

**Minneapolis**  
*City of Lakes*

# **Community Engagement Process-Model Guidebook**

## **For City Departments**

**Communications Department  
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## **Purpose of this Guidebook**

The City of Minneapolis Communications Department has produced this guidebook to help departments incorporate a standardized community engagement process model around decision-making into their business practices. Departments can use this guidebook, along with the consultative services of the Communications Department to plan new and ongoing community engagement activities around pending departmental decisions. The goal is to enhance and standardize community engagement practices around decision-making, and better manage resident expectations citywide.

Please direct questions and comments to:

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# Acknowledgements

The Minneapolis Community Engagement Process Model outlined in this guidebook was developed through a review of existing community engagement government models and literature, discussions with department leaders in the City of Minneapolis, and consultations with other community leaders and consultants. It was an iterative process drawing on the experience and input of government and non-government practitioners.

We want to thank the following departments for taking part in the survey and interviews which were used to help provide information and direction for this guidebook.

- Assessor
- City Attorney
- Civil Rights
- Community Planning and Economic Development
- Finance
- Fire
- Health and Family Support
- Human Resources
- Police
- Public Works
- Regulatory Services

A word of acknowledgement must go to the Minneapolis Community Engagement Working Group which published its report in the end of 2003. Their report provided a great deal of direction and groundwork on the state of community engagement activities in the City. Many of the ideas and thoughts in this guidebook stem from the work done by the CE Working Group. In addition, we looked outside Minnesota and included work and ideas being employed by others in the area of Community Engagement.

## Background

In 2004, the Minneapolis City Council directed the Communications Department to coordinate the City's community engagement efforts by assisting departments in their engagement planning. The purpose of this directive was to work toward fulfilling Council's City Goal to "Enhance Community Engagement."

"The voices of individuals and the community are valued and will be heard and involved at appropriate points in the City's decision-making processes. The City will be more effective and efficient in how we communicate with and engage communities, and will work to include those who are typically under-represented in public dialogue. We will focus our engagement in a manner that supports the long-term strength of the community." (City Goal and Expectation #8)

Benefits of an appropriately engaged community to the work of the City include the following:

- ◆ Greater diversity of views expressed;
- ◆ Mutual learning among participants;
- ◆ Community acceptance of a project or decision;
- ◆ Previously unknown special needs may be accommodated;
- ◆ Post-implementation costs are avoided for agencies and departments (Instead, education occurs early in project life-cycle.);
- ◆ Improved relationship with community;
- ◆ Mutual respect among stakeholders;
- ◆ Increased project efficiency;
- ◆ Increased buy-in among participants.

The City of Minneapolis has implemented many successful community engagement strategies in deciding upon the design and delivery of services. Often strategies have failed to take into account basic engagement planning techniques, or sufficiently involve under-represented groups. This inconsistent process planning around decisions has resulted in a lack of public awareness as to when and how they will be engaged.

The CE Process Model in this guidebook, along with consultation of the new Community Engagement Coordinator in the Communications Department, will help departments evaluate decisions to change, enhance or remove projects and activities to more consistently and effectively apply engagement strategies at appropriate points. This is a first step to standardizing engagement practices citywide, better managing community expectations, better involving the community in decision making, and being more effective and efficient in how we communicate with stakeholders.

## When to Engage the Community

Engagement is undertaken by a department when decisions are to be made that create, remove, or change a City service, activity or project. Engagement should be viewed as extending throughout the life of a project or activity rather than being a “one off” exercise or “add-on.” It should begin early in the planning stage. While most projects are suited to some level of community engagement, some projects may allow a greater level of involvement than others. It is necessary therefore to carefully evaluate each pending departmental decision, per the instructions in this manual, to help plan your engagement strategy.

After an analysis of City engagement practices, we concluded that the activities listed by departments naturally fall into two different categories: 1) engaging the community for the purpose of getting input/feedback regarding a city decision and 2) being involved in the community to deliver programs or services, volunteer or educate the public. While both may include a range of city responses, from simply providing information to face-to-face contact with community members, there is a key distinguishing feature of what (for the purposes of this report and the oversight function) we will call community engagement: **Community engagement always involves an impending city government decision.** Some examples from the activities identified by departments illustrate how this key distinguishing feature helps set engagement apart from involvement in the community.

In the course of our research, the Police Department cited the Police Activities League (PAL) as one of their community engagement efforts. While this is a positive outreach program with many benefits for the community, based on our criteria it is not community engagement. Instead, it is a service program (or involvement in the community). No decision is being made through PAL that will alter police services to the public. Similarly, Regulatory Services cited thermometer give-a-ways at Farmer’s Market to test food temperature as an engagement activity. It is an effective public relations activity, and may in fact aid in the prevention of food-borne illness, but it is not community engagement. Again, the purpose of this particular interaction with the public is not to involve the public in a decision about services. It is instead, merely *providing* service.

Alternatively, Health and Family Services holds public meetings to receive input on what people think are important criteria for issuing grant money to the community. In this case, a decision is being made about the distribution of grant dollars and has the potential to have an impact on residents. When the Police Department plans to launch an initiative to address a crime problem, they often meet with members of communities of color. A decision is being made in this case, perhaps on specific crime-fighting tactics, or where to concentrate enforcement geographically. In most cases, the public does not make the final decision. However, they are engaged at an appropriate level, so that the Department can make an informed decision, and the community is informed that a decision is being made.

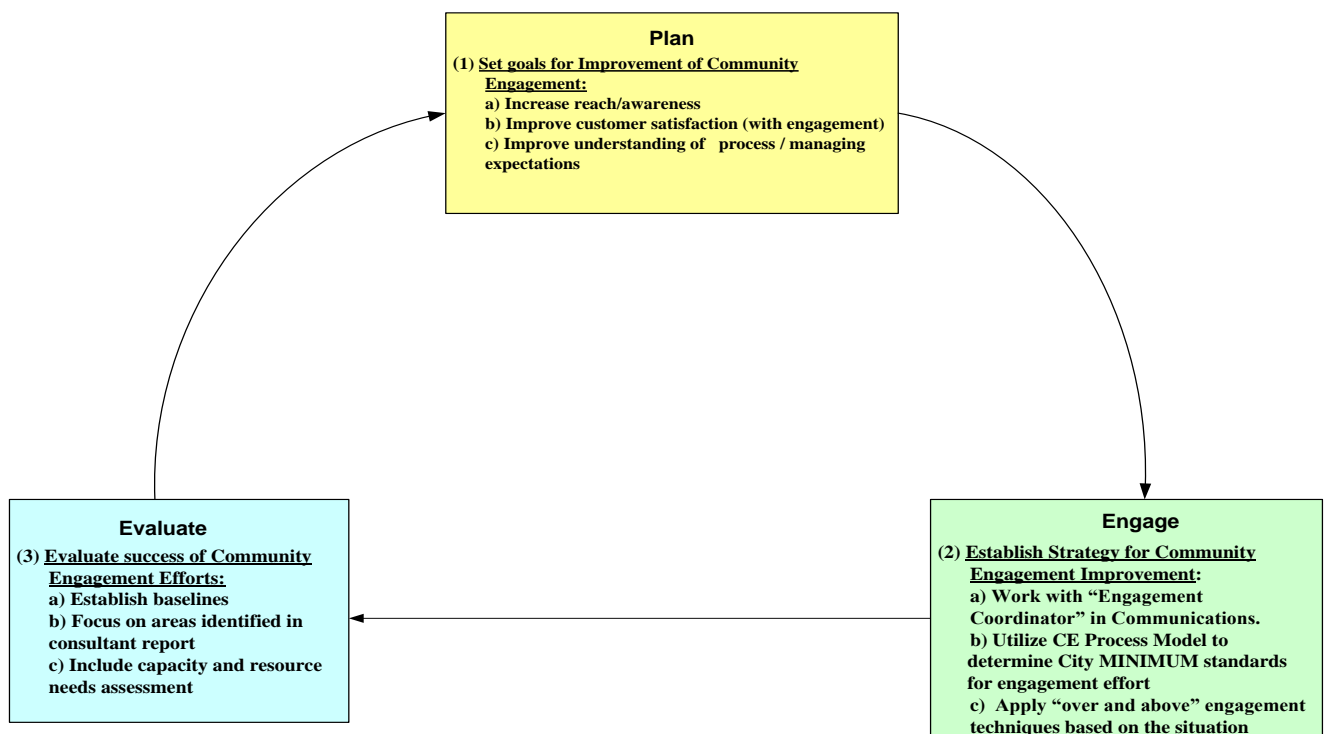
The scope of contact with the public in both involvement in the community and engagement includes a broad range of activities. In the case of involvement in the community, contact ranges from public education to an in-person service program (taking kids on a canoe trip through the Police Activities League). In the case of engagement, contact ranges from informing the community of a City decision that will be made, to meeting with the community to receive input that may inform the decision.

To illustrate the distinction further, consider a hypothetical public health education program that a department wishes to change in order to target a different group of people. Prior to making that change, the department engages the community per the standards and protocols that are being established in the Communications Department as a means of influencing decisions about service delivery. In this case, the public health education itself is **NOT** engagement. However, going to the community to inform them about a change to the program, and to solicit ideas about how to change the program **IS** engagement.

It has been noted that it is neither effective nor appropriate to engage the community if a final decision has been made on an issue, unless the purpose is solely to provide information and not allow for changes in the decision. This might occur in those situations where a purely procedural or technical decision has been made where time was critical and would not permit preliminary engagement work. However, departments should develop proactive strategies to minimize these situations.

# Community Engagement (CE) Cycle

This Community Engagement Cycle, in conjunction with the evaluation process and CE Coordinator advice, is the high-level approach departments should take to improving department engagement. This meta-level evaluation is the method departments should use to inform City Council when looking at policy needs and changes for community engagement. At Steps 1 and 2 and 3 in the Cycle, departments will refer to the Community Engagement (CE) Process Model and accompanying tools.



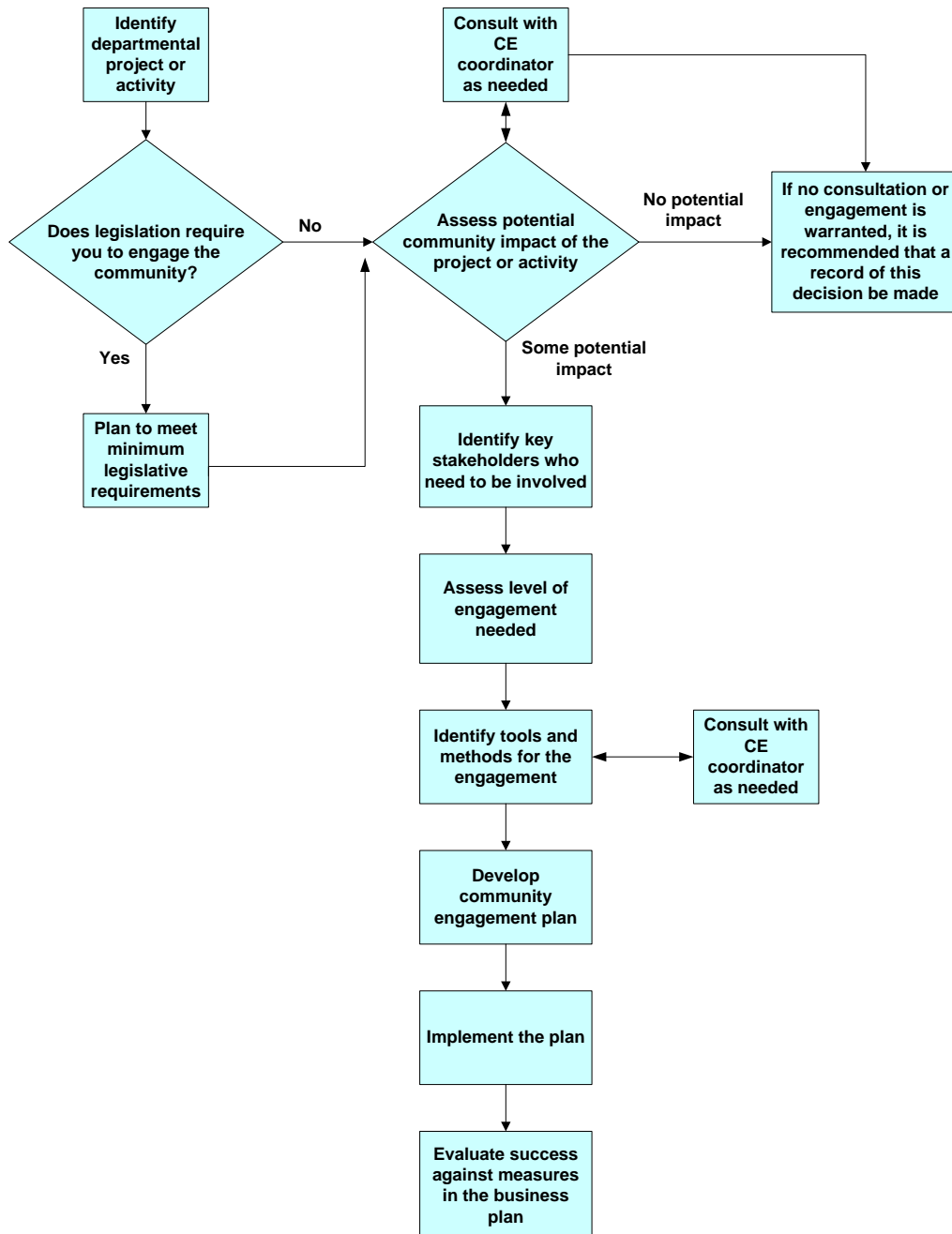
**There are three essential steps to improving and standardizing the City’s engagement practices:**

1. Planning
  - Use CE Process Model to ensure consistent City standards
  - Set goals for improving reach and customer satisfaction
2. Engaging
  - Employ appropriate and consistent techniques based on CE process planning and evaluation
  - Work with CE Coordinator to identify strategies
3. Evaluating
  - Measure results and establish baselines



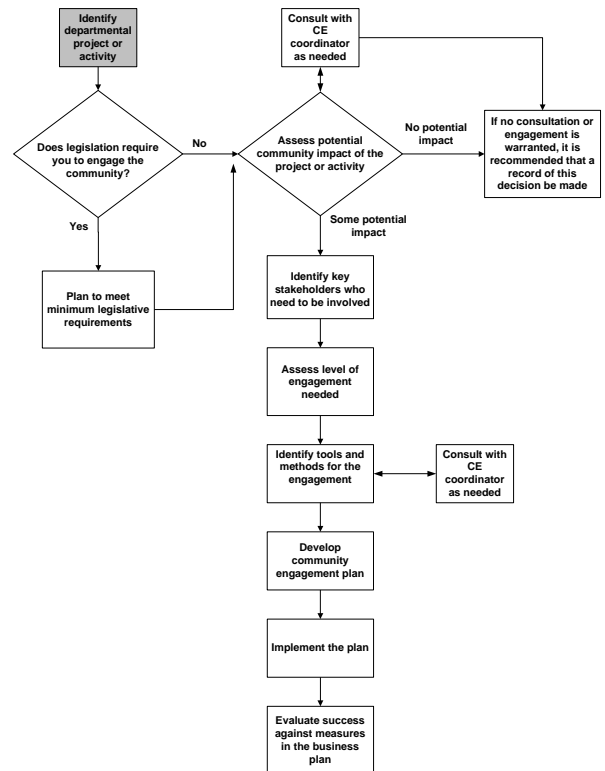
# The Community Engagement Process Model

The CE Process Model (and associated tools) is designed to provide departments with a consistent process to follow when evaluating projects or activities that involve decision making that will affect stakeholders. This does not mean that each department has to pursue the same type of engagement methods. The CE Process Model allows each department the freedom and creativity to customize the decision making and engagement process as needed. It will, however, ensure a standard approach to engagement and community involvement in decision making.



## Step 1

Identify departmental project or activity



## Action



When a decision is pending regarding the creation, removal, or changes in a City service, project or activity, carry that decision through the steps in the CE Process Model.

### Phase 1 of the Community Engagement Cycle

#### Set goals for Improvement of Community Engagement

- a) Increase reach/awareness
- b) Improve customer satisfaction (with engagement)
- c) Improve understanding of process / managing expectations

Key department tasks and activities that routinely involve decisions that impact service should be reviewed against the Community Engagement Process Model to determine how community engagement methods can be standardized and improved activity by activity. It is essential that more than one member of a department be involved in this review process. This is not an exact science, and collaboration among colleagues is necessary to effectively evaluate the appropriate level of engagement.

## Key Questions

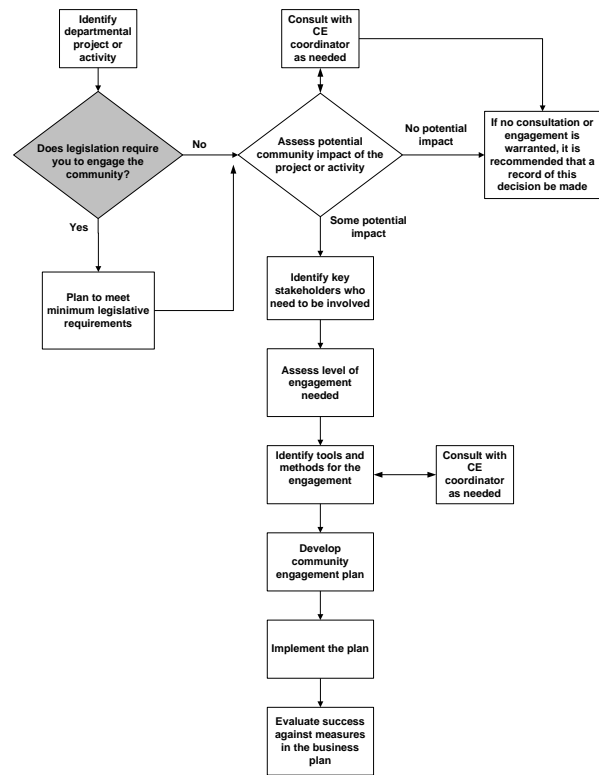


1. Is there a role for stakeholders in decision-making around this activity?
2. Are other departments going to be operationally involved in this activity? If so, plan for collaboration accordingly to avoid duplicative efforts.

## Step 2



## Action



Each department must identify any legislative requirements or Council policy where specific community engagement actions are specified. Departments may be required to meet certain requirements or standards in implementing a community engagement plan.

Also, Council policy may establish standard levels that must be met through this process model. Ensure that you are aware of the outcomes and standards expected.

## Key Questions

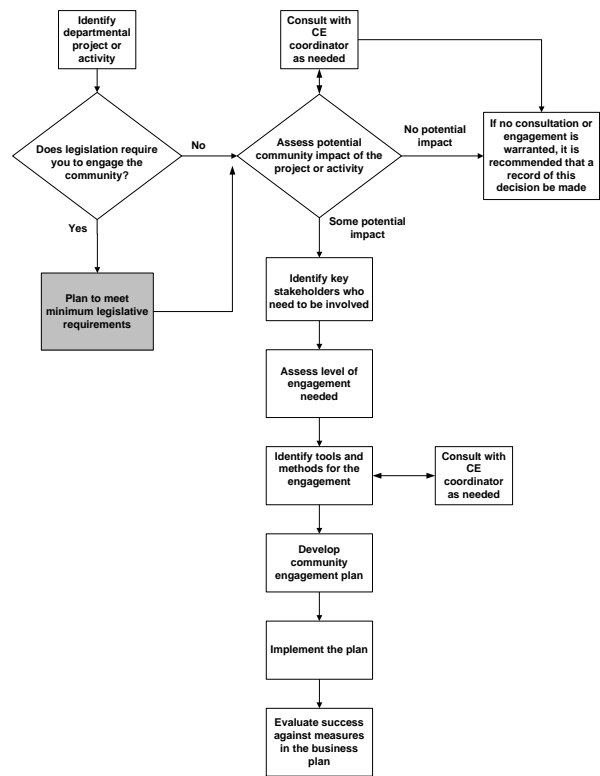


1. Where do we look for information to determine if legislative requirements apply to our task or activity?
2. What Council policies exist directing specific engagement outcomes or standards?

## Step 3

Plan to meet minimum legislative requirements

## Action



Include legislatively mandated and Council policy minimum standards regarding engagement activities in the engagement plan. While minimum requirements may be mandatory, departments should still determine whether or not it might be effective to go beyond minimum requirements. The specified requirements, standards or outcomes must be considered necessary, but they may or may not be sufficient for effective community engagement for your given pending decision.

## Key Questions

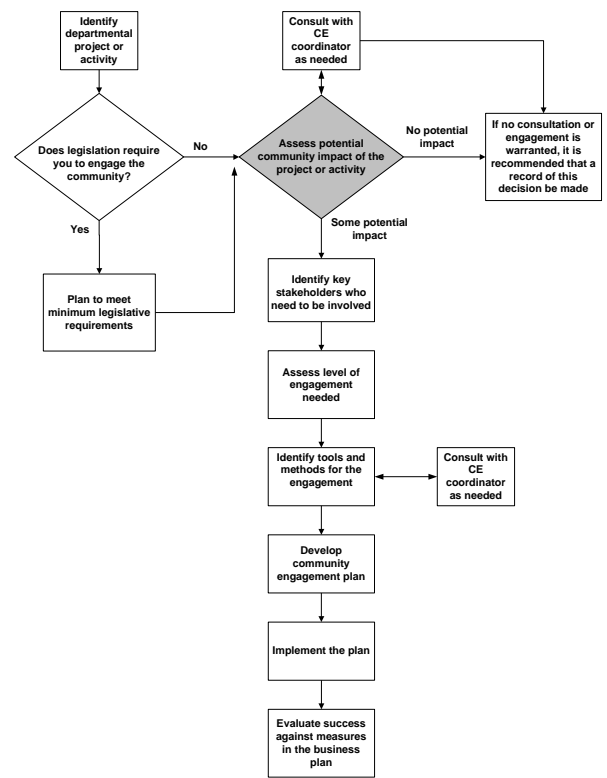


1. Should we go beyond the minimum requirements for legislative compliance for community engagement around this pending decision? (This question may best be answered upon completion of the Community Engagement Process Model).

## Step 4



## Action



Community engagement efforts must apply the same risk assessment and risk management strategies to the CE Process Model as you would apply to any project your department is undertaking. Poorly conducted CE activities can be worse than not having engaged the community at all. They can contribute to public cynicism and jeopardize future government-community partnerships.

The attached “Level of Impact Assessment Tool” outlines four (4) impact levels, where impact relates to the *“effect of a decision on the community”*. These levels are based on the assumption that any pending decision relating to a change in a department project, service or action will have some real or perceived impact on the community.

To determine the Level of Impact, staff will first need to determine the community group/s and stakeholders that are affected by the project, issue, service or action. It may be appropriate to involve Community Engagement staff in making these decisions.

The criteria that departments should use to determine the Level of Impact of a pending department decision is provided in the attached criteria table. Examples of activities are provided to assist staff to more accurately make their assessment. (See **Appendix One**)

## Key Questions

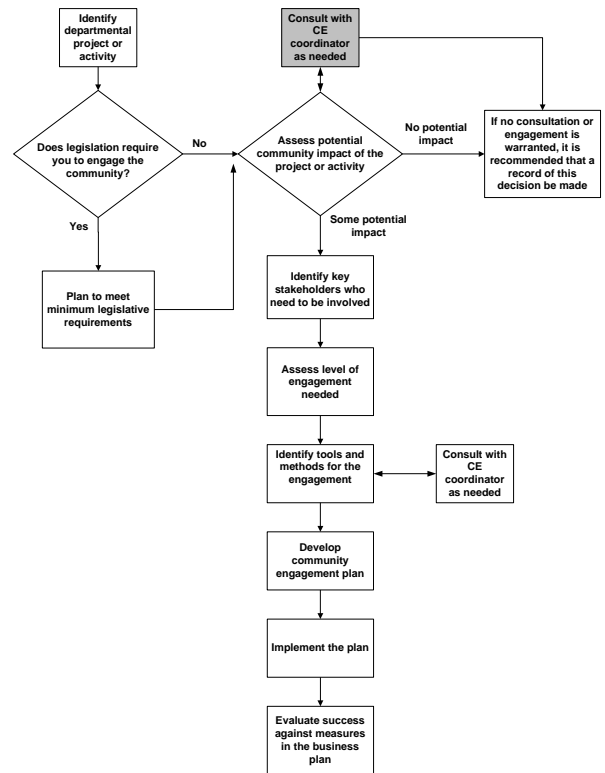


1. What is the potential level of risk or impact to the public of this decision to change a service, project or activity?
2. How will we determine who might be affected by this issue or project?

## Step 5

**Consult with  
CE  
coordinator  
as needed**

## Action



The position of Community Engagement Coordinator was created to provide consultative support to all Minneapolis departments to improve and standardize engagement practices. The CE coordinator is responsible for providing advice, consultation, training and coaching to departments on community engagement during any phase of a project or activity.

The CE Coordinator will provide support or reassurance when an outside opinion on impact analysis or engagement methods is needed. Working with the CE coordinator can allow departments to share responsibility for key decisions. If you are not sure where to start in the assessment of your project or activity, or you want a second opinion, you should contact the CE coordinator.

In addition, the CE Coordinator is responsible for auditing departmental engagement plans to ensure consistent application of the CE Process Model.

## Key Questions

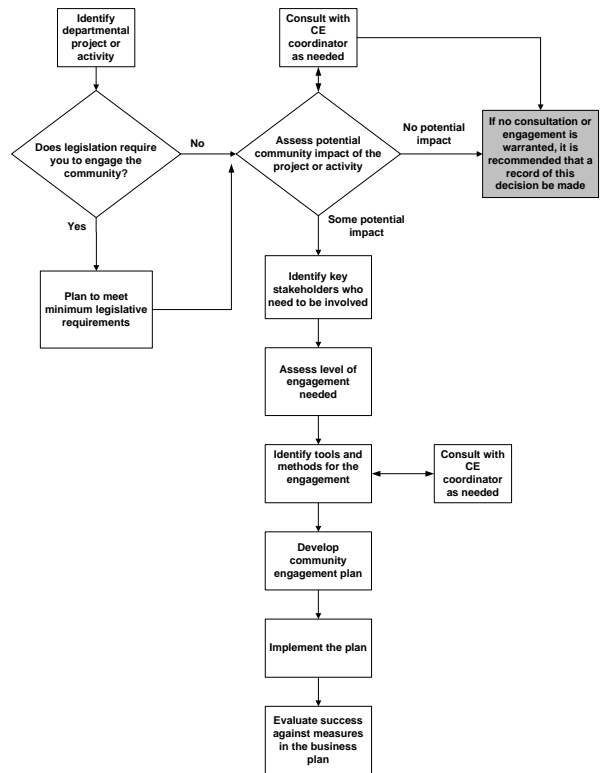


1. Is the department confident about a given task's assessment of impact?
2. Would it help to have a second opinion?
3. Are we following the CE Process Model completely, and recording our steps clearly so that the CE Coordinator can provide efficient oversight?

## Step 6

If no consultation or engagement is warranted, it is recommended that a record of this decision be made

## Action



If it is determined that no engagement of the community is warranted for a given decision, we recommend recording the reasons for not engaging the community. The CE coordinator will be maintaining a list of these documents for periodic review of City engagement standards and the effectiveness of decisions where the community was not involved.

## Key Questions

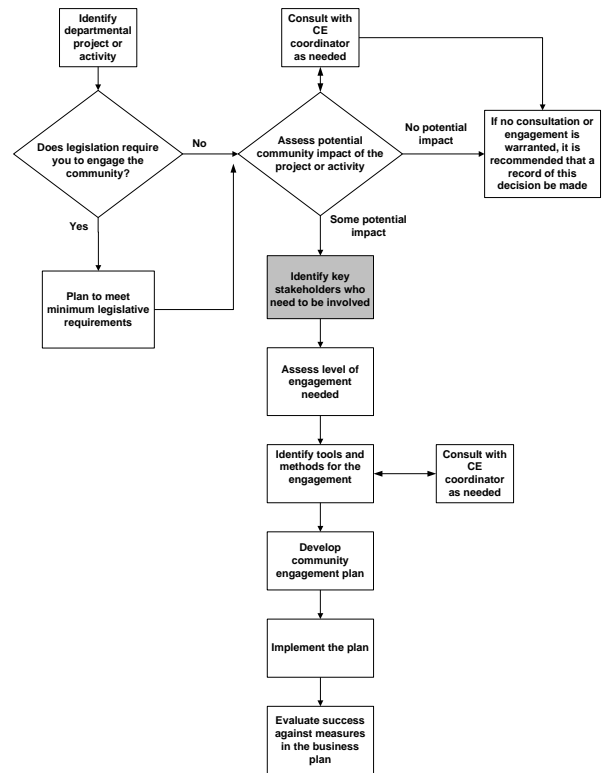


1. How will my department efficiently and effectively record decisions not to engage?
2. How can my department utilize this record (in the evaluation phase of the Community Engagement Cycle) to monitor of the effectiveness of our engagement?

## Step 7

**Identify key stakeholders who need to be involved**

## Action



**Stakeholders are anybody likely to be affected by a decision to change a department service, activity or project.**

Knowing who your stakeholders are will allow better selection of community engagement methods, and a greater understanding of the perspectives that might influence your particular pending decision.

Stakeholders are those individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the outcomes of the decision undertaken by your department. Key factors here depend on the ability, interest and capability of the stakeholder group to provide input or assistance. The level of involvement employed will vary depending on the issue and the perceived impact of the issue. Expectations of involvement must be carefully managed to minimize frustration.

Many residents and community members may wish to be involved only if the issue is one that has relevance to their lives and circumstances. What is essential is that residents should be able to participate if they wish to do so. It is the obligation of the City of Minneapolis to ensure sufficient information is provided about the issue so residents can make an informed choice.

**These Four Main Stakeholder Groups are classified according to their differing types of authority:**

- I. **Elected Officials**
- II. **Institutional:** Boards, Commissions, Unions, NRP
- III. **Non-institutional:** Neighborhood organizations, Business Associations, Cultural Groups, Non-profit Groups, Block Clubs
- IV. **Individuals:** Residents, Homeowners



## Key Questions



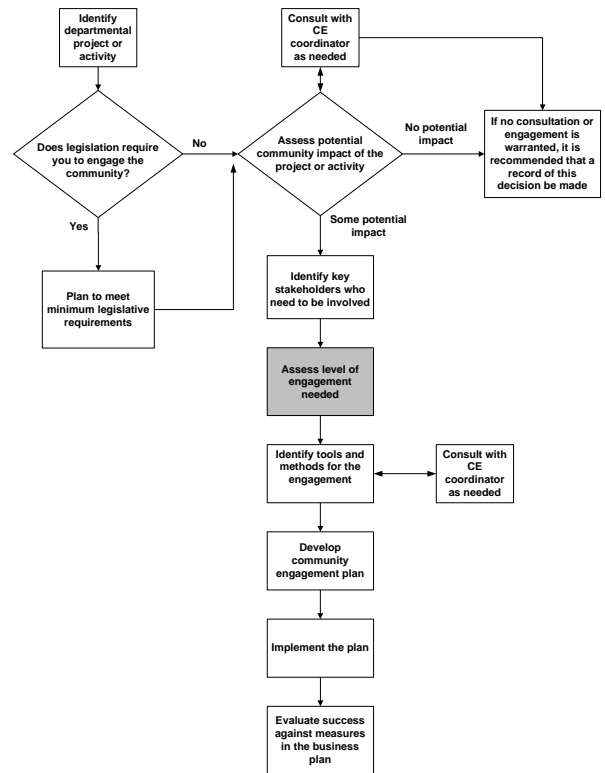
**The following questions may aid in identifying potential stakeholders:**

1. Who is responsible for implementing the results of a pending decision?
2. Who might be affected by the decision negatively or positively?
3. Who are the representatives of those likely to be affected?
4. Who can make a contribution?
5. Who is likely to mobilize for or against the decision?
6. Whose absence from participation will detract from the final result?
7. Which City departments have an interest in the decision?
8. Who has information that might make the decision making effort more effective?

## Step 8



## Action



Keeping the needs, desires, hopes and fears of identified stakeholder groups in mind, follow the Decision Tree in **Appendix 2** to answer the key questions below, and determine the level of engagement into which your project fits. The purpose of providing this standardized decision process is to assure a consistent approach when departments employ engagement methods.

## Key Questions

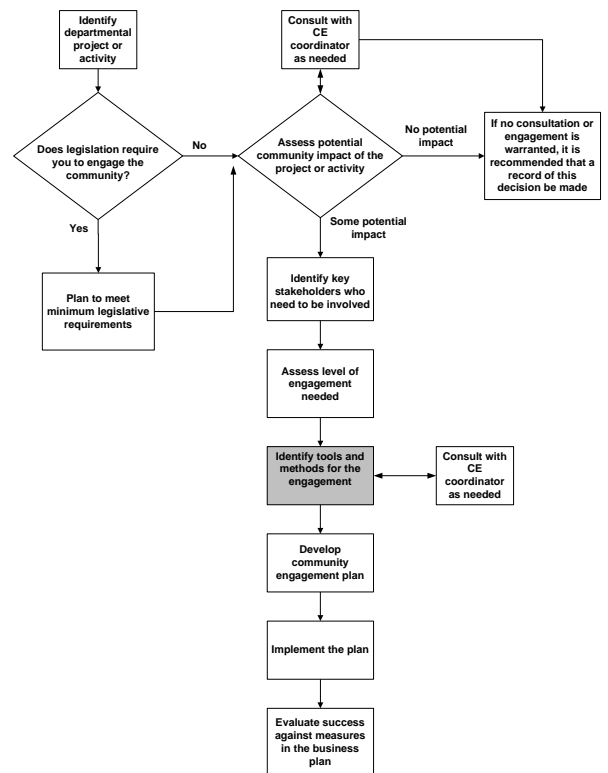


- **Please see the attached Decision Tree (Appendix 2) to answer each of the following five questions. (Remember that different stakeholder groups may need to be considered individually).**
1. Does our department have sufficient information to obtain a high quality result without involving other stakeholders?
  2. Is the problem structured so that there is space for alternative solutions?
  3. Is stakeholder acceptance of the decision critical to effective implementation?
  4. If external stakeholder acceptance is necessary, is that acceptance reasonably assured if the department proceeds without engaging the stakeholders?
  5. Are the stakeholders willing to engage in a dialogue or be involved to improve the issues or activity?
  6. Would the quality of input or future relations be improved if learning occurs among the community or stakeholders about the issues or activities?

## Step 9

### Identify tools and methods for the engagement

## Action



The second part of the Community Engagement Cycle is to **Engage** the stakeholders. This part of the Cycle begins here at Step 9 of the Process Model. This requires that a set of engagement methods be selected which can be used to involve stakeholders at the appropriate levels. To engage the stakeholders, your department will need to identify tools and methods required.

### Phase 2 of the Community Engagement Cycle

#### **Establish a Strategy for Community Engagement Improvement:**

- a) Work with “Engagement Coordinator” in Communications as needed
- b) Utilize CE Process Model to determine City MINIMUM standards for engagement effort
- c) Apply “over and above”<sup>1</sup> engagement techniques based on the situation

**Appendix 3** lists a variety of strategies, methods and options for engaging the community. Some of the advantages and disadvantages of each are also identified. Many of these methods are already used in the City of Minneapolis including focus groups, surveys, advisory boards, etc. Each method relates to the level of involvement determined in Step 8, and may be used depending on the type of decision the department is trying to make. The key in this step is to select a strategy or method that will allow you to obtain the desired level of involvement as determined by the CE Process Model.

<sup>1</sup> This means going beyond the minimal requirements required by law

## Key Questions

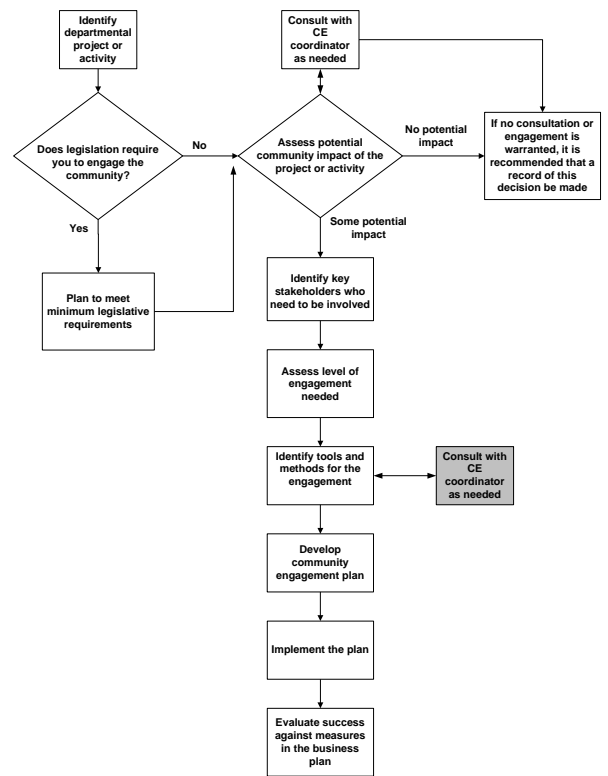


1. Which strategies best match the level of involvement needed for the decision making?
2. Do we have enough knowledge to use the strategy selected?
3. What are our time frames for a final decision to be made?
4. Does the strategy/method of engagement ensure under-represented groups will be sufficiently involved?
5. How do the numbers of people we want to get involved fit with the possible methods for involvement?
6. Will we need external facilitation for the effort?

## Step 10

**Consult with  
CE  
coordinator  
as needed**

## Action



One of the key roles for the Community Engagement Coordinator will be to help educate and update departments on the various methods and techniques that are available for a community engagement effort. Several relatively new techniques (e.g. search conferences, scenario development and on-line engagement) have been developed more recently and can provide excellent input when used. If departments are not familiar with the techniques, they will be able to call on the CE Coordinator for information and or training as needed.

## Key Questions

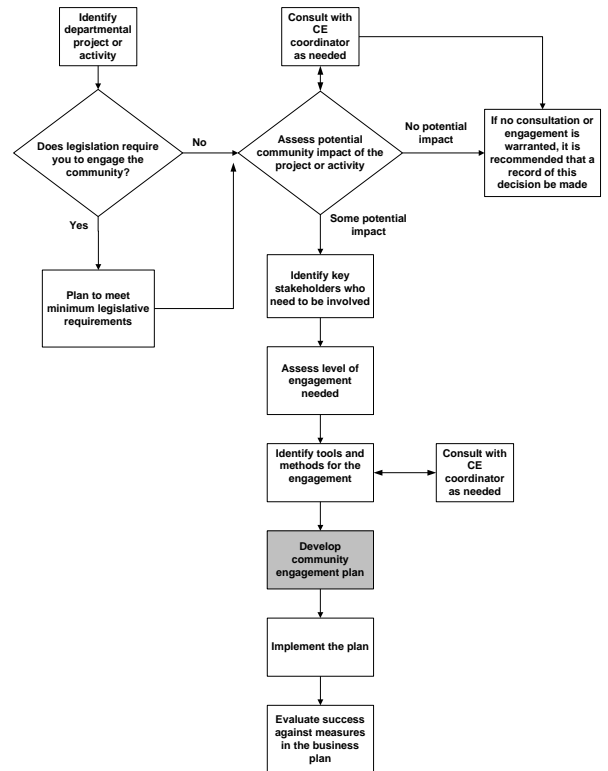


1. Are we familiar with the strategy or technique selected?
2. Do we know how to go about the particular CE activity that we have selected?
3. What other tools or methods are available for community engagement?
4. Will we need outside facilitation for the effort?

## Step 11



## Action



**Appendix 4** includes a checklist for assessing the completeness of your community engagement plan around the pending decision. A good plan will have solid timelines, resources needed and clear accountability for who needs to do what and when. A good plan should also list the methods that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the CE activity. **More about measuring effectiveness will be discussed in Step 13.** Finally, it is advisable to make an informal communication to elected officials of the impacted geographic area before completion of the plan. Elected officials often know the people, organizations, and groups who most need to be engaged on a particular issue.

## Key Questions

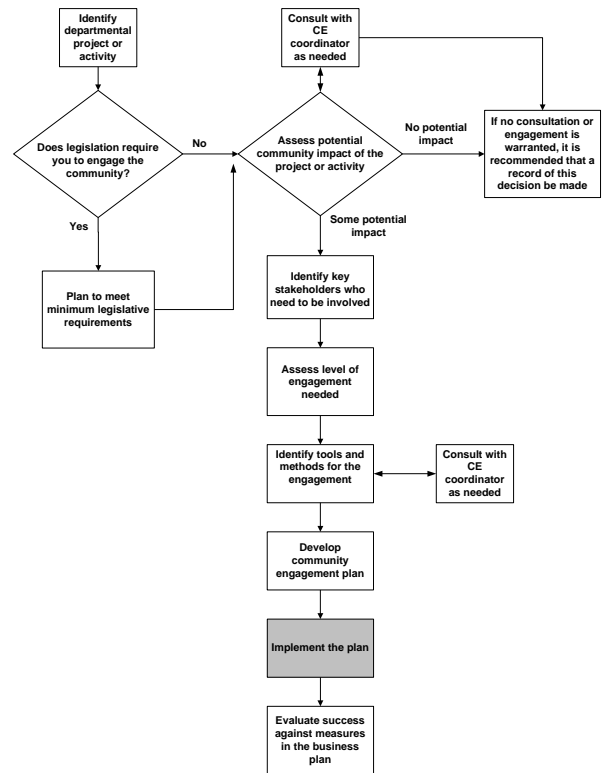


1. How will we document the CE plan for our pending decision?
2. Who will need to be involved in the CE planning?
3. How will we ensure that we have the appropriate stakeholders involved?
4. Have we informally contacted elected officials before completion of the plan?

## Step 12

Implement the plan

## Action



In this step the plan is carried out. Tasks already assigned are executed, stakeholders may now become involved and some level of assessment may already be taking place. Contingency plans may need to be invoked as issues arise with stakeholders and resources that have been allocated.

## Key Questions

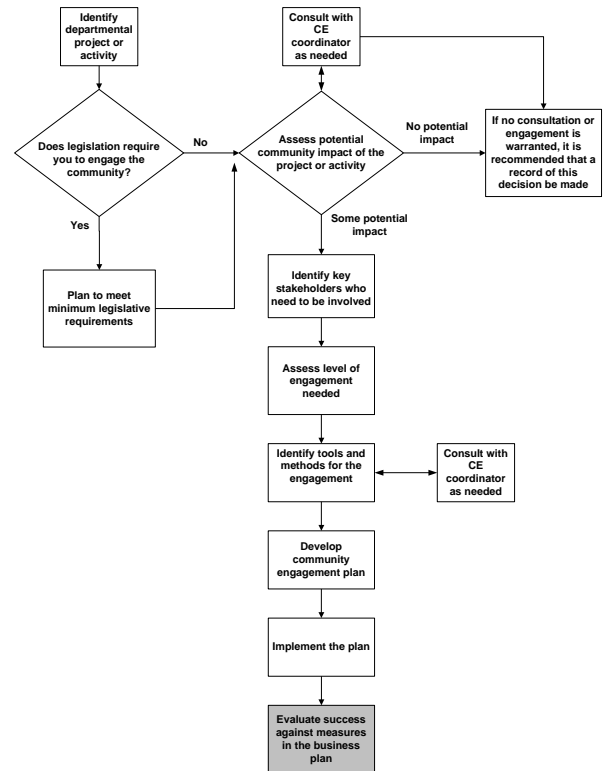


1. Are we prepared with contingency plans in case of problems?
2. What other additional resources might be needed at this point?
3. How will we monitor the progress of our plan?
4. At what point(s) should we involve the stakeholders in the implementation of the plan?

## Step 13

Evaluate success against measures in the business plan

## Action



The Community Engagement Cycle starts with Planning, then Engagement occurs, and finally the effort is **Evaluated**. Overall success of the CE plan is measured against plan objectives and goals.

### Phase 3 of Community Engagement Cycle

Evaluate success of Community Engagement Efforts:

- a) Establish baselines
- b) Focus on areas identified in consultant report
- c) Include capacity and resource needs assessment

## Key Questions



Appendix Four includes some key evaluation questions that will help you to review the success of your CE activity or project over its entire lifecycle (Plan, Engage and Evaluate).

1. What do we do if we are not satisfied with the success of our CE planning effort?
2. How can we further improve our efforts for CE?
3. How can we celebrate success and insure a repeat performance?



# Appendix 1

## Level of Impact Assessment

The Level of Impact Assessment consists of four (4) impact levels, where impact relates to the “effect of a decision on the community”. It is important to recognize that the Level of Impact does not necessarily dictate the methods of community engagement to be used; however the assessment can guide departments in the direction of similar methods for similar City-initiated decisions. Impact can be anticipated whenever there is an expected behavior change, compliance change or change in a delivered service. The impact levels are as follows:

<b>Level of Impact of Pending Decision</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Risk Factors</b>
<b>Level 1</b> High Impact Broad Geographic Area	High level of impact on the whole or a large part of Minneapolis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widespread public interest/desire for information</li> <li>• Media exposure likely, potentially controversial</li> <li>• Legislative action or interest</li> <li>• Potential significant resistance</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b> High Impact Local Geographic Area	High level of impact of a local nature, e.g. a local area, specific community or user group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong local resistance</li> <li>• Limited media exposure</li> <li>• Limited legislative interest</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b> Low Impact Broad Geographic Area	Lower level of impact on the whole or a large part of Minneapolis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media attention, probably not controversial</li> <li>• Legislative action or interest</li> <li>• Potential widespread public interest or desire for information</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4</b> Low Impact Local Geographic Area	Lower level of impact of a local nature, e.g. a local area, specific community or user group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for unexpected localized resistance</li> <li>• Potential for unexpected limited media exposure</li> </ul>

These levels are based on the assumption that any decision to change a project, issue, service or action will have some real or perceived impact on the community. Always assume there is impact.

It may be appropriate to involve Community Engagement staff in making these decisions. The approach to involving other Community Engagement staff should be determined early in the process, as recommended in the Community Engagement Process Model flowchart.

There should always be a discussion among department staff since this is not an exact science.

## Criteria for Determining the Impact

The criteria that departments should use to determine the ‘level of impact’ of a decision to change, remove, or add a project, issue, service or activity is provided in the following criteria table. Examples of activities are provided to assist staff to more accurately make their decision.

Use the following criteria to determine the likely “level of impact” of your decision to change a project, issue, service or activity:

<b>Level of Impact of Pending Decision</b>	<b>Criteria (one or more of the following)</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>High Impact, Broad Geographic Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of real or perceived impact, change or risk across a large part of Minneapolis (Mpls.)</li> <li>• Any significant impact on attributes that are considered to be of high value to the whole of Mpls., such as the natural environment or heritage</li> <li>• Any impact on health, safety or well being of the Mpls. community</li> <li>• Potential high level of interest across Mpls</li> <li>• Potential high impact on State or regional strategies or directions</li> <li>• Current or ongoing policy discussion regarding an event issue or initiative</li> <li>• Current Council direction on a project or issue</li> <li>• Potential high degree of controversy or conflict for the whole of Minneapolis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing level of Fire Department</li> <li>• Decisions regarding major housing developments or high profile economic developments</li> <li>• Public Safety</li> <li>• City wide “core services”</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Police programs and issues</li> <li>• Local Environment Plan</li> <li>• A change to land categorization, e.g. community to operational land</li> <li>• Disability Action Plan</li> <li>• Development of City wide goals</li> <li>• Removal or key changes of a facility or service catering across Mpls.</li> <li>• Provision of a district or regional facility, e.g. indoor sports center</li> <li>• Changes to or impact on natural land or waterway (where the natural values could be affected)</li> </ul>

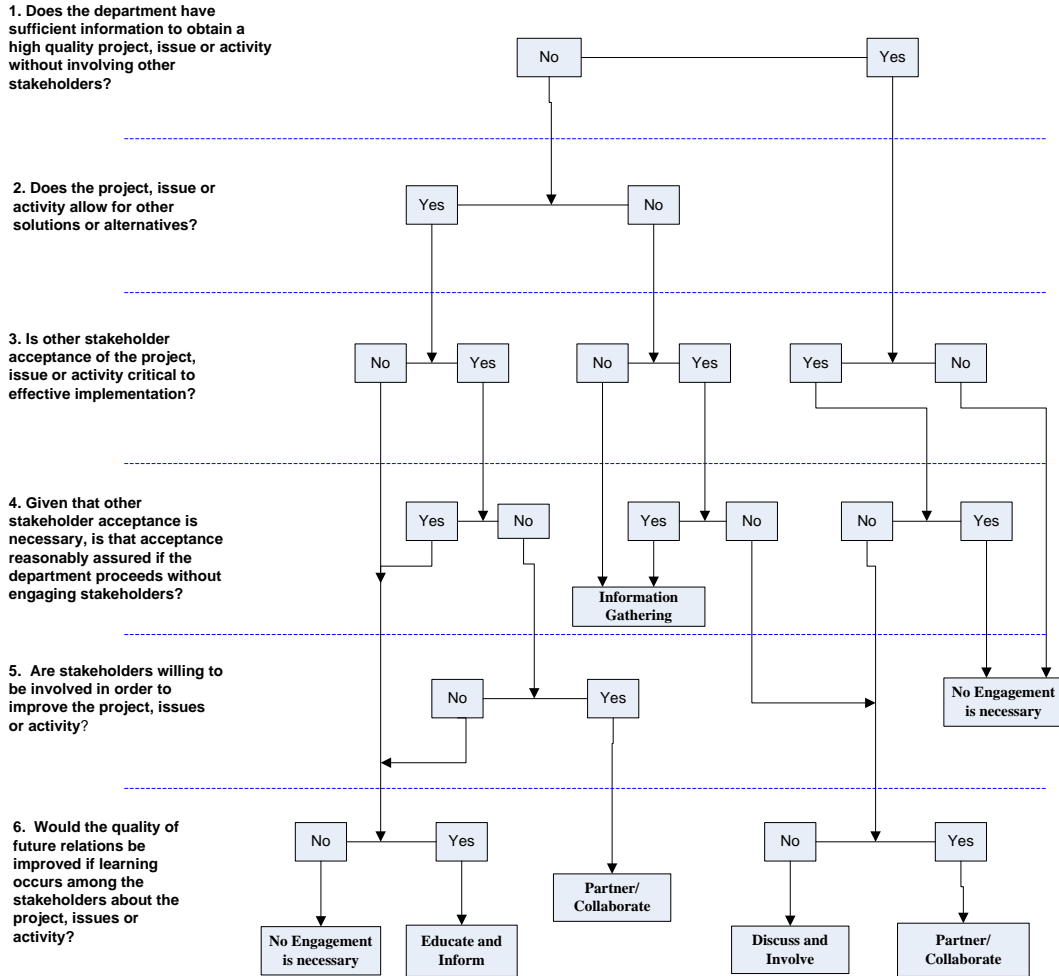
<b>Level of Impact of Pending Decision</b>	<b>Criteria (one or more of the following)</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>High Impact, Local Geographic Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same intensity of impact as Level 1 but on a smaller area or group of people</li> <li>• High level of real or perceived impact, change or risk on a local area, small community or user group/s of a specific facility or service.</li> <li>• The loss of, or significant change to, any facility or service to local community.</li> <li>• Potential high degree of controversy or conflict at a limited local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Group concerns and issues</li> <li>• Police Substations</li> <li>• Neighborhood economic development</li> <li>• Change to or loss of valued activity or program, e.g. local youth activity</li> <li>• Local street road closure</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>Low Impact, Broad Geographic Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower, although still some real or perceived impact, change or risk across Minneapolis.</li> <li>• Potential for some controversy or conflict.</li> <li>• Potential for some though not significant impact on State or regional strategies or directions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to a Minneapolis wide service, e.g. recycling.</li> <li>• Upgrade of a district or regional facility.</li> <li>• Changes to Customer Service processes, e.g. hours of operation.</li> <li>• Attendance at a community wide event.</li> <li>• Review of community needs, e.g. Survey, recreation needs assessment.</li> </ul>

<b>Level of Impact of Pending Decision</b>	<b>Criteria (one or more of the following)</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Level 4</b></p> <p>Low Impact, Local Geographic Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same intensity as Level 3 but on a smaller area or group of people</li> <li>• Lower level of real or perceived impact or change of risk on a local area, small community or user group/s of a specific facility or service.</li> <li>• Only a small change or improvement to a facility or a service at the local level.</li> <li>• Low or no perceived risk of controversy or conflict at the local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local street upgrade with no major disruption of access to business or homes</li> <li>• Changes to a local activity program, e.g. timing or venue/location</li> </ul>

At any time during a decision to change a project, issue or activity, it may be necessary to reassess the Level of Impact and vary the community engagement approach accordingly, due to a change in the situation or recognition of implications.

# Appendix 2

## Vroom-Yetton Engagement Decision Tree



Educate and Inform	Information Gathering	Discuss and Involve	Partner/Collaborate	Authorize
Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternative, issue or solutions. Giving information or education to stakeholders.	To seek or obtain public feedback on issues, analysis, alternatives or decisions. To better understand expectations in respect to engagement efforts. Listening and soliciting advice or information from stakeholders.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to insure that public and private concerns are consistently addressed and understood. This involves both giving and receiving information between stakeholders and departments.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of a preferred solution. This goes beyond merely sharing information to activity working together to find solutions.	To place final decision making in the hands of specific community organizations or identified community groups. This level seldom takes place. It places final decision making and responsibility in the hands of stakeholders.

## Appendix 3

### Consultation Methods

Methods and Models	Considerations	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>User Comments and Complaints</b></p> <p>Encourage feedback from users</p>	<p>Make feedback forms accessible</p>	<p>Provides input from those using the service</p> <p>Easy to set up</p> <p>Provides information about service's weaknesses and strengths</p>	<p>Not representative</p> <p>Essentially reactive to existing systems</p>
<p><b>Staff Feedback and Suggestions</b></p> <p>Encourage feedback and suggestions from frontline staff who deal with the public</p>	<p>Train staff to deal with comments and complaints</p> <p>Establish systems for obtaining feedback</p>	<p>Shows you value staff and are open to suggestions</p> <p>Valuable source of information on service use and users</p>	<p>Relies on staff effort</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>Doesn't necessarily provide representative views</p>
<p><b>Surveys and Questionnaires</b></p> <p>Inquiries sent randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation</p>	<p>Ensure statistically valid results are needed before making investment</p> <p>Survey/questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias</p> <p>Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys</p>	<p>Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings</p> <p>Provides input from cross-section of public, not just activists</p> <p>Statistically tested results are more persuasive with political bodies and the general public</p>	<p>Response rate is generally low</p> <p>For statistically valid results, can be labor intensive and expensive</p> <p>Level of detail may be limited</p> <p>May be perceived as a public relations tool</p>
<p><b>Small Neighborhood Meetings</b></p> <p>Small meetings within neighborhood, usually at a person's home</p>	<p>Issue relevant to neighborhood</p> <p>Make sure staff are very polite and appreciative</p> <p>May need to be aware of other neighborhood issues</p>	<p>Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue</p> <p>Maximizes two-way communication</p>	<p>Requires a lot of labor to reach many people</p>
<p><b>Open Public Meetings</b></p> <p>Formal meeting with scheduled agenda</p>	<p>Accessible and convenient public location</p> <p>Publicize event</p> <p>Clearly defined objective</p> <p>Provide proper staffing and facilitation</p>	<p>Opportunity to provide information and obtain feedback</p> <p>Demonstrates commitment to public consultation</p> <p>Builds relationships with local community</p> <p>Relatively inexpensive</p>	<p>Not representative</p> <p>Localized knowledge only</p> <p>Large group format may be a barrier to some</p>

<p><b>Representative Groups</b></p> <p>Made up of people with particular interest in the issue. Contact may be through forums or discussion groups</p>	<p>Find relevant groups, what they do and who they represent</p> <p>Determine best contact method</p>	<p>Access to body of research</p> <p>Consultation with knowledgeable group</p> <p>Allows in-depth discussion</p> <p>Relatively inexpensive</p>	<p>Opportunity for individuals to capture discussion</p> <p>Not necessarily statistically representative</p> <p>Can be time consuming</p> <p>Large group format may be a barrier to some</p>
<p><b>Future Search Conferences</b></p> <p>Considering future scenarios and ways to influence outcomes in uncertain situations</p>	<p>Independent and skilled facilitator</p> <p>No pre-set proposals</p> <p>Seeks consensus</p>	<p>Allows an exchange of information</p> <p>Many viewpoints can be heard</p>	<p>Resource intensive</p> <p>Can be captured by large interest groups</p> <p>Difficulty in reaching a consensus</p>
<p><b>Face-to-Face Interviews</b></p> <p>One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information on public concerns and perspectives</p>	<p>Where feasible, interviews should be conducted in person, particularly when considering candidates for citizens committees</p> <p>Take advantage of opportunity for citizens to input on how they participate</p> <p>Use trained researchers</p>	<p>Provides opportunities to understand public concerns and issues</p> <p>Provides opportunity to learn how to best communicate with public</p> <p>Can be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members</p>	<p>Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming and expensive</p> <p>Interviewers must engender trust or risk negative response to format</p> <p>Not necessarily representative</p>
<p><b>Focus Groups</b></p> <p>8-10 people led by trained facilitator in “one-off” discussion on particular topic</p>	<p>Selection of group is of primary importance</p> <p>May need to have several groups to investigate views from different perspective</p> <p>Value the input and commitment of group members</p> <p>Requires skilled facilitator</p> <p>Rewards/incentives may be offered</p>	<p>Allows for brainstorming of ideas</p> <p>Can include those who may usually be excluded (e.g., culturally and linguistically diverse groups)</p> <p>Allows in-depth discussions</p>	<p>May be costly</p> <p>Lack of confidentiality</p> <p>Qualitative information only</p> <p>Difficulty in prioritizing issues</p> <p>Does not lend itself easily to discussing sensitive issues</p>
<p><b>Public Hearings</b></p> <p>Formal meetings with scheduled presentations offered</p>	<p>Try to use informal meetings immediately before to build knowledge base</p>	<p>Provides opportunity for public to speak without rebuttal</p> <p>Meets legal requirements</p> <p>Puts comments on record</p>	<p>Does not foster dialogue</p> <p>Creates “us vs. them” feeling</p> <p>Minority groups not easily included</p>
<p><b>Community Facilitators</b></p> <p>Use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct</p>	<p>Define roles, responsibilities and limitations up front</p>	<p>Promotes community-based involvement</p> <p>Capitalizes on existing</p>	<p>Can be difficult to control information flow</p> <p>Can build false</p>

project outreach		networks Enhances project credibility	expectations Information capture can be difficult
<b>Advisory Boards and Commissions</b>  A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process	Define roles and responsibilities up front  Be forthcoming with information  Use a consistently credible process  Interview potential committee members in person before selection  Use third party facilitation  Ensure members communicate with their constituencies	Provides detailed analyses for project issues  Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise	General public may not embrace committee's recommendations  Members may not achieve consensus  Sponsors must accept need for "give and take"
<b>User Panels</b>  A small group regularly assembled to debate or provide input on specific issues over a long period of time	Small size – no more than 12  Have clear objective and time frame	Useful sounding board  Relatively quick feedback  Continuing dialogue  Can build credibility if all sides are represented  May provoke media attention	May provoke unwanted media attention  Can polarize issues if not conceived and moderated well  Users can become too closely linked to the organization
<b>Consensus Conferences</b>  10-16 panel members come together to research a complex issue and then question expert witnesses before reaching a consensus decision	Requires high level of commitment from panel members  Requires compilation of complex material for preparatory days  Make available expert witnesses as determined by panel  Requires skilled and independent moderator	Panel determine questions to ask witnesses leading to greater impartiality  Open to public – transparent  Provides informed deliberation	High-level commitment from panel  Resource -intensive  Costly  Extensive preparatory work  Not representative  May be difficult to reach a consensus
<b>Deliberative Opinion Polls</b>  Measures informed opinion on an issue during a 2-3 day meeting. Uses statistically significant sample	Do not expect or encourage participants to develop a shared view  Requires skilled facilitator	Polling of an informed group  Exposure to different backgrounds, arguments and views	Resource intensive  Can be costly to set-up and pay expenses of those attending  Not statistically represented
<b>Written Consultation Exercises</b>  Inviting public submissions for written comments on specific proposals	Provide full details of issue for which views are sought  Publicize event	Provides detailed information on the issue of those interested  Elicits a considered view	Resource-intensive  May have poor response rate



	<p>May need multiple format for documents</p> <p>Allow ample time to respond</p>		Lengthy process
<p><b>Open Days Community Exhibitions</b></p> <p>Informal events to inform citizens about an organization</p>	<p>Locate suitable venue</p> <p>Publicize the event</p> <p>Provide information displays</p> <p>Timing is important</p>	<p>Gives public flexibility to attend</p> <p>Allows contact with public and can provide ad-hoc feedback</p> <p>Publicize organization</p>	<p>May not be representative</p> <p>Feedback may be limited</p> <p>Difficulty in recording responses</p>
<p><b>Consensus-Building Exercises</b></p> <p>Help people reach consensus by focusing on the issues</p>	<p>Requires experienced mediators. Typically used to bring stakeholders together to reach consensus over an issue</p> <p>Round tables are one approach when adversarial groups are brought together</p>	<p>Helps people reach solutions they can all support</p> <p>Allows for different viewpoints to be expressed</p>	High emotional commitment
<p><b>Citizen Advisory Committees</b></p> <p>Intended to represent broader public views</p>	<p>Benefits from balanced committee</p> <p>Can be made up of variety of organizations from government and public</p> <p>Advice of committee should influence decision-making</p>	<p>Informs public, aids trust in government, reduces conflict</p>	Not always a representative group
<p><b>Referenda</b></p> <p>Issue put to popular vote</p>	<p>Initiated by government</p> <p>Issue should stand on its own (not complex question)</p>	<p>Incites discussion</p> <p>All voters have equal influence</p> <p>Results cannot be ignored</p>	<p>Expensive</p> <p>Potential for undue influence by organizations with greater resources</p> <p>Limited use</p>
<p><b>Information Technologies</b></p> <p>Using information technology as a means to inform and gather feedback (e.g., calls for submissions, completing online questionnaires, etc.)</p>	<p>Access to computers may be limited</p>	<p>Cost-effective after initial outlay</p> <p>Quick response rate</p> <p>Easy to keep information current</p> <p>Can incorporate large amount of data</p>	<p>Won't reach everyone</p> <p>Technical problems</p> <p>Requires expert staff</p> <p>Results can be unrepresentative</p>

## Appendix Four:

### Checklist for Community Engagement

#### Do we have:

- Organizational commitment to engagement and to the outcomes derived?
- Mechanisms and resources to document the full extent of the engagement?
- Adequate time for engagement built into project timelines?
- A shared understanding, from all parties involved, of the scope and objectives of the engagement?
- An understanding from all stakeholders of what is negotiable and open to change and what is not.
- Agreement from all parties concerned as to whether the focus is on gaining agreement on the process for engagement or on the outcome of the engagement process?
- The ability to coordinate information and actions across the organizations involved.
- Relevant information that is readily accessible to all members of the community – including information on the issue and on the engagement process?
- The financial and technical resources to undertake the engagement?
- Practical/logistical matters identified and resourced?
- Appropriately skilled human resources to undertake the engagement?
- Open and accountable processes that can withstand public scrutiny?
- Community understanding of the level of input expected of them?
- Opportunities for engaging the community in debate on the issue?
- All potential stakeholders identified?
- Adequate publicity in place to ensure all potential stakeholders are aware of the engagement?
- An understanding of possible barriers to public participation and appropriate strategies in place?

- Mechanisms in place for monitoring the engagement process and the organizational flexibility to make changes if required?
- Strategies in place for evaluating feedback from the engagement?
- Strategies in place for providing feedback to participants?
- A clear understanding with stakeholders regarding their level of involvement in implementation of outcomes?
- An evaluation of the consultation process built into project timelines?

# Appendix Five

## Evaluation Questions

### 1. Plan

- Were the aims of the consultation made clear?
- What parameters and expectations were defined at the outset?
- Did participants have input into the design and strategies of the engagement?
- Was there a clear understanding of the expectations of all parties?
- Were the consulters trained in the skills required for effective engagement?
- Was financial assistance available to enable low-income participants to participate?
- Was the outcome determined beforehand?
- Were other departments consulted/coordinated?
- Was there agreement on the approach to be taken?
- Were there enough opportunities to allow a full range of views to be expressed?

### 2. Engage

- Were all stakeholders identified at the outset and involved in the engagement?
- Were the stakeholders representative of the affected population?
- How were roles and responsibilities made clear for all involved?
- Was participation voluntary?
- Were independent skilled and neutral facilitators available?
- Was information made accessible to all including special groups?
- Was the process fully documented?
- Did the process maintain objectivity and independence?
- Was there an acceptance of the diverse values, interests and knowledge of all participants?
- Was there respect for the confidentiality of information shared?
- How was flexibility integrated into the process?
- Was enough time allocated for the project?
- Did participants have the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the process?
- Was the feedback provided by participants acted upon?

### 3. Evaluate

- Did the engagement process produce reliable information?
- Was the collected information objectively analyzed by skilled personnel?
- Was there a sense of shared ownership of the process and outcome?
- Was there a commitment to implement the outcome?
- Was feedback provided to participants?
- How did participants express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the process?

## Appendix Six

### Useful Websites

- **Minneapolis Boards and Advisory Commissions**  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/>
- **Citizen Driven Government Performance Measures**  
<http://www.andromeda.rutgers.edu/~ncpp/cdgp/teaching/brief-manual.html>
- **City of Minneapolis Home Page**  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/>
- **Community Connections Calendar**  
<http://www.ccc.localevent.net/>
- **Strategy for Community Engagement Evaluation**  
[http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share\\_your\\_knowledge/evaluation/strategy/strategy.html](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/evaluation/strategy/strategy.html)
- **International Association for Public Participation**  
<http://www.iap2.org/>
- **Evaluating Community Engagement**  
<http://www.onlinelearning.qld.gov.au/materials/ce/ce/info/learning/guide/t6.htm>
- **Civic Engagement in America**  
<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/>
- **CDBG Programs**  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/index.cfm>
- **Alphabetical List of Community Engagement Techniques**  
<http://www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/techniques/alphabetical.jsp>
- **Minneapolis Community Engagement Project**  
[http://mplscommunityengagement.com/modules.php?name=Your\\_Account](http://mplscommunityengagement.com/modules.php?name=Your_Account)
- **Guides and Publications for Community Engagement**  
[http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share\\_your\\_knowledge/resources/guides\\_publications.html](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/resources/guides_publications.html)
- **Onadaga Citizens League**  
<http://www.suce.syr.edu/community/ocl/about.htm>