



Equitable,
Empowered,
Engaged

Engage Barrie
Position Paper on Community Engagement
July 2020

Context:

Effectively engaging with Barrie residents is fundamental to both helping the public and our elected representatives understand the nuanced challenges our community faces and to the development of sustainable solutions. This paper describes international best practices in public engagement, and Engage Barrie's expectations regarding public participation in decision-making processes on civic matters.

Key Principles:

The [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#)¹ is the international standard in public engagement, and offers five levels of participation that can define the public's role in any deliberative process:

Inform ♦ Consult ♦ Involve ♦ Collaborate ♦ Empower

This Spectrum also lays out the goal and the promise to the public for each.

The IAP2 Spectrum can be used in the design stages of a community engagement process to clarify the objectives of engagement and identify the appropriate tools and techniques for participation that has integrity. When the commitments of the determined level of engagement are kept, trust is built with participants. It also contributes to the transparency, accountability and credibility of the decision-making process.

Given these best practices, it is Engage Barrie's expectation that when it comes to civic matters:

- Public participation is expected, encouraged, facilitated, and adequately resourced.
- Public participation presented at the "Consult" level or above (surveys, public meetings, advisory committees) is intended to influence the decision.
- The process is designed to address barriers to public engagement and allow meaningful public participation.
- When a public participation process is presented at the "Consult" level or above, it is designed to communicate how public input affected the decision.

Conclusion:

Meaningful public engagement is at the heart of a well-functioning democracy. As Barrie strives to become a more healthy, resilient community where each resident can participate and thrive, every

¹ IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. IAP2 International Federation. (2018).
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

effort must be made to provide transparent, accountable, and credible engagement processes that are accessible and allow for meaningful participation.

Fig. 1. The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

iap2 public participation spectrum

developed by the international association for public participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns 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 provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate 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 decisions