

MOVING SUSTAINABILITY FORWARD:

Public Engagement for

Local Government Sustainability Planning

in the Columbia Basin Trust Area

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following research looks at public engagement in the context of local government sustainability planning for the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), an organization that works to support the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area of British Columbia (BC) that was most impacted by the Columbia River Treaty—the “Basin”. CBT works with communities and local governments on many issues to meet their broad mandate and this report came out of discussions between local government officials and staff at a workshop, focused on sustainability planning, that CBT co-facilitated with Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities in November 2009. At this workshop, called *Moving Sustainability Forward*, the theme from discussions and presentations revolved around the need for and challenge in effectively engaging the public.

The research had three main objectives:

1. Understand the challenges local governments in the Basin are facing around public engagement specific to sustainability planning.
2. Identify existing smart practices around public engagement (based on communities that have completed public engagement), which are appropriate to the needs and resources of Basin communities.
3. Identify ways CBT can continue to support effective local government public engagement and develop and prioritize recommendations for CBT.

The research begins with a review of public engagement literature. The literature review discusses the debate around measuring *effectiveness* of public engagement and offers some key themes around improving outcomes of public engagement from the literature. This emerging area is seeking empirical evidence to support the theoretical assumptions that public engagement improves public policy and decision making by increasing the public’s trust in the decision makers, increasing public understanding and acceptance of the decision and increasing the knowledge available to make a decision.

Despite the ambiguity of measuring *effectiveness*, the literature provides hints as to improving the likelihood of success (or at least, avoiding likely downfalls). Looking at public engagement as an ongoing process, building trust through engagement and within public engagement strategies, and understanding the important role social capital (Putnam, 2000) and connections play all provide avenues toward effective engagement.

The multi-method approach used for this report provides insight into the experiences of local governments in the Basin and select other communities around the challenges they face with public engagement, as well as the ways they have been successful. These approaches included interviews with local government staff and elected officials in the Basin and a review of smart practices from communities that have completed successful public engagement exercises. An additional third method was used as an opportunity to ground truth the preliminary options identified during the first two methods with local government officials at the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments convention.

Interviews

The interviews with thirty five local government elected officials and staff assessed three key areas to understand the experiences with public engagement, the challenges local governments faced, and the areas where they could be better supported with public engagement.

1. *Assessing the experience local government staff and elected officials had with public engagement and what plans, projects, or policies in which they do use, or planned to use public engagement.*

It is clear that staff and elected officials feel that public engagement is important and are aware of a number of strategies. Most common strategies mentioned by participants were the more traditional: open houses, surveys, and public meetings. However, most participants were keen to try and learn more about creative strategies and were aware of at least one.

2. *Understanding the challenges local government staff and elected officials face when doing or planning a public engagement initiative.*

Overall, interviewees were keen to try engagement but the challenge of having enough time, resources, and people to do the engagement were paramount. Another key theme was the need for information and expertise around how to effectively engage the public to build trust. The need for all players in a public engagement exercise to be empowered, from council, to local government management, staff and the public was acknowledged both elected officials and staff as a key contributor to success.

3. *Noting the needs of local governments and identifying any potential roles for CBT to provide support.*

Overall, respondents provided key insights into four areas where they need support: internal capacity, key resource person (external capacity), information, and help working with consultants.

While several respondents remarked how important CBT funding was to making projects work, funding was not the main theme or request from respondents. Additionally, several respondents presented thoughtful responses on the role of CBT as providing a regional perspective. One respondent described how local governments appreciate CBT looking ahead to the next big issue and helping coordinate a regional dialogue on an emerging issue. Respondents used examples of CBT's *Affordable Housing Resources Program, Watersmart, Climate Change Adaptation* and *State of the Basin* as providing information and resources to help facilitate local government collaboration and providing information and support on an issue that is affecting the entire region.

Smart Practices

From interviews and research into the experience of seven example communities: Golden, Jasper, Revelstoke, Rossland, Slocan, St. Mary's, and Williams Lake, fourteen smart practises were developed for local government public engagement around sustainability planning.

1. *Use active citizens to lead the process:* Communities used steering committees, task force, and a committee with a mix of volunteers, and local government officials and staff.
2. *Go to the people:* Several communities tried to go to where people were instead of asking people to come to them. They went to people's homes, grocery stores, community events, and even a local pub.
3. *Use targeted approaches to reach demographics:* certain groups are less likely to attend community wide events. Example communities specifically targeted youth, seniors, and business people.
4. *Make partnerships with key community leaders:* Communities worked with private, public, and voluntary sector leaders as well as with educational institutions to draw on their expertise and reach out into those leader's networks.
5. *Use a creative technique for a public meeting:* Techniques used by communities included a pucha kucha night, rural cafe, and a design charrette.
6. *Create a fun public event:* From hosting a concert in a park or creating a local version of "the Amazing Race" creative strategies were used by example communities.
7. *Showcase your plan visually and experientially:* St. Mary's is building a tipi, a relevant symbol to their First Nations community, to represent their strategic plan.

8. *Use a new medium:* Many of the example communities used videos and online forums to reach the larger community. Slokan used a Google map to identify community assets.
9. *Provide incentives to attend:* Food, prizes, and childcare are popular incentives to get busy community members out to meetings.
10. *Let the community know how their input was used:* Report back to the community on how the plan is being used.
11. *Realise that It takes more time than you think it will:* A key lesson learned from example communities was that these projects take a lot of staff and volunteer time.
12. *Resist the urge to invite the entire community to every event.* The communities found meetings with a particular group were successful at gathering information that is difficult to get in a large group.
13. *Communication between council, staff and consultants is key:* As some of the communities were among the first in the Province to adopt a sustainability plan, they found it challenging to venture into the unknown and make sure that council, staff and consultants all had the same expectations.
14. *Prioritize:* Sustainability plans with good public engagement generate enthusiasm in a community and good ideas. A local government needs to prioritize areas to address in the short, medium and long term.

Finally, the preliminary areas where CBT could support local governments: people (staff/ volunteers), key resource person (expert), information sharing, and working with consultants were taken as survey options to the 2010 Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) convention. This additional method created an important opportunity to ground truth early options for supporting public engagement in Basin communities and it was found that the priority was for the availability of key resource people: experts, facilitators, and researchers, closely followed by the need for capacity: staff, volunteers, and intern/coop students. An additional benefit of this method was it allowed both the researcher and participants to experientially test an effective public engagement exercise by the choice of technique used to solicit input.

The input from the public engagement at the AKBLG convention along with the smart practices, literature, and interviews were used to inform the recommendations for CBT. The report offers options for how CBT can continue to support effective public engagement by local governments while serving as a resource to local governments on smart practices for public engagement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 2 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 7 |
| 1.1 Study area context | 7 |
| 1.1 Scope | 8 |
| 1.2 Background to the report..... | 9 |
| 1.3 Structure of the report | 10 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 12 |
| 2.1 Public engagement | 12 |
| 2.2 Effective engagement | 13 |
| 2.3 Improving outcomes of public engagement | 14 |
| 2.4 Sustainability | 16 |
| 2.5 Summary | 17 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology..... | 18 |
| 3.1 Interviews | 19 |
| 3.2 Smart practices review..... | 19 |
| 3.3 Ground truth of early recommendations | 21 |
| 3.4 Summary..... | 21 |
| Chapter 4: Local Government Interview Summary..... | 23 |
| 4.1 Assessing experience with public engagement | 23 |
| 4.2 Challenges and successes with public engagement | 24 |
| 4.3 Needs and potential roles for CBT | 26 |
| Chapter: 5 Smart Practices | 30 |
| 5.1 Use engaged citizens to lead the process | 30 |
| 5.2 Go to the people..... | 30 |
| 5.3 Use targeted approaches to reach particular demographics | 31 |
| 5.4 Make partnerships with key community leaders | 31 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 5.5 Use a creative technique for a public meeting | 31 |
| 5.6 Create a fun public event | 32 |
| 5.7 Showcase your plan visually and experientially..... | 32 |
| 5.8 Use a new medium | 33 |
| 5.9 Provide incentives to attend..... | 33 |
| 5.10 Let the community know how their input was used | 33 |
| 5.11 Realise that it takes more time than you think it will: | 33 |
| 5.12 Resist the urge to invite the entire community to every event | 33 |
| 5.13 Communication between council, staff and consultants is key..... | 34 |
| 5.14 Prioritize | 34 |
| 5.15 Summary | 34 |
| Chapter 6: Preliminary Analysis and Ground truthing Early Recommendations | 35 |
| Chapter 7: Final Recommendations to Client | 38 |
| Chapter 8: Conclusion..... | 39 |
| References..... | 41 |
| Appendix A: List of Communities Interviewed..... | 43 |
| Appendix B: Smart Practice Community Stories..... | 44 |
| Appendix C: Map of the Columbia Basin Trust Region | 51 |
| Appendix D: Interview Questions | 52 |
| Appendix E: Example Communities Interview Script Outline | 53 |
| Appendix F: Verbal Consent Form..... | 54 |
| Appendix G: Example of Relationships between Planning Documents – Resort Municipality of Whistler. | 56 |
| Appendix H: Public Participation Spectrum | 57 |
| Appendix I: Toolkits and Useful Websites..... | 58 |
| Appendix J: The Columbia River Treaty And CBT | 59 |
| Appendix K: Ethics approval | 61 |
| Appendix L: Ethics Application..... | 62 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) commissioned this report to examine public engagement for local government sustainability planning in the CBT area. This report investigates the challenges local governments in the region face when doing public engagement around sustainability planning. The report draws on examples from local governments who have undertaken public engagement to develop smart practices for public engagement. Drawing from the smart practices, identified challenges, and a literature review on effective public engagement, the report identifies ways to support local governments in the CBT area to perform *effective* public engagement.

1.1 STUDY AREA CONTEXT

This project is focused on the area of British Columbia (BC) that is defined as “the Region” in the *Columbia Basin Trust Act*, the Provincial legislation that created CBT in 1995. This area, generally referred to as “the Basin”, is shown in Appendix C – Map of the Columbia Basin Trust Region. The Basin is an area in the south eastern corner of BC that is typically referred to as the Kootenays.

The Basin has a total population of approximately 160,000 spread over four mountain ranges: the Rockies, Purcells, Selkirks, and Monashees. Water is an important geographic feature of the area and most communities are on the Columbia River in the valleys of the region. Major water bodies are the Columbia and Kootenay Rivers, Kootenay Lake, and the reservoirs created by the Columbia River Treaty: Kinbasket, Revelstoke Lake, Arrow Lakes, and Kooacanusa. There are 25 incorporated municipalities and five regional districts¹ in the Basin. The Ktunaxa First Nation people have inhabited the Basin area for ten thousand years. The Shuswap and Sinixt First Nations also call areas of the Basin home. Traditionally this area was settled around the industries of mining, forestry, and transportation (particularly Canadian Pacific Rail). Tourism in the Basin started historically with Canadian Pacific Rail bringing over Swiss guides to guide tourists travelling on the rail. Today, tourism has grown into a major economic driver with destination ski resorts, numerous hot springs, golf courses, and water recreation opportunities within the Basin.

Local governments are a key stakeholder for Columbia Basin Trust (CBT). CBT is a Provincial Crown Corporation that was created to support social, economic, and environmental well-being of the Basin in recognition of the local affects of the Columbia River Treaty (Appendix J). CBT works with local governments in a number of ways. Increasingly, CBT has received requests from local governments asking for support with sustainability planning and public engagement initiatives. Discussions with local governments uncovered a common theme in that many are struggling with public engagement around sustainability planning. The emergence of this theme led to the undertaking of this research which aims to:

1. Understand the challenges local governments in the Basin are facing around public engagement specific to sustainability planning.

¹ Municipalities are the administrative and service providing entities with a mayor and council that include villages, towns and cities. Regional Districts encompass incorporated municipalities and have jurisdiction over large unincorporated rural areas that have communities, farms, and uninhabited areas. The Regional Districts are governed by a board of directors that include municipal representatives and elected directors for rural areas.

2. Identify existing smart practices around public engagement (based on communities that have completed public engagement), which are appropriate to the needs and resources of Basin communities.
3. Identify ways CBT can continue to support effective local government public engagement and develop and prioritize recommendations for CBT.

1.1 SCOPE

The Canadian constitution gives authority over municipal institutions to Provinces. As such, local governments in British Columbia exist through Provincial legislation that gives them authority and compels them to provide certain services to their citizens. To the Province, the term “local government” refers to both municipalities and regional districts. Other organizations and writers use the term more inclusively to also include First Nations, school districts, health regions, and other forms of local governance. This paper uses the term local government to mean municipalities, regional districts, and First Nations and uses the term community to include non-incorporated communities.

Sustainability Planning Context

In 2005, the Paul Martin government created the “New Deal” program for municipalities in Canada. As this program was federal, its roll out was through an agreement with the provinces and the provincial municipal organization. The New Deal program was essentially a transfer of the money collected by the federal government through gas taxes, back to municipalities. BC local governments were the first province to receive the gas tax funding when the Government of Canada, Province of BC and the Union of BC Municipalities signed the agreement on April 15, 2005. As a result, local governments in BC have received \$635.6 million between 2005 and 2010 (Marohnic, 2008). When Stephen Harper became Prime Minister in 2006, he honoured the agreement but rebranded it as the “Gas Tax Agreement”. In 2008, the three parties signed to extend the Gas Tax Agreement through 2010-2014 (Ministry of Community and Rural Development, 2010).

The Gas Tax Agreement was designed “to achieve real, measurable progress towards the economic, social, environmental, and cultural sustainability of Canada’s cities and communities” (Prime Minister’s Advisory, 2005, p. 4). The advisory panel for the program suggested that the Gas Tax Agreement fund Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP), which was defined as “a long-term plan, developed in consultation with community members, that provides direction for the community to realize sustainability objectives it has for the environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions of its identity” (Prime Minister’s Advisory, 2005, p. 4).

Prompted by the Gas Tax Agreement, local governments across British Columbia are now developing sustainability plans or checklist or amended Official Community Plan with sustainability as a core theme. The approach to sustainability planning varies across Canada. BC has decided to allow communities to create plans reflecting the uniqueness of the community, as opposed to other provinces which are providing a more prescriptive template. While BC’s approach may result in more valuable public engagement and strong planning “owned” by a community, some local governments in BC struggle with starting the process in the absence of a clear template to follow. In order to assist local government with

sustainability planning, Fraser Basin Council was funded by a collaborative² agreement (to create *Smart Planning for Communities* (SPC)). SPC is “a BC-wide collaborative initiative to assist local and First Nations governments in addressing their long-term sustainability challenges by providing resources and tools for planning socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable communities” (SPC website, 2010). A core part of the SPC program is to have sustainability facilitators located throughout the province to offer advice and support on sustainability planning for local governments. Through a collaborative arrangement, CBT has partnered with Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities (SPC) to have a sustainability facilitator in the Basin. The sustainability facilitator works with communities in the Basin to provide expertise and assistance on creating a sustainability plan.

For many local governments in the Basin, a sustainability plan is a way for them to look at the intersections between different pillars of sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural) and engage the public in creating plans for the future. A sustainability plan can serve as an overarching policy document that integrates different sectoral plans. Appendix G has an example of how the different community plans: sustainability, land use, and sectoral, in a particular community relate to one another. In the Basin, several communities have undertaken different sectoral plans relating to areas like affordable housing, economic development and reviews of Official Community Plan (OCP). The issue of sustainability generally appears when a community is faced with change.

This report identifies smart practices that currently exist for local governments to engage citizens. Based on interviews with local government staff and elected officials in the Basin, the report also highlights the challenges of engaging the communities in the Basin. Finally, the report provides recommendations to CBT about how it can continue to support effective public engagement by local governments while serving as a resource to local governments on smart practices for public engagement.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

On November 4, 2009, CBT and Fraser Basin Council co-hosted a one-day workshop on the topic of sustainability planning that was part of a larger event called *Moving Sustainability Forward*. The workshop was a combination of presentations and interactive sessions dedicated to an audience of local government elected officials and staff.

In the workshop, local government practitioners learned about how other communities conducted local sustainability plans, as presenters shared their perspectives on key successes and lessons learned. Participants then worked through exercises that focused their thinking on how they could prepare their own community for a sustainability planning process. The workshop was attended by approximately 35 elected officials and staff from local governments in the Basin. Participants included regional district directors, municipal mayors and councillors, chief administrative officers (CAO), and planners.

The workshop aimed to add to participants' knowledge, networking and resources and to bring a bit more clarity and direction to sustainability planning. Another aim was to bring to light any common challenges faced by communities with respect to sustainability planning and to identify some ways to help communities continue to move forward.

² The collaborative includes BC Hydro, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ducks Unlimited, BC Ministry of Community and Rural Development, BC Ministry of Environment, Real Estate Foundation of BC, Canadian Rural Partnership.

Through the workshop a theme emerged that participants were struggling with how to creatively engage their citizens in sustainability planning. Participants noted that they wanted to know how to do *creative* engagement and wanted to do more than typical community open houses. Participants wanted to know how to engage the unengaged, how to deal with the overly engaged, and what was involved in *effective* engagement. This theme was raised throughout the day and led CBT to request this report. The shift from *creative* to *effective* public engagement was made because it is acknowledged that effective engagement might include a mix of creative strategies and traditional strategies.

CBT's Director of Planning and Development and SPC's Kootenay Sustainability Facilitator in the Basin have served as co-advisors to the masters in public administration candidate undertaking this report.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report aims to:

1. Understand the challenges local governments in the Basin are facing around public engagement specific to sustainability planning.
2. Identify existing smart practices around public engagement (based on communities that have completed public engagement), which are appropriate to the needs and resources of Basin communities.
3. Identify ways CBT can continue to support effective local government public engagement and develop and prioritize recommendations for CBT.

In order to address these issues, this report begins with a literature review. The literature offers definitions for the concepts of public engagement and sustainability. The literature review discusses the debate around measuring *effectiveness* of public engagement and offers some key themes around improving outcomes of public engagement from the literature.

The following section is the methodology. It covers the two main methods used in this report as well as a third method used to ground truth early options. The first method was interviews with local government staff and elected officials of Basin communities about their experiences. The second method was a smart practice review of communities with different public engagement experiences. The smart practices (Bardach, 2005) from the communities in this report are not necessarily the best or would work in every context. They are simply good ideas for other communities to learn from and adapt to their unique context. The communities reviewed in this report are the BC communities of Rossland, Slocan, St. Mary's, Golden, Revelstoke, Williams Lake, as well as Jasper, Alberta. This selection includes communities from both within and outside the Basin.

Chapters four through six cover the findings and analysis from the two main methods and the additional third method. Chapter four has the findings and analysis of the key themes from the interviews. The next chapter provides smart practices from the review of example communities that address some of the challenges identified in the interviews and link to the literature themes. The final review was a survey of elected officials (and local government staff) at the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) convention based on the information gathered through the earlier interviews and smart practice review. The AKBLG event also served as an opportunity for the researcher to use a public engagement technique to interact with the officials at the meeting.

Based on the analysis conducted on this data, chapter seven provides recommendations to CBT on how it can help address the challenges local governments face with public engagement.

The final chapter, the conclusion, looks at the journey taken in this report and summarizes key themes and conclusions reached. Finally, it outlines next steps for CBT to consider.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review provides an overview and brief history of the concept of public engagement and literature that attempts to address the notion of *effective* public engagement. The literature review also includes a section on sustainability to set the context of the public engagement situation.

There is significant literature available on public engagement from both public administration and consulting fields. The former deals with justifying why governments should engage their citizens and the latter deals with strategies to engage those citizens. The challenge of measuring the effectiveness of public engagement is recognized in recent literature and continues to be a theme for debate among academics.

This report seeks to find *effective* ways for local governments to engage their citizens and recommendations for how CBT can help those local governments. This means that the issue of effectiveness must be considered within this literature review.

2.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is a complex term to define (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). There appears to be agreement that public engagement is not well defined in literature (Rowe & Frewer, 2005, Rowe *et al*, 2010, Chess & Purcell, 1999). The general concepts underlying public engagement concern the involvement of the public in government policy making or decision making using a variety of mechanisms ranging from traditional (public meetings) to novel (participatory action) (Rowe & Frewer, 2005). Rowe and Frewer (2005) use a definition that public engagement includes three concepts:

- Public communication: the sponsor (i.e. local government) communicates to the public
- Public consultation: the sponsor seeks information from the public
- Public participation: information and dialogue is exchanged between the public and the sponsor (p. 255)

The idea that there are different forms of public engagement – a spectrum - is generally agreed upon by researchers (Arnstein, 1969, Russell *et al*, 2008, Rowe & Frewer, 2005). The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (2007) shows public participation as a continuum:

inform → consult → involve → collaborate → empower

This continuum, which is outlined in Appendix H, suggests that different strategies should be used for different reasons along the spectrum. For local governments that are working on numerous issues, the higher levels of engagement from *involving* to *empowering* are not always practical; however, even having open council meetings or publishing notices in the paper acts to *inform* the public.

In this report, the term “public engagement” refers to the notion of public participation, within the context of sustainability planning. It is used to describe local governments’ active involvement of the public in community activities that cultivate data that is used to create a vision of their sustainable community and a plan for how to get there. This is in line with definitions from the literature (Rowe & Frewer, 2005) and reflects the broadness of the approaches used by communities in the Basin.

In the last century, the pluralism and direct democracy movements have challenged the managerial system of government (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Public confidence has declined in the managerial system

of government, where experts weigh information on a topic and make recommendations to elected decision makers on a course of action. This resulted in exploration of public engagement as a way to increase confidence in policy and decision making (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). Public engagement was theorized to benefit policy making by improving: the decision making process, trust in decision makers, and overall knowledge (Rowe *et al*, 2008). For some policy makers, the appeal to engage the public is in part a pragmatic approach to avoid an angry non-consulted public; however, public engagement for only that reason is unlikely to be successful and is likely to be viewed as tokenism by the public (Rowe & Frewer, 2004).

2.2 EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

While there is significant literature on the evolution of public engagement and general agreement that public engagement theoretically can provide solutions to difficult decisions that government decision makers must make (Stoker 2007, Aulich, 2009), the idea of assessing *effectiveness* of engagement is a new focus of the literature (Rowe & Frewer, 2004).

While research theorizes that public engagement creates positive benefits, researchers and practitioners are challenged with how to measure or demonstrate the effectiveness of the engagement. Rowe *et al* (2010) note that there is little empirical evidence to support the “theorized claims” that public engagement enhances decision making both by increasing the quality of decisions and making them easier to make, and increasing trust in decision makers.

In 2004 Rowe and Frewer completed a review of evaluations of public engagement and noted that there were very few academic articles that evaluated public engagement. From those few articles Rowe and Frewer (2004) noted that there is no one appropriate universal definition of what constitutes an *effective* exercise (p. 218). The researchers observed from the few examples that two factors in *effective* engagement were agreed to be: a representative sample of the relevant population participating in the engagement and that public engagement impacted the policy or decision of the government conducting the engagement (cited in Rowe *et al*, 2010). This emerging area of literature could help determine methods of measuring effectiveness and help uncover the most effective ways to conduct future public engagement.

One attempt to establish universal criteria for evaluating public engagement is the Rowe-Frewer Criteria (2000, as cited in Rowe *et al* 2010). Rowe and Frewer (2000) reviewed the academic literature on public engagement and identified a number of recurring themes concerning the necessary requirements for an engagement exercise to be successful. In their framework, these themes were listed in two categories: “Acceptance Criteria,” or “Process Criteria” (Rowe *et al*, 2010).

Acceptance Criteria:

- Representativeness: public participants should comprise a broadly representative sample of the population of the affected public.
- Independence: the participation process should be conducted in an independent, unbiased way.
- Early Involvement: the public should be involved as early as possible in the process as soon as value judgments become salient.
- Influence: the output of the procedure should have a genuine impact on policy.
- Transparency: the process should be transparent so that the public can see what is going on and how decisions are being made.

Process Criteria:

- Resource Accessibility: public participants should have access to the appropriate resources to enable them to understand the issues prior to the public engagement.
- Task Definition: the nature and scope of the participation task should be clearly defined.
- Structured Decision Making: the participation exercise should use/provide appropriate mechanisms for structuring and displaying the decision-making process.
- Cost Effectiveness: the procedure should in some sense be cost effective. (Rowe *et al*, 2010).

Measuring effectiveness is further compounded by the complex issue of determining who is judging it or perceiving it (Rowe & Frewer, 2004). The views of participants (i.e. the public) as compared to sponsors (i.e. local governments) may be contradictory with regard to effectiveness. In one case participants may feel the engagement was effective because they believe in their recommendations, while the sponsoring organization may feel it was ineffective because what was recommended is not possible due to constraints (Rowe & Frewer, 2004).

In the context of this report, effectiveness will be understood by applying a local context; that is by asking the local governments to speak about their own experience, challenges and success of public engagement. The smart practices discussed later in the report are related to communities that have used them and recommend them. Future research could investigate and survey members of those communities to see if they found the engagement effective, but is beyond the scope of this report.

2.3 IMPROVING OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Despite the issues around measuring effectiveness of public engagement discussed previously, there is abundant literature outlining reasoned techniques for improving public engagement. This portion of the literature review aims to inform the smart practices for local governments discussed later in the report and the recommendations for ways that CBT can support local governments to effectively engage the public.

Understanding that public engagement is an ongoing process is an important factor in the success of a public engagement initiative. It is not simply an action that one “ticks off” a checklist as complete. Cook (2002) notes that “it is essential to conceive of consultation as a process and not a one-off event and so acknowledge that it needs to be negotiated, sustainable and strategically managed”. Cook (2002) advises using techniques that involve ‘bottom up’ approaches using community –based networks to gain initial access, thereafter snowballing contacts within communities and using face to face contacts, attending drop-ins and informal events, focus groups and conducting interviews in community-based or home settings” (Cook, 2002, p. 225). The likelihood of success is also increased by ensuring that the “feedback loop” is closed by informing those who were engaged about how their feedback was used (Cook, 2002, 528).

TRUST

A central factor in the success of citizen engagement is trust (Black, Leichter, & Gastil, 2009, Webler & Renn, 1995). Black et al (2009, p. 144) argue that “issues of trust, community and participatory practice are central to the field of public participation.” When community members perceive that “public officials have already made up their minds by the time the meeting is held” it is difficult to build trust in a public meeting (Black et al, 2009, p. 144).

Kelshaw and Gastil (2007) argue that individuals attend meetings with preconceived ideas and expectations that affect the way a meeting proceeds; in particular, “the participants’ expectations of the meeting goals, the direction of communication in the meeting, the content of the communication and the physical, psychological and socio-cultural contexts surrounding the public meeting” greatly influence the outcome of the meeting (p. 34). Those preconceived ideas must be addressed when a public engagement event is designed or the public engagement may turn problematic.

In a case study of a problematic public meeting held by the North Omaha Development Project, Black et al (2009) observed major issues with creating trust between members of the community and the public officials in the meeting that are common to public engagement processes. The authors argue that there were several contributing factors to the demise of the meeting and the lack of trust:

- the power imbalance between the audience and presenters that was reinforced by the amount of time they spent presenting information and the question and answer format;
- the difference in attire between community members dressed casually while the presenters wore suits;
- a “wall of suits” at the front of the room presenting information to the audience did not make the audience feel empowered, and
- presenters tried to ask for legitimacy by noting that there will be several meetings (which brings up the question of why the public would attend another poorly organized meeting) (Black *et al*, 2009, p. 154).

Another key problem identified by Black et al (2009) was anticipating issues that might be raised by the audience. In the North Omaha example, racism was brought up by the public and was acknowledged by the presenters but then placed in a “box” away from the discussion. Black et al (2009) argue that by dismissing the racism discussion, the meeting organizers ignored the importance of “place.” Public meetings need to begin with a clear understanding of community and what are important issues to those community members and not be contrived to meet the interests of the meeting organizers (Black et al, 2009). This point may be relevant for communities in the Basin that are facing mill closures, divisive issues, or major development.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital describes the ways peoples’ “lives are made more productive by social ties” (Putnam, 2000, 19). There are two facets to those connections, the connections an individual has and the connections a society has. For example an individual can be well-connected but if those connections are “in a poorly connected community they are not as productive as a well-connected individual in a well-connected community” (Putnam, 2000, P. 20). Putnam notes that even a poorly connected individual can be impacted by a well-connected community (Putnam, 2000, P. 20). Social capital can be used for both positive and negative means. Positive consequences include mutual support, cooperation, trust, and institutional effectiveness while negative ones include: sectarianism, ethnocentrism and corruption.

Both communities and individuals rely on social capital to get things done. Communities receive numerous benefits from having volunteer organizations. Neighbourhoods are safer if neighbours know one another. Individuals rely on their social capital extensively; for example: when looking for a sympathetic ear, looking for a job, hiring a babysitter or asking a colleague to review a report (Putnam, 2000).

Robert Putnam in his book, *Bowling Alone*, expresses a concern that social capital is decreasing in America. Putnam argues that television and urban sprawl have had a significant role in making America far less 'connected'. While Putnam's argument may not entirely apply to the Basin's rural context, Basin communities are facing challenges to the social cohesion of communities in many ways; including: second home owners who leave empty houses for much of the year, changing demographics, and changes in employment opportunities that in some communities have resulted in the loss of families or one parent commuting to employment opportunities elsewhere. These are all challenges to social cohesion and affect the availability of social capital in communities.

Social capital is important to consider for public engagement and sustainability planning because the nature of both *the act* of engaging the community and *the goals* of promoting sustainability relies on the social capital of the community. They require individuals who will volunteer to be on a task force and share their enthusiasm for the sustainability project with their friends and networks. As such, any public engagement initiative must consider harnessing and cultivating social capital.

Overall, there is a magnitude of considerations facing a local government that seeks to engage the public. Understanding the process, building trust and drawing on social capital are important components but do not encompass the entirety of public engagement. As there is still ongoing debate in literature about what makes public engagement effective, it may be what makes engagement effective is the community and the local government believing that they mutually benefit from the exchange.

2.4 SUSTAINABILITY

The term *sustainability* has many definitions but the most widely used is:

"Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"
(World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

Practitioners, planners, and educators often use metaphors to describe sustainability. One such metaphor is the four legged stool with economy, society, environment and culture being the legs. This metaphor argues that if a community puts all of its resources towards one "leg" the stool will be off balance and tip. Defining sustainability should be completed at a local level in order for the community to have a shared understanding and a definition that is meaningful to them (Cordell, L., 2010, Personal Communication).

Another way to understand sustainability is to understand the problems it is trying to address. Sustainability is an overarching concept that requires balance and tradeoffs. The concept of *wicked problems* can be used to describe the problem of unsustainable communities. These wicked problems do not lend themselves to traditional or scientific reasoning; instead, they "require tradeoffs and value choices among competing options and solutions" (Roberts, 2004). A community may face a wicked problem related to sustainability when they are forced to consider the choice between short term job creation and long term environmental quality. Roberts (2004) states that "growing numbers of social scientists (e.g. Chisholm, 1998; Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray, 1989; Huxham, 1996; Mandel, 2001; Straus, 2002; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002; Susskind, McKearnan & Thomas-Larmer, 1999) have concluded that the only way to cope with wicked problems is through 'increased doses of participation' (Day, 1997, p. 430).

Sustainability planning may be a solution for future wicked problems as its goal is for the community to create a vision document/structure to recognize the community's vision of the future and to guide decision making and acknowledges the challenges of tradeoffs.

2.5 SUMMARY

Public engagement, while generally accepted as having theoretical benefits, is a complex undertaking. Rowe & Frewer (2004 & 2005) as well as Rowe *et al* (2008, 2010) have published extensively in the emerging area of assessing the effectiveness of public engagement. This emerging area is seeking empirical evidence to support the theoretical assumptions that public engagement improves public policy and decision making by increasing the public's trust in the decision makers, increasing public understanding and acceptance of the decision, and increasing the knowledge available to make a decision.

Other literature surrounding sustainability planning and the wicked problems faced by public decision makers suggests that the only way to deal with these complex problems is through "increases in public participation" (Roberts, 2004).

The literature does provide hints as to improving the likelihood of success (or at least, avoiding likely downfalls). Looking at public engagement as an ongoing process (Cook, 2002), building trust through engagement and within public engagement strategies (Kelshaw and Gastil, 2007, Black *et al*, 2009), and understanding the important role social capital (Putnam, 2000) and connections play, all provide avenues toward effective engagement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research in this report features qualitative methodology and was conducted using two main formal methods and a third informal ground truth with local government officials. The formal methods used included interviews and a review of smart practices. The interviews were conducted between February and April of 2010 with staff and elected officials from local governments located in the Basin area. Additional interviews were done with CBT staff to obtain a regional perspective and with staff of provincially wide non-profit organizations that support communities doing sustainability planning and public engagement to give a province-wide context.

The second main formal method was to consider smart practices from relevant communities both within the Basin and from BC and Alberta that have been through large public engagement exercises. The smart practices review also included interviews with staff and elected officials from some of the example communities. The final method used was to ground truth, which is check in with the key stakeholders about the relevance of early findings identified in the interviews and review of smart practices, by engaging the local government officials and asking them to prioritize areas of action for CBT to support. A visual depiction of the research approach is provided in Figure 1.

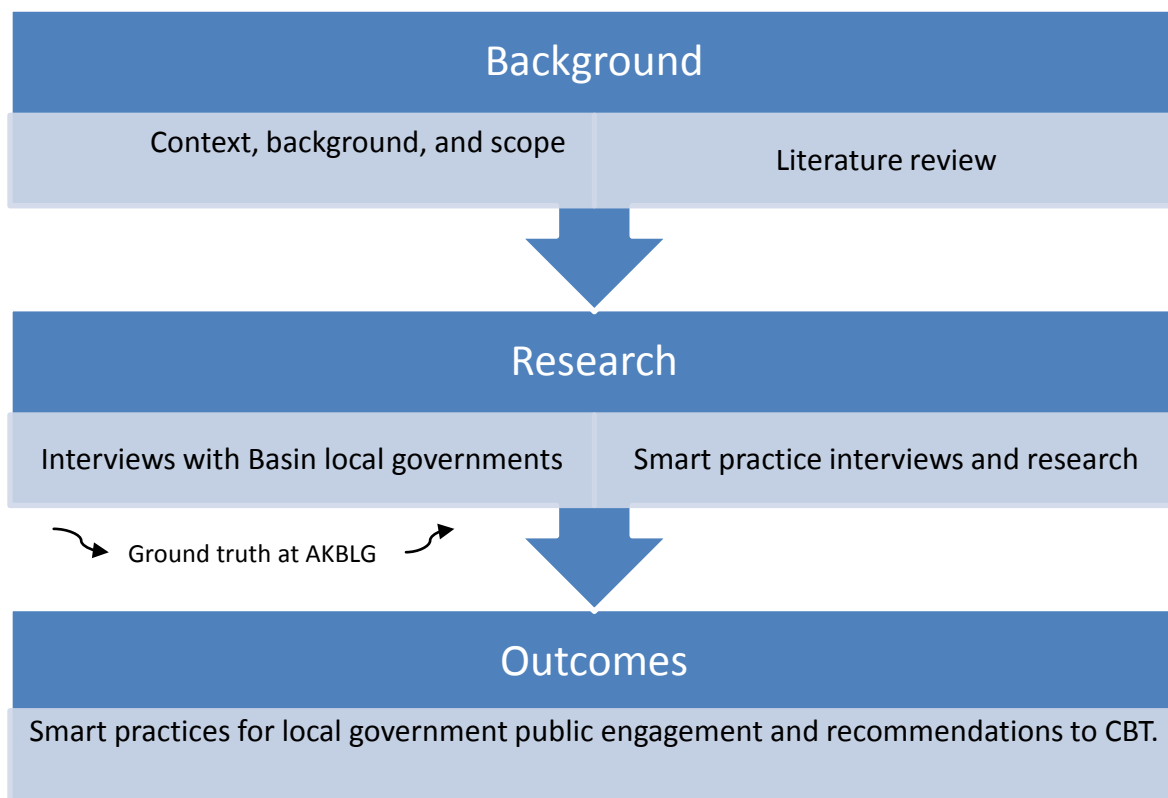


Figure 1: Concept map of research process

The researcher used these methods under the guidelines of and with approval from the University of Victoria Ethics Board (Appendix K & L).

3.1 INTERVIEWS

The methodology used for the interviews with local government officials was semi-structured conversational interviews. The interviews were exploratory and aimed to understand where communities in the Basin were at in terms of engagement, what challenges they faced and where they might need help. The method of interviews was chosen because it is an effective method to gain understanding of the everyday world and the experiences of the interviewees (Kvale, 1998).

Participants were identified through CBT and SPC contacts, public events, local government websites, and an “incremental snowball approach” (Blakeley & Evans, 2008, P. 102). Participants were initially invited to participate through a mass email to approximately one hundred staff and elected officials and received responses from three individuals. Additional emails and telephone calls were made individually to potential participants identified by staff at CBT and SPC based on geographic distribution of interviewees, different sizes of communities, split between elected officials and staff, and to both regional districts and municipalities. CBT and SPC staff also identified individuals with whom they had a connection and sent an introductory email asking them to participate. In all thirty five individuals were interviewed with twenty seven Basin local government individuals and eight example communities interviewed.

Both the general and smart practice examples interviews were primarily done over the telephone due to geographic barriers. When possible they were done in person which was the case of eleven of the thirty five interviews.

The researcher designed questions to guide the conversation with interviewees. Using information from the November 2009 *Moving Sustainability Forward* workshop, direction from the client of this report, and themes from the literature review, the researcher identified three key questions. Those questions were:

- 1. What experience have you had with public engagement? What projects are you currently, or recently, undertaking that involve public engagement (i.e. Official Community Plan (OCP), Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP))?**
- 2. What challenges do you face with public engagement? What successes have you had?**
- 3. What would help make your job of public engagement easier? What role might CBT/ SPC have in supporting your engagement?**

The researcher used those three conceptual questions to develop additional guiding questions (Appendix D) aimed to uncover the challenges and opportunities unique to each community. The interviews were semi-structured (Hills & Mullett, 2000). Respondents were asked to elaborate on points and the researcher let the conversation evolve naturally following those initial questions. The interviews were purposefully designed to be flexible because the researcher wanted to allow respondents the opportunity to include anecdotes to capture the uniqueness of each individual’s experience within their community (Hills & Mullett, 2000).

3.2 SMART PRACTICES REVIEW

The term *smart practices*, coined by Eugene Bardach, is used to describe the public policy practice of using “clever” ideas or practices from others (Bardach, 2005). Unlike the concept of *best practices* which poses the problem of an idea which may be the *best* in one instance, may not be the *best* in another context as well as measurement issues around what is best; smart practices do not involve a ranking.

The idea of looking for smart practices fits for this report which seeks to find helpful ideas to share from a variety of different public engagement experiences. To do this the researcher, with advice from her CBT and SPC advisors, looked at communities that have undertaken public engagement around sustainability planning. CBT and SPC, in the November 2009 *Moving Sustainability Forward* workshop had individuals from Whistler, Dawson Creek, Golden and Rossland speak about their experiences. Golden and Rossland are included in this report, because they are Basin examples and the researcher was able to interview four individuals from each of those communities to include additional perspectives. Other examples were sought to provide variety along the lines of:

- *Geography*: local governments both within (Rossland, Village of Slocan, St. Mary's, Golden and Revelstoke) and outside (Williams Lake, and Jasper, Alberta) the Basin.
- *Population*: very small communities (pop. 350) (Village of Slocan, St. Mary's), towns and small cities (pop. 4000-8000) (Golden, Rossland, Jasper, and Revelstoke) and medium cities (pop. 11000) (Williams Lake) were chosen.
- *Stage of plan*: Completed sustainability plans (Rossland and Jasper), plans underway (Village of Slocan, St. Mary's, and Williams Lake) and engagement for other planning documents (Golden—Official Community Plan and Revelstoke—design bylaws).
- *Relevance to the Basin*: This category is more subjective but all the communities have traits that are shared by a number of Basin communities. Several communities in the Basin are resort communities including Golden, Revelstoke and Rossland and Jasper, Alberta also fits that category. Other communities are more industrial or forestry-based communities. Another trait is that despite being in BC, many communities in the Basin are isolated or identify more with Alberta. The Northern example, Williams Lake, reflects the isolation from the Lower Mainland/ Greater Victoria, and isolation generally that many communities in the Basin feel.

The researcher looked for smart practices (Bardach, 2005) from the example communities with two methods: by looking at available information online and in reports, and by interviewing example communities.

The interviews were structured similarly to those held with the general Basin communities as described in section 3.1. Not all example local governments were interviewed because the researcher received no response to an interview request (Jasper, AB); however, that example has been highlighted in an article published in *Plan Canada* (Sweet & Sacret, 2009) magazine which covers the information required for this report. Other example local governments were recruited through email and phone calls.

The questions in the interviews to example communities depended on the stage of that community's plan and are outlined in Appendix E. The questions were designed to understand the public engagement process the community used. A challenge in the example community interviews was the allotted interview time. The researcher tried to keep the interviews in the allotted one hour time slot which meant, particularly for communities that have been through a lengthy process and are in an implementation mode, that an emphasis on understanding key components and milestones of the project was more important than the chronology of the entire process. The interviews aimed to uncover the keys to success, lessons learned and what the example communities wished they knew when they started the project.

From available material and interviews brief community stories are presented in this report in Appendix B. Analysis of the stories and the strategies allowed key themes to emerge which are presented in chapter five.

3.3 GROUND TRUTH OF EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) convention brought together elected officials and some staff from most of the Basin with minor exceptions³. This meeting created an opportunity for the researcher to survey the participants about early recommendations from the interviews and smart practice review. This opportunity was viewed as a way to accomplish three things:

1. Check in with and survey elected officials (and some staff) about early recommendations for CBT to support local government's public engagement efforts;
2. Provide an opportunity for the researcher and Basin officials to experience a public engagement exercise; and
3. Engage a larger group of project stakeholders (than the interviews) to raise their interest in, and profile, the project.

The researcher was allotted a small amount of space at the CBT booth in the event's trade show. Recognizing that the audience of primarily elected officials and a few staff would have limited time to comment on the project, the researcher designed the survey to be eye catching, simple to understand, and easy to give feedback on. The researcher used a tall, round table that allowed participants to view and comment without bending down to a low folding table. The table was covered with paper and divided and labelled into four priority areas that emerged from the interviews (section 4.3).

The researcher then asked the participants to look at the four quadrants and prioritize the areas that would be most important for helping his or her community creatively engage. On the first day of the two-day tradeshow the researcher gave each participant stickers from 1 to 5 and told them to rank the areas most important to them. On the second day the participants were only given one sticker to choose the area that was most important on a fresh sheet of paper. As the paper remained on the table for a full day, participants would see what previous participants had picked or commented. The survey method used for the exercise was a closed-ended survey with the opportunity for the respondent's to write comments that others would see.

An important, additional component to this exercise is that it allowed the researcher and local government officials an opportunity to experience a public engagement exercise. The practical element of the exercise and the empathy and experiences it presented were helpful aids promoting the research findings for the researcher and the relevance and profile of the project more generally for local governments in the Basin.

3.4 SUMMARY

The multi-method approach used for this report provides insight into the experiences of local government staff and elected officials in the Basin and select other communities around the challenges they face with public engagement, as well as the ways communities have been successful. These approaches included interviews with local government staff and elected officials in the Basin and a review of smart practices from communities that have completed successful public engagement exercises. An additional method –

³ The Kootenay Boundary Local Government Association generally includes all Basin communities except Valermount, member of the North Central Local Government Association and Revelstoke, member of the Southern Interior Local Government Association.

a practical exercise undertaken directly with local government officials – was used as an opportunity to ground-truth the preliminary options identified during the first two methods.

The amount of data accumulated in the three methods was large and the attempt to report out the findings in a way that maintained confidentiality but still reflected the nuances from different local governments in the Basin was a challenge. The findings need to be summarized due to the scope of this project. Time available was limited, and made it impossible to fully capture the richness of the data from the interviews. Despite this challenge, the summary provided in this report captures key themes and provides insights into the challenges and diversity of communities in the Basin. The client may wish to use the data for future research.

The time limitations and scope of this report also limited the richness of the data from the smart practices review for the example communities. A case study of a single one of the example communities could result in an entire report. Despite this challenge, the smart practices review in this report provides insight into the experience of several communities and gives the client and local governments a menu of smart practices and potential contacts for additional information.

CHAPTER 4: LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The report presents the findings generally in order to maintain confidentiality of interview participants but this has limited the ability to report on some of the unique issues at a local level. Taken at a regional scale, the interview summary below provides an overview of key experiences and issues Basin local governments face with regards to public engagement and sustainability planning. The challenge of the volume of material also creates future opportunity for more in depth study.

The interviews with local government staff and elected officials were completed between February and April of 2010. A total of twenty seven Basin local government staff and elected officials were interviewed (additional local governments including from the Basin were interviewed for the smart practice review in chapter 5 bringing the entire interview total to thirty-five). The findings presented here related to three objectives of the interviews:

- Assessing the experience local government staff and elected officials had with public engagement and what plans, projects, or policies in which they do use, or planned to use public engagement.
- Understanding the challenges local government staff and elected officials face when doing or planning a public engagement initiative.
- Noting the needs of local governments with respect to public engagement concerning sustainability planning and identifying any potential roles for CBT to help.

The findings are separated according to the objectives and present a synopsis of key themes and unattributed quotations from participants. Statistics concerning the interview findings are not provided given the research was aimed at providing thematic analysis of the material rather than strict empirically quantitative assessment.

4.1 ASSESSING EXPERIENCE WITH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Interviews with local government staff and elected officials in the Basin showed that a variety of public engagement strategies are used by local governments. Several interviewees remarked that the traditional public meeting or open houses are the most often used because they are the most obvious. Most communities are aware of creative engagement strategies even if they have not used them. Specific strategies mentioned by elected officials and staff in interviews are listed in the Figure 2.

| Strategies Used by Local Government | |
|--|---|
| Elected Officials | Staff |
| -mayor's message -standing in front of post office/walking downtown -rural advisory groups -advisory groups -survey -community meetings -brown bag lunch -open council and committee meetings | -survey -focus group -kitchen table -public meetings -community neighbourhood groups -design charrette -open houses -task force -web polls -software to vision land use decisions -citizen steering committees -open space -art |

Figure 2: Strategies used by Basin local government staff and elected officials

Interviewees were keen to participate in the interviews because many communities are currently undertaking large projects that involve public engagement. Four respondents were undertaking an ICSP. Eight communities are undertaking OCP reviews. Several communities were looking at their Bill 27 Carbon Emission Targets. Three communities were doing climate change adaptation projects. Ongoing social plans including those related to seniors and affordable housing were noted by five participants.

There was a divide among participants around why they would do public engagement. About a third of participants spoke of legislated requirements to publicly engage as motivating factors for public engagement. Most respondents spoke about a desire to engage “but. . .” and then listed challenges around public engagement which are summarized in the next section. Public engagement was generally viewed as a good thing “but. . .” with some reservations.

When most participants gave examples of public engagement initiatives, the majority fall into either the *involve* or *consult* categories of the IPA2 Spectrum of Public Participation (2007) (Appendix H). A minority of respondents mentioned strategies that would qualify as *engage* on the spectrum and the most common of these strategies was a citizen task force. The citizen task force (or committee) is seen as a way for communities to link into the social capital of the community and of the individuals on the task force. The task force also uses volunteers and increase the skills, expertise, man/woman-power, and connections available to the project.

It is clear that staff and elected officials feel that public engagement is important and are aware of a number of strategies. Most common strategies mentioned by participants were the more traditional: open houses, surveys, and public meetings. However, most participants were keen to try and learn more about creative strategies and were aware of at least one.

4.2 CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES WITH PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Both staff and elected officials mentioned challenges and key success factors that affect their ability to do effective public engagement. While each of the elected officials and staff noted many different challenges, they also had some challenges in common.

Both staff and elected officials recognized that the need to work well with each other and communicate throughout a large public engagement exercise was extremely important. The need for buy-in at all levels of a local government is necessary to attract buy-in from the larger community.

Resourcing is another issue, according to elected officials and staff, which is very critical for successful public engagement and sustainability planning. Staff recognized that sustainability planning projects take a high amount of staff time, even when consultants are involved. A few interviewees remarked that it is important for decision makers to evaluate opportunities, whether a new granting program is available or a community group wants to take something on, that come up and to make priorities concerning engagement clear. One interviewee, a planner whose point was echoed by several other planners, remarked that direction was given to do creative engagement but at the same time “not to make developers wait” and that has created a challenge for staff who try to do everything. Another planner spoke of working in a community that had a highly engaged public and a council that wanted to take on everything. That planner was also excited about the projects but quickly realized that the planning department with two staff needed to prioritize and could not do it all.

The culture of an organization and the freedom to try new things was emphasized as important by a number of interviewees. One interviewee commented on how a council asked for creative engagement but then changed the direction of an engagement plan because they were worried that the “movers and

shakers” would be off-put by the creative engagement methods. Several interviewees spoke of success they were able to have with public engagement when they, as decision makers, empowered their staff or consultants to plan a public engagement event using whatever technique might work.

Several elected officials spoke of the importance of educating the public about the role of a local government and what they can do as a part of a public engagement campaign. Another common theme from elected officials was a caution about not only engaging the “squeaky wheels” and that engagement needs to be designed in a way to encourage all voices. Many elected interviewees wanted to learn techniques for public meetings that encourage discussion and that also address individuals who tend to dominate the exchange. A concern for both elected officials and staff was how to convey tradeoffs and report back to the public that their voices were heard in the engagement, even if a decision does not reflect their individual feedback.

Both elected officials and staff spoke about how controversy will bring out the public, and that was not seen as the ideal way to engage the public. One interviewee remarked that “when people are generally satisfied, they are not as engaged – dissatisfaction increases participation.” This was echoed by several participants who added that a cycle of engagement around divisive issues that creates winners and losers makes future engagement about a positive vision hard to “sell” to the population which has been conditioned to think about public engagement as a fight.

A community’s history plays a key role in the degree of trust the public has with the local government or with public engagement processes. If in the past there was poor engagement or no engagement on a significant issue, then rebuilding the trust with the public becomes an important consideration. One participant noted that because of poor public engagement on a development, the local government had to conscientiously work on rebuilding trust by getting the word out about new projects and making an effort to engage on current development. Another participant noted that public engagement needs to report back to the community about how their participation informed, influenced, or resulted in decisions that were made, and that this can increase the credibility of future public engagement.

External factors were acknowledged by both elected officials and staff as having an impact on public engagement. The recession and mill closures, or threats of closure, have an impact on public engagement. Some communities have decided to look at sustainability whereas for other communities, people have withdrawn and do not come out to meetings. It was not clear what caused the distinction.

Another key external factor is development pressures. Several resort local governments have had successful public engagement because their community wants to retain the sense of community in the face of development and second home ownership. Engaging both full-time and part-time residents in communities that have a high second home owner population was acknowledged as a challenge.

Another external factor noted in an interview was the weather. “In the winter people are often away and in the summer people are doing other things” noted one participant. Another participant noted that “in the winter almost 40% of the people [from the community] are not there.”

Participants also spoke about the importance of timing and momentum. The pace of an engagement campaign was noted as important by several participants— too slow and people lose interest and too fast and people burn out.

The need to understand the reason for the engagement was noted by a number of interviewees— with agreement that engagement just because you are expected to engage is not effective. Several interviewees remarked that a clear purpose and vision for engagement is very important. The challenge

of complex problems that require a decision is that there are always tradeoffs; this observation was heard from many participants.

Several interviewees spoke about the importance of communication between local government elected officials, staff and consultants when undertaking a large public engagement project. All of those people need to be aware of the expectations of the project and of their individual roles. Some staff spoke about the challenge of setting expectations and writing requests for proposals and contracts for consultants, when the consultant is the expert in the field, not the staff. The staff spoke about the challenge of questioning an expert when something was not matching their expectations.

Overall, interviewees were keen to try engagement but the challenge of having enough time, resources, and people to do the engagement were paramount. Another key theme was the need for information and expertise around how to effectively engage the public to build trust. The need for all players in a public engagement exercise to be empowered, from council, to local government management, staff and the public was acknowledged by both elected officials and staff as a key contributor to success. While local government elected officials and staff interviewed have a different perspectives on a few key points, they had many similar comments. To generalize, elected officials seemed to be more concerned about conveying trade-offs and dealing with the “squeaky wheels” at a public meeting; while staff seemed more concerned with having the resources and support from elected officials to do public engagement. Both groups were generally supportive of public engagement and appreciated and recognized the potential concerns of the other groups. It is important to recognize the differences between communities and the different reasons (i.e. major development pressures, mill closures, environmental or social concerns) they might undertake a sustainability plan when considering the differences between staff and elected officials.

4.3 NEEDS AND POTENTIAL ROLES FOR CBT

Interviews with local government staff and elected officials showed that local governments in the Basin have a wide variety of needs for public engagement. A common thread in these needs was the need to have people (staff, skilled volunteers, organizers, consultants) that can do things, particularly internally to local governments. Many interviewees noted that while consultants and volunteers can be a form of additional human resources, they require staff time for organization, communication and to facilitate interactions with decision makers. Local governments in the Basin vary greatly in terms of size and available resources. Some communities have entire planning departments while other communities do not even have planning staff.

Figure 3, a word collage, shows common areas where interviewees suggested CBT could help their community. This figure was created by inputting a list of common words used by interviewees to describe what support they needed in order to do better public engagement. The words that are larger reflect words that were repeated by multiple respondents.



Figure 3: Common words in response to “what could help support your role in public engagement?”

The comments from interviewees ranged greatly in response to the interviewer’s question “what would make your job easier?” and follow-up questions like “what role do you see CBT playing in helping you do effective and creative public engagement?”

The researcher identified four key areas where respondents indicated they needed help and where CBT could potentially have a role. These broad areas are: people (staff and volunteers), key resource people (someone to answer questions), information (how to do things), and help working with consultants (what to ask for). These broad areas relate back to the analysis in the word art collage as most common words could be grouped into the four categories.

1. Internal Capacity

Many respondents talked about the need to have the internal capacity to do the work. Most staff interviewed indicated they were concerned that they did not have the capacity to maintain their current workload and take on a large scale project, like a sustainability plan with a public engagement component. Only one community had a staff person, a Local Government Management Association (LGMA) Intern, devoted to sustainability planning and only one other community had a staff member who had half her time devoted to public engagement. The average planning department, if there was one, had one or two staff in the Basin. Many local governments had no planner at all.

For many communities, looking at doing a sustainability plan meant they would need “extra hands on deck”. Several planners interviewed said they did not need another expert planner but rather they needed help with the day-to-day “fires that needed to be put out” so that they could focus on the public engagement that keeps getting moved to the side of the desk. Local governments with no planner recognized the need for more planning expertise as well as general help.

Many respondents remarked at how important volunteers are to public engagement and community projects. They would like CBT to look at issues like volunteer burn-out and consider ways of supporting

volunteers. Again the respondents spoke of this being an issue that affected public engagement as well as a number of other local government initiatives.

2. Key Resource Person

Several respondents remarked on the value that having the SPC Sustainability Facilitator in the region brought to their project. They liked being able to call up an expert and have answers available. Additional respondents wanted more on-call support from CBT, such as being able to have access to trained facilitators to help with events.

A few respondents spoke of the challenge of staying on top of new issues and that they appreciate that CBT can be aware of emerging issues and take a regional view. They noted that sustainability and public engagement are a part of this but they struggle with many emerging issues of increasing complexity.

Another theme from respondents was that they would like help developing local expertise and volunteers which links back to theme number one but in this case respondents want to be able to access experts that can help build the capacity of staff and volunteers locally. They would also like help knowing who has facilitation and sustainability planning skills in the Basin and what organizations may have resources or training available to their community.

3. Information Sharing

Some respondents remarked that they really wanted information, and wanted to know more about how to do engagement and sustainability planning. They wanted to hear about what other communities were doing and to have all of that information in one place. There was a sense that staff wanted more specific information on “how to” rather than “what is” with regard to both sustainability planning and public engagement.

Respondents were split on how they wanted that information. Some wanted online access, while others wanted someone to come and tell them about it, and still others wanted to have printed information. Those that had attended the *Moving Sustainability Forward* workshop, particularly planners, remarked that they found the memory sticks which contained an electronic ‘binder’ of material useful.

Some participants were contradictory in their interviews saying both that they wanted more information and that they knew there was lots of information “out there” and did not have time to access it. This reflects a real issue in communities. Staff and elected officials want information to be available and easily accessible for when they have the time or need to access it.

4. Working with Consultants

This theme came up from both the general interviews and the smart practice interviews with example communities. Local government staff members are often too busy with the day to day work of their jobs, and therefore additional support is required to do a sustainability plan and public engagement campaign. All the communities that were interviewed that were contemplating, or were in the midst of, a sustainability plan or OCP update spoke of using consultants for at least a portion of the work. Consultants were required for their specialized knowledge and expertise, facilitation skills, project management and/or plan writing.

Communities that were early adopters of sustainability planning noted that a big challenge and lesson learned was how important the contract with a consultant is. Most communities noted that they under

estimated the amount of time they spent managing or coordinating the project with a consultant on contract.

In the interviews with Basin local governments one local government representative remarked on the challenge faced by small communities, in that have no internal planning staff and then have to manage an “expert” consultant. The local government representative indicated that it was difficult to question the “expert” even when things “don’t seem right”. In that case, the local government ended up having to hire additional experts to review the document, which did have large errors.

It is important to note that participants who raised working with consultants as a challenge also stressed that it was not necessarily the consultants’ “fault” but rather reflected difficulties in designing a request for proposals for a project in an emerging field without clear guidelines to follow. The participants identified looking at practices from other communities, example documents (requests for proposals, terms of reference, and contracts), and a database of consultants with community references as needs.

Overall, respondents provided key insights into areas where they need support. While several respondents remarked how important CBT funding was to making projects work, funding was not the main theme or request from respondents. Additionally, several respondents presented thoughtful responses on the role of CBT as providing a regional perspective. One respondent described how local governments appreciate CBT looking ahead to the next big issue and helping coordinate a regional dialogue on an emerging issue. Respondents used examples of CBT’s *Affordable Housing Resources Program*, *Watersmart*, *Climate Change Adaptation* and *State of the Basin* as providing information and resources to help facilitate local government collaboration and providing information and support on an issue that is affecting the entire region.

CHAPTER: 5 SMART PRACTICES

The researcher interviewed staff, volunteers, and a councillor from five of the seven example communities: Rossland, Golden, Slokan, Revelstoke, and Williams Lake. As previously noted, the Jasper example did not involve an interview, but extensive written material was available on its public engagement exercise that sufficed for the research purposes of this report. The SPC sustainability facilitator for the Basin was interviewed on the St. Mary's example because she has worked extensively with that community. This section brings together those ideas to create smart practices for local governments doing public engagement. The smart practice themes for success are informed by the literature review and the findings from the Basin interviews. While this section reports information from the communities as smart practices, the individual stories from each community provide additional depth and information and are contained in Appendix B.

The smart practices draw from the community examples, by the researcher, as a way to relate a general strategy to other local governments. These smart practices do not claim to be "best" practices but to provide ideas for other local governments to consider (Bardach, 2005).

5.1 USE ENGAGED CITIZENS TO LEAD THE PROCESS

Several communities used a **steering committee** to help guide the process. In Golden, the steering committee included 20 residents representing diverse backgrounds and ages (from 12 to 80 plus years). The diversity of representation was important to the success of Golden's OCP. One stand-out example from Golden is that the youngest member of the steering committee, who was 12, challenged the team that "Golden's better than the minimum" when the team was looking at Provincial standards. The long term vision of the community that Golden was creating in their OCP was reflected in the age spectrum of the steering committee.

Rossland's process was very community driven and also had a steering committee led by volunteers and included the mayor, area director, one councillor and the chief administrative officer. The steering committee worked with a broad sustainability **task force** with approximately 50 members from the community.

St. Mary's process is being lead by a **committee**. This committee is made up of community volunteers, Band Councillors, and staff. The whole process includes opportunities for learning for the committee members and staff who are being mentored in facilitation and planning by a consultant.

5.2 GO TO THE PEOPLE

Several communities tried to go to where people were instead of asking people to come to them. In Slokan, the consultants set up **drop-in space** at the community wellness centre to get input on the sustainability plan from people who might not otherwise participate. Because Slokan is a small community, the consultants also went door to door to get input on the project.

Golden hired two **coop students** from the College of the Rockies Adventure Tourism class to design and implement public consultation events. The students set up **tables** to get community input on the OCP in the grocery stores, at a jam night at the local pub, and at a cafe. These tables were staffed by friendly coop students from the College of the Rockies, which made it less intimidating for community members to give their input. Golden also reached out to Vancouver Island University students who created an OCP

newsletter prior to the process start. The students came to Golden on their spring break. They did guerrilla marketing and delivered the newsletter and spoke to people at almost every building in town.

Williams Lake engaged with the public in a variety of creative ways including: setting up tables at key community venues such as cafes and asking members of the public to host **kitchen table discussions** targeted at people less likely to come to a big event like parents and seniors. At the kitchen table meetings the hosts would invite members of their network to discuss future priorities. Further, the City used existing committees, community groups and organizations to review the drafts of the ICSP document.

St. Mary's engaged the community by going to people's homes and making dinner. The project coordinator would bring groceries to a family's home and together they would **make dinner** and talk about the vision for the community in the future.

5.3 USE TARGETED APPROACHES TO REACH PARTICULAR DEMOGRAPHICS

Several communities identified groups that were not likely to attend public engagement events and held particular meetings for them. Both Rossland and Golden went to the community senior's centre to talk with seniors. Slokan held a business luncheon for engagement with the business community. Rossland recognized that developers were not coming to main events and held a meeting targeted at them. Youth were specifically targeted by Golden, and the steering committee and staff went to school classrooms to get input on the OCP.

St. Mary's is reaching out to youth in a unique way. They have organized a photography workshop, given cameras to youth and asked them to show their vision for the community in this medium. Williams Lake also reached out to youth and had grade 9 and 10 youth from each of the high schools participate in a two day digital story telling workshop. The result of this workshop was ten stories, one for each of the sustainability priority areas, which are now being used to help shape policy in the ICSP and the review of the OCP. Rossland also reached out to youth; the Rossland Secondary School were involved in a workshop and subsequently created artwork on the sustainability theme in Rossland that still hangs in City Hall.

Revelstoke is using neighbourhood groups to engage local residents. These groups meet with City staff to discuss the vision they have for their neighbourhood and the community and provide input on zoning and development applications.

5.4 MAKE PARTNERSHIPS WITH KEY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Williams Lake held a series of public engagement events called "**community partners cafe.**" For these events, community leaders were identified and labeled under each of the ten priority areas of the sustainability plan. The senior staff team split up the invite list and each invitee was personally invited to attend the cafes and asked a series of questions to help to engage them prior to the event. The project leaders remarked that using community relationships and personal invitations worked very well to have a number of people attend the cafes. The community leaders were also interviewed individually about the focus areas and their vision for the community.

5.5 USE A CREATIVE TECHNIQUE FOR A PUBLIC MEETING

Jasper's Community Sustainability Plan Working Group hosted a **pucha kucha** night at a local bar. The pucha kucha strategy involves members of the public sharing a 20 slide presentation with each slide limited for viewing for 20 seconds (no more or less) meaning that each presenter spoke for 6 min and 40 seconds on ideas they had for the community or particular issues. In this event the key themes were the availability and affordability of housing; importance of land use planning; importance of citizen engagement; public and alternative transportation; tourism and local economic development; the natural environment; water, energy and waste; and opportunities for recreation and culture (JCSP, Phase 1).

Slocan has used an adapted version of a world café, which they call **rural café** to engage community members in a comfortable setting that has hosted topic tables. The participants then move tables while the host stays and gets feedback from new participants.

Revelstoke used a **design charrette** to engage the community on the new unified design bylaw which is a regulatory form-based zoning bylaw that will replace the city's existing 25 year old zoning bylaw. This event took place over four days in June 2010 and residents were able to see how their input influenced design drawings that were prepared during the event. A pre-charrette was held in January. The event allowed the public to help design the bylaw and see it developed through a facilitator.

5.6 CREATE A FUN PUBLIC EVENT

Williams Lake's public engagement for the planning process was launched with a public event sponsored by the municipality called "**music in the park.**" At this event, community members were able to enjoy music as well as comment on the nine focus areas at stations and additional priorities for the sustainability planning process. During this event, participants were given a passport that encouraged them to go around to each of the nine stations and provide comments. At each station participants were given a stamp and were asked to submit their completed passports to enter a draw.

In the fall of 2009, Williams Lake had an event called "**the Great Adventure**" modeled after the TV show "the Amazing Race." The event, marketed to families, had participants following clues to 10 locations (that were linked to the 10 priority areas) where they would provide feedback on the transition strategies for each priority area drafted for the sustainability plan. The event wrapped up at the "Taste of the Cariboo" local food festival, planned in partnership with the City and the Food Policy Council (again linked to a community priority) where participants received a free lunch. This innovative strategy worked as an attempt to get people and families to understand the challenge of long-term decision making and the trade-offs that it requires.

In an interview with the project leads, both remarked that the event took longer than they expected because participants thoroughly discussed and commented on the priority areas. They both agreed if they were to do it again they would keep questions asked of participants at a simpler level and have less writing for the participants. One of the challenges was trying to do too much with community members who helped plan and run the event. Another lesson learned from this event is that it would be more appropriate to hold the event earlier in the process, rather than being held late in the process where it was difficult to get feedback from the public on complex issues.

5.7 SHOWCASE YOUR PLAN VISUALLY AND EXPERIENTIALLY

St. Mary's is building a **tipi** to visually represent their sustainability plan. The pillars of the community vision are being described as poles of a tipi with the canvas representing the vision. The Band intends to have a community tipi raising event that will provide a physical and visual representation of the strategic

plan. The tipi will be a place for the community to comment and see updates on the plan. St. Mary's is also planning a **community trek** which will be an activity for the community to experience together and discuss the vision for the community in the future. This will help create connections and enhance the social capital of the community.

5.8 USE A NEW MEDIUM

Williams Lake and St. Mary's have both used youth media projects to engage youth and the community. Revelstoke created videos of public events and community members and posted them on YouTube and made them available on their Unified Development Bylaw website: <http://revelstokeudb.com/>.

The Village of Slocan developed a Google **map of community assets** and sites in a public meeting. The map is now available as an interactive tool for the community.

Several local governments have used **online engagement** through an interactive web-based forum. One great BC example is *Bowen Island Ourselves*, an online forum that is relevant, up-to-date and has lively discussions. Jasper, AB had online engagement as a part of their ICSP but found that it did not attract the discussions and views they had anticipated. In a review of the process, the project team remarked that in the future they would have a local blogger dedicated to the site to help develop conversations.

5.9 PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO ATTEND

St. Mary's has had **prizes** drawn at every public event and has a large prize for which individuals get an entry each time they participate in the process. Most of the example communities provided food at each event. St. Mary's and the Village of Slocan provided childcare for events.

5.10 LET THE COMMUNITY KNOW HOW THEIR INPUT WAS USED

Since Golden implemented their OCP, the Council and staff have been saying "**this is your OCP in action**" (e.g. whenever a new development breaks ground that has affordable housing units or when the community Spirit Square was unveiled). This provides a link to the public engagement during the OCP and reinforces the ongoing value of the public engagement.

5.11 REALISE THAT IT TAKES MORE TIME THAN YOU THINK IT WILL:

The complexity of public engagement requires a great deal of **preparation** in order to be successful. The pacing is important to keep momentum and preparation is key. It is also very important, says Prince George, to take the time to get the entire staff and council on board with the project, so they can be ambassadors. Jasper notes that a well planned event "leads to increased buy-in from council and the community at large" (Sweet & Sacret, 2009).

Golden noted that they are thinking strategically about when to do the next big public engagement project. Being aware of the limits on staff time is important when considering opportunities to engage the public. Golden also acknowledges that the public can become over-engaged and get frustrated.

5.12 RESIST THE URGE TO INVITE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY TO EVERY EVENT

Jasper noted that resisting the urge to invite the entire public to every event is important because small group sessions with local experts can be invaluable. It is important, Jasper further notes, to ensure

transparency and report to the larger public on the smaller session discussions and decisions (Sweet & Sacret, 2009) if this strategy is pursued.

5.13 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COUNCIL, STAFF AND CONSULTANTS IS KEY

Both Williams Lake and Rossland emphasized that communication between staff, volunteers, consultants and council is important. Assuming that others will inform themselves or have the same understanding of expectations leads to misunderstanding. Keeping all members of the project team informed and being explicit about expectations is very important. The support from Council was mentioned as key to the success of the public engagement in Golden. The Council was very hands off until the adoption of the plan.

The relationship with consultants was noted by some example communities as very important to ensure that expectations were met from consultant, staff, and volunteers. For some, a lesson learned was to ensure that expectations and deliverables are clearly outlined in a contract and that items like logistical planning (e.g. who is paying for food and locations), and how often council needs to be consulted need to be specified in the contract.

5.14 PRIORITIZE

Rossland's sustainability commission was faced with the challenge of multiple projects and an eager public ready to get started. A lesson learned was to think ahead and recognize the need to pick priority projects from opportunities and ideas that may arise from granting organizations, community groups, Council and staff. It may be difficult but necessary to not jump at opportunities that arise as momentum builds.

5.15 SUMMARY

Although there are efforts to increase the empirical basis for measuring effectiveness (Rowe *et al*, 2010), public engagement at this point is an art not a science. It requires an understanding of one's community and an ability to learn throughout the process. A coordinator from one of the example communities said "fail joyfully." This quote aptly describes the role of a coordinator of a public engagement exercise. It is important to learn, re-evaluate, re-plan, and realize that sometimes failure can be helpful.

The smart practices reflect themes that came from the literature around increasing the likelihood of success. The need to report back to the community and the importance of communication between the project team (staff, consultants, council) helps instil trust. Process related smart practices include the importance of well-planned events, but also example communities pointed out that the ability to adapt and learn from challenges is equally important. Social capital is an important component in the use of volunteers on task forces, partnerships with community leaders, and techniques such as kitchen table meetings in an individual's home.

The opportunities a community has available to them when considering public engagement are infinite because they are only limited by imagination, as shown by the range of techniques that were used by the example communities. This abundance of choices can present a challenge to some, making choosing from the endless options exceptionally difficult. There are guides that can help communities choose and. Appendix I has a list of toolkits and useful websites in this regard.

CHAPTER 6: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND GROUND TRUTHING EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher attended the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local governments (AKBLG) meeting where she had a table in CBT's booth. This booth was an opportunity to ask local government elected officials to prioritize the four key areas where CBT could potentially help local governments creatively engage the public. This also provided the researcher and CBT with an opportunity to learn experientially. The researcher was able to engage local government officials with a quick and easy table top survey that drew attendees into the CBT booth and engaged them on the topic of public engagement.

In order to design the four options for the survey the researcher reviewed findings from both the interviews with local government staff and elected officials of Basin communities and the smart practice interviews and research. From the analysis of the findings (described in Chapter 4) the following early options were identified where CBT could help with public engagement: information sharing, people, key resource person, and working with consultants. The researcher also identified potential options within those broad categories that addressed more specific issues and wrote them on the paper under the larger category. They were designed to give more specific actions and reflected options suggested in the interview stage and through collaborative brain storming with CBT and SPC staff on what might be potential options and what further information was required. The areas and options were:

1. *Internal capacity*: staff, training, volunteers, coop student
These options were aimed at getting a wider perspective on options suggested in Basin interviews. This option called "capacity" at AKBLG, reflects the need expressed in the interviews for people to get things done and staff to organize them or have the time to do the work themselves.
2. *Key resource person* (external capacity): expert, research, and facilitator
This option aimed to understand what sort of resource person was required by participants. This reflected the need that was expressed in the interviews for someone to call upon for expertise, opinion, advice, and training requests.
3. *Information sharing*: peer to peer, facilitated, online portal/ forum
These options reflected from participants to know how to do things. The options reflect the researcher's need to understand how participants, if they wanted additional information, wanted information delivered.
4. *Working with consultants*: consultant profiles, request for proposals and contract training, dialogue.
This option looked to understand what kind of help participants needed with consultants. This reflected the needs expressed in the interviews and smart practise review around specific information on what to expect from a consultant and how to meet those expectations.

A total of fifty-five individuals (mostly elected officials) participated on day one of the event and a total of nineteen participated on day two. Participants were asked to vote with stickers on what was the priority for their community. They were also encouraged to write comments. The researcher offered the option of sticker voting for the general category or a specific one to participants.

Figure 4 shows the two days' worth of feedback.



Figure 4: Photo of tabletop feedback from AKBLG (Day 1 on the right, Day 2 on the left)

The researcher took the sticker votes and assigned a value to each of the ranked votes so that in total a participant had one vote. This was done by using the following formula: $(\text{Rank1} * 5 + \text{Rank2} * 4 + \text{Rank3} * 3 + \text{Rank4} * 2 + \text{Rank5}) / 15$ for the ranked votes from the first day of AKBLG and added the single vote from the second day of AKBLG.

The feedback in Figure 5 shows that a key resource person and capacity support were the most important areas for CBT identified by local governments in terms of support for public engagement. Information sharing with almost a quarter of votes was next, while working with consultants was the least important area for respondents.

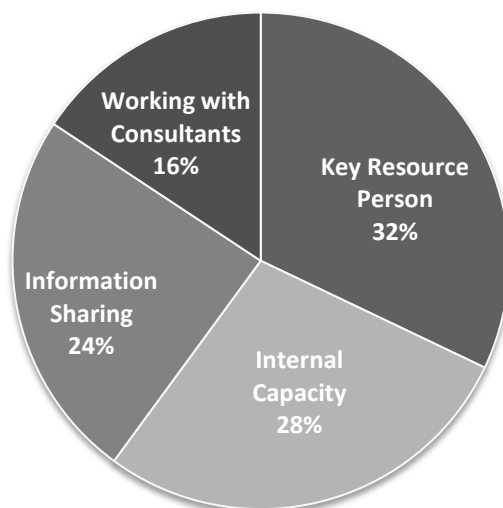


Figure 5: Analysis of participants responses for priority options for CBT to consider helping support public engagement.

Participants at the AKBLG event made specific comments about the potential areas for CBT involvement. Two participants noted that training as a means of capacity building was important for their communities but added the caveat that such training needs to be available to small communities and not just in regional centres. Another participant noted that professionals in community groups are an important source of capacity in small communities and that non-profits need funding to keep these people employed.

Within information sharing, one participant added that local governments need help sharing information with citizens and three other participants added their sticker to show that this was also important in their communities.

The researcher looked at the constraints of the public engagement opportunity at AKBLG and identified the challenge of time and space and picked her strategy based on those. The researcher chose to have a tall table that people that were walking around a trade-show could come up and look at without bending over. The researcher also designed a way for local government staff and elected officials to answer her survey easily (with stickers) and to stimulate conversation.

This method was a “bonus” for the researcher and the client. It created an important opportunity to ground truth early options for CBT supporting public engagement in Basin communities. It was successful at allowing an opportunity for the researcher to engage a group of stakeholders. The analysis that led to the survey was conducted early in the overall project and the recommendations have since evolved further based on additional analysis of the interviews, smart practices’ review and the AKBLG survey itself.

CHAPTER 7: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO CLIENT

The following recommendations are for CBT to consider. They are structured to include a general sentence of the goal of the recommendation followed by suggested options for CBT to consider.

1. *Recognize existing expertise that is available to communities and work to improve accessibility to expertise.* Many interviewees remarked that it is very important to have expertise in the Basin and have those experts available when they need advice or a sounding board.
 - a. Recognize the resources that are already present in the Basin, through CBT staff and the SPC Sustainability Facilitator. Consider opportunities to further collaborate in order to retain and broaden the expertise that is available, and make sure it is accessible to all communities.
 - b. Consider training for the CBT staff and the SPC Sustainability Facilitator, who work with communities, to increase their capacity to support communities.
2. *Develop training material and information.* Interviewees generally wanted relevant and easily accessible information available to them about public engagement and sustainability planning.
 - a. Explore technology such as webinars and video podcasts as ways of sharing basic knowledge about public engagement and sustainability planning across the Basin.
 - b. Develop more specific workshops or other tools (such as adding to the existing SPC resource binder) that provide in depth knowledge and examples of public engagement.
 - c. Share this report with local governments and create handouts from report findings that are quick and easy to access. Create or link to “how to” documents for using specific engagement strategies covered in this report. These materials should be developed in collaboration with SPC to complement or add to their existing resource binder.
3. *Build local governments’ human resource capacity to undertake an in-depth public engagement campaign.* Many local government officials and staff noted the biggest obstacle they had to meaningful engagement was having the staff time to devote to a project. Example communities stressed that effective public engagement takes a lot of staff time.
 - a. Coop and internship subsidies: Explore synergies with existing and future coop/internship programs (e.g. Local Government Management Association internship program).
 - b. Facilitators: Explore ways CBT can support facilitation capacity in the Basin through training and networking of facilitators or communities.
 - c. Recognize the unique needs and challenges very small communities have and consider additional support for staffing and consultants.
4. *Funding.* Many communities are challenged with funding effective public engagement.
 - a. CBT has been welcoming and supporting proposals for sustainability planning and public engagement through the existing Community Development Program (a flexible granting stream with limited criteria). This should be continued.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This report began with the Columbia Basin Trust and Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities *Moving Sustainability Forward* workshop held in November 2009. The theme from participants in that workshop was that local governments in the Basin are struggling to do public engagement and wanted to be able to use creative strategies in this area. Based on that feedback, CBT commissioned this report. With advice from CBT and SPC the researcher set out to:

1. Understand the challenges local governments in the Basin are facing around public engagement specific to sustainability planning.
2. Identify existing smart practices around public engagement (based on communities that have completed public engagement), which are appropriate to the needs and resources of Basin communities.
3. Identify ways CBT can continue to support effective local government public engagement and develop and prioritize recommendations for CBT.

To fulfill these research objectives the researcher reviewed relevant literature and determined that public engagement is accepted as having an important role in local government planning and policy making. The literature is now focused on the questions of what constitutes *effective* public engagement and how it can be measured. This concept of supporting *effective* public engagement, as opposed to the initial idea of *creative* public engagement informed the research objectives, analysis of the findings, and smart practices for local governments. Ultimately the recommendations from this report advise CBT on how the organization can help local governments effectively engage their communities.

Additionally, the literature discussed the concept of sustainability and linked it to the idea of *wicked problems*, problems that require difficult decisions and decisions which require public engagement in order to address the complexity of sustainability issues that can pit short term gains against long term goals. The literature provides insights into ways communities can theoretically improve public engagement: careful process design, trust, and social capital (Putnam, 2000) of public engagement have emerged as relevant to local governments in the Basin.

After consulting the literature the researcher investigated the issues that affect local governments within the Basin. The researcher sought to understand how themes from the literature are reflected in the experiences and challenges of local governments each with their unique local context—or *place*. The researcher conducted exploratory and qualitative interviews with staff and elected officials from local governments across the Basin area. While the interviews clearly demonstrated the unique challenges that individual communities are facing, there were a number of common themes. Basin communities are struggling in four key areas: internal capacity, information, key resource people and working with consultants.

These four areas where Basin communities are struggling and where CBT could potentially have a role in supporting local governments formed the basis of a survey taken to the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) convention in Castlegar. The AKBLG convention also offered an opportunity for the researcher and elected officials to experience public engagement. The survey found that local governments were challenged by all four areas but that the priority was for support from key resource people (expertise) and help with human capacity (staff, volunteers, or contractors). Information was the third priority for the elected officials and some staff in attendance at the AKBLG meeting. The practise of doing public engagement provided an opportunity to learn experientially. The researcher was able to engage local government official with a quick and easy table top survey that drew attendees into the CBT booth and engaged them on the topic of public engagement.

The researcher reviewed material available from local governments that have completed effective engagement around sustainability plans or OCP reviews. The researcher primarily used examples from within the Basin area but also used two non Basin examples because the communities were relevant to Basin communities and the examples provided unique smart practices. The smart practices from community examples outline ways to develop ideas and make them work within a particular community. The smart practices show how communities each developed their own approach to public engagement and the keys to success, challenges they faced, and strategies they used.

The smart practise themes for local governments overall were linked to themes that emerged from the literature review. For local governments doing public engagement it is important to consider the following key points:

1. *Building trust:* creating a culture of trust within an organization and empowering the front line staff or volunteers to creatively engage the community, which in turn helps build trust between the community and the local government.
2. *Communication:* a project as complex as sustainability planning and/or public engagement require clear communication between council, staff, consultants, volunteers, and community members to have everyone operating on the same page throughout the process.
3. *Social capital:* reach out to highly engaged and networked community members that can use their connectedness to reach further. Use the process to increase social capital within the community.
4. *Resources:* projects need staff, facilitators, coordinators, and people to arrange logistics. Local governments must prioritize these resource requirements and allocate sufficient staff and financial support, through their own means or by looking for additional funding and staff.

In this report, the smart practices serve as a direct resource for local governments. The client of this paper, CBT, was provided with additional recommendations on how to support local governments with public engagement. These recommendations centred around the priority areas identified from the local government interviews.

Out of this project, the researcher notes that work is still required to ensure that local governments have the resources required to undertake effective public engagement around the complex subject of sustainability. The recommendations in this report are designed for the client, CBT to help communities with the Basin area but could be more broadly applied to other regional organizations, such as the Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities program.

Sustainability planning with effective public engagement has the potential to develop a clear and cohesive vision for a community. The vision, backed up by a clear sustainability plan can help communities make choices for their future. Local governments will have a plan in place to guide them when they face difficult decisions around wicked problems. The ability of the local government to follow the sustainability plan will stand as a test of the *effectiveness* of the public engagement; as, in theory, a public who was effectively engaged and believes in a plan will want it to remain. This may be the best way to assess the *effectiveness* of public engagement.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF COMMUNITIES INTERVIEWED

Basin Municipalities (note some municipalities had more than one person interviewed and note that in some cases the municipal representative is also a regional district director)

Castlegar- staff- telephone
Cranbrook- staff –in person and elected official- telephone
Elkford- staff- telephone
Fruitvale- elected official - telephone
Golden*- 4 staff- in person
Kaslo- staff- telephone
Kimberley- staff- in person
Montrose- elected official – telephone
Nakusp- elected official- telephone
Nelson- staff and volunteer- telephone
New Denver- 2 elected officials- telephone
Radium Hot Springs- elected official- in person
Revelstoke*- staff- telephone
Rossland*- staff, elected official, and 2 volunteers- telephone
Trail- 2 elected officials - telephone

Regional Districts

Columbia Shuswap Regional District – elected official- in person
Regional District of East Kootenay- 2 elected officials- telephone
Regional District of Central Kootenay- 2 elected officials and staff- telephone
Regional District of Kootenay Boundary- 3 elected officials- telephone

Additional Interviews

Arts and Culture volunteer- telephone
Consultant- telephone
CBT staff- 2- telephone, 2- in person
BC Healthy Communities- 1 in person, 1 telephone
SPC Sustainability Facilitator – in person

Interviews with Example Communities

Golden- 4 staff -in person
Rossland- 1 staff, 2 volunteers, 1 elected official -telephone
Slocan-1 staff- telephone
Prince George-1 staff- telephone
Williams Lake- 2 staff- telephone
SPC Sustainability Facilitator on work with St. Mary's Band- telephone

APPENDIX B: SMART PRACTICE COMMUNITY STORIES

Several communities at different stages of public engagement around sustainability planning and one around an Official Community Plan were consulted to consider themes around strategies used, keys to success, and lessons learned. The communities were selected, by the researcher with advice from the client, because of the variety and uniqueness of their approaches. The communities were also selected based on the relevance of their experience to the communities of the Basin; this meant several city examples were left out because their access to resources and scale of projects is very different.

St. Mary's Band- Aq'am, BC : *Ka Kniwitik* – “Our Thinking”.

The Aq'am Community, St. Mary's Indian Band, is part of the Ktunaxa First Nation and is located near the City of Cranbrook. The Aq'am community has a population of 342 people of which a third are under the age of twenty-five. In 2009, the community elected the first new chief in thirty years and almost an entirely new Council.

St. Mary's is undertaking a strategic plan (a version of a Comprehensive Community Plan), similar to an integrated community sustainability plan. This plan is being coordinated by a young community member under the mentorship of an experienced consultant. One of the aims throughout the process is to build local capacity and skills of the entire community.

The process in St. Mary's is community driven. The local coordinator notes that the planning process is more about “uncovering” the strategic plan rather than writing it—that the community already has the knowledge and wisdom. The respect for the community by the project coordinator, the Band staff, and the Band Council has allowed the process to bring together the community. The coordinator emphasizes that it is the community's project, not hers and that she is learning with the community, which has built trust and teamwork. The coordinator notes that the community wanted change which has helped provide the support for the process. One of the objectives of the plan, as set by the Chief and Council, is to develop a framework for community led decision making.

St. Mary's is only part-way through their public engagement on their strategic plan and already have done significant public engagement. The first activities for the project were to have a public engagement brainstorming session and facilitation workshop for the Strategic Plan committee, the project coordinator, staff, Council. Special engagement sessions were held to engage youth and elders. The sessions created a venue for the development of the Ktunaxa name for the project—*Ka Kniwitik* meaning “Our Thinking”.

The next phase of public engagement included multiple community meetings. Community members were encouraged to attend by having dinner served at meetings and draw prizes at each meeting and an entry each time an individual participated in the planning process for a large draw prize (a TV) drawn at the end of phase two. The meetings were designed to be fun, empowering, and interesting so that once people were enticed to join the meetings they wanted to stay and participate. Concurrently, during this phase, family meetings were held where the project coordinator would visit a family and bring food to cook together and discuss their vision for the community. Youth were specifically engaged in the process through a photography project for youth and children had many opportunities to draw and contribute in the community meetings. The public engagement also included visits to the schools and one on one meetings between youth and elders.

Throughout the community meetings and visioning process, a metaphor of a tipi was used to describe the strategy sustainability plan. The poles of the tipi represent the sectors of the community: health and education, land use, environment, culture and language, economic development and governance and the

fabric represents the community's vision. The next phase of St. Mary's public engagement involves building an actual tipi with displays and opportunities to comment. This event is being designed as a community project that will allow the community to "build" the plan. Following the tipi building the community is taking a community trek which is hoped to bring the community together around the strategic sustainability plan and to be a celebration of the success of the project.

The thorough public engagement for St. Mary's strategic sustainability plan is still in progress but already demonstrates how a committed community with support from Council, staff, and the community can use public engagement around a sustainability plan to bring together a community. The focus on building capacity and connections within the community throughout the project will help with the implementation of the plan and with future initiatives and has helped grow the social capital within St. Mary's.

Slocan, BC

Slocan has the distinction of being one of the smallest incorporated municipalities in BC with only 350 residents. Slocan has its own silver rush history but now is a small community at the south end of Slocan Lake. In April 2009, Springer Creek Wood Products, the mill and largest employer in the Village of Slocan announced that it was shutting down. Slocan appealed to the Province's transition team asking for help creating a transition strategy, as Springer Creek was also the largest taxpayer in the community. Slocan was able to start looking at opportunities, that existed within a time of change.

With funding from the Province and CBT, Slocan hired a consulting firm to do a sustainability plan and a scenarios plan around the future of the mill. The sustainability plan aimed to do public engagement and identify assets for the community. So far the consultants have publicly engaged the community through three public forums that used the world café strategy. This strategy works by having a host at each table with a topic and having participants move between tables to discuss that issue.

Slocan used asset mapping as a way to identify opportunities and assets within the community. They even created a google map that shows the local businesses, amenities, and public spaces.

While public events were well attended the consultants wanted to reach those who might not attend an evening meeting. They went to a community hub, the wellness centre and invited people to stop by and discuss the sustainability plan. The project also needed to engage the business community and so a business lunch, with food provided, was held for business owners. The business meeting used the analogy of a leaky bucket to discuss how to get people to spend money within the community, to "plug" the leak of money that leaves the community.

The extensive public engagement and positive community response really demonstrate the resilience of a small community facing a major economic challenge. This example shows that a community can pull together to look at a sustainable future in the midst of a challenge.

Golden, BC

Golden is a resort municipality of 4500 with some blue collar roots in the forestry and transportation industries (CP Rail and the TransCanada highway). Golden is located on the TransCanada highway in the Columbia River Valley and between Rogers and Kicking Horse pass. In 2000 the local ski hill was bought and developed into a major resort: Kicking Horse Mountain Resort.

Golden undertook a large public engagement process on the community's Official Community Plan which includes a number of sustainability elements. Golden is an example because of the public engagement and how the Official Community Plan has been used to promote sustainability. The researcher heard

Golden referenced during the Basin interviews as an example that communities in the Basin already look to.

In interviewing staff from the Town of Golden it is clear that the OCP was determined a priority by the Council and that Council's support was a big factor in the success. The Town of Golden created a culture of trust by appointing an OCP steering committee that consisted of volunteers and one Councillor to guide the process. Advertising was creative with a photo of Golden's mayor made to look like the historic "Uncle Sam" posters saying "we want you!"

For the public engagement the steering committee and town planner supervised two coop students hired from the Golden campus of the College of the Rockies and gave them "free reign" to design and implement an engagement strategy. This culture of trust throughout the organization was a key to the success. The coop students were cheerful and approachable and went out into the community to engage citizens. The students set up big signs with "OCP event" and did public engagement in grocery stores, coffee shops, public skate, and jam night at a local pub. Golden did additional engagement using techniques like a design charrette where community members commented on designs with post it notes and open houses.

The Golden example shows that by establishing a culture of trust that embraced new ways of going to the people to publicly engage; the community will buy-in to the plan. Since Golden's OCP was adopted in 2008, the Council, even the newly elected Council, and staff have made an effort to show the community how the OCP that they helped create is being used. In Council meetings, newspaper articles, and at community events the phrase "this is your OCP in action" is reiterated to show that a new development that has affordable housing suites or a redevelopment of a community centre are all in line with the OCP. The implementation of Golden's OCP won the 2009 UBCM Innovation and Leadership award for small communities.

Golden's OCP blurs the line with a sustainability plan and contains many sustainability elements. The sustainability values from the OCP are placed in the Council chambers at the seat of each Councillor to ensure that decisions are made that reflect those values. Golden is still considering whether the OCP constitutes an integrated community sustainability initiative or whether to pursue a sustainability plan or checklist in the future. In the meantime the award-winning OCP continues to be put to action in Golden.

Rossland, BC

Rossland is a resort municipality of 3500 people within the Basin region. Rossland at one time was a gold rush and mining boom town. It is now a diverse community with a world-class ski resort and amenities that attract tourists and amenity-migrants. Rossland was one of the first communities in BC to undertake a sustainability plan. Rossland's 'Visions to Action' plan was created out of a desire to look at sustainability due to the rapid development at Red Mountain. Their 'Strategic Sustainability Plan' evolved from earlier concerns raised by some community members in 2002 over the potential impacts of rapid development and change. A cost-benefit assessment of development was carried out in 2006. This assessment raised the broader issue of sustainability, and led to Rossland's Visions to Actions sustainability plan.

The Visions to Actions plan was led by a steering committee of volunteers, and municipal staff and council members. The steering committee worked with a Sustainability Task Force of fifty community members to do a number of public engagement events including workshops, surveys, target group sessions (seniors, youth, developers) and a design charrette. A major strength of Rossland's project was the degree and depth of involvement and participation by the community. Also a strong emphasis on

creating a final product – the Strategic Sustainability Plan – that would be clear, concise and easy to read and understand.

One of the strengths of Rossland as an example community is that they are honest and open about their successes and challenges. Rossland faced challenges engaging developers in the sustainability plan and overcame them by having meetings specially targeted to developers and business people. Rossland also faced challenges of a volunteer driven task force working with a consultant. The volunteer members and contract manager of the Steering Committee ended up doing a lot more work than they originally anticipated. Also a scenario planning component of the project was not as effective as the Steering Committee had hoped due to misunderstandings of the role of scenario planning.

The Visions to Actions 'Strategic Sustainability Plan' (SSP) was adopted by Rossland's City Council in 2008 following almost two years of work. Unfortunately, the implementation was delayed while the community OCP was reviewed and revised to be consistent with the SSP, so some momentum was lost in moving to the all-important 'Action' phase of the process. Eventually the Council expressed its view on the priority issues or focus areas to be addressed, and, through a by-law, created a Sustainability Commission to succeed the Steering Committee and oversee the implementation of the SSP. Since then, the Sustainability Commission, which is a unique governance model, oversees four task forces that correspond to four of the eleven focus areas in the Visions to Actions SSP. The commission exists to maintain focus and continuity over time in the implementation of the SSP, and to coordinate projects, oversee the task forces, and vet ideas before they go to Council. This unique model has achieved several milestones such as a climate change adaptation plan, an indicators project, a watershed mapping project, and has completed an economic report on nomadic entrepreneurs. The Commission has also had some difficulties. A relationship with Council based on trust and confidence is key to the successful implementation of the SSP. The growing pains and struggles that Rossland has experienced with the Sustainability Commission by no means diminish the work that has been done, but rather show the challenges of maintaining momentum of a long-term project and implementing a complex, multi-sectoral concept like sustainability.

Rossland is an example community because of its successful engagement and it serves as an example of how a project evolves over time. Interviews with several individuals involved with the project over time (volunteers, councillor, and staff) indicate that there is some challenge with the Commission model; yet despite some growing pains Rossland has achieved important implementation milestones and is a leader in adopting a sustainability plan within BC.

Revelstoke, BC

Revelstoke is a resort municipality of approximately 8000 people. Revelstoke is known for its huge snowfalls and has a rich history closely tied to Canadian Pacific Railroad. The "last spike" that connected the westward railroad and the eastward railroad is just west of Revelstoke. The community is also home to the Revelstoke dam. The community experienced rapid development and a real estate boom with the development of Revelstoke Mountain Resort which opened in 2007. Real estate speculation raised house values significantly.

Revelstoke completed a new OCP in July of 2009 that had a lot of public engagement. The implementation of the OCP and subsequent bylaw updates continues to have a focus on public engagement. The unique neighbourhood groups and large scale design charrette are two reasons why Revelstoke was chosen as an example. Revelstoke is also a recognized leader in social planning, community energy development, and early childhood development.

Revelstoke's eight neighbourhood groups began in the fall of 2009 and meet monthly with planning staff. The neighbourhood groups are an opportunity for residents to connect with each other and raise their concerns to the City. This form of ongoing engagement at a neighbourhood level helped increase social capital in the community and for the both the City and the residents. The neighbourhood groups are a way for the City to get the word out on community meetings and other engagement.

Revelstoke is rebuilding trust in the community because of lack of engagement around development in the past. The renewed focus on public engagement in the midst of change due to substantial development and a new seasonal and sometimes transient population is animating discussions. Building off of Revelstoke's OCP, a new *Unified Design Bylaw* (UDB) is in the midst of public engagement. Revelstoke held an extensive four day design charrette that involved a variety of community member. A design charrette involves various stakeholders and community members giving ideas on designs for the community and artists or designers are drafting the ideas from the crowd. Then these drafts are revised throughout the event based on feedback from those in attendance. The ideal charrette, while time consuming and intense for the event, can potentially save months of debate and revisions by having all the players in the room making revisions and ultimately coming up with a collective decision.

The online site for the UDB, <http://revelstokeudb.com/>, has YouTube clips showcasing feedback from students that attended the design charrette as well as videos featuring other community members. The clips help explain the priorities and vision of residents as well as features experts explaining the process.

Revelstoke is an example of a community that is committed to preserving its community-feel and culture in the midst of major resort and real estate development. The use of a design charrette, neighbourhood groups and YouTube videos are examples of creative public engagement.

Williams Lake, BC

Williams Lake is located in the Cariboo region and has a population of approximately 11,000 people. It is known as the Stampede capital of BC. The T'exelcenc and Xat'sull Bands call the area home.

Williams Lake has undertaken a community-centered sustainability plan called "Williams Lake: Imagine Our Future" that involved a number of creative engagement strategies. Williams Lake started their sustainability plan in the summer of 2009 with a public event called Performance in the Park. At this public event, put on through a partnership between the City and the Community Arts Council, hundreds of citizens came out to watch live music and a chance to win a prize for participating in stations for the nine draft priority areas. These priority areas were identified through a review of previous City plans prior to the public engagement, and were subsequently confirmed by the public and one additional priority area was added to the planning exercise.

Williams Lake used multiple creative strategies to engage citizens around the sustainability plan. One of which was organizing kitchen table meetings, where a volunteer "host" invited friends to come and discuss the priority areas over the kitchen table. Another example of creative strategies to engage citizens was the community partner's café. Using social connections, members of the project team invited friends and acquaintances from diverse community organizations to a "conversation café" style meeting. The participants moved to different stations representing the now ten priority areas and had discussions. Another method Williams Lake used was having hot spots in different active community locations where community members could learn about the project and jot down their thoughts on a table top.

Williams Lake was not afraid to venture into the unknown. They created an event called "The Great Adventure" where families and community members participated in an Amazing Race style activity. The clues in the adventure led participants to community landmarks where they could comment on Transition

strategies around each of the priority areas. In an interview, the project coordinator noted that overall the event was a success but if they were to do it again they would make the questions and expected feedback from the public simpler. The participants took each “stop” so seriously and were diligent in their comments that the event took longer than expected to complete.

The work in Williams Lake is a good example of being creative, making up your own events, and making things fun. The celebratory nature of the public engagement enticed people to come to events. Williams Lake’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan was so successful that it recently won the national 2010 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Sustainable Communities Award under the planning category.

Jasper, AB

The municipality of Jasper with a population of approximately 4500 is located in Jasper National Park and has a large tourism based economy. The municipality and Parks Canada jointly undertook a sustainability planning process that involved several creative engagement opportunities. Jasper was chosen as it is not in British Columbia and yet has a similar size and tourism economy as several communities in the Basin.

While the municipality of Jasper is located in Alberta, its tourism related economy and mountain geography make it a relatable example for many communities in the BC Columbia River Basin. Jasper has the additional influence of being located within a national park which mirrors some communities within the Basin and the relationship local governments and regional districts have with Parks Canada.

The community of Jasper, AB kicked off the public engagement component of the Jasper Community Sustainability Plan in October of 2008. The event included an introduction to the project, guest speaker, and engagement through an “Activity Centre” with multiple stations. In one station participants could enter their feedback into computers; other participants could fill in a “brick” with ideas and place it in the pathway; and a visual art project for children. The event was designed to be fun with local musicians playing (Jasper Community Sustainability Plan (JCSP), 2008).

Within a week of the kickoff Jasper’s Community Sustainability Plan Working Group hosted a **pucha kucha** night at a local bar. The pucha kucha strategy involves presenters sharing a 20 slide presentation with each slide on for 20 seconds (no more or less) meaning that each presenter spoke for 6 min and 40 seconds on ideas they had for the community or particular issues. In this event the key themes were the availability and affordability of housing; importance of land use planning; importance of citizen engagement; public and alternative transportation; tourism and local economic development; the natural environment; water, energy and waste; and opportunities for recreation and culture (JCSP, 2008).

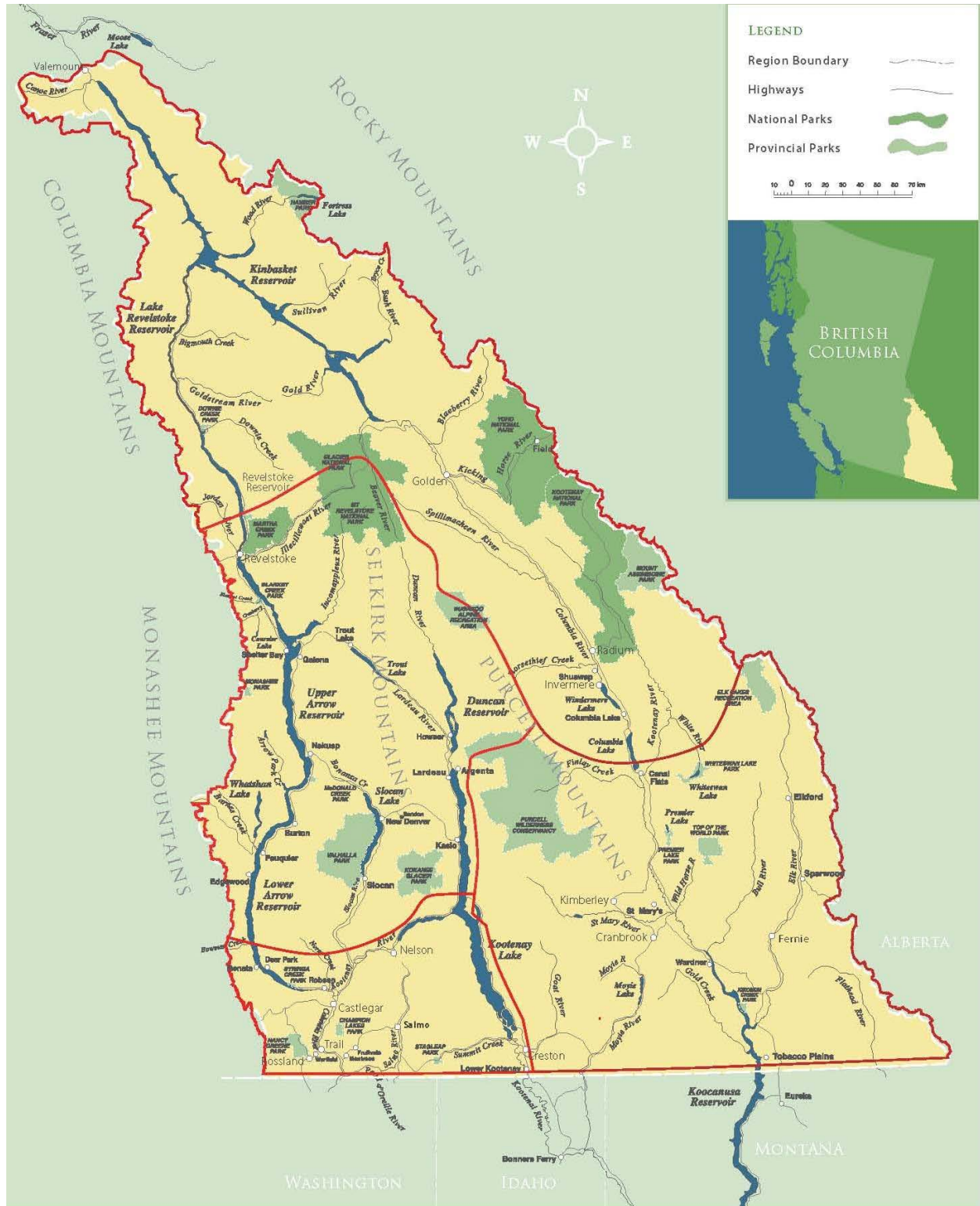
The next events were workshops on sustainable tourism and creating a vision and goals. (JCSP, 2008). Following that, Jasper held workshops to create the vision and principles for the sustainability plan. These involved three exercises: Vision & Principles, Asset Mapping and Visual Cues, with the purpose of identifying key assets, opportunities, and challenges in the community. The strategies helped the community identify its vision and priorities as well as underlying concerns. (JCSP, 2008).

Goals for each sustainability area were developed through a public engagement workshop where sample goals were expanded by participants and the ninety participants over two nights voted with dots on their priority goals. Indicators were developed by consultants with less public engagement due to their technical nature and were evaluated by Municipal and Parks Canada staff (JCSP, 2009).

From their experience, Jasper notes “that investing in creating a public engagement plan was worthwhile because public engagement requires greater investment of time, effort and resources. Well planned

events lead to increased buy-in from council and the community at large” (Sweet & Sacret, 2009, P. 37) Jasper learned that smaller sessions with local “experts” are effective and do not need to involve the entire community at every event. They note that smaller events do need to be reported publicly to maintain transparency. Jasper learned that while technology has potential as an engagement tool, it needs to be animated and note that if they did the project again they would have had a local blogger to keep online discussions lively and current. (Sweet & Sacret, 2009)

APPENDIX C: MAP OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN TRUST REGION



APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I began with an introduction to the project and discussion of verbal consent.

1. Can you describe for me what the perfect public engagement process would look like (in _____)?
 - What percentage of your community would be involved? Who would be involved?
 - How would they be involved?
 - What would be involved?

2. How do you characterize your community in terms of engagement?
 - Can you describe what public engagement looks like in your community?
 - What trends have been key influences on engagement in your community?

 - What is working well about the way you are engaging your community? What are some of the places that you see could be improved?

 - How much time do you spend on engagement? Is this consistent? Has it changed? Can you spend as much time as you would ideally like to?

 - When you engage your community, what is it generally about?

3. I want you to think of an innovative and creative public engagement strategy you have either been involved in or heard about.
 - If you've been able to use that strategy what allowed you to take it on?
 - If you haven't tried that strategy, what would enable you to try it?

4. What would make your job easier? What would that look like?
 - Can you describe it for me?
 - (extra hands, information, support from council, financial, relationship skills, pro-d/leadership)

5. Do you have any other thoughts on engaging your community that you would like to share with us?

APPENDIX E: EXAMPLE COMMUNITIES INTERVIEW SCRIPT OUTLINE

I began with an introduction to the project and discussion of verbal consent.

1. I am calling you to discuss the public engagement your community undertook. From available material I've gleaned that you have had some success in engagement and we appreciate the opportunity to share your experience with others in an effort to promote engagement in other communities. Could you tell me about your project?
2. What was the motivation/spark for this strategy?
3. How did the community react to the strategy? Initially? Over time? If it changed: how and why? Had you tried this strategy or others in the past?
4. What do you wish you knew when you started the project? What lessons did you learn in the process?
5. What piece of advice would you give a community embarking on a similar project?
6. What about your community made it ready to respond and engage to this strategy?
7. What was key to your success?
8. What has happened since the engagement and have you been able to sustain public participation? What was it's legacy? Ripple effects?
9. Would you be open to sharing your experience with other communities? What examples did you draw on?
10. Do you have any documents/resources that you would be willing to share with other communities?

APPENDIX F: VERBAL CONSENT FORM

Creative Tools to Engage Citizens in Sustainability Planning

You are invited to participate in a study entitled **Creative Tools to Engage Citizens in Sustainability Planning** that is being conducted by Sara Davis.

Sara is a Master's in Public Administration student from the University of Victoria, working as Project Coordinator for the Columbia Basin Trust.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to find creative community engagement strategies for communities doing sustainability planning that incorporates the uniqueness of different communities. The report and interviews will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What good examples of creative community engagement exist?
2. How useful are these strategies to Basin communities?
3. In order to share these strategies with Basin communities, what format works best for staff and elected officials to access this information?
4. What particular challenges do staff and elected officials face with regards to engaging their communities around sustainability planning from their professional perspective?

Importance of this Research

This research project is important because it will inform recommendations for CBT/FBC on how to support community engagement. It was initiated in response to a need identified by Local Government staff and elected officials who attended the November 2009, *Moving Sustainability Forward: Smart Planning for Practitioners* workshop.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a professional (staff or elected official) working in a local government. Your knowledge and experience in community engagement and your community context are critical to the scope and depth of this research project and the report that will be produced.

What is involved?

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a one-hour interview at a time that is convenient for you. The interview may be in-person or by telephone. If the interview is in-person, the location for that interview will be mutually agreeable to you and the principal investigator.

Interview questions will focus on:

- Discussing challenges and successes your community has had with regards to community engagement from your professional perspective.
- Ideas about what would make community engagement easier in your community, in the context of your job.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study you will be consulted to discuss further use of information that has been provided. No information will be used without your consent.

Anonymity, Confidentiality, and Disposal of Data

There are limits to your anonymity and confidentiality. Because the principal investigator will be contacting you directly and conducting the interview in person or by telephone, your identity will be known to her. To protect your anonymity from others, data collected will be kept in locked filing cabinet(s) and password protected computer files. Interview data will be destroyed within two years. Feedback you give to the investigator will not be attributed directly to you but may be attributed to your position and with your verbal permission, to your community as well.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this project will be shared with others in the following ways: a report available through the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), Fraser Basin Council (FBC) and the School of Public Administration; a resource that will be shared with participants in the Basin (through CBT) and province-wide (through FBC); through presentations at public events.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this project include:

Sara Davis, Principal Investigator
Phone: 250-304-8391, Email: sdavis@cbt.org

Dr. Catherine Althaus-Kaefer, Academic Supervisor, University of Victoria
Phone: (250) 721-8060, Email: calthaus@uvic.ca

Sabrina Curtis, Director, Columbia Basin Trust
Phone: 250-344-7872, Email: scurtis@cbt.org

Laurie Cordell, Sustainability Facilitator, Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning for Communities
Phone: 250-489-4860, Email: lcordell@fraserbasin.bc.ca

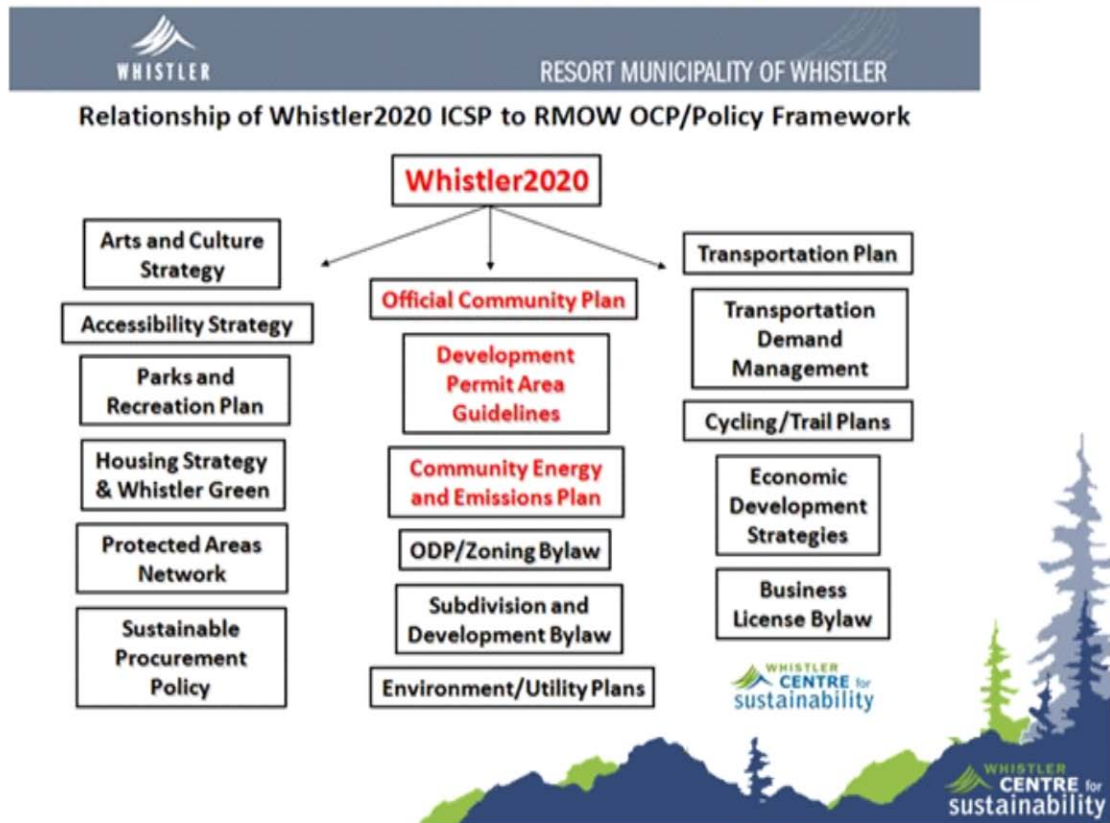
In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

By verbally agreeing, **YOUR FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT IS VERBAL** and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Please retain a copy of this letter for your reference

APPENDIX G: EXAMPLE OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PLANNING DOCUMENTS – RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

W2020 ICSP is the “overarching” policy document!



Reference: Allison, M., Whistler Centre for Sustainability. (2010). The Natural Step: Bridging the Gap - Moving from Planning to Implementation [PowerPoint slide]. Retrieved from Webinar May 26, 2010.

APPENDIX H: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



| | Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public Participation Goal | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions. | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision-making in the hands of the public. |
| Promise to the Public | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |
| Example techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fact sheets ▪ Web sites ▪ Open houses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public comment ▪ Focus groups ▪ Surveys ▪ Public meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshops ▪ Deliberative polling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen advisory committees ▪ Consensus-building ▪ Participatory decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen juries ▪ Ballots ▪ Delegated decision |

Table X IAP2, retrieved from http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf

APPENDIX I: TOOLKITS AND USEFUL WEBSITES

Citizen Engagement Toolkit –Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Citizen_Engagement_Toolkit

Website — Smart Planning for Communities

http://fraserbasin.bc.ca/programs/smart_planning.html

Sustainability Planning electronic resource binder — Smart Planning for Communities:

<http://smartplanning.pcna.ca/files/Moving%20Sustainability%20Foward%20Nov.%203-4/>

Tools for Community Engagement — Islands Trust, BC

<http://www.islandstrust.bc.ca/climatechange/pdf/communityengagementtools.pdf>

Community Engagement Handbook — New South Wales, Australia

www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement

International Association of Public Participation Toolkit

http://iap2.affiniscap.com/associations/4748/files/06Dec_Toolbox.pdf

Community Builders Rural Resources — New South Wales, Australia

http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/rural_regional/resources/srctoc.html#part2

ICSP Toolkit — Ontario

<http://www.amo.on.ca/Content/NavigationMenu/SustainableMunicipalities/FederalGasTax/IntegratedCommunitySustainabilityPlan/default.htm>

Completed Yukon ICSPs – Yukon

<http://www.infrastructure.gov.yk.ca/icsp.html>

Consultation and Engagement Resource—Victoria Local government Association, Victoria, Australia

<http://www.vlgaconsultation.org.au/>

Natural Step Canada

<http://www.naturalstep.org/>

Community Based Social Marketing toolkit book

<http://www.cbsm.com/pages/guide/preface>

APPENDIX J: THE COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY AND CBT

Canada and the United States were facing two major challenges in the Columbia Basin after the Second World War. With increased population and community growth in the region the "untamed" Columbia River was causing periodic and sometimes devastating flooding, and an upswing in the economy increased the need for energy sources.

In 1964, Canada and the United States ratified the Columbia River Treaty (CRT). The purpose of the CRT is to coordinate flood control and optimize electrical energy production in the Columbia River Basin in the United States and Canada.

Under the CRT, Canada agreed to build three storage dams - Keenleyside, Duncan and Mica - in the Canadian Columbia Basin. A fourth dam - Libby - was built in the United States.

In return for the storage of water, Canada is entitled to one half of the additional power generated at the American power plants on the Columbia River. The Province of BC owns this "Canadian Entitlement of Downstream Benefits". The Province sold the first 30 years of these benefits to a group of U.S. utilities for \$254 million US. This sales agreement began to expire in 1998. The Province is now receiving the Canadian Entitlement for the remaining 30 years of the CRT.

Although there is no official "expiry date", there are provisions for renewal, termination or re-negotiation after 60 years (2024), if 10 years notice is given (2014). Canada is obligated to continue to provide flood control as long as the three CRT dams are in operation.

The Columbia River Treaty provided a number of long-term benefits to BC and the US Pacific North West including flood control and increased source of power. There were also employment benefits from the construction and ongoing maintenance/operations of the CRT project dams.

Impacts of the Columbia River Treaty

During the creation of the Columbia River Treaty, there was a lack of consultation with the residents of the Canadian Columbia Basin, even though they were most impacted.

When the water started rising behind Keenleyside, Duncan, Mica and Libby dams:

- 2,300 people along the Arrow Lakes, and the Kocanusa, Duncan, and Kinbasket reservoirs were displaced.
- Sixty thousand hectares (500 square kilometres) of high value, valley bottom land was flooded.
- Numerous First Nations archaeological and burial sites were submerged or buried. Areas that were critical to the cultural, economic and environmental well-being of the region were lost.

The region is still burdened with the on-going impacts from the rise and fall of water levels:

- Recreation on the reservoirs is limited because of the large seasonal fluctuations of the water levels.
- Loss of key wildlife habitat, species and populations have been impacted by increased pressures on low elevation areas.
- Dust storms around reservoirs impact human health.
- Transportation infrastructure in the region is more complex and difficult to maintain.

- Agriculture and forestry activities in the region are limited due to the loss of fertile low elevation land.

The CRT and Columbia Basin Trust

Drastic social upheaval, an absence of local input into major decisions and permanent environmental losses; such is the history of the dam building experience in the Columbia Basin. By the early 1990s people became aware that an opportunity for public involvement might at last present itself. The sale of the first 30 years of BC's share of the downstream benefits was about to expire. Residents of the region resolved that local people should be given more say in matters concerning environmental, economic and social health. Columbia Basin Trust was created in that spirit.

In the early 1990s leaders from First Nations, local communities and the Province of BC worked cooperatively on an agreement recognizing the impacts to the region. In 1995, Columbia Basin Trust was created with a unique mandate to support the efforts of the people of the Basin to create a legacy of social, economic and environmental well-being in the region most directly affected by the creation of the Columbia River Treaty dams. Columbia Basin Trust was endowed with \$295 million from the Province of BC (approximately five per cent of the total downstream benefits owned by the Province of BC).

Reference: *Columbia River Treaty*, Retrieved June 29, 2010 from http://www.cbt.org/The_Basin/?Columbia_River_Treaty

APPENDIX K: ETHICS APPROVAL

Dear Sara Davis:

Your Application for Ethics Approval entitled 'Creative Tools to Engage Citizens in Sustainability Planning' has been approved and assigned Protocol Number 10-079.

Beginning January 2, 2008, as per federal regulations, ethics protocols are approved for a one-year period. All Principal Investigators are required to submit a Request for Annual Renewal form prior to the certificate End Date to maintain ethics approval. You will be contacted via email with a prompt for your renewal submission or project completion details approximately six weeks prior to the end date on your Certificate of Approval.

You may begin your research and will receive your Certificate of Approval via regular mail.

Good luck with your study.

Shannon McCallum
Human Research Ethics | University of Victoria | Administrative Services Building
B202 | Victoria, BC | Canada

Tel: 250-472-4545 | Fax: 250-721-8960 | <http://www.research.uvic.ca> | E-mail: ethics@uvic.ca

APPENDIX L: ETHICS APPLICATION



Human Research Ethics Board

Application for Ethical Approval for Human Participant Research

The following application form is an institutional protocol based on the

[Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

Instructions:

Download this application and complete it on your computer. Hand written applications will not be accepted. The ethical review process takes 4 - 6 weeks.

Use the *Human Research Ethics Board Guidelines* to complete this application: <http://www.research.uvic.ca/Forms/>. Note: This form is linked to the guidelines. Access links in blue text by hitting CTRL and clicking on the blue text.

Submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of this completed, signed application with all attachments to: Human Research Ethics, Administrative Services Building (ASB), Room B202, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada

If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca

Please note that applications are screened and will be returned to the applicant if incomplete (e.g. missing required attachments, signatures, documents).

Once approved, a Request for Renewal must be completed annually for on-going projects for continuing Ethics approval.

A. [Principal Investigator](#)

If there is more than one Principal Investigator, provide their name(s) and contact information below in Section B, Other Investigator(s) & Research Team.

Last Name: **Davis** First Name: **Sara**

Department/Faculty: **HSD/ Public Admin** Email: **sldavis@uvic.ca**

Phone: **250-896-6426** Fax:

Mailing Address including Postal Code: P.O. Box 2366, Golden, BC, V0A 1H0

(if different from Dept/Faculty)

Title/Position:

Faculty Undergraduate Ph.D. Student

Staff Master's Student Post-Doctoral

Students: Provide your Supervisor's:

Name: **Catherine Althaus-Kaefer** Email: **calthaus@uvic.ca**

Department/Faculty: **HSD/ Public Admin** Phone: **250-721-8060**

Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary's email address: **jselina@uvic.ca**

B. [Project Information](#)

Project Title: **Creative Tools to Engage Citizens in Sustainability Planning**

Anticipated Start Date: **January 2010** Anticipated End Date: **June 2010**

Geographic location(s) of study: **Golden, BC and other communities in the Columbia Basin area**

Keywords: **1. Citizen Engagement 2. Sustainability Planning 3. 4.**

Is this application connected/associated/linked to one that has been recently submitted? Yes No

If yes, provide further information:

Other Investigator(s) and Research Team:

(Include co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations. The form will expand.)

| Contact Name | Role in Research Project | Institutional Affiliation | Email or Phone |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Sabrina Curtis | Client | Columbia Basin Trust | 250.344.7872 |
| Laurie Cordell | Project partner | Fraser Basin Council | 250.489.4860 |

For Faculty Only: Graduate Student/Research Assistant who will use this data to fulfill UVic thesis/ dissertation/ academic requirements.

Student/Research Assistant Email or Phone

C. [Agreement and Signatures](#)

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:

I have read this application and it is complete and accurate.

The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants.

The conduct of the research will not commence until Ethics approval has been granted.

The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is modified.

Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.

Principal Investigator Student's Supervisor

Signature

Signature

Sara Davis

Catherine Althaus-Kaefer

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

Chair, Director or Dean

I affirm that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of this research.

Signature

Print Name

Date

D. [Project Funding](#)

Have you applied for funding for this project? Yes No

Has notice of award been received? Yes No

If yes, please complete the following:

Source(s) of Project Funding

Project Title used in Funding Application(s)

Will this project receive funding from US Funders (*e.g. NIH*)? Yes No

If yes, provide further information:

E. [Level of Risk](#)

The [Tri-Council Policy Statement](#) (TCPS) definition of “minimal risk” is as follows:

The research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk if potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research. The designation of minimal or non-minimal risk affects the way the application is reviewed not the substance of the ethical review.”

Based on this definition, do you believe your research qualifies as “minimal risk” research?

Yes No

Explain your answer by referring to the level of risk stated in the TCPS definition:

As the probability of harm to participants is no greater than one would expect in everyday life, the level of risk for this research can be determined as minimal

F. [Scholarly Review](#)

What type of scholarly review has this research project undergone?

- External Peer Review (*e.g. granting agency*)
- Supervisory Committee or Supervisor—required for all student research projects
- None
- Other, please explain:

G. [Other Approvals and Consultations](#)

Do you need to seek approval from other agencies, community groups, First Nations, local governments, etc?

Yes No

(Attach proof of having made request for permission or approval letter. Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of external approvals.)

If **Yes**, what types of other approval will you need?

- School District, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher**
- VIHA or other regional government authority.** If you are planning to conduct research (including recruitment via poster placement), in a VIHA facility you must use the [Joint UVic/VIHA application form](#) on the ORS website. Above minimal risk applications, please contact the Ethics Office.
- Community Group (e.g., formal organization, informal collective)**
- Indigenous Organization (e.g., Treaty Group, Tribal Council)**
- Indigenous Community**

Approval from an Indigenous community or organization may be required when the research involves Indigenous people in relation to their community or organizational affiliation (whether residing in urban or reserve areas), the cultural knowledge and/or resources of Indigenous people, or where individuals speak on behalf of an Indigenous community or nation.

a. Does your research specifically involve or include in the study's population sample individuals from an Indigenous community or organization?

Yes No

b. Will a particular Indigenous community, group of communities, or organization be a central focus of the research?

Yes No

c. Will the cultural knowledge, resources or heritage of an Indigenous community be a central focus of the research?

Yes No

d. If you answered "yes" to questions a), b), or c) have you consulted with the Indigenous community or communities for this study?

Yes No

e. If you answered "yes" to question d), describe the process that you have followed or will follow. Include any documentation of consultations and the role or position of those consulted, including their names if appropriate.

f. If you answered "no" to question c), briefly justify your decision not to seek Indigenous community approval.

UVic Biosafety Committee Approval. Please attach Biosafety Human Materials Form to this application. Note that Ethics Approval is contingent on Biosafety Approval.

Other Approval, please explain:

H. [Description of Research Project](#)

Purpose and Rationale of Research

Briefly describe in non-technical language:

Please use 150 words or less. The form will expand to the length of your answers.

1a. The research objective(s) and question(s)

Research Question

How do local governments (including municipalities and regional districts) reach beyond traditional engagement processes to effectively engage citizens?

Research Objectives

To collect creative engagement strategies and analyze them for their appropriateness for communities in the Columbia Basin.

To interview and engage local government staff and elected officials to include their input into both the challenges they face and successes they have had with creative community engagement as well as provide feedback on the usefulness of strategies from case studies.

To speak with staff or elected representatives from case study local governments on lessons learned in their community engagement strategy as well as seek permission to highlight their successes as an example for other communities.

To make recommendations to the Columbia Basin Trust regarding creating a toolkit for communities with feedback from stakeholders regarding the format.

To present and develop a toolkit with input from communities at the Alberta BC – Mountain Town and Resort Planners Network meeting in late January (input seeking), the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) meeting in April (information sharing and input seeking) and receive final input at the Columbia Basin Trust and Whistler Centre for Sustainability workshop in May as well as ongoing input from the Fraser Basin Sustainability Facilitator in Cranbrook and the Columbia Basin Trust.

1b. The importance and contributions of the research

This research is important because it supports communities to effectively engage their citizens, especially in the Columbia Basin Trust region but also potentially wider application to rural community areas. The research also boasts an important contribution to the literature around citizen engagement in rural communities as it will provide an overview scan of smart practices in this field, as well as an applied case study application of citizen engagement in such a rural region.

1c. If applicable, provide background information or details that will enable the HREB to understand the *context* of the study when reviewing the application.

The idea for this project came from stakeholders at a workshop co-hosted by the CBT and FBC on sustainability planning when the facilitators asked what communities struggle with in their sustainability planning process. Those at the workshop brainstormed ideas and a theme emerged that planners and community leaders need to know “how do we get beyond a traditional engagement process?”

I. [Recruitment](#)

[Recruitment and Selection of Participants](#)

2a. Briefly describe the target population(s) for recruitment. Ensure that all participant groups are identified (e.g. group 1 - teachers, group 2 - administrators, group 3 - parents).

Group I:

Local Government staff & elected officials located in the Columbia Basin area.

The local government staff and council will primarily consist of planning staff; however as part of this research is aimed at communities with limited capacity and getting a broad perspective on engagement, the researcher will speak with other local government staff or council as well. When speaking with elected officials the investigator may be accompanied by her client supervisor.

Group II:

Participants in three workshops as currently being planned:

Alberta BC – Mountain Town and Resort Planners Network in late January, 2010. The researcher will be asking for input from participants (primarily planning staff) concerning the question of the needs for citizen engagement strategies.

The Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Government's (AKBLG) annual meeting in late April, 2010 – If application to speak at AKBLG is accepted the researcher or her supervisor will present citizen engagement strategies to community representatives and ask for input. The researcher may also host a table/booth at the trade fair and invite elected representatives to comment on the draft toolkit of citizen/community engagement strategies.

The CBT-Whistler Centre for Sustainability Workshop in late May, 2010. Planning for this event is still underway. This event will serve as the final opportunity for stakeholder (primarily planning staff) feedback on the project.

Group III:

Staff or elected officials from local governments that will be used as good examples of creative community engagement.

This project will highlight specific examples of successful and creative engagement strategies used by local governments primarily in rural BC. The researcher will contact those communities for permission to use publicly available material from the local government (i.e. reports on their website, awards or other write-ups). The researcher will also ask if the local government is willing to speak with the researcher to discuss lessons they learned in the process, things they wished they would have know going into the project, and any advice they would give to other local governments embarking on a similar project.

2b. Why is this population of interest?

Group I & II:

The population is not the subject of the project. The population will comment on the usefulness of material being collected and presented to them. The interviews will focus on the needs of the population and the evaluation of the creative citizen engagement strategies to their particular “place”. This will help ensure the recommendations of the research and the associated toolkit is applicable in a practical sense, thereby assisting the client to achieve its objectives for citizen engagement.

Group III:

This group can provide insight on the strategies being used as examples for other communities.

2c. What is the desired number of participants?

Group I:

The researcher would like to speak with participants from different communities including: local government staff as well as elected officials. The researcher will be working with her CBT supervisor and FBC advisor to pick a representative list of participants that reflect the diversity of communities in the Columbia Basin. This will likely range between ten and fifteen participants.

Group II:

The researcher will speak with any participants that volunteer information/feedback or approach the researcher’s table and agree to give feedback.

Group III:

The researcher will contact all communities being used as examples and ideally interview them all. The number will range between five and ten example communities.

2d. What are the salient characteristics of the participants (*e.g. age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, position, etc.*):

Both Groups:

The participants are generally professionals. They will hold the position of: planner, Chief Administrative Officer, town councilor, mayor, or administrator. The age, gender, race, class, and ethnicity of participants is not relevant to their participation.

2e. Provide a detailed description of your exact recruitment process. Explain:

Who will recruit/contact participants (*e.g. researcher, assistant, third party*)

Group I:

The researcher will be introduced by the researcher’s supervisor, the client of this report, and the Fraser Basin Council sustainability facilitator, the project partner, in the form of a letter with both organizations logos. The letter will explain the project and that the participant is invited to participate. The letter will

outline the ethics process and limits to confidentiality.

Group II:

The researcher will be attending the same event as potential participants and will speak with participants who approach her table or volunteer feedback in the presentation.

Group III:

The researcher will contact the appropriate person in the good example communities by telephone or email to arrange a time to speak with them. The researcher will use the letter of introduction when initially contacting people.

List and explain any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (*e.g. acquaintances, colleagues*). Complete item 3 if there is a [power over relationship](#) (*e.g. instructor-student, manager-employee*).

The investigator previous worked in the community of Golden, BC (a Columbia Basin Community) and has acquaintances in the local government in that community through her unrelated position as the Outreach Coordinator at the Golden Women’s Resource Centre.

The investigator’s supervisor/client from the CBT and colleague from FBC have worked with many of the participants in the past as co-contributors on projects.

There are no power-over relationships, however, associated with this research.

Describe how recruitment will be done (*e.g. in person, by telephone, letter, snowball sampling, word of mouth, advertisement*) and from what source(s) will the participants be recruited. If applicable, include how contact information for participants will be obtained.

For Group I, participants will be recruited based on their position. They will be recruited through contacts already working with CBT and also through the community’s internet/phone book contact information. They may also self-identify once they receive information about this project in the “next steps” section of a follow up report on the CBT/FBC Sustainability Workshop held in November 2009.

For Group II, participants will voluntarily recruit themselves.

For Group III, participants will be recruited based on their position and role in their local government’s community engagement process. They will be recruited through the telephone and email with a letter of introduction from the CBT supervisor and FBC advisor.

Describe the steps in the recruitment process.

Group I:

Participants will receive an email with a letter of introduction from both CBT and FBC (with logos) explaining the project and that the researcher will be calling them. They will be asked to set up a time that works for them. This email will explain the limit to confidentiality and the right to withdraw from participation.

Participants will receive a follow up phone call that verbally discusses the project, limits to confidentiality, and reasserts their right to withdraw from participation. Participants can agree to speak with the investigator at that time or at a follow-up time.

Participants will be asked about their previous citizen engagement strategies, how they worked, what were their successes and challenges, and what they would like to see in a citizen engagement toolkit. Participants will be asked about their sustainability planning and what stage is their community at in developing one, or, if not, what's preventing them from developing one.

Participants will be asked if they would like to receive follow-up information on the project and if they would agree to provide ongoing feedback to the investigator if appropriate or needed.

Group II:

The researcher with her colleagues: the client from CBT and the FBC Sustainability Coordinator will be presenting to potential participants. Participants will be informed about the project and invited to comment during the presentation and will also be invited to voluntarily approach the researcher at a table at the event with their input.

Participants will self-identify and will only need to comment if they choose to speak in the presentation or approach the table.

Group III:

Participants will receive an email with a letter of introduction from both CBT and FBC (with logos) explaining the project and that the researcher will be calling them. They will be asked to set up a time that works for them. This email will explain the limit to confidentiality and the right to withdraw from participation.

Participants will receive a follow up phone call that verbally discusses the project, limits to confidentiality, and reasserts their right to withdraw from participation. Participants can agree to speak with the investigator at that time or at a follow-up time.

Participants will be asked about their citizen engagement strategies, what were their successes and challenges, what lessons they learned in the process. The example community participants will be told about the project and asked if they support the use of their community as an example.

Participants will be asked if they would like to receive follow-up information on the project and if they would agree to provide ongoing feedback to the investigator if appropriate or needed such as future invitations to make a presentation, provide mentorship to other communities.

Indicate whether the permission of other bodies is required for recruitment (*e.g. school boards*).

No.

Power-Over

If you are completing this section, please refer to the:

Guidelines For Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners

Are you or any of your co-researchers in any way in a position of authority or power over participants? Examples of a “power-over” situation include teachers-students, therapists-clients, supervisors-employees and possibly researcher-relative or researcher-close friend.

Yes No Varies

If *yes* or *varies*, describe below:

The nature of the relationship.

Why it is necessary to conduct research with participants over whom you have power.

What safeguards (steps) will be taken to minimize inducement, coercion or potential harm.

How the dual-role relationship and the safeguards will be explained to potential participants.

Recruitment Materials Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

- Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.
- Invitation to participate (*e.g. Psychology Research Participation System Posting*)
- Advertisement, Poster, Flyer
- None; please explain why (*e.g. consent form used as invitation/recruitment guide*)

J. Data Collection Methods

Data Collection

For community-based research, autobiographical or observational research, please see Appendix III of the Guidelines.

4a. Which of the following methods will be used to collect data? *Check all that apply.*

| | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviewing participants: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> using web-based technology (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> Conducting group interviews or discussions (including focus groups) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attach draft interview questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administering a questionnaire or survey: <input type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> mail back <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> web-based <input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe: | <input type="checkbox"/> Attach questionnaire or survey: <input type="checkbox"/> standardized (one with established reliability and validity) <input type="checkbox"/> non-standardized (one that is untested, adapted or open-ended) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administering a computerized task (<i>describe in 4b</i>) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observing participants <i>[In 4b, describe who and what will be observed. Include where observations will take place.]</i> | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording of participants using: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> audio <input type="checkbox"/> video <input type="checkbox"/> photos or slides | <input type="checkbox"/> Images used for analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Images used in disseminating results <i>[include release to use participant images in consent materials]</i> |
| <p>Analyzing secondary data or secondary use of data (Refers to information/data that was originally gathered for a purpose other than the proposed research and is now being considered for use in research., <i>e.g. patient or school records, personal writings, lesson plans</i>).</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data involving anonymized information (Information/data is stripped of identifiers by another researcher or institution before being shared with the applicant). May be eligible for Application for a Waiver from Full Ethical Review) <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data with identifying information (Data contains names and other information that can be linked to individuals, <i>e.g., student report cards, employment records, meeting minutes, personal writings</i>). <p><i>In item 4b describe the source of the data, and explain whether and how consent was obtained from the</i></p> | |

| |
|---|
| <i>individuals for use of their data.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using human samples (<i>e.g., saliva, urine, blood, hair</i>) <i>Ensure that you apply to the Biosafety Committee for the storage and use of biological materials. Also, complete the Human Materials Form, have it signed and attach it to your application. If using human tissue only, skip to 7g-8, 11-end.</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other , specify: |

4b. Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. List all of the research instruments and interview/discussion questions, and in an appendix provide copies of all instruments. If not yet available, provide drafts or sample items/questions. For multi-method or other complex research, use the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project. If you have more than one participant group, be sure to explain which participant group(s) will be involved in which activity/activities.

Please see Appendix for Interview Questions Outline, Letter of Introduction, and Verbal Consent Script.

4c. Where will participation take place? (Provide specific location, *e.g., UVic classroom, private residence, participant's workplace*)

Participation will take place in either the participant's office, the CBT offices, or over the telephone. Participants from the workshop will speak with investigator at the workshop.

4d. How much time will be required of participants?

Participants will meet with/speak to the investigator for approximately an hour.

4e. Will participation take place during participants' office hours or instructional time? If so, indicate whether other permission (*e.g. from workplace supervisor*) is required.

Participants will speak with the investigator at a time convenient to them during their regular work day. As participants will be professionals it is unlikely they will need permission from their supervisor.

Data Collection Methods Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

Standardized Instrument(s)

- Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
- Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
- Observation Tools

K. Possible Inconveniences, Benefits, Risks and Harms to Participants

Benefits

Identify any potential or known benefits associated with participation and explain below.

Keep in mind that the anticipated benefits should outweigh any potential risks.

- To the participant To society To state of knowledge

The participants: The project is developing tools for the participants and so their benefit is the goal of the project. Their participation will help ensure the results of the project are relevant to their community and their work. The participants will also benefit from an increased relationship with the CBT, an organization that can provide services and funding.

To society: The toolkit developed for communities in the Columbia Basin will be available for additional communities. Lesson learned and creative citizen engagement practices will allow citizens to meaningfully engage in planning processes, which promote positive economic, social, environmental, and cultural communities.

To the state of knowledge: The knowledge generated in the citizen engagement field is not always applicable to communities with different levels of capacity. The focus on capacity differentials, rural citizen engagement and the inclusion of political perspectives on rural citizen engagement ensure this project contributes to the state of knowledge on citizen engagement.

Inconveniences

Identify and describe any known or potential inconveniences to participants:

Consider all potential inconveniences, including time devoted to the research.

Minimal inconvenience is anticipated as this research question was developed through consultation with potential participants. The time involved in participation is minimal and related to participants' work or elected responsibilities.

Estimate of Risks

Could this study involve the following? Please answer each question by putting an **X** in the appropriate boxes:

7a. Could a participant feel demeaned or embarrassed during their participation in the research?

- Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7b. Could a participant feel fatigued or stressed due to the research?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7c. Could a participant experience any other emotional or psychological discomfort as a consequence of participation?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7d. Is there any social risk, possible stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7e. Are there any physical risks?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7f. Could a participant experience any economic risk? (e.g. job security, job loss)

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7g. Do you see any chance that participants may be harmed in any other way? (e.g. risk to community)

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

Possible Risks

If you indicated in Item 7 (a) to (g) that any risks are *possible* or *likely*, please explain below:

8a. What are the risks?

n/a

8b. What will you do to try to minimize or prevent the risks?

n/a

8c. How will you respond if the risk of harm occurs? (e.g. *what is your plan?*)

n/a

Deception

Will participants be fully informed of everything that will be required of them prior to the start of the research session?

Yes No (If no, complete the [Request to Use Deception form](#) on the ORS website.)

L. Compensation

Compensation

10a. Is there any compensation for participating in the research (e.g. gifts, honorarium, bonus points, reimbursement for transportation, parking, childcare, etc.)?

Yes No

If yes, explain the nature of the compensation and why you consider it to be necessary:

Also consider if the amount of compensation could be considered to be a form of inducement.

10b. Explain what will happen to compensation if participants withdraw during or anytime after data collection (e.g. compensation will be pro-rated, full compensation will be given, etc.).

M. Free and Informed Consent

The following questions address the competence of participants to give consent, the process used in your research to obtain consent, ongoing consent, and the participants' right to withdraw. Consult Appendix V of the Guidelines for further information.

Participant's Capacity (Competence) to Provide Free and Informed Consent

Identify your prospective participants: (Check all that apply.)

| Competent | Non-Competent |
|---|---|
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competent adults</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A protected or vulnerable population (e.g., inmates, patients)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent adults:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consent of family/authorized representative will be obtained</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the participant will be obtained</p> |
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Competent youth</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, and parental consent is required due to institutional requirements (e.g. school districts)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will be informed</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent youth:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the youth will be obtained</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will <i>NOT</i> be informed <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 17 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will not be informed | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competent children <input type="checkbox"/> Children under 13: consent of parent/guardian will be obtained, and child consent will be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Other, explain: | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent children: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the child will be obtained |

Means of Obtaining Consent:

(Check

all that apply, attach copies of all consent materials, complete item 13)

Signed consent. (Attach consent script(s) and consent form(s) - see [template](#) available on ORS Website)

Verbal consent. (Attach information letter(s). Explain below why written consent is not appropriate and how verbal consent will be documented.)

Implied consent (e.g. anonymous, mail back or web-based survey. Attach information letter, see [template](#))

Other means. (Explain below and provide justification.)

Consent **will not be obtained**. (Please see [TCPS Article 2.1c](#) and explain below)

Explain consent procedure if “verbal consent,” “other” or “consent will not be obtained”:

Because participants are from a large geographic area, most of the interviews will be conducted by telephone. For this reason, verbal rather than signed consent will be obtained. The investigator will go over the verbal consent form with the participants verbally during an initial phone conversation or at the start of the interview, whichever is convenient for the participant. The investigator will offer to send

participants a copy of the consent form. The investigator will maintain a list of verbal consent received.

For participants in the workshop (group II), consent will be implied by the voluntary participation in a public forum. Participants will be informed in the workshop/presentation of the project and that by commenting they are agreeing that their comments may be used in the report and any resources that are developed. Participants will be informed that they can raise any concerns or withdraw by speaking with the investigator or advisors.

Informed Consent

Describe the exact steps you will follow in the process of explaining and obtaining informed consent.

Verbal consent will be obtained for each conversation/interview the investigator has with participants in Groups I & III. The investigator will have already emailed participants an invitation to participate outlining the project purpose, limits to confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any point. The researcher will go over the verbal consent (see attached ethics verbal consent document) with each participant at the start of the interview or first phone conversation. The researcher will offer to send the participant a copy of the consent document. The researcher will maintain a list of participants and make notes of each contact and consent.

For participants in the workshops, the presentation will include information about the project, the type of feedback the investigator is seeking and the limits to anonymity. Participants speaking with the investigator at the table will be given the same explanation.

Ongoing Consent

Ongoing consent is required for research that occurs over multiple occasions and/or multiple research activities and/ or extended periods of time (i.e., more than one point of contact, including second interviews, review of transcripts, etc.)

14a. Will your research occur over multiple occasions or an extended period of time?

Yes No

14b. If yes, describe how you will obtain and document ongoing consent:

Participants will be reminded on each occasion that they have consented to participate in the research and have the right to withdraw at any point.

Participant's Right to Withdraw

Free and informed consent requires that participants have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence or explanation.

Describe what participants will be told about their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Participants will be verbally told they have the right to withdraw from the research during each

conversation with the investigator as well as indicated in written form initially in an email.

What will happen to a person's data if s/he withdraws part way through the study or after the data have been collected/ submitted? If applicable, include information about visual data such as photos or videos.

- It will not be used in the analysis and will be destroyed.
- It is logistically impossible to remove individual participant data (*e.g. anonymously submitted data*).
- When linked to group data (*e.g. focus group discussions*), it will be used in summarized form with no identifying information. Include this agreement in the consent form.
- It will be used in the analysis if the participant agrees to this. Describe how this agreement will be obtained:

Free and Informed Consent Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

- Consent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods
- Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent
- Verbal Consent Script

N. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity

Anonymity means that no one, including the principal investigator, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants.

17a. Will the participants be anonymous in the data gathering phase of research?

- Yes No

17b. Will the participants be anonymous in the dissemination of results (*be sure to consider use of video, photos*)?

- Yes No

Confidentiality

Confidentiality means the protection of the person's identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of his or her data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data (if relevant) and after the study is completed (e.g., storage).

18a. Will the confidentiality of the participants and their data be protected?

No - If confidentiality will not be protected, explain why. If you are asking the participants to waive their right to confidentiality (you plan to identify them with their data), explain what steps will be taken to respect their privacy, if any.

Participants will provide information specific to their profession and location, thus it will be important to include professional details (i.e. town planner, elected official) and geographic location or identifiers (i.e. primary employer of an area) that will make maintaining anonymity difficult in a defined geographic area. Participants will not be identified by name but details required in demonstrating the relevance and “place” of their feedback will make it possible to identify participants. Participants will be fully informed of this and have the option to not participate or to withdraw should they wish to do so. For many participants, most information will be free to share.

Any information that is potentially sensitive will not be attributed to an individual and only be included as an aggregate and only if a theme emerged from several respondents.

For example if the planners in Golden, Fernie, Revelstoke and Kimberly all remark that a particular engagement challenge is the opposing views developers and environmentalists have about development. That would be attributed as a theme: “several resort communities struggle to engage residents because of diverse views from environmentalists and developers on development.”

Yes, completely

Yes, with limits (*Check relevant boxes below.*)

Limits due to the nature of group activities (*e.g. focus groups*) the researcher can not guarantee confidentiality

Limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants (*e.g. school principals in a small town*)

Limits due to selection: The procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants (*e.g. participants are identified or referred to the study by a person outside the research team*)

Limits due to legal requirements for reporting

Other:

18b. If confidentiality will be protected, describe the procedures to be used to ensure the anonymity of participants and for preserving the confidentiality of their data (*e.g. pseudonyms, changing identifying information and features, coding sheet, etc.*).

18c. If there are limits to confidentiality due to the methods (*e.g. group interview*), sample size or legal requirements (*e.g. reporting child abuse*) so that you cannot guarantee confidentiality, explain what the limits are and how you will address them with the participants:

Participants in group I will be informed that the interview will not be confidential. They will also be informed that data will be reported as their position and community and that they can specify at any time that they wish certain information or all information to be reported only as an aggregate and not linked to their community. See 18a for specific examples.

Group II participants will not be confidential because their feedback will be sought in a public forum. Participants will be reminded of this in the introduction of the presentation or if they come speak to the researcher at her exposition table.

Group III participants will not be confidential because their community will be showcased. It is anticipated that these communities will be open to sharing information because they are chosen as a positive example.

O. Use and Disposal of Data

Use(s) of Data

19a. What use(s) will be made of all forms of data collected (*field notes, photos, videos, audiotapes, transcripts, etc.*)?

The data will be used to complete this project. This project will be used to inform future initiatives and information in the form of smart practices to be shared with communities. It is the intention of this project to share information. Individual data and notes and audiotapes will remain in the hands of the researcher and of CBT.

19b. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by yourself for purposes other than this research project?

Yes No Possibly

19c. If yes or possibly, how will you obtain consent for future data analysis from the participants (*e.g. request future use in current consent form*)?

Participants will be informed of this when they give verbal consent

19d. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by other persons for purposes other than explained in this application?

Yes No Possibly

19e. If yes or possibly, by whom and how will you obtain consent from the participants for future data analysis by other researchers (*e.g. request future use in current consent form*)?

Commercial Purposes

20a. Do you anticipate that this research will be used for a commercial purpose?

Yes No

20b. If yes, explain how the data will be used for a commercial purpose:

20c. If yes, indicate if and how participants will benefit from commercialization.

Maintenance and Disposal of Data

Describe your plans for protecting data during the project, and for preserving, archiving, or destroying all the types of data associated with the research (*e.g. paper records, audio or visual recordings, electronic recordings, coded data*) after the research is completed:

21a. means of storing data (*e.g., a locked filing cabinet, password protected computer files*):

Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer. It is not anticipated that this data will contain information that would be sought by individuals not connected to this project or hold private details that could be used in a negative way.

21b. location of storing data:

Columbia Basin Trust offices or in the researcher's home office. There may be instances when the researcher will be travelling and the laptop will be kept with the researcher or locked in a hotel room.

21c. duration of data storage (if data will be kept indefinitely, explain):

No more than 2 years.

21d. methods of destroying or archiving data:

Data will be deleted off computer and notes will be shredded.

Dissemination

How do you anticipate disseminating the research results? (*Check all that apply*)

Thesis/Dissertation/Class presentation

Presentations at scholarly meetings Published article, chapter or book

Internet Media (*e.g. newspaper, radio, TV*)

Directly to participants and/or groups involved. Indicate how (*e.g., report, executive summary, newsletter, information session*):

Other, explain:

P. Researchers

Conflict of Interest

23a. Apart from a declared dual-role relationship (Section I, item 3), are you or any of the research team members in a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest regarding this research project (*e.g. partners in research, private interests in companies or other entities*)?

Yes No

23b. If yes, please provide details of the conflict and how you will manage it:

n/a

Researcher(s) Qualifications

In light of your research methods, the nature of the research and the characteristics of the participants, what training or qualifications do you and/or your research team have (*e.g. research methods course, language proficiency, committee expertise*)?

The researcher has completed ADMN 502A Research Methods course, HSD 590 Community Based Research at the University of Victoria and research methods and a statistics courses at the undergraduate

level to complete an BA honours in sociology at the University of Saskatchewan.

Risk to Researcher(s)

25a. Does this research study pose any risks to the researchers, assistants and data collectors?

No

25b. If there are any risks, explain the nature of the risks, how they will be minimized, and how they will be responded to if they occur.

n/a

Q. Further or Special Questions

Multiple Site Research

26a. Does this project involve collection of data at multiple sites within Canada requiring the approval of other sites, bodies or organizations (*e.g., other ethics board(s)*)?

Yes No

26b. If you responded Yes to 27a. above, list the sites, bodies or organizations:

International Research

27a. Will this study be conducted in a country other than Canada?

Yes No

27b. If yes, describe how the laws, customs and regulations of the host country will be addressed:

Attachments*



*Ensure that all applicable attachments are included with all copies of your application.

Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be

Information for Submission

Applications may be printed and submitted double-sided

Do not staple the original application with original signatures

The two photocopies may be individually stapled or clipped

Do **not** staple or clip the individual appendices

Title and label attachments as Appendix 1, 2, 3 etc. and attach the following documents (check those that are appended):

Section I - Recruitment Materials:

- Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.
- Invitation to participate
- Advertisement, Poster, Flyer

Section J - Data Collection Methods:

- Standardized Instrument(s)
- Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
- Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
- Observation Tools

Section M - Free and Informed Consent:

- Consent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods
- Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent
- Verbal Consent Script

- Approval from external organizations (or proof of having made a request for permission)
- Permission to gain access to confidential documents or materials
- [Request to Use Deception](#) form
- Human Materials Form
- Other, please describe: Verbal Consent Checklist