



TECHNIQUES TO SHARE INFORMATION


TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
BILL STUFFERS			
Information flyer included with monthly utility bill	Design bill stuffers to be eye-catching to encourage readership	Widespread distribution within service area Economical use of existing mailings	Limited information can be conveyed Message may get confused as from the mailing entity
BRIEFINGS			
Use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate. Normally these groups need speakers. Examples of target audiences: Rotary Club, Lions Clubs, Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters. Also a good technique for elected officials.	KISS! Keep it Short and Simple Use "show and tell" techniques Bring visuals	Control of information/presentation Opportunity to reach a wide variety of individuals who may not have been attracted to another format Opportunity to expand mailing list Similar presentations can be used for different groups Builds community goodwill	Project stakeholders may not be in target audiences Topic may be too technical to capture interest of audience
CENTRAL INFORMATION CONTACTS			
Identify designated contacts for the public and media	If possible, list a person not a position Best if contact person is local Anticipate how phones will be answered Make sure message is kept up to date	People don't get "the run around" when they call Controls information flow Conveys image of "accessibility"	Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses May filter public message from technical staff and decision makers May not serve to answer many of the toughest questions
EXPERT PANELS			
Public meeting designed in "Meet the Press" format. Media panel interviews experts from different perspectives. Can also be conducted with a neutral moderator asking questions of panel members.	Provide opportunity for participation by general public following panel Have a neutral moderator Agree on ground rules in advance Possibly encourage local organizations to sponsor rather than challenge	Encourages education of the media Presents opportunity for balanced discussion of key issues Provides opportunity to dispel scientific misinformation	Requires substantial preparation and organization May enhance public concerns by increasing visibility of issues

 An IAP2 TipSheet provides more information about this technique.
TipSheets are included as part of the course materials for IAP2's Techniques for Effective Public Participation.

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
FEATURE STORIES			
<p>Focused stories on general project-related issues</p>	<p>Anticipate visuals or schedule interesting events to help sell the story</p> <p>Recognize that reporters are always looking for an angle</p>	<p>Can heighten the perceived importance of the project</p> <p>More likely to be read and taken seriously by the public</p>	<p>No control over what information is presented or how</p>
FIELD OFFICES			
<p>Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to inquiries</p>	<p>Provide adequate staff to accommodate group tours</p> <p>Use brochures and videotapes to advertise and reach broader audience</p> <p>Consider providing internet access station</p> <p>Select an accessible and frequented location</p>	<p>Excellent opportunity to educate school children</p> <p>Places information dissemination in a positive educational setting</p> <p>Information is easily accessible to the public</p> <p>Provides an opportunity for more responsive ongoing communications focused on specific public involvement activities</p>	<p>Relatively expensive, especially for project-specific use</p> <p>Access is limited to those in vicinity of the center unless facility is mobile</p>
HOT LINES			
 <p>Identify a separate line for public access to prerecorded project information or to reach project team members who can answer questions/obtain input</p>	<p>Make sure contact has sufficient knowledge to answer most project-related questions</p> <p>If possible, list a person not a position</p> <p>Best if contact person is local</p>	<p>People don't get "the run around" when they call</p> <p>Controls information flow</p> <p>Conveys image of "accessibility"</p> <p>Easy to provide updates on project activities</p>	<p>Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses</p>
INFORMATION KIOSKS			
<p>A station where project information is available.</p>	<p>Make sure the information presented is appropriately tailored to the audience you want to reach.</p> <p>Place in well traveled areas.</p> <p>Can be temporary or permanent.</p>	<p>Can reach large numbers of people.</p> <p>Can use computer technology to make the kiosk interactive and to gather comments.</p>	<p>Equipment or materials may "disappear".</p> <p>Information needs to be kept up to date.</p>




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INFORMATION REPOSITORIES			
Libraries, city halls, distribution centers, schools, and other public facilities make good locations for housing project-related information	<p>Make sure personnel at location know where materials are kept</p> <p>Keep list of repository items</p> <p>Track usage through a sign-in sheet</p>	<p>Relevant information is accessible to the public without incurring the costs or complications of tracking multiple copies sent to different people</p> <p>Can set up visible distribution centers for project information</p>	Information repositories are often not well used by the public
LISTSERVES AND E-MAIL			
Both listserves and email are electronic mailing lists. With listserves, anyone can register on the listserv to receive any messages sent to the listserv. With e-mail, someone needs to create and maintain an electronic distribution list for the project.	<p>People read and share e-mail quite differently from hard copy mail. Thus you must write messages differently.</p> <p>Augment with hard copy mail for those who prefer it or who don't have ready e-mail access.</p> <p>To share information of any sort including notifying stakeholders when new material is posted to a Web site, inviting them to upcoming meetings, including comment and evaluation forms, sharing summaries of meetings, comments and input, etc.</p>	<p>As an inexpensive way to directly reach stakeholders</p> <p>When you hope people will pass on messages to others since electronic-based mail is much easier to share than hard copies</p>	Can be difficult to maintain accurate, current e-mail addresses as these tend to change more frequently than postal addresses.
NEWS CONFERENCES			
	Make sure all speakers are trained in media relations	Opportunity to reach all media in one setting	Limited to news-worthy events
NEWSPAPER INSERTS			
A "fact sheet" within the local newspaper	<p>Design needs to get noticed in the pile of inserts</p> <p>Try on a day that has few other inserts</p>	<p>Provides community-wide distribution of information</p> <p>Presented in the context of local paper, insert is more likely to be read and taken seriously</p> <p>Provides opportunity to include public comment form</p>	Expensive, especially in urban areas

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PRESS RELEASES & PRESS PACKETS			
Press Releases	Fax or e-mail press releases or media kits	Informs the media of project milestones	Low media response rate
Press packets (provides resource and background information plus contact information)	Foster a relationship with editorial board and reporters	Press release language is often used directly in articles Opportunity for technical and legal reviews	Frequent poor placement of press release within newspapers
PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS			
Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines	Figure out the best days and best sections of the paper to reach intended audience Avoid rarely read notice sections	Potentially reaches broad public	Expensive, especially in urban areas Allows for relatively limited amount of information
PRINTED PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS			
Fact Sheets	KISS! Keep It Short and Simple	Can reach large target audience	Only as good as the mailing list/distribution network
Newsletters	Make it visually interesting but avoid a slick sales look	Allows for technical and legal reviews	Limited capability to communicate complicated concepts
Brochures	Include a postage-paid comment form to encourage two-way communication and to expand mailing list	Encourages written responses if comment form enclosed	No guarantee materials will be read
Issue Papers		Facilitates documentation of public involvement process	
Progress Reports			
Direct Mail Letters	Be sure to explain public role and how public comments have affected project decisions. Q&A format works well		
RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARIES			
A form of documentation that provides feedback to the public regarding comments received and how they are being incorporated	May be used to comply with legal requirements for comment documentation. Use publicly and openly to announce and show how all comments were addressed	Responsiveness summaries can be an effective way to demonstrate how public comments are addressed in the decision process.	With a large public, the process of response documentation can get unwieldy, especially if Web-based comments are involved.
TECHNICAL INFORMATION CONTACTS			
Providing access to technical expertise to individuals and organizations	The technical resource must be perceived as credible by the audience	Builds credibility and helps address public concerns about equity Can be effective conflict resolution technique where facts are debated	Limited opportunities exist for providing technical assistance Technical experts may counter project information




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TECHNICAL REPORTS			
Technical documents reporting research or policy findings	Reports are often more credible if prepared by independent groups	Provides for thorough explanation of project decisions	Can be more detailed than desired by many participants May not be written in clear, accessible language
TELEVISION			
Television programming to present information and elicit audience response	Cable options are expanding and can be inexpensive Check out expanding video options on the internet	Can be used in multiple geographic areas Many people will take the time to watch rather than read Provides opportunity for positive media coverage at groundbreaking and other significant events	High expense Difficult to gauge impact on audience
WORLD WIDE WEB SITES			
 Web site provides information and links to other sites through the World Wide Web. Electronic mailing lists are included.	A good home page is critical Each Web page must be independent Put critical information at the top of page Use headings, bulleted and numbered lists to steer user	Reaches across distances Makes information accessible anywhere at any time Saves printing and mailing costs	Users may not have easy access to the Internet or knowledge of how to use computers Large files or graphics can take a long time to download





TECHNIQUES TO COMPILE AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK




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COMMENT FORMS			
Mail-In-forms often included in fact sheets and other project mailings to gain information on public concerns and preferences Can provide a Web-based or e-mailed form	Use prepaid postage Include a section to add name to the mailing list Document results as part of public involvement record	Provides input from those who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides a mechanism for expanding mailing list	Does not generate statistically valid results Only as good as the mailing list Results can be easily skewed
COMPUTER-BASED POLLING			
Surveys conducted via computer network	Appropriate for attitudinal research	Provides instant analyses of results Can be used in multiple areas Novelty of technique improves rate of response	High expense Detail of inquiry is limited
COMMUNITY FACILITATORS			
Use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct project outreach	Define roles, responsibilities and limitations up front Select and train facilitators carefully	Promotes community-based involvement Capitalizes on existing networks Enhances project credibility	Can be difficult to control information flow Can build false expectations
DELPHI PROCESSES			
A method of obtaining agreement on forecasts or other parameters by a group of people without the need for a face-to-face group process. The process involves several iterations of participant responses to a questionnaire and results tabulation and dissemination until additional iterations don't result in significant changes.	Delphi processes provide an opportunity to develop agreement among a group of people without the need for meeting Delphi processes can be conducted more rapidly with computer technology. You can modify the Delphi process to get agreement on sets of individuals to be representatives on advisory groups, to be presenters at symposia, etc.	Can be done anonymously so that people whose answers differ substantially from the norm can feel comfortable expressing themselves. A Delphi process can be especially useful when participants are in different geographic locations.	Keeping participants engaged and active in each round may be a challenge.
IN-PERSON SURVEYS			
One-on-one "focus groups" with standardized questionnaire or methodology such as "stated preference"	Make sure use of results is clear before technique is designed	Provides traceable data Reaches broad, representative public	Expensive




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INTERNET SURVEYS/POLLS			
<p>Web-based response polls</p>	<p>Be precise in how you set up site; chat rooms or discussion places can generate more input than can be reviewed</p>	<p>Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings</p> <p>Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list</p> <p>Higher response rate than other communication forms</p>	<p>Generally not statistically valid results</p> <p>Can be very labor intensive to look at all of the responses</p> <p>Cannot control geographic reach of poll</p> <p>Results can be easily skewed</p>
INTERVIEWS			
 <p>One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus-building programs</p>	<p>Where feasible, interviews should be conducted in person, particularly when considering candidates for citizens committees</p>	<p>Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum</p> <p>Provides opportunity to obtain feedback from all stakeholders</p> <p>Can be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members</p>	<p>Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming</p>
MAILED SURVEYS & QUESTIONNAIRES			
 <p>Inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation</p>	<p>Make sure you need statistically valid results 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 valid 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>
RESIDENT FEEDBACK REGISTERS			
 <p>A randomly selected database of residents created to give feedback to an agency, business, or organization about its services, priorities, project or contentious issues.</p>	<p>Think through what terms the participants should have. In the United Kingdom, 2 years is common.</p> <p>Using an independent company to select the participants will help allay any cynical concerns of “handpicking” residents to get the answer sponsors want</p>	<p>Useful in gathering input from “regular” citizens, on an ongoing basis, instead of just from representatives of interest groups or those who more typically come to meetings, participate on advisory groups, etc.</p> <p>Provides useful input without requiring people to come to meetings</p>	<p>Panel may not be credible with the larger community if people feel they have not been selected fairly.</p>




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TELEPHONE SURVEYS/POLLS			
Random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation	Make sure you need statistically valid results before making investment Survey/questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys	Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list Higher response rate than with mail-in surveys	More expensive and labor intensive than mailed surveys


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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESSES			
 <p>Appreciative inquiry is a systematic process that uses the art and practice of asking questions and building upon narrative communications to surface imagination, innovation and commitment to action.</p>	<p>Requires “whole system” involvement; participants should be a microcosm of the potentially affected public.</p> <p>Process requires an especially high level of engagement by core team members.</p>	<p>Creates high level of engagement and commitment to change as an ongoing process, not a one-time event.</p> <p>Fosters positive, grassroots level action</p> <p>Connects the community by celebrating stories that reflect the best of what is and has been.</p>	<p>Participants need to “own” and co-create the process. Core team members may burn out.</p> <p>Given the high level of engagement, people expect to see changes as a result of the process.</p> <p>The sponsor of the process needs to be truly committed to the outcomes.</p>
CHARRETTES			
 <p>Intensive session where participants design project features</p>	<p>Best used to foster creative ideas</p> <p>Be clear about how results will be used</p>	<p>Promotes joint problem solving and creative thinking</p>	<p>Participants may not be seen as representative by larger public</p>
CITIZEN JURIES			
 <p>Small group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross-examine witnesses, make a recommendation. Always non-binding with no legal standing</p> <p>More Info: Citizen Jury® The Jefferson Center www.jefferson-center.org or www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU/SRU37.html</p>	<p>Requires skilled moderator</p> <p>Commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why</p> <p>Be clear about how results will be used</p>	<p>Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue</p> <p>Public can identify with the “ordinary” citizens</p> <p>Pinpoint fatal flaws or gauge public reaction</p>	<p>Resource intensive</p>
COFFEE KLATCHES – KITCHEN TABLE MEETINGS			
<p>Small meetings within neighborhood usually at a person's home</p>	<p>Make sure staff is very polite and appreciative</p>	<p>Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue</p> <p>Maximizes two-way communication</p>	<p>Can be costly and labor intensive</p>
COMPUTER-ASSISTED MEETINGS			
<p>Any sized meeting when participants use interactive computer technology to register opinions</p>	<p>Understand your audience, particularly the demographic categories</p> <p>Design the inquiries to provide useful results</p> <p>Use facilitator trained in the technique and technology</p>	<p>Immediate graphic results prompt focused discussion</p> <p>Areas of agreement/disagreement easily portrayed</p> <p>Minority views are honored</p> <p>Responses are private</p> <p>Levels the playing field</p>	<p>Software limits design</p> <p>Potential for placing too much emphasis on numbers</p> <p>Technology failure</p>



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DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUES			
 <p>A systematic dialogic process that brings people together as a group to make choices about difficult, complex public issues where there is a lot of uncertainty about solutions and a high likelihood of people polarizing on the issue. The goal of deliberation is to find where there is common ground for action.</p>	<p>Considerable upfront planning and preparation may be needed. The deliberation revolves around 3 or 4 options described in an Issue or Options booklet.</p> <p>Process should be facilitated by a trained moderator.</p> <p>Deliberation should occur in a relatively small group, about 8 to 20 people. A larger public may need to break into several forums, requiring more moderators.</p>	<p>Participants openly share different perspectives and end up with a broader view on an issue.</p> <p>A diverse group identifies the area of common ground, within which decision makers can make policies and plans.</p>	<p>Participants may not truly reflect different perspectives.</p> <p>Participants are not willing to openly discuss areas of conflict.</p>
DELIBERATIVE POLLING PROCESSES			
 <p>Measures informed opinion on an issue</p> <p>More Info: The Center for Deliberative Democracy http://cdd.stanford.edu</p>	<p>Do not expect or encourage participants to develop a shared view</p> <p>Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique</p>	<p>Can tell decision makers what the public would think if they had more time and information</p> <p>Exposure to different backgrounds, arguments and views</p>	<p>Resource intensive</p> <p>Often held in conjunction with television companies</p> <p>2- to 3-day meeting</p>
DIALOGUE TECHNIQUES			
 <p>An intentional form of communication that supports the creation of shared meaning.</p>	<p>Dialogue requires discipline to intentionally suspend judgment and fully listen to one another. Participants need to be open to communication that engages both thinking and feeling.</p> <p>Participants need to feel safe to speak truthfully.</p> <p>It is important to carefully craft questions to be addressed in dialogue.</p>	<p>The group engages in “the art of thinking together” and creates shared meaning on a difficult issue.</p> <p>A new understanding of a problem or opportunity emerges.</p>	<p>Participants are “ready” to engage in dialogic communication. They may not be able to move from individual positions and reflectively listen to each other.</p>
FAIRS & EVENTS			
 <p>Central event with multiple activities to provide project information and raise awareness</p>	<p>All issues — large and small — must be considered</p> <p>Make sure adequate resources and staff are available</p>	<p>Focuses public attention on one element</p> <p>Conducive to media coverage</p> <p>Allows for different levels of information sharing</p>	<p>Public must be motivated to attend</p> <p>Usually expensive to do it well</p> <p>Can damage image if not done well</p>

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FISHBOWL PROCESSES			
A meeting where decision makers do their work in a “fishbowl” so that the public can openly view their deliberations.	The meeting can be designed so that the public can participate by joining the fishbowl temporarily or moving about the room to indicate preferences.	Transparent decision making. Decision makers are able to gauge public reaction in the course of their deliberations.	The roles and responsibilities of the decision makers and the public may not be clear.
FOCUSED CONVERSATIONS			
 <p>A structured approach to exploring a challenging situation or difficult issue by using a series of questions arranged in four stages:</p> <p>Objective — Review facts</p> <p>Reflective —Review emotional response</p> <p>Interpretive — Review meaning</p> <p>Decisional — Consider future action</p>	<p>Plan the series of questions ahead of time and don’t skip a step.</p> <p>May be used in many different settings, from debriefing a process to exploring the level of agreement on a given topic.</p> <p>Be clear on the intent of the conversation.</p>	<p>People learn new information and insights on a complex issue.</p> <p>People learn to respect and understand other views.</p> <p>The decisional steps leads to individual or collective action.</p>	<p>People jump ahead to interpretation or decisions and lose the meaning of the structured process.</p>
FOCUS GROUPS			
 <p>Message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience. Can also be used to obtain input on planning decisions</p>	<p>Conduct at least two sessions for a given target</p> <p>Use a skilled focus group facilitator to conduct the session</p>	<p>Provides opportunity to test key messages prior to implementing program</p> <p>Works best for select target audience</p>	<p>Relatively expensive if conducted in focus group testing facility</p> <p>May require payment to participants</p>
FUTURE SEARCH CONFERENCES			
 <p>Focuses on the future of an organization, a network of people or community</p> <p>More Info: Future Search Network www.futuresearch.net</p>	<p>Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique</p>	<p>Can involve hundreds of people simultaneously in major organizational change decisions</p> <p>Individuals are experts</p> <p>Can lead to substantial changes across entire organization</p>	<p>Logistically challenging</p> <p>May be difficult to gain complete commitment from all stakeholders</p> <p>2- to 3-day meeting</p>
MEETINGS WITH EXISTING GROUPS			
<p>Small meetings with existing groups or in conjunction with another group’s event</p>	<p>Understand who the likely audience is to be</p> <p>Make opportunities for one-on-one meetings</p>	<p>Opportunity to get on the agenda</p> <p>Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum</p>	<p>May be too selective and can leave out important groups</p>

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ONGOING ADVISORY GROUPS			
 <p>A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process.</p> <p>May also have members from the project team and experts.</p>	<p>Define roles and responsibilities up front</p> <p>Be forthcoming with information</p> <p>Use a consistently credible process</p> <p>Interview potential committee members in person before selection</p> <p>Use third-party facilitation</p>	<p>Provides for detailed analyses for project issues</p> <p>Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise</p>	<p>General public may not embrace committee's recommendations</p> <p>Members may not achieve consensus</p> <p>Sponsor must accept need for give-and-take</p> <p>Time and labor intensive</p>
OPEN HOUSES			
 <p>An open house encourages the public to tour at their own pace. The facility should be set up with several informational stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits.</p>	<p>Someone should explain format at the door</p> <p>Have each participant fill out a comment sheet to document their participation</p> <p>Be prepared for a crowd all at once — develop a meeting contingency plan</p> <p>Encourage people to draw on maps to actively participate</p> <p>Set up stations so that several people (6-10) can view at once</p>	<p>Foster small group or one-on-one communications</p> <p>Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions</p> <p>Less likely to receive media coverage</p> <p>Builds credibility</p>	<p>Difficult to document public input</p> <p>Agitators may stage themselves at each display</p> <p>Usually more staff intensive than a meeting</p>
OPEN SPACE MEETINGS			
 <p>Participants offer topics and others participate according to interest</p> <p>More Info: H.H. Owens & Co. www.openspaceworld.com</p>	<p>Important to have a powerful theme or vision statement to generate topics</p> <p>Need flexible facilities to accommodate numerous groups of different sizes</p> <p>Ground rules and procedures must be carefully explained for success</p>	<p>Provides structure for giving people opportunity and responsibility to create valuable product or experience</p> <p>Includes immediate summary of discussion</p>	<p>Most important issues could get lost in the shuffle</p> <p>Can be difficult to get accurate reporting of results</p>
PANELS			
<p>A group assembled to debate or provide input on specific issues</p>	<p>Most appropriate to show different news to public</p> <p>Panelists must be credible with public</p>	<p>Provides opportunity to dispel misinformation</p> <p>Can build credibility if all sides are represented</p> <p>May create wanted media attention</p>	<p>May create unwanted media attention</p>

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PUBLIC HEARINGS			
<p>Formal meetings with scheduled presentations offered. Typically, members of the public individually state opinions/positions that are recorded.</p>	<p>May be required by sponsor and/or legal requirement</p>	<p>Provides opportunity for public to speak without rebuttal</p>	<p>Does not foster constructive dialogue</p> <p>Can perpetuate an “us vs. them” feeling</p>
PUBLIC MEETINGS			
 <p>An organized large-group meeting usually used to make a presentation and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and give comments. Public meetings are open to the public at large</p>	<p>Set up the meeting to be as welcoming and receptive as possible to ideas and opinions and to increase interaction between technical staff and the public.</p> <p>Review all materials and presentations ahead of time.</p>	<p>Participants hear relevant information and have an open opportunity to ask questions and comment.</p> <p>People learn more by hearing others’ questions and comments.</p> <p>Legal requirements are met</p>	<p>The meeting escalates out of control because emotions are high.</p> <p>Facilitators are not able to establish an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared.</p>
REVOLVING CONVERSATIONS (ALSO KNOW AS SAMOAN CIRCLES)			
 <p>Leaderless meeting that stimulates active participation</p> <p>More Info: Larry Aggens www.involve.com</p>	<p>Set room up with center table surrounded by concentric circles</p> <p>Need microphones</p> <p>Requires several people to record</p>	<p>Can be used with 10 to 500 people</p> <p>Works best with controversial issues</p>	<p>Dialogue can stall or become monopolized</p>
STUDY CIRCLES			
 <p>A highly participatory process for involving numerous small groups in making a difference in their communities.</p>	<p>Study circles work best if multiple groups working at the same time in different locations and then come together to share.</p> <p>Study circles are typically structured around a study circle guide</p>	<p>Large numbers of people are involved without having them all meet at the same time and place.</p> <p>A diverse group of people agrees on opportunities for action to create social change.</p>	<p>Participants may find that the results are hard to assess and may feel that the process didn’t lead to concrete action.</p> <p>It may be difficult to reach and engage some segments of the community.</p>
SYMPOSIA			
<p>A meeting or conference to discuss a particular topic involving multiple speakers.</p>	<p>Provides an opportunity for presentations by experts with different views on a topic.</p> <p>Requires upfront planning to identify appropriate speakers.</p> <p>Needs strong publicity.</p>	<p>People learn new information on different sides of an issue.</p> <p>Provides a foundation for informed involvement by the public.</p>	<p>Experts don’t represent different perspectives on an issue.</p> <p>Controversial presenters may draw protests.</p>

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TASK FORCES – EXPERT COMMITTEE			
A group of experts or representatives formed to develop a specific product or policy recommendation	<p>Obtain strong leadership in advance</p> <p>Make sure membership has credibility with the public</p>	<p>Findings of a task force of independent or diverse interests will have greater credibility</p> <p>Provides constructive opportunity for compromise</p>	<p>Task force may not come to consensus or results may be too general to be meaningful</p> <p>Time and labor intensive</p>
TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS — GUIDED AND SELF-GUIDED			
 <p>Provide tours for key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media</p>	<p>Know how many participants can be accommodated and make plans for overflow</p> <p>Plan question/answer session</p> <p>Consider providing refreshments</p> <p>Demonstrations work better than presentations</p> <p>Can be implemented as a self-guided with an itinerary and tour journal of guided questions and observations</p>	<p>Opportunity to develop rapport with key stakeholders</p> <p>Reduces outrage by making choices more familiar</p>	<p>Number of participants is limited by logistics</p> <p>Potentially attractive to protestors</p>
TOWN MEETINGS			
A group meeting format where people come together as equals to share concerns.	<p>Town meetings are often hosted by elected officials to elicit input from constituents.</p> <p>There are cultural and political differences in the understanding of the term “town meeting.” It may be interpreted differently wherever you are working.</p>	<p>Views are openly expressed.</p> <p>Officials hear from their constituents in an open forum.</p>	<p>The meeting escalates out of control because emotions are high.</p> <p>Facilitators are not able to establish an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared.</p>
WEB-BASED MEETINGS			
Meetings that occur via the Internet	<p>Tailor agenda to your participants</p> <p>Combine telephone and face-to-face meetings with Web-based meetings.</p> <p>Plan for graphics and other supporting materials</p>	<p>Cost and time efficient</p> <p>Can include a broader audience</p> <p>People can participate at different times or at the same time</p>	<p>Consider timing if international time zones are represented</p> <p>Difficult to manage or resolve conflict</p>

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
WORKSHOPS			
 <p>An informal public meeting that may include presentations and exhibits but ends with interactive working groups</p>	<p>Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop</p> <p>Conduct training in advance with small group facilitators. Each should receive a list of instructions, especially where procedures involve weighting/ ranking of factors or criteria</p>	<p>Excellent for discussions on criteria or analysis of alternatives Fosters small group or one-to-one communication</p> <p>Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions</p> <p>Builds credibility</p> <p>Maximizes feedback obtained from participants</p> <p>Fosters public ownership in solving the problem</p>	<p>Hostile participants may resist what they perceive to be the “divide and conquer” strategy of breaking into small groups</p> <p>Several small-group facilitators are necessary</p>
WORLD CAFES			
 <p>A meeting process featuring a series of simultaneous conversations in response to predetermined questions</p> <p>Participants change tables during the process and focus on identifying common ground in response to each question.</p>	<p>Room set-up is important. The room should feel conducive to a conversation and not as institutional as the standard meeting format.</p> <p>Allows for people to work in small groups without staff facilitators.</p> <p>Think through how to bring closure to the series of conversations.</p>	<p>Participants feel a stronger connection to the full group because they have talked to people at different tables.</p> <p>Good questions help people move from raising concerns to learning new views and co-creating solutions.</p>	<p>Participants resist moving from table to table.</p> <p>Reporting results at the end becomes awkward or tedious for a large group.</p> <p>The questions evoke the same responses.</p>