
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Effective Date: March 23, 2018

Approved By: MVRD/MVHC/GVWD/GVS&DD Boards

Policy No. GV-018

PURPOSE

To outline Metro Vancouver's approach for the development and implementation of engagement processes to achieve the following:

- Effective engagement processes that are clear, consistent, and carried out responsibly;
- Opportunities for public input to influence decision-making;
- Strong relationships with the communities that Metro Vancouver serves; and,
- Board decisions that are informed by input from the public.

This Policy applies to all public engagement initiatives with the exception of First Nation engagement, which is prescribed in separate processes. This Policy does not apply to the Statutory Notification Process.

DEFINITIONS

"Engagement" means purposeful dialogue between Metro Vancouver, member jurisdictions, residents, businesses and special interest groups to gather information to influence decision-making;

"Engagement Spectrum" means a spectrum that helps to provide -clarity on terminology, process, level of promise and expectation for engagement;

"Engagement Support" means the group responsible for assisting the project manager in scoping the engagement process, and preparing and executing the engagement strategy. The group may consist of staff from External Relations, Public Involvement or external consultants depending on the department structure;

"International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)" means an international association that promotes the practice of public participation. IAP2 has set out core values and a spectrum of participation to create a common understanding of the engagement practice;

"Plain Language" means clear, concise communication designed so the audience can easily understand the message;

"Public" means a broad grouping of residents and/or businesses and/or special interest groups; and

"Stakeholder" means any member of the public interested in or potentially impacted by a project or initiative.

POLICY

As articulated in the *Board Strategic Plan*, Metro Vancouver is committed to informing, educating, and engaging the public in decision-making and providing the public with opportunities to influence decisions that impact their lives.

This Policy sets out the guiding principles and procedures for ensuring that all engagement initiatives are carried out consistently and responsibly.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Accountability – Metro Vancouver upholds the commitments it makes to the public and demonstrates that the results and outcomes of the engagement processes are consistent with the approved plans for engagement.

Inclusiveness – Metro Vancouver makes its best efforts to reach, involve and hear from those who are impacted. Plain language will be used in all engagement materials.

Transparency – Metro Vancouver provides clear and timely information, and endeavours to ensure decision processes, procedures, and constraints are understood.

Commitment – Metro Vancouver, within its ability and work plans, allocates sufficient resources for effective engagement.

Responsiveness – Metro Vancouver seeks to understand and be receptive to the public's input.

SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Metro Vancouver applies an adapted International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Engagement Spectrum to help identify the public's role in the decision-making process, and to clearly lay out the corresponding level of engagement with examples of appropriate techniques.

Metro Vancouver will use the "Engage Assessment" as found in the *Public Engagement Guide* to determine the appropriate level of engagement required for each initiative. The different levels of engagement correspond to the level of influence the public has in the decision making process and the level of ownership Metro Vancouver has over the decision-making process and end decision.

Consult

The consult level of engagement consists of raising awareness, sharing information about projects, and providing opportunities for feedback. The commitment to the public is to keep them informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. Decisions are made by the authorized decision-maker with input from the public or relevant stakeholders.

Involve

The involve level of engagement consists of involving the public to make sure that concerns and aspirations are considered and understood. The commitment to the public is to work with them to ensure concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. Decisions are made by the authorized decision-maker after involving the public to explore possible alternatives to an issue or opportunity at hand.

Collaborate

The collaborate level of engagement consists of collaborating with the public in each aspect of decision-making. The commitment to the public is to look to them for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their advice and decisions to the maximum extent possible. Decisions are made by authorized decision-makers after Metro Vancouver and the public have worked together to explore possible alternatives to an issue or decision and prioritize the preferred solution(s).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Metro Vancouver Board of Directors is responsible for authorizing engagement processes and hearing public input reported to them through Standing Committee and Board reports, and making decisions informed by public input.

Not all engagement processes will require reports to Standing Committees and the Board. In general, engagement reports will be sent to Committee when a project or initiative fulfills all of the following three criteria:

- The Board will be making the ultimate decision/providing the final approval regarding the project or initiative;
- The project or initiative has the potential to impact the public and/or stakeholders; and,
- There are decisions within the project or initiative that will be open to input from the public.

Metro Vancouver staff are responsible for adhering to the *Public Engagement Guide* and for carrying out engagement initiatives in accordance with the guiding principles. Staff will prepare reports to Standing Committees and the Boards that are informed by research, data, and analytical tools in addition to input from the public that is representative of the breadth of input received.

The *Public Engagement Flow Chart* shows the engagement process including the role of the Board.

Reference

[Public Engagement Flow Chart](#)

[Public Engagement Guide](#)