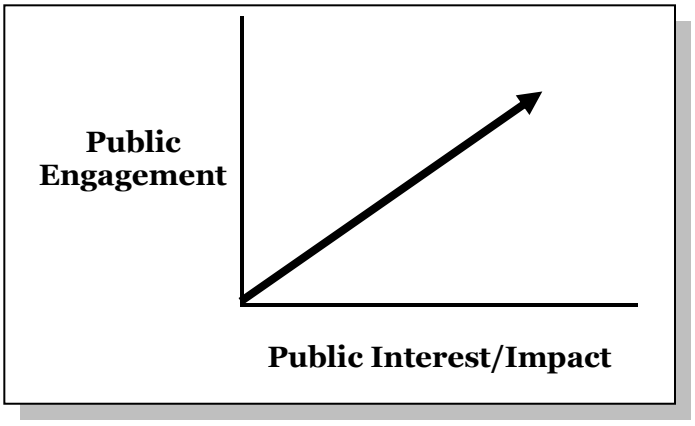


Reaching the public

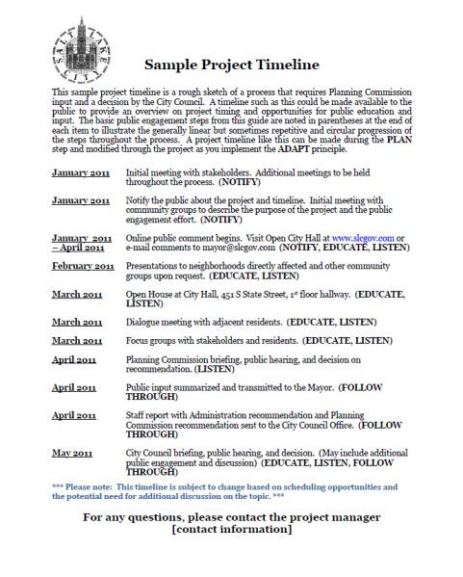
It is important to determine who exactly constitutes "the public" in relation to your project. You will need to decide how best to reach the greatest number of people—educating them about the project and inviting their input—given your limited resources. A blend of "active" and "passive" methods of public engagement can be used to accomplish this. Active methods of public engagement are public engagement efforts that require approaching and reaching out directly to individuals or groups. In contrast, passive methods are those which require the public to approach the City for information about the issue or project. While active methods are more personal and more likely to engage members of the public, passive methods can act as a "catch-all" for anyone not engaged through active methods. Therefore a blend of these methods is recommended.

Information about your project can be made available to anyone who comes seeking it by posting it on online. Web pages in your department page within the City website can provide descriptions of your issue/project and also list the project timeline and methods for providing input such as meeting dates/locations and contact information for key staff including their phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and physical mailing addresses. ***Major issues or projects should also be posted on "Open City Hall," the City's online public forum tool.*** Open City Hall allows members of the public to read material about a project and to comment on it after completing the one-time registration with the site.

While the internet is an excellent tool for public engagement, public engagement should also include active efforts to reach out directly to the public. Some examples of active outreach are sending flyers or e-mails directly to stakeholders and presenting at community meetings. Often, active outreach is accomplished through community organizations. There are various community organizations in the city that represent various populations and interests. Some organizations, like the community councils, are organized by neighborhood. Others are organized by special interest such as bike, dog, or environmental advocates, or special populations such as the Latino, Pacific Islander, or disability communities. ***Community organizations can be vehicles through which public engagement occurs. However, take***

care to not assume that a community organization is fully represents the all of the interests of the community. It is a good practice to diversify the groups you reach out to and the techniques you use for outreach in order to reach the greatest number and most representative section of the public.

Develop a timeline for your process



Sample Project Timeline

This sample project timeline is a rough sketch of a process that requires Planning Commission input and a decision by the City Council. A timeline such as this could be made available to the public to provide an overview on project timing and opportunities for public education and input. The basic public engagement steps from this guide are noted in parentheses at the end of each item to illustrate the generally linear but sometimes repetitive and circular progression of the steps throughout the process. A project timeline like this can be made during the **PLAN** step and modified through the project as you implement the **ADAPT** principle.

January 2011	Initial meeting with stakeholders. Additional meetings to be held throughout the process. (NOTIFY)
January 2011	Notify the public about the project and timeline. Initial meeting with community groups to describe the purpose of the project and the public engagement effort. (NOTIFY)
January 2011 – April 2011	Online public comment begins. Visit Open City Hall at www.slcgov.com or e-mail comments to mayor@slcgov.com (NOTIFY, EDUCATE, LISTEN)
February 2011	Presentations to neighborhoods directly affected and other community groups upon request. (EDUCATE, LISTEN)
March 2011	Open House at City Hall, 451 S State Street, 1st floor hallway. (EDUCATE, LISTEN)
March 2011	Dialogue meeting with adjacent residents. (EDUCATE, LISTEN)
March 2011	Focus groups with stakeholders and residents. (EDUCATE, LISTEN)
April 2011	Planning Commission briefing, public hearing, and decision on recommendation. (LISTEN)
April 2011	Public input summarized and transmitted to the Mayor. (FOLLOW THROUGH)
April 2011	Staff report with Administration recommendation and Planning Commission recommendation sent to the City Council Office. (FOLLOW THROUGH)
May 2011	City Council briefing, public hearing, and decision. (May include additional public engagement and discussion) (EDUCATE, LISTEN, FOLLOW THROUGH)

*** Please note: This timeline is subject to change based on scheduling opportunities and the potential need for additional discussion on the topic. ***

For any questions, please contact the project manager
[contact information]

A timeline is a valuable tool both for planning an effective public engagement process and for educating the public on the overall project process. A common complaint by members of the public is that they were not aware of the overall plan and timeline for deciding on an issue or project. You can avoid complaints from the public that they were "blindsided" with the issue by sharing your plan and timeline with them early. ***It is recommended that you develop a one-page timeline for the public that clearly lays out the "who, what, when, where, and how" of the overall process.***

Begin your timeline by listing dates related to formal decision-making processes and deadlines related to the project. Work backwards from target dates for final decisions to determine how much time the public engagement effort will require. Include in your timeline brief descriptions of each item that can be easily understood by the public. If technical terms are used, define them or use alternative simple lay language. It is suggested that you share your draft timeline with other staff members and even some members of the public for feedback on the process and the clarity of the timeline. If the timeline is made available to the public on the internet, consider updating it with results of each event as each date passes so that at any time, anyone can easily identify the status of the project. A sample project timeline is located in the appendix of this guide.

Step 2: Notify

After planning has been completed, the second step in the public engagement process is to sufficiently notify the public about the project and the public engagement plan. Sufficient notification requires getting the word out early, to as many members of the public as possible, that the City is working on the issue or project. The notification step sends the message to the public that "this project may affect you" and educates them on the public engagement and decision-making processes planned for the

project. ***During notification, describe the purpose and goals for the project. Also, outline the public engagement plan using the project timeline, highlighting opportunities for education, input, and involvement.*** Notification can be accomplished through a variety of mediums and techniques such as initial visits to community organization meetings, open houses, e-mails to individuals and groups, letters through the mail, phone calls to community leaders, and a posting within the department webpage. ***Remember to provide a minimum of two weeks, ideally 45 days, notice for public engagement activities.***

Step 3: Educate

The third step is to educate the public about the project. The public cannot provide input without a clear understanding of the project. In the past, the City has received complaints from members of the public who had wished to provide input on a major project but expressed frustration because they did not feel they could make an informed conclusion due to lack of information. It is easy for a project manager who is daily involved in the project to forget that it may not be as easy for community members to grasp what is being proposed. Education allows for meaningful discussion and dialogue to occur by providing common ground for all interested parties. In addition, it can prevent myths that may emerge, either inadvertently or strategically by opponents, about the costs and benefits of the project. ***Be careful to not skip the important step of educating the public to allow them to make informed conclusions about the project. Take time to clarify the decision-making process, the scope and impacts of the project, and the variables and alternatives to be considered.*** Long staff reports may need to be summarized in an executive summary or in a bullet-point format. Profession-specific language should be translated into simple lay terms. Use both print and public meetings to educate. The educate step may occur as an individual step or in conjunction with step 4, "Listen." The important thing is to remember to educate. This step is vital to a smooth process and good public input.

Step 4: Listen

The fourth step is to gather public input and show the public that you are listening. Once educated on the project, the public can provide informed opinions. There are several methods for obtaining public input such as through e-mail, Open City Hall, public meetings, interviews, and focus groups. The methods you choose will depend on the nature and

scope of your project. Consider the costs and benefits of one-time, one-way input versus involvement and dialogue over time. Gathering public input may seem relatively simple but there are some details to consider: ***First, decide where to keep all of the public input.*** It may be in an electronic folder on your computer and a hard copy folder in your files. As input is received, move it into those folders immediately so nothing is missed. By carefully recording all public input, you can reassure the public that their opinions will be considered as a final decision is made.

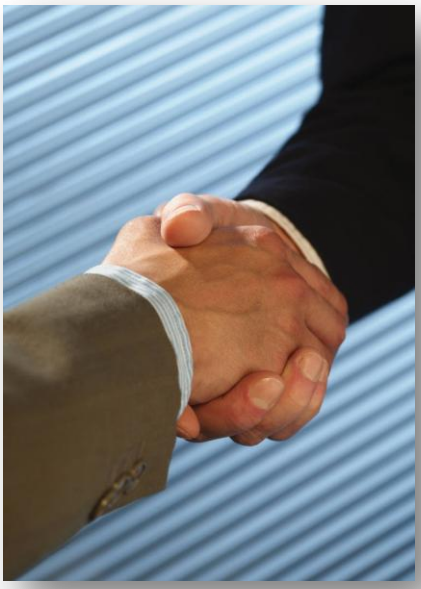
Second, ***determine how verbal input will be recorded.*** You may receive phone calls and attend meetings where members of the public voice their opinions. Generally, in government business, only items in writing and verbal comments during formal meetings and public hearings are considered "official" but project managers are encouraged to be flexible in receiving verbal input in addition to those formal methods. Consider what form of input you will encourage from community groups. Many community groups assume they need to come to consensus by majority vote on an issue to submit their opinion. Taking a poll of the number of people in favor of and the number opposed to a project may be more valuable than a single unified opinion in that it describes how many people actually participated in the process and exactly how many were in favor versus opposed to the project.

Third, ***consider what types of questions you will ask the public.*** People can be quick to come to conclusions about whether they are in favor of or opposed to a project and community groups will often want to take a vote to that end. However, many projects involve a number of components each with more than one alternative. ***Move beyond gauging general support for a project by asking follow-up questions as to why someone is opposed to the project and whether they have suggestions on addressing those concerns.*** Many projects are flexible enough to allow several modifications in response to public input. Rather than being a rigid idea put up for public acceptance or rejection, projects can be shaped and molded by public opinion to the point where individuals who disliked the initial proposal may come to accept or even like the final proposal. ***When possible and early on in the process, provide a list of alternative approaches to a policy or project and their associated pros and cons. Allow the public to comment on the list and add other alternatives, pros, and cons.*** This provides an opportunity for the public to discuss each alternative, the community values underlying each, how desirable the new policy or project is, the intended consequences, and potential unintended consequences. When

presenting the list of alternatives, remember the "do nothing alternative," which is the option to keep things as they are.

Fourth, ***approach the public with willingness and openness.*** Avoid communicating in ways that would suggest reluctance, as though the public engagement is required of you against your will. Pay special attention to the nonverbal cues you give off as you engage the public. Some members of the public may have cultivated an attitude that public engagement is "window dressing" and that the proposed project will move forward regardless of public input. It is important to overcome this barrier by approaching the public in a way that conveys you are willing to alter or even halt (the "do nothing alternative") the project if there is enough input to warrant it.

Finally, ***it is important to show the public that you are listening by summarizing what you have heard, thanking them for their time, and reassuring them that they have been heard and their input will be considered.***



Step 5: Follow Through

The fifth step is to follow through by sending the public input to the decision-makers and to follow through again by providing the public with the rationale for the decision in light of all relevant facts and opinions. Whatever input methods are used, communicate to individuals and groups that you have heard them. Acknowledge them. Throughout the process, summarize questions and concerns that have been heard. An issues summary and/or frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet may be useful. Describe how input will be communicated and presented to the decision-makers. This is often accomplished through staff reports or memos but other methods may be used as well. Depending on the amount of public input received, you may need to devise a process to summarize the input for decision-makers in a way that provides a succinct report while preserving the intent of individual comments. If community groups provide unified opinions, write a brief explanation of the individuals who participated in forming that opinion including the number of people who were present. This will help decision-makers gain an understanding of the strength and representation of a group's opinion.

Ask decision-makers to provide rationale for their decisions in light of all of the facts including all public opinion. Document the rationale and make it available to the public. If possible, provide rationale for why one alternative was chosen over others and why decisions were made to move forward in light of opposition, if there was any.

Step 6: Adapt

The sixth step is to adapt, be flexible. During implementation of your public engagement plan, regularly assess whether goals and expectations related to public engagement are being met, and revise the plan as needed. This may require changes such as pushing back decision dates, creating additional education material in response to confusion or erroneous rumors that have surfaced, meeting an additional time with a community group to provide sufficient time for discussion on the topics, adding time for a new group of stakeholders not previously identified to catch up with others in the process, or expanding the public engagement process because the level of impact was found to be greater than previously thought.

During your project, consider gathering feedback from the public and your internal workgroup on the quality of the process and whether it is meeting their expectations.

After your project is complete, consider "debriefing" both internally and externally with discussions about how public engagement for future similar projects can be improved. Answer the following questions: What went well? What didn't go well? And what recommendations do you have for the future? The City is collecting case studies from which to learn lessons on public engagement best practices. All City Departments are encouraged to regularly write case studies and contribute them to the collection for future reference.

Appendix

A. Six Steps to Public Engagement Checklist

B. Assessing the Public Impact Worksheet

C. Determining the Level of Public Engagement Worksheet

D. Sample Project Timeline

Six Steps to Public Engagement

1. Plan

- ☑ Design a public engagement plan that fits the scope of your project.
- ☑ Identify who will make the formal decisions about the project, specific requirements for recommendations and public input, when formal decisions will be made, and what required activities must lead up to that point.
- ☑ Brainstorm a list of all of the potential stakeholders—both internal and external—of your project. Involve other city departments in your planning.
- ☑ Determine the appropriate level of public engagement based on the scope/impact of the project (see "Public Impact" and "Level of Public Engagement" worksheets)
- ☑ Determine which "public" to target and how to engage them.
- ☑ Develop a timeline to achieve the remainder of the public engagement steps.

2. Notify

- ☑ Notify the public about the project and the public engagement plan. Get the word out early, to as many affected members of the public as possible, that the City is working on the issue or project.
- ☑ Describe the purpose and goals for the project.
- ☑ Outline the public engagement plan using the project timeline, highlighting opportunities for education, input, and involvement.
- ☑ Remember to provide a minimum of two weeks, ideally 45 days, notice for public engagement activities.

3. Educate

- ☑ Educate the public about the project to allow them to make informed conclusions about the project.
- ☑ Take time to clarify the decision-making process, the scope and impacts of the project, and the variables and alternatives to be considered.
- ☑ Use both print (including electronic) and public meetings to educate. Long staff reports may need to be summarized in an executive summary. Profession-specific language should be translated into simple lay terms.

Six Steps to Public Engagement

(continued)

4. Listen

- ☑ Gather public input and show the public that you are listening.
- ☑ Decide where to keep all of the public input.
- ☑ Determine how verbal input will be recorded.
- ☑ Consider what types of questions you will ask the public and how follow-up questions can reveal core concerns about possible solutions.
- ☑ Approach the public with willingness and openness.
- ☑ Show the public that you are listening by summarizing what you have heard, thanking them for their time, and reassuring them that they have been heard and that their input will be considered.

5. Follow Through

- ☑ Present the public input to the decision-makers.
- ☑ Ask decision-makers to provide rationale for their decisions in light of all of the facts including all public opinion.
- ☑ Provide the public with the rationale for the decision in light of all relevant facts and opinions.

6. Adapt

- ☑ Be flexible. During implementation of your public engagement plan, regularly assess whether goals and expectations related to public engagement are being met, and revise the plan as needed.
- ☑ During your project, consider gathering feedback from the public and your internal workgroup on how the process is going and whether it is meeting their expectations.
- ☑ After you project is complete, consider "debriefing" both internally and externally with discussions about how the public engagement for future projects can be improved.

Assessing the Public Impact Worksheet[1]

Assessment Questions	Low	Moderate	High
1. What is the anticipated level of conflict, controversy, opportunity or concern on this or related issues?			
2. How significant are the potential impacts to the public?			
3. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue, project or program?			
4. What degree of involvement does the public appear to desire?			
5. What is the potential for public impact on the potential decision or project?			
6. How significant are the possible benefits of involving the public?			
7. How serious are the potential ramifications of NOT involving the public?			
8. What level of public participation does the Mayor and/or City Council desire or expect?			
9. What is the possibility that the media will become interested?			
10. What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem or advancing the project?			
Count the number of checks in each column			
Multiply number of checks by the weight	x 1	x 2	x 3
Enter column score			
PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE (add three scores)			

Based on your PUBLIC IMPACT SCORE from this worksheet, identify an appropriate level of public engagement for your project. Note that each level has a different obligation and outcome. The minimum level of public engagement for City actions is almost always public information and education. Just one mark at the "High" level will warrant careful evaluation about the level of public engagement, even if your answers to the other questions were otherwise low.

[1] Adapted from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Public Expectations Worksheet" and Portland Development Commission "Public Participation Manual."

Determining the Level of Public Engagement[1]

10 ← ← Public Impact Score → → 30			
Level of Public Engagement			
Inform	**Solicit Input / Consult**	**Involve**	**Joint Decision-Making**
One-way communication from the City to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Two-way (one-time) communication from the public. Seek public feedback on a proposal, analysis or alternatives. Requires a response from the public, but limited opportunity for public dialogue.	Two-way (over time) communication with the public—dialogue. Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. Contains elements of the "inform" and "consult levels," but adds a third dimension of dialogue.	Collaborate with the public on some or all aspects of the planning or decision, including the identification of issues, development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Goal			
We will keep stakeholders informed.	We will keep stakeholders informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to stakeholders for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
Examples of Techniques (Each successive level includes all techniques from lower levels)			
letters (mail or e-mail), flyers, fact sheets, reports, newsletter articles, listserves, e-mail, websites, press releases, bill stuffers, print advertisements, social media postings, presentations, open houses, signs	comment forms, public comment periods, public meetings, small discussion groups, surveys/polls (via mail, phone, or internet), interviews, online forums (e.g., Open City Hall), interactive software, responsive summaries	series of meetings, advisory groups, workshops, design charettes, deliberative (common ground) dialogues, kitchen table meetings, fishbowl processes, focus groups	public-involved workgroups/partnerships, joint venture, ballot, bond

For more information on techniques, visit http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf.

[1] Adapted from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Public Expectations Worksheet" and Portland Development Commission "Public Participation Manual."

Sample Project Timeline

This sample project timeline is a rough sketch of a process that requires Planning Commission input and a decision by the City Council. A timeline such as this could be made available to the public to provide an overview on project timing and opportunities for public education and input. The basic public engagement steps from this guide are noted in parentheses at the end of each item to illustrate the generally linear but sometimes repetitive and circular progression of the steps throughout the process. A project timeline like this can be made during the **PLAN** step and modified through the project as you implement the **ADAPT** principle.

January 2011	Initial meeting with stakeholders. Additional meetings to be held throughout the process. (**NOTIFY**)
January 2011	Notify the public about the project and timeline. Initial meeting with community groups to describe the purpose of the project and the public engagement effort. (**NOTIFY**)
January 2011 – April 2011	Online public comment begins. Visit Open City Hall at www.slcgov.com or e-mail comments to mayor@slcgov.com (**NOTIFY, EDUCATE, LISTEN**)
February 2011	Presentations to neighborhoods directly affected and other community groups upon request. (**EDUCATE, LISTEN**)
March 2011	Open House at City Hall, 451 S State Street, 1st floor hallway. (**EDUCATE, LISTEN**)
March 2011	Dialogue meeting with adjacent residents. (**EDUCATE, LISTEN**)
March 2011	Focus groups with stakeholders and residents. (**EDUCATE, LISTEN**)
April 2011	Planning Commission briefing, public hearing, and decision on recommendation. (**LISTEN**)
April 2011	Public input summarized and transmitted to the Mayor. (**FOLLOW THROUGH**)
April 2011	Staff report with Administration recommendation and Planning Commission recommendation sent to the City Council Office. (**FOLLOW THROUGH**)
May 2011	City Council briefing, public hearing, and decision. (May include additional public engagement and discussion) (**EDUCATE, LISTEN, FOLLOW THROUGH**)

***** Please note: This timeline is subject to change based on scheduling opportunities and the potential need for additional discussion on the topic. *****

For any questions, please contact the project manager [contact information]