diversity accessibility and inclusion respect informed discussion partnership transparency responsiveness commitment to learning and improvement
# Table of Contents

**About New Westminster's Public Engagement Toolkit**  
2

**New Westminster’s Engagement Principles**  
3

**A Strategic Framework for Public Engagement Initiatives**  
4

How to use the strategic framework  
5
Strategic consideration 1: What question(s) are we asking the public?  
7
Strategic consideration 2: What are we trying to achieve?  
8
Strategic consideration 3: How will our decisions affect communities?  
10
Strategic consideration 4: How will the community’s input affect decisions?  
13
Strategic consideration 5: What is the scale of engagement?  
15
Strategic consideration 6: How will we follow through?  
15

**Planning and Implementing Public Engagement**  
17

6 steps to successful public engagement planning  
18
Step 1: Identifying internal stakeholders  
18
Step 2: Planning for evaluation  
18
Step 3: Planning for inclusion and accessibility  
19
Step 4: Choosing engagement methods and tools  
19
Step 5: Planning communications  
20
Step 6: Providing information  
21

Further methods and tools  
22
References  
23

**Appendix: Worksheets and Resources**  
24
# Table of Contents

**About New Westminster's Public Engagement Toolkit**  
2

**New Westminster’s Engagement Principles**  
3

**A Strategic Framework for Public Engagement Initiatives**  
4

How to use the strategic framework  
5

Strategic consideration 1: What question(s) are we asking the public?  
7

Strategic consideration 2: What are we trying to achieve?  
8

Strategic consideration 3: How will our decisions affect communities?  
10

Strategic consideration 4: How will the community's input affect decisions?  
13

Strategic consideration 5: What is the scale of engagement?  
15

Strategic consideration 6: How will we follow through?  
15

**Planning and Implementing Public Engagement**  
17

6 steps to successful public engagement planning  
18

Step 1: Identifying internal stakeholders  
18

Step 2: Planning for evaluation  
18

Step 3: Planning for inclusion and accessibility  
19

Step 4: Choosing engagement methods and tools  
19

Step 5: Planning communications  
20

Step 6: Providing information  
21

Further methods and tools  
22

References  
23

**Appendix: Worksheets and Resources**  
24
About New Westminster’s Public Engagement Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support high-quality public engagement by the City of New Westminster and the implementation of the City’s Public Engagement Strategy.

The strategy and toolkit were developed by the Mayor’s Task Force on Public Engagement with support from SFU’s Centre for Dialogue. The process engaged New Westminster residents through public workshops and online surveys, members of City advisory committees, staff and senior management from all City departments, as well as City Council.

At the core of the Strategy is a commitment to ensure the City’s engagement efforts reflect a set of eight principles, which are described in more depth on the next page:

Diversity, Accessibility & Inclusion, Respect Informed Discussion, Partnership, Transparency, Responsiveness, Commitment to Learning & Improvement

The toolkit consists of a strategic framework as well as concrete steps to plan engagement initiatives. City staff responsible for planning and delivering engagement processes and events can use the six strategic considerations included in the framework to clarify key sponsorship questions with decision-makers and senior staff.

The six planning steps as well as the worksheets and resources included in the Appendix provide guidance for preparing and carrying out engagement initiatives.
New Westminster’s Engagement Principles

**diversity**
Involves community members who reflect the diversity of interests and opinions in the community.

**accessibility & inclusion**
Achieves accessibility for all community members, recognizes their right to participate and values the knowledge and experience they contribute.

**respect**
Creates a respectful environment that builds trust and maximizes the contributions of community members and staff.

**informed discussion**
Provides community members with accessible and timely information on City matters and processes.

**partnership**
Works in partnership with community members and builds on community initiative and ownership.

**transparency**
Actively communicates transparent information about process and outcomes for each public engagement initiative.

**responsiveness**
Acknowledges and responds to community members’ input and requests for information.

**commitment to learning & improvement**
Continuously improves public engagement practices through measurement and evaluation, and the use of innovative methods and technologies.
Cycling infrastructure and safety

After an extensive public engagement process, the City of New Westminster is rolling out upgrades to its cycling infrastructure, including new separated bike lanes as part of its efforts to increase active transportation. Council has requested staff to develop an information and education campaign to ensure smooth implementation and increase traffic safety.

Staff delivered a campaign that included an interactive website with FAQs on new infrastructure, traffic rules, safety tips and a story-book with user experiences from New Westminster and other cities. The City partnered with a cycling advocacy group to host “Wheels On” training sessions in schools, workplaces and at community events.

Strategic considerations summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Cycling infrastructure upgrades and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Raising awareness and education/mobilizing collaborative action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community impacts</td>
<td>Modest community-wide impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to the public</td>
<td>Inform: “We will keep you informed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale of engagement</td>
<td>Medium to broad (extensive online engagement) due to community-wide impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-through</td>
<td>Consider ways to keep people engaged in a conversation about traffic safety and the role of bicycle infrastructure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: this is a hypothetical scenario and does not refer to current or planned engagement initiatives/topics at the City of New Westminster.
What question(s) are we asking the public?

What makes a good question?

Determining the right question(s) to ask the community is fundamental for choosing the appropriate engagement process and setting it up for success.

A question that is too narrow will limit the public’s input and creativity in helping address the issue, and can easily feel like window dressing. For example, if the City plans a new park and only asks the public where to put the playground this may be a lost opportunity for public engagement.

When asking an open question, on the other hand, it is important that the engagement process produces actionable information. Asking residents how they envision their new park, for example, offers a great opportunity for engagement, but to generate useful discussions and feedback, it may have to be broken down into questions like: what should the park look like? Who will use it? What services should it provide? And what facilities might it include?

What is the opportunity for engagement?

The public makes unique contributions to planning and decision-making at City Hall that complement those of elected officials, staff, experts and stakeholder groups.

The topic(s) of engagement and associated questions should reflect the contributions that the City is hoping for and the opportunity this represents for improving decision-making and planning. Example questions to help clarify the roles of different actors include:

- Where is community participation needed to define the challenge, develop and evaluate solutions and/or enable successful implementation?
- Where do we need to hear from a broad, diverse audience, including all those affected by decisions?
- Where can the community’s input help to prioritize and balance competing needs and interests?
- Where will tapping into the community’s collective intelligence allow the City to learn and innovate?
What is on or off the table?

New Westminster’s Public Engagement Strategy aims to maximize opportunities for the public to get involved.

Choosing a question for public engagement, however, not only requires defining what is up for discussion—but also what isn’t. There are a number of factors that can limit what is on the table, and it is critical to be transparent about such limitations at the outset of an engagement process. Such factors can include:

- What fiduciary duties do elected officials have to fulfill regarding this topic?
- How do existing priorities, plans, policies and bylaws affect the decision?
- How do other legal and institutional frameworks affect the decision?
- What parts of the question must be answered by subject matter experts?
- What resources are available to implement solutions?
- What political realities must be considered?
- How comfortable are decision-makers with ambiguity?

What are the risks of not engaging (more deeply)?

Every engagement initiative faces constraints—and it is easy to place too many limitations on the process or define questions too narrowly when focusing on such constraints.

There are significant risks associated with not engaging the public more deeply in decision-making. A lack of engagement with those who are—directly or indirectly—affected by decisions can mean that their interests are not adequately considered. Other risks include escalating conflicts, loss of trust, delays in decision-making and higher costs for implementation. Insufficient engagement often means that decisions need to be revisited and revised after the fact, and can result in missed opportunities for innovation and collective action.

Corporate standard:
The public is informed about the intended outcomes of public engagement initiatives, including how their input will be used to affect decision-making
Planning and Implementing Public Engagement

This section provides practical guidance for staff involved in planning and implementing public engagement initiatives at the City of New Westminster, including guidance for selecting tools and methods after answering the questions posed by the City's strategic framework. This guidance is organized into six practical steps for successful engagement planning. The Appendix includes detailed worksheets and resources for each of the six steps.
**Step 1: Identifying internal stakeholders**

Who needs to be involved in designing and delivering this initiative?

Who has authority over what decisions?

Who will mediate conflicting needs and interests between departments?

**CORPORATE STANDARDS**

City staff identify and involve internal stakeholders early in the planning of public engagement initiatives, including stakeholders who can mediate conflicting needs and interests.

**SCENARIO**

To plan the engagement process for an OCP update regarding density (see scenario 2 on p. 15), the project lead from the Development Services Department involved staff from three other departments from the start of the process. While decision-making on the engagement process resided with Development Services in this project, staff from Engineering were critical for identifying implications on traffic and gather information to be included in a backgrounder document for participants. Staff from the Parks and Recreation Department and Library were involved in planning outreach activities. See p. 31 for worksheets and resources on planning step 1.

**Step 2: Planning for evaluation**

What are we trying to achieve by engaging the public and what are useful indicators for measuring success?

What information/data do we need to collect and when?

At what points along the way do we check whether we are on track and, if necessary, how to adjust?

**CORPORATE STANDARDS**

Engagement initiatives integrate evaluation tools beginning in the early planning stages, using New Westminster’s public engagement principles as a basis for evaluation.

**SCENARIO**

The City launched an information campaign on cycling infrastructure to increase use and raise safety awareness (see scenario 1 on p. 5). Staff responsible for the campaign identified as criteria for success that the campaign should reach at least 1,500 individuals, 200 of them in person. At least 15% of the people engaged in person should be individuals with a primary transportation other than cycling. To capture data, staff encouraged participants to pre-register for in-person events and asked them fill out a brief exit survey. See p. 32 for worksheets and resources on planning step 2.
Step 3: Planning for inclusion and accessibility

What will make this public engagement initiative accessible and welcoming to a broad diversity of community members and to identified communities of interests?

What barriers to participation do communities of interests and stakeholders face and what can we do to reduce those barriers?

How can we meet communities of interests “where they already are”?

CORPORATE STANDARDS

Venues, language and communications channels are assessed for their accessibility when planning public engagement initiatives.

Planning for public engagement initiatives includes concrete and inclusive steps to mitigate barriers to participation.

Participants are offered multiple channels and formats to engage for different abilities and learning styles.

SCENARIO

As part of the planning for the City’s cycling infrastructure and safety information campaign (see scenario 1 on p. 5), staff identified two non-cycling groups who either faced barriers or were expected to be hard to reach: seniors and car-drivers. Staff met with Seniors advocacy groups to plan activities that would be accessible to seniors, such as an information session at Century House with a mock set-up of pedestrian crossings at new bike lanes. Staff further worked with community volunteers to hand out info pamphlets and free coffee to drivers who dropped off their children at New Westminster Schools. See pp. 33-35 for worksheets and resources on planning step 3.
This policy guides how the City should...

- Meet its target of providing 2.2 hectares of park space per 1,000 people.
- Increase park space given the limited land base in the city.
- Create adequate connections between parks, community facilities and other important city spaces.
- Design parks to provide activities and spaces that meet the needs of a variety of residents with different abilities, ages, incomes and interests.
- Create a pleasant and attractive urban public realm with vibrant and lively spaces that allow people to gather formally and informally.
- Generate additional food production.

Community + parks space in W.E.

PARKS, RECREATION + PUBLIC REALM
Appendix

Worksheets & Resources

The following pages provide worksheets and resources supporting staff in working through the strategic considerations and planning steps for public engagement initiatives.
The following pages provide worksheets and resources supporting staff in working through the strategic considerations and planning steps for public engagement initiatives.
What question(s) are we asking the public?

What is the opportunity for engagement?
Examples:
- How will decision-making benefit from engagement?
- How do existing priorities, plans, policies and bylaws affect the decision?
- How do other legal and institutional frameworks affect the decision?
- What do subject matter experts have to contribute?
- What are the risks of engaging and not engaging?

What other information do elected officials and senior staff need?

What are possible engagement questions?
### Engagement outcomes?

#### What are possible engagement outcomes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raising awareness and education</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploring ideas and information</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing to decision-making</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transforming conflicts</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobilizing collaborative action</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**Engagement initiative:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder group/community of interest</th>
<th>How will they be affected?</th>
<th>Level of impact</th>
<th>Level of influence</th>
<th>Actions to include group/community of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION 4  WORKSHEET

**How will the community’s input affect decisions?**

**What is our commitment to the public?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Notes/questions for implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>Notes/questions for implementation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>Notes/questions for implementation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>Notes/questions for implementation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>Notes/questions for implementation:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>