

**DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER**  
**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK**  
**POLICIES, PRINCIPLES and PRACTICES**

**A Four Volume Series**

**May 1996**

# **Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices**

## **Introduction**

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### **Public Involvement Framework**

#### **Policies, Principles and Practices**

#### **A Four Volume Series**

This “manual” is intended to be used as a tool for staff to design effective public involvement processes, consistent with the District’s Governance Principles that “we believe that open and responsive local government occurs through decision-making processes that are accessible to those wishing to participate, easily understood, timely, just and fair” and “we believe that local government must be accountable, efficient and effective”.

These principles are reflected throughout this four volume manual and are intended to be incorporated into the public processes we design and implement.

This manual will be used extensively by staff in all departments who individually and collectively, and together with Council, take responsibility for how we do business in the District of North Vancouver.

Volume 1 sets out the policy framework and guiding principles and Council policies related to public involvement.

Volume 2 is the “How to” portion of the manual which outlines the questions to ask and issues to consider when staff design public involvement processes.

Volume 3 is a list of the processes that we currently have for involving the public in the myriad of decisions that are made which affect the public.

Volume 4 is a “Tool Box” of creative techniques which suggests various mechanisms and ideas that can be considered in designing and processing.

The various volumes can be used together or separately depending upon the reference tool required for the task that staff are working on. Copies of the full manual are available in Clerk’s Office and can be purchased for \$20.00.

Public information materials have also been prepared. Samples are contained in Volume 4, “Tool Box”.

# Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

## Introduction

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### 1 What is Public Involvement?

Public Involvement:

- ensures that all views are considered in planning and decision-making;
- builds the longer term capacity of governments, organizations, and citizens to work together for a healthier, safer and more vibrant community;
- requires that citizens, groups, and organizations are informed about decisions and actions likely to affect their lives;
- is a joint creation of future visions with the community that speak to multiple interests and concerns;
- involves others in learning, discussing, thinking, and acting;
- inspires people, groups, and organizations to take an active role in caring for and enriching their community.

*Citizens interact with the District of North Vancouver in many ways.*

*For example they:*

- seek information
- pay taxes
- apply for permits and licenses
- vote in municipal elections
- receive services
- respond to customer surveys
- work alongside District staff
- influence Council decisions

While all of these processes involve citizens, community groups, and organizations in the on-going activities of the District of North Vancouver, this manual focuses on a narrower definition of public involvement.

Public involvement processes intentionally engage citizens, community groups and organizations in the decision making processes of the District of North Vancouver, at both Council and staff levels.

# **Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices**

## **Introduction**

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This manual is the result of a combined effort of the following people over a one year period.

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# Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

## Introduction

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### 2 How To Use This Manual

This manual serves several purposes:

- **Volume 1** outlines the official policies of the District of North Vancouver regarding public involvement processes
- **Volume 2** lays out a framework for designing public involvement processes for those issues and decisions where there are no current common practices.
- **Volume 3** describes current practices, and particularly those situations where a relatively pre-defined public involvement process is used for a specific issue or decision.
- **Volume 4** provides technical resources.



This volume summarizes the framework under which the development and the implementation of public involvement processes within the District of North Vancouver is carried out.

- 1.2 Council’s Overall Policy On Public Involvement\_\_\_\_\_ 3**
- 1.3 Guiding Principles For Public Involvement\_\_\_\_\_ 6**
- 1.4 Policy Statement On Community Committees of Council  
and Community Associations\_\_\_\_\_ 8**
- 1.5 Community Associations and Neighbourhood Livability\_\_\_\_\_18**

Appendix “A” .... Excerpt from the Business Plan

## 1.1 Corporate Business Plan

The Corporate Business Plan outlines the District's Mission Statement, Governance Principles, Corporate Values and Corporate Priorities. The Business Plan also includes many statements reinforcing the importance of public involvement in the way the District "does business."

For example, the following statement can be found under the section headed "Leaders and Partners":

"While the organization recognizes its responsibility to the entire community to exercise leadership in planning, policy making and decision making, there will be a renewed emphasis on partnerships between Council, staff and the community. This new emphasis on partnership requires that we re-examine our roles in service delivery and decision making, develop stronger working relationships with our partners, encourage community-based solutions and ensure that the District both acts and is perceived to act in an open, understandable and fair manner."

## 1.2 Council's Overall Policy on Public Involvement

### 1.2.1 Expectations

We expect public involvement processes within the District of North Vancouver to:

- inform and increase the awareness of staff, Council and the public including individual citizens, interest groups, businesses, and community associations and organizations
- improve the quality of decision-making by:
  - ⇒ building better understandings of the diverse needs, interests, and values of citizens
  - ⇒ building better understanding of the complexities of the issues, and of the options available, so that there is wide acceptance of what needs to be considered during decision-making
  - ⇒ providing multiple points of view that need to be considered in making final decisions
  - ⇒ gauging public opinion
- where possible, build common ground upon which decisions can be made, particularly when there is controversy and conflict



- provide democratic opportunities for citizens to participate in their community and to become involved in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

We do not expect public involvement processes to:

- provide solutions for resolving all conflicting interests, perspectives, and values in the community
- lessen the importance of the professional advice provided by District staff
- limit the fundamental role of Council as the final decision-maker
- equally satisfy all members of the community.

### **1.2.2 District Responsibilities**

Council and District staff will ensure that:

- public involvement processes provide timely access to necessary information so that members of the public have opportunities to become informed about activities, plans, and decisions that affect them
- citizens have opportunities to participate in meaningful and timely ways
- Council's decision-making takes into account the full range of opinions expressed through public involvement processes
- timely feedback is provided to those who participated about the results of their participation and the decisions made by Council
- public involvement processes are evaluated in an on-going manner
- public involvement processes are, and can be perceived to be open, understandable and fair
- special outreach efforts are made to support the participation of those groups in the community who find it more difficult to become involved

- the public is informed of the opportunities to become involved.

### **1.2.3 Public Responsibilities**

For public involvement processes to be most effective, community groups and organizations need to:

- take proactive action to be informed, become aware of the issues, and participate in the opportunities made available
- seek informal ways to interact with friends, neighbours, and work colleagues to discuss key community issues
- seek to understand and respect the diverse interests, needs, and values of all of the citizens in the community
- look for understandings and solutions that build positive benefits for all citizens, present and future.

### **1.2.4 Constraints**

Public involvement processes within the District will be designed and implemented, recognizing that:

- as a municipal body, the District has power and influence over certain issues, and not others
- Council, as the publicly-elected body, has the final decision-making authority
- quite often, decisions need to be made within a given time frame
- the costs of public involvement (dollars, staff time,...) need to fit within the District's budgetary limits
- citizens, community groups, and organizations also have limits (dollars, time, energy...) to their involvement.

## 1.3 Guiding Principles for Public Involvement

The District's, and other municipalities, experience with public involvement processes indicate that the following principles are key to success.

### Integrity

- Establishment of early and on-going opportunities for participation
- Leaders of public involvement processes must show integrity, commitment to the process, fairness, and objectivity.

### Flexible

- The District's decision-making processes must be open to change.
- Public Involvement, over the longer term, needs to be seen to have impacts

### Responsive

- Public involvement processes must be meaningful to the participants, in terms of the quality of the opportunities for involvement and the real impacts on the decision-making process.
- There needs to be timely feedback to those who were involved as to what has emerged from the process, and why.

### Open and Informed

- Open access to information is essential to determine what facts need to be considered.
- People cannot participate well without full information.

### Collaborative

- Public involvement will be greater if there are many different ways for people to become involved.
- Where possible, building agreement first on the facts, and then on the issues and problems, is key to avoiding conflicts when looking for solutions.

### Fair

- The people involved should reflect the full range of interests.
- The integrity of the public involvement process must be protected from any group that tries to dominate it.
- Perceptions that a decision has been too heavily influenced by interested parties acting outside of the public involvement process will do considerable damage to people's respect for the process, both in an immediate sense and into the future.

### Clear

- The process needs to be explained fully and everyone involved needs to respect the agreed upon process.

### Efficient

- Sufficient time, staff, volunteers, and resources must be allowed.
- Perceptions that public involvement processes are being used to procrastinate on decision-making will do considerable damage to people's respect for the process, both in an immediate sense and into the future.
- It is important that citizens be heard at both an immediate feeling level, and in more considered ways.

## **1.4 Policy Statement on Community Committees of Council and Community Associations**

### **Introduction**

It is a sound principle of public involvement that citizens are more easily and effectively engaged in the process on their own turf. Citizens gather in many groups and organizations (for example: school parent committees, sports groups, voluntary organizations, business associations,...). These are a natural community infrastructure to enhance the District's public involvement processes.

The District also has more formal relations with:

- its own appointed community committees (see section 1.4.1)
- individual community and ratepayer associations (see section 1.5)

# Community Committees of Council

## 1.4.1 Mandate

Within its overall policy on public involvement, the Council of the District of North Vancouver appoints advisory committees, advisory panels, and task forces to:

- Provide information and well considered advice to Council and staff on issues of concern to the public and the District;
- Educate and raise the awareness of Council and staff; and
- Provide concrete recommendations for consideration by Council and staff.

### REASON FOR POLICY

The advisory committees, advisory panels and task forces provide opportunities for diverse citizens to become more actively involved in their community, and for issues to be considered in depth.

### PROCEDURE

## 1.4.2 Scope of Policy

This policy applies only to non-mandatory and discretionary committees of a non-contractual nature, established by the District of North Vancouver which are primarily made up of community members.

Current community committees covered by this Policy are:

*Advisory Committees:*

- Child Care Grants Advisory Committee
- Community Services Advisory Committee
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Parks Advisory Committee

*Panels:*

- Advisory Design Panel

*Task Forces:*

Northlands Golf Course Task Force  
Street Tree Plan Task Force

*Statutory:*

Advisory Planning Commission

#### **1.4.4 Functions**

Within their mandate, the functions of the community committees of Council are to:

- respond to issues referred by Council and staff;
- listen to and report on the community's views;
- gather necessary facts, information, and opinions;
- educate and raise the awareness of Council and staff;
- in the case of Advisory Committees, offer longer term visions for how the community needs to develop;
- relate to other bodies in the community doing similar work;
- provide advice and recommendations to Council and staff;
- raise issues to Council and staff that need to be addressed further.

#### **1.4.5 Expectations**

The Council of the District of North Vancouver expects community committees of Council to:

- respond to the issues referred by Council and by staff;
- within their mandates, raise issues to Council and staff that committee members believe need to be addressed;
- give well-considered and timely response to Council's need for advice;
- work within the strategic directions as outlined in Council's annual business plan;
- work within the framework of the District's overall policy on public involvement;
- carry out their work effectively, efficiently, and creatively.

In return, community committees of Council can expect from Council and staff:

- full information on the issues being addressed;
- consistent and effective staff support, within the budgetary limits of the District;

- orientation and training;
- prompt feedback on the outcomes of their advice and recommendations;
- community recognition for providing hours of volunteer time, and valuable ideas and expertise;
- a commitment from Council to refer issues for committee consideration as they arise.

In addition, members of community committees of Council can expect opportunities to:

- learn more about their community, and the issues that need to be addressed;
- engage with other people in dialogue and debate about the community and its issues;
- create broad visions of how the community needs to be developed over the longer term;
- make concrete recommendations to Council and staff.

Council acknowledges that it is vital that committee members feel that they are making a real difference in the life of their community.

#### **1.4.6 Reporting**

The community committees of Council are appointed by and report directly to Council.

- They are consultative groups.
- Council has the responsibility for making final decisions.
- Community committees of Council also play significant roles in assisting and advising staff.
- Committee members will not represent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated by Council.

#### **Minutes**

Committee minutes, summarizing the decisions made and the key discussion points, will be submitted to Clerk's Office to circulate to Council and made available to management staff.

As minutes are available to the public, confidential material should not be included.

## **1.4.7 Membership**

### **Diversity**

Membership of the community committees of Council will be diverse, and broadly reflective of the community (for example: age, gender, cultural background, occupation, and geography).

Membership will also reflect the desired experience, knowledge and expertise.

## **1.4.10 New Committees**

In considering a new community committee of Council, Council will use the following criteria:

- What work needs to be done, or what issues need to be considered by the committee?
- Is the work on-going, or of a more time limited nature? What are the timelines?
- Is there a need for public involvement? Why? Who needs to be involved?
- Are there existing groups within the District or the community who could undertake the work or consider the issues?

In addition, Council will give consideration to the make up of the committee in terms of skills, expertise, and the diversity of interests required.



## 1.5 Community Associations and Neighbourhood Livability

There are tremendous benefits to be gained by having active, involved community associations at the neighborhood level. These organizations enable residents to work together to: address local issues, create a sense of community by connecting people with each other, develop needed programs and services, and provide input into municipal decision-making from those who are affected.

In 1994, the District of North Vancouver adopted a framework for neighbourhood livability and involvement. The following objectives and policies from that framework are closely related to public involvement processes.

### 1.5.1 Objectives

- Promote and enhance neighbourhood identity, community spirit, and resident involvement.
- Promote safety and security in neighbourhoods.
- Improve public participation processes and neighbourhood-based solutions to local problems.
- Support and encourage methods of planning and design that foster and preserve the elements of healthy neighbourhoods.

### 1.5.2 Policies

- The District will recognize and encourage resident involvement in neighbourhoods at all levels - from individual to ratepayer/community associations and other neighbourhood based groups.
- The District and residents will investigate ways to involve youth in enhancing amenities and activities for youth within neighbourhoods.

- The District will, together with residents, investigate ways to support problem solving at the neighbourhood level with respect to safety and security issues.
- All District departments will, when developing processes to involve the public in District decision-making, ensure that:
  - ⇒ residents are involved as early as possible in the decision-making process;
  - ⇒ feedback is provided to residents on their input;
  - ⇒ the District follows up with residents on the outcome of the decision-making process.
- The District will make information accessible to residents on where and when they can be involved in different types of District decisions and initiatives, and increase opportunities for information access and exchange.
- The District will support early resident involvement in planning and development decisions affecting neighbourhoods.
- The District will investigate ways to support neighbourhood initiatives consistent with the overall community goals contained in the Official Community Plan and Area Community Plans.

### **1.5.3 Official Recognition of Community Associations**

The District of North Vancouver recognizes and supports those Community Associations which meet the following criteria:

1. Has a mandate which includes improving the quality of life in the neighbourhood.
2. It's membership is open to all persons residing in a geographic area whose boundaries are described.
3. The Association will register with the District Council the names and phone numbers of all officers and directors and will update this information when changes occur.
4. The Council will inform the Association of any other group in the described geographical area which is making representations.
5. There will be a regular communication of the activities of the Community Association with the members.
6. There must be a duly advertised and open AGM.
7. There is a written outline of how records of the Association are kept.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK**  
**POLICIES, PRINCIPLES and PRACTICES**

**VOLUME TWO**  
*Designing and Implementing*

**Volume 2      Designing and Implementing**

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**Introduction**

Volume 3 outlines the District's Standard Practices for Public Involvement. However, there will always be issues that require more specifically designed public involvement processes.

For example:

- reviews of the District Official Community Plan
- development of significant District-wide policies
- exploration of issues that affect everyone, all aspects of the community, and multiple aspects of the District as a municipal corporation.

This volume is intended to assist you in designing a public involvement process that fits your situation. The sections outline:

- 1) Issues that need to be considered;
- 2) Questions that must be addressed to ensure completeness and appropriateness; and
- 3) Techniques that can be used

**2.1 Public Involvement Dilemmas - A Cautionary Note**

In designing and implementing public involvement processes, there are a number of common dilemmas which should be addressed or avoided.

***Accessibility***

People are not, or feel that they are not, involved early enough in the decision-making process.

People are, or feel that they are, invited to participate at the last minute.

People are expected to participate without the background material, or they receive it too late.

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People are, or feel that they are, invited to react to pre-developed ideas and alternatives, rather than being involved in the beginning stages.

Publicity in the mainstream media does not work. More personal approaches are needed.

Public meetings are too formal and restrictive. More informal approaches, such as focus discussion groups, are important and can be hosted by community organizations such as churches, seniors housing, or schools. Traditional approaches do not work well with population groups such as seniors, youth, low income and new immigrants, who may have difficulty attending meetings at night or may feel intimidated by large groups.

Key community leaders need to be brought on-side before reaching out to the broader community.

#### ***Limited Resources***

The time frame for public involvement is too short.

The public, individuals, community groups, and organizations, do not have the resources to adequately prepare for their participation.

#### ***Fuzzy Objectives***

The scope of the public involvement process is too broad, and ill defined. The desired outcomes are not clear, or there is little agreement on them.

It is unclear how the results will be used.

#### ***Organizational Resistance***

There is internal organizational resistance to public involvement because people believe that:

Public involvement is too costly and time consuming.

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The process will be dominated by special interest groups.

The public does not care about the issue or decision.

There are too many conflicting interests, and building any kind of consensus is impossible.

The municipality already has the skills, information, knowledge, and expertise to make the best decision.

Engaging the public will not improve the final decision.

Public involvement will challenge staff's professional identity, credibility, and power.

Staff have the expertise, experience, and knowledge to provide the best recommendations.

The decision has to be made quickly, and there is not time for public involvement.

Public Involvement will result in loss of decision-making power and authority for Council.

Council will make their own decision no matter what.

#### ***Implementation***

Despite the apparent agreement on overall policies, directions, and plans during the public involvement process, there is often considerable controversy at the implementation phase.

Too many issues are being addressed at once.

#### ***Too Complex***

There are different understandings of the underlying issues and problems, due to lack of agreement on the facts, or fundamentally different perspectives and languages.

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Concerns of senior government agencies over-ride public concerns.

Issues raised within the process are beyond the mandate of the municipal government.

The issues raised within the process resonate with deeper value differences in the community.

#### ***Overload***

There is information and/or paper overload.

Meetings are too long and/or lack focus.

The public involvement process goes on and on forever.

#### ***Safety***

Members of the public feel unsafe in participating because of fear of neighbourhood reactions.

Staff feel unsafe in participating because of fears of public criticism, lack of senior management support, and lack of Council support.

Council fears loss of its decision-making powers.

## **2.2 Steps to Design a Public Involvement Process**

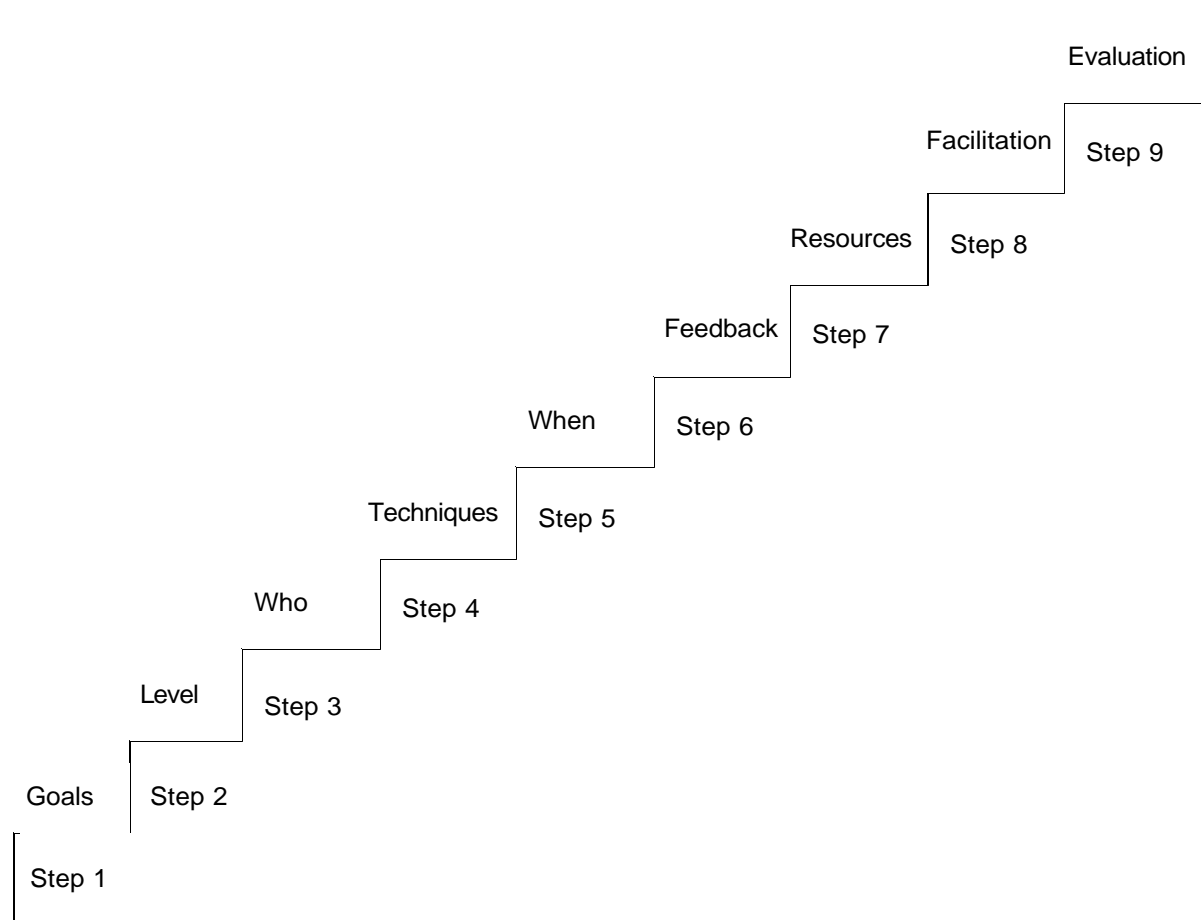
Section 2.2 outlines a 9 step decision making process to assist you in designing a public process. Each step is accompanied by a series of questions to consider.

Section 2.3 provides a detailed discussion of steps 1 to 4.

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**Step 1 What are the goals for the public involvement process?**

- What issues or decisions need to be considered?  
What other issues are likely to emerge?
- What are the desired outcomes of the process?
- How will the results be used?
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- Step 2 What level of public involvement is needed?  
Why?**
- How many people will be impacted?
  - Will the impacts be significant?
  - Will vested interests be affected?
  - Is there controversy?
  - Is the issue likely to involve conflicting views and interests?
- Step 3 Who needs to be involved?  
Why?**
- Who will be impacted?
  - How will they be impacted?
  - Who has information and expertise that might be useful?
  - Who are the relevant special interest groups?  
What other community organizations and government agencies are concerned?
  - What other departments need to be involved?
  - What barriers to their involvement exist?
  -
- Step 4 What techniques will be used to involve them?**
- How will information be provided?
  - What level of public involvement is needed?  
What techniques fit with the people that need to be involved?
  - involved?

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|---------------|---|---|
| <b>Step 5</b> | <b>When will the public involvement process take place?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will holidays/schedules have an impact?</li><li>• How much lead time will people need to participate well?</li><li>• What timetables do interested groups and parties already work on?</li><li>• When does the decision need to be made?</li><li>• Which departments need to be involved?</li></ul> |
| <b>Step 6</b> | <b>How will feedback be provided to the participants?</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will feedback be provided during the process? How will feedback be provided once the decisions are reached?</li></ul>   |
| <b>Step 7</b> | <b>What resources will be needed?</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How much staff time will be needed?</li><li>• What will be the costs of mailings, rooms, publications?</li><li>• Will outside facilitation be needed?</li></ul>   |
| <b>Step 8</b> | <b>Is outside facilitation needed?</b>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the issue so controversial that an outside facilitator is needed for the whole process?</li><li>• Do staff have the time and skills to provide facilitation?</li><li>• As what points in the process might an outside facilitator be useful?</li></ul>   |
| <b>Step 9</b> | <b>How will the process be evaluated?</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Was the effort genuine? Have the results been incorporated into decisions?</li><li>• Did participants have an influence on the outcome of the process?</li></ul>  |

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- Was mutual respect for the legitimacy and points of view of all participants demonstrated?
- Were the goals, scope, expectations, and responsibilities clear and were they communicated clearly to all participants at the outset of the process?  
Was the specific objective of each stage in the
- involvement process clearly articulated and understood?  
Was the scope of the involvement opportunity clear
- and were the limitations clearly articulated and accepted?
  
- Were participants involved in establishing objectives and designing the process?
- Were opportunities provided for two-way communication between the District and the public, with face to face dialogue?
- Did the process provide support for collaborative consensus-building and conflict resolution?  
Did the involvement process promote learning among
- participants?
  
- Was the agenda and purpose negotiable and the outcome not predetermined?
- Are complete and unfiltered records of meetings and events open to the public?

**Step 9**      **How will the process be evaluated (continued)**

## **2.3 Details on Steps to Design a Public Involvement Process**

### **Step 1 Goals for Public Involvement**

A key to developing effective public involvement processes is establishing clear objectives and desired outcomes for the process itself. In each situation, objectives and desired outcomes need to be identified, clarified, and agreed to by participants prior to developing the public involvement process.

The objectives and desired outcomes need to be linked to:

- the issues and decisions under consideration
- the overall strategic directions of the municipality
- statutory requirements for public involvement
- the objectives of the various interested communities, individuals and groups
- the resources available
- the overall municipal policy on public involvement.

A preliminary public involvement phase may be important to involve the interested communities in setting out the objectives and desired outcomes.

In developing specific goals for public involvement processes, here are some statements worth considering:

#### **Informing**

- Build public understanding about municipal processes, community issues and change, and the role of the municipality.
- Build the understanding of staff and politicians about the (changing) needs and interests of the community, and its citizens.
- Inform and educate individuals, community groups, and businesses about upcoming decisions and actions, the available alternatives, and their likely consequences.
- Provide full, accurate, and objective information to the public and decision-makers.
- Provide full technical information in non-technical language to the public and decision-makers.

### **Listening**

- Gather information and identify community concerns about a particular issue or decision.
- Gather information about community values and interests to develop criteria for evaluating alternative actions.
- Allow opportunities for individuals and interest groups to express opinions on issues and preferred alternatives.

### **Involving**

- Ensure all of the interests of stakeholders are considered in the decision-making processes.
- Solicit community expertise.
- Take into account the responses from the public and interest groups, and demonstrate how these responses have been considered.
- Provide timely feedback to the participants of the public involvement process as to the impacts of their involvement, and the outcomes of the process.

### **Building Consensus**

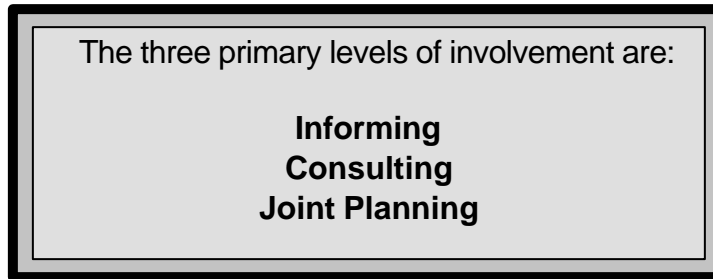
- Identify (potentially conflicting) interests.
- Build consensus, resolve conflicts and disputes, and enhance decision-making and joint negotiations among the multiple interests.
- Avoid confrontation and minimize future controversies.
- Make the implementation process easier by ensuring ownership of the decisions.

### **Building Community**

- Build internal and external working relationships.
- Foster trust among all of the parties.
- Build public confidence in the credibility and accountability of municipal departments and the municipality as a whole.
- Build community consensus.
- Build on-going trust in the municipality's public involvement framework and processes.

## **Step 2 Level of Public Involvement**

An important issue in developing effective public involvement processes is the level of public involvement to be created. The various levels are not about techniques, but about how much power and authority will be shared by municipal staff, and by Council as the formal decision-making body.



The deeper the level required, the more time, resources, and consultation will be needed for designing and implementing the public involvement process.

### **Level 1: Informing - Giving Out**

#### **Informing and Building Understanding**

- Providing information to create greater community awareness of the issues, potential decisions, and their potential consequences.
- Creating awareness about the issue, and the municipality's process for considering it.
- Building understanding about District goals and directions.

#### **Providing Advance Notice**

- Providing information on a proposed plan or direction before it is finalized and implemented.

### **Level 2: Consulting - Receiving - Listening**

#### **Identifying Needs and Interests**

- Listening to citizens, community groups, and interested parties regarding their needs and interests related to the issues and decisions under consideration.

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- Developing understandings about the common interests that might form a basis for making a decision.
- Clarifying the diverse and, potentially conflicting, interests, that need to be considered and weighed in making a decision.

#### Gathering Ideas About Alternatives

- Building on the public's experience, knowledge, and expertise to develop broader alternatives that might be considered.
- Exploring creatively new ideas and options.

### Level 3: Joint Planning - Exchanging

#### Sharing the Decision-Making

- Involving the public in gathering facts, and defining the issues.
- Seeking consensus or broad agreement on the alternatives that need to be pursued.

*Public involvement processes can also lead into changing decision-making structures and processes, including: multi-party negotiations and dispute resolution; transferring responsibility and authority for decision-making to a task group, commission, or other external body; and restructuring responsibilities and resources so that individuals and community groups identify their own issues, make their own decisions, and act accordingly.*

**There is no easy answer to what level of involvement is desirable**

The desirable level relates to the objectives and desired outcomes of the public involvement process, to the values and leadership styles of the municipality, and to the nature of the issues and decisions that are under consideration.

In general, public involvement processes move from information, through consultation, to joint planning, as the issues and decisions become:

- **more significant**

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having a wider and longer term impact on larger groups of people;

- **more controversial**

being of greater concern to various communities of interest, and to the public as a whole;

- **more uncertain**

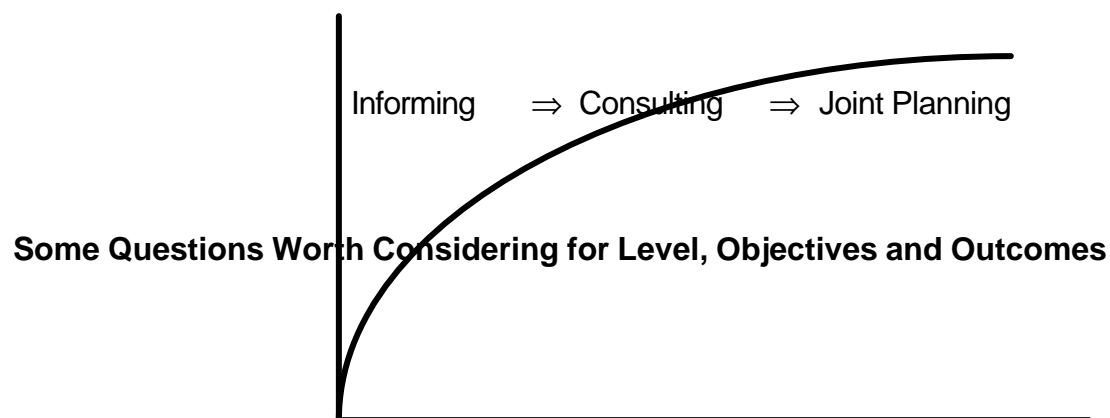
reflecting less information and conflicting values and interests;

- **more complex**

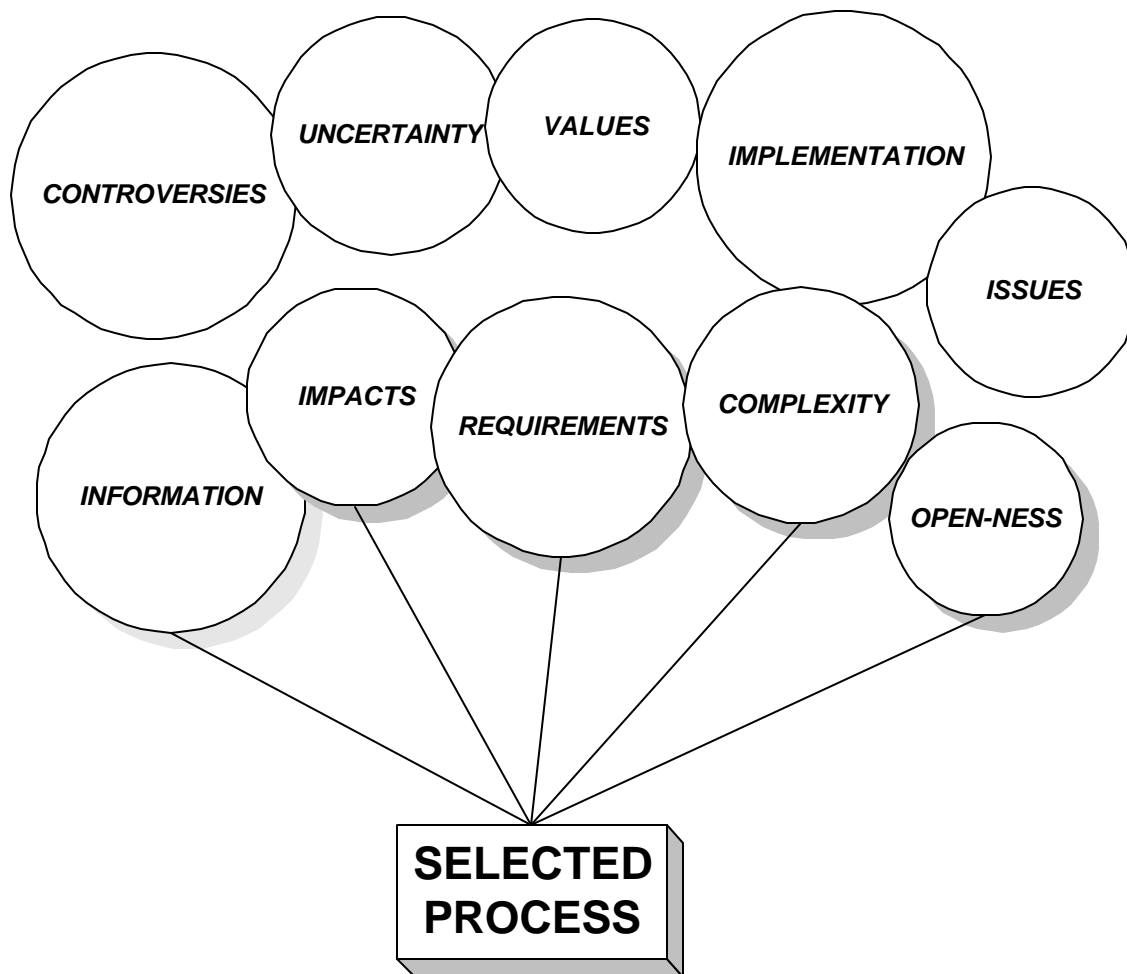
needing the agreement of many parties for effective implementation.

As the municipality needs individuals, community groups, businesses, ... to become actively involved in the implementation process, the more the municipality should move to deeper levels of involvement.

Increasing  
Degree of  
significance  
controversy  
uncertainty  
complexity







*In determining the level, objectives, and desired outcomes of the public involvement process, here are some questions that are worth considering.*

### **Impacts**

- What impacts will the issue or decision likely have on the living environment, characteristics of neighbourhoods, public expectation, landscapes, traffic, transportation, safety, taxation levels, service levels?
- Will these be significant impacts?
- Who will be impacted?

## **Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices**

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- How many people will be impacted? Will some be affected more than others?
- Will vested interests be impacted? What are the community politics of the issue or decision?

#### **Issues**

- Will the public involvement process likely generate other issues, decisions, and concerns?
- Will these be within the mandate of the municipality?

#### **Controversies**

- Is the public concerned about the issue or decision? Will they be? Is there controversy?
- Is the issue or decision likely to involve conflicts among the public, and interested parties?
- Is there public readiness for addressing the issue or decision? Is the time ripe to act? How controversial is the issue?

#### **Requirements**

- Is public involvement required from a statutory perspective? If so, what outcomes are expected?
- Is public involvement being requested by senior management or Council? If so, what outcomes are expected?
- Is there internal municipal commitment to public involvement?

#### **Information**

- Is all the information available that is needed for facing the issue or making the decision?
- Could public involvement generate useful information?

#### **Uncertainty**

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- Is the issue or decision uncertain, reflecting lack of information, involving unclear values and priorities, and/or depending upon the actions of other actors?
- Is it possible to identify who is likely to be impacted by the issue or decision? Is this another area of uncertainty?

#### **Complexity**

- Is the issue or decision complex, reflecting dependency on other issues and decisions, and/or requiring the joint actions of many parties for effective implementation?

#### **Values**

- Are the criteria for evaluating alternative actions clear?
- Are the municipality's values, strategic directions, and priorities relating to the issue or decision clear?
- Are the public's values and priorities relating to the issue or decision clear?
- Are there likely to be conflicts among the public's priorities, and between the public's priorities and the municipality's priorities?

#### **Implementation**

- Will implementation of the decision require public acceptance?
- Will implementation of the decision require partnerships with other bodies?

#### **Openness**

- Will the public involvement process have significant impacts on the eventual decision or outcome?
- How will the results of the public involvement process be used?
- What might the public expect from the public involvement process?

If there is still uncertainty whether public involvement is needed, or what level, or what the objectives might be, ask others.

- What is our previous experience in this municipality with these kinds of issues and decisions?

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- What has been the experience of other communities?
- What do the potentially interested parties think needs to be done in terms of public involvement?

In uncertain situations, where there is likely to be considerable conflict and controversy, it will likely help to start with a preliminary, more informal public involvement process. Out of this will come greater clarity as to how the more formal public involvement process can be designed.

### **Step 3 Who Needs to Be Involved?**

There is no one public. For any significant issue, there will likely be many diverse communities of interest. Identifying who they are, and providing opportunities for them to participate, is a key to effective public involvement processes.

Public involvement processes are dialogues, not community elections or scientific polls. The quality of learning and discussion is as important as the outcomes. If the goal is to measure public opinion on specific issues, then polls can be used, but they are costly.

#### *Participants are self-selected*

Concerns are often expressed about ensuring adequate representation, and about the silent majority. In most public involvement processes, participants are largely self selected. No matter how well the process is organized, not everyone will be involved or represented.

#### *Inclusivity*

Public involvement processes should be directed at all individuals, community groups, businesses, and organizations that have a perceived or actual interest in the issues and decisions under consideration. The principle is inclusivity.

#### *Diverse*

Communities are increasingly heterogeneous. People bring to public involvement processes diverse cultures, faiths, languages, values, work situations, family lifestyles, and perspectives of what is in the public interest. Public involvement processes need to be open to this diversity.

#### *Responsibility*

Public involvement is about taking responsibility for one's own situation and for one's community. Public involvement processes need to be designed to support citizens in taking responsible action.

#### *Minimize Barriers*

There are many reasons why people do not become involved. Public involvement processes need to be designed to minimize the barriers to participation, they cannot be designed to ensure that everyone will participate.

# Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

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### Some Questions Worth Considering for Who Needs to be Involved

In determining who needs to be involved, here are some questions worth considering.

**Who will be impacted by the issue or the decisions?**

**How will they be impacted?**

- These are the groups of people that the public involvement process should reach out to: to inform, to listen to, and to involve.

**Who are the expert individuals and groups that need to be involved?**

- These are the groups of people who have experience, knowledge, and skills to offer to the discussion of the issues and the decisions. Their expertise may be technical, or it may be about the general concerns of the community.
- These people are usually well informed already.
- It is important to recognize that the gut opinions of citizens are as valuable in the discussions as an expert opinions. Both are needed.

**Who are the special interest groups that need to be involved?**

- These are the groups of people most likely to participate. They are clear about their interests, usually well informed, and often already organized to participate and to lobby for their perspectives.
- Too often, public involvement processes are overly dominated by these groups.

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#### **Who will want to be involved, and why?**

Public involvement processes, if they are to be successful, have to meet participants' interests for becoming and being involved.

These interests can include:

- ⇒ desiring to become more informed, and to learn about the issues, the municipality and its processes, and the community;
- ⇒ interested in meeting new people, making friends, and socializing;
- ⇒ wanting to be heard, and to state one's point of view;
- ⇒ interested in community leadership, power, and running for elected office;
- ⇒ concerned for the community, and its future development;
- ⇒ needing to protect the status quo, and one's current resources;
- ⇒ wanting to express passion about the issues.

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**What barriers will prevent people from becoming involved, and how can these be overcome?**

- Some of the barriers to participation include:
  - ⇒ work and family schedules and commitments;
  - ⇒ locations of meetings that are inaccessible;
  - ⇒ notices of meetings not received, or not received in time;
  - ⇒ not able to reach someone to request more information about the issues or the process;
  - ⇒ feel ignorant about the issues under discussion;
  - ⇒ lack of understanding of municipal processes, and the opportunities to participate;
  - ⇒ feel intimidated by the process, or by having to participate in groups
  - ⇒ not comfortable in speaking out in public settings;
  - ⇒ feel the process, or speaking out, will not be safe;
  - ⇒ not aware of the impacts that a decision might have;
  - ⇒ feel part of a community group that historically is stereotyped, and not listened to
  - ⇒ feel overwhelmed by the complexity of government and of the issues;



## Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

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**What will prevent people  
from being involved?  
(Continued)**

- ⇒ the issues under discussion are too personally sensitive;
  - ⇒ the issues under discussion are too personally important;
  - ⇒ belief that the decisions have already been made;
  - ⇒ belief that participation will have no impact;
  - ⇒ belief that someone else will speak out for them;
  - ⇒ belief that public involvement processes are dominated by special interest groups;
  - ⇒ not able to read or speak English;
  - ⇒ negative experiences with previous public involvement processes
-

## Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

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#### Step 4 Techniques Used to Involve

There are many techniques for involving people. They can be grouped in terms of the level of public involvement that is desired. Typically, public involvement processes use a number of these techniques in parallel.

INVOLVEMENT METHOD	INFORMING	CONSULTING	JOINT PLANNING
Advisory Committees			X
Briefings	X		
Bus Shelters	X		
Charettes			X
Council Meetings		X	
Customer Surveys		X	
Discussion papers		X	
Displays, Exhibits	X	X	
E-Mail		X	
Focus Groups		X	
Key Informant Interviews		X	
Letters to the District		X	
Mailings	X		
Media Stories	X		
New Conferences	X		
News Releases	X		
Newsletters	X		
One-to-one Interactions		X	
Open Houses	X		
Open Houses		X	
Paid Advertising	X		
Polling		X	
Public Hearings		X	
Public Meetings	X	X	
Public Notices	X		
Public Service Announcements	X		
Publications, Brochures	X		

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INVOLVEMENT METHOD	INFORMING	CONSULTING	JOINT PLANNING
Reports	X		
Signs	X		
Site Visits	X		
Small Group Workshops		X	
Speakers Bureau	X		
Steering Committees			X
Surveys		X	
Talking with Friends	X		
Telephone Hot Lines		X	
Toll Free Telephone Line	X	X	
Town Hall Meetings		X	
Working Seminars and Conferences			X
Working Task Forces			X
Working through Networks	X	X	

There is no magic or scientific formula for selecting the best public involvement techniques.

There are, however, some sound **principles** to remember.

- **Personal interaction is often the most effective form of participation.**

For example, a series of interviews with representatives of key interests can be effective in identifying concerns, assessing which alternatives need to be considered, finding out what is needed to make an alternative acceptable; and how public involvement might be best designed.

- **Go to where people are, rather than asking them to come to you.**

People meet and gather in everyday community ways: for example, community associations, libraries, school-based, parent advisory groups, coffee shops,... It is easier to reach people there than trying to attract people to more formal public events.

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- **Use all of peoples' senses.**

If people can feel, sense, touch, see and hear what you are doing, it will be more credible, and their participation will be enhanced. Public involvement needs to be seen to be done, as well as actually done.

- **The more conflict that is likely to occur, the more the techniques need to be of an interactive nature.**

There are many techniques for avoiding or helping groups through conflict, for example: developing agreement upon the facts and the problem before jumping to solutions, helping people learn about and respect different viewpoints, focusing upon needs, interests, and desired outcomes rather than positions, and focusing upon the issues rather than the personalities.

- **People need information to participate well.**

Full disclosure of the information regarding the issue or decision helps people to understand, and to avoid conflict. Start by asking participants what information they think needs to be gathered.

- **Using a number of techniques is often better than a single technique.**

If diverse communities of interest are to be meaningfully involved, then techniques need to be chosen that best fit different groups of people.

It is likely that the more techniques that are used, the more people will become involved.

Using one technique runs the risk of becoming caught up in the technique rather than the whole public involvement process.

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- **Technical information needs to be provided in non-technical language.**

Municipal staff and departments all have their own professional and technical language. Members of the public do not usually understand this jargon. Information should be provided in user friendly language.

The professional language may also include hidden assumptions about values and issues that need to be made clear as part of the public involvement process.

- **Public involvement processes should be efficient in use of resources (\$'s, peoples' time) and outcomes.**

In an increasingly busy world, citizens, community organizations, and businesses have limited time to participate in public involvement processes. At the same time, the municipality's resources (\$'s and staff time) are being stretched.

The costs of public involvement processes only make sense if there are real benefits: better decisions and smoother implementation.

- **Public involvement processes need to be flexible.**

As public involvement processes unfold, there will inevitably be changes in who wants to participate, the information that becomes available, and the perspectives on the issues. Keeping the process flexible will allow responsiveness to these changes.

- **Public involvement processes need to protect the rights of formal decision makers to make the final decisions**

Most public involvement processes are focused on improving the quality of decisions made within the existing formal decision-making processes.

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- **Public involvement processes should seek agreement on the middle ground between people's worst fears and greatest hopes.**

Finding some common agreement among the diverse and conflicting. People react to issues and upcoming decisions with fears and hopes. Views will require responding to both.

- **Public involvement processes should be safe for the participants.**

Particularly when the issues are controversial and when there is considerable conflict, people need opportunities to become involved where they feel safe in expressing their views and opinions.

## **2.4 Costs and Benefits**

Public involvement processes have **costs**:

- the time and energy of participants
- staff time
- meetings, publications....
- longer time to make decisions
- potentially lost opportunities
- decisions never made

There are also **benefits**:

- better decisions
- new opportunities
- wider agreement on the decisions
- less resistance at the implementation stage

Not carrying out effective public involvement processes may also lead to lengthy and costly controversies once the decisions have been made. Frequently, the decisions are made, and then remade.

On the other hand, the District needs to develop its public involvement processes within the resources it has available, and within the resources potential participants can contribute.

Weighing up the costs and benefits of public involvement processes is a challenging exercise; but, it cannot be avoided.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK**  
**POLICIES, PRINCIPLES and PRACTICES**

**VOLUME THREE**  
*Current Practices*



**Volume 3      Current Practices**

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**Introduction**

The District of North Vancouver has developed a range of common practices for involving the public in issues that regularly arise in the life of the community.

This volume sets out those processes currently followed.

At the bottom of each page you will note a Public Involvement Continuum Index on which we have plotted each process indicating the degree of public involvement from receiving information through being consulted to joint planning or sharing in the decision making. For definitions of these points in the public involvement continuum, see Volume 2, Section 2.3.

### **3.1 Formal Public Meeting and Hearings**

#### **Public Hearing**

A formal hearing held by Council in legal compliance with the requirements specified in the Municipal Act. A public hearing is required whenever a land use change or zoning bylaw is affected.

Public hearings **legally require** newspaper advertising and written notification to surrounding property owners and residents.

#### **Public Information Meeting**

A meeting organized and hosted by the applicant of a significant development proposal. The meeting provides the affected residents with an opportunity to learn the details of the proposed development and comment. Staff attend as observers only to gauge and identify public comments and concerns, and to provide technical information if required.

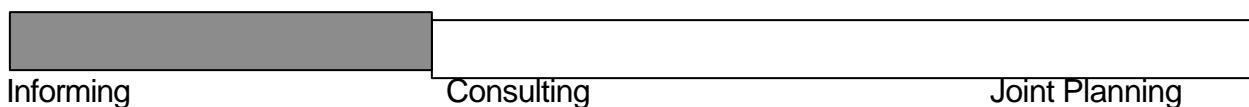
The applicant is **required** to deliver an information package to all property owners and residents within 350m. of the subject site, and to ratepayers/residents associations in the area, post a sign on the property, and advertise in two issues of the North Shore News.

*The District of North Vancouver encourages all applicants to liaise with the community on proposed zoning changes or major development proposals. Prior to any Public Information Meetings being recommended or attended by staff, an information report is to be prepared for Council's consideration which outlines the proposal.*

#### **Public Meeting**

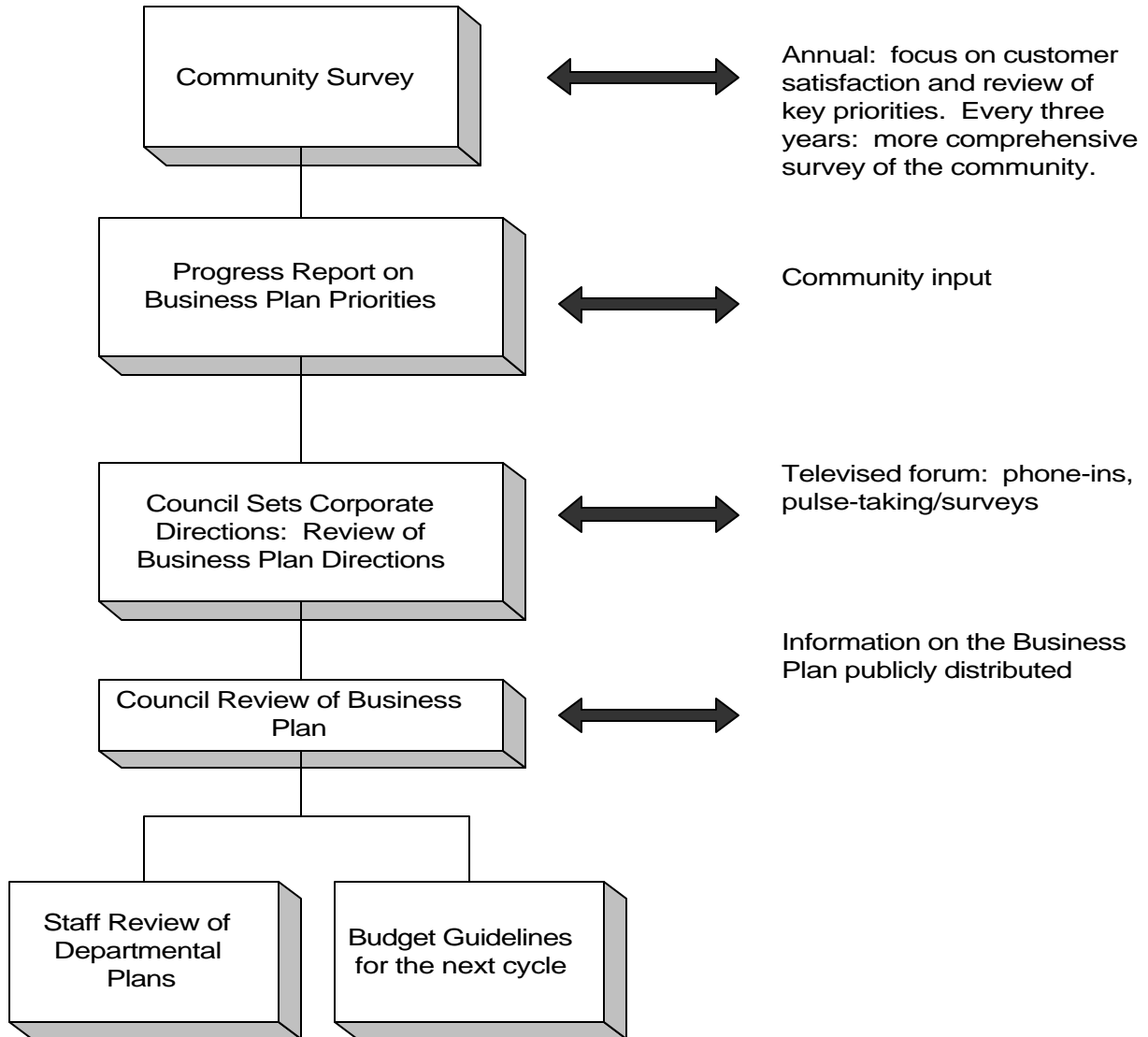
A meeting held by Council to obtain public input on an item which does not require a formal public hearing.

Public Meetings and Hearings

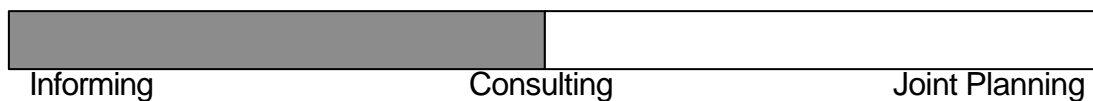


### 3.2 Annual Business Plan Review

Timing: Annual, January to July  
 Primary Responsibility: Corporate Services

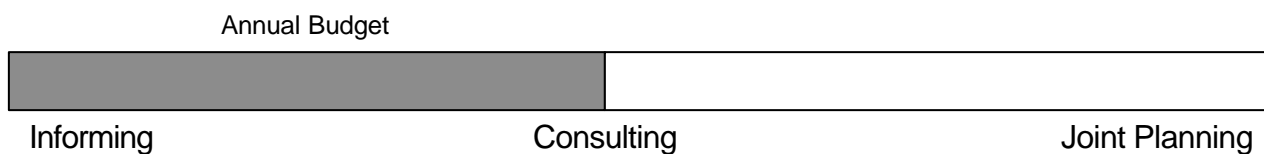
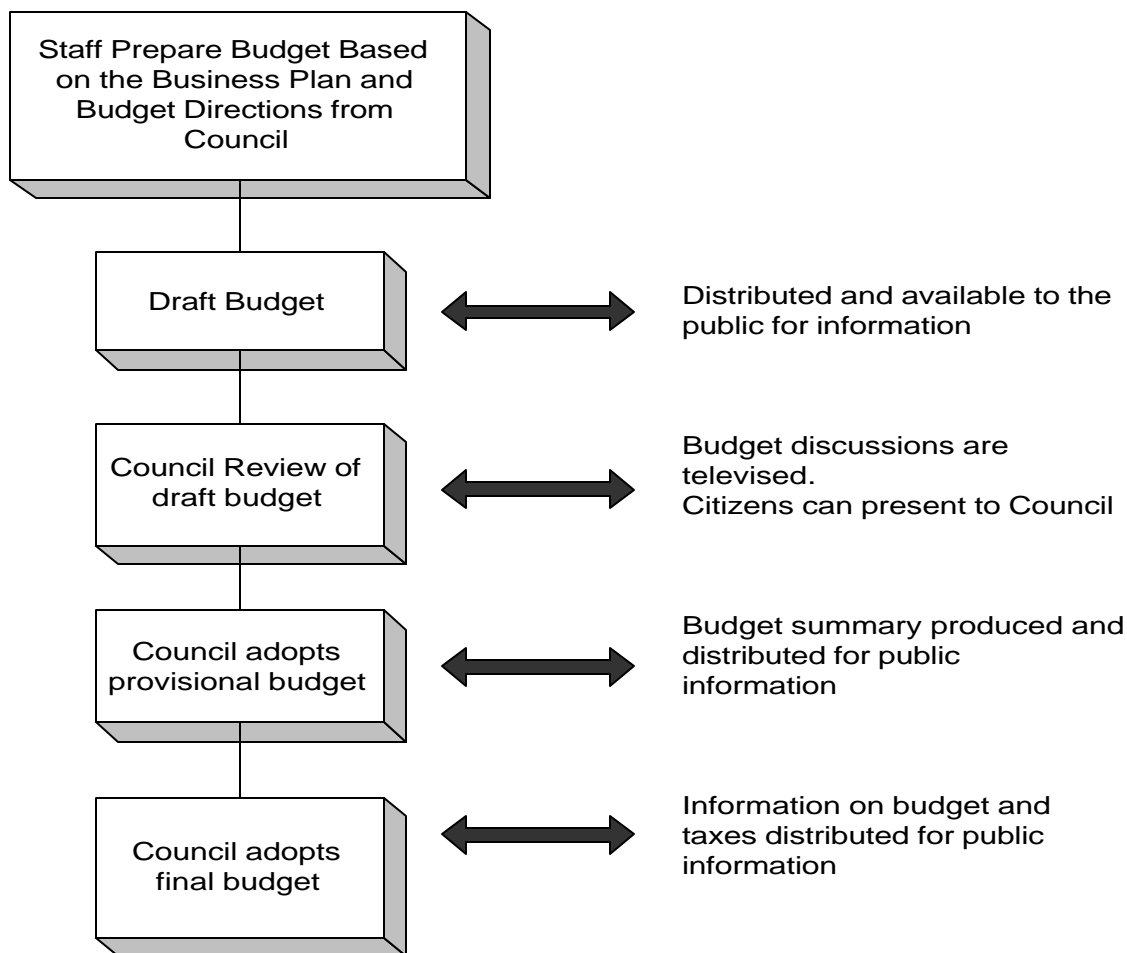


Business Plan Review



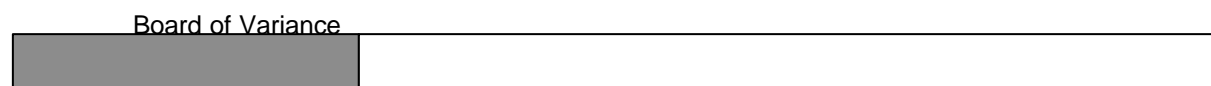
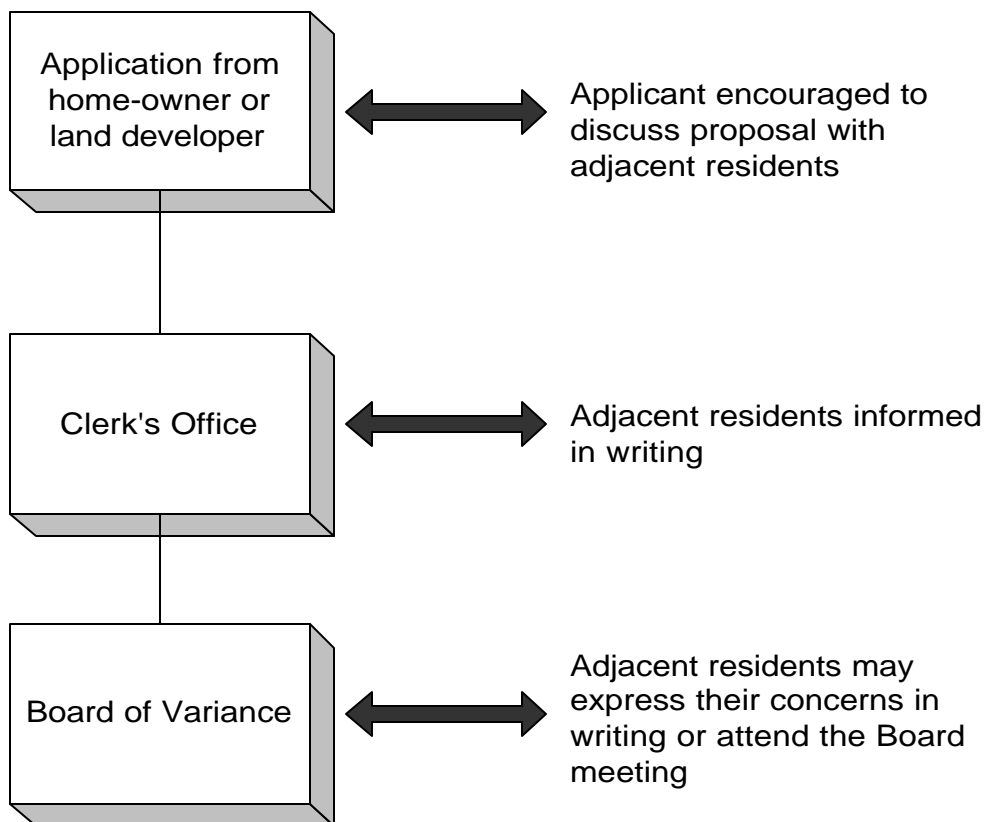
### 3.3 Annual Budget Process

Timing: Annual, July to December  
 Primary Responsibility: Financial Services



### 3.4 Board of Variance Applications (Hardship Considerations)

Timing: on request  
Responsibility: Clerk's Office



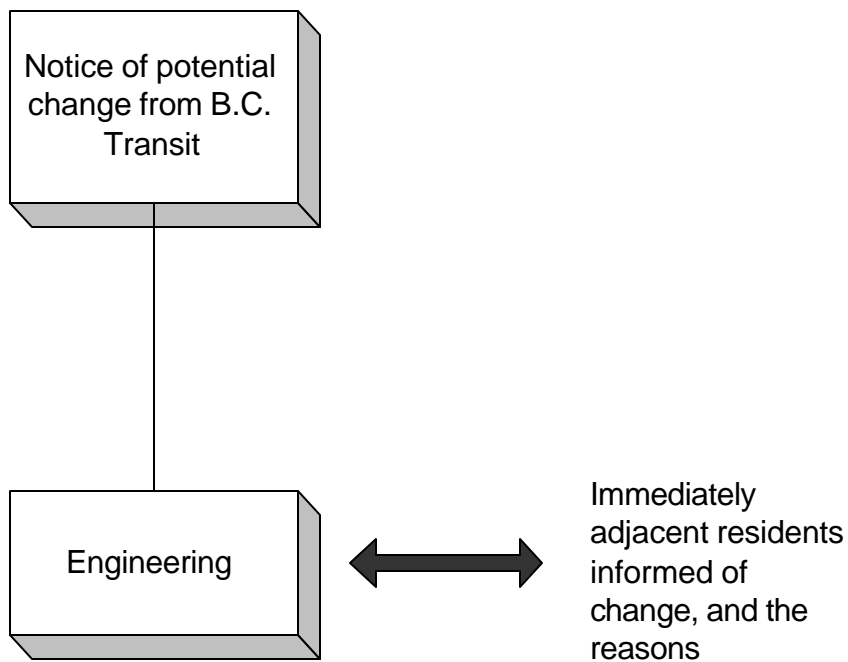
Informing

Consulting

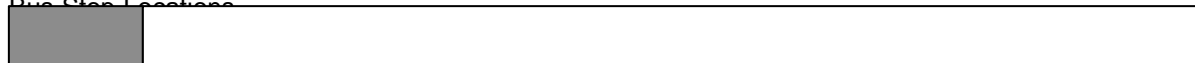
Joint Planning

### 3.5 Bus Stop Locations (New, Close Down, Relocate)

Timing: on request  
Responsibility: Engineering



Bus Stop Locations



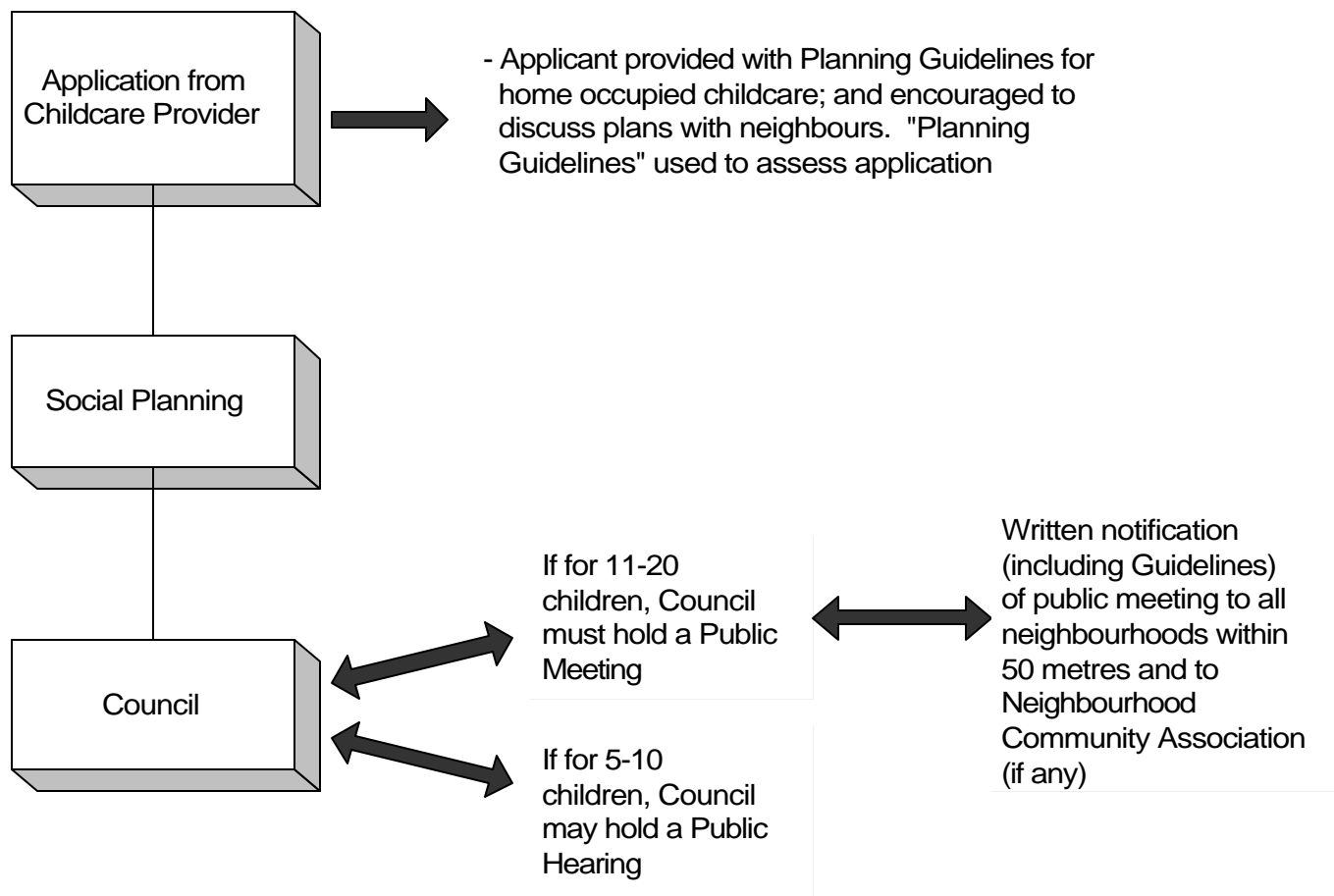
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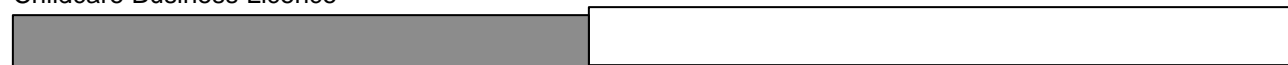
Joint Planning

**3.6 Child Care Facilities Business Licence Applications**  
 (For Home Occupied Child Care)

Timing: on request  
 Responsibility: Social Planning



Childcare Business Licence



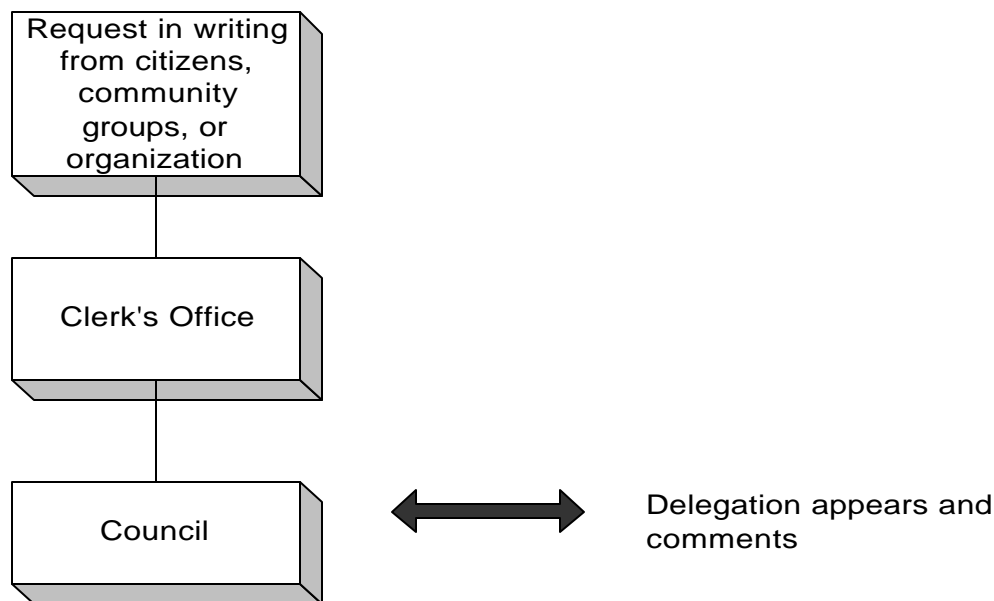
Informing

Consulting

Joint Planning

### 3.7 Council Delegations

Timing: on request  
Responsibility: Clerk's Office

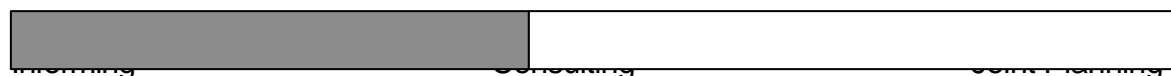


Procedures at Council and Executive Committee meetings will facilitate reasonable public input whether it be in written form or by brief verbal comments either at the beginning of the meeting or during the meeting as agenda items are considered.

If a delegation request concerns a matter previously decided by Council or concerns an issue which is being or has been dealt with in a public participation process, the delegation's request to appear before Council may be placed on the appropriate agenda for Council direction.

Unscheduled public input is not permitted on certain matters: items that are before Council from a closed public hearing, and items which are being or have been dealt with in a public participation process.

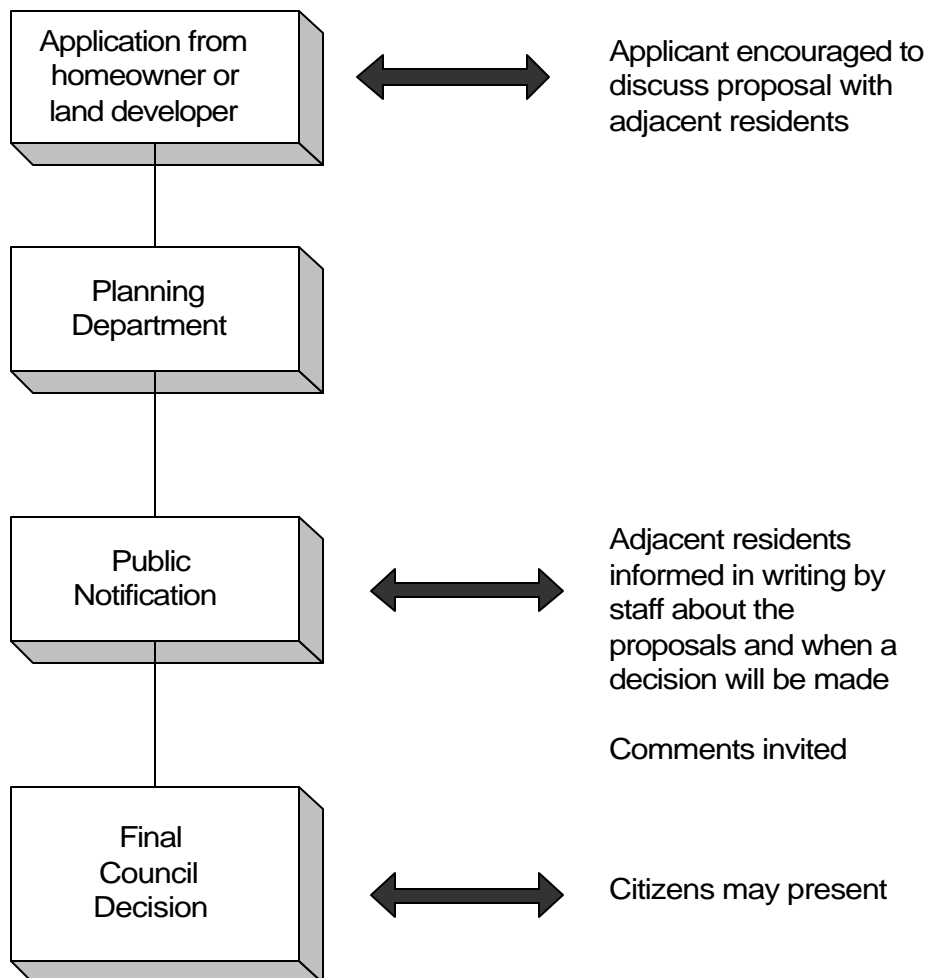
Council Delegations



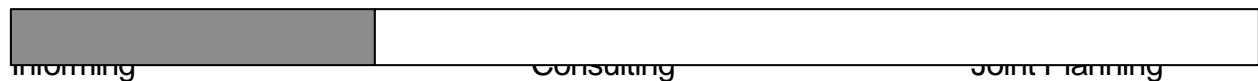


### 3.8 Development Variance Permits for Single Family Housing (heights above neighbourhood zoning regulations)

Timing: on request  
Responsibility: Planning and  
Clerk's Office



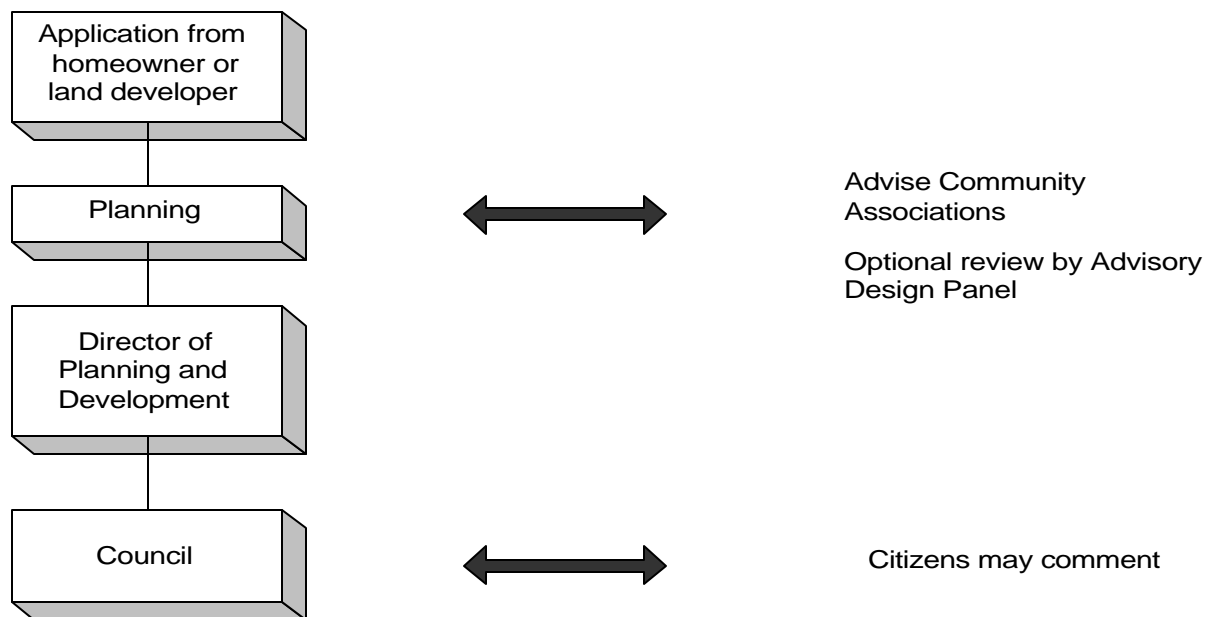
Development Variance Permits



### **3.9 Land Use and Development Permit Applications**

Within the permit process there are a number of steps depending upon whether the application is considered by the Planning Department to be major or minor in nature.

#### Type 1 (Minor Development Permits, Amendments to Development Permits)



#### Type 1

Minor development permits are considered by Council for applications which involve new buildings up to an area of 93sq.m (1000sq. ft) or exterior alterations to existing buildings. The review process does not require a public information meeting, although staff or Council may choose, on a case by case basis, to hold a public meeting.

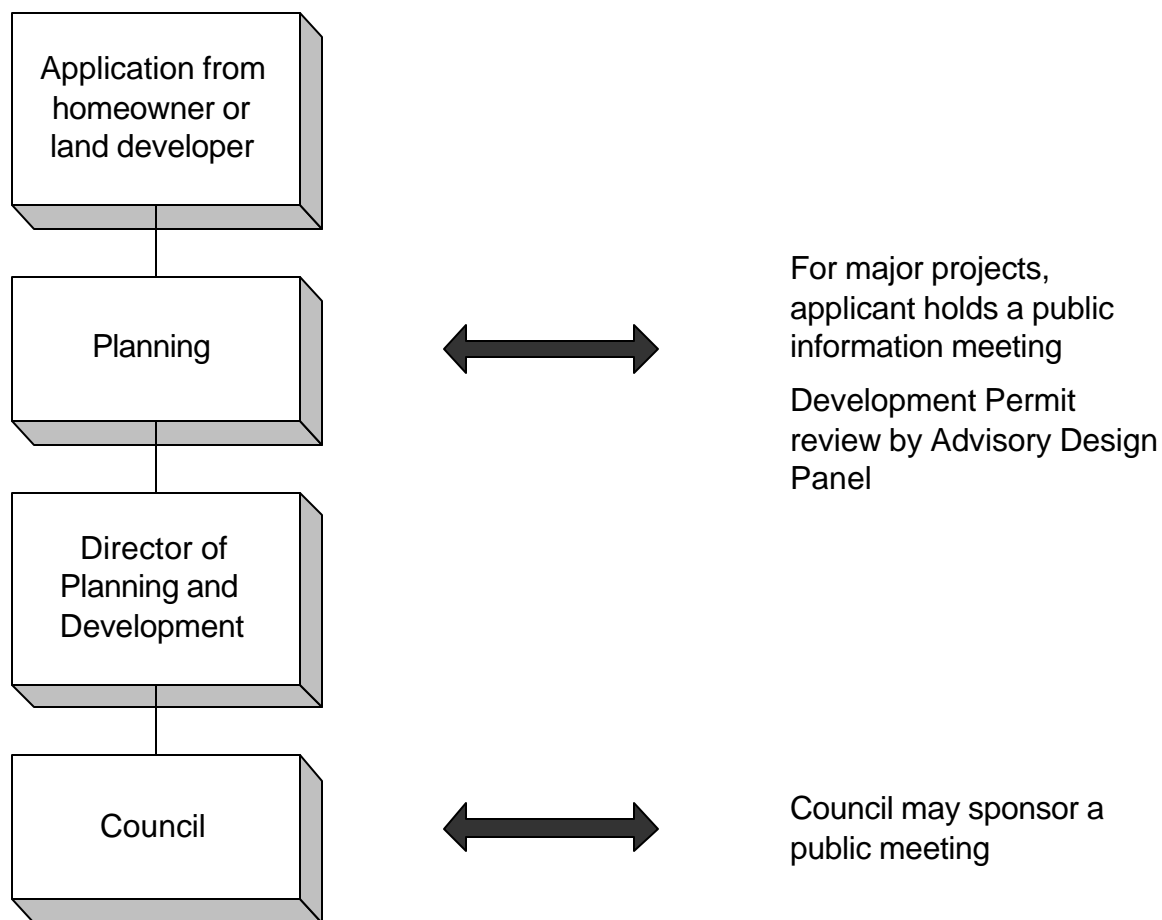
Amendments to development permits generally involve alterations to the exterior of a building or a site plan. These applications, if minor, may be approved by the Director of Planning and Development Services. If the alterations are significant they will be referred to Council for approval.

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Type 2 (Development Variance Permits, Major Development Permits, Temporary Use Permits)



### Type 2

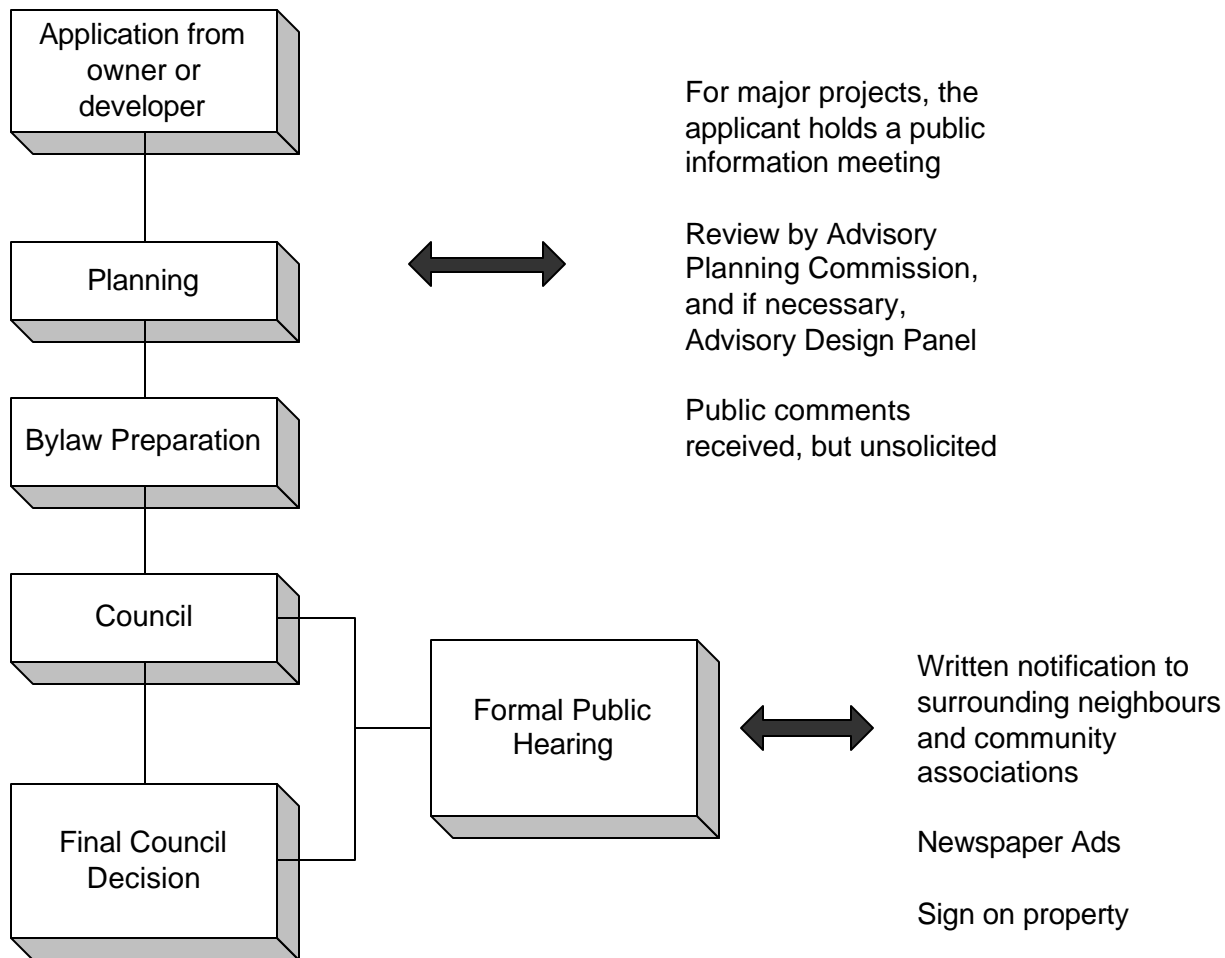
Temporary Use Permits may not be considered by staff unless the applicable Official Community Plan designates the specific site as being appropriate for a temporary use. Therefore, any temporary use permit application first requires an amendment to a specific OCP and the opportunities for public involvement are the same as for that process. The review process does not provide for any other opportunities for formal public involvement.

# Public Involvement: Policies, Principles & Practices

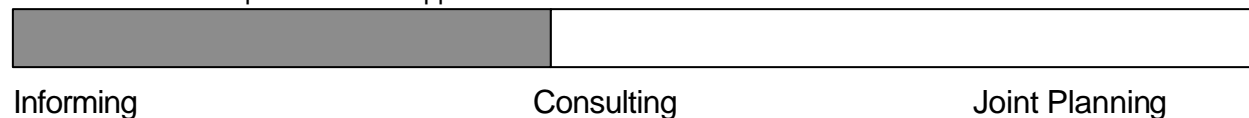
## Volume 3

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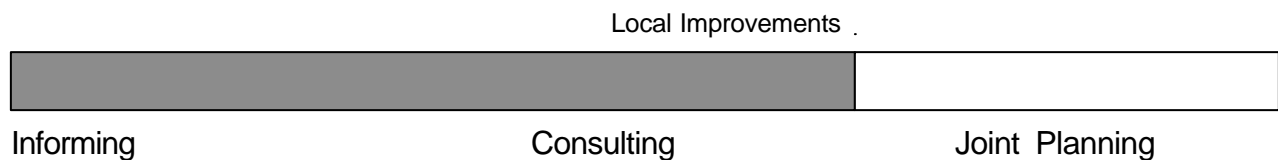
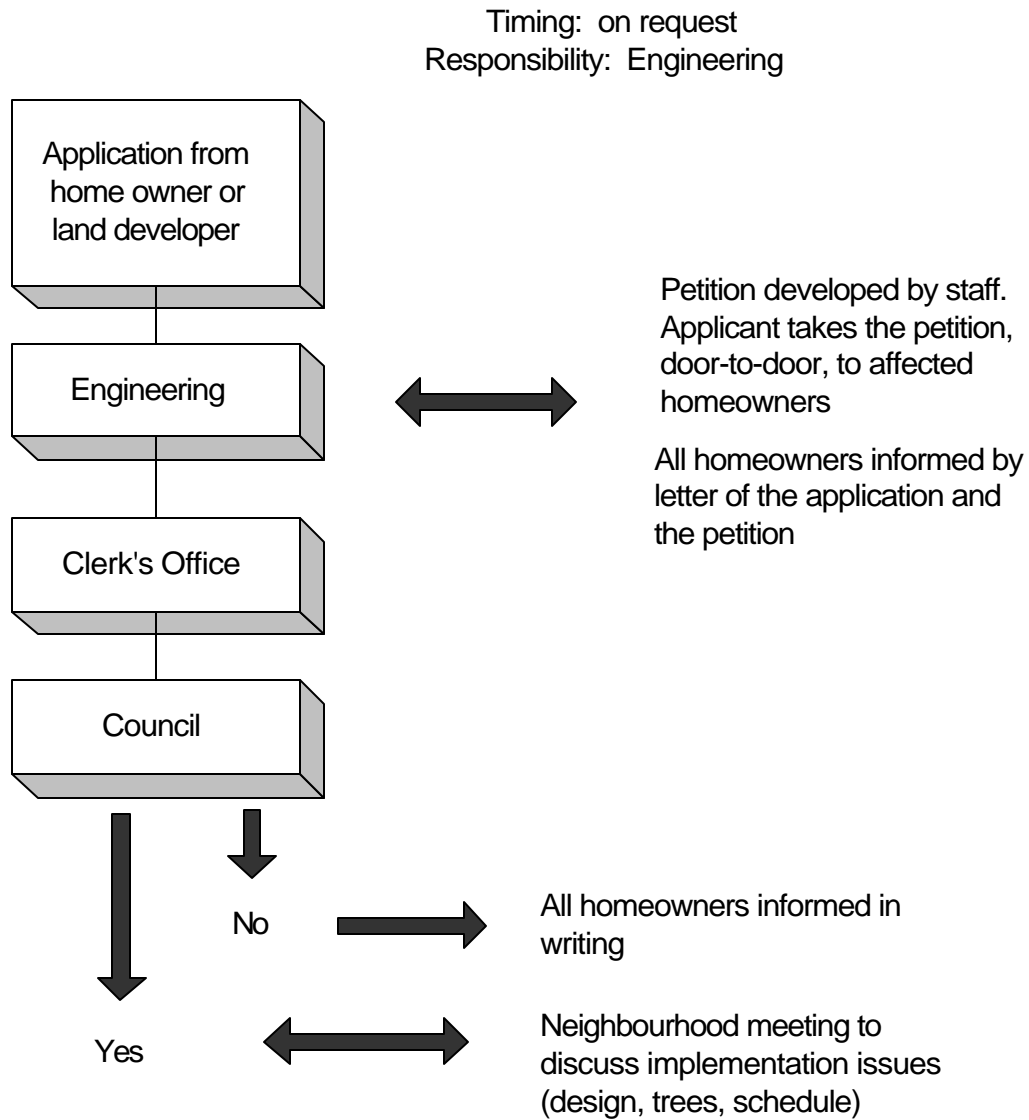
Type 3 (Amendments to an Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw Text Amendments, Rezoning, and Siting Area Establishment or Amendment Bylaws)



Land Use & Development Permit Applications

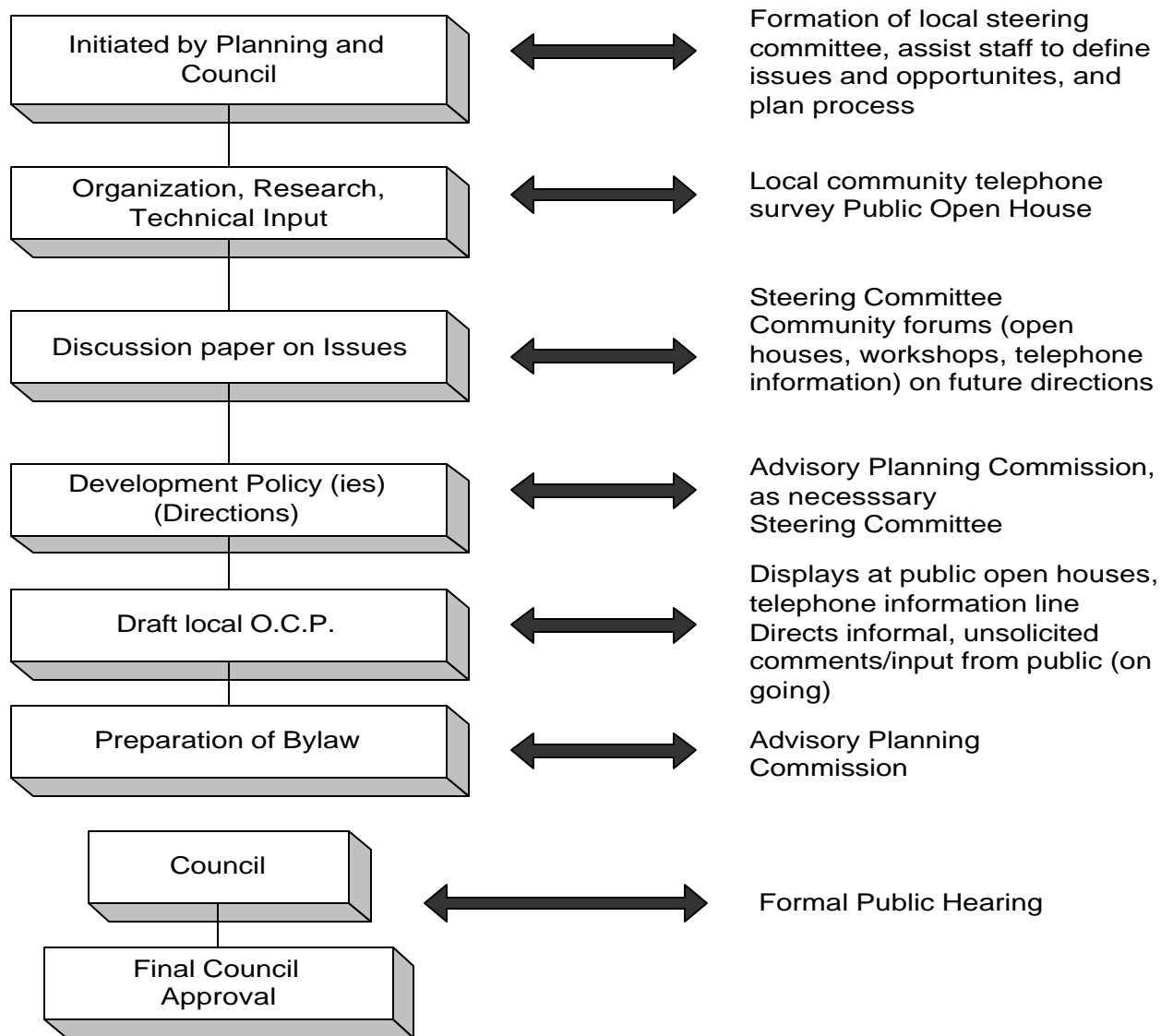


3.10 Local Improvements (roads, curbs, sewers, lighting, lanes, parking)

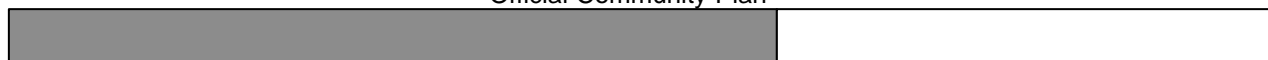


### 3.11 Official Community Plan

Timing: variable  
 Responsibility: Planning



Official Community Plan



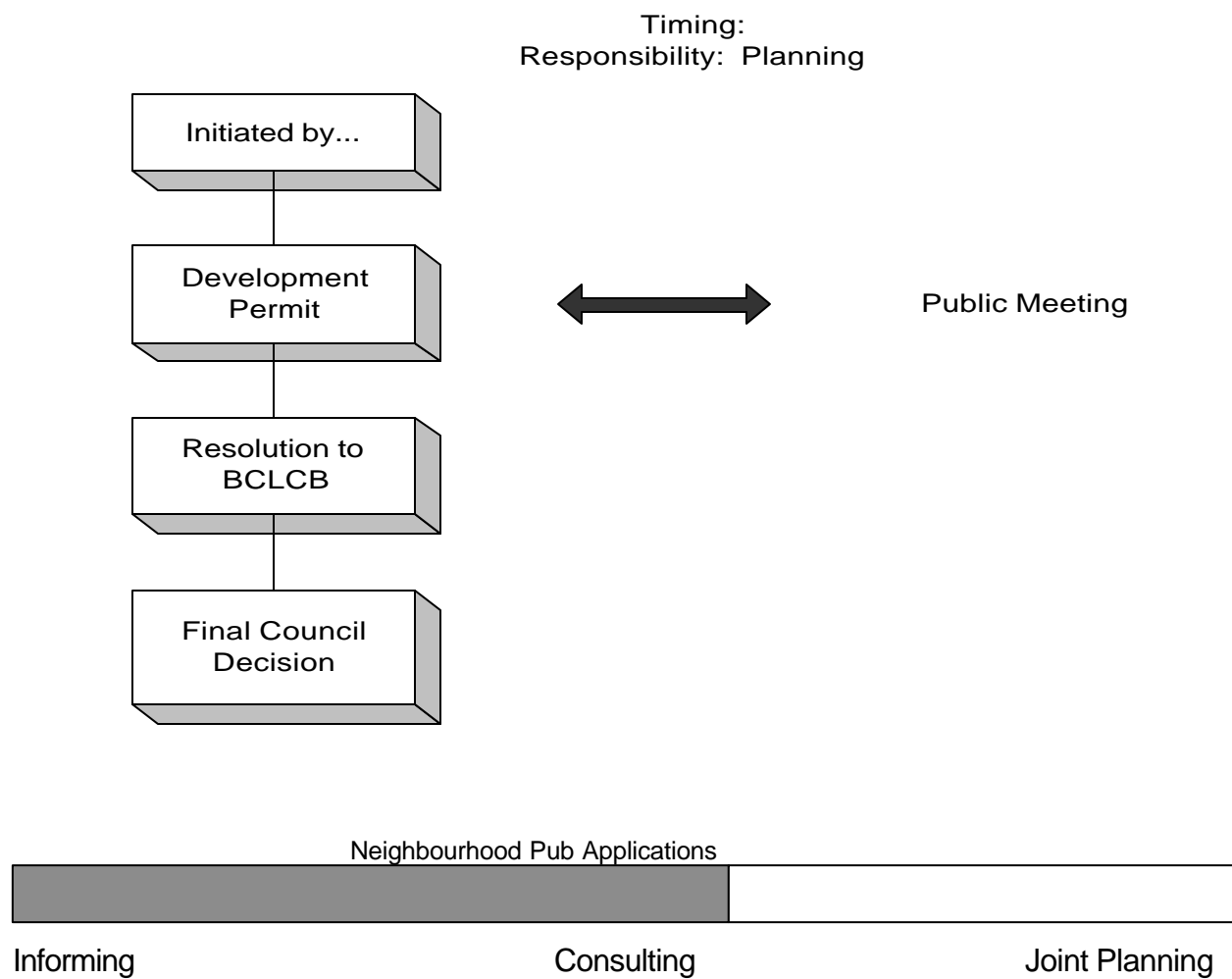
Informing

Consulting

Joint Planning

### 3.12 Neighbourhood Pub Business Licence Applications

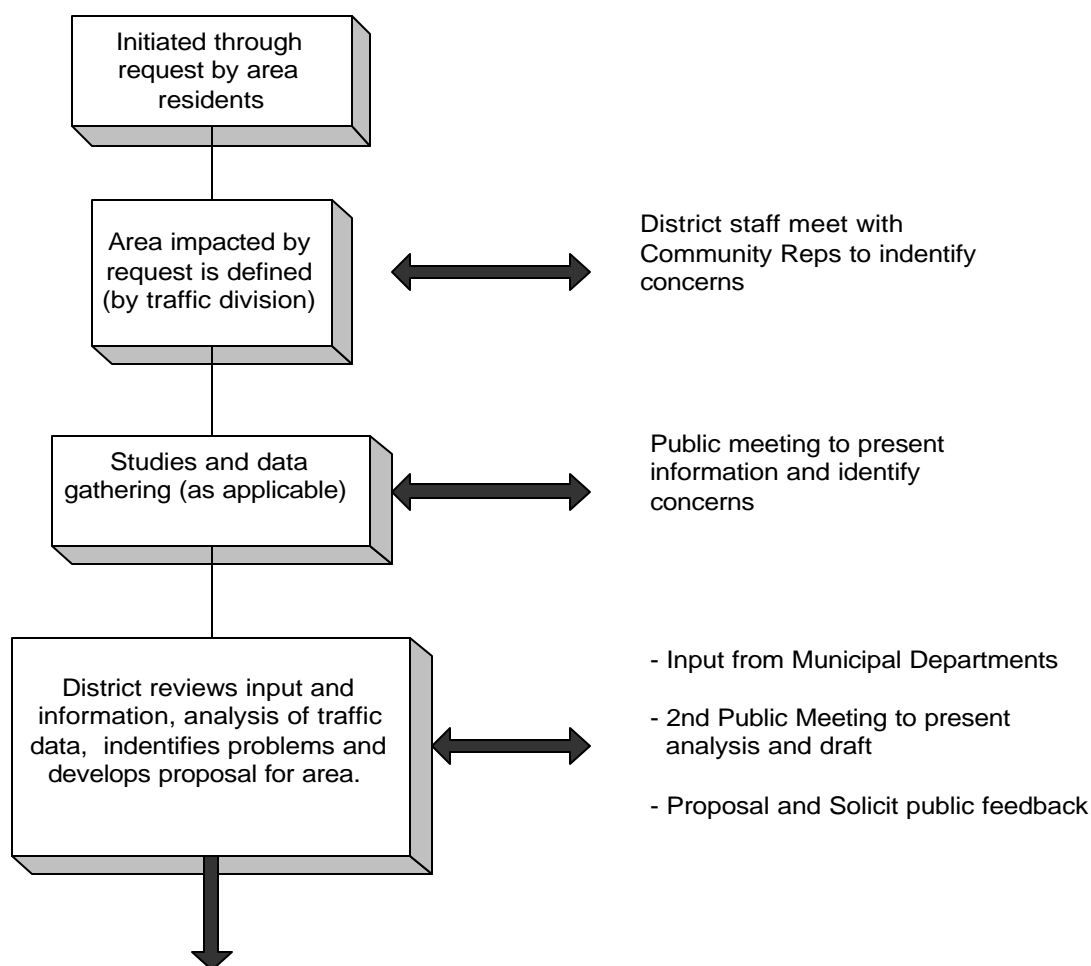
A public meeting may be held at Council's request. Approval of a neighbourhood pub applications first requires the approval of the B.C. Liquor Licensing Branch, called "Pre-Clearance". Upon receipt of "Pre-clearance", the municipality proceeds with a rezoning application (which may also involve an amendment to an Official Community Plan) and a development permit. Rezoning is required as neighbourhood pubs are allowed only in the use specific C6, General Commercial Zone 6. Therefore, the process following Pre-Clearance and the opportunities for public input are the same as for any rezoning application. However, additional notification requirements are built into the process.



### 3.13 Neighbourhood Traffic Control Program

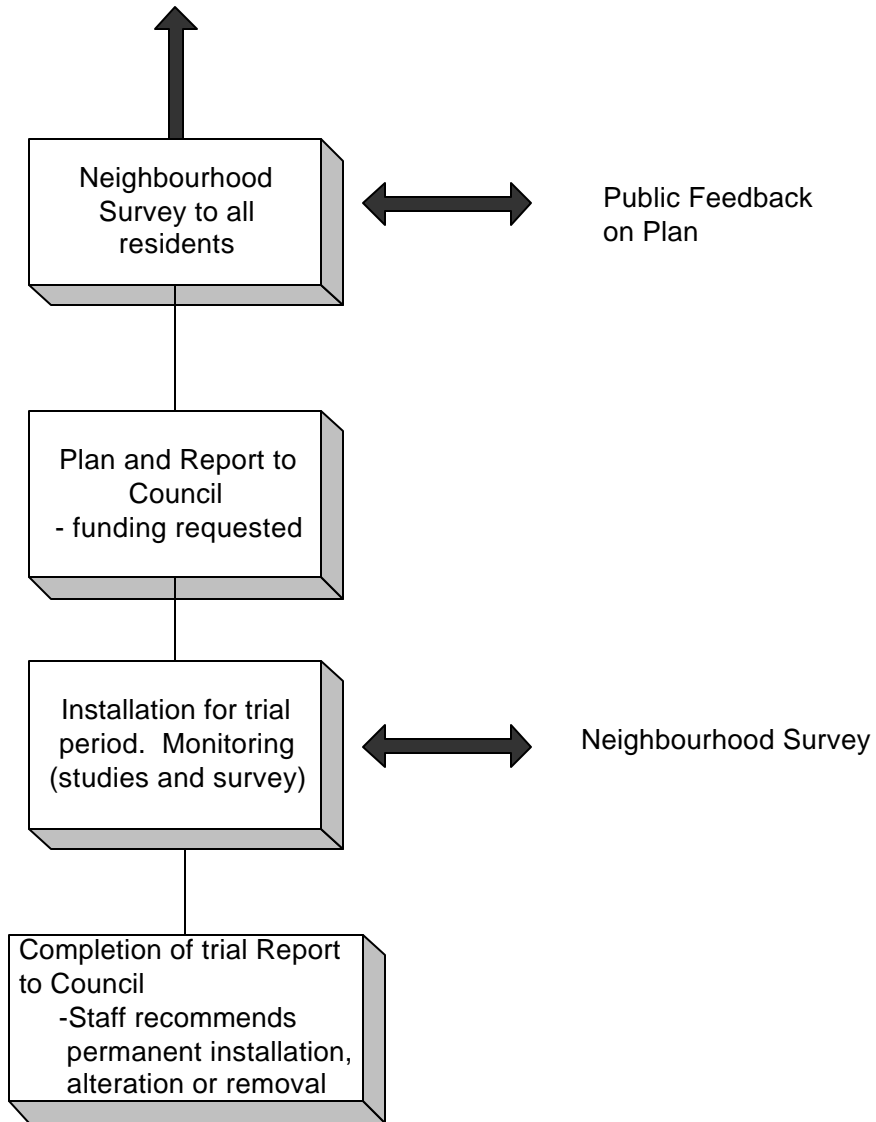
The Neighbourhood Traffic Control Program has been established to address neighbourhood traffic concerns while enabling citizens and/or community groups to become actively involved in the improvement process. The four phase program involves education, engineering solutions, enforcement, and public awareness. Neighbourhoods are encouraged to identify their problems, discuss solutions with neighbours, and work with the Engineering Department to implement solutions.

Timing:  
Responsibility: Engineering

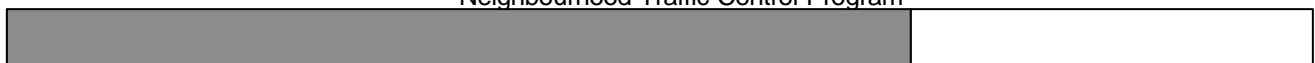




**Neighbourhood Traffic Control Program (Continued)**



Neighbourhood Traffic Control Program



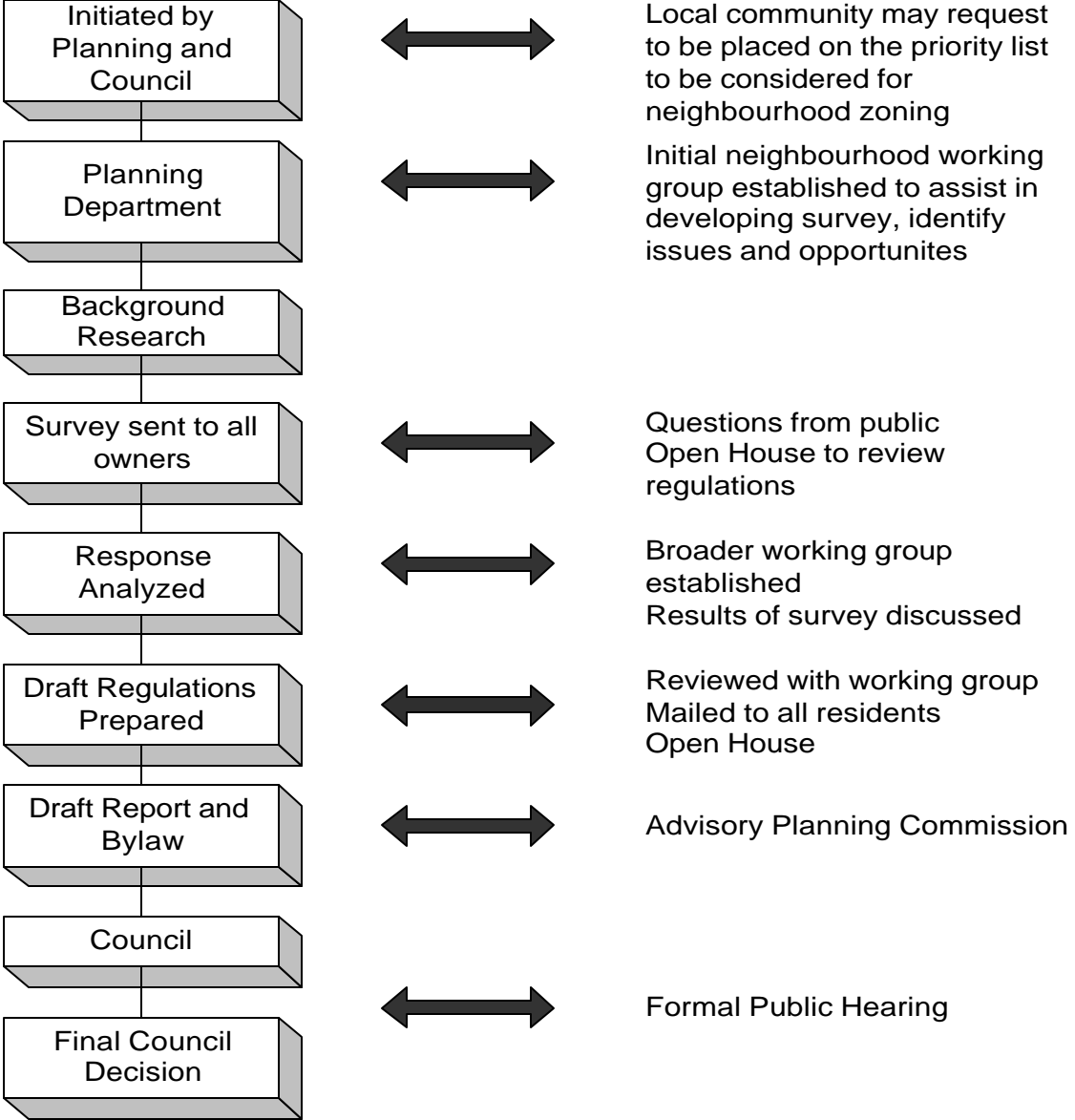
Informing

Consulting

Joint Planning

**3.14 Single Family Neighbourhood Zoning (regulations specific to a neighbourhood within the local Official Community Plan)**

Timing: variable  
 Responsibility: Planning



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## Volume 3

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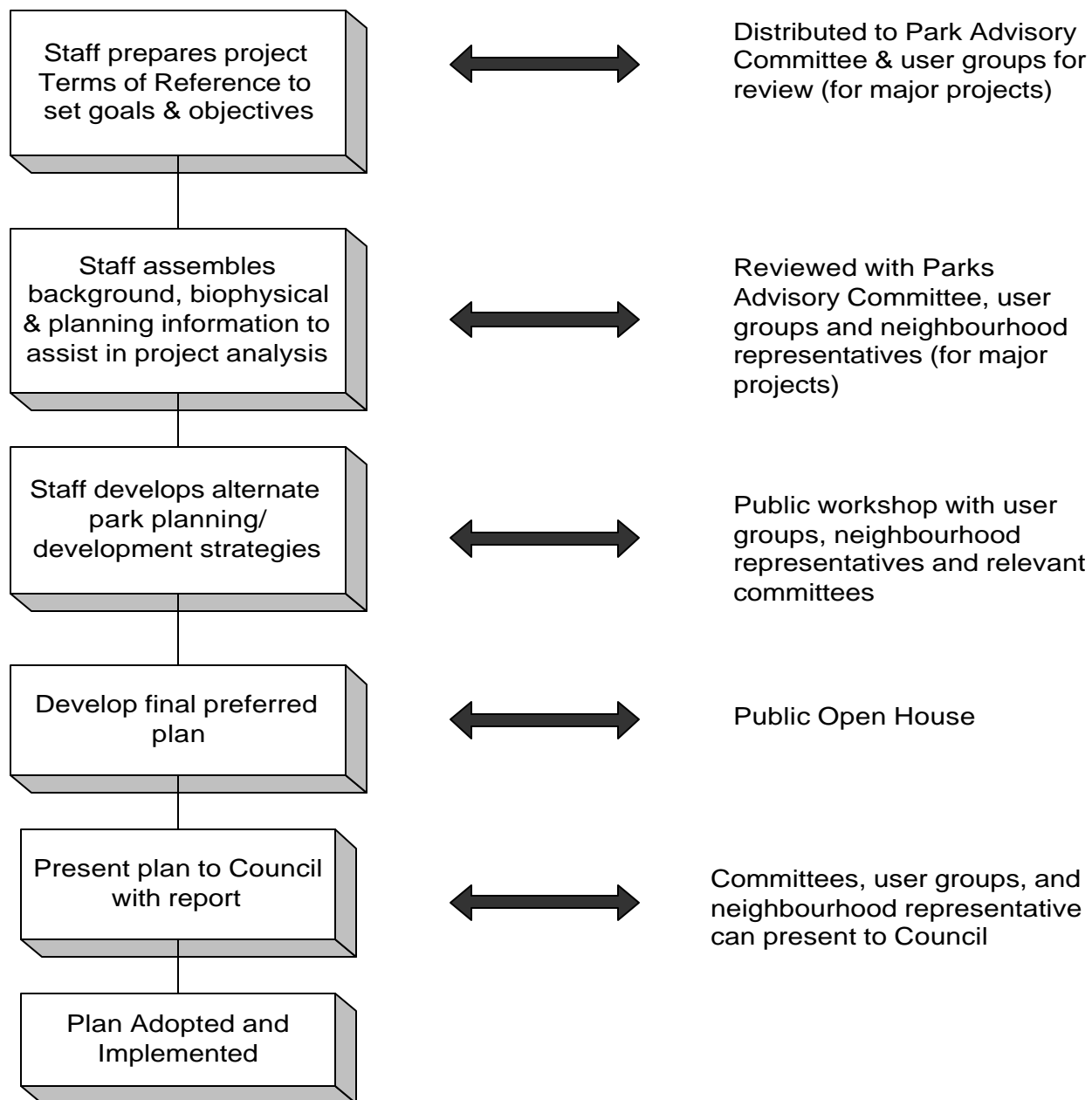
Informing

Consulting

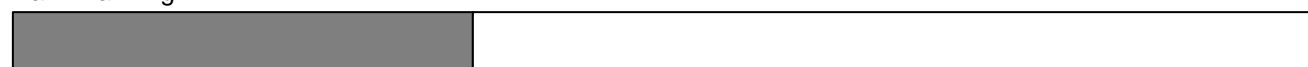
Joint Planning

**3.15 Park Planning**

Timing: variable  
Responsibility: Parks



Park Planning



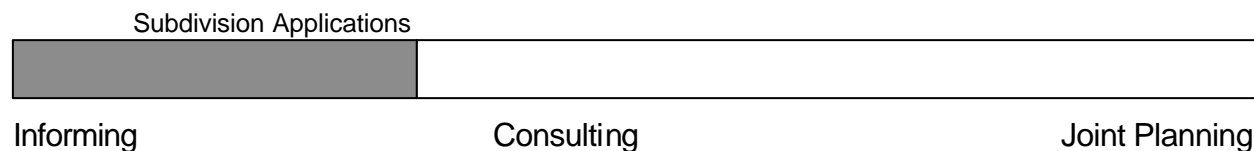
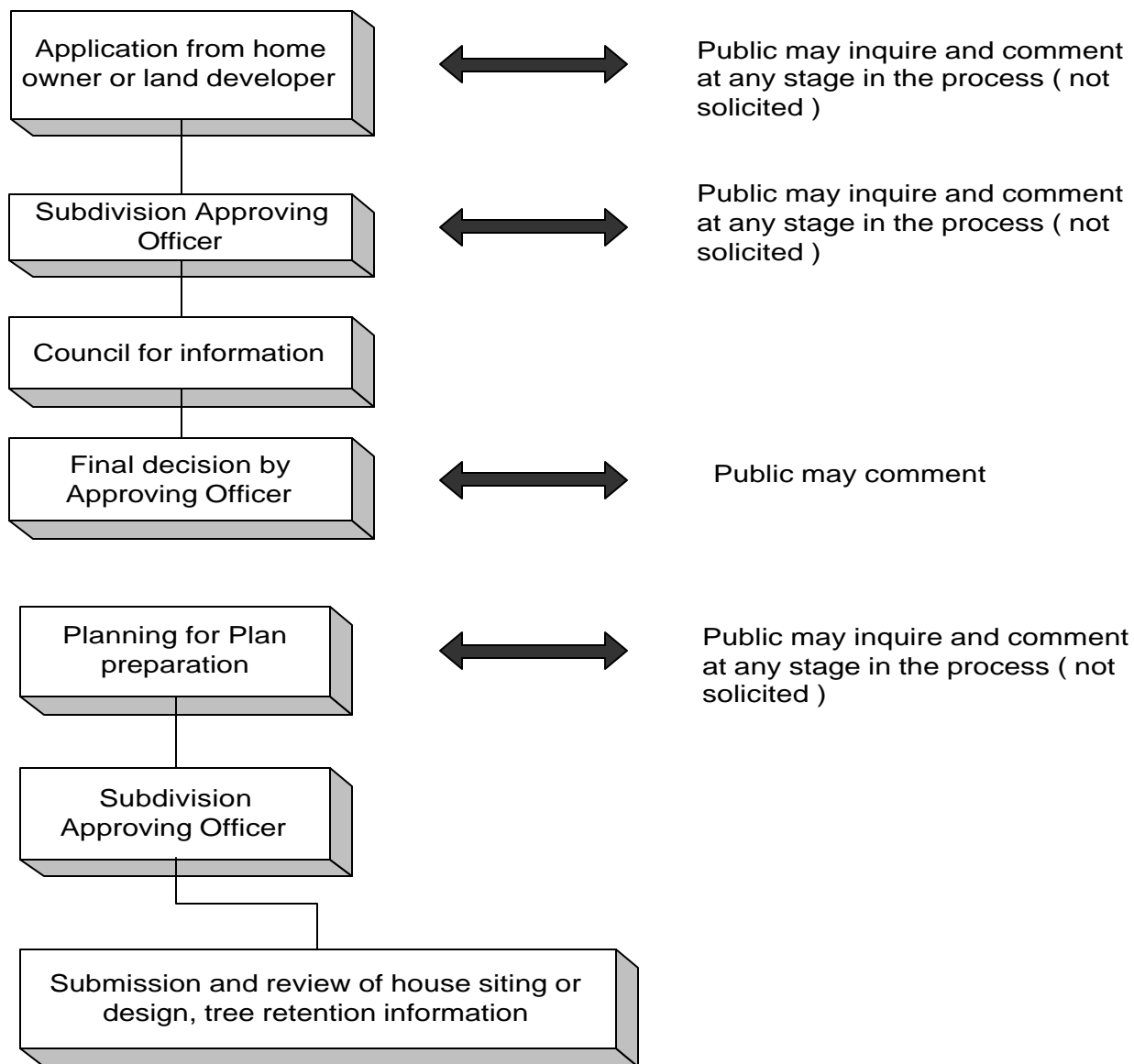
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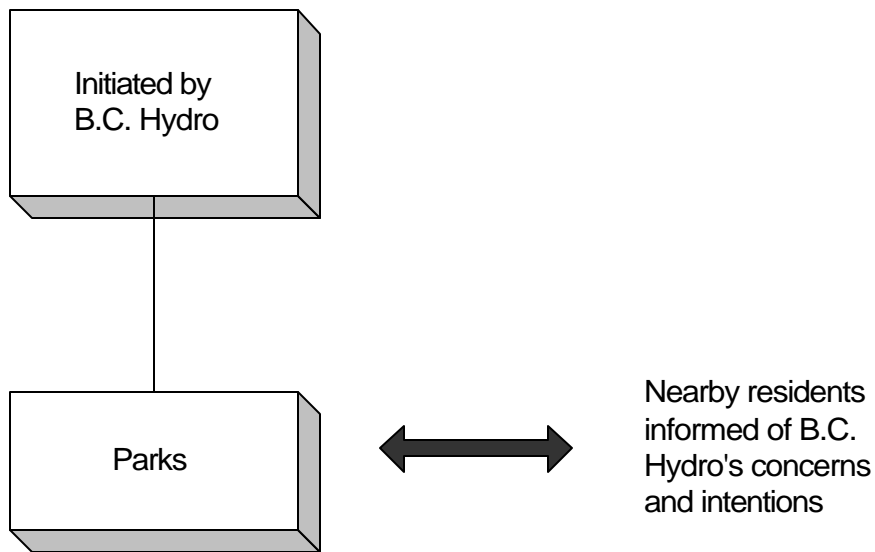
### 3.16 Subdivision Applications

Timing: on request  
 Responsibility: Subdivision Approving Officer

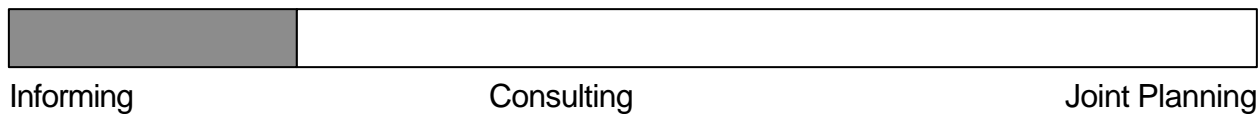


### 3.17 Trees on District Property

Timing: on request  
Responsibility: Parks



Trees on District Property



**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK  
POLICIES, PRINCIPLES and PRACTICES**

**VOLUME FOUR**  
*Tool Box*

**Volume 4      Tool Box**

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**Introduction**

Designing and leading public involvement processes requires diverse knowledge, skill, and experiences. This volume has been developed to provide some basic ideas on:

- 4.1 Looking For Resources Within the District
- 4.2 Working with Task Forces and Other Groups
- 4.3 Meetings
- 4.4 Facilitation
- 4.5 Exploring Non Traditional Approaches
- 4.6 Using Consultants
- 4.7 Exploring the Literature

Some of the material has been adapted and excerpted from:

John Talbot, Developing Effective Groups, Facilitators' Guide, Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, 1995

John Talbot, Problem Solving and Decision-Making, Facilitator's Guide, Minister of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, 1995

Roger Schwarz, The Skilled Facilitator, Jossey-Bass, 1994

United Way of Canada, The Modern Board and Committee, 1986



## **4.1 Looking For Resources Within The District**

### **4.1.1 Communications Department**

The Communications Department can provide help with:

- putting the framework for public involvement into practice through the design and implementation of the public involvement process
- communications strategies and planning
- brochures and graphic design and production
- media releases and media relations
- advertising

### **4.1.2 Experience In Public Involvement**

A number of staff have considerable experience with public involvement processes. They are prepared to provide advice.

- Social Planning Department
- Doug Allen, Planning Department
- Erica Bell-Lowther, Social Planning Department
- Gavin Joyce, Engineering Department

### **4.1.3 Community Groups**

Community associations, community service organizations, cultural groups, and other community organizations can help. They know how to best reach, inform, and involve their constituents.

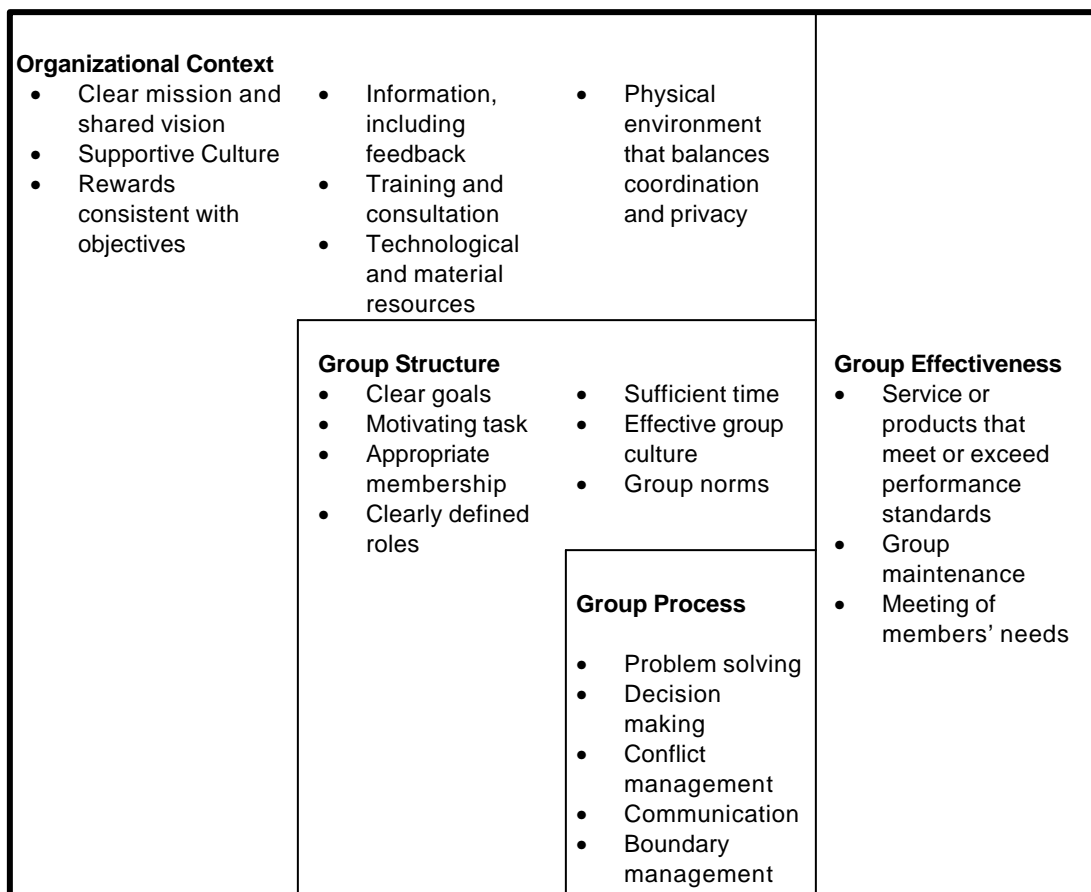
## **4.2 Working With Task Forces and Other Groups**

Particularly when the level of public involvement requires joint participation of diverse citizens, the use of task forces and working groups can be an effective way to gather information, learn, vision, consider options, build consensus, and develop recommendations.

This section provides some frameworks for thinking about groups and task forces.

### 4.2.1 Characteristics of Effective Teams

Roger Schwarz (The Skilled Facilitator, Jossey-Bass, 1994, pg. 19-41) offers a sound framework for understanding the elements that lead to effective groups and teams, summarized in the chart below:



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Groups are effective when:

- customers of the group's output are satisfied that their needs and expectations are met;
- the group is able to work together over the time it takes to fulfill its tasks;
- the needs and interests of individual group members are satisfied

This means, then, that public involvement working groups and task forces need to:

- clarify whom they are serving, and what the expectations of their customers are;
- ensure that the task force is able to work together, building trust and not burning people out;
- pay attention to the needs of individual group members, and how they might be reasonably met.

#### Processes and Structures

Effective groups establish explicit agreements on supportive processes and structures.

Group processes include:

- problem solving           ⇒ a systematic, step-by step approach to address issues, both within the group, and externally
- decision-making         ⇒ clear rules for how decisions will be made (for example: majority vote or consensus), and by whom
- conflict management   ⇒ systematic processes for resolving conflicts
- communication         ⇒ how information flows within the group, and externally
- boundary management   ⇒ how the group will communicate and relate to external interests

Group structures include:

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- clear goals ⇒ written in such a way that the group can measure its own progress
- motivating tasks ⇒ work that uses the diverse skills of group members, has visible outcomes, has significant consequences, provides autonomy for group members, and can be evaluated
- appropriate membership ⇒ a mix of knowledge and skills for the task; large enough to do the work; stable membership; a mix of personalities (doers, thinkers, feelers and creators)
- clearly defined roles ⇒ explicit understandings of the roles and responsibilities of each member
- sufficient time ⇒ to do the work, both tasks and internal group development
- effective culture ⇒ a set of common beliefs and values that give the group a common ground to work on
- group norms ⇒ explicit expectations of how group members will behave, and relate to each other

#### **4.2.2 Phases of Group Development**

The material, in this section and the next, was developed by John Talbot (Developing Effective Groups, Facilitator's Guide Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, 1995) It is reprinted here with permission. His work was funded by the Ministry of Small Business Tourism, and Culture.

*Groups go through different stages of development. Each stage reflects different goals, opportunities and problems. One model of development suggests that most groups go through four specific stages: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Although no group necessarily follows these steps in order, all four provide a useful framework for thinking about and understanding group characteristics, changes, and dynamics.*

##### Forming

*Groups form for a variety of reasons: a common purpose, an idea, an issue, or a crisis. A group's first task is to establish a goal, an identity, and a focus. Sometimes this becomes very clear early on; at other times it takes longer, maybe several weeks. For some groups, goals, identity and focus shift and remain "fluid" for a few months or longer.*

*Goals evolve as the group becomes more of an entity with its own process, structure, and vitality. At this initial stage, the group is seeking enough members to reach its goals and secure its ongoing existence.*

*New groups are often very impressionable and sometimes vulnerable. For example, individuals with strong personalities and belief systems can often influence the leadership style, tone and values that govern or influence group functions, Early on during the forming stage, roles and responsibilities need to be established and ways of working determined.*

*The six initial components of a group's formation are important to understand and be able to develop.*

- *Establish Goals:*

*Goals give a group direction. They provide a framework for action and give satisfaction to achievements. Goals need to be realistic and meaningful for all members. A group without goals often drifts, wastes valuable resources and accomplishes little.*

- *Develop Leadership:*

*A group is a dynamic entity that requires internal leadership to help it achieve its goals. One individual or several can fulfill the leadership functions depending on the nature, structure and purpose of the group. Effective leaders:*

- *develop and convey short and long term visions for the group;*
- *motivate and support group members to contribute their best;*
- *solicit and listen to ideas, suggestions and criticisms of group members and act on them appropriately; and*
- *provide ongoing feedback, information and ideas to keep the group on track.*

- *Recruit Members:*

*In any given group, individual members bring their own unique skills and knowledge to the effort. Most groups require members who reflect a wide diversity of skills, knowledge, and abilities. Highly effective groups are able to bring out the best each member has to offer to handle particular tasks and functions.*

*Initially, the group needs to be large enough to accomplish its work but small enough to sustain stability. Groups that are too large often become fragmented; while groups that are too small may not possess the necessary diversity of skills to accomplish all that needs to be done.*

*Most groups find that their members reflect different interpersonal behavior styles. These are often referred to as doers (practical); thinkers (ideas and strategies); feelers (people oriented); and creators (intuitive and proactive). Recognizing that individuals have different skills, knowledge, abilities and styles of behavior can often help groups better understand both their successes and tensions.*

- *Clarify Roles of Each Member:*

*Each member of the group needs to understand what is expected of him or her. Without this information, it is difficult for individuals to contribute effectively since they often must “second guess” the group’s requirements. Such a situation gives rise to high levels of frustration and invites inter-personal conflict. Clarifying roles and responsibilities - almost on an ongoing basis is an essential component of effective group development.*

- *Consider Time Requirements:*

*Groups need enough time to complete their tasks. While simple in nature, groups often overlook this point. For example, sometimes goals are over ambitious for a given time period. This can lead to high levels of stress among group members. Further, shortcuts may be taken that can undermine the quality of the desired outcome, often leading to disillusionment with the entire purpose or mission of the group.*

*Alternatively, sometimes a group has too much time to fulfill its purpose. This can lead to a sense of aimlessness among group members, fragmentation and a refocusing on matters outside the group’s purview. Groups need to set realistic goals and targets for themselves, review and reflect on their progress regularly and be flexible enough to shift strategies and priorities as necessary.*

- *Encourage Motivating and Inclusive Tasks:*

*Group members need to be motivated and feel included in the group. This happens when groups focus initially on tasks that:*

- *allow for a variety of skills and personality types;*

- *have tangible outcomes;*
- *allow each member flexibility and independence in how to accomplish their tasks;*
- *generate continuous feedback about how well the group is performing;*
- *build trust and recognize the needs of all members.*

#### Storming

*During this stage, issues of conflict and power emerge. Matters of leadership, roles and responsibilities and the allocation of resources can all lead to personal differences and strong feelings among members. For the group to stay focused and grounded, these issues must be addressed and resolved. At this stage in its development, the group needs to clarify its priorities, parameters, resources and capabilities. New ideas and new members may add to the dynamic nature of this stage.*

*Most groups find this period difficult. Although characterized by high energy, this stage challenges individual members to consider their own ways of working and interacting with others. The way in which the group works through this stormy period generally influences the way it integrates new members and deals with subsequent change.*

*During this stage, the group dynamic reflects high energy. This is often associated with tension and conflict surrounding leadership, power, priorities, time pressures, roles and responsibilities, communication strategies or personal behavioral styles. Recognizing the generic causes of conflict can help groups develop useful strategies for not only resolving difficult matters but constructively learning from them. Central to identifying and resolving conflict is understanding the importance of feelings, emotions and perceptions.*

*Almost all conflict gives rise to strong feelings and emotions, all of which may be expressed differently. Some people, for example, shout and yell if they are angry or unhappy, while others withdraw. Some people skirt over real issues, obscuring the true nature of the conflict. Still others try to intellectualize their emotions in an effort to minimize their hurt, pain, or anger. How people deal with their*



*feelings in a conflict situation usually reflects the way they were brought up.*

*Along with strong feelings and emotions, most conflict situations mirror different perceptions. Conflict arises when different members of the group look at the same situation and draw very different conclusions or observations. These differences represent each individual's personal views. It is worth remembering that each person brings their own perceptions to the conflict. Understanding that differences in perception are at the root of most group conflict gives a clear starting point for resolving the conflict.*

#### Norming

*During this stage, group members learn to listen more effectively to one another, nurture other's ideas and encourage the full participation of each member of the group. They come to agree on priorities, ways of working and desired outcomes. Group norms reflect the way members want to get the job done and interact with one another.*

*During this stage, too, the group's identity strengthens and communication becomes easier and more natural. Humour and a sense of fun frequently emerge as individuals feel more comfortable with themselves and the group. Norming is a critical stage in the development of the group and if not given adequate time to develop can lead to dysfunction or even disbandment of the group.*

*Norms are expectations about how people should or should not behave. In well functioning groups, all or many group members share these norms. Some examples of norms could be: that members let each other know when someone plans to be absent; and, that members do not talk negatively about the group outside the group. Norms are important because they:*

- *provide important guide posts for carrying out tasks and working together;*
- *contribute to the group's identity; and*
- *help integrate new members into the group.*

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*Many norms develop implicitly, without the group ever actually discussing them. Sometimes, when norms develop in this manner, members - particularly those new to the group - may learn about them only by violating them. Developing and discussing norms explicitly can help to ensure that members understand and can work within them.*

#### *Performing*

*This stage represents group effectiveness. The group is aware of its capabilities and limitations and works to build and sustain lasting achievement. Membership is nurtured and shared among group members. Everyone is contributing to the best of their abilities.*

*Once it is performing well, the group can continue to expand and move forward. It must make sure that the processes and structures it had developed are open and flexible enough to invite new members but are sturdy enough to stay focused.*

### **4.2.3 Resolving Conflicts**

*The more intense the level of public involvement, the more likely there will be considerable conflicts in the working groups or task forces. Understanding how conflicts arise, time traps we get into in response, and the strategies for resolving conflicts, is essential.*

*Much has been written on this subject. The Justice Institute offers extensive training.*

#### Causes

*There are many causes of group conflict, several of which may emerge during the storming stage of the group's development.*

- *Diversity and Differences*

*Diversity is part of human nature. No two people look or think alike. Recognizing the wonder of human diversity can open up possibilities and help you learn and develop in new ways. But human nature also makes you cautious, sometimes fearful, when that diversity is new or alien to your own experience. Individual differences that threaten you can lead to misunderstandings, disagreements and poor communication - all of which can contribute to conflicts.*

*In the dealing with conflicts emerging from diversity and individual differences, there are several helpful strategies to consider:*

- *try to understand the nature of the differences and look for areas of commonality (which are often greater than the differences);*
- *share your fears or perceptions with the other person(s); and*
- *look for opportunities to improve the relationship.*

- *Expectations and Responsibilities*

*All group members have their own needs and expectations and needs of the group. These go hand in hand with the rights and responsibilities of group membership. Conflicts arise when one*

*or more group members' needs and expectations are not met by other group members - either by accident or intention. In this situation, it is essential that the expectations and needs of group members are acknowledged, discussed and, whenever possible, met. Sometimes group members have unrealistic expectations of the group or needs that cannot be fulfilled by the group. In these instances, the leadership or other members of the group need to listen to the individual and help him or her accept the limitations of the group.*

- *Roles and Responsibilities*

*Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities can also contribute to group conflict. If roles and responsibilities are not clear, individual members may duplicate one another's efforts, feel that they have no clear contribution to make to the group, and resent others "butting in" on their turf. As with most of the other causes of conflict, it is essential that groups try to clarify roles and responsibilities so that each member feels valued and comfortable with his or her place in the group.*

- *Power and Authority*

*Power and authority are often closely linked to the issue of roles and responsibilities. Imagine a group in which one or more members believe they have the power to control or take advantage of other group members. What would be the likely impact? It is not too difficult to imagine the nature of conflict that could develop.*

*It is important to remember that power and authority do not just rest with the leadership of the group. Each member should be empowered to influence and contribute to the development of group norms and ways of working.*

- *Values, Principles and Belief Systems*

*Values, principles and belief systems guide all human behavior. They reflect those things you consider to be most important and guide your day-to-day life. They help determine the nature of your relationships, the way you spend your own time and how you*

*work. It is not surprising that in groups, differences in values, principles and belief systems often lead to conflict. As with all issues and perception, a first step in resolving conflicts of this nature is trying to clarify and understand not only the other person's values, principles and belief systems by also your own.*

- *Internal Conflict*

*Sometimes conflict does not emerge between or among people. Rather, it arises inside yourself - when you are not sure of yourself, your place in the group or how you should handle particular situations. Sometimes people feel pulled in many directions at the same time; they may have complex decisions or hard choices to make. This too can lead to inner dilemmas for individuals. Inner conflicts not dealt with can put stress and strain on group relationships and sometimes undermine the group's efforts since the no one is quite sure "what is going on" with the person in conflict.*

### Common Approaches

*Group members' behavior in conflict situations generally falls into one or more strategies. These strategies can be described in terms of two factors:*

- *the extent to which individuals attempt to satisfy their personal goals; and*
- *the extent to which individuals attempt to maintain or improve their relationship with those with whom they are in conflict.*

*These five strategies are: competing, accommodating, avoiding, bargaining, and collaborating:*

- **Competing** *occurs when one individual seeks to win in a situation and tends to see conflict in terms of a win or lose position. An individual using this strategy strives to achieve his or her personal goals with little concern for the other individual in the relationship.*

- **Accommodating** occurs when a group member works to preserve the existing relationship by emphasizing common interests or areas of agreement but fails to confront the areas of disagreement. Individuals who regularly “accommodate” may give up their personal goals and feel they are frequently taken advantage of.
- **Avoiding** occurs when one or more of the individuals in conflict withdraw from the situation. They either do not acknowledge the existence of the conflict or they refuse to deal with it. This results in neither satisfying their own personal goals or improving the relationship.
- **Bargaining** occurs when individuals negotiate so that each person obtains at least part of what he or she wants. In bargaining, they attempt to meet as many of their own personal goals as possible without seriously damaging the relationship.
- **Collaborating** involves agreeing to cooperate and working to find a solution that will meet the needs of both sides, thus creating a “win-win” situation. In using this strategy, individuals attempt to meet their own personal goals and improve the relationship.

#### **Steps to Resolve Conflicts**

*Responding to conflict in a timely and effective manner is the key to preventing it from disrupting the progress of the group. Regardless of the type of conflict, the same five step process is helpful in resolving it.*

#### **Step 1: Acknowledge the Conflict:**

*There is usually a sense of relief once the conflict is recognized and acknowledged. Groups are most effective when all members share a commitment to individually recognize conflict situations and jointly work for solutions.*

#### **Step 2: Gain Common Ground:**

*Put the conflict in perspective by returning to the overall purpose and goals of the group. One way to assess the seriousness of any issue is to determine the extent to which the issue is getting in the way of the group's goals. If all members are committed to the group's goals, they should be willing to address issues that threaten their attainment.*

**Step 3: Seek to Understand All Perceptions:**

*It is important to remember that gaining understanding does not mean gaining agreement. One does not agree to understand the point of view of another. The value associated with seeking to understand all perceptions is to gain all appropriate information and not to win an argument.*

**Step 4: Focus on the Issue, Not Each Other**

*Focusing on the issue means that you are not confronting each other but addressing the conflict that is keeping you from progressing as a group. The goal is to reach a solution that propels the goals of the group without violating the values of any one group member. Focusing on issues requires that you consider each party to be a valuable partner in reaching a solution. Therefore, anger and hostility must be channeled into more productive activities such as problem-solving and action planning.*

**Step 5: Develop An Action Plan:**

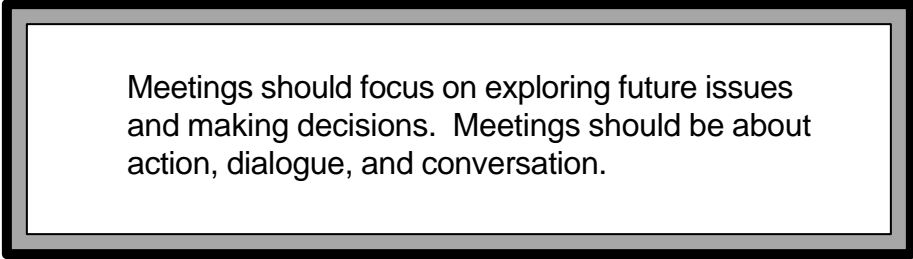
*The final step in the process is to describe what each member will do to solve the problem. An action plan should be written so that each member can take responsibility for their part in resolving it.*

### 4.3 Meetings

Public involvement requires endless meetings. Task forces and working groups meet. Advisory committees meet. Public meetings are held. And, yet, too much of the time people find meetings frustrating.

Meetings are places where people can: reflect strong feelings, come together to participate on an equal basis, become informed, discuss, and make decisions.

Many meetings are focused on informing people, and listening to reports. Generally, this is inefficient. There are many other ways to inform people that can and should be used.



Meetings should focus on exploring future issues and making decisions. Meetings should be about action, dialogue, and conversation.

#### 4.3.1 Designing Meetings

Here is a set of guidelines that help in systematically designing meeting agendas.

- Rule of the Agenda

Have an agenda, make sure it is circulated beforehand, and keep to it. The agenda is best seen as a contract between the chairperson and the members - in return for your preparation, time, and participation, we will deal with these issues.

- Rule of the Clock

Start on time and end on time so that late comers are not rewarded. Keep the meeting to 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours. More than that, people leave bodily or otherwise. Less than that, there is not



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enough time to develop the team, something that has to be redone at every meeting.

- Rule of Three Quarters

Mail the agenda out to members, with all the supporting materials, so that it reaches them 2 to 3 days before the meeting. The supporting materials should include update reports, and reports directly tied to the issues for discussion and decision. Expect people to read and come prepared. Make the package user-friendly so that it is easier for people to prepare.

- Rule of Halves

About two weeks before the meeting, proactively reach out to each member to seek potential agenda items. Sort the issues into categories:

- items for information, for discussion, or for decision
- items that are important or urgent, or neither
- items requiring a decision, where all of the background work has been done, and those where it has not

Most meetings have too many issues on the agenda. Focus on those that are for discussion or decision, are important and urgent, and where the background work has been done. Keep the time spent just informing people to a minimum.

- Rule of Thirds

Most groups do their most effective work at about 2/3 of the way through the meeting. Plan the most difficult decisions and discussions at that point.

- Rule of Sixths

Order the agenda items as follows:

- I. Make announcements and receive reports
- II. Make short, easy decisions
- III. Make more difficult decisions
- IV. Make the most difficult decisions
- V. Hold an open discussion on future issues

VI. Make an easy decision

This is like an aerobic exercise, warming the group up to effective team decision-making, and letting emotions and conflicts cool off before people leave.

Remember that good decision-making requires:

- background information
- options and recommendations
- the right people attending
- preparation before the meeting
- full participation

### **4.3.2 Chairing Meetings**

The role of the chairperson is critical for effective meetings. The Chairperson should be a:

- leader ⇒ willing to give up personal interests, and willing to work with the whole group
- facilitator ⇒ able to encourage people to participate, help people to listen to each other, and to reflect back the common threads of the discussion
- spokesperson ⇒ willing to speak publicly on behalf of the group
- administrator ⇒ ensuring that all of the technical issues are handled well (agendas, minutes, notices, room arrangements)

### **4.3.3 Styles of Decision-Making**

The material in this section was developed by John Talbot (Problem Solving and Decision Making), Facilitator's Guide, Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture, 1995). It is reprinted here with permission. His work was funded by the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture.

*Groups and organizations use a variety of methods for making decisions. The appropriateness of any one method depends on the situation in which the decision is made. The four common methods for making decisions are:*

- *Autocratic:*

*The decision is made by one individual or a small group of individuals. This one individual is often the person "in charge".*

- *Democratic:*

*Voting is usually the way that decisions are made. In simple form, everyone gets a vote in order to decide. The majority (50%+) is usually considered the winner.*

- *Consensus:*

*Consensus decision-making occurs when all group members are committed to support the decision. Consensus does not mean that everyone agrees the best decision has been reached, but it does mean everyone can support the decision and does not feel they are compromising their basic values or interests in doing so.*

- *Unanimity:*

*This form of decision-making means that everyone in the group agrees that the best decision has been made and fully supports it.*

Looking for Consensus

*Consensus is different from other kinds of decision-making because it stresses the cooperative development of a decision with group members working together rather than competing against each other. The goal of consensus is a decision that is consented to by all group members. However, full consent does not mean that everyone must be completely satisfied with the final outcome. The decision must nevertheless be acceptable enough, so that all will agree to support the group in choosing it.*

*Before using consensus as the model of decision-making, it is necessary for a group to have certain characteristics and for members to possess certain skills and attitudes that can help the consensus model succeed. The “prerequisites” listed below should help you assess your group’s readiness to use consensus:*

- *Unity of Values and Purpose:*

*There should be full support to the values and purpose of the group both within and outside the group.*

- *Sufficient Time:*

*The process of developing consensus requires time spent on group process and discussion with all members, as well as adequate time to make the decisions.*

- *Trust and Cooperation:*

*Consensus works well when group members are willing to work cooperatively and when they feel they are able to trust each other. This requires a commitment by individual members to examine their own attitudes and be open to change. Such trust and cooperation also require a caring group which supports the development of these attitudes.*

- *Skill Development:*

*Consensus works well when there is a willingness to learn and practice skills in group participation, facilitation and communication. The group must encourage and assist of all its members to develop these skills.*

- *Commitment and Satisfaction:*

*The struggle to reach consensus requires more intense involvement from group members. In majority rule, dissenting group members are often committed to the decision merely by a vote. In consensus, commitment arises from involvement as well as from satisfaction.*

- *Quality Decisions:*

*Since the decision must be acceptable to a variety of people, consensus requires the group to examine its decisions carefully and to meet the high standards of workability, desirability and integrity.*

### 4.4 Facilitation

Meetings, conferences, groups, task forces, .... (all key elements of public involvement processes) require facilitation. Quite often, this is part of the role of the chairperson. At other times, an external facilitator may be needed. This could be a District staff person, or an outside consultant.

Facilitators guide a group through a process to meet the identified goals of the group. The facilitator:

- guides the group;
- intervenes to help the group perform well;
- challenges group members for clarification;
- helps the group make decisions.

Facilitators are usually not

- technical experts
- members of the group
- people with a direct interest in the group's goals

#### **4.4.1 Principles of Effective Facilitation**

Facilitators generally work on the basis of the following principles:

- People in groups are capable of identifying and solving their own problems, and usually want to take responsibility for their own situation. Where they may need help is with the process, itself.
- What groups do not need is outside experts who provide instant and magical answers. Facilitators lead the process, enabling people to participate together in tough, reality-tested conversations.
- Broad participation of all group members is critical for building agreement upon the real issues, encouraging full creativity, nurturing on-going learning, and implementing the results.
- Both perceptions and facts are important. People walk into groups with diverse experiences, their own pictures of what is happening, ideas about the real issues, and strong feelings of what is most important. These need to be honoured and respected. At the same time, people's perceptions need to be reality-tested against each others' views, and against the facts.
- Groups need valid information. All relevant information needs to be shared, in ways that all can understand. People need to share information in ways that others can independently validate it. On-going information gathering and learning is a sound basis for planning, problem-solving, and decision-making.
- Members of the group need to be able to make free and informed choices. They should define their own objectives and methods for achieving them. Coercion and manipulation should be avoided. Choices should be based on valid information.
- Group members need to develop internal commitments to the choices of the group. People need to feel personally responsible for their decisions. The choices need to be compelling and satisfying.



#### **4.4.2 Keeping it simple**

Facilitation should be fun. Here are some basic rules:

- Relax. Take three deep breaths. The challenge is to help all participants say what they want to say, listen to each other, ask questions, and find a common ground for collective action.
- Keep it simple. Do not try to do too much. Simple technologies, like flipcharts, work better. Let group members take flipchart notes.
- Use the Law of Two Feet. If the group is not moving forward, and people are becoming restless and frustrated, use your feet, and take a break.
- Encourage questions, the more the better. Good brainstorming is more and more ideas. Good facilitating is more and more questions.
- One good idea explored well is worth far more than four great ideas left behind.
- Enjoy the experience. Help others to have fun. Let people laugh.
- Pay attention to the environment. Natural light, comfortable seats, space to move, and access to the outside pay off.

### **4.4.3 Techniques**

There are many techniques that facilitators use - tools in their tool box.

#### Listening

Facilitators model effective listening behavior.

- attending when others are speaking
- responding
- being non-judgemental and empathic
- learning from others' points-of-view
- hearing the feelings and thoughts expressed
- hearing what is not being said
- paying attention to one's own internal reactions

#### Perceptual Snapshots

This is a technique developed by Robert Myers and others (On-Site Analysis, OSCA Ltd., 1988). It's a way to bring to the surface group members' perceptions of the facts of a situation. As a result, people laugh, see the differing perceptions of the facts, and find motivation to spend time learning together.

- Ask each person to write down their answers to some of the key factual questions (e.g. What is the average family income in this community?)
- Question by question, have people provide their answers. Provide time for people to comment on the group's responses.
- End by having people talk about what information and facts they want to know.

#### Brainstorming

The purpose of brainstorming is to generate an extensive number of ideas or solutions to a problem by suspending criticism and judgement.

#### Generating Ideas:

- Criticism of ideas or inputs during this phase is actively discouraged.
- Creative or even what would appear to be silly ideas are encouraged.
- Piggybacking on ideas is encouraged.
- Quantity of ideas is desired.

#### Evaluating Ideas:

- Review the list and discard ideas that obviously do not fit the situation.
- Evaluate the remaining ideas for relevance and application to the problem.
- Identify ideas that build on one another or can be used in combination.
- Create a final list of ideas to try.

One approach to brainstorming is to identify all the positive aspects of an idea and then all the negative aspects. Both the positives and negatives should be equally valued and used to help in the decision-making process.

#### Fishbone and Mindmaps

One method that is often used to get at the root causes of a problem is the fishbone diagram - so named because it resembles the skeleton of a fish. The fishbone diagram has a box on the left in which the problem definition is written. Five diagonal lines extend from the backbone, two above and three below. Each line has a label that represents a major category of potential causes. The categories may vary according to the nature of the problem statement, but together the major categories capture the major potential causes. Some examples of categories are: environment, materials, methods, people, and technology.

Once the group has agreed on the comprehensive major categories, participants brainstorm potential causes within each category. Brainstorming continues until the group has exhausted its ideas. In the next step, the group brainstorms about the root causes of the causes participants have identified. This process continues until the participants have identified the root causes of each initial cause. After potential root causes have been identified, the group may need to collect information to determine which, if any, of the causes are accurate. When the group has completed this step, they have agreed on a casual map of the problem that is based on valid information.

A similar process called mind mapping is discussed by Marvin Weisbord (Future Search, Berret-Koehler, 1995). Imagine a large 6 foot by 12 foot wall, covered with paper. The group gathers by the wall. Starting with an issue or community, group members offer trends that will likely have an impact in the future. Each trend is noted, with a different coloured line. Examples are asked for, creating branch lines off each trend. As ideas surface, lines branch out, creating a branched, multi-coloured tree of how the future might be imagined. Mind maps are developed as a total group so everybody hears what matters to others.

#### Force Field Analysis

Force field analysis comes from the work of Kurt Lewin. Draw a column in the middle of the page, and write in the issue, problem, or desired change. On the left-hand side, mark in the forces that are or will lead to change. On the right-hand side, mark in the forces that will resist change.

The group can then hold a discussion on what can be done to ensure that the forces for change are greater than the forces against change. The object is not to deny the realities at work. Rather, it is to use one set of forces to balance another set.

## **4.5 Exploring Non Traditional Approaches**

Public involvement processes have typically involved smaller (8-15 people) groups or task forces working over a period of several months.

More recently, other approaches have emerged that aim at intensely involving larger groups of people over 2-4 days. Two such are briefly described here.

### **4.5.1 Future Search**

A typical Future Search involves 60-70 people, reflecting all of the major stakeholder groups, over a period of three days. A small planning or steering committee works with the facilitators to prepare for the event, focusing particularly on defining the theme to be addressed, and ensuring that the full range of interested players will participate.

A typical Future Search agenda looks something like:

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| Day 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning from the past: key global, personal, and community milestones leading to the present</li><li>• Creating a mind map of current trends shaping individual lives and the community</li></ul>  |
| Day 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzing the current trends: what do they mean, what do people want to do about them</li><li>• Identifying current actions of all of the stakeholders in working with the community: what are the strengths and weaknesses</li><li>• Creating ideal future scenarios: dreams of what the community could be like 10 - 20 years out</li><li>• Exploring common ground for collective action: common futures, potential projects, and unresolved differences</li></ul> |
| Day 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifying common ground to act on</li><li>• Action planning: personal responsibilities and joint ventures.</li></ul>  |

For more information, read Marvin Weisbord's, [Future Search](#) (Berrett-Koehler, 1995).

#### **4.5.2 Open Space Technology**

Open Space Technology is a process for designing a working conference where the participants are integrally involved in developing and implementing the agenda. Typical events can involve up to 250 people over 2-4 days.

The event begins with a gathering of the participants, pulled together around a theme about which they have some passion and commitment. The theme is described and explored. Participants are invited to express issues, related to the theme, around which they are prepared to lead a workshop, conversation, or seminar during the conference. The agenda is built out of this process.

Open Space Technology is based on a faith that:

- Whoever comes is the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
- Whenever it starts is the right time
- When it's over, it's over

While this process may sound crazy, it does work.

For more information, read Harrison Owen's, [Riding The Tiger](#), Abbot Publishing, 1991.

## **4.6 Using Consultants**

In looking at public involvement process, there are four types of consultants that you might consider.

- **Expert Consultants**

Here you define what you want, write out a Request for Proposal, and seek the right person. The consultant comes in, does the work for you, and leaves. This approach works well if you have clearly diagnosed your needs, can communicate that clearly to the consultant, and can find the right person. Typically, expert consultants are hired for their content experience.

- **Facilitators**

Here you are buying external leadership, usually for a process that is already designed. The facilitator may help improve the process, but their essential role is to guide people through the process. This approach works well if you know what process you want, but need outside leadership because of conflicts, distrust of internal leadership, and the reality that is difficult to be a “prophet in your own home.”

- **Process Consultants**

Here you are unsure of what you want, and are inviting someone else in to help you define your needs, and design a healthy process. Process consultation is based on the assumption that outside experts with answers are not what is needed; more, the effective participation of inside people is essential. Most process consultants are also facilitators.

- **Mediators**

Here you are hiring someone whose skills are in conflict resolution. Their role is to assist in negotiating away through the conflicts.

## **4.7 Exploring the Literature**

The following list is a selection of articles and books that may be of help.

BC Round Table on the Environment, Public Involvement in Government Decision-Making: Choosing the Right Model, June 1994

BC Round Table on the Environment, Reaching Agreement: Consensus Processes in British Columbia, Report of it Dispute Resolution, Core Group 1991

Bruce Fraser, Engaging Citizens In Creating Durable Land And Resource Use Agreements, Salasan Associates

Bruce Fraser, Public Involvement Handbook, Ministry of Forests, Province of BC, 1981

Centre for Conflict Resolution, Building United Judgment, Madison, Wisconsin, Centre for Conflict Resolution, 1981

Desmond Connor, Constructive Citizen Participation: A Resource Book, Victoria, BC, Development Press, 1995

Dovetail Consulting, Public Involvement Program Manual, North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver Engineering Department, April 1994

Edward deBono, Six Thinking Hats, Penguin Books, 1987

Gavin Perryman and John Talbot, Increasing Community Involvement, A Workshop Developed for the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, July 1995

Harrison Owen, Riding the Tiger, Abbott Publishing, 1991

John P. Kretzmann and John McKnight, Building Communities From The Inside Out, ACTA Publications, 1993

Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith, The Wisdom of Teams: Creating The High Performance Organization, Harvard Business School Press, 1993

Kathleen Callow and Ken Lee, Public Consultation: Process and Techniques, BC Water and Waste Association Conference, April 1992

Kimball Fisher, Steven Rayner, and William Belgard, Tips for Teams: A Ready Reference for Solving Common Team Problems, McGraw-Hill, 1995



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Mark Dorfman and Melanie Hare, Public Participation in Municipal Planning Policy Development, A Report To The Municipal Planning Policy Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ontario, 1991

Marvin Weisbord and Sandra Janoff, Future Search: An Action Guide To Finding Common Ground In Organizations and Communities, Berrett-Koehler, 1995

Praxis Consulting, Public Consultation Processes: Towards More Effective Decision-Making, Whistler, BC Whistler Centre for Business and the Arts, May 1992

R. Fisher and W. Ury, Getting to Yes, Penguin Books, 1983

Roger Schwarz, The Skilled Facilitator: Practiced Wisdom For Developing Effective Groups, Jossey-Bass, 1994