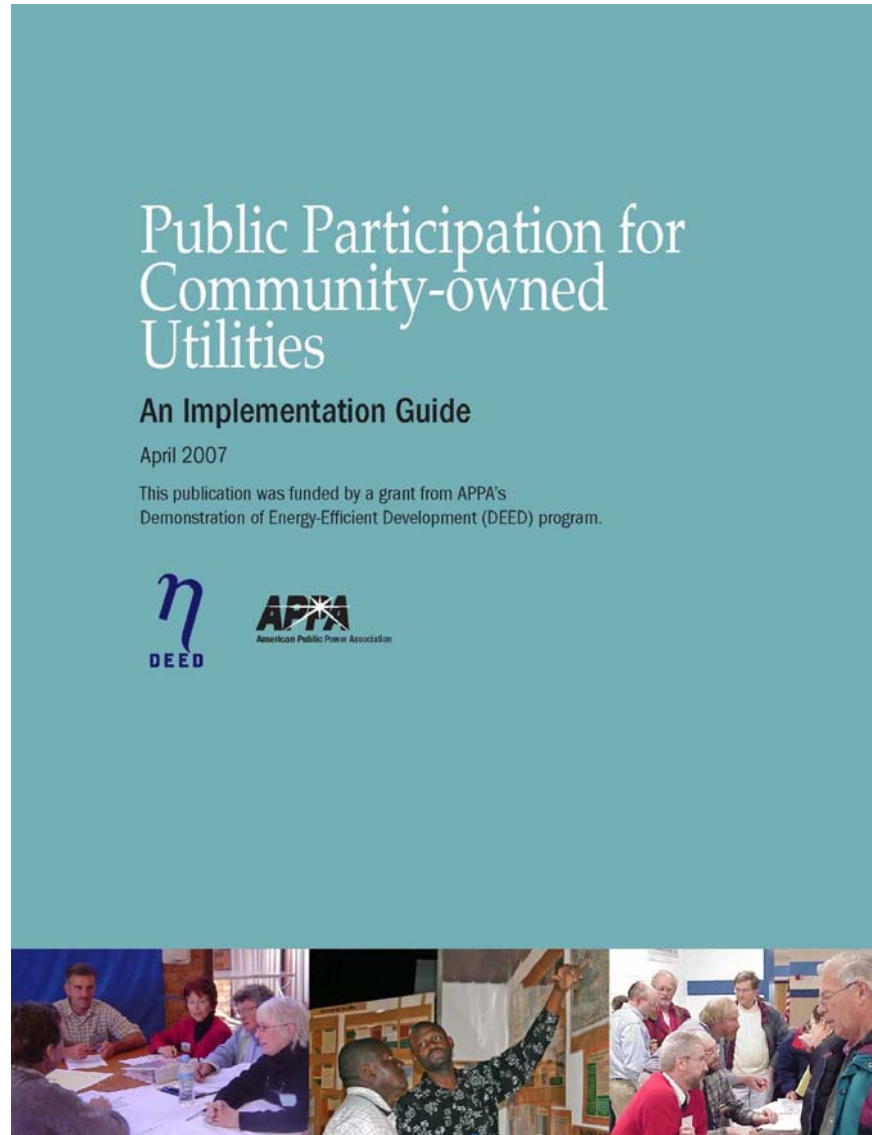


APPENDIX B – APPA IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



Acknowledgements

This guidebook was developed by a public participation partnership formed and funded under the American Public Power Association's Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments Program.

Partners in the project include the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), Longmont Electric Department, Platte River Power Authority, Redding Electric Utilities (REU), Palo Alto Utilities, Utility Energy Forum and Western Area Power Administration. Additional support was provided by the U.S. Department of Energy's GeoPowering the West and Wind Powering America programs.

Special thanks go to

- LaVerne Kyriss, Western Area Power Administration
- Jim Creighton, Creighton & Creighton; and
- Barbara Lewis, Catalyst Consulting.

LaVerne, Jim and Barbara collectively have a lifetime of experience designing, conducting and evaluating public participation programs and processes as well as training others on how to do this better. All three are active members and have served in varying leadership roles with IAP2.

The materials in this guidebook draw on many of the resources and experiences of the partners, with emphasis on courses developed for IAP2's training program. The courses include those that make up IAP2's Certificate in Public Participation program.



This publication was funded by a grant from APPA's Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments (DEED) program.

Copyright © 2007 by the American Public Power Association
All rights reserved.

Published by the American Public Power Association
2301 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-1484
www.APPAnet.org



Contents

I. Executive Summary	1
II. Introduction	3
Background and reason for this guidebook	3
How to use this guidebook	5
III. Public Participation Overview	7
The definition of public participation	7
The public	8
The advantages of public participation	9
Utility roles in public participation	14
IV. Critical Components	17
Clarify the decision to be made	17
Clarify how the decision will be made	18
Understand and identify who needs to be involved	18
Define the appropriate level(s) of public participation	18
Embrace the process values of public participation	20
Design the public participation process	20
Evaluate and adapt continuously	20
V. A Values-Based Approach to Planning	21
Community values	21
Finding common ground	22
Process values	22
VI. Five Steps for Public Participation Planning	25
VII. Step One: Gaining Internal Commitment	26
VIII. Step Two: Learning from the Public	28
IX. Step Three: Selecting the Level of Participation	31
X. Step Four: Defining Process and Participation Objectives	35
XI. Step Five: Preparing a Public Participation Plan	38
XII. Implementing the Plan: Case Histories of Public Participation and Communications Efforts	47
Appendix A: The IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox	56
Appendix B: IAP2's Code of Ethics	63



I. Executive Summary

This guidebook is written to help utility managers become comfortable with the public participation process. It describes the advantages and obstacles to the process and it outlines an approach, based on the experience and insights of the International Association for Public Participation. It has four main messages:

- The public brings valuable, unique knowledge and energy to utility efforts and projects.
- Working with the public can improve how the utility provides valuable services.
- Ignoring the public in decision making is an increasingly risky practice.
- Using the public participation process is not free, but is likely to be less expensive than ignoring it when making decisions that have a high impact on the public.

A public participation process is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making. An effective process includes the formation of a well-organized team. The team includes one or more public participation practitioners who help guide the process.

Public participation can be described as having five levels:

- **Inform:** Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve:** Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower:** Place the final decision making in the hands of the public.

To effectively carry out public participation, the utility needs to embrace seven core values:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected.
- Public participation involves participants in defining how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



To develop a public participation plan that imbeds the above core values, the utility manager can consider five steps:

1. Gain internal commitment.
2. Learn from the public.
3. Select the level of public participation.
4. Define process and participation objectives.
5. Design the public participation plan.

After step five is completed, the utility implements the plan. To illustrate plan implementation, the final section of this guidebook provides case histories of public power utilities that have used some of the techniques described in the document. Whether public power utilities follow the recommendations in this guidebook to the letter or more selectively, most will find highly relevant and useful information in these pages.

II. Introduction

Effective public participation holds great potential for improving utility decisions and decision-making processes. The public brings varied viewpoints, unique knowledge and energy to utility efforts and projects. Incorporating the public's ideas and concerns from the beginning of a project can increase cost-effectiveness and efficiency and decrease the likelihood of later delays.

However, to implement public participation effectively, utility decision makers must recognize the need and make a commitment to it. The utility and its public must be clear on the problem or decision at hand. The role of the public, their level of involvement and the objectives of public participation must drive the process. All

interested and affected parties must be able to participate and have reasonable access to the process. Then, using a well-designed and thought-out plan, public participation and the public's role can be integrated into the utility's decision.

The American Public Power Association's Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments Program (DEED) worked with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and several other partners, including local utilities, to develop this guidebook as one way to address this challenge. As the first worldwide professional organization to focus on public participation in decision-making, IAP2 represents practitioners who have direct experience working with utilities, government agencies and other organizations on a range of public participation processes. In these pages, DEED offers the approaches IAP2 developed for consideration by public power utilities as they find their own best ways integrate public participation into utility decision-making.

Background and Reasons for this Guidebook

Public power utilities have a special compact with their customers. Involving the public in the utility decision-making process is natural and necessary. As one public power manager explained, "It's not just when we're considering whether to buy or build resources to meet load growth—we share ideas, listen to our customers, and work together to make our communities vibrant places to live and work."

Typical public power decisions worthy of public participation

- Acquiring new generation
- Siting a power plant
- Restructuring rates
- Revising low-income programs
- Building a transmission line
- Selecting a general manager
- Expanding service area
- Adding a substation
- Designing energy efficiency programs
- Starting a green power program
- Expanding services beyond power supply
- Developing a load shedding program

"The credibility of a community-owned utility is determined not only by the decisions its board makes, but also by how the decisions are made and how they are communicated. The board members are the representatives of the community, so they are also utility ambassadors to the community. It is very important to provide open, honest, timely and two-way communication with the people they represent. Keeping the public informed about the utility's mission, goals, policies and processes is essential to good governance.

Sometimes board members do not realize the public is interested in utility matters. On occasion, boards may become involved in technical or detail issues, assume no one else is interested and therefore end up not communicating about them. However, virtually everything the board does is going to, in some way, end up affecting rates and service, which are the two things the community is always interested in."

—LaVerne Kyriss, Western Area Power Administration

Public power utilities are expected, through their mission and community mandates, to involve the public in their decision-making processes. For example, the development and implementation of an integrated resource plan (IRP) is a requirement for public power utilities receiving the benefits of federal hydropower from Western Area Power Administration. One of the necessary elements of a successful IRP is public participation.

Further, the public is becoming more outspoken about utility resource decisions. This is evidenced by passage of renewable portfolio standards and customer benefit charges, among other state laws. Because of these state mandates, public power utilities are becoming more proactive about involving the public in decision-making processes—specifically those associated with resource selection. Some utilities may also want to involve the public in decisions about developing new business opportunities, such as Internet services, energy services and telecommunications. Public participation can play a role in gauging the appropriateness of activities in these nontraditional service areas.

Old utility decision-making processes, which can be described as DAD (decide, announce and defend) processes, are becoming increasingly risky to pursue because they likely are exhaustive, expensive and ineffective. If the public feels that a decision doesn't reflect their issues and concerns, it will find ways to intervene in the execution of that decision.

Finally, utility managers are recognizing that effective public participation acknowledges the desire of humans to participate in decisions that affect them. Public participation provides a means for incorporating the public's values into decisions that affect their lives. It encourages the public to provide meaningful input into the decision-making process. Effective public participation

- facilitates understanding,
- defines the problem or opportunity,
- provides a forum for sharing ideas and concerns,
- develops clear, understandable information,
- finds common ground,
- incorporates public issues, and
- provides rationale and support for the decision.

Yet even when a utility recognizes the value of public participation, uncertainties may exist about which of the multitude of available techniques should be applied in any particular situation, when, and how. How much participation is appropriate, when to invite it and how best to integrate public views into the decision-making process are topics that may cause considerable uncertainty for utility planners.

Smaller utilities especially are often unable to commit the resources necessary to fully explore these issues. Among the specific problems this guidebook addresses are how to measure, analyze and compare public participation alternatives and how to integrate these alternatives into an existing decision-making strategy.

Developing a sound, quantitative basis to evaluate alternatives is a key requirement to help build consensus among utility planners, management and the public. This guidebook gives managers a means to effectively evaluate public participation strategies and to overcome a perception that they might not be doing enough to pursue the best alternatives.

How to Use This Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to help public power utilities determine when, why and how to involve the public in decision-making processes, identify some approaches that can be useful, get an early read on potential concerns and outline a useful planning process. These utilities take a variety of approaches in assigning a spokesperson to be responsible for the public participation process and for communicating with community stakeholders. Typically the approaches are endorsed by their governing boards. Some boards assign this role to the board chairperson. Others delegate it to the general manager, who in turn may delegate it to the communications department. Some use a combination of approaches, depending on what makes sense. This guidebook assumes that the general manager is the spokesperson. Regardless of who speaks for the utility, it is important to disseminate information frequently, consistently, positively and proactively.

The guidebook reflects the experience of public power utilities and is written with a view to transfer information and experience in a focused manner to small- and medium-sized utilities that have few resources available to fully pursue public participation activities due to technical staff limitations or budget constraints. Written and organized as a handbook, it assists utility managers in three critical ways:

- guiding them through key strategic planning issues, such as forming a public participation team and comparing alternative approaches to involving the public in utility decision processes;
- guiding utility managers through the process of designing and implementing a public participation program; and
- providing an introduction to a toolkit of public participation techniques that can be used in a wide variety of situations to accomplish specific goals.

The intent of this guidebook is to help to answer a common question: What should utility managers do to involve the public in utility decision-making processes, and how should they go about it? It describes a suggested process, takes an analytic approach and discusses key issues that will enable a utility manager to work with key stakeholders to develop an informed answer that is tailored to the utility's size, customer base and other unique situations. It provides a ready resource of usable information, successful approaches and tools that the utility manager can consult when weighing whether and how to consult members of the public about key decisions. Much information currently exists about public participation approaches, tools and techniques, but it's not organized or presented in such a way that utility managers can readily find practical solutions for their specific situations. By following the process and using the tools in this guidebook, a utility manager can create a set of public participation activities customized for the decision-making process he or she is undertaking. The public participation plan should be as rigorous and as detailed as it needs to be. The utility manager can use as many or as few of the tools in this guidebook as are helpful to the specific situation being faced.

But a word of caution must also be shared. This manual is not a cookbook. To effectively involve the public in a specific decision-making process, the utility manager must be committed to the process. Although a particular public participation activity worked well the last time, it may not be effective the next time—even for a similar decision.



Finally, just as safety officers bring a set of skills and responsibilities to a project, the utility manager can rely on one or more “public participation practitioners” to be part of the public participation team. A public participation practitioner is someone familiar with the art and science of public participation who can help design and implement a public participation program, because some of the techniques described in this guidebook require a great deal of skill and experience to accomplish what they are designed to do. The practitioner’s experience can ensure that the technique is deployed effectively to get the best results for the utility’s investment. The practitioner can be from within or outside the ranks of the utility. Also, any time a utility manager tries a new technique, it’s helpful to get the assistance of someone with experience in implementing that specific technique. For information on finding public participation practitioners who can be engaged to assist public power utilities, contact IAP2.

III. Public Participation Overview

The Definition of Public Participation

According to IAP2, public participation is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions. Public participation includes all aspects of communicating ideas, identifying problems, developing alternatives and making decisions. Public participation uses tools and techniques that can be applied to a number of fields as shown in Figure 1.

In many ways, these fields are kindred spirits with similar goals of increasing clarity and openness, giving voice, making better decisions and managing conflicting needs and values. While these fields have many commonalities, there are also distinct differences that are useful to acknowledge. Public participation requires specialized skills, knowledge, and thought processes to recognize the commonalities and differences. An activity involves public participation if it has the following characteristics:

- The event or activity is keyed to a decision-making process; and
- the event or activity is designed to bring people together to participate at one or more of these five spectrum levels: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

IAP2 describes each of these five levels of public participation:

- **Inform:** Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve:** Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower:** Place the final decision making in the hands of the public.

Different levels of participation reflect different objectives and carry different promises to the public. Activities designed to accomplish other tasks are likely to be useful to a utility, but they are not public participation if they are not keyed to a decision-making process and do not involve the public at one or more of the above levels.



Figure 1. Dispute Resolution and Communications Fields

Effective public participation embraces seven process values, which IAP2 refers to as core values, listed here and discussed in detail in Section V.

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected.
- Public participation involves participants in defining how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

The Public

The public is often referred to as stakeholders. They are any groups and individuals that are affected by or interested in the utility's decision or project. The public might include external entities such as other government agencies, businesses, associations, nonprofit organizations, interest groups, elected officials, tribes, community groups and individuals. The public also includes internal individuals and groups within the utility. Different individuals or groups may have different levels of interest and involvement. An effective public participation process reflects the needs of internal as well as external stakeholders.

The Orbits of Public Participation

Another way to think of stakeholders is by their level of interest and their perceived distance from the impacts of the decision. Some people will be extremely engaged, attending every meeting and consistently being part of the process. Others will comment occasionally or from afar. Some might know the process is going on, but will not become engaged. A visual representation of the concept was originally developed by Lorenz Aggens, one of IAP2's founders. His original model, shown in the accompanying sidebar, has inspired other practitioners to continue consideration of how distance from the decision and interest level can affect participation and communication techniques. This model helps visualize the need for opportunities for the public to be engaged to varying degrees—and by different techniques—at different steps of the process. Some people may be willing to work collaboratively with the utility, while others just want to give input or be informed. People and organizations may move from one orbit to another throughout the life of the decision or project as their interest, awareness, availability and priorities change.

Orbits of Participation
by Lorenz Aggens

The model shows a decision-making center surrounded by "orbits" of activity. The closer to the center, the greater the activity and energy within it. If you are in an orbit closer to the center, you may have more impact on the decision, but you will need to devote more energy to the process and your participation.

This model clarifies there is no single public, but different levels of public based on differing degrees of interest and ability to participate, even within a single interest group. The design of a public participation plan must take into account multiple levels of the public. Your public process needs to provide for the needs of those in all orbits.

People may move from orbit to orbit. The outermost orbit includes people who know of your project, but choose not to participate. People uninformed of the project or decision are outside all the orbits.



The Advantages of Public Participation

Effective public participation acknowledges the desire of humans to participate in decisions that affect them. It provides a means for incorporating the public's values into decisions that affect their lives. It encourages the public to provide meaningful input into the decision process.

Effective public participation facilitates understanding. Both the public and the decision maker need to fully understand both the problem or opportunity and the available options if a solution is to be found. Depending upon the approach implemented, it is possible to achieve the following outcomes:

- a clear definition of the problem/opportunity;
- a forum for sharing ideas and concerns;
- clear, understandable information;
- a comprehensible decision-making process and explicit decision-making criteria;
- stakeholders working together to focus on the problem or opportunity and finding common ground;
- incorporation of the public's issues (fears, concerns, needs and desires) into the decision-making process; and
- clear, understandable rationale for the decision.

Each person's view is a unique perspective on a larger reality. If I can "look out" through your view and you through mine, we will each see something we might not have seen alone.
—Peter Senge

Effective public participation improves decisions by bringing all perspectives to the table. Multiple perspectives contribute to a richer understanding of the scope of the decision, problem or opportunity (Figure 2). Sustainable decisions result when the utility decision maker finds common ground. Project proponents, agencies and technical staff know a great deal about the technical component they typically know much less about the social, cultural and economic aspects of a proposed project. The public brings that knowledge to the process. The best technical solution may not be sustainable because it doesn't address other aspects. It may be technically feasible, but not economically viable or socially acceptable. Thus it's not the best overall solution. Such a solution is not likely ever to be successfully implemented. Instead, it could be vetoed, overturned, sabotaged, remain unused or result in ill will. Sustainable decisions should be technically feasible, economically viable, environmentally compatible and publicly acceptable.

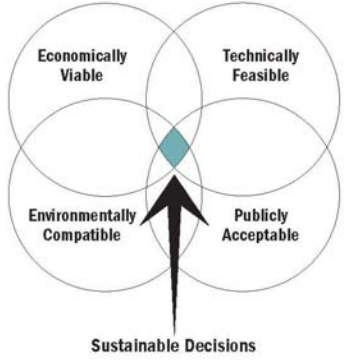


Figure 2. Multiple Perspectives

As participation increases, public support for the decision increases (Figure 3). Decisions that are widely supported by the public tend to be sustainable.

*Tell me, I forget.
Show me, I remember.
Involve me, I understand.*
—Chinese proverb

Effective public participation recognizes democratic principles. Democratic principles embrace the philosophy that people have the right to influence what affects them. Public power utilities operate following these democratic principles. Government agencies manage the public's resources, transportation and utility networks, social services, justice systems and environment. Business decisions similarly affect those public resources. Thus, involving the public and seriously considering their input and needs are ethically the right things to do. Public participation provides a method for incorporating the public's values and needs into such decisions, resulting in more responsive and democratic governance.



Figure 3. Public Participation and Public Support

Effective public participation improves the decision-making process. It can make the decision-making process easier, not harder. Although the front-end planning can be lengthier and more complicated, subsequent steps are often more efficient, and some sources of delays can be avoided. Public participation can improve decision making by:

- **Providing an early warning system.** Participation by the public early on and throughout the planning or decision-making process provides early warning that the utility might be heading in a direction that is untenable. It can also provide notice of certain issues, options, or opportunities that the utility did not consider earlier. Generally, the sooner such information comes to light, the more useful it will be to the process and the less likely the utility manager would need to undo earlier work and decisions.
- **Managing single-issue viewpoints.** When people partake in an interactive process with others who have a broad range of perspectives and values, they generally become more aware and appreciative of the challenge of balancing needs and making decisions in complex situations. While their zeal for their issue will not diminish, they may consider other issues and needs.
- **Creating better understanding of the task.** For an effective decision-making process, both the decision makers and the public need to fully understand the problem, situation or opportunity, and the available options. Public participation clarifies the definition of problem, provides a forum for sharing ideas and concerns, requires clear and accurate information and brings people together to focus on the issue.
- **Building a motivated force.** When people help solve problems, make decisions, or create plans, typically they develop a sense of ownership and a stronger stake in those initiatives. Frequently, they then become stronger advocates and help bring projects to life. This may take the form of political advocacy, volunteerism, partnering, publicity, securing funding and so on.
- **Getting it right the first time.** If people have had their issues addressed and considered throughout the process, the decisions should better meet their needs. Similarly, if the decision-making process, through public participation, has met their procedural needs, they should be more supportive of the decision. This diminishes the capacity of someone to stop a decision either late in the decision-making process or even in the implementation phase. Many lawsuits to stop or delay a project are aimed less at the actual decision and more at failures in the decision-making process—options weren't considered, meetings weren't public and noticed, analysis was flawed.

Effective public participation provides better results and decisions. Not surprisingly, the process improvements discussed above result in better decisions.

- **More information.** A public participation process brings more information into a decision. It adds useful information to a decision beyond the scientific knowledge an agency provides. Local knowledge can provide important perspectives, information and history. Social, economic and institutional components can be added to the ecological framework.
- **More perspectives.** Public participation adds more perspectives and expands options, thus enhancing the decision. The utility manager can create a decision that considers more people's concerns and meets more people's needs if they have been involved in its formation.
- **Increased mutual understanding.** Public participation provides a forum for both decision makers and stakeholders to better understand the range of issues and viewpoints. Thus it broadens their knowledge base as they contribute to the decision.
- **Free consultants.** In one sense, the public provides free consulting to the project. They may bring technical expertise, firsthand knowledge of an initiative, specific knowledge about how decisions will impact certain population segments, local history or other specialized experience.

Effective public participation builds relationships. These relationships may prove a useful foundation for other work later. Public participation also serves as a sounding board for proposed organizational programs, creates a credible channel through which accurate and timely information can be disseminated, helps increase understanding and support for the utility's goals, encourages appropriate modification of policies and procedures before major problems develop and increases understanding and reduces costly project delays.

"I believe I have a right to provide input to decisions or actions that affect me, my children and my money."



Common misconceptions about public participation

"Engaging the public in decision making abdicates responsibility."

The utility and project team do not abdicate responsibility. Rather, after thoughtful consideration, a plan for productive public engagement is implemented that retains appropriate responsibilities and benefits the organization and project/initiative.

"Complex technical and/or specialized decisions need to be made by trained professionals."

Public participation recognizes that experts contribute essential information and knowledge to decision-making. Additionally, however, the effectiveness and sustainability of decisions tends to be enduring when factors such as local knowledge and perspectives and sensitivity to community context are also part of the decision-making equation.

"Working with elected officials is sufficient, because they have a mandate to speak and act for the public."

Quality public participation assists elected officials to understand and respond to their constituencies' hopes, dreams, issues and concerns. Additionally, solely relying upon elected officials (who have limited terms of service) may fail to build sustainable decisions for the community.

"Public participation takes a lot of extra time and money."

The cost and time required for public participation varies widely based upon multiple factors including experience and skill of the practitioner, history of participation within the organization and community, and the complexity of issues. Appropriate questions to be asked within the utility and project team are, "What is the risk of insufficient quality public participation? What are the potential costs for poor quality public participation, including rework, delays and overruns?"

"There are little risks and costs of not involving the public."

Without good public participation, a utility's ability to implement a decision is more likely to become entangled in legal and political quagmires—lawsuits about lack of due process, legislative interventions and other such strategies are signs that individuals or organizations were not satisfied with the decision-making process.

Sometimes known as "the veto," concerned individuals and groups have many tools and increasing knowledge and sophistication in slowing down and stopping a utility's decision making. They might seek legislative action to undo the decision or even remove the utility's responsibility and control. They might physically disrupt a project, perhaps even endangering safety. They may create a public relations nightmare for the utility.

When assessing the costs and benefits of public participation, a utility manager should consider the potential costs of delays, or even the inability to move forward, should the public exercise its "veto."

"The same approach to public participation is appropriate to every project."

The opportunity for meaningful public participation varies from project to project, initiative to initiative. Prior to designing and implementing a public participation plan, each project or initiative must be analyzed.

The benefits of proactive engagement of the public versus the risks of having no involvement or inappropriate participation must be considered. Each project is unique in its decision to be made and the level of public participation effort that may be appropriated.

Utility Roles in Public Participation

Everyone involved in the decision process has a defined role. The utility manager's role is unique, because he or she is ultimately responsible for the final decision. There are some responsibilities related to making that decision. These include:

- Carefully consider the public's input when making the decision. Respect the unique viewpoints and wisdom the public brings to the table.
- Be clear about the process used to make the decision and how people can participate in that process. Have an open and transparent process.
- Be clear on any "bottom lines" and non-negotiable items. Be clear if certain issues are "off the table." Do not ask for input if it is not going to be considered.
- Do not promise a level of involvement that can't be delivered.
- Keep promises.
- Select a team that honors the seven process values of public participation.
- Provide the appropriate level of time and resources to support the process. Be clear on resource limitations when the process is designed. Set reasonable timelines that are compatible with the scope of the project and the public participation objectives and levels of participation.
- Directly or indirectly oversee and manage the public participation team to ensure the integrity of the process. The team is composed of utility staff or outside consultants who understand some key components and considerations of public participation and the ethics that guide the work of public participation practitioners.

Some project teams or programs identify staff or hire consultants to lead the public participation process. They are uniquely charged with overseeing the process and being sure it reflects the core values and principles. They are ethically bound to advocate for sound public participation practices, including that the public's role in the decision-making process is carefully considered and accurately portrayed. They are the protectors of the promises made to the public about the process. These public participation practitioners need to ensure that the commitments made to the public by the decision maker are genuine and can be implemented.

Throughout the process, public participation practitioners need to focus on the content related to the decision, the process for getting to the decision, and the relationships among those involved with the decision. Their skills and experience have three foundations:

- **They are values-based.** Community values are different from the process values of public participation. The community's values reflect its opinions, concerns, fears, hopes and dreams. They are internal standards that are not negotiable. The community's values influence its view of the decision-making process and its outcome. More details on community values are provided in Section V.
- **They are decision-oriented.** There is a decision to be made, and public participation can affect the outcome. The decision to be made must be clearly and accurately defined. The utility and the public must come to a mutual understanding of the problem or opportunity to be addressed. Frequently, some members of the public will have a much more expansive definition of the problem or opportunity than the utility can feasibly address. In such cases, the public will need to understand what is and what is not feasible for the utility to address within the initiative.

- **They are goal-driven.** Specific, intentional outcomes are to be achieved with the public. The outcomes could be information communicated, input received, or feedback sought. The outcomes include the decision to be made, the benefits of involving the public, the specific objectives to be achieved by involving the public and finally the techniques.

All public participation programs are not the same. According to IAP2, the public's role depends on its level of participation (Figure 4). Identifying the public's level of participation leads to the formulation of a specific public participation goal. Throughout the phases of the project, specific participation objectives will be identified to support the public participation goal. A broader discussion of objectives appears in Section X of this guidebook.

The remainder of this guidebook focuses on developing and implementing a successful public participation program that avoids six major mistakes:

- asking people for their input and not listening or considering their thoughts and opinions in making the decision;
- implying that the public has some level of impact when it does not;
- being unclear on the reasons for a decision;
- promising something that can't or shouldn't be delivered;
- assuming that the public will not get involved in decisions made without their input; and
- applying the same public participation technique to every decision.

Decision makers should be cautious not to promise any individual stakeholder that they will be involved in a specific manner until the public participation plan has been drafted. Two examples illustrate this point:

- A decision maker promised a powerful stakeholder that he would be put on the advisory committee, but an advisory committee actually was not considered for the project. Once such a promise is made, it is hard to retract, and the promise—rather than the situation and objectives—may drive the public participation process.
- A project used a technical advisory team as one aspect of its public participation process, with that team focusing only on the technical biological aspects of the situation. A decision maker agreed when a nontechnical but very vocal person with a single-issue viewpoint pressured the decision maker to add him to the technical advisory team. This angered all the other nontechnical stakeholders and they also wanted to be included on the technical team. Soon the technical team became large and overloaded with nontechnical members and could no longer effectively serve its role.

“Clarity on the decision to be made is the basic building block for agreement on a process and one of the attributes of a successful outcome.”

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, 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.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	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.	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.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fact sheets ■ Web sites ■ Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public comment ■ Focus groups ■ Surveys ■ Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workshops ■ Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Citizen advisory committees ■ Consensus-building ■ Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Citizen juries ■ Ballots ■ Delegated decisions

© 2000-2006 International Association for Public Participation. Used with permission.

Figure 4

IV. Critical Components

Effective public participation has certain critical components. Utility staff or consultants may hold primary responsibility for these components, but the utility decision maker must understand them to be comfortable with the public's role and to adequately manage those with primary responsibility for public participation.

Clarify the Decision to Be Made

Before determining the details of involving the public in the decision, the decision maker must first be clear on what the decision is and how it will be made. The utility manager may have a different perspective than the staff, and the public may have yet another. It is difficult to reach agreement on approaches and solutions if people don't first agree on what the issues are.

Working with stakeholders, the utility decision maker can answer three questions to reach clarity:

- What are the interests and concerns that can be addressed by this process?
- What are the interests and concerns that cannot be addressed by this process?
- What is the role of the public in helping to determine this?

If the issue to be addressed is not clear, the process can become inefficient. Confusion can result as the utility and the stakeholders spend time talking about irrelevant matters. Confusion can then lead to distrust and unnecessary concerns.

For example, when a public power utility was working with a mountaintop community, it discovered the utility had been talking about where to run the power line while the community had been talking about how to get power to their town—and since these were two different problems, the process wasn't going very smoothly. Only when the utility and the community came to understand that they were addressing different issues were all parties able to reassess what problem they were going to be able to solve with the pending decision.

Some strategies can prove helpful when people see the problem or decision differently:

- Use initial discussions to work toward common understanding and definitions. Often this involves enlarging the definition of the problem. People must be cautious not to make the problem too big to be addressed and may have to agree to work on smaller pieces.
- Communicate clearly and continuously what problems the process will and won't address, and why. This will not make the other issues disappear. Some people may continue to hammer on issues over which the utility has no control. They will do so because they are frustrated or because it is a good strategy for them.
- Coordinate multiple decision makers on complex issues. A proposal for a new facility may involve decisions by the utility, the state environmental agency, local zoning boards, sewerage districts, a transportation department, federal agencies, a tax incentive agency and elected officials. In such cases, the utility manager could bring the other decision-makers into a more coordinated process. For example, a state environmental agency may be able to coordinate with city or county officials who make land use decisions or to encourage a project proponent to work to address other public concerns. This linking and coordination of decision-making processes will require up-front work and bridging multiple organizational missions and cultures. However, the public will find it easier to participate in one unified process than in multiple disjointed processes.

Clarify How the Decision Will Be Made

If a decision-making process is already in place, the decision maker should write it out explicitly, including the steps, timing and responsibilities from beginning to end. The public participation process must be integrated into this decision-making process. Each step in the process is a potential opportunity to involve others in some way.

If a decision-making process does not already exist, the utility manager must develop one that describes how decisions will be made and who will make them, including any intermediate decisions. Laws and regulations may prescribe some of this, but the utility may have more flexibility in other areas. Regardless, a clear and well-understood process is important.

Understand and Identify Who Needs to Be Involved

The participation process should:

- ask key stakeholders to identify other stakeholders that should be involved;
- identify organized groups and types of individuals who will be interested due to potential or perceived impacts of the decision, process or project;
- consider any groups that may have special needs;
- identify groups or individuals that may not fall within traditional stakeholder categories;
- embrace the individuals or groups who will be most adamantly opposed to the project, initiative or decision; and
- consider whether other dimensions, such as geographic or demographic representation, are important.

Another way to think of stakeholders is by their level of interest or orbit of participation. Some people will be extremely engaged, attending every meeting and consistently being part of the process. Others will comment occasionally or from afar. The concept of orbits of participation can help a decision maker visualize the need for opportunities to be engaged at varying levels at different steps of the process. Some people may be willing to work collaboratively with you, while others may just want to give input or be informed. People and organizations may move from one orbit to another throughout your project as their interest, awareness, availability and priorities change.

Define the Level(s) of Public Participation in Relation to the Decision-Making Process

The decision maker needs to select the level of involvement (inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower) that best fits both the participants' and the project's needs. The utility manager needs to define the objectives for involving the public so the decision process is tailored to needs, purpose and intentions of both the utility and the stakeholders. This tailoring also helps keep expectations realistic and helps people understand their role and their anticipated level of involvement. Importantly, this decision involves making a promise which the decision maker must honor.

At each step and decision point in the decision-making process the utility manager needs to revisit questions about public participation: What will be the role of the public and the purpose of the public participation effort? How will the utility use public input or involvement? What value and information can the public bring to the decision? Who will make the decision and how? In other words, the utility manager embeds the public participation process within the decision-making process right from the project's start. IAP2 offers four important points to consider in answering such questions:

- **There is a range of how much impact stakeholders may have in any process or step in a process.** This range reflects different levels of involvement. The public may have different levels of involvement and objectives at different stages of the decision-making process or with different segments of the stakeholders. The orbits of participation illustrate how different groups will want and expect different levels of involvement, reflecting their interest, stake and commitment.
- **Picking the objective in involving the public will define and drive the process.** The objective and role is critical as each level of involvement reflects a different objective.
- **Each objective carries a promise that the utility is making to the stakeholders.** The utility manager must be able to honor that promise before committing to it. The decision maker is the keeper of this promise. Be clear about what roles the public will play in the decision making and who makes the decision.
- **The objective will drive the actual process and techniques the utility uses to involve the public.** Different tools and techniques are better, and worse, at different things. To help pick and design appropriate public participation tools and techniques, the utility's public participation plan needs to add more details and specificity to the general objectives. Some examples of more specific objectives for public participation are:
 - clarify the problem, issue or need;
 - gather specific, defined types of information or data to help frame the initiative;
 - understand the range of needs and concerns about a proposal, problem or situation;
 - identify all the alternatives to solving a problem;
 - get feedback on a particular draft or proposal or specific element of the project;
 - list and analyze the full range of impacts of any given solution to a problem;
 - have the public design or help design a solution to a problem or situation;
 - manage conflicts around a particular issue;
 - understand and set priorities for resources or future work;
 - involve the community with an initiative from beginning through implementation; and
 - recruit volunteers to implement a plan.

Embrace the Process Values of Public Participation

IAP2 offers seven process values, which it calls core values for public participation. They are described in Section V of this guidebook. These values represent broad international input over a two-year period to identify those aspects of public participation that cross national, cultural and religious boundaries. Their purpose is to help make better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

The process values represent standards and best management practices for public participation. Effective public participation processes reflect them. In addition, a professional code of ethics, found in Appendix B, guides the work of public participation practitioners. The utility manager needs to understand that the public participation team working on the project should be comfortable with and adhere to this code. They are guardians of the process and will be working to maintain its integrity and effectiveness. They will not be advocating for a particular point of view.

Design the Public Participation Process

An effectively designed public participation process meets several criteria: It is aligned with the decision-making process, explicitly describing the public's role and level of involvement at each step. It is driven by the public participation objectives and levels of involvement defined for the overall decision-making process and each step within it. It respects the core values of public participation. It reflects available resources. And finally, it fulfills the decision maker's promise to the public about the impact it will have on the decision.

Evaluate and Adapt, Continuously

A utility's public participation plan should include evaluation steps throughout the process and at its end. Ongoing evaluation allows the utility manager to adapt and improve during the process. IAP2's core values and the project's defined public participation objectives can serve as evaluation criteria. The manager can also ask questions such as these: Is the utility getting the information it needs to improve the decision? Are the public's needs being met, and is it able to impact the process and decision appropriately?

V. A Values-Based Approach to Planning

Effective public participation recognizes that there are two types of values that come into play—community values and process values.

Community Values in the Public Participation Process

Community values are not negotiable. They are used to judge events or behavior—what is good, bad, right, wrong, fair or unfair. They are formed by cultural, social and institutional mores, including but not limited to family influence, national identity, religious affiliation, ethnic background and peer group norms, as well as personal experience and individual contemplation. For individuals, values are personal criteria that govern the way they think things “ought to be.” Consequently, values are highly personal and can vary significantly from person to person.

When people engage in a public process they bring their own values and personal perspectives. These values shape the way they perceive the problem or opportunity and possible solutions or actions.

How Are Community Values Identified?

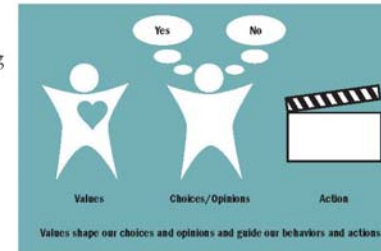
Community values are identified by researching and analyzing the community as an entity and the stakeholders as groups and individuals. Some ways to identify values include:

- thoughtfully identifying the stakeholders and seeking to understand any cultural, organizational and/or subgroup values that might be represented;
- seeking information from stakeholders about what’s important to them, and trying to understand their hopes, dreams, fears and concerns related to the project/initiative;
- listening to what people have to say about their perceptions of the potential outcomes of the project/initiative, and delving deeper into the conversations to uncover closely held views, concerns and issues;
- understanding the history of similar previous projects or issues related to the stakeholders; and
- reviewing the priorities of public spending history.

For many stakeholders, their distance from the center of the orbits of participation may be determined by their values. Understanding this will help a utility decision maker accept that not everyone who “should” be engaged in the process is willing to be.

Community Values and Public Participation

Community values can be common, such as “loyalty to family and friends” or “caring for and preserving the community.” Other values can collide and potentially cause conflict, such as individual rights versus the common good, economic progress versus protecting the environment, feeding people versus animal rights.





Diverse and competing values create challenges for a public participation process. Value differences are divisive. Consider an approach that begins with a broader, more commonly held value as a platform for drawing people into productive dialogue and moving toward a decision. However, it is not the role of the public participation process to reconcile differences in values. It is the role of the process to encourage an open environment where multiple perspectives can be presented.

Finding Common Ground

Understanding how the utility values relate to the community’s values is often important in designing a process that works for both the utility and the community. Identifying where values overlap or are shared provides a foundation for collaborative problem solving.

Some examples of values that may be important to the community and to the utility are:

- Aesthetic quality
- Community, or the common good
- Affordability
- Freedom, or the rights of the individual
- Openness
- Integrity
- Environmental quality
- Sustainability
- Peace
- Fairness
- Professionalism
- Equity
- Fun
- Economic vitality
- Due process
- Public health and safety
- User pays
- Honesty
- Faith

Process Values

Process values are values that support the underlying philosophy of public participation on the part of the sponsoring organization and project team, reflect the public participation approach applied to the project, direct the implementation of the public participation plan, and guide the interaction of all stakeholders, including the sponsoring organization and project team. There are seven process values for the utility to incorporate into its public participation activities.

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.

A correlation exists between the level of significance and impact the public has on the scope of the decision, problem or opportunity and the benefits derived from effective public participation. Factors to be considered in applying this process value include:

- What is the decision to be made?
- How will the decision be made and who will make it?
- Who potentially will be affected by the decision?

2. Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision. Public expectations must be aligned with the utility’s expectations. Until this alignment exists, proceeding with the decision may result in controversy, bad will for the utility, frustration for everyone and potentially an action that could stall or stop the project.

3. Public participation communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants. To help ensure this, the practitioner can explore these questions:

- What are the public's concerns and what is the level of their concern?
- How would the public prefer to be engaged?
- What would be the most effective means to obtain and document the public's input?
- How will the public's input be communicated effectively to the decision-maker?

Participants bring their values to the process with the goal of impacting the decision to include more than technical and/or political factors. The process can involve stakeholders on the basis of their interests by finding ways to address how people want to be involved—taking into consideration access, time and location.

The utility builds its process, schedule and venues based on stakeholder needs—not the convenience of the project team or the utility. The utility identifies barriers to participation and helps people overcome them. The utility recognizes that it has an increasing responsibility to make it easier for the public to become and stay engaged in a way that is meaningful and convenient for them.

4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the participation of those potentially affected. Time may be one of the most significant factors in a person's decision to participate in the public process. Time is a precious commodity and a gift from people who do participate. Adjusting the process and selecting techniques that address time issues may enable the public to participate more fully.

Another challenge of public participation is to involve segments of the public that historically have not been engaged—yet often are most affected by decisions. To identify multiple channels for reaching stakeholders, a utility can build on existing resources and networks. For example, a utility can ask stakeholders how to communicate with others and smooth the way for stakeholders to participate by offering child-care, food and non-meeting techniques. All techniques that embrace this core value consider how to reach all affected individuals and organizations and make it easier for them to get involved.

Participation tools	
Advertisements	Magazine/newspaper inserts
Bill stuffers	Parades
Child care	Picnics
Flyers	TV programs
Neighborhood mixers	Etc.
Newsletters	

5. Public participation involves participants in defining how they participate.

Collaboration in designing the public participation process helps align the decision-making process with both the public's and the decision maker's expectations. Defining how they participate encourages ownership and responsibility from participants. It clarifies participant roles and enhances their commitment to the process.

An effective practitioner encourages the public to identify involvement techniques that are meaningful to them and offers a wide range of options. The practitioner is open to additional creative suggestions that encourage the public to identify involvement mechanisms and considers how engage the public in a collaborative effort to design and conduct a public participation process and how to use techniques beyond traditional ones.

"Core values provide best practice guidance to the public participation process."

6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. Without accurate and thorough information, the public cannot give effective input. If information is not available from the project team, the public will obtain it elsewhere. The practitioner knows to be the first and most accurate source of all information—"the good, the bad and the ugly"—and to address both positive and negative factors. The public requires the same information as the decision maker. Openness and disclosure are essential. Uneven sharing of information creates uneven access to the process and uneven influence. The process provides equal access and distribution of information.

7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. The practitioner keeps track of and disseminates information on how the public input is being addressed. This activity builds trust and accountability, promotes ongoing involvement, and helps identify needs for potential midcourse corrections. It also documents how public input affected the final decision.

An example provided by one practitioner:

As a practitioner, I subscribe to IAP2's Core Values, one of which is: Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision. I incorporate that value into the public participation process in multiple ways including:

- Serving as an advocate for inclusion of public input at each stage of the project.
- Being the voice of the public(s) within project team meetings.
- Reviewing preliminary materials, reports, alternatives and recommendations to be certain the public's contribution has been recorded, analyzed and considered.
- Communicating to the public how their contribution has been used or how it will be used in the future... or, communicating how their input was considered and why it was not reflected in the final decision.



VI. Five Steps for Public Participation Planning

The utility manager can look at developing a public participation plan in five steps, shown below and described in detail in the remaining sections.

Step	Action	Tasks
1.	Gain internal commitment	Task 1: Identify the decision-maker(s) Task 2: Profile the utility's approach to public participation Task 3: Clarify the scope of the decision Task 4: Identify stakeholders and their issues of concern Task 5: Determine the utility's expectation for level of participation
2.	Learn from the public	Task 1: Understand how people perceive the decision Task 2: Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders Task 3: Correlate stakeholders and issues Task 4: Review/refine the scope of the decision
3.	Select the level of participation	Task 1: Assess internal and external expectations Task 2: Select level of participation Task 3: Assess the utility's readiness
4.	Define process and participation objectives	Task 1: Understand the existing decision process Task 2: Set public participation objectives for each step in the process Task 3: Compare decision process with public participation objectives Task 4: Check to confirm objectives meet needs
5.	Design public participation plan	Task 1: Integrate baseline data into plan format Task 2: Identify the public participation techniques Task 3: Identify support elements for implementation Task 4: Plan for evaluation

©IAF2. Used with permission.



Gain Internal Commitment

VII. Step One: Gaining Internal Commitment

Public participation is oriented toward making decisions. In this step, the utility manager determines the organization’s internal commitment. Gaining internal commitment to public participation is a five-part activity:

- Activity 1.1: Identify the decision-maker(s)
- Activity 1.2: Profile the utility’s approach to public participation
- Activity 1.3: Clarify the scope of the decision
- Activity 1.4: Identify the preliminary list of stakeholders and their issues of concern
- Activity 1.5: Assess utility’s view of the Spectrum level

By implementing the five activities, a utility can expect these outcomes:

- preliminary statement of the problem/opportunity to be addressed and decision to be made;
- preliminary level of participation; and
- preliminary list of issues and stakeholders.

Activity 1.1: Identify the Decision Makers(s)

The utility can hold one or more meetings with the internal public participation team. The team may include the utility decision-maker(s), the technical project manager, the public participation leader, and key public participation support people. The outcomes of the meeting(s) are

- identification of the decision-maker(s);
- description of each team member’s expectation for the process and involvement in it; and
- determination of the team members’ experiences with public participation.

Activity 1.2: Profile the Utility’s Approach

In the first or subsequent meetings, the utility can determine:

- the different viewpoints within the utility; and
- the root causes of these differences.

Activity 1.3: Clarify the Scope of the Decision

Based on the first two activities, the utility defines the decision to be made and includes any differing viewpoints as appropriate. The utility also determines the constraints of the decision, such as regulations, and any related issues or efforts that will affect the decision.

Activity 1.4: Identify the Preliminary List of Stakeholders and Their Issues of Concern

The utility then determines the different public groups and individuals who are likely to participate and their past experiences in public participation. The utility also identifies which issues these entities will be interested in and which issues are expected to be the most controversial. The preliminary list can include:

- people living near any proposed actions;
- people who use resources affected by the decision;
- people who have expressed interest in this or similar issues;
- people who may be specifically impacted based on culture, ethnicity or socioeconomic class;
- any groups with a potential equity concern;
- people with special needs, such as the hearing- or sight-impaired, people who don't speak the common local language and people who find it difficult to attend public meetings because of disabilities, special transportation needs, child-care issues and work schedules; and
- groups and individuals who represent the public at large, such as elected officials, other government agencies and the media.

In addition to specific issues related to individual decisions, there are common issues centered around accessibility to public meetings, such as for those with disabilities, child carriages, special transportation needs, large distances to travel, lack of affordable child-care and special work schedules.

Activity 1.5: Assess the Utility's View of the Level of Participation

Identifying the public's most suitable level of participation leads to the formulation of a specific goal for the public and the utility in the process. Figure 4 summarizes these levels along a spectrum, including Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. No one level, goal or promise is better than another, but one will be best suited to each particular decision-making process.



Learn from the Public

VIII. Step Two: Learning from the Public

Once the utility has determined its internal commitment, which includes an initial understanding of the decision, the potential issues and who the stakeholders are, it's time to test this understanding with the stakeholders—and time to start building a working relationship with them. There are four activities under this step:

- Activity 2.1: Understand how people perceive the decision
- Activity 2.2: Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders
- Activity 2.3: Correlate stakeholders and issues
- Activity 2.4: Review /refine the scope of the decision.

After completing these activities, the utility will have a completed stakeholder analysis and an assessment of issues and level of controversy.

Activity 2.1: Understand How People Perceive the Decision

From the initial list of stakeholders identified in step one, the utility begins developing constructive stakeholder relationships. Typically, the utility conducts key contact interviews with stakeholders who represent a range of the anticipated perspectives. To be most effective, the utility:

- meets informally with stakeholders in an environment familiar to them;
- conveys that it understands their issues by providing direct feedback through meetings and personal correspondence; and
- determines the answers to questions that help in understanding the issues, such as:
 - How does the stakeholder perceive the potential impacts?
 - What geographic area will be affected?
 - How much variation in views is there among stakeholders' issues?
 - Who are the leading groups and opinion leaders in the community?
 - What groups or individuals are already involved in similar issues?
 - What potentially affected stakeholders are not likely to be represented by an existing group?
 - What is the history of public participation in this community?
 - What would make public participation credible?

Activity 2.2: Develop a Comprehensive List of Stakeholders

Developing a comprehensive list of stakeholders minimizes the probability that an unknown stakeholder or group will surface late in the life of the project—creating challenges to the schedule, budget and process. But new stakeholders may appear at any time, so it is important to be prepared and to maintain openness to new participants throughout the project. Continue to identify potential stakeholders. Ask other stakeholders for leads. Some good sources for identifying stakeholders are homeowner associations and neighborhood groups; schools and parent groups; seniors' groups; and religious, service and cultural groups.

Develop a comprehensive list of stakeholders' issues and concerns, based on communication with them. This list can include issues and concerns related to livelihood, productivity or employment; financial security; economic vitality; quality of life; health and safety; recreation; environment; nuisances (noise, odor and traffic); growth; cultural, racial, gender or religious identity; politics; education; and utility mistrust or neglect.



The utility can build relationships with stakeholders by being ready to engage them at their convenience, providing them with updated information and continually asking them how they want to receive information and be involved. Relationships are built step by step on trust and respect. Information packets may be a useful tool. These packets, both in print and on the Web, refresh existing participants and help new participants understand the project's history and progress. They should include information on decisions that have been made so far, including how public participation impacted them.

Activity 2.3: Correlate Stakeholders and Issues

A comprehensive understanding of stakeholders and their issues helps the utility select the appropriate level of participation, design the process and develop the public participation plan. IAP2 offers a Stakeholders and Issues Assessment Worksheet (Figure 5) as a tool to correlate stakeholders and issues. Whether utility managers use the IAP2 worksheet or develop one of their own, key items are the level of impact of each issue on each stakeholder, each stakeholder's level of concern about each issue, each stakeholder's geographic frame of reference (neighborhood, city, county, state, national, etc.) and stakeholder contacts.

Figure 5. Stakeholders and Issues Assessment Worksheet

Issue	Sponsor's Evaluation: Level of Impact N = None L = Low M = Moderate H = High U = Unknown	Stakeholders			
		Stakeholder Group	Level of Concern N = None L = Low M = Moderate H = High U = Unknown	Geographic Frame of Reference	Contacts
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					

©IAP2. Used with permission.



Activity 2.4: Review/Refine the Scope of the Decision

The utility can revise the definition of the decision to be made based on stakeholder input. Stakeholders commonly have a different perception of the problem or opportunity than the utility. Any such disparity needs to be addressed—but some cannot be addressed in the public participation process. The utility should provide other processes for dealing with them. Identifying what is and isn't covered in the public participation process will help all parties focus on the issues at hand.

IX. Step Three: Selecting the Level of Participation

If the utility and stakeholders are in agreement about what needs to be done, by whom and when, this step isn't necessary. However, stakeholders and utility staff frequently have differing opinions on what the decision should be. Thus it's critical to take an analytical approach to selecting the level of participation that can be supported by both the utility and the public. There are three activities in this step:

Activity 3.1: Assess internal and external expectations

Activity 3.2: Select the level of participation

Activity 3.3: Assess utility "readiness"

At the end of this step, the utility will have a refined project statement, a selected level of participation and promise, and a commitment of resources.

Activity 3.1: Assess Internal and External Expectations

It is important for the utility to assess the degree to which the community considers the issue significant. The community becomes involved according to its perception of the seriousness of the issue. It is also important to gauge the utility's receptiveness to community input and the resource level that will be available. IAP2 has a public expectations worksheet and an internal expectations worksheet (Figure 6 and Figure 7) that are effective tools for making this assessment. Whether the utility uses IAP2 worksheets or develops its own tools, it should consider the questions listed on the worksheets.

The utility can use the results to get a general sense of the level of public participation that is most appropriate to the project at hand. Yet these tools are not scientific or to be followed precisely. There may be additional questions that are important to the utility or the community. In addition, a minimum level of public participation may be prescribed by regulation, in which case these tools might help to determine whether the minimum level is enough or a higher level should be considered. If any worksheet questions are answered "very high," the utility needs to carefully evaluate the level of public participation, even if the average scores are otherwise low.



Select the level
of Participation

Figure 6. Public Expectations Worksheet

Directions: Check the appropriate expectation level for Question 1-5. Then, follow instructions in left column.

Assessment Questions	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1. What is the probable level of difficulty in addressing the problem/opportunity?					
2. What is the potential for community outrage related to the project?					
3. How important are the potential impacts to the community?					
4. How much do major stakeholders care about the problem/opportunity to be addressed and decision to be made?					
5. What degree of participation does the community appear to want?					
Count number of checks in each column					
Multiply number of checks by the weight	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5
Enter column score					
Add total of all five column scores		Score Indicates: 1-2 Very Low to Low			
Divide total score by the number of questions	/5	2-3 Low to Moderate – Recommendation: at least Consult 3-4 Moderate to High – Recommendation: probably Involve			
Average score		4-5 High to Very High – Recommendations: minimum Involve, consider opportunities for Collaborate or Empower, if feasible.			

©IAP2. Used with permission.



Figure 7. Internal Expectations Worksheet

Directions: Check the appropriate expectation level for Question 1-8. Then, follow instructions in left column.

Assessment Questions	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	
1. What is the legally required level of public participation?						
2. To what extent do internal staff members believe that community members could help improve the outcome of this project?						
3. At what level do internal staff members perceive community interest in this project?						
4. What is the potential for the community to influence the decision-making process?						
5. What level of media interest do you anticipate?						
6. What is the likelihood that decision-makers will give full consideration to community input?						
7. What levels of resources are likely to be available to support public participation?						
8. What is the anticipated level for political controversy?						
Count number of checks in each column						
Multiply number of checks by the weight	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	
Enter column score						
Add total of all five column scores	Score Indicates: 1-2 Very Low to Low 2-3 Low to Moderate – Recommendation: at least Consult 3-4 Moderate to High – Recommendation: probably Involve 4-5 High to Very High – Recommendations: minimum Involve, consider opportunities for Collaborate or Empower, if feasible.					
Divide total score by the number of questions						/8
Average score						

©IAP2. Used with permission.

Activity 3.2: Select the Appropriate Level of Participation

If the expected levels of public participation are similar internally and externally, selecting the level selection is straightforward. If utility expectations exceed community expectations, the utility can select the level at which the public is willing to participate.

If the organization does not support the level of participation desired by the community, the practitioner who is helping to lead the process needs to ask what level of participation is warranted by the potential impacts. He or she then needs to determine how to get the utility to support this level of participation and to work with decision makers to gain acceptance. If the utility cannot support the level that the practitioner determines is warranted, the only option is to select the highest level that the utility can support.

Once the level is selected, the practitioner needs to work with stakeholders to meet their specific needs at the selected level of participation.

Activity 3.3: Assess Utility "Readiness"

Once the level of public participation is selected, the manager needs to determine how ready the utility is to conduct a public participation program at that level. The manager should consider questions such as these:

- Are there constraints around the decision that need to be understood?
- What will "success" look like when the decision is made?
- Are there conflicting or competing priorities or agendas?
- Are there unspoken interests or hidden agendas?
- Can the utility, including the manager and key project personnel, commit the necessary time and resources?
- Is there internal public participation capability?
- If not, can this capability be acquired with additional training or contracted expertise?
- What can be done to affirm and strengthen this commitment?

To help answer the last question, the utility might consider publicizing a statement such as this: "We believe that meaningful participation by the community leads to decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of those who may be affected by this project. We believe community members should have a say in decisions about actions that affect them and that the public participation process will let participants know how their input affected the decision. We are committed to conduct public participation at least to the level of _____ and our promise to the community is _____."

X. Step Four: Defining the Decision Process and Participation Objectives

Earlier sections of this guidebook have focused on the preparation that goes into a public participation plan. This section defines specific public participation activities that apply to the different levels of participation:

- Activity 4-1: Understand the existing decision process
- Activity 4-2: Set public participation objectives for each step in the decision process
- Activity 4-3: Compare and modify the decision process with public participation objectives
- Activity 4-4: Check back to confirm that objectives meet stakeholder needs

Once these activities are completed, the utility will have a commitment to the decision process and public participation objectives.

Activity 4-1: Understand the Existing Decision Process

The utility manager needs to be explicit in describing the decision process, including the steps, timing and responsibilities from beginning to end. Sometimes a particular process is prescribed by regulation. At other times, the utility has flexibility.

Whatever the decision process, it must be clear, logical, transparent and well understood. If such a process does not exist, then the utility manager needs to work with project staff to develop one. The decision process description:

- identifies timing and responsibility considerations;
- communicates to the community the decision steps to be followed; and
- links the public participation process to it and allows the community to understand how and why the decision was made.

A sample decision process is shown in Figure 8. As the figure suggests, a useful decision process allows the public to gain increasing understanding of the decision as information emerges and choices are made. Each step in the decision process is an opportunity to gain or lose trust. Utilities can lose trust by not involving the community until options are already established or, worse, a preferred option is already determined, just not “officially” selected.



Define Process and Participation Objectives

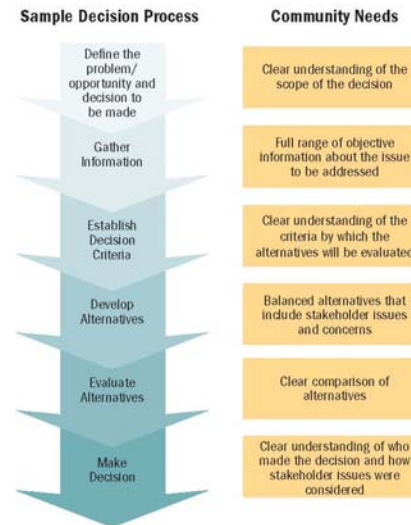


Figure 8. Decision Process

Activity 4-2: Set Public Participation Objectives for Each Step in the Decision Process

Based on the selected level of participation and the overall public participation goals, the utility manager can identify specific objectives for public participation at each step in the decision process. Any step in the process may have more than one public participation objective. These objectives cover a number of activities which must be performed at each step, including:

- provide information to the community;
- get input from the community;
- build relationships with the community;
- build consensus through dialogue with the community;
- provide feedback to the community; and
- evaluate the public participation process.

To do this, the utility manager can use IAP2’s Participation Objectives Worksheet (Figure 9) or a similar tool. Objectives should be realistic targets, expressed in the active voice using strong verbs such as *plan, write, conduct* and *produce* – rather than softer verbs such as *learn, understand* and *feel*.

Figure 9. Participation Objectives Worksheet

Level of Public Participation	Public Participation Objectives for Each Decision Step					
	Define Problem/ Opportunity	Gather Information	Establish Decision Criteria	Develop Alternatives	Evaluate Alternatives	Make Decision
Inform P2 Goal: To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solution.						
Consult P2 Goal: To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.						
Involve P2 Goal: To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that community issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.						
Collaborate P2 Goal: To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.						
Empower P2 Goal: To place final decision-making in the hands of the community.						

©IAP2. Used with permission.

Activity 4.3: Compare and Modify the Decision Process with Public Participation Objectives

An effective public participation process is integrated with the decision process. It is not a separate activity and is continually tested to see if it is aligned with the decision process. If they are not in alignment, the utility manager can consider modifying the decision process, if feasible, or backing up the decision process and seeking alignment opportunities. For example, if the decision process has already begun, the utility needs to allow the community to catch up if there is enough time. If there is not enough time, the utility needs to be clear with the community about the limits of its promise and the opportunity for the community to impact the decision.

Activity 4-4: Confirm that the Public Participation Objectives Meet Stakeholder Needs

With the level of participation in mind, the utility manager can periodically assess the community's desire to be involved and the utility's commitment to public participation. The assessment can be done through communications with stakeholders and utility staff.

Goals are broad, brief statements of intent that provide focus or vision for planning.

Objectives are meant to be realistic targets. They are written in the active voice using strong verbs such as *plan, write, conduct and produce* rather than softer verbs such as *learn, understand and feel*.

Public participation objectives are "**SMART**"

- **Specific**—state what will be done, what outcomes are expected and who will be involved
- **Measurable**—define outcomes that can be measured and documents
- **Achievable**—realistic
- **Relevant**—outcomes will support the overall public participation goal and level of participation
- **Time sensitive**—an expectation is set for when the objective will be achieved

XI. Step Five: Preparing a Public Participation Plan



Develop the Public Participation Plan

Preparing any public participation plan, from the simplest to the most complex, involves five activities:

- Activity 5.1: Determine plan format
- Activity 5.2: Integrate baseline data
- Activity 5.3: Identify the public participation techniques
- Activity 5.4: Identify support techniques
- Activity 5.5: Establish an evaluation methodology

The result of these five activities will be a thoughtfully constructed, dynamic planning document that serves as implementation guide and provides a detailed list of techniques that support objectives; a list of what is to be evaluated and the evaluation criteria; a list of requirements including resources, budget and time; and the historic base of execution and outcomes.

Activity 5-1: Determine plan format

The format and complexity of the plan are largely driven by the requirements of the decision makers, the experience of the public participation practitioner, the nature of the project/initiative and the needs of the community. The utility manager may start with the standard format shown in Figure 10, altering it to suit individual projects. As the plan is executed and adjusted, each section can be updated to reflect outcomes, challenges, lessons learned and suggested improvements for future projects.

Figure 10. Public Participation Planning Document

Public Participation Planning Document

Formal documentation of the public participation process can be modeled following this outline. It is efficient to create this formal documentation as each step of the plan and each activity is completed. To each section, the following may be added:

- Outcomes achieved within each section. i.e. products, decisions reached, relationships strengthened, media coverage
- Challenges encountered and how they were addressed
- Lessons learned and improvements to consider in the future

Such detail will add to the value of the document in future work with decision sponsors and project team members. It will also guide future efforts more efficiently. You may choose to compose an Executive Summary that addresses the major elements of each section.

The following elements may be addressed in your plan depending upon the needs of the project. The list below is inclusive and may be more detailed than is needed for some projects. The complexity of your project will determine the amount of detail required and the organization of your plan.

Section I: Baseline data

- Background
- Project overview
- Decision scope and timeline
- Summary of stakeholders and issues
- Decision process steps
- Level on the IAP2 Spectrum and promise to the community
- Public participation process objectives
- Appendix: Database reports including mailing lists, organizational contacts, etc.

Section II: Techniques (selection and logistics)

- Information required by the community at each step related to process and content
- Input needed from the community at each step
- Detailed description of the techniques to be used at each step

- Feedback to be provided to the community at each step
- Post implementation review/evaluation of each technique individually, as well as the entire package of techniques within each decision step

Section III: Support elements

- Detailed project schedule
- Comprehensive budget (built from technique analysis)
- Personnel roles and responsibilities
- Operational details (venues, catering, audio-visual needs, etc.)
- Media relations details (media outlets, deadlines, formats required)

Section IV: Evaluation plan for public participation process

- For each decision step:
 1. Evaluate each technique to determine how it contributes to achieving the technique objective
 2. Analyze each public participation objective to determine how it contributes to achieving the decision objective
 3. Ensure the project team evaluates each decision objective to determine how it contributes to achieving the decision step
- Analyze the overall public participation process as a "stand alone" process
- Evaluate the contribution of the overall public participation process to the project/initiative decision

NOTE: Executive summaries can be used to help build and improve the practice of public participation. In addition to being resources for future personal efforts, comprehensive executive summaries:

- Educate decisionmakers to the benefits of public participation
- Serve as documentation of resource needs
- Provide comprehensive case studies to colleagues
- Serve as marketing tools in promoting public participation to future project teams, agencies and decisionmakers

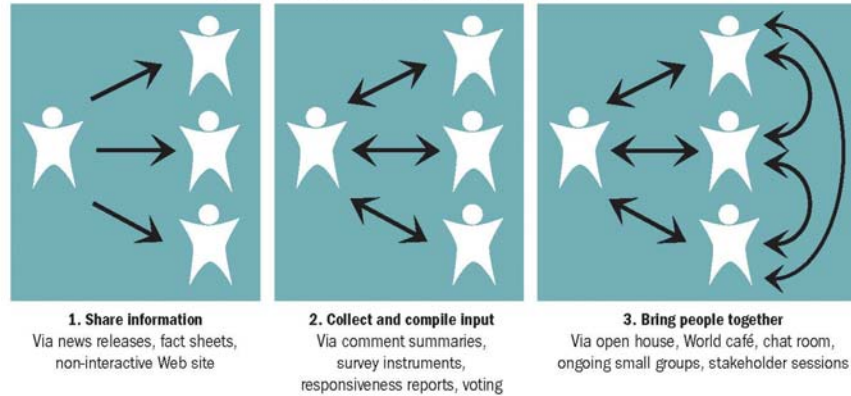
©IAP2. Used with permission.

Activity 5-2: Integrate Baseline Data

The public participation plan summarizes, clearly and completely, the data gathered to date, including: background, project overview, stakeholders and issues, decision to be made, decision process steps, decision step objectives and public participation process objectives.

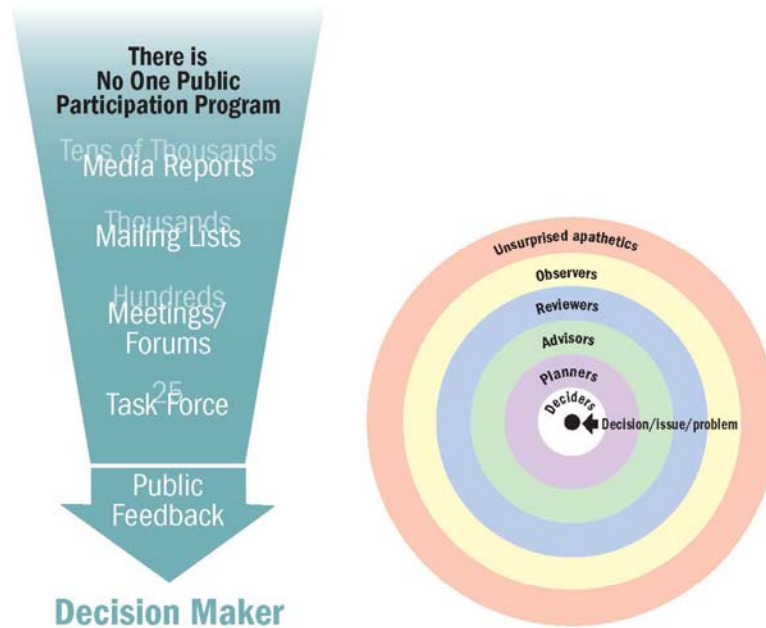
Activity 5-3: Identify Public Participation Techniques

In this activity, techniques are chosen that support the public participation objectives and match the communication format. There are three basic formats that serve as the basis of communication required within public participation:



Because no project has endless resources or time to allocate to each objective, public participation techniques must be selected carefully, with an eye to their strengths and weaknesses, to maximize effectiveness. Appendix A, drawn from IAP2's Public Participation Toolbox, provides an overview of dozens of techniques.

Depending on the project, some techniques may be able to achieve more than one objective at a time. Most decision steps require multiple techniques to meet all of the objectives. The utility manager can use the Techniques Pre-Selection Assessment Worksheet (Figure 11) to compare different techniques for achieving an objective.



Decision Maker

Revisiting the Orbits of Participation

It is essential to match the communication format required by the community members in each Orbit of Participation with the techniques selected. It's important to remember that any one technique will not fit every orbit. Failure to consider techniques that reach outer orbits of the community can result in "orbit hopping" by those who perceive themselves uninformed of on-going activities. Often, when "opposition" individuals or groups seem to suddenly appear late in the process, the catalyst for their involvement is the feeling of alienation from a process that affects them to a higher degree than they understood early in the process.

For example, using an advisory group to help set criteria for a facility siting may be very appropriate and productive for people in the Deciders, Planners and Advisor orbits. That technique alone will not be effective in communicating to the outer orbits.

So, when the advisory group sets the siting criteria and that criteria is released to the community at large it may appear that a previously unidentified special interest group appears out of nowhere with a claim that their issue was not considered. The "eleventh hour" participation of that interest group may send the advisory group back to re-do its work and lengthen the schedule and expenditures of the project. Of course, relationships and trust in the community are also damaged.

However, techniques such as news releases, newsletters, or Web site information, can inform outer orbits about the on-going activities of advisory groups. These techniques can provide the previously unidentified special interest group an earlier opportunity to access the process and provide input to the advisory group.

Figure 11. Technique Pre-Selection Assessment Worksheet

Directions: List the specific public participation objective that the technique must achieve, the level on the Spectrum and the specific decision step. Then weigh each potential technique against the criteria listed on the worksheet.

Public participation objective: _____

Identify the level on the Spectrum:

- Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Identify the decision step:

- Define decision scope Gather information Establish decision criteria
 Develop alternatives Evaluate alternatives Make decision

Evaluation criteria	Technique A	Technique B	Technique C
How will it meet the objective(s)?			
What is cost and do we have adequate resources to pay for this technique?			
How effective will this technique be in reaching the right audience?			
Do we have access to the tools and personnel needed to implement this technique?			
Do we have the expertise to implement this technique successfully or do we need outside support?			
Is there sufficient time to successfully implement this technique?			
Does the technique have a proven track record of success in similar situations or with similar audiences?			
Does the technique coincide with what you have learned from the public about how they want to be involved?			
Will it meet all legal requirements?			
Are there any special circumstances which may affect the use of this technique?			
Can you get internal support for these technologies?			

©IAP2. Used with permission.

Activity 5.4: Identify Support Elements for Implementing the Plan

Planning for Timing

The public participation plan needs to contain a detailed timeline of the decision process and the public participation activities within it. Activities need to be timed so that the public can impact the decision process. Often the decision deadline and/or project schedule dictate the public participation schedule. Considerations include:

- the utility's ability to respond to the community in real-time;
- fixed or planned milestones;
- legal, legislative or budgetary deadlines;
- lead times for gathering resources, such as hiring and training staff and consultants;
- elections or other political factors, or regulatory activities affecting timing; and
- time required for:
 - each decision process step to effectively employ desired techniques,
 - studies or data-gathering to generate adequate information for the community,
 - community response to inquiries, and
 - flexibility if more time is needed.

Planning for Budget

Budgeting for public participation can be a difficult process. Sometimes there is no budget at all. More often than not, a budget is developed without an understanding of the types of activities that will be conducted—with the risk of becoming involved in a process that requires resources that aren't available, making it impossible to meet objectives and keep promises, and leading to community dissatisfaction. By answering the following questions, a utility manager can begin to understand how to put a public participation budget together.

- What resources are available?
- What are the expected costs for each process component?
- How do these costs compare with public participation for similar projects?
- How do these costs compare with the overall costs of the project?
- What are the potential costs of delay due to community protest later in the project?
- Is the necessary funding currently available? If not, what steps must be taken to get it?
- What staff will be needed at each step in the process and are they available?
- What consulting help is needed and are the resources available to acquire it?
- What resources will community members need to participate?
- What resources can the community provide?
- Are outside organizations available that might be able to contribute resources?
- What opportunities exist to integrate public participation costs with other project activities?

Planning for Roles and Responsibilities

Project team personnel must have the skills and tools to interact with the community at whatever level their role requires. For example, technical personnel with limited experience and comfort with public speaking may need to improve this skill. Field staff (surveyors, construction supervisors, sampling scientists) may benefit from a handout or flier explaining the project and process as well as what the field staff is doing at the moment.

Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities encourages accountability, recognizes specialties among the team and identifies communication protocols. Roles and responsibilities are present in three contexts:

- Content—Team members who provide, receive and analyze data
- Process—Team members who design and implement the process
- Relationships—Team members who interact with stakeholders

The manager can identify everyone who has a role and/or responsibility in the decision process. A key action is to identify an overall public participation manager responsible for tracking progress, completing each public participation activity and reevaluating and modifying the plan as changes occur and additional information becomes available. The overall public participation manager can identify a public participation lead person for each activity in the plan. The lead person in turn can identify roles for technical staff, public participation staff, managers, decision makers and other internal and external resources.

Early on, the public participation manager can determine operational needs, such as potential venues (including size and acoustics), audiovisual equipment needs, exhibits/graphics, catering, staffing requirements and insurance.

Also, the public participation manager can plan for media considerations, such as outlets (TV, radio, newspapers, existing resources), deadlines and format requirements, contact, editorial board processes and protocol for communicating with media outlets.

Activity 5-5: Establish an Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation is most effective as an on-going tool to assess and improve the process as it moves forward. On-going evaluation can promote program flexibility by identifying needs and opportunities for course correction during the life of the project. Evaluation should occur at multiple points through the project, including:

- evaluation of each public participation activity and technique;
- evaluation of the participation objectives for each decision step;
- overall evaluation of the public participation goal for the project; and
- evaluation of outcome and impact of the public participation goal on the decision.

Evaluations, performed by staff or through a third party, can be formative, summative or both. A formative evaluation is one that regards the public participation process as fluid and seeks ways to improve it. A summative evaluation determines whether or not a public participation process has been successful, for example in terms of public participation objectives achieved and unmet. Most evaluations have both formative and summative elements. IAP2 offers the Activity Evaluation Worksheet (Figure 12) as a tool to conduct evaluations.

Involving stakeholders in designing and conducting evaluation is a further way of partnering with the community and creating a transparent process. The role of the public in evaluation might include design, data collection, interpretation and dissemination.

The best assessment always comes directly from participants. Throughout the process, the public participation practitioner can ask them how the process is going and how their needs are being met. An effective method is to use evaluation forms at the end of public meetings, informal calls and meetings with key stakeholder groups. The components to be evaluated include:

- the effectiveness of information and outreach;
- community satisfaction with the public participation process;
- staff performance in public participation activities;
- the appropriateness of public participation activities to stated objectives;
- the impact of public participation on the decision-making process;
- the impact of public participation on project outcomes; and
- the actual costs of public participation.

Immediately following each activity, the public participation practitioner can get feedback from internal and public sources to keep things on track. Via informal conversations, formal surveys, debriefings, questionnaires and peer evaluations the practitioner can use questions such as these:

- Is the input from the community useful to the decision maker?
- Did the community members get the information they needed to provide meaningful input?
- How were the community's expectations met by this activity?
- Does the community believe the utility is sincere in its public participation efforts?
- Were the goals of the participation activity met?
- Have the process objectives for this decision step been met?
- Has anything occurred to warrant changes to the existing public participation plan?
- Is the internal commitment of all parties still in place?

At the end of the process, the practitioner can use a more formal process to get broad-based feedback on how the process achieved its objectives for public participation. The following questions may be useful. The answers can be the basis for an evaluation report to internal and external stakeholders and for reference when designing future public participation plans.

- Did stakeholders perceive that the process fairly considered their input?
- Did stakeholders perceive that decision makers were sincere in their desire to obtain public input?
- Did participants understand the objectives, promise and process?
- Did participants believe that they had input into how they participated?
- Did participants perceive that the process was sufficiently flexible to address issues as they arose?
- Did participants believe that they had the information they needed to contribute at the level they desired?
- Was it clear to the community how their input was used?
- Was the final decision generally acceptable to the community?
- How satisfied are participants overall in the process that was used to arrive at the final decision?

- Was the level of public participation adequate to represent the concerns of those impacted by the decision?
- Did input from the community contribute to a better overall decision?
- Did decision makers believe community input helped to make a better decision?
- Was the process implemented as planned? If not, what changed and why?

Figure 13. Activity Evaluation Worksheet

Project: _____

Activity: _____

Lead Team Member: _____

Overall, how well did this activity meet the intended objectives? Use a scale of 1 to 5, 1 = Perfectly to 5 = Not well)		
Evaluation factors	Planned	Actual
Description of Activity		
Targeted Publics		
Objectives		
Number of People Reached		
Timing		
Budget and Staffing		

Comments: _____

Suggestions for the future: _____

©IAP2. Used with permission.

XII. Implementing the Plan: Case Histories of Public Participation and Communications Efforts

City of Palo Alto, California

This case history represents an example of a high level of effort in public participation. The city of Palo Alto, whose utilities department is a DEED member, sought to inform, consult, involve and partner with the public it serves around the topic of climate protection. The process, which is summarized here, is described in greater detail in the final report of the Mayor's Green Ribbon Task Force on Climate Protection, available on the city's Web site at <http://www.city.palo-alto.ca.us/greenribbon/index.html>.

Background

In June 2005, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed an executive order establishing aggressive goals for California to address global climate change. Subsequently, the state enacted AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, which declares that global warming poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources and environment of California.

Responding to the challenge of global warming, Palo Alto Mayor Judy Kleinberg stated in her 2006 State of the City address that she would establish a Green Ribbon Task Force on Climate Protection, serving the Palo Alto/Stanford community, to "better galvanize our community to work on the problem of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, and to recommend tangible steps and local actions by all stakeholder groups, including the city, to reduce global warming and encourage sustainable practices."

The mayor was confident in her statement, because the city of Palo Alto has had a historic role in addressing environmental issues. For example, it already sponsored utility programs to foster energy efficiency and renewable energy, waste reduction, use of alternative fuels, commuter programs and green building.

Because of its experiences in holding this historic role and because of its leadership in stimulating effective public participation, the city believed that local actions, identified and supported by the public, would be critical to achieving state goals to address a global problem. The city chose to appoint and help operate a task force to identify the actions.

The Task Force

The initial members of the task force were invited by the mayor, with assistance from a former mayor. The task force was asked to adopt a mission statement and work plan and then to develop climate protection recommendations from which each stakeholder group would develop action plans. These plans would be based on benchmarks, goals and objectives. In the next few months, the task force developed the following mission, goal and work plan/timeline:

Mission: To recommend an achievable and measurable set of policies and actions to meet or beat the governor's greenhouse gas emission-cutting goals (2000 levels by 2010, 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050).

Goal: To achieve significant, measurable reductions of greenhouse gas emissions in the Palo Alto/Stanford area through positive actions in all sectors of the population

Task Force Work Plan and Timeline: Involving four committees meeting biweekly to provide a report to the council by the end of 2006.

The mayor appointed a task force chairperson, an active volunteer member of the community and a staff liaison, a senior resource planner with City of Palo Alto Utilities, who was already working on a Climate Action Registry process and developing a climate action plan for the utilities department. The task force expanded along the way, bringing in community members who were passionate about the issue. The final task force roster included 58 members from a wide range of backgrounds, only six of whom were city staff.

The task force met biweekly from the first meeting in May 2006 until the final presentation in December. Some committees held supplemental meetings between regular task force meetings. Most of these meetings were held in a space donate by the school district. On days when that space was not available, the city allowed the task force to meet in city council chambers.

Three volunteer contributions made a big difference during the process. First, communication among task force members was greatly enhanced by one of the members, who established a Web-based discussion group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PA-GRTF/files>.

Second, a local businessman offered trained facilitators from his firm to help the task force progress from creative brainstorming to decisions on action. These facilitators gave the committees valuable assistance in moving toward concrete recommendations.

Third, another participant from the business sector provided the building committee with Option Finder technology to help them prioritize their recommendations.

Final Report and Core Recommendations

Each task force committee asked the city council to direct staff to evaluate and recommend alternatives that would bring the city as close as it feasibly, effectively and affordably could to climate neutrality in city government operations. They also asked the staff to facilitate community-wide activities to reduce emissions and to influence regional, state and federal agencies to address climate change. The recommendations and goals are included in the final report. Core recommendations would direct the city to:

- lead by example by continuing to report greenhouse gas emissions inventory for city operations and encourage and challenge businesses to participate;
- develop tools to measure progress in achieving community-wide emissions reductions;
- develop and implement a climate action plan for the city utilities department with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2020;
- revise city purchasing policies and practices to incorporate environmental costs;
- incorporate city vehicle fleet and employee commuting in the city's climate action plan;
- work with regional transportation agencies to advance the availability and ridership of public transportation and low-emissions transportation alternatives;
- incorporate green building practices into construction review process and building codes to evolve green building from exception to mainstream; and
- investigate a public-private partnership to actively raise awareness of and motivate actions to avert global warming.

The mayor also requested that progress toward the task force goals be annually reported to the city council. In parallel with the task force report, city staff submitted a report with a recommendation to adopt a resolution formally joining a Cities for Climate Protection campaign. The resolution was adopted unanimously, which commits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the community by undertaking the Cities for Climate Protection process, which consists of working through the following five milestones:

- conduct a greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast to determine the source and quantity of greenhouse gas emissions in the jurisdiction;
- establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target;
- develop an action plan with both existing and future actions geared to meet the local greenhouse gas reduction target;
- implement the action plan; and
- monitor and report progress and update plans.

City staff proposed reporting a progress update in April 2007 and developing a climate action plan by fall 2007.

City of Longmont, Colorado

The city of Longmont's community involvement process invites residents, elected officials and individuals from public agencies, private enterprise, nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations to come together to think collectively and act cooperatively on utility issues of all kinds. The process is also used for decisions related to transportation.

The public and city staff and officials work together through a process they call structured public involvement (SPI). They also jointly take responsibility for sustaining solutions that are developed and implemented.

Community involvement in Longmont includes four levels of participation. The level selected for working with the public on one issue may differ from the level selected for working on another issue, based on the types of considerations discussed in this guidebook. The four levels are:

- **Inform:** Provide balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives, and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve:** Collaborate directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.
- **Partner:** Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. All participants' inputs are equally valued.

The Public Process

When issues require public involvement at the first three levels (inform, consult, involve), the city is the decision maker. At the partner level, the decision is shared between the city and the community. At all four levels, the city connects with the community to define needs, gather information and make the decision. Also, the city strives to communicate clearly who made the decision and on what basis, including how public issues were considered.

When the aim is to consult, to involve or to partner with the public, the city and participating stakeholders establish a clear understanding of the scope of the issue at hand. They also establish an understanding of how individual interests are or are not within the scope of the decision-making process. Also, they agree on criteria, reflecting important community values and concerns, which will be used in the decision-making process.

Regardless of the level of involvement chosen, the city recognizes that the potentially interested and affected stakeholders have different and possibly conflicting interests and will engage at different levels. Also at each level, the city has process and outcome goals.

The process goals include:

- build trust and credibility;
- comply with regulatory requirements;
- achieve public satisfaction with decision-making process;
- ensure full consideration of public input by decision makers; and
- provide an opportunity to receive meaningful input.

The outcome goals include:

- support from elected officials;
- solutions that reflect community values and preferences; and
- more informed community/more informed staff and officials.

The city also recognizes the differences between values and interests. A value is a social principle or standard held or accepted by an individual, group, community or society. An interest is a feeling of intentness or curiosity—of wanting to know more about something. Individuals and groups use values to judge events and behaviors to judge what is right or wrong, fair or unfair. Understanding the difference between a value and an interest helps draw out perspectives on a project. Values are non-negotiable and usually do not change, although they can evolve over time. Public interests are continually changing.

The city embraces community involvement to discover the values of the community. Once they identify these values, the city and the community can create a strong platform to make and defend decisions and develop support for them. To get the community involved, the city uses SPI.

SPI brings together a variety of modern analytic methods, such as visualization, decision theory and facilitation methods. SPI is aimed at increasing public satisfaction with infrastructure projects of all types by providing an analytic framework for public involvement. SPI does not come in the form of a checklist of techniques to be followed in a specific sequence. Effective SPI requires customization for the project at hand. Implementing SPI requires a careful choice of methods for gathering public input and for translating this input into meaningful project guidance. The city's policy and systems analysis team uses a combination of approaches, techniques and practices to achieve these goals.

As a general rule of thumb, SPI involves determining clear project objectives and setting decision parameters by consulting with professionals and other representatives. It includes designing a public participation process, using forums such as focus groups or public meetings, obtaining information directly related to the project goals and then incorporating this information into design options before soliciting iterative feedback. Participants in the public forums participate in ways that reassure them that their voice really counts.

The Longmont experience suggests four principles of SPI:

- **Know who the stakeholders are and how to reach them.** If a road needs improvement, which groups would be expected to participate? How could outreach be organized to ensure that under-represented groups would participate in this process? For example, improving Internet outreach may not be helpful for urban transit situations in low-income areas where computer access is limited.

- **Understand the capacities of the technologies employed.** If visualization is to be used, which form of visualization is appropriate? How will stakeholders respond? What kinds of landscapes are best portrayed with two-dimensional, three-dimensional or virtual reality methods? If multi-criteria decision theory is to be used to evaluate competing alternatives, how might the choices to be defined and by whom? How might they to be presented and to whom? Who will define the parameters around which the decision will be structured?
- **Facilitate stakeholder input into determining project goals and scope,** not just the technical details of which solution is preferred. This requires some form of shared language and understanding among stakeholders that is not always easy to develop.
- **Consider how the participants understand the role of the technologies.** Be sure the process is oriented around people's wants and needs, rather than around development and use of specific technologies.

Colorado Springs (Colorado) Utilities

Public power utilities are expected to be responsible and responsive to their key stakeholders—their customers. That level of responsibility drove Colorado Springs Utilities to create an issues management department in 2001. In 2004, the department won a national award from the Issues Management Council, recognizing the excellence of its processes. The department plays an integral part in recognizing and mitigating the potential for negative public impacts on Colorado Springs Utilities' credibility and reputation. It played a key role in securing customer review and acceptance of Colorado Springs Utilities' 2004 Integrated Resource Plan.

Background

Colorado Springs Utilities completed a resource plan in 2002, following an older model for obtaining public comment. However, during the year after the plan was completed, several events affected that plan's validity. In January 2003, the U.S. Department of Energy selected Colorado Springs Utilities to partner in constructing a clean-coal power plant. Local activists and news media raised objections to the proposed plant. Some were also concerned about the rising cost of natural gas, which fuels about 20 percent of the utility's loads. At the same time, the utility's peak load growth forecasts showed that the need for electricity would increase at a slower rate than previously projected.

These developments all played into the utility's decision to update its integrated resource plan in 2003-2004, instead of waiting until 2007. This time, the utility's issues-management staff got involved.

Approach

"Public participation at Springs Utilities includes risk analysis to reduce costs and improve service," said Lisa Rosintoski, manager of issues management. "We identify and implement ways for our citizen-owners to benefit from any project by involving them in the planning and decision-making processes. Our goal is to think in terms of fire prevention versus fire fighting."

The issues management department's first step in approaching any project is meeting with the utility project manager and core project team. By holding a workshop with project team members and on occasion with public stakeholders, the department documents comments and concerns from all stakeholders potentially affected by a project. They imagine what local news headlines might be if a group or concern is overlooked. They determine whether they need to inform or educate the public. Then they identify internal and external stakeholders, before assessing the most appropriated public outreach strategies.

The staff develops a combined public participation and communications plan. Their approach is based on the philosophy and training of Hans and Annemarie Bleiker, founders of the Institute for Participatory Management and Planning.

In their planning, they try to avoid common public involvement mistakes, such as:

- ignoring employees;
- getting too close to the involved public;
- waiting too long to start, making implementation more difficult;
- having unclear goals or purpose;
- lacking management commitment, board support, flexibility to respond, and timely updates;
- excluding some internal and external stakeholders;
- lacking clarification in the relationship of public opinion to decisions;
- ignoring the time required to respond to concerns; and
- coming up with answers too soon.

The goals of public involvement and participation in the updated resource plan were to:

- identify all potentially affected interest groups, or stakeholders;
- identify all potential issues, concerns and values;
- educate and inform the public on the processes and issues;
- build trust and accountability with stakeholders;
- give stakeholders input on the planning processes to resolve issues quickly and efficiently, and minimize project delays and costs; and
- collaborate with external stakeholders to ensure we listen and understand their concerns.

In developing the IRP, Colorado Springs recognized that many of the decisions about how power was to be generated or how much it should cost, as well as what kind of conservation programs should be offered, were up to the community. According to the utility IRP project manager, "We needed to know if our customers wanted to continue with coal, if they were willing to pay additional costs associated with green technologies, or what programs would help them to better manage their energy use. We knew that good technical analysis alone would not lead to understanding our story."

From January to October 2004, public input was gathered for the IRP through four public meetings. Approaches and techniques included:

- use of a citizen content advisory group to offer substantive advice and review public processes, documentation and feedback on the planning process;
- use of a citizen technical advisory group for renewable energy and demand-side management plans;
- one-on-one stakeholder interviews;
- outreach to Colorado Springs Utilities employees who belong to outside organizations, such as service clubs;
- discussion groups that focused on senior citizens, commercial accounts and those involved with low-income and affordable housing;

- outreach to community groups;
- use of a random sample customer survey; and
- outreach through bill inserts, the utility Web site and board updates.

Communications with the Utilities Policy Advisory Committee

As public outreach for the IRP drew to a close, public sentiment had become clear: Demand-side management programs were highly valued by nearly all participants, who appreciate conservation measures and rebates.

Results and recommendations included the following:

- Customers identified their top priority as price, followed by a reliable power supply and environmental considerations.
- Customers generally support renewable energy and demand-side management programs, but cost is a deciding factor in overall acceptance.
- Colorado Springs Utilities should look for partnering opportunities to educate and inform customers on the need for long-term resource planning.
- Colorado Springs Utilities should continue to educate the public about the IRP using multiple communications tools, such as public meetings, the Web site, media, bill inserts and community outreach presentations.
- Because of finite resources and the increasing cost of gas, the majority of stakeholders feel Colorado Springs Utilities must be weaned away from coal and gas.

With the combined technical analysis and public input, Colorado Springs Utilities drafted a plan, which was approved by the Utilities Board, that calls for a progressive approach for the IRP, increasing demand-side management and renewable energy use to moderate levels.

According to the IRP project manager, the process was successful because a broad, representative sample of the public participated, helping to make decisions based on economics, reliability and environmental issues. The public policy issues that Colorado Springs Utilities dealt with have been typically complex and involve high stakes. Decisions about meeting growing electricity needs involve enormous costs and have environmental, quality of life, political and emotional dimensions for a community. Public participation is an essential part of the utility's long-range planning.

Placer County (California) Water Agency

Maintaining community trust is the chief goal of public communications for the Placer County Water Agency. According to one board member, Pauline Rocucci, "You need to develop a trust with the community because there may be times when you have to raise rates or when you have other problems, and you want to already have a good relationship established with the community."

Most of the agency's board meetings are held midafternoon. However, if the board will be considering issues of heightened public interest, it schedules an evening meeting. It will even send out extra notices to make sure as many people as possible are informed. The board sometimes even broadcasts its meetings on local cable television.

For this agency, communication is about more than just sitting at a table and allowing people to watch and listen. It is about interacting as much as necessary for everyone to understand the issues. Rocucci, a former mayor of Roseville, Calif., learned this when she was a member

of that city's planning commission. She would review the minutes of meetings and try to find out why certain people would support something and others would not. She found that a lack of support was not necessarily a sign that someone was against something. Sometimes it was simply an indication that an individual or group needed more information before it could support a decision.

Roccucci uses this insight in helping to direct the Placer County Water Agency. "If you can get to the root of confusion and understand what people are concerned about, you can usually begin to build consensus," she said.

Agency board members extend their communications in the community beyond the four walls of the board meeting room. Most members also belong to community organizations, and people know this, so they can approach board members in convenient settings. They also provide presentations to civic groups and publicize their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The board does not designate a single spokesperson, because each member represents a specific district. Besides, the opportunity for community members to get to know board members personally helps build trust, which can be particularly important if a controversy arises. The board also allows the media to contact any and all board members. And like many other community-owned utilities, the agency likes to use the Internet to initiate communications, often publicizing topics that will be discussed at upcoming meetings so that participants can prepare.

Redding (California) Electric Utility

This guidebook suggests five levels of public involvement to consider when implementing a public participation process. Each has a different level of commitment by the utility and the public: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower.

Redding Electric Utility (REU) evaluated these levels in detail because it faced an issue that it believed could be controversial—the introduction of residential time of use (RTOU) rates. At the outset, the utility wanted to measure community interest and concern as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

After some consideration, REU chose to develop a customer survey to determine the community's attitude toward RTOU. It designed the survey to also test community interest or concerns in three other areas: global warming, renewable energy and utility quality of service.

There were 15 questions addressing the four major areas. A cover letter emphasized that REU needed customers' help and that the topic of RTOU was only included as a possible course of action. That is, REU would consult the customers further at a later date, should it decide to pursue the RTOU option. The survey activity was presented carefully, only to get feedback on potential ideas and programs. To demonstrate its neutrality, REU asked the Utility Energy Forum, a consultancy, to conduct the survey.

The Survey

In August 2006, the Forum mailed out the survey form to 200 randomly selected residential customers in the REU service area. Seventy responded. The response rate of more than 33 percent, which was well above the national average of 2 to 5 percent, was probably due to one or more reasons: Energy use, renewable energy, global warming and energy independence are dominating the news. There was a "call for help" message in the cover letter. And there was telephone follow-up with more than 75 percent of the target group.



Survey Results

Redding is a diverse community. Its citizens have a range of ideas, incomes, lifestyles and outlooks. The survey reflected that diversity. However, there were some areas of relatively uniform agreement. For example, the majority of residents recognize that it costs more to supply electricity on a hot summer afternoon than at any other time of the year. The majority believe that REU should offer a volunteer RTOU program and that it should offer some flexibility on the length of time that a customer needs to stay on the rate after signing up. In short, the survey found no need to expend much time and money on convincing the public of the time value of energy.

The public's recognition of flexibility showed a high degree of sophistication, because it signaled that participants would like to see if they could achieve savings on the proposed rate, rather than to be locked into the rate indefinitely with no way to opt out. The majority also indicated that they are concerned about global warming and energy independence. In this way, the Redding community reflects the U.S. citizenry as a whole. Regardless of what programs or projects REU offers for consideration, it will have community support if the public can see the tie to mitigating global warming or increasing our energy independence.

According to David Wright, Redding Public Utilities director, the back of a customer's bill can be a low-cost tool for any utility. As he points out, what if a direct mail marketer sent your utility an offer to send an extra mailer once a month to all of your customers, postage free, with no cost for envelopes or paper stock? And what if they guaranteed that virtually all of your customers would open the envelope every time, and that a large percentage would keep the mailer, no matter what the message or offer said? The utility already has this tool at its disposal, in the form of the monthly bill.

Printing on the bill is not the same as providing an insert with the bill. Customers often throw inserts away without reading them. In viewing alternatives, the most obvious location, the utility bill itself, became David's focus. The back of the utility bill contained the statement of services, which is required to be included with each utility bill. His thought became: "What if we utilized the back of the utility bill to communicate more information and could teach our customers to just flip their bill over to read our message?" Using the back of the bill enables REU's monthly message to be communicated much more effectively.

Customer response shows success. REU found this marketing outlet to be extremely successful, reinforced by envelope messages directing customers to check out the information on the back of the bill. Customers routinely read these back-of-bill messages, urging them to participate in REU's energy conservation programs. Additional back-of-bill information has included updates on new solar energy projects, water projects, energy conservation tips and quarterly Power Content Labels.



Appendix A

The IAP2 Public Participation Toolbox

Techniques to share information

TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
PRINTED PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fact Sheets ■ Newsletters ■ Brochures ■ Issue Papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KISSI - Keep It Short and Simple Make it visually interesting but avoid a slick sales look ■ Include a postage-paid comment form to encourage two-way communication and to expand mailing list ■ Be sure to explain public role and how public comments have affected project decisions. Q&A format works well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can reach large target audience Allows for technical and legal reviews ■ Encourages written responses if comment form enclosed ■ Facilitates documentation of public involvement process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Only as good as the mailing list/distribution network ■ Limited capability to communicate complicated concepts ■ No guarantee materials will be read
INFORMATION REPOSITORIES			
Libraries, city halls, distribution centers, schools, and other public facilities make good locations for housing project-related information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure personnel at location know where materials are kept ■ Keep list of repository items Track usage through a sign-in sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relevant information is accessible to the public without incurring the costs or complications of tracking multiple copies sent to different people ■ Can set up visible distribution centers for project information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Information repositories are often not well used by the public
TECHNICAL REPORTS			
Technical documents reporting research or policy findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reports are often more credible if prepared by independent groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides for thorough explanation of project decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be more detailed than desired by many participants ■ May not be written in clear, accessible language
ADVERTISEMENTS			
Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Figure out the best days and best sections of the paper to reach intended audience ■ Avoid rarely read notice sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Potentially reaches broad public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expensive, especially in urban areas ■ Allows for relatively limited amount of information
NEWSPAPER INSERTS			
A "fact sheet" within the local newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design needs to get noticed in the pile of inserts ■ Try on a day that has few other inserts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides community-wide distribution of information ■ Presented in the context of local paper, insert is more likely to be read and taken seriously ■ Provides opportunity to include public comment form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expensive, especially in urban areas
FEATURE STORIES			
Focused stories on general project-related issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Anticipate visuals or schedule interesting events to help sell the story ■ Recognize that reporters are always looking for an angle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can heighten the perceived importance of the project ■ More likely to be read and taken seriously by the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No control over what information is presented or how
BILL STUFFER			
Information flyer included with monthly utility bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design bill stuffers to be eye-catching to encourage readership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Widespread distribution within service area ■ Economical use of existing mailings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited information can be conveyed ■ Message may get confused as from the mailing entity

©IAP2. Used with permission.



TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
PRESS RELEASES			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fax or e-mail press releases or media kits ■ Foster a relationship of editorial board and reporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Informs the media of project milestones ■ Press release language is often used directly in articles ■ Opportunity for technical and legal reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low media response rate ■ Frequent poor placement of press release within newspapers
NEWS CONFERENCES			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure all speakers are trained in media relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunity to reach all media in one setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Limited to news-worthy events
TELEVISION			
Television programming to present information and elicit audience response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cable options are expanding and can be inexpensive ■ Check out expanding video options on the internet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be used in multiple geographic areas ■ Many people will take the time to watch rather than read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High expense ■ Difficult to gauge impact on audience
INFORMATION CENTERS and FIELD OFFICES			
Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to inquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide adequate staff to accommodate group tours ■ Use brochures and videotapes to advertise and reach broader audience ■ Consider providing internet access station ■ Select an accessible and frequented location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provides opportunity for positive media coverage at groundbreaking and other significant events ■ Excellent opportunity to educate school children ■ Places information dissemination in a positive educational setting ■ Information is easily accessible to the public ■ Provides an opportunity for more responsive ongoing communications focused on specific public involvement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relatively expensive, especially for project-specific use ■ Access is limited to those in vicinity of the center unless facility is mobile
EXPERT PANELS			
Public meeting designed in "Meet the Press" format. Media panel interviews experts from different perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide opportunity for participation by general public following panel ■ Have a neutral moderator ■ Agree on ground rules in advance ■ Possibly encourage local organizations to sponsor rather than challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourages education of the media ■ Presents opportunity for balanced discussion of key issues ■ Provides opportunity to dispel scientific misinformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Requires substantial preparation and organization ■ May enhance public concerns by increasing visibility of issues
BRIEFINGS			
Use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate. Normally these groups need speakers. Examples of target audiences: Rotary Club, Lions Clubs, Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters. Also a good technique for elected officials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ KISS - Keep it Short and Simple ■ Use "show and tell" techniques ■ Bring visuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Control of information/presentation ■ Opportunity to reach a wide variety of individuals who may not have been attracted to another format ■ Opportunity to expand mailing list ■ Similar presentations can be used for different groups ■ Builds community good will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project stakeholders may not be in target audiences ■ Topic may be too technical to capture interest of audience
CENTRAL INFORMATION CONTACT			
Identify designated contacts for the public and media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If possible, list a person not a position ■ Best if contact person is local ■ Anticipate how phones will be answered ■ Make sure message is kept up to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People don't get "the run around" when they call ■ Controls information flow ■ Conveys image of "accessibility" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses ■ May filter public message from technical staff and decision makers ■ May not serve to answer many of the toughest questions



TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
WEB SITES			
A Web site provides information and links to other sites through the World Wide Web. Electronic mailing lists are included.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A good home page is critical Each Web page must be independent Put critical information at the top of page Use headings, bulleted and numbered lists to steer user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaches across distances Makes information accessible anywhere at any time Saves printing and mailing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User may not have easy access to the Internet or knowledge of how to use computers Large files or graphics can take a long time to download
TECHNICAL INFORMATION CONTACT			
Providing access to technical expertise to individuals and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical resource must be perceived as credible by the audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds credibility and helps address public concerns about equity Can be effective conflict resolution technique where facts are debated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities exist for providing technical assistance Technical experts may counter project information

Techniques to compile input and provide feedback

TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
INFORMATION HOT LINE			
Identify a separate line for public access to prerecorded project information or to reach project team members who can answer questions/ obtain input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure contact has sufficient knowledge to answer most project-related questions If possible, list a person not a position Best if contact person is local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People don't get "the run around" when they call Controls information flow Conveys image of "accessibility" Easy to provide updates on project activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses
INTERVIEWS			
One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus building programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where feasible, interviews should be conducted in-person, particularly when considering candidates for citizens committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum Provides opportunity to obtain feedback from all stakeholders Can be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming
IN-PERSON SURVEYS			
One-on-one "focus groups" with standardized questionnaire or methodology such as "stated preference"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure use of result is clear before technique is designed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides traceable data Reaches broad, representative public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive
RESPONSE SHEETS			
Mail-In-forms often included in fact sheets and other project mailings to gain information on public concerns and preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use prepaid postage Include a section to add name to the mailing list Document results as part of public involvement record 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input from those who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides a mechanism for expanding mailing list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not generate statistically valid results Only as good as the mailing list Results can be easily skewed
MAILED SURVEYS & QUESTIONNAIRES			
Inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you need statistically valid results before making investment Survey/questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides input from cross-section of public not just activists Statistically tested results are more persuasive with political bodies and the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response rate is generally low For statistically valid results, can be labor intensive and expensive Level of detail may be limited



TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
TELEPHONE SURVEYS/POLLS			
Random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you need statistically valid results before making investment Survey/Questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list Higher response rate than with mail-in surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More expensive and labor intensive than mailed surveys
INTERNET SURVEYS/POLLS			
Web-based response polls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be precise in how you set up site, chat rooms or discussion places can generate more input than you can look at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list Higher response rate than other communication forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally not statistically valid results Can be very labor intensive to look at all of the responses Cannot control geographic reach of poll Results can be easily skewed
COMPUTER-BASED POLLING			
Surveys conducted via computer network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate for attitudinal research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides instant analyses of results Can be used in multiple areas Novelty of technique improves rate of response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High expense Detail of inquiry is limited
COMMUNITY FACILITATORS			
Use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct project outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define roles, responsibilities and limitations up front Select and train facilitators carefully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes community-based involvement Capitalizes on existing networks Enhances project credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to control information flow Can build false expectations
FOCUS GROUPS			
Message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience. Can also be used to obtain input on planning decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct at least two sessions for a given target Use a skilled focus group facilitator to conduct the session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunity to test key messages prior to implementing program Works best for select target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively expensive if conducted in focus group testing facility
DELIBERATIVE POLLING			
Measures informed opinion on an issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not expect or encourage participants to develop a shared view Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can tell decision-makers what the public would think if they had more time and information Exposure to different backgrounds, arguments, and views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource intensive Often held in conjunction with television companies 2 – 3 day meeting



Techniques to bring people together

TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
SIMULATION GAMES			
Exercises that simulate project decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test "game" before using Be clear about how results will be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be designed to be an effective educational/training technique, especially for local officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires substantial preparation and time for implementation Can be expensive
TOURS			
Provide tours for key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how many participants can be accommodated and make plans for overflow Plan question/ answer session Consider providing refreshments Demonstrations work better than presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to develop rapport with key stakeholders Reduces outrage by making choices more familiar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of participants is limited by logistics Potentially attractive to protestors
OPEN HOUSES			
An open house to allow the public to tour at their own pace. The facility should be set up with several stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone should explain format at the door Have each participant fill out a comment sheet to document their participation Be prepared for a crowd all at once - develop a meeting contingency plan Encourage people to draw on maps to actively participate Set up stations so that several people (6-10) can view at once 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster small group or one-on-one communications Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions Less likely to receive media coverage Builds credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to document public input at each display Usually more staff intensive than a meeting
COMMUNITY FAIRS			
Central event with multiple activities to provide project information and raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All issues, large and small must be considered Make sure adequate resources and staff are available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses public attention on one element Conducive to media coverage Allows for different levels of information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public must be motivated to attend Usually expensive to do it well Can damage image if not done well
COFFEE KLATCHES			
Small meetings within neighborhood usually at a person's home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure staff is very polite and appreciative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue Maximizes two-way communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be costly and labor intensive
MEETINGS WITH EXISTING GROUPS			
Small meetings with existing groups or in conjunction with another event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand who the likely audience is to be Make opportunities for one-on-one meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to get on the agenda Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be too selective and can leave out important groups
WEB-BASED MEETINGS			
Meetings that occur via the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailor agenda to your participants Combine telephone and face-to-face meetings with Web-based meetings. Plan for graphics and other supporting materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost and time efficient Can include a broader audience People can participate at different times or at the same time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider timing if international time zones are represented Difficult to manage or resolve conflict



TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
COMPUTER-FACILITATED WORKSHOP			
Any sized meeting when participants use interactive computer technology to register opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand your audience, particularly the demographic categories Design the inquiries to provide useful results Use facilitator trained in the technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate graphic results prompt focused discussion Areas of agreement/disagreement easily portrayed Minority views are honored Responses are private Levels the playing field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software limits design Potential for placing too much emphasis on numbers Technology failure
PUBLIC HEARINGS			
Formal meetings with scheduled presentations offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid if possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunity for public to speak without rebuttal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not foster constructive dialogue Can perpetuate an us vs. them feeling
DESIGN CHARRETTES			
Intensive session where participants re-design project features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best used to foster creative ideas Be clear about how results will be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes joint problem solving and creative thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants may not be seen as representative by larger public
CONSENSUS BUILDING TECHNIQUES			
Techniques for building consensus on project decisions such as criteria and alternative selection. Often used with advisory committees. Techniques include Delphi, nominal group technique, public value assessment and many others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use simplified methodology Allow adequate time to reach consensus Consider one of the computerized systems that are available Define levels of consensus, i.e. a group does not have to agree entirely upon a decision but rather agree enough so the discussion can move forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages compromise among different interests Provides structured and trackable decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not appropriate for groups with no interest in compromise Clever parties can skew results Does not produce a statistically valid solution Consensus may not be reached
ADVISORY COMMITTEES			
A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define roles and responsibilities up front Be forthcoming with information Use a consistently credible process Interview potential committee members in person before selection Use third party facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for detailed analyses for project issues Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public may not embrace committee's recommendations Members may not achieve consensus Sponsor must accept need for give-and-take Time and labor intensive
TASK FORCES			
A group of experts or representative stakeholders formed to develop a specific product or policy recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain strong leadership in advance Make sure membership has credibility with the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings of a task force of independent or diverse interests will have greater credibility Provides constructive opportunity for compromise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task force may not come to consensus or results may be too general to be meaningful Time and labor intensive
PANELS			
A group assembled to debate or provide input on specific issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most appropriate to show different news to public Panelists must be credible with public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunity to dispel misinformation Can build credibility if all sides are represented May create wanted media attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May create unwanted media attention



TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
CITIZEN JURIES			
Small group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross examine witnesses, make a recommendation. Always non-binding with no legal standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires skilled moderator Commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why Be clear about how results will be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue Public can identify with the "ordinary" citizens Pinpoint fatal flaws or gauge public reaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource intensive
ROLE-PLAYING			
Participants act out characters in pre-defined situation followed by evaluation of the interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose roles carefully. Ensure that all interests are represented. People may need encouragement to play a role fully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow people to take risk-free positions and view situation from other perspectives Participants gain clearer understanding of issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People may not be able to actually achieve goal of seeing another's perspective
SAMOAN CIRCLE			
Leaderless meeting that stimulates active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set room up with center table surrounded by concentric circles Need microphones Requires several people to record discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used with 10 to 500 people Works best with controversial issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogue can stall or become monopolized
OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY			
Participants offer topics and others participate according to interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to have a powerful theme or vision statement to generate topics Need flexible facilities to accommodate numerous groups of different sizes Groundrules and procedures must be carefully explained for success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides structure for giving people opportunity and responsibility to create valuable product or experience Includes immediate summary of discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most important issues could get lost in the shuffle Can be difficult to get accurate reporting of results
WORKSHOPS			
An informal public meeting that may include a presentations and exhibits but ends with interactive working groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop Conduct training in advance with small group facilitators. Each should receive a list of instructions, especially where procedures involve weighting/ranking of factors or criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent for discussions on criteria or analysis of alternatives Fosters small group or one-to-one communication Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions Builds credibility Maximizes feedback obtained from participants Fosters public ownership in solving the problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hostile participants may resist what they perceive to be the "divide and conquer" strategy of breaking into small groups Several small-group facilitators are necessary
FUTURE SEARCH CONFERENCE			
Focuses on the future of an organization, a network of people, or community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can involve hundreds of people simultaneously in major organizational change decisions Individuals are experts Can lead to substantial changes across entire organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logistically challenging May be difficult to gain complete commitment from all stakeholders 2 – 3 day meeting

Appendix B

IAP2's Code of Ethics

IAP2's Code of Ethics is a set of principles that guides the public participation practitioner's professional conduct and role in designing and implementing public participation processes.

Practitioners should hold themselves accountable to these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

IAP2 Code of Ethics for Public Participation Practitioners

The IAP2's Code of Ethics for public participation practitioners supports and reflects IAP2's Core Values for the practice of public participation. The Core Values define the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. The Code of Ethics speaks to the actions of practitioners.

Preamble

As members of IAP2, we recognize the importance of a Code of Ethics, which guides the actions of those who advocate for including all stakeholders in public decision-making processes. To fully discharge our duties as public participation practitioners, we define terms used explicitly throughout our Code of Ethics. We define stakeholders as any individual, group of individuals, organization, or political entity with a stake in the outcome of a decision. We define the public as those stakeholders who are not the decision-maker(s). We define public participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to make better decisions.

This Code of Ethics is a set of principles which guides us in our practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process. As practitioners we hold ourselves accountable for these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

1. **PURPOSE.** We support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body.
2. **ROLE OF PRACTITIONER.** We will enhance the public's participation in the decision-making process and assist decision-makers in being responsive to the public's concerns and suggestions.
3. **TRUST.** We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process and among all the participants.
4. **DEFINING THE PUBLIC'S ROLE.** We will carefully consider and accurately portray the public's role in the decision-making process.
5. **OPENNESS.** We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision.
6. **ACCESS TO THE PROCESS.** We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.
7. **RESPECT FOR COMMUNITIES.** We will avoid strategies that risk polarizing community interests or that appear to "divide and conquer."
8. **ADVOCACY.** We will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for a particular interest, party, or project outcome.
9. **COMMITMENTS.** We will ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those by the decision-maker, are made in good faith.
10. **SUPPORT OF THE PRACTICE.** We will mentor new practitioners in the field and educate decision-makers and the public about the value and use of public participation.

©IAP2. Used with permission.