

Schedule A – Public Participation Opportunities

Types of Participation	Description of Method	Strengths	Weaknesses	Result
Citizen Panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consists of statistically representative sample of residents in a given area • largest response from citizens who represent the general population of an area • panel views are regularly sought using a survey instrument (e.g. postal, telephone surveys) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inexpensive and effective way to learn about citizens’ needs and preferences • panel data can be analyzed for multiple purposes (i.e. ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic, geographic area) • opportunity to collect trend data through multiple surveys to monitor impact of policies over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusivity of participant selection process • consultation agenda determined by decision-making body (i.e. top down) • under-representation of hard-to-reach groups who refuse to participate • panel members vulnerable to Hawthorne effect (i.e. over time they may be prone to sympathize with decision-makers...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • due to the expense, as well as, the design, the panel is best suited for the development of major community wide policy documents. • limit to new policy areas, where community opinion and policy direction have yet to be determined and mobilization has not yet occurred
Deliberative Polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds on the opinion poll by incorporating elements of deliberation (input prior to decision) • involves larger numbers of citizens and may involve less time • measures what public would think if it was informed and engaged around an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides insights into public opinions and how people come to decisions • seeks informed opinions, does not force people to reach consensus • large, random sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires preparation time • although sample size is large and random, ensuring representativeness is difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can provide useful insight into public opinion and useful input into public decision processes • complement to representative democracy • not good for crisis decisions • best suited to issues with options and about which the public is not knowledgeable
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one time discussion of a particular topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • successful focus group may lead to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • private sector marketing roots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be a tool for encouraging discussion and deliberation,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involves small group of individuals selected to meet specific criteria in order to broadly represent a particular segment of society • one-time face-to-face meeting structured to be informal to encourage open discussion among participants 	<p>consensus and feelings of enrichment among participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good venue for learning about needs of a particular group • remain largely informal, so participants can discuss issues in relaxed atmosphere • a good way to gauge the opinions of the public 	<p>limit ability to cover complex issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of informed participants produces superficial discussion • potential for revealing and reinforcing social cleavages • selection criteria can create bias in eliciting opinions • limited number of participants limits representativeness of opinions • potential for ideas expressed to be influenced/shaped by interaction/exchange with others (especially those who are dominant) • resource intensive 	<p>but needs to be used with much caution because of the problems associated with it</p>
Open Houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the public is invited to drop by at any time at a set location on a set day(s) and times • the public can speak with staff, view the displays set up in the room and break into small discussion groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relaxed atmosphere • enables staff to tailor responses according to the needs/questions of the public • allows for sensitive topics to be discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potential for lack of clarity in purpose • staff resource intensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable for challenging issues

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops links for the future 		
Citizen Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be made up of a variety of different organizations (e.g. from governmental to public) • intended to represent the broader public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if committee is balanced, deliberations can be fruitful • the advice should influence decision making process • should also produce informed citizens, boost trust in institutions and reduce conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not a representative group of people 	
Community Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set policy agenda and to discuss citizens' vision for community and services provided in it • more about the outcome of participation (i.e. consensus about the vision or plan) than the process of engagement (who participated and how) • draws upon a range of participation techniques (e.g., pre-circulated consultation documents, written responses, structured public meetings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows for underlying assumptions to be dealt with in a deliberative manner • emphasizes consensus building, collaboration and cooperation • formal outcome is a community plan but emphasis is on reaching a common understanding of issues and finding a shared vision for dealing with them • fosters connections/partnerships between different organizations • educative role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may set/raise expectations that public bodies are unable to meet 	

<p>Visioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • similar to community planning but input sought is about broader “vision” for community services and less about specifics on how to achieve the vision • deliberative process where ideas are gradually refined through iterative process until a clear statement emerges • outcome is typically an overview of possibilities rather than a definitive plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasizes consensus building, collaboration and cooperation • formal outcome is a community plan but emphasis is on reaching a common understanding of issues and finding a shared vision for dealing with them • fosters connections/partnerships between different organizations • educative role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may set/raise expectations that public bodies are unable to meet 	
<p>Notification, Distribution & Solicitation of Comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplest form of consultation • can involve the sending out of documentation • may also involve other methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broad and representative in theory • transparency guaranteed through notification process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questionable effectiveness in reaching some populations • risk that consultation will be dominated by the best organized groups with easy access to publication • despite the potential for broad participation, the interaction between concerned public and the authorities 	

			<p>is often very limited, with no real possibility for dialogue or negotiation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transparency is threatened when solicitation of comments is targeted to specific groups • not enough time given to soliciting feedback (i.e. sham consultation) 	
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solicit information from representative sample of citizens • same questions are asked of every individual surveyed • there are a variety of survey types: postal, interviewer, telephone, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can reach large numbers of people • if same questions are retained, can be used for longitudinal studies (e.g., monitoring change over time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the lists may not be representative or comprehensive • questions need to be somewhat simple and straightforward, the information gathered then can be simplistic and superficial • survey results are often not comparable • the effectiveness of surveys are affected by the rates of response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because this is a time consuming process, it is not a good method if quick results are required • can be used during the beginning phases of a study (useful in detecting issues that need to be addressed)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fundamental decisions have to be made before the survey begins and cannot be changed once survey has been implemented 	
Plebiscite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the process wherein an issue is put to popular vote • can be initiated by governmental or other organizations, or sometimes the citizenry • results may or may not be considered binding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incites discussion and interest • way to learn public views • way to get citizens directly involved with the legislative process • all voters have equal influence • can potentially involve all members of a local or national population • difficult for the government to ignore the results of a plebiscite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • results may not be representative if there is low voter turnout • wording can present problems • limited number of times you can use it (i.e. voter fatigue) • potential for undue influence if one organization has greater resources than another when campaigning for or against a proposed referendum • very costly process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should not replace representative democracy • issue should be answerable by “yes” or “no” • issue should stand on its own (i.e. not so intertwined with another that it becomes impossible to answer) • need to inform citizenry on issue beforehand