



Digital + Distanced Stakeholder Outreach Framework.

Resilient Strategies for Industry,
Community, and The City of Calgary

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Responding to New Realities

In just a few short weeks, the evolving response to COVID-19 has significantly changed most of our relationships with The City of Calgary, our communities, and our neighbours. With each change – from social distancing to the closures of public institutions and local businesses – the ability of people, goods, and services to operate and communicate normally has been disrupted.

To mitigate social and economic fallout, it's more important now than ever for industry, communities, and The City to band together and embrace new modes of communication. We need to work together to ensure that land development planning, investment, and city-building continue to grow the economy, support workers, and strengthen our connections to the places we live.

A Resilient Approach is the Foundation of a Strong Practice

Trusted, clear, and effective engagement and information-sharing strategies are essential to ensuring key messages are communicated and that all voices play a meaningful role in community development. Given the current realities of social distancing, this is an opportunity for us to consider how we can best serve our communities in times of need, to identify new engagement approaches, adapt, and strengthen our practice.

Our goal is to reinforce a common language among all stakeholders, focused primarily on Digital and Distanced engagement strategies and consultation tools.

Digital outreach strategies, like web portals and online surveys, are especially effective at broadening audience reach by enabling participants to learn and contribute in ways that are customized to their own interests, abilities, and convenience.

The public open house is not the 'be-all and end-all' of stakeholder outreach.

These extraordinary times have the potential to show us the power and spectrum of creative and best-practice stakeholder outreach, using strategies that remain resilient and meaningful in the face of social distancing measures.

Distanced tools, on the other hand, typically employ more traditional communications channels, like mail and telephone, which are often favoured by stakeholders who are not comfortable receiving information or contributing feedback through online digital channels.

Best practice engagement follows the same principles, be it on or offline; it requires careful planning, testing, implementation, follow-up, and concentrated efforts to notify stakeholders of opportunities to participate.

The integration of Digital and Distanced strategies and consultation tools has the potential to create a more democratic process by increasing the convenience of participation, improving information sharing, reaching more diverse audiences and sustaining outreach efforts over time. This approach is about empowering our collective community voice and emerging from this pandemic with a stronger practice and network of social cohesion.

Digital + Distanced Stakeholder Outreach Framework.

Introduction

This Framework is a hybrid set of Digital and Distanced information sharing strategies and consultation tools, designed to sustain civic engagement and address possible inequalities in the outreach process during an extraordinary period of social distancing.

Information sharing strategies provide stakeholders with accurate and objective information about projects and engagement processes, while consultation tools obtain feedback and input from stakeholders on project considerations.

Digital information sharing strategies and consultation tools are especially effective at broadening audience reach by enabling participants to learn and contribute in ways that are customized to their interests, abilities and convenience.



Digital Strategies

Information Sharing

PROJECT WEB PORTAL

Develop a comprehensive standalone project web portal that provides an information-rich user experience, including key project details and opportunities for feedback and input.

VIRTUAL EVENT / WEBINAR

Invite stakeholders to attend webinar-style events facilitated by project teams via video-sharing software. Formats may include an introductory presentation, panel discussions, and moderated Q & A sessions. Webinars can be open to the general public or targeted to specific stakeholder groups via direct mailed invitations and can be recorded and shared online with those unable to attend.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Develop social media posts that introduce stakeholders to projects and direct them to the project web portal.

Consultation

COMMENT FORMS + SURVEYS

Allow stakeholders to submit feedback on specific topic areas online. Comment themes and project team responses may later be included in a "What We're Hearing" section.

QUESTION + ANSWER

Allow stakeholders to submit questions online and receive direct answers from the project team. Common questions can later be integrated into a Frequently Asked Questions section / page.

QUICK POLLS + VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEYS

Gauge stakeholder interests and preferences on specific project considerations.

SPATIAL FEEDBACK

Gather location-based input using interactive maps and diagrams.

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Distanced information sharing strategies and consultation tools typically employ more traditional communications channels, which are often favoured by stakeholders who are not comfortable receiving information or contributing feedback through online digital channels.



Distanced Strategies

Information Sharing

PROJECT MEDIA RELEASE

Develop a detailed project media release that formally announces a project and communicates key messages. Messages might include the project team's commitment to the future growth of Calgary and its social and economic resilience, the importance of a specific site and / or project, and the start of a responsive and innovative project outreach strategy tailored to these extraordinary times.

PROJECT MAILER + ADVERTORIAL

Circulate a project mailer and printed publication advertorial that introduces surrounding area stakeholders to the project and directs them to the project web portal. Provide stakeholders with project team contact information, as well as an opportunity to request a printed project information package and comment forms by mail or telephone.

PROJECT INFORMATION PACKAGE

Develop an information-rich printed project information package that corresponds to the information available on the project web portal.

Consultation

PROJECT CALLBACK LINE

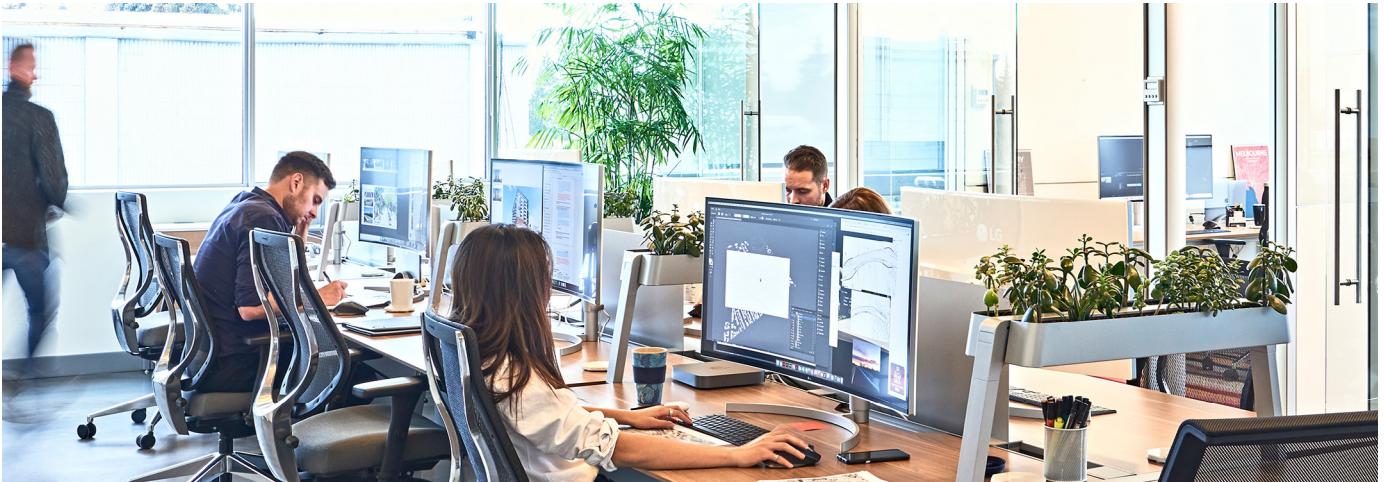
Allow stakeholders to submit questions, comments, and requests for a printed project information package and comment forms, with callbacks from the appropriate member of the project team.

COMMENT FORMS + SURVEYS

Allow stakeholders to submit feedback on specific topic areas by mail.

QUESTION + ANSWER

Allow stakeholders to submit questions and receive direct answers from the project team by mail.



CivicWorks

CivicWorks is a client focused, design forward, and outcome driven urban planning and design consultancy. We act for city-builders who shape our communities for a better future.

We are a team of urbanists with a hybrid skill-set in planning, physical design, communications and information architecture. Together, we drive innovation and bring an equal mix of talent and effort to every challenge.

Our work embodies our core values and is a testament to our reputation as industry leaders and experts in our field. We practice a disruptive brand of urban planning to realize socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable urban places.

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