



Smart Practices - Summary

The following smart practices are an excerpt from a paper prepared for Columbia Basin Trust: Davis, S. (2010) "Moving Sustainability Forward: Public Engagement for Local Government Sustainability Planning in the Columbia Basin Trust Area". Unpublished Master's Report, University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. P. 3-4.

From interviews and research into the experience of seven example communities: Golden, Jasper, Revelstoke, Rossland, Slokan, St. Mary's, and Williams Lake, fourteen smart practises were developed for local government public engagement around sustainability planning in a paper prepared for CBT.

1. *Use active citizens to lead the process:* Communities used steering committees, task force, and a committee with a mix of volunteers, and local government officials and staff.
2. *Go to the people:* Several communities tried to go to where people were instead of asking people to come to them. They went to people's homes, grocery stores, community events, and even a local pub.
3. *Use targeted approaches to reach demographics:* certain groups are less likely to attend community wide events. Example communities specifically targeted youth, seniors, and business people.
4. *Make partnerships with key community leaders:* Communities worked with private, public, and voluntary sector leaders as well as with educational institutions to draw on their expertise and reach out into those leader's networks.
5. *Use a creative technique for a public meeting:* Techniques used by communities included a pecha kucha night, rural cafe, and a design charrette.
6. *Create a fun public event:* From hosting a concert in a park or creating a local version of "the Amazing Race" creative strategies were used by example communities.
7. *Showcase your plan visually and experientially:* St. Mary's is building a tipi, a relevant symbol to their First Nations community, to represent their strategic plan.
8. *Use a new medium:* Many of the example communities used videos and online forums to reach the larger community. Slokan used a Google map to identify community assets.
9. *Provide incentives to attend:* Food, prizes, and childcare are popular incentives to get busy community members out to meetings.

10. *Let the community know how their input was used:* Report back to the community on how the plan is being used.
11. *Realise that It takes more time than you think it will:* A key lesson learned from example communities was that these projects take a lot of staff and volunteer time.
12. *Resist the urge to invite the entire community to every event.* The communities found meetings with a particular group were successful at gathering information that is difficult to get in a large group.
13. *Communication between council, staff and consultants is key:* As some of the communities were among the first in the Province to adopt a sustainability plan, they found it challenging to venture into the unknown and make sure that council, staff and consultants all had the same expectations.
14. *Prioritize:* Sustainability plans with good public engagement generate enthusiasm in a community and good ideas. A local government needs to prioritize areas to address in the short, medium and long term.