

GET INVOLVED

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



August 27, 2018

Public engagement is a shared responsibility between the City and the community and contributes to meeting expectations of transparency and action.

Purpose of the Framework

The City of Thunder Bay recognizes the importance and value of involving citizens more effectively in the decisions of elected officials and municipal staff regarding the development of its policies, programs, services, and initiatives.

The knowledge, energy and ideas of citizens can improve governance and decision making by giving policy makers information to support the common good and to meet expectations of transparency and action.

What is Public Engagement?

Public engagement is an ongoing process involving communication and interaction between the City of Thunder Bay and its citizens. It includes any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to help make decisions.

Public engagement means regularly engaging the community through sharing information, through consulting, involving and collaborating on projects, development of city policies, strategies and plans for strategic investments.

Our Framework

The public engagement framework fosters engagement and dialogue to develop stronger relationships between the City and community. To be successful, it's important to understand and uphold the purpose of the framework by being inclusive, meaningful, and responsive.

1. **Inclusive** - Inform and involve those who are affected directly and indirectly.
2. **Meaningful** - Further a clear policy purpose and be in the best interests of residents and municipal property taxpayers.
3. **Responsive** - Be effective, keeping in mind diverse needs, backgrounds and interests, and be transparent in reflecting back details of the process and how stakeholder views affect outcomes.

Our principles will be applied in public engagement activities conducted within the available City resources.

When does the Framework Apply?




The Framework applies when the City must assess the impact of an action, decision or potential change in the community.

The framework can be applied in many different situations. Specific examples include:

- *Area improvement or change* - matters that affect people in a neighbourhood or area.
- *Service planning or change* - the development, improvement, elimination or reduction of a municipal service or by-law that could have an impact on the whole municipality.
- *Major Projects and Strategic Initiatives* - projects that impact the finances or future of the municipality as a whole.



The City of Thunder Bay is guided by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation* [Appendix A]. When the City engages with citizens, we will be clear, identifying the involvement level and what the public can expect.

Our Goal	Examples	Citizen Involvement Level	What Can You Expect?
Inform	Information Session Display Fact Sheet Thunderbay.ca City Website MyTBay Citizen Newsletter Social Media	Learn more 	Balanced, objective information
Consult	Public Meeting Open House Survey Focus Group	Have your say 	Give input Find out how your input makes a difference
Collaborate	Workshop Design Session/Charette Task Force Special Purpose Committee of Council Administrative Committee Stakeholder Roundtable	Shape your city 	Discuss and provide input. Incorporate advice and recommendations into the development of ideas and alternatives. Find out how your input makes a difference.

A *Get Involved* section is included on the City's website at thunderbay.ca/getinvolved. View open and past consultations from the website.

*The levels of public impact (as guided by the IAP2 Spectrum) most frequently used by the City are Inform, Involve and Collaborate. The Empower level is not often used because City Council, as elected officials, make the final decision on the public's behalf. Empowerment is used in specific instances such as when City Council provides funding to a community organization to support their efforts to further a strategy or project. Examples include community funding under the Thunder Bay Food Strategy or the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Toolkit for Public Engagement and Communication

Purpose of Toolkit and Resources

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide examples for commonly practiced public engagement and communication techniques and methods. Corporate Communications is a corporate resource when preparing and planning selected public engagement and communication activities. Templates and Guidelines are available on the Inside CTB Intranet, and media contacts are available from Corporate Communications.

Where the goal of an engagement is to 'Inform', a Communication Plan is appropriate. Where the goal is to 'Consult' or 'Collaborate', a Community Engagement Plan can be helpful by leading planners through questions to identify key stakeholders and to select appropriate techniques and methods.

Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and Organizations

The Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Unit, supported by Corporate Communications, is available to provide guidance on engagement and consultation with Indigenous peoples and organizations. Consultation planners should be mindful that Thunder Bay is built on the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850.

In Canada we have a duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples. Fort William First Nation has outlined their expectations when consulting with them on City projects and developments. The document "The Importance of the Duty to Consult & Accommodate" produced by Fort William First Nation should be referenced for guidance.

Choosing Suitable Engagement Techniques

Before selecting a technique from the list below, first assess the impact of the situation on the community, and then determine the most suitable and appropriate technique for public engagement. The *Community Impact Matrix* is a useful guide in exploring the range of techniques most suitable for the level of engagement needed.

Timing

Where possible it is best to start planning engagement several months in advance. Time must be built in to the process for:

- advance notice of the engagement opportunity
- time for the engagement to be held (i.e. several open houses, multiple weeks for an online survey, etc.)
- time to evaluate the findings
- time to include the details of the engagement, the findings, and the resulting impact to the recommendations in a final report
- time to share the final report back to participants

Residents have told us it is important to tell them early when there are engagement opportunities. They need to plan around their busy lives, and want more than one way in which to participate.

At a minimum, 14 days notice should be provided for in-person events. Where public engagement processes are legislated, the City will meet or exceed the notice dictated by the legislation.

See the Connect Thunder Bay Report for more on what residents told us about the best ways to engage with them and what they are interested in knowing more about.

Accessibility

Accessibility must be considered with all engagement opportunities. This includes using the Planning for Accessible Meetings Checklist, ensuring all reports and materials posted online are created for accessibility, and a contact for accessible accommodation is included on all notices of public meetings. The Municipal Accessibility Specialist is a corporate resource available when planning City engagement opportunities.

The District and Region

Consider if major plans or initiatives may impact the district and region outside of Thunder Bay. If this is a possibility, the Office of the City Clerk can provide guidance to assist you in reaching out to these areas.

Transparency

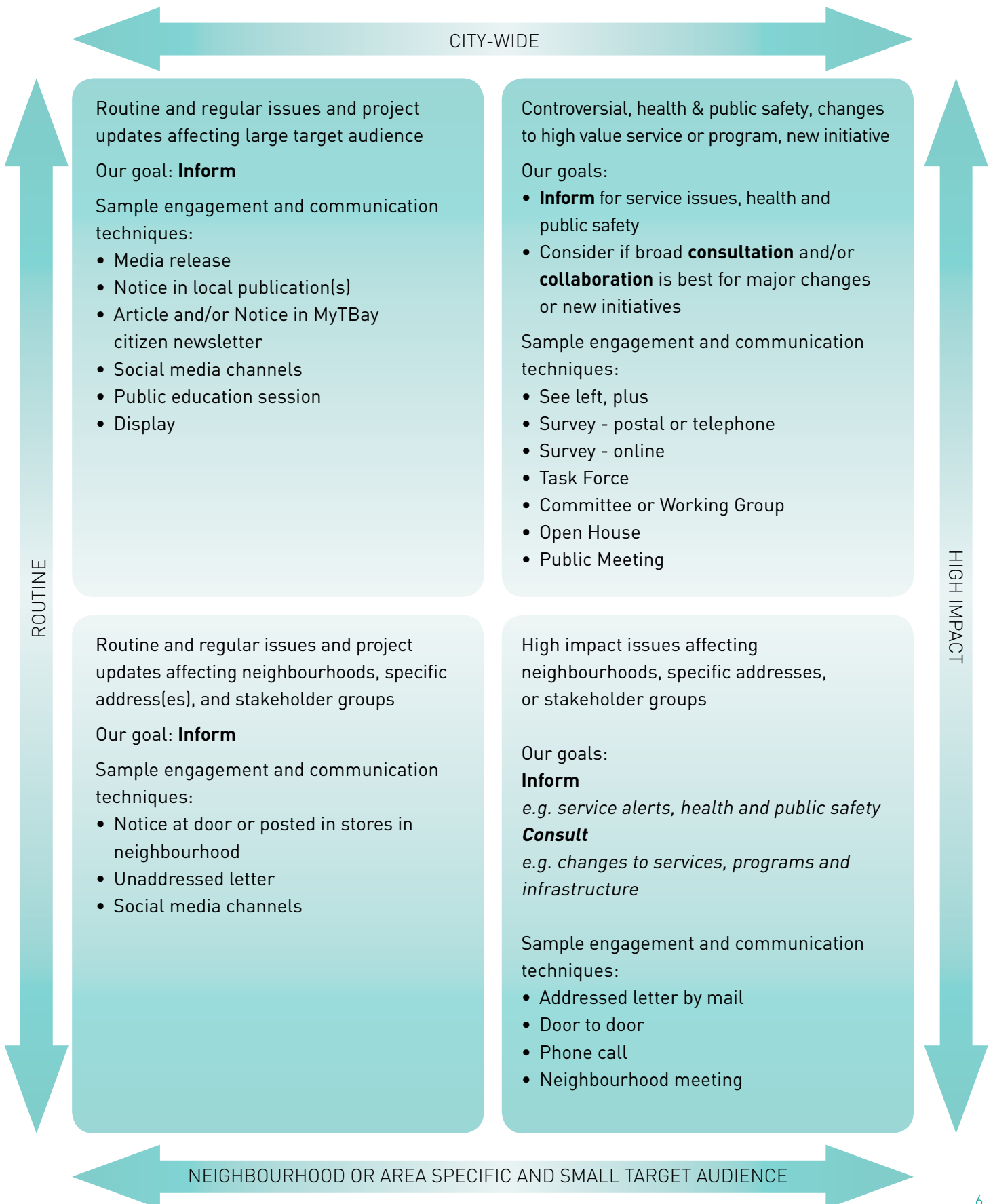
When the goal is to consult or collaborate, include details of the public engagement and the citizen input received in the final Report. Ensure you share this Report back to the involved citizens so they can see their input taken into consideration. On the City website, post the Report in the applicable location and ensure a link is available to the Report under the website's "Get Involved, Past Engagements" section.

Follow-up: How We Report Back

It is very important to report back to those who have been engaged when the goal has been to Consult or Collaborate. The resulting report or action, including the summary of the engagement and how it has impacted the direction should be made available to those involved. There are multiple ways to achieve this. Examples include:

- direct communication to stakeholder participants where contact information is available (i.e. participants in a focus group session)
- sharing with the general public through social media
- posting to the City website and providing a link under the "Get Involved – Past Engagements" section of the website

Community Impact Matrix: Determining Techniques for Engagement and Communication



Sample Public Engagement and Communication Techniques

INFORM

1. **Media Release** – written on City media release template or recorded communication directed at members of the media for the purpose of announcing something of value to the public.
2. **MyTBay Citizen Newsletter or Magazine Article** – a formal written announcement communicating information about an event, update or other information about an issue or project with a goal of informing and being accessible to the public.
3. **Notice in Newspaper or Magazine** – paid advertisement of a public notice in a local newspaper.
4. **Social Media Channels** – using online social media channels such as the City’s Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube channel to share content.
5. **On-site Display** – this is an on-site information board or display that is openly in public view such as City Hall foyer or storefront intended to communicate information or updates to the public on an issue or project.
6. **Open House** – the public is invited to drop by at a set location on a set date and time to have the option to speak with staff, view displays set up in the room.
7. **Pamphlet** – an unbound booklet that may consist of a single sheet of paper printed on both sides and folded in half, in thirds or fourths or it may consist of a few pages that are folded in half.
8. **Presentation and Presentations to Council** – the activity of formally presenting something, the act of making something publicly available by presenting it through visual and audio presentation.
9. **Public Information or Education Session** – meetings or courses provided to the public with speaker(s) to fully examine and discuss an issue or project.
10. **Written Correspondence** – personally addressed communication by letter with the intent to provide information, notice, or updates about an issue or action.



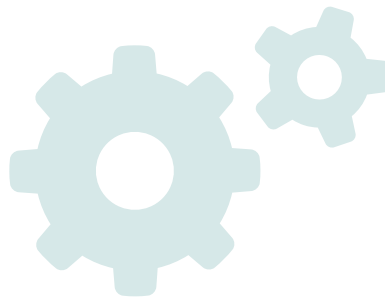
CONSULT | HAVE YOUR SAY

11. **Public Meeting** – an announced meeting designed to facilitate participation in the decision-making process and to assist the public in gaining an informed view of a proposed project or issue as well as enable comment/input.
12. **Face-to-Face Meeting/Interviews** – when a staff member or individual involved in the consultation will invite individuals to participate in face-to-face meeting discussions to address any issues or concerns regarding a project or issue.
13. **Letter or Media Promotion Inviting Submissions** – Inform/broadcast to the community in attempts to receive information and ideas in a written presentation of views or proposals, concepts, contests, activities or resources about an upcoming project or issue that will be assessed.
14. **Social Media Channels** – using online social media channels such as the City’s Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube channel to seek comments regarding an update, action or potential decision.
15. **Suggestion Box** – a device for obtaining additional feedback comments, questions and requests on a topic, process or project.
16. **Statistically Valid Survey** – a survey conducted by telephone or sent by mail to a random sample, where respondents are asked to complete a series of questions (unaided).
17. **Online Survey** – a survey for input available from the City website and social media or where respondents are contacted by email and they respond back to the survey via email. This type of survey can be accessed anywhere with Internet connection. Note: results of an online survey cannot be generalized to the population as the sample is not randomly selected.
18. **Neighbourhood Meeting** – an assembly of people from specific small geographic area of the City which may be impacted by the action, decision or potential change in their neighbourhood. The meeting is typically held within or close to that specific neighbourhood.



COLLABORATE | SHAPE YOUR CITY

19. **Task Force Group/Committee of Council** – group of people selected to work under a specified direction to complete a task or develop key parts or resources of a project/issue.
20. **Working Group/Focus Group** – a group is created with a range of complementary skills and resources so that a task can be completed without recourse to others. These groups collaborate with each other within their working group and at times between groups for the purposes of either resolving a given problem or often simply identifying the spread of opinions and feelings on the issue without attempting to resolve the issue or make any decisions but provide recommendations.
21. **Design Session/Charette** – a design process that involves the collaboration of all the project stakeholders at the beginning of a project to develop a comprehensive plan or design.
22. **Workshop** – a period of discussion or practical work on a particular subject in which a representative group of people share their knowledge and experience. The information gathered can then be used to help inform a direction or recommendation.
23. **Stakeholder Roundtable** – Representative stakeholder participants agree on a specific topic to discuss. Each person is given equal right to participate and share their input, as illustrated by the idea of a circular layout referred to in the term round table. The information gathered can then be used to help inform a direction or recommendation.



IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision