



*We steward Burlington's infrastructure and environment by delivering efficient, effective and equitable public services*

# Public Engagement Plan

## OVERVIEW

**Best practices, public safety, regulatory requirements and the needs of the community inform every decision we make.** DPW undertakes a variety of projects and performs a variety of services in Burlington. Finding the right ways to reach the community and providing opportunities for the community to reach us are essential elements of effective public engagement. This engagement strategy will be tailored to meet the needs of our city.

Burlington is a dynamic and diverse city with residents who deserve and expect well planned, well-built and properly maintained infrastructure. As Vermont's largest city, with a population of over 40,000, Burlington has a wide range of residents, business owners, students, commuters and tourists who come to rely on DPW-provided services and infrastructure. From recycling and street maintenance to the implementation of long-term capital projects, our neighbors and visitors should have meaningful opportunities to be informed, to provide input and to make recommendations to DPW's planning process.

This plan uses the Community, Economic, and Development Office's (CEDO) civic engagement framework as a guide and directly references their 'Core Values of Civic Engagement'<sup>1</sup> below, and provides a step toward helping DPW achieve its public engagement goals while continuing to serve Burlington. This plan will evolve as public engagement tools expand and as DPW and the community refine the public engagement process.

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<sup>1</sup> These are cited directly from a draft CEDO civic engagement document and are based on a version Alexandria, Virginia previously published.

## CORE VALUES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Transparency:** Act with integrity in open process; access to clear, reliable information.
- **Mutual accountability:** Honest, respectful, informed discussion; meaningful assessment to measure growth.
- **Easy participation:** Create milestones; lots of ways to participate via electronics and in person.
- **Meaningful engagement:** Open and unbiased process; deliberate and feasible options.
- **Inclusiveness and equity:** Involve people most impacted; respect culture and language differences.
- **Respect:** Approach decisions openly, regardless of differences; clearly articulate participation ground rules.
- **Evaluation:** Regularly assess the use of civic engagement; “lessons learned” are applied to future initiatives.

## GOALS

- **Communicate what we do:** To regularly and reliably provide information to the public about projects that will have an effect on daily life and to do so in a timely and predictable manner.
- **Provide opportunity for input:** To provide inclusive, equitable and meaningful opportunities for the public to provide input, to give recommendations and to offer feedback on upcoming, ongoing or completed projects and maintenance.
- **Set expectations for feedback:** To provide the appropriate acknowledgement for any engagement from the public, commit to review all comments, questions or requests and factor serious consideration of public input into our decision-making

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- **Decision-Making and the role of public input:**
  - Evaluate capital projects, maintenance work and emergent issues with regard to how, when, where and with whom the public engagement process occurs. Continue to refine and improve engagement to meet resident/stakeholder needs while balancing resource constraints.
  - Transition to a degree of standardization so that predictable engagement occurs for similar project-types.
  - Include both project-specific outreach efforts as well as overall construction season outreach to educate our stakeholders about what work and impacts to expect in Burlington. Where feasible, group projects by larger geographic area for comprehensive location-based outreach

- **Reflecting the City's Diversity in our Outreach**
  - Identify cultural and linguistic barriers to creating a meaningful two-way dialogue with all communities in the city
  - Refine and expand our engagement efforts in effectively reaching underrepresented communities in Burlington
- **Online Presence:**
  - Build out DPW social media platforms to be a trusted and reliable source of timely information.
  - The Capital Projects Portal will provide information on all public and private construction projects in the right-of-way to better inform the public and minimize disruptions, with continued refinements to ease of use and aesthetics.
  - Streamline our use of See Click Fix, meet Service Level Agreements and improve and increase the level of detail we provide to customers when closing inquiries
- **Quick Build Program**
  - Includes an expanded suite of public engagement tools to include interim projects as engagement and educational opportunities.
  - Build outreach materials and community understanding of the quick-build program, the value of interim improvements and the value of real-time public engagement.

## IMPACTS, EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT

Upon identifying a project, moving a project to a new phase or encountering a project hurdle, DPW staff (project manager, management, public information manager, etc) will consider impacts and equity before deciding on and implementing a public outreach plan. The following assessment will be conducted to decide on the appropriate level of engagement and the additional tools needing to be considered beyond the minimum standards:

1. Who is positively impacted from the project?
2. Who may be negatively impacted and for how long?
3. What are the main concerns, issues and interests of the community?
4. Will any individuals, institutions or groups be disproportionately impacted?
5. Was the project recommended in earlier planning studies which included public engagement? Is additional public input needed or required?
6. Are there any linguistic or cultural barriers to engaging with impacted residents?

## SPECTRUM OF ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is both a process and an outcome related to the public's ability to influence decision-making. The engagement process falls on a spectrum, ranging from no decision making ability (Inform) to having

power over the final decision (Empower). Where a project falls on the *Spectrum of Engagement*<sup>2</sup> indicates the highest level of public participation. For projects on the higher end of the *Spectrum of Engagement*, **the tools and strategies at lower levels may also be utilized as the project progresses through its various phases**. See Appendix for a list of specific project types, the minimum level of engagement the public can expect from DPW, the tools and our stakeholders.

For this plan, the public is considered stakeholders who should have a meaningful opportunity to shape, alter or be informed about DPW project work. At times, **early decision-making may have included regulatory or legal obligations, emergency issues, etc.**

|   | INFORM   | CONSULT  | INVOLVE   | COLLABORATE  | EMPOWER  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <i>Engagement strategies may be needed at many levels, depending on the project or its phase.</i> | Provide the public balanced and objective information.   | Obtain public feedback (usually indirectly) on analysis, concepts/ alternatives, or decisions.   | Work directly with the public to understand concerns and aspirations as they are considered for the project.  | Co-lead the project in partnership with the public on each aspect of the decision.                                   | Place the final decision in the hands of the public.   |
| Project Types   | Minor Maintenance<br><br>Adopting Standards<br><br>Sidewalk Re-construction  | Quick-Build<br><br>Major Maintenance/ Road   | Traffic Regulation Change<br><br>Street Redevelopment/ New Sidewalks  | Scoping / Feasibility Studies<br><br>Corridor Studies  | Traffic Calming<br><br>Special District Projects   |
| Role of the DPW   | Share information.<br><br>Ensure public safety, access, and utility of basic public services that do not have regulatory impacts or change the line/grade of a road. | Indirectly engage the public.<br><br>Improve public safety, implement projects that have no regulatory impact or impact on traffic distribution. | Directly engage the public.<br><br>Implement public safety and/or access improvements through regulatory changes or through full reconstruction of a roadway or intersection. | Collaborate to identify a preferred alternative.<br><br>Facilitate a conversation about transportation improvements. | Ask questions and provide information for informed decision making.<br><br>Distribute impartial information, usually after engaging the public across the earlier spectrums of |

<sup>2</sup> The Spectrum of Engagement is modified and developed from versions CEDO and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission have used. Both are developed from the *International Association for Public Participation's* 'Public Participation Spectrum.'

|                      |   |   |  |  |                                    |
|----------------------|---|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
|                      |   |   |  |  | engagement                         |
| Role of the Public   | Receive information   | Provide feedback  | Share ideas, concerns, and visions   | Co-lead Committee or Task Force with the DPW | Decision-maker                     |
| Tools and Strategies | Website<br>Calendar<br>Brochures<br>Posters<br>Flyers<br>Displays<br>Press-Releases<br>Social Media<br>Email<br>Listservs<br>Newsletters<br>Direct-Mailings<br>Door Hangers | Surveys<br>Reports<br>Legal ads<br>Visualization-Techniques | Advisory-Committees<br>Focus Groups<br>Project Meetings<br>Open Houses<br>Public Forum | Coalitions and Partnerships                  | Ballots (e.g. TIF)<br>Mailed polls |

## MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

- Responsiveness to questions/issues raised through social media or See-Click Fix (SCF)
- Feedback from the City Council and DPW’s Commission after one year of the Plan’s implementation
- Annual internal review on reaching underrepresented communities
- Increase in visitors to the website and Capital Projects Portal
- Increase in social media followers and impressions
- Decrease in amount of new and total active DPW Customer Service inquiries
- Positive tone in media coverage with regard to the quality of the work DPW does and any analysis of its public engagement efforts

## APPENDIX:

This plan highlights the *minimum* engagement strategies that will be considered, but unique circumstances may require different approaches. DPW has and will continue to evaluate the level of impacts of all projects to determine the proper engagement strategy by asking the six impact, equity and engagement questions (referenced above):

### *INFORM Project Types*

| <u>Project Type</u>  | <u>Engagement Tool</u>                           | <u>When</u>                    | <u>Example</u>                  |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Minor Maintenance/Water Maintenance:</b> <i>if work impacts water service or if there will be a temporary loss of parking</i> | Flyers/door hangers to residents                 | 24 hours prior to maintenance  | Water service work              |
|  | Social Media                                     | 24 hours prior to maintenance  |                                 |
| <b>Minor Maintenance</b>   | Social Media                                     | 24 hours prior to maintenance  | Crack sealing, sidewalk cutting |
| <b>Adopting Standards</b>  | Website  | Once final                     | Driveway standards              |
| <b>Sidewalk Reconstruction</b>   | Mailings, letters, visits or flyers to residents | One week prior                 |                                 |
|  | Citywide Front Porch Forum & Social Media post   | After sidewalk RFP is approved |                                 |

### *CONSULT Project Types*

| <u>Project Type</u> | <u>Engagement Tool</u>                   | <u>When</u>                    | <u>Example</u>                   |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Quick Build</b>  | Social Media educational post            | During Installation            | Bollard protected curb extension |
|                     | Flyers and/or posters posted on adjacent | 72 hours prior to installation |                                  |

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|                               |   |                                |   |
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|                               | stretch of project  |                                |   |
|                               | Front Porch Forum:<br>Impacted neighborhood                                 | 72 hours prior to installation |   |
|                               | Project description on Quick Build website                                  | One week prior to installation |   |
|                               | Area -Councilor notification;<br>Commission Notification (Chair & Co-Chair) | One week prior to installation |   |
| <b>Major Maintenance/Road</b> | Mailings to owners of adjacent parcels                                      | One week prior to construction | Water relining/replacing, Repaving road<br><i>(additional regulatory requirements apply to early written notification to coordinate utility work)</i> |
|                               | Mailings, flyers or door hangers for businesses and residents               | One week prior to construction |   |
|                               | Front Porch Forum:<br>Impacted neighborhood                                 | One week prior to construction |   |
|                               | Capital Projects Portal   | One week prior to construction |   |
|                               | Area -Councilor notification;<br>Commission Notification (Chair & Co-Chair) | One week prior to construction |   |
|                               | Social Media  | One week prior to construction |   |

## INVOLVE Project Types

| <u>Project Type</u>               | <u>Engagement Tool</u>                        | <u>When</u>                             | <u>Example</u>                      |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Traffic Regulation Change:</b> | Mailings, flyers or door hangers to residents | Ten days prior to community meeting, or | Handicap parking space, Residential |

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|--|--|--|----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Additional regulatory requirements may apply</i></li> <li>• <i>This project-type encompasses an extremely wide range of possible requests and it is essential to consider breadth of impacts by answering the 6 impact assessment questions</i></li> </ul> | <p>who live adjacent to and within estimated area of effect</p>  | <p>as soon as practical prior to meeting</p>   | <p>Parking</p>       |
|  | <p>Mailings to owners of properties within estimated area of impact, and Area-Councilor notification, where a regulation change leads to a loss of greater than 3 parking spaces</p> | <p>Ten days prior to community meeting, or as soon as practical prior to meeting</p> |                      |
|  | <p>Notify and share materials with requestor and interested parties who have shared email</p>  | <p>Ten days prior to community meeting, or as soon as practical prior to meeting</p> |                      |
| <p><b>Street Redevelopment/New Sidewalks</b></p>   | <p>Project Meetings</p>  | <p>Ten days prior to meeting</p>   | <p>Great Streets</p> |
|  | <p>Mailings to owners of adjacent parcels</p>  | <p>Ten days prior to meeting/One week prior to construction</p>                      |                      |
|  | <p>Mailings, flyers or door hangers for residents and businesses</p>   | <p>Ten days prior to meeting/One week prior to construction</p>                      |                      |
|  | <p>Area-Councilor Notification;<br/>Commissioner Notification (Chair, Vice Chair)</p>  | <p>Ten days prior to public meeting/One week prior to construction</p>               |                      |
|  | <p>Social Media</p>  | <p>Ten days prior to public meeting/One week prior to construction</p>               |                      |
|  | <p>Front Porch Forum: Impacted neighborhood</p>  | <p>One week prior to construction</p>  |                      |
|  | <p>Capital Projects Portal</p>   | <p>One week prior to construction</p>  |                      |

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|  | Project Website | Prior to first public meeting |  |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------|--|

## *COLLABORATE Project Types*

| <u>Project Type</u>   | <u>Engagement Tool</u>  | <u>When</u>   | <u>Example</u> |
|---|---|---|----------------|
| <b>Scoping Studies, Feasibility Studies, Corridor Studies</b> | Project Website   | One month prior to first public meeting                             | Colchester Ave |
|   | Project Advisory Committee  | Formed at consultant kick-off                                       |                |
|   | Public Notification of Meetings   | Two weeks prior to meeting  |                |
|   | Front Porch Forum   | Two weeks prior to public meetings                                  |                |
|   | Social Media  | Two weeks prior to public meeting                                   |                |
|   | Area Councilor Notification;<br>Commissioner Notification (Chair, Vice Chair) | If not included on the Committee: one week prior to public meetings |                |

## *EMPOWER Project Types*

| <u>Project Type</u>                             | <u>Engagement Tool</u>   | <u>When</u>                 |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Traffic calming (neighborhood initiated)</b> | Mail negative poll to neighborhood residents, owners, and businesses on the traffic calmed street (a negative poll asks people to respond if they do | Poll stays open for 3 weeks |

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|                                 |   |   |
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|                                 | not want the project to advance as proposed).                                   |   |
|                                 | Area Councilor Notification<br>Commissioner Notification<br>(Chair, Vice Chair) | As poll is mailed; one week prior to implementation |
| <b>Special District Project</b> | Ballot Item   | TIF District  |

## STAKEHOLDERS

- Residents: Owners, Tenants, Landlords
- Businesses: Owners, Business Associations
- Adjacent Communities
- Neighborhood Planning Assemblies
- Institutions (e.g., UVMMC)
- Council Members
- Public Works Commission
- Media
- City Departments
- Advocates

## TOOLS

- **Tools of Engagement**
  - Communications with property owners, residents and businesses
    - To include mailings, flyers and face to face communication
  - Public Meetings/Pop-Up Meetings
  - Interpretation and Translation Services
  - Social Media
  - Demonstration Projects/Quick-Build Projects
  - DPW Customer Service
    - Including after Hours: 802-863-9094 (DPW Customer Svc main); 864-7428 (Street or Sewer); 863-4501 (Water)
  - See-Click Fix
  - Online input tools
- **Tools to Provide Information**
  - Traffic-Alerts
  - Capital Projects Portal
  - Website: DPW and City's homepage

- Informational Signs and Brochures
- Email notices and Newsletters (FPF, CEDO's Buzz)
- Information/Press Releases
- Online calendars (DPW's or Government Meeting calendars)
- BTV Stat, Annual Reports
- Other Stakeholder Distribution (CEDO Business Outreach, Advocate listservs, BBA)

## GUIDANCE FOR WRITTEN MATERIALS

- **Project Manager, Project Staff and Public Information Manager will collaborate on content and distribution**
- **Contact Information**
  - Include a link to the project website/DPW website
  - Project manager and/or DPW customer service contact information
- **Project Details to include**
  - *Who*: DPW, contractor or both
  - *What*: Specific project details
  - *When*: Include anticipated start date and anticipated length
  - *Where*: Include geographic parameters of project
  - *Impacts*: Identify anticipated parking, obstruction, noise or other impacts

###