

“What Was Said” Report
Community Workshop
February 25, 2011
9:30 am – 12:00 pm
Number of participants: 35

INTRODUCTION

How you feel about the start of the process?

- Like what read re: issues; huge need for more facilities (soccer parent/coach)
- There is a lot of demand for limited resources; want our voice to be heard (e.g., soccer facilities)
- Need sports (soccer) facilities
- Senior advocate; how seniors being treated
- See if generate process for city to mature, to ensure generate sustainable tool/process for politicians to use
- Need for facilities (soccer)
- Shortage of facilities (soccer)
- Facility shortage
- Find out how budget works
- Restore/preserve parks and heritage: City has been supportive; initiated by Mayor Klein; process interesting and want to be part of the process
- Calgary Heritage, curious re: start of the process
- Calgary heritage, information gathering; confusion re: how the process dovetails with Mayor Nenshi's call for community engagement
- Opportunity for improved citizen engagement re: how develop/deliver community services; also curious re: public engagement process
- Find out more; work with families in poverty; they need to have a voice
- Seniors, concerned about City not aware of negative impact of increased property tax on fixed income people; focus too much on frills
- Concern re: impact of increased taxes/fees
- Find creative ways to finance indoor soccer facilities
- Skeptical re: process; different interests & priorities
- Interested re: how dovetail with Council and Mayor decisions; curious re: process
- Soccer interests
- Learn about process; input to engagement
- Also interested in process and how to input

- Interest in process; learn how civic partners can be part of the process; how can sustain their operations
- Calgary Sport Council - fair and equitable development for all sport; maintenance / renewal of all facilities
- Move process along to more wholesale community development
- Trying innovative things for seniors; process piece of how can do things better
- Deficit in City re: soccer facilities
- Many perspectives important to process

QUESTION 1

**Think of the best public engagement experience you have been involved in.
What made it meaningful?**

- Formed organization to discuss and identify needs put forward as a group
- Good media coverage of issues and perspectives
- Collaborative effort by individuals and spokespeople for groups. Able to get the ear of the government, but unfortunately we do not always get the results we want.
- Having an Alderman that will listen
 - actively involved in the community
 - opportunities to talk and discuss issues with them
 - willing to represent constituents concerns
 - building relationships and understanding
- Having a result/solving a problem as a result of public participation
- Being able to connect with City reps
- Mayoralty campaign
 - well controlled meeting
 - forum allowed for a leader emerge
 - have to believe you can really be heard
- Discussion with Minister
 - directly to him, not through bureaucracy. Meaningful to the Minister too
- Difficult to remember a positive experience
- Series of smaller meetings direct contact with leader. Direct contact is important
- Face to face interaction. Lots of energy
- Partnership with community leaders
- Collaborating with others in the government, private sector, etc.
- When the host of the conversation and engagement process is directly involved – when it's their JOB to engage
- Getting information from the source
- Must have measurable outcomes for accountability
- Surveys
- When people really want to hear out perspective and they care about it
- Advocates that go out and get people in their areas involved
- When people in power recognize our needs

- When the culture of the organization is echoed through the business plan. When they really believe in it
- Identifying the steps of the process to make it less overwhelming
- Smaller organizations are better at it unless areas are compartmentalized to deal with such a large issue
- Go plan – participants has a vote in the decision
- Different people in the room (council, admin, citizens)
- PlanIT was very effective in data because decision-makers were involved
- Good questions get asked – need “good” answers (usually political response)
- Group was able to work through an item and then requested to come up with an action plan
- Real collaboration between sponsor and community which sparked additional collaboration amount other groups
- Community organization started a process
 - weakness is they need support – who do you talk to?
- When participants were able to help define potential solution
- Participants have a sense of ownership
- On-line
 - broad experience of engagement
- 10 year plan
 - took politics out of the process
- Better if it’s done before the decision is made
- Genuine
- Sequence of events
- Key stakeholders
- Willing to listen
- Willing to use input

QUESTION 2

What has been your experience with City of Calgary engagement activities in the past?

- Successful when community led the process. More collaborative – it worked
- Not successful when City led the process (very focused, not receptive to changes in the process)
- Mixed messages from City re: how to work with the City and community groups (communication issues, politically driven)
 - no continuity between political level and administration
- Lack of understanding of realities of how community groups operate; resources not available to produce documents, etc. (unlike City resources) and to be able to participate in the process
- Open houses – usually too late in the process and only to inform, not consult
- Active member (West LRT) community engagement around development
- Civic Camp Calgary ongoing since 2009
- As a Civic Partner, this process is potentially much better. Will take time to change.
- Top down – little guy does not have a voice
- What part of the pie can we influence? Perhaps the pie should be bigger
- Calgary pathways – special interest groups were more organized and had a head start

- Involved down the process minimal ability to influence
- Presented with a 'fait a complis' way too often
- Having the support of the City in the past on certain projects has been good
- Collaboration with other community organizations
- What hasn't worked – when the City already makes the decision before engaging. Driving the process by engaging later
- Dilemma of knowing where to go to try and address my issues
 - Needs to be accessible and clear. Having the information on how to engage is important
- If too intent on data fathering, the decision-making and implementation doesn't follow. From data gathering to implementation, these actions must be clear
- Getting feedback is essential
- Listening to the loudest voice as opposed to the best or silent voices is dangerous
- Everybody has something to say
- Any big decisions that take a lot of money need to be public
- Accessibility is important. City hasn't done a good job of providing ways for these to be accommodated
- Line staff more willing to engage more than more senior staff
- Sometimes staff feel unable to make change
- Already an agenda and end goal in mind
 - engagement only to support agenda
 - not meaningful
- Delusional
- Like the opportunity for input
- Bureaucracy gets in the way
 - an excuse
- Inconsistency in the way departments consult
 - they don't talk to each other
 - scope is narrower and input not passed on
- Some departments have an us vs. them attitude
- PlanIt – lots of great involvement, lots of Twitter, at the last minute the City inserted changes (stepped away from the table and made a decision on their own)
- The City is not providing the representation we deserve
- Difficult to identify progress when they aren't listening
- Wide, diverse representation on committees
- Barriers to participation:
 - transportation to get there
 - child care
 - timing of meetings
- Have no participated because of work
- Perception is that the City only has short term goals
- Maybe in this process we can identify what can't be funded, and find vehicles to do that
- Often seems like the decisions are already being made

QUESTION 3

What 'ground rules' for participation would you suggest for participants in this conversation over the next few months?

- Get people involved early (at a more appropriate stage in the process)
- Set the agenda to fill special interests at certain times
- Multi-pronged approach
 - diverse participation
 - use social media
 - mail out
- City has forgotten who is the boss (taxpayers, citizens)
- Process needs to be able to give time to various interests
 - fair weighting
- People need to represent their interests but must also be open to common good (bigger picture)
- Simple English (no Twitter language, no newspeak)
- Not just web based engagement – make sure everything is available in a wide variety of ways (ages, languages etc.)
- Not so singular, respect differences in ways of engaging
- Allow all voices to be heard
- Respect where people are coming from and the differences in priorities and values
- Clarity, notice of agendas re: meetings (purpose, agendas posted in advance)
- How publicize, how we hear about events (advertise on CBC, especially if people don't belong to an organization)
- Take responsibility for own involvement in the process and share this responsibility
- Bring back to core issues like healthy communities instead of just soccer
- Be forward focused in discussion, not just on a single issue
- Accessibility for all demographics – single parents, homeless, etc. Provide childcare
- New Canadians, low income, don't know how to engage. Engagement culture is not there – soccer parents for instance
- Written word probably best way
- Find ways to have people with different perspectives
- Don't penalize those that are mobilized
- Let's not let groups hijack the process
- This is one of the few processes that we can be involved in
- Remember volunteers most likely will make up the majority, plan around that
- Use computer forums as a technique
- Share the 'airtime'
 - everyone has the right to be heard
- Calm, clear and fair facilitation
- Control the 'off the wall' people
- Stick to the topic
- Don't interrupt
- Equal representation
- Enable dialogue for those with communication problems (translation, microphone for sound levels)
- More of the average citizen

- Need all perspectives
- Don't allow groups to over power individuals
- Stay focused on the question at hand
- Civility with others and their perspectives
- Accessibility – going out to communities and considering mobility issues
- Provide information beforehand so that people can participate well
- Making input public is key
- Providing sessions and ways to participate in different languages and continuing it
- Hear everyone and allow everyone to participate
- Providing an opportunity for different types of people to engage
- A way to provide input AFTER the sessions are over – following up
- Defining a road map of the process. Where we are going in the process as well as the objectives for specific sessions
- Provide people with the knowledge of where the process is going and how it will influence and impact decisions
- Release that everyone can make a difference
- Must be meaningful
- Acknowledge the little successes, ideas and consensus that happen throughout the process

QUESTION 4

Please rate the importance of the following engagement goals on a scale of zero to five.
Zero: low importance – Five: high importance

NOTE: The goals listed below are the public engagement goals participants were asked to rank:

- 1) **Gathering values-based input that will be used and considered in decision-making on the trade-offs and priorities for City services and budget.**
- 2) **Providing multiple meaningful and appropriate opportunities to engage staff, citizens and Council in constructive dialogue about issues, priorities and ideas that are important to them.**
- 3) **Delivering a transparent, accountable and inclusive engagement process that builds relationships, trust and credibility with stakeholders.**
- 4) **Raising awareness and understanding of City services and budget allocation.**
- 5) **Building capacity, skills and knowledge of citizens, staff and Council to engage and participate in dialogue about important issues.**
- 6) **Building relationships and partnerships with organizations, stakeholders and citizens and creating an increased feeling of involvement on important issues.**
- 7) **Providing all participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.**
- 8) **Building understanding of the foundation and vision of Imagine CALGARY and the context of this conversation as the path towards beginning the journey of implementation towards that vision.**

Group 1

Most important engagement goals:

****This group chose not to rate the goals**

How do we make these goals a reality?

- All the goals say the same thing
- Too verbose
- Lack of definition makes it too general, too loaded, too high level of language. Should be a grade 8 level
- Advertising is very important
 - mass media, newspaper, TV, news editorials, bold signs, news, etc.
- Additional printing on bill inserts
- Email lists, community newsletters
- Give people a template to work with. Research how to present their ideas
- Agenda available in advance
- Raw data immediately via smart boards
- Word of mouth is very important too
- Aps
- Information on every item so that I can determine where the fluff is in the system
- Know how to access information about the City of Calgary initiatives
- Details on monetary decisions to make people more accountable
- Transparency
- Strategic projects when, what, already held
- ImagineCalgary vs. PlanIT, GoPlan

Group 2

Most important engagement goals:

- 1) 20/25
- 2) 22/25
- 3) 23/25
- 4) 17/25
- 5) 14/25
- 6) 17/25
- 7) 17/25
- 8) 14/25

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Consolidate # 4 and # 7 – they are very similar
- In the long-term, some of the lower rated ones will rate higher
- Some of this is the citizens' responsibility
- Events are scheduled for times when people can attend
- Leverage technologies
 - use it to bring people into the process
- Youth shouldn't be targeted
- Perhaps in a school program
- Civic Camp – having trouble building down to a CA level

- Need to look at language issues
- Older people not “connected”

Group 3

Most important engagement goals:

- 1) 22/35
- 2) 24/35
- 3) 31/35
- 4) 26/35
- 5) 31/35
- 6) 31/35
- 7) 33/35
- 8) 22/35

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Communication of established timelines
- See more councilors present at sessions (and accessible)
- How does the average citizen get info on the budget
- Didn’t hear about these dates. They need to be published and shared much earlier (3-4 weeks)
- Providing information in advance
- Use variety of means to advertise
- Tap into existing communication vehicles
- Beginning of a long-term project to change the budget process
- Focus on budget quality, not just quantity
- Connect with faith and culture based groups
- Need to be accountable about what was said at sessions. A chance for the public and participants to review what was said to make sure it was accurate

Group 4

Most important engagement goals:

- 1) 31/35
- 2) (combine with 7)
- 3) this is an outcome
- 4) combine 4 and 5
- 5) combine 4 and 5
- 6) take feelings out of it
- 7) take off # 8 – too many goals

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Get the word out, market the opportunities
- Engage a wide audience
- Look at media and advertising, not just electronic
- Use community associations to spread the word
- Use community vehicles that communities and groups use
- Bull stuffers
- Hold meetings of civic partners and others who receive funding
- Better understanding goes both ways

- City people involved with citizens/groups in Dialogue Partners synergy and partnerships with the communities at large

Group 5

Most important engagement goals:

All goals are equally important

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Raise awareness about where the money is allocated. Have information available all the time, not just around election time
- Spending money across the board – prioritizing
- Make the entire budget available
- Council must communicate with the public better
- Identifying budget timeframes
- Doing what is best for individual citizens as best they can
- Provide a way for citizens to inform them about monitored progress and how money is being spent
- Assessing the input in a way that the public understands
- Different avenues to look at different interests as well as the large picture
- Provide opportunities that take different amount of time, levels of engagement, etc.
- We want to know what the City is thinking
- What methods are there to increase the City’s pot? Where can we get more money?
- Partnering with other companies that are local so that profits going back into the City. Explore options
- What sort of projects does the City have in mind for the future? Engage when possible
- Use the media (TV, radio, newspapers, mail outs, inserts in bills, emails) to get the message out

Additional comments:

- Dialogue means engagement with the City
- Talking with City staff, remember to deal with the fear of job loss
- Would like to see a City staff person here to listen
- Add numbers to the goals to correspond to engagement goals
- Concern between “feeling” involved and actually being involved
- Similarities between awareness and capacity
- Process – open, authentic, transparent
 - does the process matter if the outcomes aren’t reflective?
- Too many goals to have priorities
- “feeling” word throws people off
- 2,6, and 7 re-worded to become one

QUESTION 5

What information is critical for consideration in this process?

- Who drives the decision – council or administration?
- Budget summary discretionary vs. non

- Inventory of all sports facilities by type and quality
- What relationship exists between City and sports associations
- Results from previous surveys about the values and priorities of Calgarians
- Budget breakdown
- How much is going to civic partners?
- What is required in the City
- More information that the property tax bill, less than the entire budget
- Sources and revenue (provincial funding)
- What is negotiable amongst the topics?
- Who votes?
- Categories of services provided
- Can the City help with facility utilization or scheduling
- What will happen to our information? Who will handle it and will it actually get to who needs it?
- Information about tax revenue streams relative to other cities
- Organize information to suggest what the potential trade-offs are
- How are new community infrastructures financed?
- Communication of timelines
- Streamlining of information so it's somewhat transparent
- Accessibility to more info for those who want it
- Convey the rationale for decisions
- How much money does each department have?
- Alderman's opinions
- Compare sport facilities to other cities
- 5 year business plan
- What can and can't be changed
- Expenditure details
- What is the budget figure
- Benchmark information other City services vs. Calgary
- Operating budget and capital budget
- Revenue/sources
- Allocation of money in accessible English
- Criteria and formula used to make decisions
- Budget decision-making process
- Benchmark information: other city taxes vs. Calgary

QUESTION 6

What can we do to ensure that you continue to participate?

- Follow up with stakeholder dialogue
- Open house
- We are being listened to
- Implementation of recommendations
- Regular process updates sent to us
- Progress
- Convenient location and time

- Well defined timelines
- Free parking
- Evening and weekend forums in the 4 quadrants of the cities (locations and times are crucial)
- Specific topics of interest covered in the forums (we need a voice without being perceived as hijacking the agenda) Note: This doesn't preclude forums that are general and over all topics and interest groups – these general meanings are a necessary part of the process
- Feedback
- Know that our input will make a difference
- Circulate the information we've asked for
- Response of bureaucrats to citizen input
- Questions before meetings
- Have everyone from today's meeting share their experience with others so that they can ignite further involvement – grass roots explosion
- Develop action plan and responsibility assignments
- Hand out tasks or homework (talk to neighbours, bridge club, book club, dinner groups, expanded social networks, etc.)
- Trust that the exercise will influence the budget
- Ways to continue the conversations beyond just being there (Twitter hashtag, online forum, coffee shop discussion)
- Place to post independently organized opportunities
- Make the final reporting into a podcast
- Sufficient notice of opportunities to participate
- Clear description of the *value* to my group or me from participating "why does this really matter to me?"
- Strait forward communication to invite people to stuff
- More social networking and media coverage to deliver messages about sessions
- Support from staff and contractors
 - questions, information, advice on project
- Feedback within a week – 10 days
- Meeting with City on budget for civic partners

QUESTION 7

What stood out for you?

- Inefficiency and division
- Some frustrated by their ability to engage. Be more inclusive
- Try to include the people that aren't here or able to attend because of jobs and other commitments
- Moving data collections toward implementation. Make sure the loop connects. We must know how decisions are being made and how they link to the input
- Encountered no other way to engage with decision makers. No ways of accessing them.
- We aren't here to hijack the situation, but to ensure that we are heard
- Looking at healthy communities as a whole is the #1 priority
- Hijacking meetings – it shows how passionate people are about the issues
- There are a lot of people that aren't being heard. The ability to be heard is so important