



Clackamas County Community Engagement Framework



Introduction

Community engagement is the cornerstone of a successful public process. It builds lasting relationships, trust, and transparency, and achieves deep understanding of the lived experiences of those who live and work in the community we serve. Successful community engagement involves people in the decisions that affect them and about what matters to them most. It enables better outcomes for both the community and the county by allowing those involved to identify concerns, risks, opportunities, options and solutions through more informed and mutually beneficial decision making.

Community engagement is core to the county's strategic priority to ensure safe, healthy, and secure communities. The county's ability to successfully fulfill this priority will require ongoing community involvement and engagement in any current and future efforts.

Vision Statement

The county supports effective and genuine community engagement by ensuring an inclusive and equitable process so that every voice is heard and decisions reached result in an improved lived experience for all residents of the county.

Guiding Principles

Clackamas County can achieve its vision by adopting a cohesive and robust community engagement framework that ensures the public process is representative of the community's voice and needs. The framework is built on five guiding principles:

1. Focus on the best interests of the community
2. Facilitate open, honest, and meaningful dialog, with clear milestones for providing input
3. Foster inclusive and equitable representation
4. Provide timely, accurate, and accessible information
5. Be transparent with decision making

These principles will be embedded into our normal operating procedures as we seek public input at the onset of any planning or decision-making needs that arise within the county.

Core Beliefs

As we aspire toward universal goals that bring better outcomes for the communities we serve, we recognize the strategies we develop may require targeted efforts and resources that are responsive to structures, culture, inequities, and lived experiences with whom we engage. While our strategies may vary, our core beliefs remain the same:

- Community stakeholders have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

- Community stakeholders' contributions shall influence the county's decisions.
- The county recognizes the needs and interests of all participants.
- The county seeks out and facilitates engagement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- The county seeks input from community stakeholders in designing how they participate.
- The county provides information community stakeholders need to participate in a meaningful way.
- The county communicates to community stakeholders how their input impacts or affects a decision.
- The county engages stakeholders by meeting them where they are.

Community Stakeholders

Clackamas County recognizes the value of community engagement as an essential part of strategy development, project planning, and decision making to deliver better outcomes for the community and the county. The county also recognizes we have many stakeholders with whom we work, partner, and collaborate. They are the people who live, work, and play in the county. These community stakeholders may have different needs and expectations and the county's engagement strategy will reflect this.

1. Advisory boards and commissions (ABCs) are county-organized boards of community members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to provide insight on specific county programs. The board members offer their lived experience and sometimes professional experience as their expertise to help guide the BCC and staff to ensure programs meet the community needs and reflect community values.
2. Community planning organizations (CPOs) are community groups that help ensure community engagement in the county's land-use process. CPOs are one of the county's methods to achieve Oregon State Planning Goal 1. CPOs are supported by the county, but are not agents of the county to ensure they can legally oppose land-use decisions. CPOs serve as a regular meeting body to offer a place for community dialogue about land use and provide their feedback to the county.
3. Hamlets and villages are community groups in unincorporated county regions that serve to connect their communities to county government. As agents of the county, hamlets are extensions of county leadership in the community. Hamlet board members serve in a unique position to share key information with their communities and to share community perspective with the Board of County Commissioners and county staff.
4. Community-based organizations are the bridge to reach the communities we serve. They are key stakeholders in the community with established relationships and are trusted by the community. Community-based organizations are nonprofit groups organized and operated by community members to support community needs.
5. Youth play an important role in strengthening programs, encouraging innovation, and ensuring

longevity and sustained outcomes. They need to be engaged as fully active participants who will inform county initiatives and help build a future community of educated, engaged, and community-minded leaders.

6. Communities of interest are groups of people who share a particular experience, interest, or characteristic, such as communities of color, culturally specific organizations, grass-roots groups focused on diversity and inclusion, LGBTQIA+, faith groups, older people, people with disability, migrant groups, cultural and ethnic groups, and others. Clackamas County is diverse yet this diversity is often missing in our public process. We recognize communities of interest have unique needs and are not homogenous groups, as each group can hold multiple intersections of identity calling for nuanced solutions. The county must continue to explore and invest in culturally sensitive and informed outreach to build relationships with the diverse communities that call Clackamas County home.

Community Engagement Model

The public engagement spectrum developed by The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) will serve as the county’s community engagement model. The county will apply the model’s community engagement best practices countywide and invest resources necessary to prioritize authentic, transparent, inclusive, and equitable engagement.

Depending on the goals of the project and level of engagement necessary, the community stakeholders will have clear expectations for how the engagement process will proceed, how they will be engaged, what they will have influence over, and how their input will impact outcomes.



	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with the public to make sure concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision making.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise	We will keep you informed.	We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns.	We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made.	We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible.	We will implement what you decide.



Community Engagement Plans

Clackamas County's community engagement plans will embody the vision, principles, and strategies outlined above, and will be tailored to meet the needs of each community stakeholder group. At a minimum, each engagement plan will include the following:

- The purpose and scope of engagement.
- The desired objectives the engagement process will achieve.
- Stakeholder and issues analysis, including a context analysis to understand how local, regional, state, and national issues may affect the engagement process.
- A recruitment strategy that ensures inclusive representation and diversity of views.
- Engagement phases including timelines and schedules, and the level of engagement required or needed from community stakeholders to achieve engagement objectives.
- Clearly defined engagement methods or tools to inform community members, gain input, feedback, or collaboration to achieve engagement objectives.
- A process identifying how community input will be collected and how it will be used to inform decisions.
- A communication plan to raise awareness or understanding about the planning or development phases, how feedback will be provided to the community about the engagement process, what has been heard, and how the feedback will be considered in the planning and development stages.
- A list of resources needed (e.g., financial, time, human) to deliver the defined engagement methods.
- Evaluation measures to evaluate the success of the engagement.

Community Engagement Tools

Clackamas County will consider and implement a myriad of community engagement tools that are most appropriate for varying levels of engagement to deliver a successful community engagement process and achieve the engagement objectives desired. Our biggest challenge remains reaching residents and communities with limited English proficiency—one that requires adequate resources.

While the county will continue to use traditional tools, such as print materials, advertisement, and in-person engagement, we will also expand our engagement strategies to leverage the evolution of digital tools. As digital communication continues to change how people access information and communicate with government on important issues, the county will continue to explore and implement a wide range of online tools, forums, workshops, surveys, and polling.

Not all residents have time to be active in their community. With 97% broadband coverage in Clackamas County and 94% of households with computers, online and digital engagement offers a level of accessibility not available in the past. Along with accessibility, online platforms are portable, interactive, and provide real-time information. Key benefits include:

- Providing access to a more diverse group of community stakeholders and bringing more people into the conversations that affect their community: busy people, working parents, younger people, senior citizens, shift workers and people with mobility, vision or hearing impairment.
- Providing a secure space for people to learn and test assumptions, positions, and options.
- Offering cost-effective and efficient engagement systems.
- Improving transparency and responsiveness.
- Supporting community ownership at all levels of the engagement spectrum.

A list of engagement tools is available as Appendix A at the end of the document.

Conclusion

A well-defined and structured community engagement framework is an important first step toward building deep and lasting relationships with the communities we serve. The proposed plan will help Clackamas County build upon its existing efforts while pivoting toward a more forward-looking, inclusive, and meaningful strategy. This strategy is defined through core engagement principles and a well-established engagement model developed by the International Association for Public Participation.

The framework not only guides the county's efforts in community engagement, but also provides a roadmap as we seek to build authentic and ongoing relationships with community stakeholders. Successful implementation will rest on our commitment to inclusive engagement and ability to adapt to new methods of engagement as emerging technology and tools become available. Our success will depend on the priority we place on community engagement and ensuring appropriate resources are available to help us reach our fullest potential.

Appendix A. Engagement Tools

The table below lists many traditional and emerging tools to consider when implementing a community engagement initiative.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve- Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Print materials	Brochures, newsletters, fact sheets, articles in newsletters, or rates notices.	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create awareness and interest within the community. • Can be tailored to specific groups and interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive to produce. • Hard to target or monitor effectiveness. • Can miss minority groups. • Timing can be a constraint.
Advertisements	Print, TV, radio, digital, media releases.	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast, efficient, and wide reaching. • Opportunity to position projects positively with key messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Hard to target or monitor effectiveness. • Can miss minority groups.
Websites	Provide accessible, clear, and appropriate information cost effectively. Can also be used for two-way information exchange.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide targeted information about projects cost effectively. • Can allow community members to ask questions and receive answers that are accessible to all. • Can provide links to online surveys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive • Hard to target or monitor effectiveness. • Can miss minority groups.
Email feedback	A cost-effective and easy way to obtain ideas on an issue or a range of issues.	Inform – Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quicker form of participation and may be attractive to those with little time. • Can ask specific questions and, potentially, have them answered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails received must be tracked carefully to make sure that they are acknowledged and, where this commitment has been given, responded to. • A community member may believe the email is a properly made submission, when it may not be.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Hotlines	Information provided through a 1-800 number.	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a single point of contact for enquiries and requests for information. • Allows community members to speak directly about their concerns and questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation required to generate interest.
Public meetings	Opportunity for stakeholders to voice their point of view on important issues. Require a strong moderator to ensure meeting flow properly.	Inform – Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers community opportunity to attend and have opinion heard. • Allows for most important issues to be raised and gives people for whom these issues are most relevant opportunity to discuss. • Can enable community members to share issues and to move on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to get a nuanced understanding from a single meeting. • Challenging for quieter community members. • Tendency to focus on the squeaky wheels and those who are confident enough to speak in front of a large group. • Potential for a mob mentality to form.
Telephone surveys/polls	Structured and quantitative responses on specific issues.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good way to quickly assess current awareness of, and attitude towards, particular issues. • A simple vote on a topic will give an indication of the level of local awareness and support. • Opportunity to capture views of community members who may not actively engage in a planning process or attend public displays or meetings. • Provides input from a cross-section of the community, which can be randomly selected and provide a statistically valid sample. • Higher response rate than mailed surveys, as participants are recruited and researchers continue until they have achieved their sample size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More expensive to deliver and more labor intensive than mailed surveys.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Interviews	A standard set of questions posed to individuals. Data gathered must be carefully analyzed to provide an accurate representation of public opinion.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides important qualitative information about community perceptions of planning projects, or observations about their local community, at a level of detail that can be difficult to obtain by any other method. • Good way of raising community understanding about planning concepts. • Good way of finding and recruiting other community members who may be able to help with other engagement techniques. • Opportunity for in-depth information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive and more labor intensive, depending on the number of community members being interviewed.
Small group meetings	Generate discussion and insight on aspects of a project from a known group of stakeholders. Need a clear agenda and strong facilitator to keep the meeting on track.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for planners to have a more detailed conversation about projects and process with interested community members. • Opportunity to meet with community groups that support people with disabilities, older people, younger people, and indigenous people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need to reimburse group members for travel and offer meals if meeting lasts longer than two hours. • Not a broad sample from which to draw.
Public displays/Community events	Present at a local venue to gain informal input from a broad cross-section of stakeholders.	Inform – Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows community members to discuss concerns about projects with local government planners. • Allows community members to gather information about projects and processes, and share their views. • A wider cross-section of community members is able to attend. • Opportunity to share accurate information about projects and process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for lack of clarity in purpose. • Requires intensive staff resources.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Open houses	An informal event that provides information relating to a range of topics and issues. Multiple engagement techniques can be used to encourage and capture conversation.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open invitation, so all interested community members can attend. • Selection of engagement techniques depends on the nature of the topic and the purpose of the engagement process. • Food and entertainment can be provided to encourage attendance. If this is the case, event could also be referred to as a festival or a fair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on scale and number of interested participants, events could be expensive to hold. • Robust information-capture processes need to be in place.
Workshops	Stakeholders, project team, planning and design professionals, technical experts, and community members who work in small groups to present ideas and approaches to a defined problem or opportunity.	Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad consensus of stakeholders and community representatives in a short period. • Opportunity to build an understanding of design processes with community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource intensive, but effective method for working through complex problems relatively quickly. • Lead time for planning is resource intensive.
Steering groups	A group of high-level stakeholders or experts who provide guidance on key issues. These are not usually representative of the broader community, but more a panel of experts who guide decision making.	Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose can vary greatly from members providing their own feedback or ideas about planning processes, to members acting as a conduit between the broader community and organization. • Can lead to stakeholder decision making and input over time, depending on the terms of the group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining demographic relevance can be challenging. • Not all parties may be adequately represented. • Power dynamics may emerge and stifle authentic engagement.
Community reference groups	A broad-based structured group of stakeholders and community representatives who meet regularly and operate under clear terms and objectives.	Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose can vary greatly from members providing their own feedback or ideas about planning processes, to members acting as a conduit between the broader community and organization. • Can lead to stakeholder decision making and input over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can involve a slow-paced decision-making process. • Can be good for broad consensus, but not necessarily demographically representative.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Resident panels	Large number of people who are selected to be representative of the population to deliberate on a range of issues over a set period.	Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If recruitment process is rigorous, resident panels can be effective method for securing input from a representative sample of community members over time. • Provides opportunity for community members to understand planning concepts and process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive and resource intensive to manage both recruitment and management time. • Members may confuse the panel's deliberative process with a decision-making role.
Engagement apps	Mobile platforms that engage audiences who are unlikely to attend traditional engagement events, and to reach younger and more mobile audiences.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad range of information types can be loaded into an app including interactive content. • Can gather live data. • Mobile usage is at an all-time high. • Cost-effective way to engage people where they are, essentially bringing engagement to them. • As new engagement tools emerge, they can be loaded into an app, which can function as a platform for progressive advancements and additions to the engagement tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to develop content. • Time to allow for approvals and uploading of apps to Apple and GooglePlay. • A degree of technological comfort is required to use apps. • This type of technology may not be appropriate for all comments.
Social media	Online social engagement platforms that allow for broad based comments and feedback.	Inform – Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More direct format to submit ideas and provide feedback. • High usage levels. • Good for overcoming geographic constraints. • Relatively easy to create and share content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymity and lack of control present a challenge. • Requires participants to have an account. • Monitoring can be labor intensive.
Online survey/polling tools	A quick and effective way to get a snapshot of community sentiment.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More direct format to submit ideas and provide feedback. • High usage levels. • Good for overcoming geographic constraints. • Relatively easy to create and share content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymity and lack of control present a challenge. • Requires participants to have an account. • Monitoring can be labor intensive.

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Online survey/polling tools	A quick and effective way to get a snapshot of community sentiment.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for fast data and community sentiment in relation to emergent issues. • Quantitative data. • Relatively cost effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No complexity of data. • No opportunity to interrogate data in more detail.
Hardcopy surveys/questionnaires	A standard set of questions conducted through face-to-face interviews, self-completion, over the phone, or electronically.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular method of collecting point-in-time qualitative and quantitative information from a population. • Good way to find out opinions of local people on a particular planning topic in a structured way that can be extensively analyzed. • Good way to inform people about the project. • Good way to reach many people and involve those who may not be able to engage in other ways. • Input from those who may not attend public meeting. • Provides a mechanism for extending a mailing list. • Provides a cross-section of the community, not only activists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response rate can be low. • To get statistically valid results, can be labor intensive and expensive. • Level of detail may be limited. • Less effective in obtaining responses to complex issues. • Effective analysis of data can be labor intensive and requires a high level of expertise.
Online forums	A virtual gathering space for stakeholders to connect and share ideas, thoughts, and recommendations. Forums can be open or closed. Recruitment of participants is critical as are rules of engagement. These may have a formal moderator or be self-moderated.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can build a robust community and deep relationship over time. • Allows engagement based on participants' time and availability. • Great potential for detailed qualitative data. • Can be moderated by a community manager or self-moderated. • Can be an open or closed forum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive if additional website functionality is required. • Strong moderation is necessary for success. • Can be resource intensive, requiring maintenance, review and refresh of content, and monitoring and responding to community comments.

Tool	Description	Level of Participation <i>Inform-Consult-Involve-Collaborate-Empower</i>	Benefits	Considerations
Gamefication	The use of game thinking and game mechanics in a non-game context to engage users in solving problems.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide a fun way to encourage community participation and greater community understanding of project concepts. • Helps users to explore scenarios, understand impacts of planning choices, or to understand different perspectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be appropriate for your engagement purposes. • Concept or idea may not be compelling enough for people to play it.
Conversation kits	Self-guided discussion that allows interested community members to explore and contribute to planning processes at their own pace and at a location of their choice.	Inform – Consult – Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows community members to engage in conversation about project processes and concepts in an environment they feel comfortable in. • Helps to build social networks within the community. • If background information is well designed and easy to understand, community awareness and understanding will improve. • Kits can be designed for use in school environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on community members being motivated to access and use kit, and capture and submit a record of the conversation. • Success relies on comprehensive promotion of the kit.
Community summits	An event that brings together many participants to explore and discuss an issue. These can be interactive, collaborative, and deliberative. Participants can either be selected or self-nominate.	Inform – Consult – Involve – Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach to participant selection can range from invitation-only, directly invited randomly selected community members, self-nominated, or a combination of all three of these approaches. • The selection of engagement techniques incorporated as part of the summit is dependent on the purpose of the event and the budget. • Depending on approach and topic, summits can attract considerable media interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event needs to incorporate feedback processes, so that participants can understand what has been discussed. • Based on scale and number of participants, event can be expensive to stage.