

“What Was Said” Report

Community Workshop

February 26, 2011

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Number of participants: 19

INTRODUCTION

How you feel about the start of the process?

- Been telling Council that they need to spend money on infrastructure first
- Women in poverty; important to engage women with special needs in the process
- Problem dealing with the City on various issues
- See what process all about
- Work with City to get resources for all needs; work to find consensus moving forward
- Talk to people; hope to change
- Lack of facilities & resources in soccer programs
- Citizen, background in water issues around the City; going to be a tough equation if we don't put enough money into one end; won't get results at other end
- Momentum (poverty organization) - ensure poverty voices are heard; also need more art spaces in City; stoked to be here - great meeting is one that I can be at
- Sport (soccer) has social and physical benefits for kids and City needs to pay more attention to benefits of soccer; hope can make a difference by being here; dismayed more people not here today
- “Volun-told” to attend
- Ditto re: benefits of soccer
- Adult soccer group, support comment re: benefits of soccer
- Community association; diving into public policy issues, see how interconnected issues are (e.g., secondary suites with transportation; sports with transportation, etc.) gain appreciation for process and big picture thinking
- Chamber of Commerce - optimism re: engaging citizens in budget conversation; excited about process
- Excited; focus on 65+ independence
- Alderman Low: Confirm core services linked to mayors vision; observe & listen

QUESTION 1

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

- Diversity of people that were involved
- Genuinely heard and was not tokenism (listened to)
- Public perceived process is real, need follow up results and how voice was heard
- Go Plan: 3 elements, City was open to input, massive public involvement, did lead to change/plan on shelf
- This is my trial run
- Results at the end will be used to determine success
- Having meetings in your community
- Notices come directly to your house
- Provided information sheets
- Petitions/meetings/options to get involved
- Being able to talk to Alderman/leadership
- Spending time talking to lots of people
- Want things to happen from discussions/engagements
- Imagine Calgary: good quality info, facilitation, engagement of so many people, multiple opportunities to participate, accessible, celebrated success at end, shared results/feedback, ongoing engagement
- Make sure have broad range of representation at table, cross section of views
- Make sure to record conversation
- Understanding rationally regarding decisions, how made, why input used or not used, feedback re why and why not
- Hawkwood: Ward 4 OLT's, 150 community participants, range of participants, input collect, measured feedback, could see how used
- Election: exciting, people were engaged, talking on bus etc., people talked about what they wanted, very organic, covered a broad base, interested in results, sensed vote counted, used social networking, youth
- Mission Road: good meetings, designs, but City ran out of money and dropped things, didn't share why, ended up bad
- City often lacks resources (\$, skill sets)
- Citizens want to be engaged-give us the chance even on Saturday mornings, online, etc.
Political leadership, alderman should get involved, mayor should build on political capital started in January

QUESTION 2

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

- Experienced in several processes, each process had good points but also painful
- People willing to give up time and others being paid, not equitable regarding how time is used (administration often not keeping up with volunteers)
- Bureaucracy/admin resources not being used as efficiently as could be

- Brentwood: change in development plans and not sharing info in advance of meetings re: change in plans very different focus; not adequate timing re: geological studies; development of infrastructure; info didn't get presented to council until the morning of council; petitions 2.5 years later; limited consultation/communications between communities, administration and council; alderman don't represent interests of communities
- Squeaky wheel gets the grease
- Lakeview-land crescent
 - Water drainage pilot was cancelled
 - Neighborhood not consulted-opposed to the project
- Development Process-Bridge Design
 - Very interesting/education about process
- Fluoridization
 - Fought it 20 years ago/petition
 - Plebiscite many opposed
 - Goal is to get it to happen
- Previous budgeting: no opportunity to schedule, no block times, understanding how feedback is recorded, understanding why decisions are made to incorporate or not
- Go Plan: good, massive public engagement, city was looking for input, there was change based on input, the bad parts of the plan not implemented because of lack of resources
- Sometimes the Engage Calgary is called "enrage Calgary" process is all about checking boxes instead of really hearing people
- Vista heights: good- individuals could make a difference, sending people into community (city admin), many workshops and summarized results
- West LRT: process easy to understand and information widely available, knew what's happening and now I can see the results of citizen input
- When English is the only language consultation is delivered in (does this suit the other cultural communities)
- Seniors aren't engaged
- Access to information is important
- Hearing different opinions and perspectives is important
- Not having enough people to provide a representative group
- Find solutions for those who are isolated, don't have childcare (parallels between people in poverty and seniors)

QUESTION 3

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

- Hospitality (beer and pizza)
- Time limit on conversations; let everyone talk
- Listen; what is other person saying and why
- Need a good moderator to guide conversation
- Respect
- Clear information (in advance if possible)

- Focused information and discussion (not broad based)
- Have info from previous meeting to build on in advance of meetings (available on line)
- Agenda and purpose of session in advance
- Snapshot of where the city budget goes (put through the FCC)
- Be respectful not distracted, like side conversations
- Time limits, fair division of time
- Good sets of information, decision of council based on good info because has been increased education on the process
- Face to face ward meetings with Alderman in attendance, a couple of times in the process
- Listen to the questions and stay on topic
- Not have preconceived notions. Stay open minded
- Discuss issues and facts and not make it personal
- Transparency-what is said and done needs to be related, need to know the decision criteria and how things are done
- Don't want to only have the squeaky wheel heard
- Ways to ensure all people are heard
- Respect: listen to all voices, ensure all people are heard, limit time and find the balance between people
- Find ways to engage seniors/disabled/etc., all people are important
- Need to have enough time for people to engage
- Turn off your cell phone
- Segmenting groups to talk about what you want to talk about (like interests together)
- Need to deal with the competitive nature for air time
- Finding a balance between your interests and others interests
- Need to find the link between issues and how they are connected and integrated
- Need to develop an understanding of the issues and how they are related and impact on another

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: Listed below are the Engagement goals were 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:

- 1) 27/30
- 2) 20/30
- 3) 25/30
- 4) 20/30
- 5) 25/30
- 6) 30/30
- 7) 26/30
- 8) 19/30

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Who do we really have to engage, work harder to get them involved (ESL, single moms, lower income, people with disabilities)
- Use different methods that would cater (maybe an issue with budget)
- Engage the media more
- Multi-stakeholder sessions
- Need info so that allocation of budget understood
- Your tax bill community city should use that service
- Get youth involved-the way they want to be involved
- Issue of trust when dealing with The City
- Has not been a good experience, bureaucracy gets in the way, no reward to be efficient
- Budget digest speaks to transparency of the process
- Need objective relative data and true information
- Poor idea of who is living in our communities
- Calgary.ca is a few years old
- Need to reach out and touch people to get involved
- Getting into a venue can be difficult so go to them where they are using the services (feel empowered in their own turf)
- Need to revisit the 100 year plan (Imagine Calgary) i.e. Urban sprawl leads to increased infrastructure costs like water pressure

Group 2

Most important engagement goals:

**Did not want to rate the goals

How do we make these goals a reality?

- raising awareness: reach through the bubble of people not getting involved, people come home and are tired, have to find a way to reach them
- Need to create a sense of urgency: share challenges with the budget, explain this is how we are going to find, why this conversation needs to happen now
- Need to use plain language
- Using TV news broadcasts-to get people aware
- Proposing the idea of a “citizens tour”. Various events held at city locations to allow people to gain an appreciation of what it takes to run a city well, go to a water treatment plant, go to landfill; show how much organization goes into managing a city; this should be a family type event
- Inclusiveness: involving younger people through twitter, Facebook, YouTube, involving the 65+ with phone calls, posters and print media
- Some ways to get youth involved: using podcasts, get them engaged in discussion/treating youth the same way as adults, work with the Calgary Board of Education, find ways to fit into the curriculum
- Build momentum and getting other people to share the message and information

Group 3

Most important engagement goals: Ratings

- 1) 17/20
- 2) 17/20
- 3) 20/20
- 4) 17/20
- 5) 16/20
- 6) 19/20
- 7) 20/20
- 8) 11/20

How do we make these goals a reality?

- Accessible venues, daytime sessions for seniors, plain language, interpretive services
- Alderman should have frequent/regular meetings in their ward in different communities
- Dialogue across communities, keep conversations open (i.e. City of Calgary-not just limit to members, eg. Issues such as ring road important to all Calgarians)
- Process to think about what we want as a city overall promote Plan it
- Accessible online as well as face to face, choice and multiple opportunities regarding how want to participate, all input valued equally
- City planning did breakdown of budget re: services, how get there, pie charts
- Community papers-not equal distribution
- Need info in advance re: meetings and process happenings
- City departments need to work together, communicate with each other re: projects and timing

- Verbal communication is not dead; hard to find info on Calgary website
- Info out through alderman officers
- Need to invest resources into process i.e. Advance awareness of meetings and information needed

QUESTION 5

What information is critical for consideration in this process?

- Create an APP that clearly shows where our personal taxes go (yourtaxbill.com is a great example)
- Demographics, financial information, budget, stakeholders involved
- Prioritizing infrastructure projects, understand how projects are chosen and prioritized
- Understanding how services are funded, greater clarity about true costs
- Summary of specific services
- Understanding city responsibilities, services provided by the city, province and federal
- Understanding how council sets its priorities by using high level vision (Imagine Calgary, Plan It Calgary) flows into Council priorities then into budget decisions
- Facts and figures: demographics, geography (neighbourhoods, transit lines, etc.), where are recreation facilities currently located
- Resources required to build and service new communities
- Long term projects
- Easy to understand, breakdown of the city budget
- Main contact for an issue or project
- How do monies allocated align with values and priorities identified in Plan It and CTP
- Information on the projected demographics of Calgary and area (housing, transit, services)
- Breakdown of where our money goes (i.e. pie chart by percentages, transportation, emergency services)
- Criteria for decisions
- Detailed budget available to all Calgarians-make it searchable
- Minimum 2 weeks advance notice of any meetings
- Playfields-who looks after the grass and upkeep of the fields
- Focus on tax competitiveness-comparison of property and non-residential and business tax
- Service efficiency and performance-benchmarking services on cost and performance against other CDN cities
- What we currently spend on what services, current \$ allocation
- What funds come from the provincial and federal government to support city projects and programs
- How do we best involve ourselves to make positive changes?

QUESTION 6

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

- A sense that the info gathered will be viewed and valued the same way by elected officials and senior bureaucrats
- Find more people in their 20's who care and will engage

- Publicize feedback
- Have a process that shows how the feedback will be used
- Meetings for smaller community groups
- Better notification of upcoming meetings
- Broader communication
- Proof that my previous input has been considered in the decision process
- Proof of personal relevance to individuals
- Breakdown conversations to be more specific, gives chance to drill down
- Should be specific institution engagement as well as for Calgary citizens
- Bring the conversation to different venues to encourage different perspectives (theatre's, pub, parks)
- Getting information out thru pamphlets, public notices, radio, public service announcements
- Break down the budget into segments that resonate with different interest and concerns with different areas and people
- Open honest location communication
- Citizen tours
- Know what the city will do with these meeting findings
- Like the opportunity to host own discussion with membership
- Email, website, TV, newspaper, Facebook
- Because relying on volunteer time need a forum (in person, online) that is convenient, user friendly, productive and not too time consuming
- Location and accessibility to transit
- Meeting in subsidized buildings include LICO seniors and low income individuals, include everyone

QUESTION 7

What stood out for you?

- Met someone her interested in water sustainability, great to see, need to follow up with the Bow River Basin Council
- Verbal communication is not dead
- Amazing how many similar issues come up in different communities
- Concern how little know about different parts of the city
- Concern received a letter from City administration to not contact Alderman (i.e. Go to Alderman first)
- Sitting Alderman should represent people in the ward, not act politically
- Don't use skill sets of volunteers to extent they should be used (volunteer list not comprehensive)