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