

Effective Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Columbia Basin Trust in collaboration with Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities has completed a research project based on Basin input and effective public engagement strategies used within and outside the region. The recommendations from that report are providing a foundation for considering program and tool development.

Creative Engagement Techniques:

One way to improve effectiveness of engagement is to consider a variety of techniques and pick the one that is right for your community and engagement goal.

Pecha Kucha:

Invite keen community members to create a presentation on an issue or their vision that is exactly 20 slides, each slide displayed for 20 seconds, (that's less than 7 minutes per presenter) and share it in a fun setting (i.e. pub, coffee shop). Jasper, AB used this strategy in their Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP): <http://jasperplan.wordpress.com/>

Design Charrette:

Designers or artist sketch ideas for the community design as they are generated by participants. Revelstoke hosted a Design Charrette as part of their Unified Design Bylaw: <http://www.cityofrevelstoke.com/charette.htm>

Kitchen Tables:

Volunteers host visioning meeting at their own kitchen tables, reaching out into their network. Prince George has used this strategy: www.mypg.ca

Task Force:

Recruit community leaders and volunteers to lead the project. Rossland had a large community task force in the creation of their Sustainability plan and now have a volunteer Sustainability Commission and task forces involved in implementation: www.visionstoaction.ca/

Online forum:

Engage citizens in an online forum with areas to share ideas. Bowen Island Ourselves is an active and lively example of an online forum: <http://bowegover.ning.com/>

Make up your own:

Williams Lake did an activity based on the Amazing Race called the Great Adventure: <http://www.imagineourfuture.ca/>

Golden did engagement for their Official Community Plan in places where people are likely to be or come to: public skate, jam night, grocery stores, seniors centre and more: <http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=122>

Smart Practices:

Learn from the experience of communities and organizations that have effectively done public engagement.

1. *Use active citizens to lead the process*
2. *Go to the people*
3. *Use targeted approaches to reach demographics*
4. *Make partnerships with key community leaders*
5. *Use a creative technique for a public meeting*
6. *Create a fun public event*
7. *Showcase your plan visually and experientially*
8. *Use a new medium*
9. *Provide incentives to attend*
10. *Let the community know how their input was used*
11. *Realise that It takes more time than you think it will*
12. *Resist the urge to invite the entire community to every event*
13. *Communication between all involved (including decision makers) is key*
14. *Don't take everything on at once—Prioritize with the stakeholders, volunteers, staff and officials.*

Online Resources and Toolkits

Islands Trust: Tools for Community Engagement

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/climatechange/pdf/communityengagementtools.pdf>

Smart Planning for Communities: Sustainability Planning electronic resource binder

<http://smartplanning.pcna.ca/files/Moving%20Sustainability%20Forward%20Nov.%203-4/>

Citizen Engagement Toolkit –Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Citizen_Engagement_Toolkit

International Association of Public Participation Toolkit

http://iap2.affiniscape.com/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement:

<http://tamarackcommunity.ca/>

For more information on future development of CBT's support for effective community engagement contact Sara Davis, Project Coordinator toll free 1.800.505.8998, direct 250-344-2453, or email sdavis@cbt.org.