# » Planning Public Forums:
## QUESTIONS TO GUIDE LOCAL OFFICIALS

…for the most part we live in a world where no one is fully in charge, yet many are involved, affected, or have some partial responsibility to act on public problems that spill beyond the boundaries of any single organization.

— John Bryson

Institute for Local Government
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*Collaborative Governance Initiative*

*Generous support for the publication provided by:*


**Hanson Bridgett**
**Marcus Vlahos & Rudy, LLP**

**Silicon Valley Community Foundation**

*We also acknowledge the support of the National League of Cities and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.*

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- Greater capacity by cities and counties to engage residents in inclusive and effective public involvement processes.
- Enhanced trust and confidence in government.
- More politically informed and engaged residents.

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## Questions to Guide Local Officials



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# » Table of Contents

*"We seem to be moving towards a different kind of system in which working directly with [the public] may be just as important as representing their interests."*

**— STEVE BURKHOLDER, Mayor of Lakewood, Colorado**

# » Introduction

## Consider the following scenarios:

1. A local agency in a high-growth area faces the daunting task of updating its out-of-date general plan. Community members disagree over the extent to which growth benefits the area's quality of life, as well as over the degree to which other values (such as recreation, open space and agriculture) ought to be preserved and pursued.
2. Officials and the public are concerned about rising crime rates involving youth in a particular neighborhood. Parents believe a youth center will help; others demand more law enforcement activity.
3. A group home opens in a neighborhood of politically well-connected residents. They believe the facility does not belong in their neighborhood and demand that local officials shut it down.
4. The costs of government services exceed the revenues for the next fiscal year and, unless something changes, the situation will not improve in the future. Residents seem to want the services, but not the taxes or fees to pay for them.

Each of these situations presents unique challenges. Increasingly, local officials are organizing and supporting public forums to help inform their decision-making in these and other areas. Their interest is to:

- Achieve the best policy result by promoting the overall public interest;
- Maximize the public's satisfaction with the ultimate decision; and
- Foster the public's support for the agency.

These efforts go beyond the important but more limited purposes of public hearings and comment periods.

There are of course many approaches to involving the broader community in public decision-making. The emphasis here is on designing appropriate forums for public deliberation. Typically in such forums, members of the public participate in reasoned discussions that result in new ideas, visions, general preferences, or detailed recommendations. In turn, these results are considered by policymakers and help shape public decisions and actions.

Each community has its own unique conditions and interests when confronting a challenging issue or controversy. Therefore, most of the information that follows is framed as questions that local officials can use to answer the following:

- Are public forums appropriate for us?
- Are we ready to undertake such an effort?
- How do we design these forums to best meet our goals?

# Public Involvement: Definitions and Purposes

## 1. Definitions: What do we mean when we talk about public involvement?

The language of participation and civic engagement can be vague and confusing. Here are some definitions that may help.

**Civic engagement:** This is the broadest category of public involvement, encompassing all the many roles and activities through which people take an active part in community life. Civic engagement includes direct volunteer activities, such as helping build a youth center to address the community's concerns about crime. It also includes participating in processes to consider whether government should allocate funds for such a center or, instead, for additional law enforcement activities.

**Public participation:** This is a subset of civic engagement that involves people in becoming more informed about and in shaping the policies that affect them. In terms of the four scenarios sketched above, this concept includes processes through which the public provides its views about planning for future growth patterns or a youth center, but not actually writing the plan or building the center.

**Collaborative governance:** This is a subset of public participation that involves the general public and others in informed and reasoned (sometimes called "deliberative") discussions that seek to influence public sector decision-making. These may be temporary processes or embedded in the way local governance is carried out. In the revenue shortfall scenario above, a collaborative governance approach might include a participatory budgeting process through which a broadly representative group of residents and business owners deliberate and then recommend a set of budget revenues and expenses to the city.

There are three broad categories of collaborative governance practices.[1] These are:

- **Forums for Public Deliberation (or "Public Forums").** These often facilitated forums allow members of the general public to participate in reasoned discussions that generally result in recommendations to be considered by public officials in their decision-making.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Dispute Resolution.** Stakeholder groups representing different interests and points of view (such as environmentalists, business interests and government representatives) work together to reach specific agreements through negotiation and consensus-building. This is closely related to more traditional concepts of conflict resolution, such a mediation.
- **Community Problem-Solving.** These are primarily place-based, inter-organizational collaboratives of community, government, and other groups which, over an extended period of time, work together to address public problems.

This guide will primarily address the first category — forums for public deliberation, or "public forums." For easier reading, we will use "public involvement," and "deliberative forums," interchangeably with "public forums".

**Public Knowledge:** "Public knowledge" is a useful term used to describe the understandings, ideas, recommendations, etc. that are generated by the public in deliberative forums and are intended to inform and influence public officials in their decision-making.

1 Doug Henton, John Melville, Terry Amsler & Malka Kopell, *Collaborative Governance: A Guide for Grantmakers*, (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation 2006).

## » Characteristics of Public Forums

- Include members of the broader public in order to foster participation by diverse and representative interests and communities
- Consider matters of public interest, action, and/or policy
- Are usually facilitated
- Are often informed by impartial background information, materials and/or design models
- Illuminate various points of view and encourage the reasoned exchange of information and the consideration of practical trade-offs
- Encourage changes in participants' thinking
- Result in a more informed understanding of the topic by participants and, often indirectly, by the larger community
- Generate information (or "public knowledge") in the form of ideas, preferences or recommendations that will be considered by public officials in their decision-making
- Seek as much common ground or consensus on a topic as can be realistically and authentically reached

### 2. Purpose: Why involve the public?

Most public officials are motivated by the desire to make good decisions and take effective action. What is it about deliberative forums or other public involvement activities that makes this more likely?[2] Decisions from such forums may be:

- **More legitimate.** They have been arrived at fairly, through an open, equitable and inclusive process and reflect the broadest public good.
- **More informed.** They have been made with the best information, through authentic and good faith "give and take" exchanges of ideas and opinions, and reflect reasonable choices made from among the considered options.[3]
- **Consensus-based.** They represent a shared view of the problem and the solution, are appropriately detailed given the process and the problem addressed, and often result from a transformation of participant attitudes and opinions.
- **Supportable.** They generate (or will potentially generate) broader support for their implementation beyond those who are directly involved.

There is overlap among these categories and leaders may want to achieve them all. However it's important to know that different public involvement processes have differing potential for achieving each of these purposes. Clarity about purposes is helpful.

Public involvement can have other benefits. Leaders may want to encourage public involvement to reduce polarization, to restore the connectedness between residents and their government, or to help maintain a sense of community during periods of growth or rapid demographic change.

In addition to addressing a concrete policy, challenge or choice, a public official may believe that public involvement is also a good thing in itself. Effective deliberative processes create a more knowledgeable and active public, and encourage political participation, trust in government and greater enthusiasm for the political process.

2 *See* Mark Button & David Michael Ryfe, *What Can We Learn From the Practice of Deliberative Democracy*, in *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook* (John Gastil & Peter Levine eds., Jossey-Bass 2005). These are generally drawn from Button and Ryfe but amended and used differently in this context.

3 *See* David Mathews, *Politics for People: Finding a Responsible Public Voice* (Chicago; University of Illinois Press 1994). David Matthews has said the heart of deliberation is making hard choices among conflicting alternatives.

## » Getting Started: Threshold Questions

### 1. Do you need a public forum?

It may be sufficient to rely on the analysis and decision-making of elected representatives or staff, with participation by residents limited to the traditional public hearing and comment process.

However, deliberative forums may be particularly helpful when:

- Not only the solution to a controversy but the nature of the problem itself is in dispute;
- The best solutions seem outside the initial comfort zones of stakeholders;
- The issue is emotionally charged or controversial; and/or
- Broader public understanding and support are needed in order for solutions or policies to be accepted and implemented.

### 2. Do you want to ask or persuade?

It's important to be clear about your purpose. Is it to genuinely seek the public's input on a question? Or is your goal to move public opinion toward an outcome that is already desired? Both may be valid at different times, but they're not the same thing.

Consider the group home scenario described above. State and federal law may well tie the hands of local officials. Inviting people to provide input on a situation in which there are few if any options will lead to frustration and mistrust. In this case, public education may be the right goal.

### 3. Do you have the time and resources?

Make sure your public involvement plans match the time and resources available. Be realistic about timing. Take into account the scale and scope of the planned public involvement, and the time needed for the required formal decision-making by public officials. The best advice for almost any public forum is to start planning early as this will encourage trust in the process.

Keep in mind that effective public involvement will likely take more time than you first envision. Planning, identifying a consultant or facilitator, reaching out to traditionally less-involved communities, and finding resources, all takes time. Elections may also slow things down.

These processes also entail costs for planning, publicity, management, meetings and follow-up — and for any required external consultants, facilitators or technology to support public involvement.

## » Public Forums on City Budgeting: Three Case Stories

### "YOUR CITY/YOUR DECISION" IN MENLO PARK

Early in 2005, the City of Menlo Park forecast a $2.9 million structural imbalance between revenues and expenditures in the general fund starting in fiscal year 2006-2007. The city faced difficult choices about reducing services, increasing revenues and/or finding alternative ways to provide services at lower cost. With the help of Community Focus, a nonprofit specializing in community engagement, the city undertook a process to not only solicit community input, but also to educate residents about the important budget issues at stake. The resulting process was called "Your City/Your Decision."

There were two phases to this process. The first phase gathered information about the priorities of the community through a mail-out worksheet that asked residents to balance the budget. This mailer was distributed to every household and business and was also available online. From this feedback, the city staff developed a list of possible budget-balancing strategies (for example, various levels of cost reductions, alternative ways to provide a service, revenue increases, etc.) to address the community's priorities. In the second phase, the city presented these strategies to the community in a series of workshops. Residents were arranged in small groups to simulate what a city council might experience and deliberated over the possible strategies, with each group voting for or against each presented strategy and finishing with a balanced budget solution.

Over 1,600 people returned surveys in phase one, and 225 people participated in person in the phase two workshops. Among the workshop groups, 93 percent chose to balance the budget using a combination of cost reductions and taxes; 7 percent chose to balance the budget through cost reductions only, and no groups chose taxes alone.

On average, workshop participants "raised" $1,573,000 through cost reductions, and $1,314,000 through increased taxes to erase the $2.9 million dollar deficit.

The information from the surveys and community meetings was compiled, and the substance of these ideas was included in a staff report to the city council outlining options for next steps. The council used the feedback from "Your City/Your Decision" In directing staff to develop a sustainable and balanced budget.

### A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON THE FUTURE OF MORGAN HILL

Morgan Hill (pop. 37,000) faced a difficult choice to address a looming structural deficit: cut essential services (which residents opposed in polls) or raise additional revenues (which they also opposed). The city council asked Viewpoint Learning to design a different kind of community conversation to bring Morgan Hill's residents together to re-examine what kind of city they wished to have. City leaders wanted to create a process that would engage more than the usual participants in public meetings and letters to the editor, and help residents move past wishful thinking.

Viewpoint Learning designed a "Meeting in a Box" kit that leaders from Morgan Hill have now used in almost 30 community conversations with members of the public hosted by a range of local organizations, businesses and individuals. The kit was designed around a streamlined set of choices for the city's future and includes a detailed leader's guide and a video that quickly presented the critical information and the ground rules of dialogue. The meetings created a very different kind of conversation: a dialogue in which participants learn from each other and search for common ground in a conversation that can be facilitated by local leaders themselves.

More than 300 residents spent at least 2 1/2 hours learning about the options, and talking with their neighbors as they tried to reconcile different perspectives about the level of city services and how to pay for them. These meetings culminated in a capstone event that brought together the mayor and all members of the city council, a wide range of civic leaders, and some of the residents who had participated in the community conversations.

Building on the conclusions reached by the public in the community conversations, the capstone session identified a surprising amount of common ground on the best way forward. This common ground was used by the city council as one important basis for budget decisions. For example, it contributed to the development of the city's "Sustainable Budget Strategy" that calls for a more aggressive effort to locate retail sales generators, while restricting staff growth.

The city council hopes to continue the community conversations on this subject and use a similar approach for other matters where hard choices have to be made that require public understanding and support. For example, proposals for new tax measures will be evaluated in future community conversations that will ask whether city services should expand to meet the demands of a growing community.

Continues on next page

## » Case Stories, continued

### SAN FRANCISCO LISTENS

In 2005 and again in 2006, the City and County of San Francisco invited randomly selected residents to "electronic town hall meetings" that solicited participant ideas about budget priorities for that city. Organized and facilitated by AmericaSpeaks in the first year, and by San Francisco State University's Public Research Institute in the second, the meetings focused on discussions among everyday San Franciscans, utilizing technology to capture and synthesize this information in real time.

The mayor convened three "SF Listens" meetings over a four-week period from late March to mid-April of 2005, calling the effort "an innovative way to hear what San Franciscans think city hall's priorities should be." The three-hour meetings, held in different parts of the city, engaged nearly 500 San Franciscans.

Working with prepared background materials, those attending the meetings met around tables of ten to twelve people, each facilitated by a volunteer facilitator, and discussed their perceptions of service needs and budget priorities. Following these small table conversations, their ideas and preferences were recorded by handheld electronic devices and the results compiled and exhibited on large screen for everyone in the room to see.

The prioritization of policy issues varied by community, but several emerged as issues of common concern across all the meetings, including: public safety; accountable and responsive government; jobs and economic development; homelessness; and housing.

In April of 2006, the city organized a meeting of more than 300 San Franciscans, again randomly selected, who spent the day in a combination of small and then large group meetings to offer their priorities to the discretionary component of San Francisco's annual budget. Prepared packets listed nine issues, of which each small group was assigned three to discuss. The nine issues included: homelessness and human services, housing, public safety, economic and community development, education and youth, quality of life and city greening, transportation and public works, heath care, and government reform and customer service. Other items were added by the groups themselves.

During the small group discussions, a notetaker using a wireless laptop transmitted each table's discussions to the "Collaboratory" where a team of facilitators and city policy experts tracked common themes, priorities and strategies. These were reported back to the full group at a large group session later that day. At this larger session of all participants, themes and priorities were reviewed and, again with handheld polling keypads, participants indicated their budget priorities for the city. The results were used to guide priorities for the mayor's FY 2006-2007 budget proposal.

### 4. Are key elected and appointed officials supportive?

For public involvement processes to be successful, political leaders must be supportive. They need to share a common vision and understanding of the purposes of the proposed public forum, and how they will integrate the resulting public input into their decision-making. Political leaders should clearly communicate this commitment to staff and to the public.

### 5. Will key decision-makers be involved in the process?

In some cases, public officials will choose to participate directly in these processes, especially when they wish to demonstrate their commitment to using the results in the ultimate decision-making. In all cases, appropriate elected officials and staff should maintain clear and regular communication between those managing and participating in these processes. Typically, public officials should be closely tied into the deliberative forum process rather than being distant (or absent) observers.

### 6. Are there pre-existing community rifts you need to address first?

There are times when a history of mistrust or a recent divisive political battle causes significant polarization in a community. This may divide elected officials and part of the community and/or cause serious rifts among community residents themselves. In these cases you may

need an "airing out" process before, or as an early step in, a new public involvement process. Existing divisions may also make it more important for you to develop a new process jointly and not simply let one perceived "faction" or another launch it.

### 7. Have you examined your own experiences and reflections?

Every public official has an opinion about public involvement: pro, con, somewhere in the middle, or shifting depending on the circumstances. It is worth the time to reflect on these experiences — and on how you view your job as a public official — as you consider increasingly sophisticated approaches to public involvement.

The National League of Cities has suggested a few questions for reflection (see box at right). Discussing officials' experiences and views will help prevent unrecognized biases from limiting the success of the process.

### 8. Will you be able to link talk to action?

Can you clarify and commit to a link between the outcomes of deliberative forums and the ultimate decision? How will you make this link? Think and plan for both as one integrated piece of work. Good intentions and well-run processes are not enough. There has to be clarity from the beginning about how public officials plan to use the ideas and recommendations generated by a public involvement process. Such commitment by public officials is often critical to the success of public involvement efforts. This will be covered in more depth below.

### 9. Will you need a communications strategy?

Whatever the topic or model of participation, consider developing a complementary communications strategy to reach significant community and institutional "influencers," as well as the general public. Having civic groups and private sector organizations and groups — as well as the broader public — aware of the public deliberation process will help ensure support for the resulting decisions. Make effective use of your own local agency website and communication vehicles, and ensure the early education of local media about the purposes and nature of deliberative public discussions.

### 10. What does the law require?

Depending on the policy issue, the law will often require specific public involvement processes such as public hearings and certain forms of notice. There are minimum requirements, of course but the public's trust and confidence in the process requires that the requirements be observed.

## » Questions for Reflection[4]

1. Why did you get involved in local government? What inspired you to become a local official (or to work with local officials)?
2. Why is it important to involve people in addressing key issues in the community? Describe a particular issue or policy decision: Why was it important to get residents involved?
3. What challenges do you face in trying to get people involved?
4. How do you involve people?
   - What kinds of meetings or activities do you ask them to take part in?
   - How do you recruit people?
   - What expectations do you have for the people who participate: Do you want them to become informed? Give input? Take action? Come to consensus? Change their behavior?
5. What are the most successful principles or strategies you've used in your citizen involvement work?

4 From *Building Democractic Governance, Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens* (National League of Cities, November 2005).

## » Choosing the Appropriate Public Forum: Questions to Guide Design

Assuming local officials and other forum planners decide to go forward, the questions now turn to the more specific goals you wish to achieve and the specific nature of the public forum to be convened.[5]

### 1. Purposes: What kind of "public knowledge" do you need?

While focus is typically on public participation *processes,* an important purpose of these processes is achieving new "public knowledge" that addresses the issue at hand and adds real value to the decision-making of local officials.

Such public knowledge can take different forms; for instance:

- More informed participant opinions and ideas
- An agreed-upon set of values or a collective general vision
- Ranked preferences for a design or among a set of policy alternatives.
- Consensus and detailed recommendations or agreement relating to a proposed policy or public decision.

Each outcome may offer more or less of what local officials hope will result from a public involvement process. Are you looking for more informed public opinion about an issue or do you need specific recommendations and/or general agreements that most people endorse? Setting one's sights higher on achieving general consensus and more detailed recommendations on a proposed policy, design or action usually requires more back and forth discussion and therefore more time and (frequently) resources.

### 2. What are the issues to be addressed?

A key question is how to identify and "frame" the specific issue or issues appropriately. Is the question to put before the public sufficiently clear and specific to ensure that a deliberative forum will have a clear goal? At the same time, is it broad enough so that the participants feel that their ideas and solutions are welcome?

Some topics, such as the updating a general plan, determining the use of open space, or considering local budget choices may seem straightforward. However, deliberative forums are not as familiar to sponsors or participants as, for example, traditional public hearings. Most public forums typically require additional care in identifying and wording the topic(s) for discussion. Informative background materials, perhaps suggesting a continuum of values/ policy choices, can help frame and focus forum deliberations.

## » Forming A Planning Group Can Help

Forming a planning or coordinating committee can help an agency guide a public forum design process and to get a public involvement effort off on the right foot. Including diverse people and points of view is especially helpful when the goal is an authentic, broadly representative process whose recommendations have legitimacy and support throughout the community.

A planning group can be especially useful when the community is divided, when the issue is a polarizing one, or when there is a history of mistrust. Public officials should clearly and publicly identify this group's responsibilities and authority. Responsibilities may include advising on or actually designing the public involvement process. Such a group can also continue to provide advice, coordination, and feedback throughout the life of the intended process. The diversity of this initial group is often critical to ultimate success, so take the time you need to get it right.

5 While this guide's emphasis is on creating deliberative public forums, there are many other approaches, including those whose intent is primarily to inform, enhance understanding, or build relationships among the participants. While these can be very useful, we will concentrate on processes that generally confront trade-offs and result in concrete ideas, preferences or agreements.

Some observers also divide such practices into ad-hoc or temporary collaborative governance activities on the one hand, and more sustained efforts (e.g. neighborhood councils) on the other. Again, while our focus is on the more temporary forums, we find that local agencies are increasingly finding ways to embed public deliberation into the regular order of government decision-making.

Clarity about the issues will help forum planners design the right public involvement strategy and prepare appropriate materials to guide deliberations.

The "framing" of an issue may become itself become a point of contention, especially when the nature of problem is in question. For instance, it is not uncommon for a community deliberation about budget priorities to first require a more general discussion about "what kind of community" residents prefer for themselves and their families.

A related question is: who should help identify the issue or question that will drive the planned deliberative forum(s)? A representative group can help in naming and framing the issue, particularly if a fair amount of controversy on the topic already exists (see box on page 8). A skilled civic engagement consultant can be particularly helpful in this area.

### 3. What influence and impact should the process have?

The ideas and recommendations emanating from authentic public involvement processes should influence the relevant policy discussions and decisions of local officials, and justify the time and commitment of participants. With public officials actively engaged in the leadership or shared planning of these activities, the chances for real impacts increase. However, political leadership needs to clearly articulate and communicate their plan for using public input. This does not mean a commitment by officials to always *agree* with recommendations but to integrate this new knowledge into staff work and policymaking — and to explain differences of opinions when they occur.

The "Continuum of Public Participation" on page 10 suggests a range of options for how "influential" public input might be.

### 4. Participation: Who and how many should be involved?

The answer to this question primarily depends on the kind of "public knowledge" you are seeking, and the degree of influence you want the process to have. This question of *scale* can make a significant difference in the ultimate impact of your collaborative governance activity.

#### *Who to involve:*

Most deliberative forums will seek a representative mix of the population interested and affected by the topic of the forum. At the same time, there may be a smaller set of already organized stakeholders whose interests and voice need to be taken into consideration in any public forum process. Those most impacted, organized and with developed "habits" of participation are likely to have the most interest initially. However, working to involve participants "beyond the usuals" will provide an opportunity for a truer picture of community ideas and recommendations to emerge. Question five below describes how to attract representative participants.

#### *Smaller Numbers*

A small number of people may participate in extensive deliberative discussions, learn a great deal, and develop well-considered ideas or recommendations for public officials on a pressing public matter. However, if this is

## » A Continuum of Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a continuum of public participation with an increasing degree of influence given to the public's voice.[6]

**Inform → Consult → Involve → Collaborate → Empower**

Conceptually, here's what each point on the continuum involves.

- **Inform.** Local officials may choose to keep the public **informed** about the nature of a problem or public issue, their deliberations on the matter, and/or the decision reached or actions to be taken.
- **Consult.** Public officials may **consult** with the public, committing themselves to receiving input, while preserving their authority for ultimate decision-making. Public hearings are a classic example; individuals or group representatives merely give brief comments and there is usually little deliberation or agreement.
- **Involve.** To **involve** the public, local officials still preserve their authority, but acknowledge the process of public involvement underway and publicly commit to use the results of deliberation in their ultimate decision-making. Such public involvement is frequently deliberative and may seek more collective preferences or recommendations.
- **Collaborate.** To **collaborate** with the public suggests those efforts where public officials still preserve their authority but **participate with residents** in developing and recommending plans and strategies for public action. As with the "Involve" category, local officials acknowledge the process of public involvement, and publicly commit to use the results of deliberation in their ultimate decision-making. However, there may be a greater likelihood of such use when public officials themselves have been a part of the process.
- **Empower.** At the farther end of the continuum, in an example of **empowering** the public, a government body delegates certain decision-making authority to a deliberative forum. For example, the Citizens' Assembly in British Columbia deliberatively arrived at recommendations for a new provincial electoral system, and its decision went directly to the voters. Most governmental decision-making bodies face legal restrictions on the degree to which they can delegate decision-making authority. Charter cities may have more options this regard, depending on their charters.

Most deliberative forums fall within the **involve** and **collaborate** areas of the above continuum. As these are by nature usually gray areas, it is important that local officials carefully consider the degree of influence contemplated for any planned public involvement process, including how the public's ideas and recommendations will be integrated into ultimate decision-making. This information should be communicated broadly through a collective statement of the relevant policymakers in order to give the public realistic expectations.

Conversely, vague and changing messages to participants on this question can seriously undermine the benefits an agency hopes to achieve in inviting public participation in the decision-making process.

6 See IAP2's website at www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/spectrum.pdf. This Guide draws from IAP2 categories in a general and illustrative way only.

a group of twenty-five people in a city of 50,000, there is the risk that these voices will not be representative of the larger community, or simply not "big" enough to have much influence. This is the problem of "scale."

However, the more representative the group is of the community, and the more time participants have to become well versed in and to deliberate on the issues — then the more that leaders and the public may rely on their conclusions and recommendations. Smaller groups are typically better able to handle in-depth, detailed and nuanced discussions, to involve all the participants directly, and to craft more consensus-like outcomes.

### *Larger Numbers*

Larger groups can be particularly effective for sharing information, bringing many different voices to the table, and making an impact. Greater participation has the advantage of more "buy-in" from a larger number of residents, and often more public support for the ideas generated. At the same time, larger groups can also be more unwieldy, time- and cost-intensive, and require more preparation and facilitation. However, the use of technology can aid in making large public forums into effective deliberative bodies.[7]

In fact, "large" and "small" are relative terms and depend on the setting and how they are used. For instance, a series of smaller meetings held throughout a city or county may reach hundreds or thousands of people. Even if a group is smaller, participation that accurately reflects community demographics may be effective and carry great legitimacy. If you are seeking to attract only groups of organized stakeholders this may require smaller numbers; while involving the broader community may suggest more. For many issues and controversies a public involvement plan that addresses both populations may be most effective.

### *Combined and Virtual Groups*

Even when larger numbers of people participate in public forums, they almost always do much of their work in smaller groups. Moreover, not all public involvement necessarily entails only face-to-face meetings, whether either large or small. For example, in some participatory budgeting processes, agencies use mailed surveys to residents asking for their services and revenue priorities in conjunction with face-to-face meetings. Technology-based tools, whether used for online forums or to enhance face-to-face meetings, can also involve more participants effectively.[8] Thus, you can combine several different approaches.

The decision on how many people to involve should emerge from an understanding of the purposes of the public involvement process. Good planning, the right process, and an effective communication plan invest a deliberative forum of any size with greater capacity and influence.

## 5. Participation: How to attract representative participants?

While local officials and agencies may strive to encourage broader participation, it is often a relatively narrow demographic slice of the community that actually takes part. The National League of Cities' *Building Democratic Governance* publication encourages organizers to craft a recruitment message with broad appeal, to map and take advantage of local community networks as a source of participants, and to set firm participation goals.[9] Achieving broad representation is critical to achieve full legitimacy for the process and the resulting decision.

7 AmericaSpeaks' "21st century town meeting" is one such approach.

8 See the Deliberative Democracy Consortium website (www.deliberative-democracy.net) for two useful charts listing various online and other processes.

9 From *Building Democratic Governance, Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens* (National League of Cities, November 2005).

Organizers of successful deliberative forums display a clear and ongoing commitment to enhance inclusion.[10] Identifying the relevant populations and communities is a first step. Moreover, local officials can help develop the knowledge and capacity of less-involved communities. These communities can benefit from ongoing assistance, independent of specific issues, to improve their understanding of government agencies and the continuum of opportunities for involvement.

Identify and seek the advice of community-based and intermediary organizations, including grassroots leadership groups, religious organizations, school and health services, and print and electronic community-specific media, that can assist with general education about involvement, as well as provide communication between government and community residents on specific issues and policies. Acknowledge these organizations' own interests and purposes, and build ongoing alliances and relationships to encourage public involvement over time.

Such groups may be especially helpful in identifying a more diverse membership for an initial planning or coordination group. Making early efforts at inclusion will not only build trust, but will bring voices to the table that can help create the capacity for a more inclusive process.

Most local deliberative efforts pursue open but targeted recruitment, perhaps with some attention to stakeholder representation as well. However without significant effort, local officials may find that "open but targeted" recruitment does not meet their inclusion goals. A challenging but often more effective strategy is representative selection, beginning with knowledge about the specific population groups in the community, clear targets and plans, and a commitment to achieve the goal of truly representative participation.

Insufficient attention to outreach and recruitment can result in imbalances of participation that may subtly shift group ideas and recommendations and generate challenges to the legitimacy of the process. If the issue addressed is a particularly divisive one with strongly polarized views, organizers must also not appear to encourage or favor participation from one "side" over another.

### 6. Participation: How should participants be selected?

Generally, participants are selected in one of the first three of these four methods:

- Self-selection
- Sponsor invitation
- Representative selection
- Random sample

**Self-selection** is the easiest to describe: generally the sponsors hold a meeting or meetings and invite anyone who wants to come.

**Sponsor invitation** is the way that many if not most deliberative forum organizers decide to identify participants. This includes:

- Open-But-Targeted Recruitment. This involves inviting members of the general public, but with a special effort to include specific, often under-represented groups or individuals (often defined by ethnicity, immigrant status, age, gender, or socio-economic position).
- Stakeholder Recruitment. This involves identifying parties representing specific, usually organized, interests (such as government, business, environmental advocates, etc.) and targeting such groups for inclusion in the deliberative forum.

**Representative selection** is a process that more systematically identifies and recruits participants who accurately reflect the relevant population.

10 This section draws on ideas relating to diversity and inclusion contributed by Raymond Colmenar (PolicyLink), Maria Rogers Pascual (Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action), and Connie Chan Robison (Center for Collaborative Planning).

## » Notes on Immigrant Civic Engagement[11]

Much of California's diversity derives from immigration. The state's foreign-born population has increased more than five-fold since 1970 to more than nine million residents. This represents a quarter of Californians generally, and at least 10 percent of the population in 36 of the state's 58 counties. Eighty-nine percent of the state's immigrants are from Latin America or Asia, with slightly over half from Latin America and one-third from Asia. Leading countries of origin (2002 figures) are Mexico, the Philippines, Vietnam and El Salvador. More than three-fourths of immigrants are legal residents.[12]

Inviting immigrants to participate in their new communities' decision-making processes has a number of potential payoffs:

- It can educate policymakers about issues of concern to immigrants;
- It adds to immigrants' understanding of issues and political processes, to tolerance, and to the general skills and habits of democracy.

Of course, there are obstacles. Language, long working hours, and cultural predispositions from home country experience[13] act as barriers to participation.

Generalizations about immigrants and refugees are certainly not enough to develop appropriate strategies for inclusion. A good first step is having an understanding of the demographics and populations trends in your communities and creating a longer-term plan for leadership development and participation among those who have been less involved.

### USE OF INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS

Almost without exception, there will be organizations and institutions that have direct access to, knowledge about, and legitimacy with immigrant communities. Examples include a school, hospital or health clinic, ethnically-oriented chamber of commerce or business association, cultural or sports group, organizing and advocacy nonprofit organizations, religious/spiritual leaders or institutions, and/or ethnic media.[14]

These organizations can help identify sources and sites for making connections with populations that may first appear less visible and harder to reach than others who more typically participate. They may co-sponsor public involvement meetings for immigrant populations in their own communities. Again, when possible, it is helpful to develop longer-term relationships with such groups and create collaborative agendas for immigrant leadership development and civic engagement.

### USING NATIVE LANGUAGES

Given what may be limited English language proficiency in immigrant communities, using native languages for public involvement-related notices and relevant background documents, and in public forums themselves, can be very important. A number of local agencies in California now have their entire websites instantly available in translation by hitting an icon on the home page. Digital, wireless simultaneous translation equipment for public meetings is increasingly accessible in terms of cost and ease of use. While translated notices, materials and meetings are helpful, they will rarely be enough to ensure greater immigrant participation without a broader strategy.

### EXAMPLE: CITIZEN ACADEMIES

A number of local agencies have developed "citizen academies" with a focus on specific communities, such as Central American, Hmong, Russian and Vietnamese. Often held in peoples' native languages or with simultaneous translation for those not speaking English, these sessions can provide important civic, law enforcement, health and social service information and aid participants' understanding about specific agencies and local government more generally. This can be an important step for participants as they learn more about their local government and opportunities for service and civic and electoral participation. It also helps to better acquaint local agencies with the needs, conditions and leadership of the communities they serve.

11 This is a brief treatment of the topic. The Institute plans to publish a guide to immigrant civic engagement in 2007.

12 Public Policy Institute of California, *Just the Facts: Immigrants in California* (July 2002).

13 Craig McGarvey, *Pursuing Democracy's Promise: Newcomer Civic Participation in America* (Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, in collaboration with the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation, 2004).

14 See the New American Media website (http://news.newamericamedia.org) for information about ethnic print and electronic media in California and the U.S.

This is usually done through a methodologically rigorous process, with clear goals, that helps prevent significant gaps in participation.

A **random sample** is the least frequently used form of selection, in part because of cost, although it is often employed with deliberative polling. Such a sample of participants may be identified through a process such as random phone dialing.

Most significantly, a deliberative process that more adequately includes diverse people and points of view will generate discussions and recommendations that more adequately reflect the interests and ideas of the broader community. This inclusion will also enhance the legitimacy of the process and the degree to which its work may influence the public and local officials.

Local officials should generally avoid self-selection approaches except for particular discussions that are a part of a larger, multi-faceted effort that seeks broader inclusion through other means. Random samples will not be practical in most local efforts. However, they can be a check on other approaches that entail some degree of selection bias.

## 7. What is the best format for a public forum?

### *Similarities and Differences*

Public forums may look much alike in terms of their broader participation, deliberative discussions among participants, and the development of ideas or recommendations directed to public officials.

However, they may also be significantly different. These differences may include:

a) specific purposes and desired form(s) of public knowledge;

b) number and composition of participants;

c) structure and process of communications in the meetings, including the time devoted to examining real differences, confronting hard choices, and finding common ground; and

d) the specific way in which the generated public knowledge influences and is integrated into final decision-making.

The sidebar below suggests these and other choices in the design of deliberative public forums.

## » Selected Design Issues for Public Forums

- The form(s) of public knowledge sought, such as more informed individual or collective opinions, new ideas, collectively ranked preferences, specific consensus recommendation, etc.
- Numbers, selection and representativeness of participants
- Chosen format or formats, including: smaller or larger meetings, face-to-face communication and/or online mechanisms, use of technology to aid discussions, open ended or more "forced choice" discussions,[15] etc.
- Anticipated time period for entire process, including time devoted to substantive participant deliberations
- Amount of background or "expert" information provided to participants prior to or as part of the deliberative forum
- Degree of reliance on agency staff or external consultants for process design and facilitation
- How the results of the public forum process will be integrated into public officials' final decision-making
- Whether a communications strategy will be important to help inform the broader (non-participating) public and generate support for the final recommendations

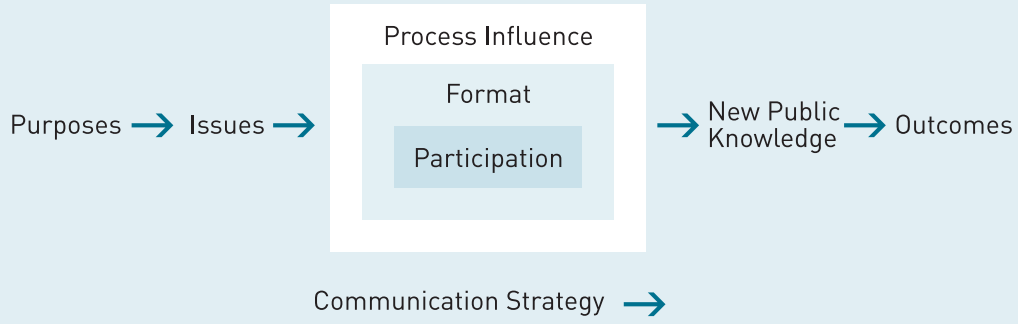
15 For more on online deliberation see the Deliberative Democracy Consortium website at www.deliberative-democracy.net for a chart of online deliberation techniques, and also *Public Deliberation: A Managers Guide to Citizen Engagement* for "Characteristics of Deliberation Online." *See also* Gwen Wright, *Building Democratic Governance: Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens* (National League of Cities, November 2005).

### *Examples*

Because of such distinctions in design, these forums may look very different from one another. A few examples:

- A large meeting of several hundred randomly selected participants, with attendees sitting at tables of twelve and, following discussions, registering their preferences on the topic with electronic handheld devices and with collated data shown on large screen for all to see.
- A week-long series of design charrettes[16] with interested members of the public dropping in to storefront centers where designs for neighborhood revitalization are displayed and then redesigned for further review based on public input.
- Trained agency staff and civic leaders facilitate multiple community conversations over several months and then bring participants together to hear the results of the individual meetings and further refine a specific set of recommendations.

## » Designing Effective Public Forums




Clear and fully articulated purposes will help planners design public forums that address the desired issues effectively and generate useful new public knowledge for policy makers and their communities.

These purposes extend beyond the issues themselves to the **nature** of the information and outcomes desired. What will most readily assist policymakers in addressing the issue at hand? Is it more informed individual opinion? New ideas? A general vision? Ranked preferences? Consensus? Detailed agreements? Less polarization? Fully inclusive participation? Broad public support for the forum's recommendations?

Once there is clarity about these broader purposes, forum planners can identify the appropriate mix of participants, discussion format, and the how the results will be used in ultimate decision-making.

This mix of the right participants and process will result in useful new public knowledge about the issue in question. The final outcomes occur when public officials use this new knowledge — in the form of ideas, preferences or recommendations — in their final decision-making.

The entire process should usually be accompanied by a planned communication strategy. This strategy should ensure ongoing information sharing between the public forum and the appropriate political leadership, and also inform the larger non-participating public about the forum's intent, process and results.

*These ideas are drawn from the work of Archun Fung, John Gastil, Mark Warren, and others.*

16 See the National Charrette Institute at www.charretteinstitute.org.

- Surveys are distributed citywide by mail and online asking for resident and business input on an extremely complex matter, with thousands of submissions followed by community wide meetings to consider the survey results and to draft final recommendations to elected officials and agency staff.
- Groups of twenty-five selected and diverse community residents meet for half days with prepared background materials suggesting values-based policy options, with their recorded preferences used by policy makers to assess the readiness of the community to embrace new policies.
- A local government embeds the opportunity for community visioning and deliberation on design choices into its formal redevelopment project application process.

### *Making Design Choices*

Given the array of processes (and consultants) that offer these and other approaches, and with typically limited amounts of time and resources, how do you decide what sort of public forum makes sense for your local agency?

First, thinking about and answering the threshold and design questions in this guide will help you make a good choice. Remember that each public involvement effort must have its own clearly defined purpose, including an understanding of the form (or forms) of public knowledge sought.

Once this purpose is clearly articulated you will better understand who has the information that will more likely give you the public knowledge you seek. Different configurations of participation will affect: 1) the scope and variety of information brought to the forum; 2) the legitimacy of the discussions; and 3) the likelihood that the results will have broad support outside the meeting room. These clear purposes will also help you clarify your relative focus on more organized stakeholders and/or the broader, less organized public.

With this same clarity about purpose, you will also be better able to determine the depth and detail of the information you hope will result from the process. This, in turn, will help determine the nature and extent of the communication and deliberation required (the "format") to allow participants to successfully generate this sort of public knowledge.

In general, the key is that for authentic consensus and detailed recommendations to emerge, significant time and skilled facilitation is required. For matters concerned with complex design issues, computer generated or other modeling will aid participants' understanding. Where there is a great deal of detailed and perhaps complex information to be grasped, materials and other forms of knowledge building must be attended to before (or sometimes as a part of) actual deliberations.

The central design question is often whether you want to understand what members of the public think about an issue at the moment, or whether the intent is to generate more collective public knowledge that provides deeper insights on the issue, more direction to policy makers, and/or greater public support for ultimately determined public decisions or policy directions.

Determining exactly how the generated ideas and recommendations will be integrated into the formal policymaking process — and how that information will be appropriately disseminated — completes the three essential components (participation, format, and process influence)[17] of public forum design. Often complemented by a communication strategy, the result will be new and useful public knowledge that can be integrated into the decision or policy making of local officials.

The following example illustrates these points.

17 This draws on the work of Archun Fung, John Gastil, Mark Warren, and others.

## » Using Charrettes: A Case Story from Hercules

### HERCULES DISTRICT PLAN INITIATIVE

In the 1990s, the small city of Hercules (20,000 residents at the time), was beginning to experience development challenges to its previous identity as a quiet bedroom community. Land values were increasing, the city was challenged by its missing commercial core, and several controversial development proposals were being discussed.

In response, the planning commission organized the District Plan Initiative, coordinated by city staff and headed by a seven-member steering committee comprised of city officials, staff, prominent citizens and developers' representatives. Over a period of five months, the steering committee made the arrangements for a town meeting and community charrette.

The charrette was a ten-day series of intensive, hands-on discovery, brainstorming, problem-solving and sketching sessions held in late June 2000. Planners set up a temporary urban design studio in an abandoned bank branch in the local shopping center. Residents, developers, city officials, affected regional agencies, and the urban planning consultants met together in these open public meetings, with the data, people and talent needed to create an urban design solution specific to Hercules.

Great public interest was indicated by an overflow crowd of 400 at the initial town meeting and 1,000 residents participating in the various events during the charrette sessions. A day-long hands-on public design session challenged residents to "argue with their pencils" on base maps. Formal and informal meetings were conducted in the open; any interested person could walk into the studio to observe the work or contribute to the evolving design solutions.

The plan produced during the charrette was created to provide a greater level of assurance to the developers, landowners, and neighbors that the center of Hercules would be developed in a manner aligned with the public's desires, namely: mobility for pedestrians and bikes as well as cars; and an enhanced quality of public spaces, particularly municipal control of the alignment and character of streets. Lastly, the plan specified a higher quality of architectural design and a greater ability to attract retail businesses to the center of Hercules.

The charrette received local and regional press coverage, which published neutral to positive stories almost daily. This helped to keep the public abreast of the unfolding activities, including people who were unable to attend the public meetings. The final products of the charrette included a regulating plan, narrative report, and a form-based code.

Adapted from *The Charrette Handbook (APA Planners Press, 2006)*

### *Achieving More Informed Public Ideas and Preferences*

If your primary intent is to achieve a more informed understanding of resident ideas or preferences on a topic, then a brief and contained process may be the solution, with attention to ensuring that participants are broadly representative of the community. Participants may receive background information and deliberate briefly to add to their knowledge of the issue in question, and then express their preferences among set choices or as developed in the group. The total number of participants may not be as essential as the degree to which they represent the views of the community. Facilitators are very helpful to ensure the quality of the discussions, but they may also be drawn from among staff, civic leaders and others under the direction of a knowledgeable process guide.

## » Use a Facilitator?

Facilitators are people who can help plan and manage deliberations. Some are more experienced with organizations; some with community and public sector settings. They can be individuals from inside government or external consultants. However, it is important that they be impartial advocates of good process, not of a particular substantive outcome. Facilitators may have expertise in facilitation and process design, in the subject matter of the issue at hand, or both. If you plan to use a facilitator, involve them early in the planning, not at the last minute. Ask them about their facilitation experience, the processes they use, and how they would assess your situation and help you achieve your particular goals. Interview more than one candidate and compare their responses.

### *Achieving A Design or Plan*

Often you need input on a specific plan for something that will be built or developed (downtown, housing, park or recreational facilities, etc.). For members of the general public to participate, a process that provides sufficient background information to make sense of alternatives, and offers computer-generated or other visuals to understand the ramifications of different plans is often essential. Also helpful are opportunities for early deliberation about the community's vision for the plan or project, with input on designs or plans at subsequent points as they develop. Impartial facilitation (unconnected with the design or plan promoters) is usually beneficial.

### *Achieving Consensus Recommendations*

When you want to find common ground in a complex and contested policy area, or where many options are on the table, you need a process that allows participants to have access to trusted background information on the topic, to truly surface and grapple with underlying disagreements, and to have enough time to work out a consensus set of recommendations. This typically requires the services of a skilled facilitator, often with experience in conflict resolution and consensus building. Significant points of difference should be represented in the working group of participants. This may be easier with a smaller group but you must then very clearly communicate the process and its legitimacy to the broader community. Larger numbers of participants can be effective if working in smaller groups and using technology to "scale up" and demonstrate the full group's progress and recommendations.

### *Achieving Supportable Recommendations*

Public officials are often concerned not only with *better* decisions but with *supportable* decisions: ideas and recommendations that will have the capacity for broad community

support and successful implementation. To help ensure such outcomes, it's critical that these forums are legitimated by broadly representative participation and maximum consensus on any recommendations.

This may require approaches that involve more people and take more time (particularly for give-and-take deliberation that will result in more specific and consensus-like recommendations). If you have divisive and polarizing issues, unresolved differences can result in continuing gridlock, so the additional time and effort are usually worthwhile.

An effective communication strategy can also help take the message about the public forum to the broader public. Communicate the intent of the forum, the legitimacy of the process, and the seriousness with which policymakers consider public input and recommendations. This can be critical to public support — whether expressed through public hearings, the media, advocacy groups or the ballot box.

## 8. What happens after the public forum?

Once the public involvement process is complete, local officials should continue to explain the planned use of the resulting ideas or recommendations in their ultimate decision-making. Relevant staff reports should clearly identify and make use of this new "public knowledge." As policymakers reach their final decisions, they should make clear the public's

part in the process, and in the content of the final decision. This is true even if public officials do not agree with the public's recommendations; they should nonetheless acknowledge this input and give reasons for their decision.

The public's understanding of how residents like themselves contributed to the decision-making of public officials can be pivotal in developing support for successful implementation of that decision or policy. This may be particularly important if you anticipate a ballot measure relating to a public forum's recommendations. Research suggests that voters value such citizen recommendations. An appropriate communication strategy can tell this story. Your local media's *early* understanding — and continuing coverage — of the public's involvement is often essential to such a strategy.

Communicating to the process participants and the broader public will also result in more general support for these public involvement processes and for more positive approaches to public controversies overall.

Finally, public officials should at least informally assess the public involvement process. Questions might include:

- Did you get the kind of information (or public knowledge) you wanted?
- Was the participation as expected? Were some groups missing?
- Were participants satisfied with their experience?
- Were the format and facilitation appropriate to the forums' purpose?
- Were recommendations effectively integrated appropriately into the formal decision-making of policymakers?
- Was the larger community kept informed?
- What did you learn, and what would you do differently the next time?

## 9. How do you sustain collaborative governance processes?

While there are permanent and more comprehensive structures for public involvement,[18] temporary forums predominate at present. The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation has published a useful guide[19] designed to assist local agencies to prepare and maintain a capacity for such public involvement.

This guide, "Standards of Excellence in Civic Engagement," makes the point that public agencies achieving excellence in public involvement:

- Are in the business of collecting public knowledge;
- Use public knowledge internally over time;
- Communicate back to the public how public knowledge has influenced the agency and how staff and managers are using that knowledge; and
- Cultivate the norms, reflexes and habits that will make civic engagement a central part of how the agency conducts its business.

Developing longer-term capacity for public involvement requires that local agencies use the public knowledge they solicit — even when that means changing course. For these processes to help local agencies make tough decisions, public officials must treat public involvement as more than something on the to-do list. Community residents who trust that their input will have an impact will invest public involvement efforts with their commitment, time and best thinking.

18 From *Building Democratic Governance, Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens* (National League of Cities, November 2005).

19 Michael Wood, *Standards of Excellence in Civic Engagement: How Public Agencies Can Learn from the Community, Use What They Learn, and Demonstrate that Public Knowledge Matters* (The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, 2005). We draw extensively from this document in this section but encourage readers to go the Harwood Institute website to download the complete (free) document (www.theharwoodinstitute.org/resources/download.html). This guide includes "reflection questions" that will be useful to officials designing deliberative public processes.

## » Conclusion

The capacity to use public forums effectively is increasingly seen as an essential tool for public managers and elected officials alike. The International City/County Management Association has identified "recognizing the right of citizens to influence local decisions and promoting active citizen involvement in local governance" as among its "Practices for Effective Local Government Management."

Use this Guide and other available resources to construct the approach that will best meet your specific needs. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the models you use in order to learn from them and adapt them for future use. This is a time of tremendous experimentation in the development of collaborative governance tools and strategies, so take the time to share your experiences with other local officials.

Finally, please contact the Institute for Local Government with your public involvement stories so that we may continue to provide an increasingly useful portfolio of information on this topic to local officials.

## » Resources

There is a growing literature on civic engagement and related topics. Here are a few practical publications and a list of organizations that offer resources. Please visit our website for a more extensive and regularly updated list (www.ca-ilg.org/cgi).

### Selected Publications

*Building Citizen Involvement: Strategies for Local Government*, Mary L. Walsh (National League of Cities Leadership Training Institute), International City/County Management Association, 1999

*Building Democratic Governance: Tools and Structures for Engaging Citizens*, National League of Cities, 2005

*The Charrette Handbook: The Essential Guide for Accelerated, Collaborative Community Planning*, B. Lennertz and A. Lutzenhizer, APA Planners Press, 2006

*Collaborative Governance: A Guide for Grantmakers*, D. Henton and J. Melville, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2005

*Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World*, Daniel Yankelovich, Syracuse University Press, 1991

*The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook*, National Civic League, 2000 (third printing)

*The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the 21st Century*, J. Gastil and P. Levine, Jossey-Bass/ John Wiley and Sons, 2005

*The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes,* John Forester, MIT Press, 1999

*Engagement Streams and Processes Distinctions, National Coalition of Dialogue and Deliberation*, 2005 http://thataway.org/main/files/Engagement_Streams_and_Process_Distinctions.pdf

*Legislators at a Crossroads: Making Choices to Work Differently*, The Policy Consensus Initiative in association with the Charles Kettering Foundation, 2006

*The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule Is Giving Way to Shared Governance…and Why Politics Will Never Be the Same*, M. Leighninger, Vanderbilt University Press, 2006

*Public Deliberation: A Managers Guide to Citizen Engagement*, C. Lukensmeyer and L. Torres, IBM Center for The Business of Government, 2006

*The Public Participation Handbook*, J. L. Creighton, Jossey-Bass, 2005

*The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*, J. Berry, K. Portney and K. Thompson, Brookings Institution, 1993

*Standards of Excellence in Civic Engagement: How Public Agencies Can Learn from the Community, Use What They Learn, and Demonstrate that Public Knowledge Matters*, M. Wood, The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, 2005

## Organizations

**Collaborative Governance Initiative**
**Institute for Local Government**
www.ca-ilg.org/cgi

**Alliance for Regional Stewardship**
www.regionalstewardship.org

**California Center for Civic Renewal**
hal.conklin@californiacenter.net

**Community Problem-Solving Project at**
**The Massachusetts Institute of Technology**
www.community-problem-solving.net

**Deliberative Democracy Consortium**
www.deliberative-democracy.net

**International Association for Public Participation**
www.iap2.org

**Kettering Foundation**
www.kettering.org

**National Civic League**
www.ncl.org

**National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation**
www.thataway.org

**National League of Cities**
**Center for Research & Municipal Programs**
www.nlc.org/Issues/Democracy___Governance/index.cfm

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