Public Participation Tools and Techniques
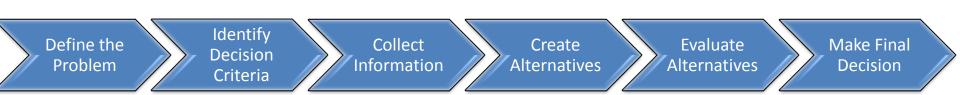
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Identify Clear Objectives for Public Participation

- First design the decision process

- Then identify objectives for public participation at each step

- Only after know what we want to achieve, do we think about appropriate tools

Integrate Public Participation into the Decision Process

- Seek early and continuous involvement
- Consider participation needs at each step

Define the Problem	Identify Decision Criteria	Collect Information	Create Alternatives	Evaluate Alternatives	Make Final Decision

Match Tools to Objectives

- Tools to inform

- Tools for input

- Tools for agreement

Tools to Inform: Consider

- Who needs the information?

- What do they know already?

- What information do they need for meaningful input?

- How do they prefer to receive information?

- What are the most direct and effective ways to communicate information?

- What is the level of trust between public and sponsor?

- How do we use our resources most effectively?

How Trust Matters

- Lower trust will result in little confidence in the information provided

- Lower trust requires more in-person action and more focus on relationship-building

Types of In-Person Tools to Inform

- Public meetings

- Briefings

- Telephone

- Direct electronic contact

Types of Remote Tools to Inform

- Fact Sheets
- Web Sites
- Social Media
- Information Repositories
- Newsletters
- Kiosks
- Press and media

Other Tools to Inform

- Community performance
- Mobile messaging
- Local partnering

Tools for Input: Consider

- Match tools to community needs

- Level of trust is important

- A public meeting is not always the best approach

Tools for Input: Should we Meet?

- Is it required?

- Is public interaction important to understanding?

- Is it important for the public learn from each other?

- Do we need to build trust?

- Do we want stakeholders to work with us on building a solution?

In-Person Tools for Input: Planning

- Clarify goal

- Think about how many people to accommodate, make large meetings feel small

- Plan how comments will be recorded

- Plan levels and types of interaction

- Plan response to a specific proposal?

- Plan co-development of solutions?

- Consider time and resources

In-Person Tools for Input

- Interviews

- Focus Groups

- Study Circles

- Public Meetings/Hearings

- Workshops

- Appreciative Inquiry

- World Cafes

- Charrettes

- Computer Assisted Processes

Other Input Tools

- Voting/Ballots

- Written comments

- On-line input

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Tools for Agreement: Consider

- Who needs to be included?

- Key interests willing and able to participate?

- Trust or other issues that must be addressed?

- Key agreements needed?

- Information necessary to build a viable consensus?

- Commitment of ultimate decision-makers?

Tools for Agreement

- Consensus workshops

- Advisory boards

- Web-based processes

- Computer assisted processes

- Citizen juries

Tools Exercise

- Design an in-person activity for your case
  - Define goals and desired outcomes
  - Identify who should attend
  - Identify information and preparation needed
  - Design the event agenda and tools to use
  - Identify key facilitation needs to achieve success