

About this Workbook

Community engagement looks complex on the surface, partly because of the differing definitions of community and of engagement, the different ways people in communities can interact with an engagement process, and the substantial array of tools available for community engagement.

But the process of community engagement becomes simpler if its purposes are clear, if it is well planned, if the tools are chosen to fit the unique needs of each engagement process, and if it is supported by a communication strategy that values clarity, timeliness, relevance and accessibility.

This workbook walks you through what you'll need to consider in designing and implementing a community engagement process that is inclusive, accessible and results-oriented. We've simplified it into two key phases:

Planning for Engagement - Consider the determinants of successful engagement processes and develop a community engagement plan. We've provided planning worksheets to organize your thinking on the following:

- Purpose: Why is this initiative needed?
- Audience: Who do we want to engage?
- Engagement Partners: Who are our engagement partners?
- Outcomes: What are the outcomes we are trying to achieve?
- Resources: What resources do we need?
- Communication: What's our communication plan?

Implementation – Select the tools and techniques you'll use to engage the community. Think about the specific results that you want to achieve and identify the key actions and roles required.

- Select appropriate method(s) of engagement
- Implement each method

When you've worked your way through each element of this guidebook, you'll be able to complete the two charts on the following pages to summarize your path forward: the Community Engagement Plan Summary and an Implementation Plan framework.

This workbook is not a definitive guide on how to develop a community engagement plan, but rather a starting point for you in the development of your own community engagement plan.

Ready to begin?



Community Engagement Plan Summary

Plan Element	Response
Purpose : Why is this initiative needed?	
Audience: Who do we want	
to engage?	
Partners: Who are our	
engagement partners (e.g.	
community partners, staff, stakeholders)?	
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Outcomes: What are the	
outcomes we wish to	
achieve?	
Resources: What resources	
do we need?	
Communication: What's our	
communication plan?	



Implementation Plan

What audience(s) are we looking to engage?	What activities will we undertake?	Which partners will we involve?	What resources (new or existing) are needed?	What is our timeline for getting this done?	What are our anticipated outcomes and how will we know if we have been successful?	How will we use the feedback we receive?



Why is this initiative needed?

Purpose answers the question: why engage?

From the outset be clear about the scope and purpose of the engagement process. Agreeing on a clear purpose will help identify engagement objectives, anticipated outcomes and help to determine the scope and depth of the engagement. This can range from informing the community through to involvement in decision making, per the IAP2s Public Participation Spectrum.

	Increasing Level of Public Impact			
Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Creating the Purpose

An organization wishing to identify a purpose that community engagement might serve (if the community has not already identified the purpose) can do so in two ways:

- 1. By directly deciding on a purpose without consultation with the communities to be involved in the engagement. Sometimes this "solo" approach is necessary because the organization has a compelling need to solve a problem or address an issue or opportunity, and this need will clearly drive the purpose of engagement. However, an inflexible statement of purpose can alienate potential community participants.
- 2. By negotiating the purpose with the community. This may be essential in some instances; since the community's investment of time and creativity in the engagement process is often crucial, the community will not make and sustain this investment unless it agrees with the purpose or has a chance to add complementary purposes of its own. However, negotiating purposes can be tricky. Generally, defining the purpose precedes defining the communities to be involved in achieving the purpose but unless one can identify the communities to be engaged, it is not possible to negotiate with the communities to establish the purposes. Dealing with this complexity often involves preliminary discussions with people drawn from the community to identify a clear but provisional set of purposes, to be refined and made clear once the communities have become more fully engaged.

Clarity of purpose does not have to mean rigidity of purpose. Once an engagement process has begun, participants may see new purposes that can be served by the engagement process.



Why engage?

Purpose: Why is this initiative needed?

What purpose does your engagement serve? What goals are you trying to achieve?

✓	Purpose & Goals
	to convey and explain information to a community
	to seek community feedback on information
	to elicit information from a community
	to engage community talent and skill in helping solve a problem that otherwise would not be solved
	to elicit community support for an initiative
	to engage a community in a planning process
	to negotiate with a community
	to elicit community involvement in the monitoring or evaluation of an activity, program or system
	to elicit and/or support ongoing community involvement in the operation of an activity, program or system (as board members, advisory committee members, volunteers or as potential or actual employees or recipients of service)
	to provide a community with tools that will help it address an issue among its members
	to respond to an issue that the community has defined, and on which it wants dialogue
	Other:

Notes



Who do we want to engage?

Audience: Who needs to be engaged?

For some community engagement processes, communities will self-identify as participants (for instance, when the aim is to respond to an issue the community has defined and on which it wants dialogue). For other processes, community identification will be more difficult. Identifying communities is closely tied to the question "Who is a stakeholder?" and is similarly tied to the question "What is the purpose of this engagement strategy?"

One simple definition of a stakeholder is "Any group or individual who can affect or who is affected by achievement of (or failure to achieve) an objective."

This definition casts a wide net. But identifying participant communities is also closely tied to the question: "What resources are available for this engagement initiative?" Given infinite resources, an engagement initiative could engage (or try to engage) everybody. But resources are finite, and criteria often need to be developed to guide decisions on who should be involved. The primary community you are looking to engage will be the one most affected by the issue. Keep these principles in mind as you consider who to engage:

Engage those who know the community best

Recognize the knowledge and expertise of community participants, the "context experts" who live in the community and experience it day to day. Appropriate community engagement processes should provide opportunities for the thoughts, opinions, ideas, and vision of participating community members to be expressed, acknowledged, and incorporated.

Engage a representative group

Ensure you engage those who represent the characteristics of your target community. For example, if an issue or project affects the entire community, then those that you engage need to reflect the sociodemographic profile of the community. An engagement process that relates to a small group of users can be more focused in terms of who is invited to engage, but likewise should attempt to involve as many people as possible from the targeted group.

Ensure your engagement process is accessible and inclusive

Accessibility is a key consideration for any effort to engage the community, beginning with the invitation you make. When planning an engagement process you need to recognise diversity, identify any potential barriers and design the process to minimize barriers where possible. There are several important factors to address in order to ensure your community engagement process consultation is accessible and inclusive, including accessible venues, ensuring people can access materials and attend meetings in their own language, child care, transportation, timing, and, creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed.



Develop an Invitation List

Criteria	Name(s)	Organization/Group(s)
Who will be directly affected if		
the aim of this engagement is		
achieved?		
Who will be indirectly		
affected?		
Who wants to be involved?		
Who is already engaged or has		
Who is already engaged or has contacted us about this issue?		
contacted us about this issue?		
Are there existing community		
networks working on this		
issue?		
Who has unique skills or		
insights to offer to the		
engagement that cannot be		
garnered in any other way?		
Who has real or perceived		
moral claims that could affect		
a decision process or		
outcome?		
Who can exert power to make		
initiatives happen that spring		
from this process?		
Who is most likely to act as		
"spoiler" if they are not		
involved in this initiative?		
Whose voice is needed to		
balance competing or contrary		
voices?		
Who will be committed to		
following the process,		
including attending meetings		
and other logistical needs?		
Are there any legislated or		
required stakeholders?		



Engagement & Outreach Partners

Partners: Who are our engagement partners (e.g. community partners, staff)?

Dialogue for community engagement comes with expectation for action. Therefore, how we hold that conversation, and who we invite into the conversation is very important. The goal is to create mutuality in the outcome and garner resources through engagement.

In any community, there are "context experts" and "content experts". Context Experts are residents with lived experience, including children and youth. They are the people who experientially know about the issue. Content Experts are professionals, staff in your organization, service providers, and leaders with formal power who have knowledge, tools, and resources to address the issue. They are the people with the technical know-how. Depending on the nature of your engagement initiative, you may wish to identify both Context and Content Experts and engage them differently.

Identifying the Content Experts is important because you may wish to invite them into the process as engagement partners. They will help you to bring context experts together, communicate about the process, and implement any changes or initiatives that result from the engagement process.

Content Experts, and potential partners, include:

- Staff and leaders in our own organizations
- Those who represent the individuals and groups who will be affected if the aim of this engagement is achieved
- Existing community networks working on this issue
- Those who have real or perceived moral claims that could affect a decision process or outcome
- Those who can exert power to make initiatives happen that spring from this process
- Those most likely to be responsible for delivering any services or initiatives that spring from this process
- Those groups or individuals most likely to act as "spoiler" if they are not involved in this initiative

And don't forget to consider the "Unusual Suspects" - those who might not naturally be attracted to the work or issue such as community leaders in other networks, business, or industry representatives. Bringing new faces and voices to the table adds to the credibility of the entire group. It also adds new expertise and a new perspective to the issue at hand, increasing the chance of creating an engagement process that works because it builds on the expertise of a diverse, and representative, community voice.



Brainstorm Engagement Partners

Brainstorm the individuals and organizations in your community you could invite to the table as engagement and outreach partners. And don't forget to consider those who might be the Unusual Suspects on this issue in your community.

Community & School Groups	Business Representatives
Government	Community Members

If you're stuck, consider the following:

Community & School Groups:

- Artistic Organizations
- Charitable Groups & Drives
- Church Groups (youth, seniors, etc.)
- Collectors Groups
- Community Support Groups
- Elderly Groups
- Ethnic Associations
- Event Committees
- Health & Fitness Groups
- Heritage Associations & Museums
- Interest Clubs
- Mutual Support Groups

- Neighbourhood & Block Clubs
- Outdoor Groups
- Parents Associations
- School Groups
- Social Groups
- Service Clubs
- Social Cause Groups
- Sports Leagues
- Veterans Groups
- Youth Groups

Business Representatives:

- Local business owners
- Business Associations
- Local Media

Government Representatives:

- Local Government
- Civic Event Representatives
- Political Organizations
- First Nations leaders

Community Members:

- Local advocates
- Leaders of community and school groups
- Representatives of particular populations (ethnic groups, elderly, marginalized, disabled, etc.)
- Teachers, Police, Hospital representatives



Outcomes - Articulated

Outcomes: What are the outcomes we are trying to achieve?

Outcomes are closely linked to your original purpose and can be expressed in different formats. Revisit your purpose for engagement and consider where it falls along the community engagement continuum. Outcomes for Inform and Consult will look sharply different than outcomes for Collaborate and Empower. With community engagement outcomes, it is a good idea not only to shape outcomes and measurements along the engagement continuum but to also involve your stakeholders in that same process in order to articulate outcomes. After all, if they play a role in shaping those outcomes, they are more likely to play a stronger role in ensuring those outcomes actually occur.

Clarify Who's Involved in the Process

How do you intend to engage people in the process of articulating outcomes? How will you manage expectations for involvement?

- Will you keep people informed of the development process, defined outcomes, and progress?
- Who will you **consult** with and provide feedback on how input influenced decisions?
- Who will be involved in the process of articulating outcomes? Who will be excluded?
- Will you **collaborate** with anyone to ensure their concerns and aspirations are directed reflected in outcomes?
- Is there an opportunity to empower people to articulate and generate their own outcomes?

Consider outcomes that may arise at multiple levels

Here's a sample table of potential outcomes of a community engagement process at multiple levels.

Individual outcomes	Community outcomes	Service-level outcomes	Strategic outcomes
•feel more empowered •want to contribute •influence the decisions that affect their lives •receive better services •increase in confidence •develop skills •increase knowledge •enhance their stake in democracy	•new ideas and solutions - innovation and creativity •reduced conflict •improvements in inclusion and cohesion •bridges between 'us and them' •community ownership •reduced isolation •services which meet needs	•voices are valued •changed products and services •messages communicated about improvements •processes changed to hear voices •better quality services •feedback is sought •people care about and develop initiatives they have had a say in	•greater understanding of needs - public interest decisions •access to new resources and expertise •increased accountability •savings in time and money •more trust •enhanced democracy •staff retention

Source: Changes: Community Development Company. Accessed at http://changesuk.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/Community-engagement-outcomes-table.jpg



Outcomes-Articulated

Complete an initial brainstorm of potential outcomes of your community engagement process. You can use these to: further refine your purpose, build institutional support for the engagement process, and/or test with the community to look for alignment.

What will success look like?

- What types of evidence would be convincing to you and other stakeholders?
- How would you be able to collect evidence as the engagement develops?

A. Engagement Outcomes

Using the community engagement continuum as a touchstone, consider the potential outcomes that may emerge from your community engagement process.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Goal	To provide information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including developing alternatives and solution.	To place final decision-making power in the hands of the public.
Potential Outcomes					

B. Additional Outcomes

Can you map the above outcomes on multiple levels? What new outcomes emerge?

Individual Outcomes	Community Outcomes	Service-Level Outcomes	Strategic Outcomes



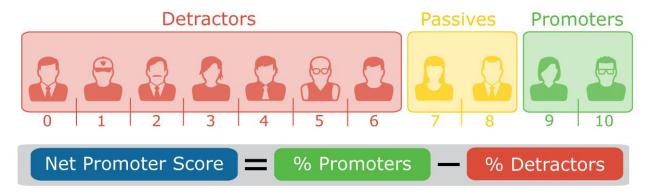
Outcomes - Net Promoter Score

Outcomes: What impact is your community engagement initiative having on loyalty?

Measuring the Voice of the Community and trying to understand what individuals really think and feel can be one of the most difficult outcomes to pursue – but, having a "customer-centric" approach is key to any engagement initiative, whether in the public or private sector. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is one such measure that has been successfully employed across the private sector to effectively link improvements to customer experience and loyalty to actual business outcomes. Established as a simple but bold new metric in 2003, NPS helps you understand the impact your product, service, or initiative is having on the people it has affected and where you should drive improvements.

How does NPS work?

- 1. Using your target audience, ask "How likely is it that you would recommend [Organization/Group/Place/Initiative] to a friend, colleague or family?"
- 2. The question has a 0-10 rating scale for respondents to answer, with 10 being extremely likely to recommend and 0 being not at all likely.
- 3. The Net Promoter Scores are then broken down into three categories:
 - "Promoters" are considered loyal. They would return or commit to the organization/group/place/initiative you are asking about and urge others to do the same (scores of 9 and 10)
 - "Passives" are satisfied but unenthusiastic. They can be easily detached and influenced elsewhere (scores of 7 and 8)
 - "Detractors" are unhappy and at risk of spreading negative word of mouth (scores 6 and below)
- 4. Calculate your Net Promoter Score by finding the percentage of "Promoters" then subtracting the percentage of "Detractors". The final percentage is your NPS.



Source: Changes: SATMETRIX. Accessed at http://www.satmetrix.com/nps-score-model/



Outcomes – Net Promoter Score

Consider how NPS could measure the impact of your engagement initiative

The NPS question should be as high level as possible, allowing respondents to respond to an overall experience and provide detail, in an open field, that will justify their response. Through analysis of responses (i.e. finding themes from "Detractors"), you can identify key themes and areas to drive change.

Here's a sample of questions and ways you can apply this measurement to better understand the impact of your community engagement initiative from a "customer" perspective.

- How likely are you to recommend City of Ottawa to your friends and family as a safe place to live?
- How likely are you to recommend the Volunteer Ottawa to your colleagues?
- How likely are you to recommend the Alzheimer's Society to your friends, family or peers as a place to volunteer?

Tips for Success

- Ensure you have an appropriate and sufficient sample size of people to ask your question. Ideally, you have 100 experienced respondents to be truly confident in the metric.
- Plan for consistency. NPS increases in value when you are able to trend the score and its drivers over time. To do so you must ask the same question.
- NPS matters little without follow up actions. Use the data to drive improvements and, where possible, showcase the changes you've made as a result of engaged input.
- Ask "Why?" and use this open commentary to identify key drivers behind the score.

Plan for Community-Centric Impact

Consider how NPS could measure the impact of your engagement initiative.

Frame your Question: How likely are you to recommend?	Who will you ask?	When will you ask your question? How frequently?	How can this Outcome impact your community engagement initiative?



Articulate Resources

What resources do we need?

The following types of resources will be required for most forms of engagement:

- Input by staff, volunteers and other interested stakeholders;
- Background information or briefing papers on the issue(s) or plan proposals;
- Independent facilitation;
- Communication and promotion, venue hire, transport, childcare, translation;
- Printing and circulating materials related to the process and its outcomes;
- Resourcing local community and non-profit groups to (for example and where appropriate) support people in understanding and responding to information and invitations to participate; complete research; convene meetings; prepare papers, reports or proposals.

Questions to Answer:

- Skills: What skills are available to us?
- Experience: What experience can we draw on?
- Who: Who holds these skills and experience?
- Facilities: What facilities can we access? (E.g. buildings, equipment, etc.)
- Time: What time is available?Budget: What is the budget?

Understanding the Costs of Engagement

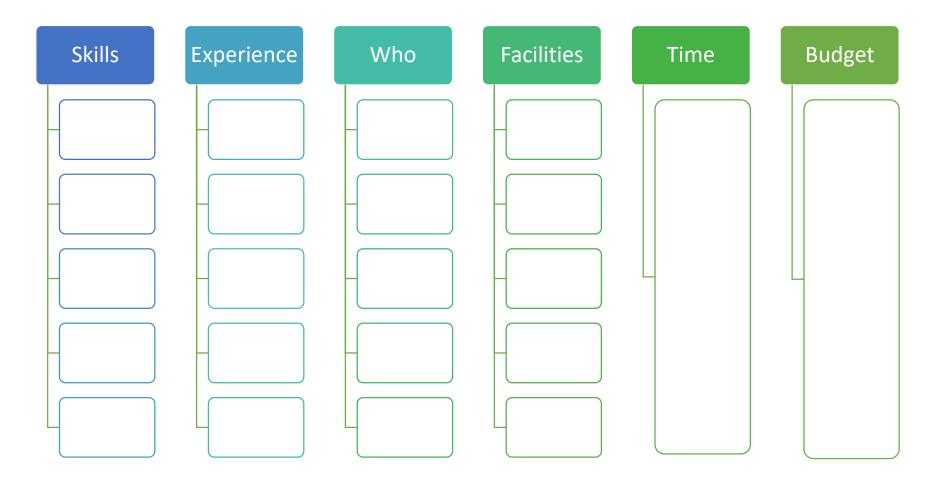
Community engagement processes have overt and hidden costs. Overt costs are usually covered by the process's budget. Hidden costs are usually not covered by anybody but the person incurring the costs. The most pronounced hidden costs are often the lost opportunity costs and the inconvenience costs associated with participants' investment of their time in the process. Understanding the hidden costs, and doing whatever is possible to see that these hidden costs do not fall more heavily on some members but not on others, can help prevent resentment from creeping into the process.

Resource Limitations

You should be clear and explicit about what you understand the limitations to be, such as time constraints, finances and resources available.



What resources are available to us?





Communication Channels

While a good deal of communication in a community engagement process will be person-to-person or small group communication, there is obviously a place for the use of more formal and more plannable communication channels. From email to websites, traditional print media to press releases, what channels are available to you and which make the most sense for your target audience?

At Tamarack, we've identified a number of channels we can use to communicate with and engage our members including:

- Blogs
- Webinars
- Social Media several accounts
- Website
- E-magazines and newsletters
- Learning events like Community Engagement: The Next Generation!

As an example, the British government's Government Communication Network schematic shows what can be taken into account in what the Government Communication Network calls "integrating channels of communication".

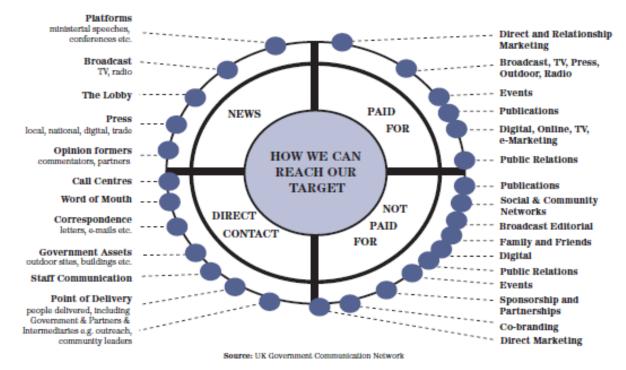


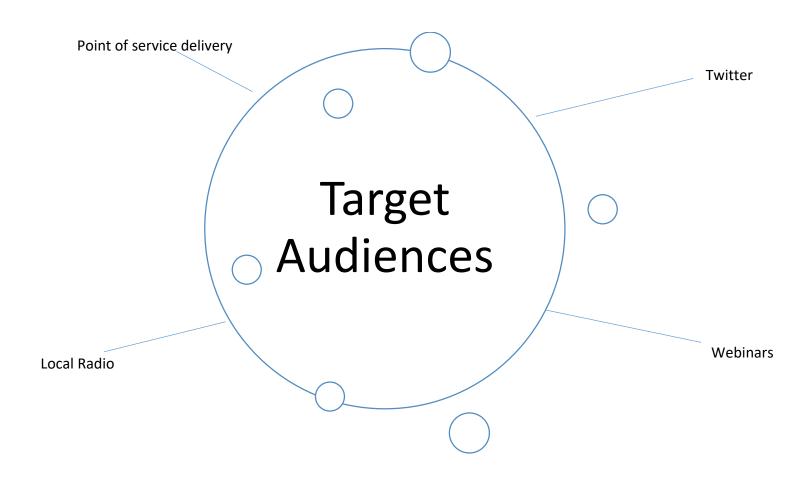
Figure 9: UK Government's Message Delivery Model

Source: Module 5: Community Engagement and Communication. The Health Planner's Toolkit, 2006.



Brainstorm: Communication Channels

What communication channels can you use to reach your target audiences?





Communication Strategy

Communication: What's our communication plan?

Communication is the thread that ties together all community engagement efforts. Poor communication is evasive and breeds division and mistrust. Good communication enlightens and builds trust – and both light and trust are essential to any community engagement process.

The first step to effective community engagement is **informing** the community about the particular issue or project under discussion. The community must have sufficient information to make informed decisions, including: relevant project/issue facts and perspectives, the roles and responsibilities of those undertaking the project, and constraining factors such as budgets or timelines. Create realistic expectations by being **open and transparent** about the nature of the project or issue under discussion, clearly defining the objectives of the process, sharing any constraints, and articulating how the community's input will be incorporated into the process or decision.

Central to informing the community of an issue or project and the related engagement process is the use of clear **accessible** language. Communication materials should be jargon free and in plain English; available in accessible formats and provided in alternative language(s) as appropriate. In order to maximize levels of participation communication materials should use clear examples or case studies of how the issue or proposed plan is likely to affect community members or sections of the community.

Equally as important as informing is the act of **promoting** how the community can be involved. Generally, more than one type of promotion is required to raise awareness and interest within the community (e.g. email, PSAs, public notices, posters, etc.). The level of promotion should reflect the level of impact of a project or issue. For example, a targeted meeting will not require broad promotion. Larger open meetings, workshops, web-based consultations, and exhibitions, on the other hand, will require broader promotion.

It is essential to **provide feedback** to participants of a community engagement process. Community members have given you their time and knowledge and it is imperative to recognize this by keeping them updated. Information to provide includes how participants' input has been used, the next steps of the project, and details as to future opportunities for input. Providing feedback on a consultation event is particularly important when there is a significant difference of opinion within the community.



Developing your Communication Plan

Time Stage of engagement	Purpose of the communication at this stage	Target Audiences for this stage	Key Messages to direct to each target audience	Tools to carry out the plan, including communication channels	Resources required to use each tool and complete this stage of the plan
Start-up					
Early "seed" communication					
Mid-stream communication					
End-stage communication					
Post-engagement					



Select Engagement Tools & Techniques

How will you engage?

There are a myriad of tools you can use to foster community engagement. Determine the community engagement tool(s) or technique(s) that reflect your purpose, are most appropriate for your issue and/or the level of engagement you seek.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Goal Promise	To provide information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. We will keep you informed.	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions. Listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how input	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered. Ensure that concerns and aspirations are reflected in the alternatives	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including developing alternatives and solution. Seek advice and innovation to form solutions and incorporate advice into the	To place final decision-making power in the hands of the public. Implement what the community decides.
		influenced the decision.	developed.	decisions.	
Tool / Technique					
Website	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email	✓	✓	✓		
Database/CRM	✓	✓	✓		
Social Media	✓	✓	✓		
Surveys		✓	✓		
Art & Creativity	✓	✓	✓		
Street Stalls	✓	✓			
Workshops		✓	✓		
Focus Groups		✓	✓		
Future Search		✓	✓	✓	
Open Space Technology		√	√	√	
Appreciative		✓	✓	✓	
Inquiry					
Public Meetings		✓	✓		
Citizens' Juries				✓	✓
Citizens Panels				✓	✓
Participatory Budgeting				√	√
Insight Communities			√	√	✓



Tools & Techniques

Which tool(s) or technique(s) will you use in your engagement process?

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Tool / Technique					
Website					
Email					
Database/CRM					
Social Media					
Surveys					
Art & Creativity					
Street Stalls					
Workshops					
Focus Groups					
Future Search					
Open Space					
Technology					
Appreciative					
Inquiry					
Public Meetings					
Citizens' Juries					
Citizens Panels					
Participatory					
Budgeting					
Insight					
Communities					
Other:					



Community Engagement Plan Summary

Plan Element	Response
Purpose: Why is this	
initiative needed?	
Audience: Who do we want	
to engage?	
Partners: Who are our	
engagement partners (e.g.	
community partners, staff,	
stakeholders)?	
Outcomes: What are the	
outcomes we wish to achieve?	
aciliever	
Resources: What resources	
do we need?	
Communication : What's our	
communication plan?	
John Marie Prairie	



Implementing the Community Engagement Plan

This implementation plan can be used for each engagement tool/technique you choose and also as a macro implementation framework for your full engagement plan.

Implementation Plan									
What audience(s) are we looking to engage?	What activities will we undertake?	Which partners will we involve?	What resources (new or existing) are needed?	What is our timeline for getting this done?	What are our anticipated outcomes and how will we know if we have been successful?	How will we use the feedback we receive?			



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