

## **Section 7.0      Public Participation Plan and Toolkit**

### ***Table of Contents***

<b>Overview</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Goal 1: To engage the public in active participation in planning-related initiatives</b>	<b>3</b>
Objective 1.1: Provide effective information to the public in a proactive, timely, clear, concise, visually appealing, jargon- and acronym-free manner.	3
Objective 1.2: Involve a wide cross-section of the community through outreach efforts.	4
Objective 1.3: Involve citizens in all phases of the planning and/or plan update process so that they have a chance to give meaningful and informed input.	5
Objective 1.4: Seek opportunities to join decision-makers when they formally engage the public in two-way communication.	6
Objective 1.5: Involve neighborhoods in planning-related initiatives.	7
<b>Goal 2: To empower the public (individuals, institutions, and organizations) to form partnerships with government and take the lead in solving problems.</b>	<b>7</b>
Objective 2.1: Continue to foster leadership in the community by actively promoting Leadership Loveland activities and programs.	7
Objective 2.2: Use public participation to encourage volunteerism and community partnerships for developing solutions to challenges in the community.	7
Objective 2.3: Strive to increase the diversity of Lovelanders engaged in leadership in order to properly represent the community.	8
<b>Goal 3: To inform and educate the community on relevant issues and government activities affecting the community</b>	<b>8</b>
Objective 3.1: Encourage city departments to prepare and distribute annual reports that document development and/or planning-related activities.	8
Objective 3.2: Engage in on-going education activities so that City employees serve as information ambassadors to the community.	8
<b>Goal 4: To maximize the use of those tools that allow for two-way communication between the public and City government.</b>	<b>9</b>
Objective 4.1: Expand and maintain city contact lists.	9
Objective 4.2: Use community surveys for citizen input and to monitor community indicators.	10
Objective 4.3: Improve the quality and quantity of the current level of information services provided on Channel 16.	10
Objective 4.4: Evaluate all information mediums in terms of potential audience and cost per thousand in that audience to assist with choices on frequency of medium use and resource allocation.	10
Objective 4.5: Develop a matrix of population demographics to increase our understanding of the community audience and types of news that might be important to those audiences.	10
Concluding Remarks	11
<b>Public Participation Checklist</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Public Participation Toolkit (3/14/05)</b>	<b>13</b>

## Overview

### Overview

The City of Loveland has come to increasingly recognize the importance of involving the public in the planning and development-related decision-making process. In 2003, the City created a Communications Plan to “provide the community and employees with excellent information related to issues and activities of City government in a manner that facilitates participation in City Government.”<sup>1</sup> This Public Participation Plan, which is intended to be incorporated as an adopted element of the Comprehensive Master Plan, supplements the Communications Plan by providing more detail on involving the public in planning-related initiatives.

At least once every ten years, the City prepares a new Comprehensive Master Plan (“the Plan”). Every five years, the Plan is re-evaluated (See Section 7.0 Process and Procedures for Amending the 1994 Comprehensive Master Plan) to ensure that it remains current. Additionally various City departments periodically update Plan elements. These Plan elements may be functional plan elements (such as Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Water and Power, Open Lands plans) or plans specific to a certain geographic area (such as the I-25 Corridor Plan).

Each time a Plan element is formulated or updated, the responsible department, and the respective advisory board/commission, should strive to implement as many of the strategies in this Public Participation Element and the accompanying Public Participation Toolkit (Appendix A) as time and budget will allow. The Public Participation Plan and Toolkit are intended to provide a recommended template for public participation and a menu of tools that can be used at every step of the planning process.

Surveys show that citizens want to be listened to by their elected and appointed officials; that citizens want to share the power of governance; and that citizens want a sense of belonging to a community. Consequently, in community planning, the emphasis has changed from institution-centered governance to citizen-centered governance.

**To that end, the purpose of this Plan is to engage citizens in meaningful public participation on planning-related issues by encouraging community and stakeholder collaboration in the decision-making process. More specifically, the intent of this element is to:**

- Support more citizen-driven initiatives
- Look to citizens as leaders who share in the decision-making process
- Empower citizens to take the lead in solving problems
- Invite citizens to become partners with local government

With these tenets in mind, **public participation** is defined as:

*Those processes where citizens and other stakeholders are encouraged to take a leadership role, along with their local government administrators and elected officials, in making decisions and developing policies that directly affect daily life in their communities.*

---

<sup>1</sup> City of Loveland Communications Plan

The term “public” includes individuals, community organizations, governmental entities, and professionals in relevant field(s). Public participation also assumes that all groups or individuals who would want to participate are welcome to be involved.

Active public participation can foster a sense of community when people make decisions together; identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships; and commit themselves for the long term to their own, one another's, and the group's well-being.

### **The Value of Public Participation**

Involving interested parties at various stages in the planning process generally results in more effective planning overall. Taking time at the beginning to communicate with potentially affected interests, carefully explaining a proposal and gathering input early-on in the process can enhance the plan and potentially reduce the time and effort needed for implementation.

Public involvement throughout the planning process is valuable because:

- Empowered citizens tend to be more active and participate more fully in governance.
- Empowered citizens can more fully understand the complexities of the issues, and appreciate the patience and perseverance that is required to work through public issues.
- Problem solving is enhanced when people work together as a team, not solo.
- When citizens are included in the problem-solving and decision-making processes, they share in the ownership (“buy in”) of the solutions to their community's problems.
- When you involve everyone who has a stake in a community issue in win-win problem-solving processes, the likelihood of conflict is reduced.
- Policy makers and staff may gain new information.
- Participants can identify and build partnerships with City government to help achieve plan goals.
- Participant comments help identify areas where people may have concerns or misunderstandings. This can be used to better inform others who are not participating.
- Government can build an ongoing relationship with the public based on mutual trust.

### **The Public Participation Plan Framework**

The framework used for this Public Participation Plan is the same as that adopted for the General Plan element of the Comprehensive Master Plan. The Comprehensive Master Plan utilizes a framework hierarchy of guiding principles, goals and objectives. *Goals* are defined as clear, distinct thoughts aligned with a *guiding principle* (in this case, the *purpose* of this Public Participation Plan). *Objectives* describe specific actions that are necessary to implement or achieve a goal. *Strategies* are more specific action items that serve to implement or achieve a portion of an objective.

This plan is meant to be a recommended template for enhancing public participation each time plan elements are updated, when new plan elements are formulated, or when implementation tools (such as codes and other regulations) are added or revised. This plan is also intended to provide objectives and a menu of strategies and tools for achieving successful public participation.

Conversely, the plan is *not* meant to provide a one-size-fits-all public participation method for all departments and other respective advisory boards and commissions. Departments and advisory boards and commissions should use those participation tools contained in the toolkit that are most applicable to their purpose and audience.

Public participation, as it relates to planning-related initiatives, should adhere to the following goals:

- To engage the public in active participation in planning-related initiatives.
- To empower the public (individuals, institutions, organizations) to form partnerships with government and take the lead in solving problems.
- To inform and educate the community on relevant issues and government activities affecting the community.
- To maximize the use of those tools which allow for two-way communication between the public and government entities.

***The following is the detailed public participation framework, with commentary in italics.***

**Goal 1: To engage the public in active participation in planning-related initiatives**

**Objective 1.1: Provide effective information to the public in a proactive, timely, clear, concise, visually appealing, jargon- and acronym-free manner.**

**Strategy 1.1.1:** Use a variety of means to disseminate information about upcoming public involvement activities.

*Public participation activities can be announced by a variety of means. The Public Participation Toolkit (Appendix A) lists various means of disseminating information. The City's primary means of reaching the public are the City Updates, a monthly newsletter included in utility bills; Dateline: Loveland, a monthly news-style article in the Loveland Reporter-Herald; and Channel 16 (including the monthly Loveland's Talking; Two-Minute Max videos; and occasional Mayor or Council call-in shows.) You can also create a "what's new" link from the City's main webpage directly to new information on your department's page.*

*You may also consider mailing lists of community organizations (maintained by the City or your department); speaking at community organization meetings; geographically targeted mailings; posting fliers; and other means of reaching the public. The Toolkit lists effective locations for publications and announcements.*

*In writing pieces for the media or city publications, keep in mind that citizens will be more interested in government activities that directly affect them. This is particularly important when plans are being updated. Rather than focusing on the plan update process, focus on how the plan will affect the future provisions of services, be it the parks and recreation facilities citizens use; the roads, trails and public transit they get around on; the shape of new development or the protection of natural resources near them; the types of cultural and human services available, etc.*

**Strategy 1.1.2:** Create and maintain an appropriate contact list for mail/e-mail use.

*Contact lists are maintained by various groups such as the Chamber of Commerce. Contact lists can be made more inclusive by considering social and/or service clubs; non-profit community and faith-based organizations; professional organizations; homeowners' associations; public and private educational providers; and past participants in public involvement activities.*

**Strategy 1.1.3:** Coordinate outreach activities with the Public Information Officer, and solicit advice regarding strategies implementation and delivery.

*The planning and delivery of announcements and other public dissemination tools should be coordinated with the Public Information Officer (PIO) sufficiently in advance of publication deadlines. All tools require some lead time; if you would like to be the "lead story" in either Dateline: Loveland or the City Update, you should plan months ahead.*

*As a supplement to the Toolkit, the PIO has developed a City of Loveland Public Information Tools Analysis and Matrix spreadsheet that is invaluable in identifying a tool's best use, target audience, distribution frequency, word/time limitations, preparation deadlines, advantages/ disadvantages, and potential costs as well as staff time considerations.*

**Strategy 1.1.4:** Schedule meetings at convenient times and places that are varied to maximize participation.

*Consider your audience's needs in scheduling meetings. Are they likely to come to a central location, or should activities be located in their neighborhood? Are they better able to attend in the evening, on weekends, or during work hours? Avoid scheduling meetings too close to holidays or during spring or fall breaks at schools. You may consider holding an activity more than once, varying times and/or locations. Open houses offer flexibility and can be scheduled in the late afternoon so that people may attend either during work hours or after work.*

**Objective 1.2: Involve a wide cross-section of the community through outreach efforts.**

**Strategy 1.2.1:** Make a proactive effort to involve underserved groups.

*There are numerous populations that are less likely to get involved in public participation activities unless a special effort is made to reach out to them. A proactive effort is needed to ensure public involvement is representative of Loveland's diverse population. Consider the locations of and language used in publications/ announcements, and which media channels or outlets might best reach these audiences. Tools such as focus groups, key informant interviews, and agency contacts may be used to include underserved groups.*

*Special outreach efforts should be directed to reach populations such as:<sup>2</sup>*

- *Hispanic community members;*
- *non-white community members;*

---

<sup>2</sup> This list was based in part on the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s list of underserved communities, as well as comments received for the Comprehensive Master Plan Update process in 2004-2005.

- *low-income community members (defined by HUD as those earning 50% or less of the median income);*
- *physically challenged community members;*
- *people who may be unable to access or operate a private automobile;*
- *people who do not speak English;*
- *youth (generally those under 21);*
- *out-commuters (those who live in Loveland but work elsewhere);*
- *geographically diverse populations (from all neighborhoods in Loveland).*

*By making a reasonable extra effort to engage these populations, policy makers ensure that all residents are given opportunity to express their views which should result in due consideration in the decision-making process. Also, development of a matrix of specific population segments, cross referenced to specific outreach methods, is recommended in the City's communications plan.*

**Strategy 1.2.2:** Make a concerted effort to involve affected parties.

*Any party who will be disproportionately affected, positively or negatively, by a given action deserves special consideration to encourage their involvement. Potentially affected parties may include residents and/or landowners of a certain area; or users of a certain service. Generally, potentially affected parties should be contacted directly and invited to participate. Targeted mailings; key informant interviews, agency contacts, focus groups, and neighborhood meetings are good ways to reach potentially affected parties.*

**Strategy 1.2.3:** Make a special effort to involve youth and schools.

*If a plan, plan update, or implementation tool is likely to affect youth, an extra effort should be made early-on in the process to include youth in public participation activities. The City's Youth Advisory Commission represents high-school age youth and meets monthly. The Thompson Valley School District, Ames Community College, private schools, and home-schooled students should be involved in outreach activities of interest to youth. Youth visioning workshops, GIS activities, and writing contests have been used to involve youth in planning in Loveland.*

**Strategy 1.2.4:** Ensure all meetings are ADA accessible.

*Meeting facilities should be accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities as applicable. In general, persons with disabilities should be provided with easy and unobstructed access to sidewalks, crosswalks, parking lots, streets, parks, restrooms, and other public and private facilities. Assistive technology is available in the Library conference room(s), allowing for wider participation.*

**Objective 1.3:** Involve citizens in all phases of the planning and/or plan update process so that they have a chance to give meaningful and informed input.

**Strategy 1.3.1:** Do not simply ask the public to respond to staff proposals, rather involve the public from the beginning in problem definition, goal-setting, and visioning.

*Some tools that can be used to accomplish this objective include audits, community visioning workshops, and charrettes.*

**Strategy 1.3.2:** Incorporate education into the participation process so that participants can provide informed input.

*Kick-off meetings; presentations; newsletters; walking tours; audits; and charrettes are some tools that can be used to educate participants. A short presentation providing data on relevant issues and trends; past planning processes; and the workings of local government can improve the quality of discussion and public input. Ideally, presentations should include visuals (e.g., graphs and charts).*

**Strategy 1.3.3:** Identify key decision points in the planning process and involve the public accordingly.

*Identify well ahead of time when key decisions will be made (i.e. goal setting; identification and selection of alternatives; etc) and build the public participation process, including distribution of drafts (below), around these decision points.*

**Strategy 1.3.4:** Release and distribute drafts and provide sufficient outreach activities and time to gather public comment.

*Release drafts early in the process, before key decision points, and seek and consider feedback. Releasing a draft is a newsworthy event and should be accompanied by a press preview meeting or a press release. An open house is a good forum to present a summary of your draft, while a focus group is a good way to get more in-depth feedback. Allow citizens sufficient time and means to comment at outreach activities, on-line or in writing.*

**Strategy 1.3.5:** Use as many varied participation activities as possible that are suited to your planning process.

*Review the tool kit for varied public participation tools. Some of these activities work best if facilitated, either by a professional facilitator or by advisory commission/committee members, who have been properly trained.*

**Strategy 1.3.6:** Evaluate the effectiveness of outreach activities and make needed adjustments throughout the process.

*Outreach activities should be evaluated for effectiveness and satisfaction and to seek constructive criticism. A survey-type evaluation is an ideal tool. Staff may evaluate quantitative factors such as turnout and response rate, and qualitative factors such as quality of discussion.*

**Objective 1.4: Seek opportunities to join decision-makers when they formally engage the public in two-way communication.**

**Strategy 1.4.1:** Decision-makers and staff should join forces in outreach activities such as community visioning workshops, walking tours, etc, in order to maximize communication.

*Citizens and decision-makers appreciate opportunities for two-way communication. Public officials should sponsor outreach activities such as ward meetings and breakfasts periodically to get the “pulse” of the community.*

**Objective 1.5: Involve neighborhoods in planning-related initiatives.**

**Strategy 1.5.1:** Identify neighborhoods affected by relevant planning activities and hold neighborhood meetings.

*As Loveland grows, it becomes necessary to hold neighborhood meetings in different geographic areas of the city and its environs. In some cases, residents of a neighborhood may be considered potentially affected parties because of a disproportionate affect on their neighborhood. School auditoriums and church community rooms close to or within neighborhoods are excellent locations to hold neighborhood meetings. Many formats may be used for neighborhood meetings.*

**Goal 2: To empower the public (individuals, institutions, and organizations) to form partnerships with government and take the lead in solving problems.**

**Objective 2.1: Continue to foster leadership in the community by actively promoting Leadership Loveland activities and programs.**

*Leadership Loveland is a program designed to develop emerging leaders, in order to supplement and encourage high quality local leadership. Through the involvement of business, civic and community leaders, the Loveland program will address these specific goals:*

- *Identify, motivate and develop community leaders*
- *Assist future leaders in identifying issues and problems facing the community and to develop possible solutions to the problems*
- *Provide program participants the opportunity to meet current leaders and to challenge both classes to greater community involvement.<sup>3</sup>*

**Objective 2.2: Use public participation to encourage volunteerism and community partnerships for developing solutions to challenges in the community.**

**Strategy 2.2.1:** Identify ways for the respective department to make use of the City of Loveland's Volunteer Program.

*The volunteer program provides central coordination of volunteer opportunities for every department in the municipality. The Volunteer Program aims to effectively combine the efforts of staff and volunteers to enrich and enhance the delivery of the highest quality services to Loveland's citizens. See <http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/volunteer/vols.htm>.*

**Strategy 2.2.2:** Use public participation activities as a venue for building and deepening partnerships among individuals, organizations and/or government.

*One function of public participation is to facilitate the public's leadership role in addressing problems and working towards desired outcomes. Some goals and objectives expressed during public participation activities may fall outside the realm of the local government's responsibility and/or require more resources than the City has available. This doesn't necessarily mean that these goals should be tabled. Individuals,*

---

<sup>3</sup> Leadership Loveland Mission and Objectives



*institutions and organizations have a wealth of expertise and resources to bring to partnerships; government may serve as an active player or simply a facilitator.*

**Objective 2.3: Strive to increase the diversity of Lovelanders engaged in leadership in order to properly represent the community.**

*Both the Agenda for the 90s and the 2004-5 Comprehensive Master Plan Update process have identified the need to increase the diversity of Lovelanders engaged in public participation, boards and commissions, and other community leadership positions, in order to ensure the community is represented. The Human Services Commission Standing Committee is attempting to address this objective.*

**Goal 3: To inform and educate the community on relevant issues and government activities affecting the community**

**Objective 3.1: Encourage city departments to prepare and distribute annual reports that document development and/or planning-related activities.**

*Several city departments have undertaken the preparation of annual reports to monitor performance and inform the interested public on planning-related activities and accomplishments.*

**Objective 3.2: Engage in on-going education activities so that City employees serve as information ambassadors to the community.<sup>4</sup>**

**Strategy 3.2.1:** Schedule community forums and other educational outreach activities.

*Community forums may be scheduled in city buildings, and present speakers on one or two topics of current interest to the community. City staff may also make presentations to professional and civic organizations; schools; and other groups.*

**Strategy 3.2.2:** Make department personnel available to speak before various community groups.

*Staff should be willing to give presentations to various civic and professional groups. City staff should volunteer to participate in an organized speakers' bureau should one be established.*

**Strategy 3.2.3:** Use the media regularly to convey information to the public.

*The Public Participation Toolkit identifies media channels such as newspaper (press releases; press preview meetings; Dateline: Loveland); and public television and radio). The Public Information Officer can provide more information as well as valuable tips on dealing with the media in many situations. Recent city publications are available on the City's News Page at <http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/news/newsmain.htm>.*

**Strategy 3.2.4:** Use innovative ways of educating the public.

---

<sup>4</sup> See City of Loveland Communications Plan

*Aside from indoor meetings, staff should consider hosting educational activities such as river and neighborhood cleanups; walking, bus or bicycle tours; site visits; etc. Participating in these activities may present opportunities to forge partnerships with community groups.*

**Strategy 3.2.5:** Use nationally-recognized weeks/days, such as World Town Planning Day and GIS Day/National Geography Week, as a means to educate and inform the public of associated planning-related initiatives.

*Identify annual days and weeks related to your department's mission and plan a variety of educational activities around them. Recent Council proclamations that may be relevant to city departments include: Arbor Day; Archaeology and Historic Preservation Month; Barrier Awareness Day; Cinco de Mayo Celebration; Children's Day; Children's Book Week; Constitution Week; Disability Awareness Week; Foster Care Month; Geographic Information Systems Day; Mental Health Month; Motorcycle Safety and Awareness Week; National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month; National Arts and Humanities Month; National Engineers Week; National Family Week; National Hunger Awareness Month; National Mentoring Month; National Patriotist Week; National Public Works Week; Public Power Week; Records and Information Management Month; Public Safety Week; School to Careers Month; Shop Loveland; and World Town Planning Day.*

**Strategy 3.2.6:** Present information from a non-technical, jargon-free point of view, using visual aids whenever possible. (See Objective 1.1)

*It is important that information is both engaging and understandable to lay people.*

**Strategy 3.2.7:** Consider the use of video and interactive presentations.

*Information in video format can be distributed as needed. Channel 16 and Channel 14 present a venue for presenting videos, as well as technical capacity to create video programs. Channel 16 provides regular forums for outreach in the form of programs such as "Loveland's Talking." Contact the Public Information Officer for more information. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be used to create interactive resources for the public.*

**Strategy 3.2.8:** Prepare or promote educational programs of interest to advisory board/commission members.

*Educational programs may be of interest to advisory commission members as well as the general public. Individual departments may offer educational and training programs (such as Planning Commissioner trainings). Various organizations and agencies, including Colorado's Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), also offer workshops and conferences.*

**Goal 4: To maximize the use of those tools that allow for two-way communication between the public and City government.**

**Objective 4.1: Expand and maintain city contact lists.**

*Keeping contact lists current, and expanding them when appropriate, is crucial to public meeting success. Contact lists, in compatible formats, should incorporate new and existing*

lists of social and service clubs; community, non-profit and faith-based organizations; professional organizations; public and private schools; homeowners' associations; participants in City activities; etc. These lists should be available to departments engaged in public participation activities. Gaps in current lists (i.e. homeowners' association contacts) should be addressed.

The City should continue to develop and use a VIC (Very Interested Citizens) list and a subscription service that allows citizens to subscribe for e-mail updates on city activities.

**Objective 4.2: Use community surveys for citizen input and to monitor community indicators.**

The City Council has asked staff to conduct a quality of life survey annually. Every five years, a professional survey will be conducted by a consultant. This survey can be used as a guide for surveys conducted using in-house resources (to determine the sample size needed for a valid survey, for example). The MIS department can generate a random sample for mailing. See <http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/survey04.htm>.

**Objective 4.3: Improve the quality and quantity of the current level of information services provided on Channel 16.<sup>5</sup>**

Improvements could include sound, presentation (visual appeal) and operations performance (camera operation, etc.)

**Objective 4.4: Evaluate all information mediums in terms of potential audience and cost per thousand in that audience to assist with choices on frequency of medium use and resource allocation.<sup>6</sup>**

The Public Participation Toolkit provides more details on using the dissemination tools and public participation activities included in the above strategies. For additional information specific to the City's Public Information Program, such as Channel 16, City Updates, and Dateline: Loveland, consult the City of Loveland Public Information Tools Matrix and Tools Analysis which can be obtained through the City's Public Information Officer (PIO). The Tools Matrix provides a list of tools categorized by type/media. The Tools Analysis provides detailed information on the best use, target audience, distribution frequency, word/time limit, deadline, advantages, disadvantages, and costs (money/time) of the various tools.

The City's Media Page is located under the Public Works page and provides an overview of some media tools the city produces. See <http://www.ci.loveland.co.us/news/newsmain.htm>.

**Objective 4.5: Develop a matrix of population demographics to increase our understanding of the community audience and types of news that might be important to those audiences.<sup>7</sup>**

Understanding Loveland's population, and how to best reach them, allows departments to reach a broad cross-section of the community, including underserved groups.

---

<sup>5</sup> City of Loveland Communications Plan

<sup>6</sup> City of Loveland Communications Plan

<sup>7</sup> City of Loveland Communications Plan

### **Concluding Remarks**

These strategies should help departments to carry out broad-based, effective public participation processes that help achieve the purpose and goals of this plan by empowering citizens to become partners with government in maintaining and building a better community.

### **End Notes**

Parts of this plan have been adapted from the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s Citizen Involvement Plan.

## Public Participation Checklist

This checklist has been developed to assist those carrying out public participation activities regarding plan updates and major projects. While each item may not be relevant to all participation activities, this list offers a comprehensive framework for organizing public participation.

- ☐ Publicize all outreach activities well using as many tools as possible
- ☐ Establish a broad-based mailing list if invitations are mailed
- ☐ Identify affected parties and formally invite them or otherwise ensure their participation
- ☐ Make a reasonable effort to include underserved populations
- ☐ Hold meetings and activities at times and locations that are convenient for a broad range of the interested public
- ☐ Involve the public from the beginning in goal setting and visioning
- ☐ Educate participants so that they can better participate
- ☐ Identify key “decision points” in your process and seek input prior to each point
- ☐ Float a draft – for example, of alternatives – to the community and solicit public input on the draft
- ☐ Use appropriate public participation activities – such as community visioning workshops, surveys, charrettes, audits, walking tours, focus groups, neighborhood meetings, key informant interviews, and open houses
- ☐ Involve the media in covering the planning and public participation process
- ☐ Use outreach media available through the City’s Public Information Office
- ☐ Evaluate the success of and satisfaction with public involvement activities and make changes if needed
- ☐ Compile and summarize public input
- ☐ Use public input to improve the plan or project
- ☐ Establish trust and buy-in for your plan or project
- ☐ Use the participation process to identify and mobilize potential community partners who can help to implement your plan or project

## Public Participation Toolkit (3/14/05)

Activity	Description	Comments
Agency Contact	See organization contact	
Annual Report	A report prepared by a department or agency that documents development and/or planning-related activities undertaken and accomplished.	Several city departments have undertaken the preparation of annual reports to monitor performance and inform the interested public on planning-related activities and accomplishments.
Audit	An audit is an assessment of conditions in the community or part of the community.	It may be a place audit, or an audit regarding a particular theme such as pedestrian mobility or urban renewal opportunities. Audits may be “walking audits” where a group evaluates the good and bad features of a particular area.
Block Party	An informal gathering so that neighborhood residents can get to know one another.	May be sponsored by a neighborhood group. A block party may not have a specific purpose other than to give residents a chance to network.
Brochure	Some City departments regularly distribute brochures including the Recreation Brochure and Cultural Events Brochure; other brochures may be produced on certain topics.	Contact the appropriate department or the Public Information Officer.
Cable TV Public Service Announcement	These can be used to promote events and programs or draw attention to an issue.	These may be up to 30 seconds and must be accepted by Comcast. Contact the Public Information Officer.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Channel 14</b>	The Thompson School District operates Channel 14, a station that airs educational programming and student-produced broadcasts. This could be used to reach a larger spectrum of youth as well as families.	Whatever is presented to the kids needs to be short and to the point with a source of additional information such as a web site. The Loveland Youth Advisory Commission meets monthly and can assist in organizing or facilitating presentations.
<b>Channel 16</b>	Channel 16 is run by the Loveland Public Library and shows local interest programs. See the City of Loveland Public Information Tools Analysis for the various shows aired on Channel 16. <i>Loveland's Talking</i> is a monthly interview program featuring information on City activities; other options include the <i>Mayor's Show</i> , <i>Council/Staff Call-In Shows</i> , and <i>Two Minutes Max</i> videos.	Programs created may be shown on Channel 16 as well as at meetings or distributed to various organizations. Programs produced for Channel 16 reach a small audience and the audio-visual quality may be unpolished. Contact the Public Information Office for more information.
<b>Charrette</b>	An intensive brainstorming session using visual methods to define issues and alternatives.	Charrettes may be one-time workshops or can be held over several days involving multiple participants. A key aspect is that participants use not only their own knowledge, but share and use data usually presented in the form of (a) map(s). Charrettes are useful for any plan having an urban design, land use, or spatial component. A charrette can be at the neighborhood or city scale; or can examine a single site such as a redevelopment project, transportation project, shopping center, or park.
<b>City Updates</b>	<i>City Updates</i> is a monthly newsletter about city of Loveland government programs, actions and issues.	Prepared by the Public Information Office and mailed to 29,000 local residents and businesses, it arrives in the envelope with the water and electric bill. You may need to submit your piece up to two months in advance to the Public Information Officer.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>City Manager/Staff Call-in Show</b>	Provides an avenue for opinions, suggestions, and explanations.	Call-in shows make it easy for the public to participate and have instant access to staff. Contact the Public Information Officer at least 4 weeks in advance.
<b>City Web Site</b>	In addition to departmental pages, the City maintains a media page (under Public Works).	The Web Site may be used for web surveys as well as announcing events and presenting information. Some people do not have access to the internet.
<b>Community Forum</b>	A public meeting that is designed to help attendees better understand a subject. It is not designed for decision making. A forum may be informational, or may strive to present differing points of view on a topic.	The City has numerous locations that can host a forum. It is helpful if some of the “experts” were local and trusted by the community. If different points of view are to be presented, a neutral moderator is needed.
<b>Community Visioning Workshop</b>	Visioning is a chance for community members to work together to create a shared vision of the future of their community.	During the Comprehensive Master Plan Update carried out in 2004-5, the City used a model developed by Ames, called the Oregon Model, that includes 4 segments: Where are we now (current conditions); Where are we going (trends); Where do we want to be (goals); and How do we get there (action items)? Community Visioning Workshops allowed four groups of citizens, including high school youth, to participate. All four segments may be included in one meeting, or the final segment (action items) may be saved for future meeting(s). Recent plans, such as the Open Lands and Historic Preservation plans, also included community visioning exercises. See <i>Bibliography</i> for more resources on visioning.
<b>Conference</b>	A meeting with two or more people where the participants discuss particular issues.	This can also be a series of meetings and/or events focused on a unifying subject; conferences sponsored by various organizations may provide opportunities for outreach.



Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Contact lists</b>	Contact lists may include social and/or service clubs; non-profit community and faith-based organizations; professional organizations; homeowners' associations; public and private educational providers; city board and commission members; and past participants in public involvement activities.	Contact lists of potential interested parties should be kept as current as possible. The City's Public Information Office plans to maintain a Very Interested Citizen (VIC) list in the future.
<b>Contest</b>	A writing or art contest is a good way to involve members of the public while publicizing a plan.	A contest could be used to select an introduction to a plan; or artwork for a logo, plan cover, or other purpose. Publicizing the contest widely and partnering with schools and newspapers can generate publicity for the plan process.
<b>Council Breakfast</b>	An interactive discussion with citizens.	Contact Public Information Officer for more information.
<b>Council Call-In Show</b>	A quarterly show allowing citizens to exchange views with the Council.	Offers the benefit of an immediate, easy way for citizens to interact with elected officials. It takes about 4 weeks to schedule, prepare and promote. Contact the Public Information Officer.
<b>Culture Events Brochure</b>	See Brochure	
<b>Dateline: Loveland</b>	The first Saturday of every month, the City publishes feature-story style information in the <i>Loveland Daily Reporter-Herald</i> on various activities associated with Loveland government.	Dateline: Loveland has proven to be an excellent tool for providing complex information in an easy to read and understand format to a wide audience. The City controls the content. Contact the Public Information Officer 2-3 weeks prior to the date of publication.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Display</b>	Information and materials are displayed in an informal setting where people are free to move about and consider whatever is of interest to them.	These may be placed at the Government Center, Public Library, Museum Gallery, banks, malls, schools and colleges, etc. See also Information Booth and Open House.
<b>Draft Document</b>	Releasing a draft for public comment can be a good way to stir citizen comment.	It is sometimes advisable to hold a press preview meeting just before release a draft document release. This gives the press a chance to learn about the draft and report information more accurately. At the very least, the draft release should be announced with a press release.
<b>E-Government</b>	E-Government refers to the development of strategies to enable businesses and citizens to access and transact with government quickly and reliably.	The City web page, on-line surveys, FTP sites, e-mail lists, and the use of interactive GIS are all e-government tools currently available. The City maintains a New Page under the Public Works Department.
<b>E-Mail</b>	The city plans on maintaining a Very Interested Citizens (VIC) e-mail list; specific lists may be created for your outreach purpose.	Contact the City's Public Information Officer (PIO) to use the VIC list to reach residents with a special interest in government.
<b>Educational Presentation</b>	Educational presentations may take various forms. Providing participants with data on trends, issues, past plans, and the workings of government can improve the quality of public involvement.	Education can be an important tool; at the same time, avoid leading the participants or having staff set the agenda and define alternatives. Unless it is part of a purely educational event (i.e. community forum), keep it short.
<b>Evaluation Tool</b>	A survey for participants in a public involvement activity, to evaluate satisfaction with the activity. See Appendix B for an example.	Evaluating activities and making changes is an important part of the public involvement process.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Focus Group</b>	A small carefully selected group of individuals who meet together to give feedback to the organizer on a specific topic. Focus groups are a good way to gain feedback from affected parties as well as underserved populations.	A focus group allows a depth of discussion and communication not possible in a survey. Generally, stakeholders are selected based on what they can add to the process. Because this is a selected group, people who are not selected may be suspicious of the information gathered; an effort can be made to involve "common citizens" in the focus group.
<b>Games and Contests</b>	These include a wide variety of activities including such things as board games, role playing, computer simulations, etc.	Use of these is an unusual and creative way to actively involve people.
<b>GIS Day</b>	Held in November, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Day may involve an open house as well as specific outreach at area schools.	Loveland held its first GIS Day events in 2004 and plans to continue this event annually. Groups outside the City who use GIS, such as the Big Thompson Watershed Forum, were participants.
<b>Grocery Store</b>	Contacting people at the grocery store, either by printing information on a grocery bag, dropping information into a grocery bag, staffed information tables or by displaying fliers or posters in the store.	This is a way to reach a larger and possibly diverse group of people. See publications for more locations.
<b>Information Booths</b>	Place where information is exhibited at fair-type events or a conference.	The City's annual Corn Roast; other annual festivals; and conferences provide good opportunities.
<b>Key Informant Interview</b>	A question and answer session with a specifically targeted person with whom it would be particularly important or useful to speak.	This may be useful as a first step in reaching minority or other interest groups and affected parties.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Kickoff Meeting</b>	A kickoff meeting is an initial meeting to educate participants about the key issues and the upcoming public participation process.	A kickoff meeting should be widely publicized. <i>Affected parties</i> should be formally invited, when appropriate, and an effort should be made to include <i>underserved populations</i> . An educational presentation at the kickoff meeting may increase the quality of participation.
<b>Luncheon or Breakfast</b>	A luncheon or breakfast may be used to recognize or thank a group of people.	An example is Loveland's Business Appreciation Luncheon.
<b>Mayor's Show</b>	A monthly show on Channel 16 that provides in-depth information on a topic of current interest presented by the Mayor and other guests.	Contact the Public Information Officer. The show can present detailed information, but it reaches a small viewership and audio-visual quality is unpolished.
<b>Meetings</b>	These are opportunities for larger groups of people to get together for a multitude of purposes. The general intent is to allow people to interact on a person-to-person basis. Meetings can be held for a wide variety of reasons from working on an issue to making a presentation.	To be most effective, a meeting should inform the participant prior to coming: what type of meeting it will be, what their role will be, and the expected outcome of the meeting.
<b>Modeling</b>	Computer and/or physical modeling can be used to help people better visualize or better understand a particular concept or project.	Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be a powerful tool for presentations; or can be included in an open house format, possibly in an interactive form. CommunityViz and similar software can show what the physical environment will look like under different design and use patterns or after a proposed structure is built. Low-tech modeling options should also be considered.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Neighborhood Meeting</b>	A meeting with residents of a neighborhood for the purpose of seeking input for an area plan or a specific city-wide plan.	Neighborhood meetings can be conducted using a variety of formats including community visioning workshop, charrettes, open house, etc. Try to locate the meeting in a facility (school auditorium; church community room; etc.) near or within the neighborhood in question.
<b>News Release (Press Release)</b>	This official release tells the press there is news they might be interested in reporting. It generally follows a specific format and includes who, what when, where and a contact for more information.	Information that is reported as "news" gets more attention and credibility than paid advertising. Community forums, public meetings, and releases of plan drafts are all newsworthy events. Contact the Public Information Officer for more information.
<b>Newspaper</b>	The newspaper can run stories on government-related happenings and announce meetings and events.	In addition to Press Releases, Press Preview Meetings and <i>Dateline: Loveland</i> ; there are many ways to use the newspaper, including community announcements; monthly news briefs; and guest opinion columns or letters from the M-Team. Contact the Public Information Office for ideas.
<b>Newspaper Advertisement</b>	Information that a newspaper prints in their paper that is not part of the news. The person/group placing the advertisement has control of the content.	These are generally purchased, and are used to announce meetings and other events. These can be expensive.
<b>Newsletter</b>	<p>You may create a newsletter (electronic or print) regarding your public involvement and planning process for interested parties. Some departments also have their own newsletters (i.e. <i>Utility News</i>). <i>City Updates</i> is the City's monthly newsletter.</p> <p>A newsletter might also be printed by a neighborhood group for residents of that neighborhood.</p>	<p>Make the newsletter easily understandable by avoiding jargon. Pay careful consideration to rules for good newsletter layout.</p> <p>Contact the Public Information Officer for more information.</p>

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Open House</b>	Information and materials are displayed in an informal setting where people are free to move about and consider whatever is of interest to them. Informed people are available to answer questions and take comments and suggestions.	Publicize your open house, including targeted efforts to attract affected parties and underserved populations. A variety of locations in city buildings can host open houses; also consider locations in neighborhoods (at schools, places of worship, etc.).
<b>Organization Contact</b>	Contact with an organization could take the form of a presentation, question & answer session, brainstorming, etc.	Social and service clubs and professional organizations are good venues for presentations.
<b>Presentation Meetings</b>	These meetings allow the organizer to provide information and answer questions for a large group at once.	The presenter generally does not present any side of the issue other than their own. (If possible the style of the meeting should be adapted to the audience. For example certain audiences may prefer posters to a PowerPoint presentation.)
<b>Press Preview Meeting</b>	A meeting held just before release of a draft document, in order to speak with the press.	Holding a press preview meeting gives the press enough time to review a document and ask questions so that information is more accurately represented. Open houses also provide a good venue for staff to speak with the press.
<b>Press Release</b>	See News Release	
<b>Promotional Activities</b>	Contests, tours, and other activities may serve to bring attention to your planning process.	

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Public Hearings</b>	This is a legal meeting that is required to ensure there is opportunity for public comment before adopting an amendment. It takes place before the City Council, with community members speaking under specific conditions.	These are required in Loveland prior to an amendment or plan being adopted. They should come at the end of the recommended public participation process. Since public hearings occur late in the process, they are not an ideal vehicle for public input. If unresolved issues are identified at a public hearing, then additional public participation activities may have to be scheduled before the project can move forward..
<b>Public Notice</b>	These are official notices posted prior to meetings.	These are required for meetings where 3 or more elected officials from the same governing body will be present.
<b>Public Service Announcements</b>	These are short announcements, usually on radio or television, for which there is no charge, with the purpose of announcing something important for the public to know.	
<b>Publications and announcements</b>	Publications and announcements include brochures, fliers, invitations, newsletters, postcard notices, posters, public notices, and other announcements. See Appendix B, Public Information Dissemination Tools. <i>City Updates, Dateline: Loveland, and Utility News</i> are useful communication resources.	These can be mailed, included in utility bills; printed in the newspaper; and/or placed at numerous locations. Publications are designed to appeal to different groups or underserved populations. Locations may include the Public Library, Government Center, Chilson Center, Museum Gallery, schools and colleges, grocery stores, book stores, cafes, places of worship, apartment and condominium buildings, transit stops and buses, major employers, parks and trailheads.  Take advantage of the City's graphic design capabilities and "consumer test" materials to ensure they are understandable and attractive.
<b>Radio 1610</b>	Public service radio station.	Contact the Public Information Officer, preferably a few days in advance.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Radio Talk Show</b>	Various talk shows may be presented on area radio stations.	This may be an opportunity for providing more in-depth information on a certain topic.
<b>Recreation Brochure</b>	See Brochure	
<b>School Presentations</b>	In order to reach youth, presentations can be made at the schools, including presentations to clubs, student council and specific classes.	Suggested classes would be: civics, economics (or other senior level classes) and geography classes. (Whatever is presented to the kids needs to be short and to the point with a source of additional information such as a web site.)
<b>School TV Station</b>	See Channel 14	
<b>Speakers Bureau</b>	This is an organized effort to make speakers available, by invitation, to various groups and events on one or more specific subjects. City employees as well as other experts are encouraged to belong to a speakers' bureau.	Participation in a speakers' bureau allows for more flexibility and reaches a broader audience.



Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Survey – Citizen Survey</b>	Surveys may be undertaken by individual departments in relation to plans and projects or to assess community satisfaction. In 2004, the city conducted a Quality of Life survey. The MIS department can generate a random sample for mailing.	<p>To get more meaningful (i.e. representative) results, ask demographic questions such as age, location in the city (by quadrants), income, etc. Questions may be closed-ended (multiple-choice) or open-ended (fill-in-the-blank or short answer).</p> <p>There are several ways to distribute a survey: mailing with utility bills; direct mail; printing in the newspaper; distribution to major employers; e-mail; internet (city web page); and making the survey available at outreach activities and/or various locations around town. Internet surveys sometimes have low numbers of respondents and are not scientific.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to preparing surveys in Spanish as well as English.</p>
<b>Survey – User Survey</b>	A user survey assesses satisfaction with a particular government service.	Individual departments may find user surveys to be good tools for evaluation and planning. It is a good idea to test surveys on a small group to ensure they are understandable and will generate the feedback desired.
<b>Telephone Hot-Line</b>	A specific phone number that has been set up to collect comments for a specific reason.	
<b>T-Shirt</b>	T-shirts can be used to publicize city events and campaigns (i.e. recycling; bike-to-work day; farmers' markets; etc.), volunteer programs, and so forth.	Selling t-shirts can make this a self-sustaining activity.
<b>TV Advertisements</b>	These are usually 30 or 60 second spots on TV during breaks in a regular show.	With cable television, it is not too expensive to run these. The main expense is in producing the spot.

Activity	Description	Comments
<b>Two Minutes Max</b>	These videos are produced for Loveland's Channel 16 and shown on a regular basis while they are relevant. They can also be shown on the webpage.	Contact the Public Information Officer for more info.
<b>Utility News</b>	This monthly newsletter is prepared by the City's Water and Power Utility and deals exclusively with related information of interest to the City's utility customers.	Another newsletter, City Updates (see above) is also mailed every month with utility bills and is not limited to utility-related information.
<b>Visioning</b>	See Community Visioning Workshop	
<b>Visual Preferencing (Visual Preference Survey)</b>	A survey of a group of citizens, presenting a variety of pictures/slide of development and asking citizens to rate development positively or negatively. It is a means of determining what sort of community residents prefer. It could be tailored to land use, community design, redevelopment, corridor planning, parks design, etc.	Visual preferencing may be done in several neighborhoods if it is to be used for neighborhood planning. Be careful in choosing pictures that illustrate different development alternatives in a way which is not leading or self-fulfilling. Pictures may or may not be local examples. A visual preference survey was conducted as part of Loveland's 2002 Historic Preservation Plan.
<b>Video</b>	A video is a useful tool for illustrating planning goals, showing community assets, and showing good (and bad) examples of development in the community. See <i>Two Minutes Max</i> .	Enlisting local film students at high schools and colleges is one way to produce an inexpensive video. The Loveland Public Library operates Channel 16, while the Thompson School District operates Channel 14. Resident interviews add interest to local videos. Videos may be distributed to organizations, shown at presentations, and shown on Channels 14 and 16.
<b>Walking Tour</b>	An organized walking tour can include both the public and decision-makers.	A walking tour may be a forum for communication between residents, staff and/or decision-makers. A tour may focus on successful examples of development projects or existing conditions. It could be part of a charrette or audit.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Ward Meeting</b>	An interactive discussion, generally with citizens and council members present, presenting a chance for two-way communication.	Contact the Public Information Officer one month before holding the meeting
<b>Working Meetings</b>	Generally these are meetings designed to work through issues when there can be give and take among all the participants.	
<b>Workshop</b>	Meetings to inform and solicit input on specific issues, plans or projects.	These usually allow a smaller group of people to participate more intensively. (See also community visioning workshop and charrette).
<b>Youth Planning Activities</b>	A variety of activities can involve youth in planning and provide an opportunity for youth input. Youth may be important or potential users of certain city services such as parks, recreation centers, trails and public transportation.	Loveland has recognized that youth are the future of the community and has expressed a desire to provide opportunities for youth to remain in Loveland. Therefore, it is important to involve youth in the planning process. During the 2004-5 Comprehensive Master Plan Update, a Youth Visioning Workshop was held; the visioning process was shortened and the last step (action steps) was removed. The Youth Advisory Board, Ames Community College, and the Thompson School District should be involved early on when a plan element affects areas of interest to youth. Be sure to include those who attend private schools or are home-schooled.

Many of the items in this list have been adapted from the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Public Participation Tools and the City of Loveland Public Information Tools Analysis. Please see the City of Loveland Public Information Tools Analysis for more information on specific tools, their best use, target audience, role of the Public Information Officer, and other relevant information.