



Engagement Framework





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INTRODUCTION

At the City of Victoria, the decisions we make impact the daily lives of people in our community.

Public participation creates opportunities for individuals with diverse perspectives to come together and share their ideas with staff and elected officials. It's also an opportunity to listen and learn from others and to assist decision-makers as they explore ways to improve plans, programs and services. Done well, public participation, increases trust between

citizens and City Hall.

In its 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, Council identifies being engaged in meaningful two-way conversations with the public as a key commitment. *"Make open government actions more routine, engage in two-way conversations with the community and Create a Public Engagement Road Map to accompany 2015 – 2018 action items"* are some of the ways Council has identified to reach their objective to 'Engage and Empower the community'.

In February 2017, the City hosted a Public Engagement Road Map workshop and drop-in session. The goal was to work with the community to develop clear expectations on opportunities for the public to participate in City decision-making. This Engagement Framework is a response to what we heard. It outlines a consistent, transparent approach to public participation and is intended for use by both staff and the community.

WHY WE ENGAGE

No one knows their community better than the people who live, work and play in Victoria's diverse neighbourhoods.

Creating opportunities for participation is integral to good governance. It enables Council to understand diverse perspectives and make well-informed decisions that reflect community needs and aspirations.

Equally important to this, we engage and convene residents because doing so helps to build community and to increase individual and collective well-being. When people participate in engagement activities they get to know others, they meet people they might not have otherwise, their feelings that they have political voice and an active role in shaping the city increases, social capital increases

(see Social Capital Rubric in Engagement Tools), and overall resilience of the community improves.

Effective engagement means that we take everything we hear under consideration as decisions are made. Our commitment to the community is that we will listen and review the feedback we receive with equal consideration as part of the City's decision-making process.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

Every four years, the public elects Mayor and Council to make decisions on programs, policies and services.

At the beginning of the term, Council works with the public to create a four-year Strategic Plan. With the public, Council shapes public ideas and aspirations into clear objectives, actions and outcomes. This Strategic Plan guides Council for the duration of the term. Each action in the plan requires a Council decision and in

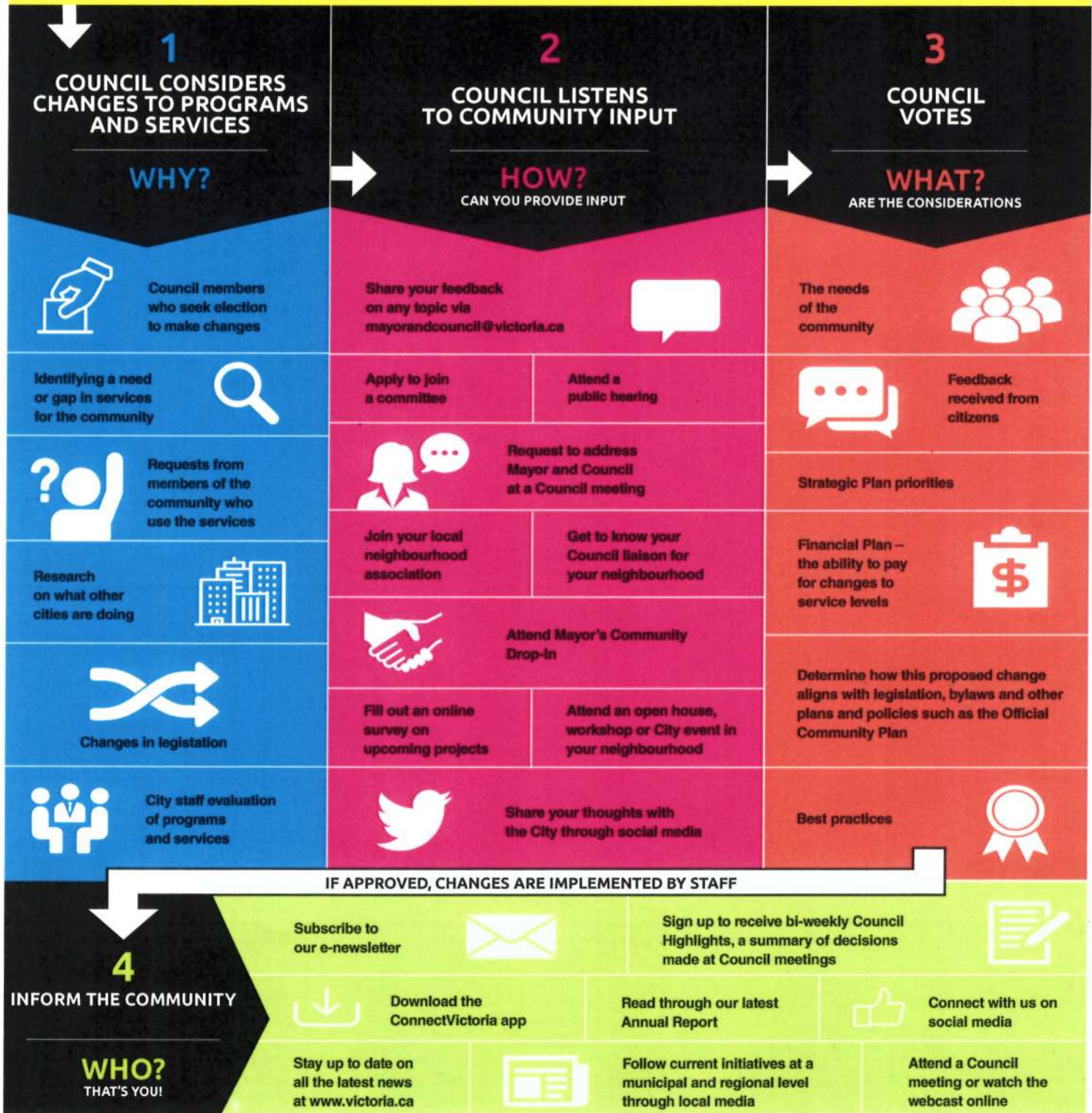
many cases, input from the public.

Council has preliminary discussions of actions and projects at Committee of the Whole meetings. This is where Council considers many factors, including community feedback, technical recommendations from staff, best practices, budgets, existing plans and policies. Council makes final decisions at a Council meeting after items have been thoroughly discussed at Committee. Public

input is a key part of how decisions are made at both Committee and Council meetings. In many cases staff are directed to engage the public and bring public input to Council before projects are fully formed. Input from the public on Strategic Plan actions is key to Council making informed decisions and to being engaged in a continuous two-way conversation with the public.

How Are Local Government Decisions Made?

Every 4 years you vote for Mayor and Council





DEFINING THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Not all initiatives require the same level of participation. Engagement includes sharing information, which is the foundation for an engaged community, to collaborating on decisions.

The table below, provides information on the various levels of engagement, which

are based on the International Association of Public Participation. For each engagement process we undertake, we adopt an appropriate level of participation based on what input we are looking for from the community. The categories are not considered in isolation as projects can include many phases.

All levels of participation are important. The spectrum is not a continuum but outlines different categories of participation and is used to help define the opportunities for involvement.

Spectrum of Public Participation

LEVEL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION			
INFORM	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	EXAMPLE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and / or solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will keep you informed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webpage Newspaper ads Signs
CONSULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys Focus groups
INVOLVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops Deliberate polling
COLLABORATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Committees
EMPOWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will implement what you decide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegated decisions such as elections and referendums

WHEN WE ENGAGE

When new projects are being developed or changes are being considered to plans, policies, programs and services, we want to hear from those who are impacted. We also want to hear from those who have passion and experience in the areas we're working on.

Some decisions the City makes may not require consultation with the community such as some of the day to day operational decisions that are required to keep the city running smoothly. For these sorts of projects, we will keep people

informed of the work underway, when it will be completed and what disruptions can be expected.

Provincial legislation like the Community Charter and Local Government Act set out minimum requirements for when local governments are required to solicit input, from the public. In the City of Victoria we aim to create many more opportunities than those legislatively required for people to participate and contribute to decisions that shape Victoria.

The City engages with the community

on many aspects of decision-making including the annual City budget, planning for neighbourhoods, park improvements, changes to public spaces, transportation and more.

We engage on what to do (key aspects and design), such as which features to include at a new park or where traffic upgrades are required. When we can, we work on the how, (timing, etc.) with the most affected stakeholders, as we try our best to accommodate ideal times to carry out necessary work.

Opportunities to Participate

PROJECT TYPES	EXAMPLES	KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS & ROLES	IAP2 MIN LEVEL	EXAMPLES OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
• City-wide policies and plans	• Parks and Open Space Master Plan • Transportation Master Plan • Bicycle Master Plan • Participatory Budgeting	• Residents • Business owners	• Consult	• Sounding boards • Workshops • Open houses • Pop-up kiosks
• Neighbourhood policies and plans	• Neighbourhood plans • Local park improvement plans • Playground upgrades	• Residents	• Involve	• Design charrettes • Stakeholder meeting • Neighbourhood Working Group • Surveys • Email to staff • Mayor's Community Drop In • Email to Mayor and Council • Feedback via social media
• Election/Plebiscite/Referendum	• Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre referendum	• Residents	• Empower	• Vote
• Council initiatives	• Strategic Plan • Economic Action Plan	• Council • Community members • Business owners	• Inform	• Task Forces and Advisory Committees • Mayor's Community Drop In • Email to Mayor and Council
• Project Implementation/Construction	• Implementation of bike lanes	• Neighbouring residents and businesses	• Inform	• Stakeholder meetings • Signs
• Development Approvals	• Development of or amendments to the Official Community Plan, including changes to regulations such as re-zonings and bylaws	• Residents • Business owners	• Consult	• CALUC meetings • Public Hearings
• Infrastructure and Asset Planning	• Johnson Street Bridge • Bike lanes	• Consult	• Involve	• Vote • Workshops • Open Houses • Stakeholder meeting • Surveys • Email to staff • Mayor's Community Drop In • Email to Mayor and Council • Feedback via social media

Many of the projects the City does fall into these categories. We benefit from hearing various experiences and perspectives.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed best practices to continuously improve public participation with individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities. In 2009, Council adopted IAP2 principles for effective public participation, which, along with best practices we have created over the years, guide our engagement practice.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE	STRATEGY AND COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY
Transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will be open and transparent in how we share information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best efforts are made to set and manage community and staff expectations by identifying the decisions that have already been made and current opportunities for participation Dependent on meeting size and complexity, what we heard from each engagement initiative is shared with the community between two weeks and one month of the meeting date to ensure all feedback was accurately captured Once Council makes their final decision it is shared with all those who participated in the engagement process
Inclusiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City makes best efforts to reach, inform and engage all people who are impacted by the decisions being considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible, the community will be involved in the design of the engagement process through neighbourhood working groups and stakeholder meetings Opportunities are created to involve people who are impacted by changes being considered Best efforts are made to accommodate diverse needs and reduce barriers to participation proactively, and as they are brought forward by the community A range of tools and techniques are used to engage a variety of stakeholders and ensure accurate representation of the community is reflected
Welcoming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City creates safe, welcoming, respectful engagement spaces and processes in which everyone feels comfortable sharing feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators will ensure everyone participating has an opportunity to speak and feels comfortable providing input Terms of Engagement will be developed with participants, shared and applied to ensure the conversation remains on track and respectful
Clear information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City provides people with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant, balanced information is shared Two levels of information are provided – a quick summary as well as more technical information for people who wish to learn more details
Timely information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will provide the community with ample notice of opportunities to participate and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community will be involved as early as possible in the engagement process to ensure stakeholders have time to learn about the issue and actively participate (Minimum two week notice of engagement opportunities) The City will provide materials for community review in advance where possible and applicable
Commitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City demonstrates its commitment to engaging the community in a meaningful way, continuously improving practices to remain relevant and effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City's Project Managers and Engagement Team are responsible to adhere to the Engagement Framework The Engagement Department is responsible for reviewing the framework annually and updating as required All feedback received will be shared with decision-makers and will contribute to decision making Opportunities will be created for the community to provide feedback on the process An interdepartmental staff debrief session will be held following the conclusion of the engagement period Community representatives will be invited to debriefs where possible Lessons learned will be incorporated into engagement processes on an ongoing basis



HOW WE ENGAGE

The first action we undertake in determining opportunities for citizens to participate and contribute to decisions, is to assess what changes are being considered, what decisions have been made and the type of project.

Once the opportunity for input has been determined, a tailored engagement strategy is developed through six key steps.

STEP ONE

Create the Strategy

The City's Engagement Team works closely with the lead department, and where appropriate members of the public, to develop an Engagement Strategy that defines the following:

1. **Purpose**
 - a. What information do we need from the community to inform the decisions being made?
2. **Commitment to the public**
 - a. What is the level or levels of public participation to be used in decision-making?

3. Timeline and budget

- a. What is the project timeline?
- b. What resources are available to use to implement the engagement strategy?

4. Target audiences

- a. Who will be impacted by the decisions being made?
- b. How can we best reach them?

5. Design

- a. Based on our timeline, audience, budget and the level of complexity of the information we are seeking, how can we best solicit the feedback we are seeking from the community?

STEP TWO

Tell the story

In order for people to provide meaningful input, they need to understand what the City is trying to achieve, why and how they can participate. Information which helps to 'tell the story' for each project, will be made clear and accessible.

How We Got Here

- What is the decision that has been made?
- When the decision was made?
- Who made the decision?
- What information informed the decision?
- What was the level of community involvement in informing the decision?

Today

- What is the decision being made?
- What input are we seeking now?
- What is the level of public participation?
- When will we seek public feedback?
- How will public input be sought?
- How will public input be used?

The answers to these questions will shape the questions we ask, the formats the City uses to ask them, how we promote our initiatives and when we share the feedback with Council. The answers will also be shared to bring people who are

new to the process up to speed and to help ensure everyone is aware on how they can help participate to inform decision-making.

STEP THREE Raise Awareness

Communication and promotion of input opportunities are critical to receiving feedback. Within the engagement plan, all communications tools will be listed to ensure a broad audience is reached.

STEP FOUR Connect

This is when public participation happens. The questions being asked are clear, information is easy to understand and next steps are well defined.

STEP FIVE Close the loop

To ensure everyone who participated in the engagement process is aware of how their input was used and of Council's final decision, reporting out is important. What we heard at each event will be shared with participants to ensure all feedback was captured.

STEP SIX Evaluate

We value the community's time and feedback to help Council make well-informed decisions that reflect community needs, values and vision for their neighbourhoods and city.

Debriefing and evaluating is an important step that contributes to the success of future engagement initiatives. The interdepartmental staff team debriefs after the public participation closes to review how well objectives were met, review feedback from the community, share experiences and recommendations for future processes. When possible, the community will be invited to participate in the debrief or provide feedback on the process.

Successful public participation is about sharing information and letting all the voices in the room be heard with the promise all feedback will be considered before a decision is made. After participating in an engagement process, we want community members to feel their feedback has been heard,

their contribution is valued, they know how input was used to inform recommendations and that they are aware of Council's final decision.

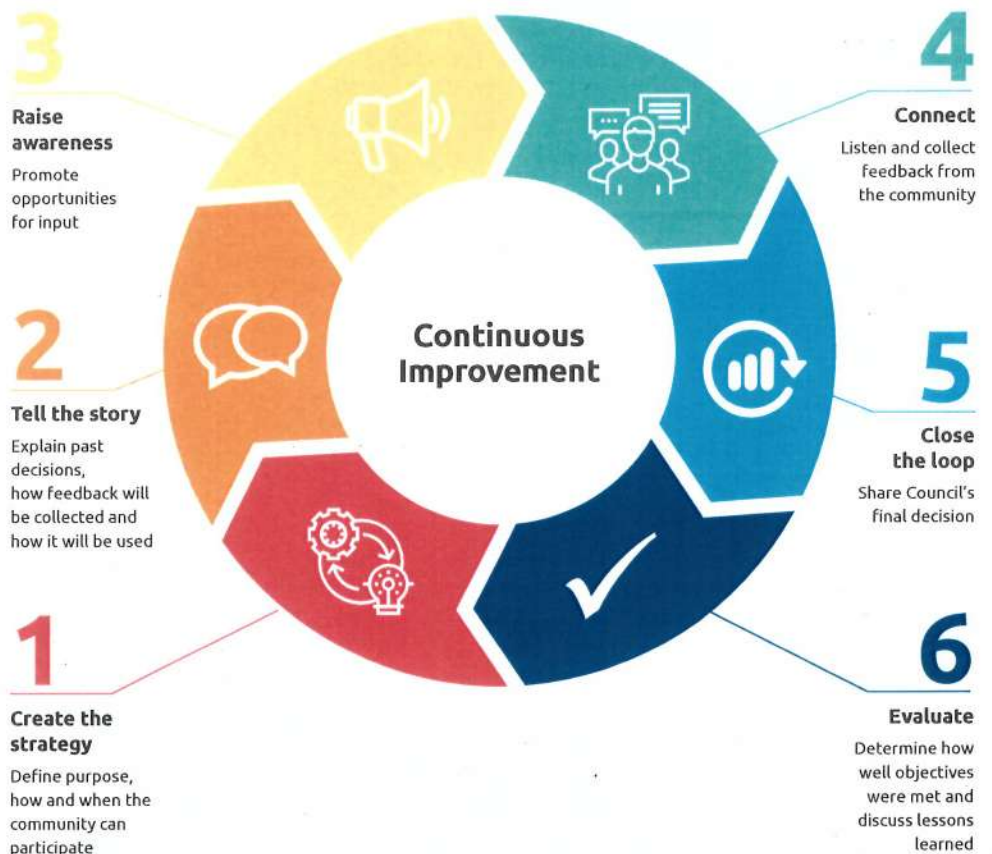
In order to ensure our engagement practices are most effective, we will continuously find ways to improve our approach. To assist with evaluation, the following factors will be used as Key Performance Indicators:

- The Engagement Framework will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective
- Feedback from participants on the

process is collected and reviewed after each initiative and incorporated where possible

- Meetings will be held with the interdepartmental staff team once engagement window closes
- Council's final decision and key considerations will be shared, closing the loop with participants
- Engagement highlights including number of people who participated in engagement events will continue to be shared with Council and the community through the City's quarterly reporting process

HOW WE ENGAGE



ROLES

Effective community engagement requires the active involvement of City staff, Council and the community.

Role of City Council

As the key decisions makers, Council has identified 13 objectives and associated actions and outcomes to guide the City's work as outlined in their Strategic Plan.

Council's main role in engagement is to:

- Identify top priorities for public engagement
- Promote participation in engagement initiatives
- Consider all feedback received from the community through their decision-making process

Role of First Nations

The City is committed to respectfully and appropriately engaging the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in City of Victoria initiatives and shared interests. Outreach is done government to government, and is flexible and adaptable recognizing the history, culture, values and tradition of the Lekwungen People.

At the beginning of this year, Mayor and Council proclaimed 2017 the Year of Reconciliation. As part of the process of Reconciliation, the City and the First Nations created a Witness Reconciliation Program. Moving forward, engagement will incorporate approaches that reflect this program, using local Indigenous tradition and practices as the foundation for outreach and involvement. Meetings will be exchanged for conversations, timeliness will be less rigid, as emphasis will be placed on relationships and the process as much as the outcome.

The City recognizes that to ensure value in engagement, it will require working differently, outside conventional municipal practices. The approach will be agile and ever evolving as the City deepens its understanding through discussions and strengthened relationships, continuously incorporating new knowledge into conversations with its Indigenous partners.

City Staff

At the City, departments work closely with the Engagement Department to design, deliver and report on engagement initiatives. Internally, engagement does not work in isolation but as part of the overall successful delivery of a project.

Bringing together cross-departmental efforts and considering the needs of the community at every stage helps ensure citizens are informed and able to participate in decisions that affect them. The role of staff is to:

- Pursue community engagement with the belief that it leads to better decision making
- Ensure that the design of each engagement initiative follows the engagement framework
- Continuously incorporate lessons learned from one engagement initiative to the next
- Inform the community of the decision-making process and the decisions being made.

Design engagement processes:

- Incorporate strategies to reach all members of the community who are impacted by the decisions being considered
- Provide balanced, clear information the community can use to inform the feedback they provide
- Incorporate a two week minimum notice to the community of any upcoming engagement initiative
- State the City's promise to the public and the community's level of participation in decision-making
- Provide an opportunity for all voices affected by a decision to be heard and all perspectives to be shared with Council
- Ensure the feedback shared with Council accurately captures all feedback received
- Present all information received equally

- Inform the community as to how their feedback was used and of Council's final decision
- Ensure consultants working with the City on engagement initiatives use the engagement framework

The Community

To inform their decision-making, Council seeks to understand the needs of the whole community, which includes residents, business and property owners and organizations representing specific groups of the population. Sharing opinions, ideas and experiences with the City and each other in a respectful and constructive way helps foster a successful engagement process. The role of participants is to:

- Identify any barriers to participation so the City can seek to accommodate any requests and alleviate barriers to participation
- Participate openly, constructively offering suggestions and alternative solutions
- Provide feedback on the questions being posed to best inform the decision being made
- Encourage others to help shape their community
- Respect opposing perspectives, allow everyone a chance to speak and come with an open mind, creating a safe space in which all can participate

Neighbourhood and Community Associations

The City works closely with neighbourhood and community associations as they help us to connect with residents in each neighbourhood. Moving forward, input from the Neighbourhood Associations to help shape the engagement process will be sought early on. The role of the associations builds on the role of the community and also includes:

- Sharing information to ensure residents are aware of initiatives and decisions made by Council that directly impact their lives

- Promoting opportunities for involvement in City decision-making encouraging residents to participate
- Providing an opportunity for community members to discuss community matters and bring forward any suggestions, concerns and questions related to municipal government to the City to consider and address
- Helping connect neighbours with each other and with their local government.

Neighbourhood Association Community and Land Use Committees (CALUCS)

Neighbourhood Association CALUCs provide a neighbourhood level

perspective on new land developments in the community. The role of the CALUC includes:

- Facilitating dialogue between applicants and the community to identify issues (both positive and negative) regarding OCP amendment, rezoning, variance and liquor license applications.
- Being knowledgeable about the Neighbourhood and Precinct Plan(s) and inform and empower neighbours to be involved in development application discussions through education.
- Commenting on the interpretation of the relevancy of policies and whether development applications fit with the spirit and intent of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Communicating to everyone involved regarding identified issues and adequacy of community consultation

Community Groups and Partner Organizations

There are numerous organizations that provide service to a variety of stakeholders and the public in Victoria. These groups include business and tourism associations, arts and culture groups, social service providers, the school district, youth serving organizations and more. They offer an important service to the community and serve as a conduit to business owners and residents. We work closely with these organizations to:

- Align City initiatives with activities of community groups to optimize resources in the community
- Involve impacted stakeholders in initiatives and decisions early on

TOOLS

We have developed and are incorporating a few tools to help staff plan and implement successful engagement initiatives as well as to measure community building through engagement.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOL
• How We Engage	• Outlines the seven steps to the engagement process	• Staff
• Public Participation Planning Worksheet	• The answers to these questions will help determine opportunities to participate and define the foundations for the engagement strategy	• Project Manager and Engagement support
• Terms of Engagement	• Identifies expectations of participants to ensure a safe, respectful environment	• Community members • Staff
• Social Capital Rubric	• Measures sense of connection, belonging and influence at the beginning of ongoing engagement activities and again at the end.	• Community members • Staff * This tool should be used at the beginning and again at the end of all ongoing engagement activities such as neighbourhood planning processes

Your feedback on this framework and how you can participate in your local government is encouraged. Email your thoughts anytime to engage@victoria.ca

HOW WE ENGAGE

3

Raise awareness

Promote opportunities for input

2

Tell the story

Explain past decisions, how feedback will be collected and how it will be used

1

Create the strategy

Define purpose, how and when the community can participate



4

Connect

Listen and collect feedback from the community

5

Close the loop

Share Council's final decision

6

Evaluate

Determine how well objectives were met and discuss lessons learned

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLANNING WORKSHEET

To help inform the development of the strategy, the following questions will be completed by the Project Manager and the Engagement Coordinator / Advisor during their first team meeting.

CONTEXT	
What is the name of the project?	
What is the intended outcome?	
What is the decision being made?	
How will the decision impact the community (identify impacts to all stakeholder groups affected).	
Who will make the final decision? • Council • Staff • Other	
Are there legislative requirements for engagement?	
What decisions will be open to input from stakeholders and the community (identify specific stakeholder groups that need be included in engagement)?	
What specific information are you seeking from the public?	
How will this information add value to the decision making process?	
How do you define successful engagement for this project?	

TELL THE STORY	
How we got here	
What decision have already been made?	
When the decision was made?	
Who made the decision?	
What information informed the decision?	
What was the level of public participation?	
Today	
What decision have already been made?	
What input are we seeking now?:	
What is the level of public participation?	
When will we seek your feedback?:	
How your input will be sought:	
How your input will be used:	

TIMING	
What are the milestones for the project? • Council meeting dates • Anticipated completion of plans	
What is the overall (past, present and future) timeline?	

BUDGET	
What is the budget for engagement?	



TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Be open to new ideas and opinions
2. Respect each other - when others are speaking and with your own body language
3. Listen actively
4. Share your story, experience and view
5. Allow everyone a chance to share their perspectives
6. Respectfully ask questions of one another's views to gain a better understanding
7. Stay on topic
8. Respect each other's time. If you would like to discuss the topic more, take the opportunity to stay after the meeting and share your ideas with the staff team
9. The goal is not to agree – it is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities.

Have a good time and enjoy sharing and hearing ideas!

SOCIAL CAPITAL RUBRIC

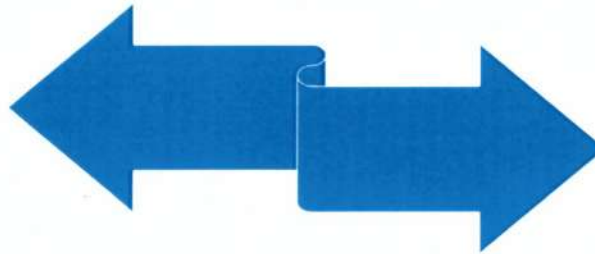
GOODWILL - SENSE OF BELONGING - SOCIAL TRUST - INCLUSIVENESS - RECIPROCITY

Social capital is a way of looking at the trusting relationships we have in our personal lives and in our community life.

Social capital is intricately connected to how we engage in community life.

The higher the number of our engagement level usually reflects a higher level of social capital.

1	2	3	4	5	6
AVOIDANCE	AWARENESS	WAKE UP	ENGAGEMENT	ACCESS	ORGANIZER
"I'm disconnected"	"I see beyond myself"	"I influence"	"I effect change"	"I'm needed"	"I'm part of the glue"



As organizers we want to engage people so they see themselves as part of the glue. They understand and can act on their rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Building social capital requires intentional relationship building and reflecting on experience.