



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

## Executive summary



### Public engagement definition

The process by which residents are informed on, or given the opportunity to be involved in, City decisions that impact all or part of the community.

The City is committed to engaging residents on issues that affect their quality-of-life and their city. Public engagement encourages participation, action, personal responsibility and democracy. The goal is to facilitate more informed and inclusive municipal decision-making.

The City's public engagement framework is intended to guide how residents and the City engage on a given issue or effort put forth by residents, council or City employees.

**Everyone has a responsibility to work together, listening and learning from each other through meaningful dialogue.**

### Charter

The public engagement charter outlines the City's commitment to making public engagement a priority with an associated process that will be continuously improved to reflect new insight, input and technologies.



# Key principles

The framework is guided by six key principles;

- 1. INCLUSIVITY:** Public engagement will be encouraged with inclusivity in mind. Organizers will try to ensure an accurate representation of the community is reflected by using a range of techniques to engage residents.
- 2. EARLY INVOLVEMENT AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION:** Accurate information will be communicated as early as possible in the public engagement process to assist residents in their planning, preparation and participation.
- 3. RESPECT:** All participants must be respectful of diverse views, values and interests. The process must also respect decision-making protocols and jurisdictions at the municipal and provincial levels.
- 4. TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE:** The process will demonstrate a commitment to efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars and ensure both the process and its outcome are transparent.
- 5. CLEAR AND COORDINATED APPROACH:** Throughout the engagement process, plain language and a variety of communication channels will be used to optimize residents' input, because people learn and engage in different ways. Public engagement activities will be coordinated and/or combined where possible to help find efficiencies.
- 6. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** Public engagement activities will be regularly evaluated and improved.



# What is good public engagement?

Successful public engagement fosters an open and inclusive environment for the exchange of ideas and input through a variety of participation techniques. Residents, council and City employees will work together to achieve the best possible decisions for the City through fulfilling their different roles and responsibilities.

- **RESIDENTS** participate openly and constructively offering ideas and working collaboratively with other participants, City employees and council to identify concerns, offer ideas and opinions and listen and respond to others.
- **COUNCIL** supports the public engagement charter, participates in engagement when feasible, reviews gathered input prior to making decisions and works collaboratively with residents and City employees to find solutions.
- **CITY EMPLOYEES** actively implement the principles of the public engagement framework, work to ensure the process is inclusive and clear, and explain how feedback will be incorporated into decisions.

## Guidelines for participation

All participants' opinions need to be heard and taken into consideration and those opinions will help inform decision-making. While the City will endeavour to ensure that all residents' feedback is taken into consideration through public engagement, it is not possible to satisfy the opinion of every participant in final recommendations and/or decisions. **Final decisions do not necessarily reflect everyone's opinions and comments.**

**The City is committed to providing a respectful environment for all participants that will enable them to express their perspectives on topics freely without fear of intimidation or reprisal.**

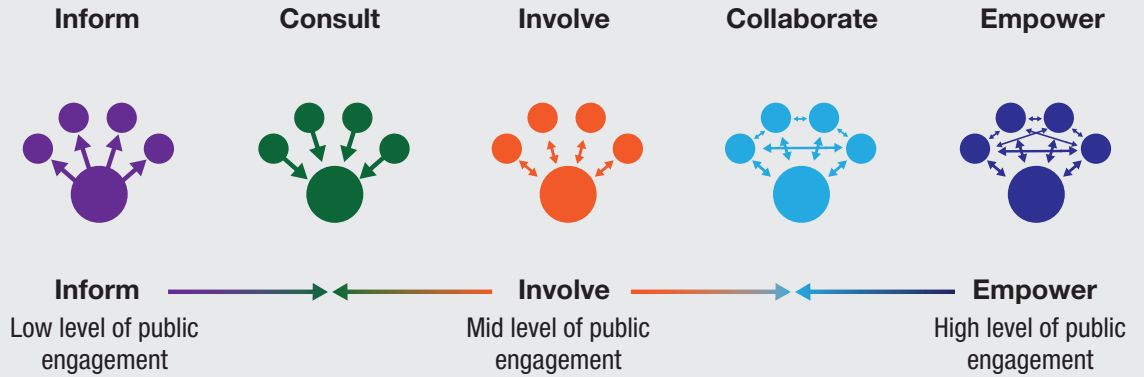
Participants will be expected to:

- Listen with an open mind;
- Show consideration for another point of view; and
- Value the role each person plays in the public engagement process.

All participants agree to the guidelines for engagement to ensure they remain in a safe space for voicing opinions and ideas. These will be established at the start of public engagement activities and reinforced throughout.

# Continuum – level of engagement


The continuum provides for various levels of engagement and individual levels should not be considered in isolation of the others. Not all projects and initiatives require the same level of engagement. These can also be amended based on resident feedback.




## Planning for public engagement

involves five key stages:

 Define initiative/project, goals, participants, timelines and resources/budget

 Determine level of public engagement and choose techniques through the worksheets

 Implement the public engagement

 Make recommendations and/or decisions and share results

 Evaluate the public engagement process

The public engagement framework is a blueprint for engaging residents in decisions that impact them. Working together, Kingston's residents, council and City employees will improve public engagement and enhance the city and its quality-of-life.

Source - International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)