



The Community Action Network Presentation to the Tamarack Institute

June 27th 2023



Do Residents Feel Heard by Their Local Government? How?

Equity in Public Engagement

Equality suggests that we treat everyone the same.



Equity considers the current, future and historical barriers that negatively impact an individual's opportunity to participate and prosper as a member of the community.



Equity in Public Engagement for Whom?

Equity Denied Groups

- Indigenous Communities
- Racialized Groups
- Individuals experiencing poverty and low income
- Youth
- Women
- Seniors
- Newcomers
- People with disabilities and/or mobility needs
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Individuals with mental illness and/or addictions
- Two Spirit and LGBTQ2S+

Source: Healthy Community Engagement, Plan H, June 2019

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Engagement Spectrum



Source: Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2019). Public Engagement Toolkit.

Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement

This guide proposes eight principles for equitable public engagement in order to maximize the meaningful and equitable inclusion of diverse voices in decision-making processes.

Source: Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2020). [Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement](#).

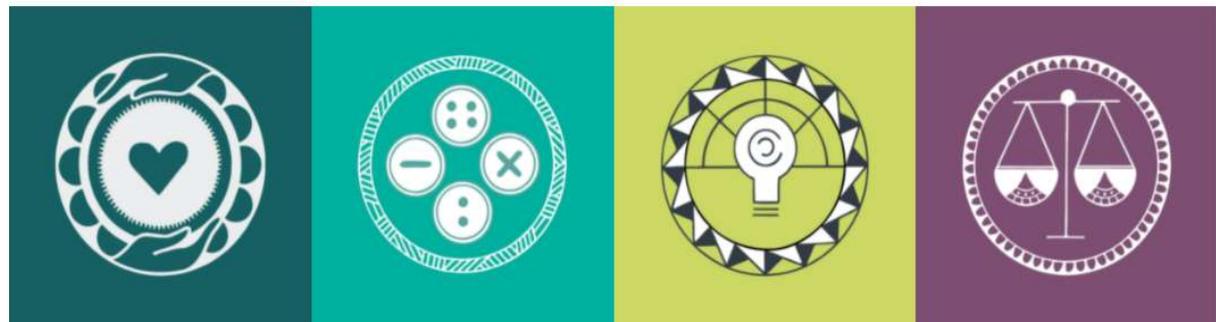


Principle 1:
Invite participation within an authentic and accountable engagement process

Principle 2:
Plan early and proactively

Principle 3:
Establish respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples

Principle 4:
Engage the internal diversity of a community



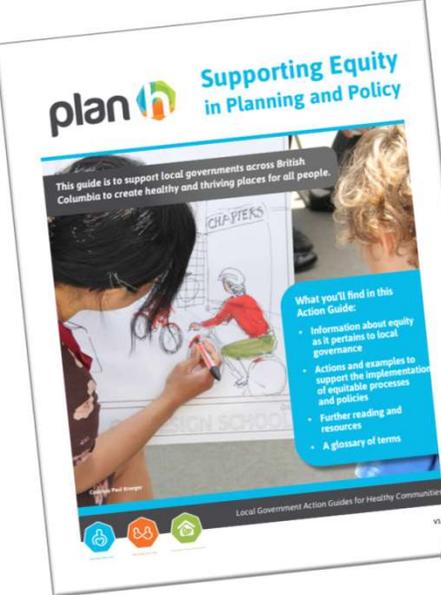
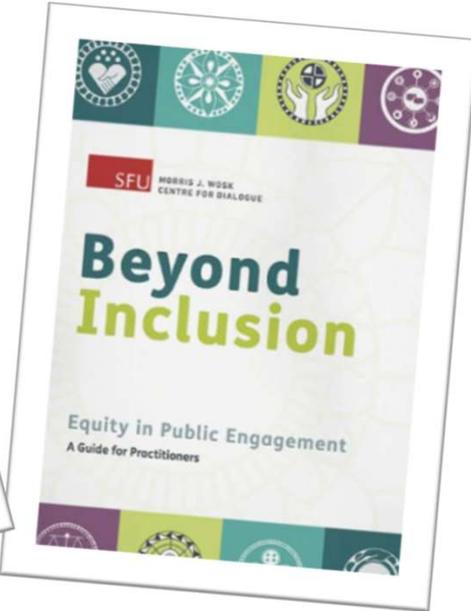
Principle 5:
Work in reciprocal relationships with communities

Principle 6:
Tailor engagement plans to the context

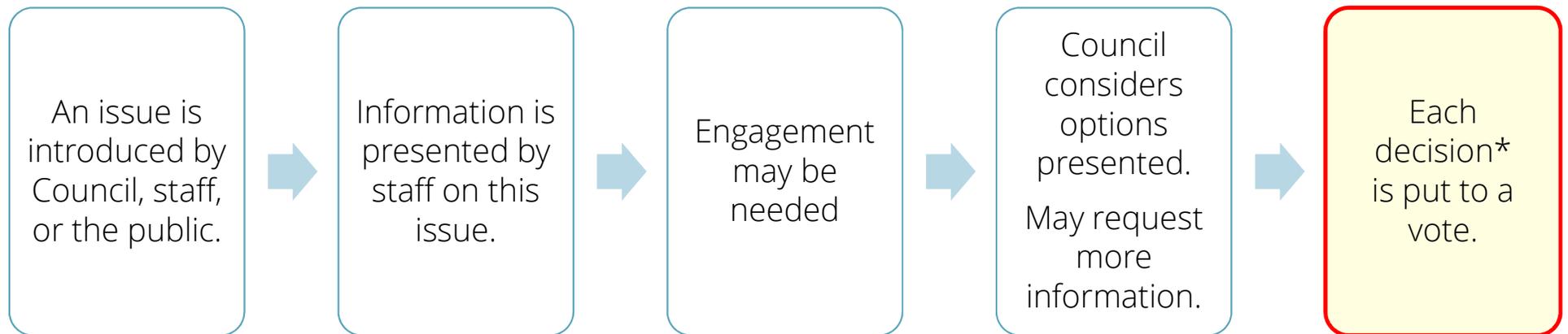
Principle 7:
Commit to ongoing learning and improvement

Principle 8:
Advance systemic equity

Resources to Reference



How Local Government Makes a Decision?



**All decisions are recorded in the Minutes which are stored.*

Engaging People with Lived and Living Experience

- Increasingly, people with lived and living experience are acknowledged as context or subject matter experts.
- As with many social issues, people with lived and living experience usually have the best understanding about what the problem is and what needs to be done to address it.



- On September 9th 2019, Council directed staff to enter into a partnership with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to engage New Westminster residents with lived and living experience of poverty in the Community Action Network Leadership Program (CAN New West).

Community Action Network (CAN)

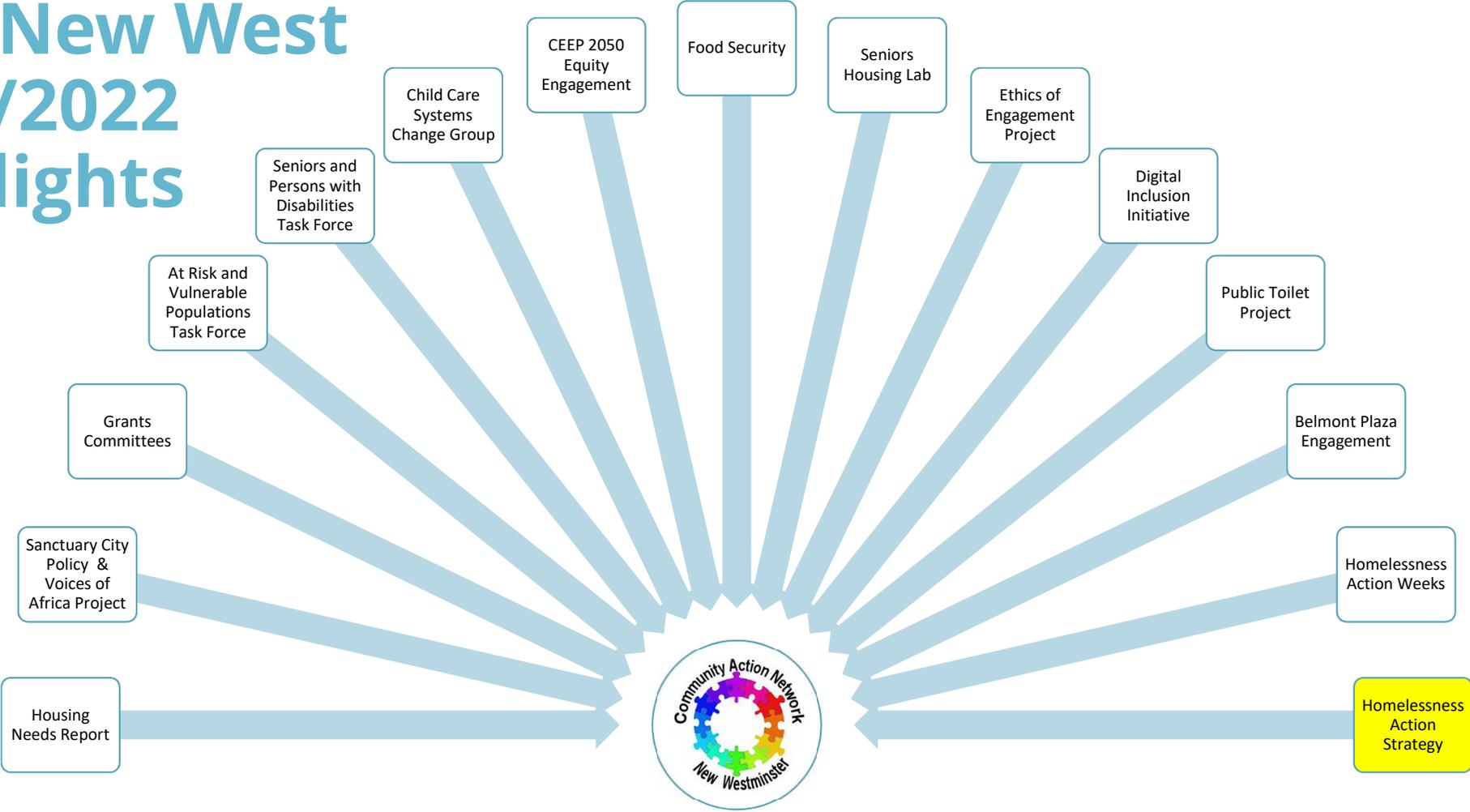
Engaging People with Lived and Living Experience in Homelessness and Poverty



The City maintains a partnership with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition CAN program, including:

- Maintaining the New Westminister CAN Learning Network;
- Compensating CAN Leaders for their time subject matter experts, ahead of a policy;
- Organizing future CAN Leadership Training Programs (2020, 2022, 2024).

CAN New West 2021/2022 Highlights



Ethics of Engagement Project

The City is participating in the Ethics in Engagement Project, which will develop a framework to inform and evaluate City engagement resources, strategies and training methods, with the objective of facilitating greater engagement by people with lived and living experience.

E.g. Community Listening Pop-ups and the Deep Listening Approach



Understanding CAN's Roles and Relationships



BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's Community Action Network Program

Lead by BC PRC

Partnership with the City of New Westminster

Relationship with the Library

Supported by the City (Community Planning)

Partnerships with Other Organizations

Facilitated by BC PRC (City may provide support or a referral)

- Topics for Discussion:**
- Facilitators
 - Communication
 - Compensation
 - Meeting Space
 - Materials Storage
 - Other Ideas
 - Recipes for Success

Examples			
Homelessness Action Strategy	Sanctuary City Policy	Advisory Committees	Permanent Toilet Project
Community Planning	Community Planning	City Clerks	Public Engagement Division

Examples					
Homelessness Action Week	Ethics of Engagement	Changing the Conversation Project	Child Care Systems Change Group	Seniors Housing Collaborative	Neighborhood Small Grants
Betina (NWHCS)	Single Mothers Alliance	Douglas College	Pacific Immigrant Resource Society	Senior Services Society	Vancouver Foundation

E.g. October 19 Library Meeting

Case Study: Homeless Action Strategy Engagement

In 2022, the developed a Homelessness Action Strategy (HAS) , which included a five-year vision and plan for addressing homelessness in New Westminster.

The preparation of the HAS and engagement framework was a collaboration between:

- The City of New Westminster
- Community Action Network (CAN)
- The UBC School of Community and Regional Planning



COLLABORATE

We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

HAS Engagement Principles

- To engage a diversity of interests, perspective and voices.
- To create a safe environment for all people to engage.
- To leverage those who have a relationship and trust to assist with, facilitate and/or support engagement activities.
- To provide a variety of ways to engage.
- To address potential barriers to engagement.
- To anticipate and respond to potentially traumatic situations.
- To ensure a meaningful engagement process, including sharing how information will be used.

HAS Engagement Techniques

- **Lived Experience of Homelessness Survey**
- HAS Working Group (Monthly)
- Seniors Advisory Committee Meeting
- Business Association Focus Group
- Resident Association Focus Group
- At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations and Persons Living with Disabilities Meetings
- **Community Conversation on Homelessness and Survey Launch**
- Focused Engagement with Individuals with Lived and Living Experience of Homelessness
- Key Informant Engagement



HAS Preliminary Themes

Some of the top concerns and issues from the engagements included:

- Need for more affordable housing
- Access to barrier free and non-judgmental support services
- Access to and more mental health support required
- Better up-to-date communication to businesses and those who are unsheltered
- Anti-stigma education is needed to educate the community on homelessness
- Desire to secure stable jobs and income

The Digital Inclusion Partnership

- The goal of the project is to work with partners and community members to help move at-risk and vulnerable populations from digital exclusion to digital inclusion.



Device Availability

- Clean devices, erase data, and install operating systems and applications on all the computers, smart phones and tablets received.



Internet Access

- Work with service providers to target the creation and expansion of public Wi-Fi hot spots and Internet provision to those who cannot afford connectivity.



Engagement Education

- Create education and training materials, and directly provide device and technical support.

Plain Language

- Plain language is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it.
- Unclear communication and jargon are barriers to access, and exclude and reinforce power differences.
- Know your audience; communicate for your audience; give need-to-know information only; give them the most important information first.

Learn more about plain language

- Plain Language Association International (PLAIN)
- Plain Language in Plain English by Cheryl Stephens
- Simon Fraser University's Plain Language Certificate

Source: Presentation - An introduction to PLAIN LANGUAGE For the City of New Westminster, January 19, 2022, Iva Cheung , @IvaCheung

Plain Language Example

Seniors CONNECT In-Place An Integrated Support System



Recognition

CASE STUDY | Transforming Systems Through Lived Experience

And a Special Testimonial by Lorna Howat

Author: Jill Zacharias
With contributions from Anur Mehdic, Lama Mugabo, Lorna Howat, Rowan Burdge



A unique partnership between the City of New Westminster, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, and the Community Action Network has resulted in a 'triple win': strengthening the voice, skills, and contribution of people with lived and living experience of poverty; as well as improving city policies and programs, while ensuring the ongoing success of a tested grassroots approach.

Case Study Link [here](#)

HOME > IN THE COMMUNITY

New West wins gold for "innovative" planning approach

What's happening Around Town? New West planning approach wins provincial award

 Theresa McManus
Jun 18, 2023 9:30 AM



Getting the gold: John Stark, the city's supervisor of community planning, on the right, and CAN graduate Richard Schabler, accepted the Planning Institute of British Columbia award on behalf of the City of New Westminster, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition and CAN graduates. photo Planning Institute of BC

 Listen to this article
00:02:25

The City of New Westminster has won a Gold Award for Excellence in City and Urban Planning for an "innovative" approach to planning.

News Article Link [here](#)



Donald



Anur Mehdic, City of New Westminster



Maria Luisa Dalisay



gailharmer



Anthony Kupferschmidt (he/him/h...



Kyoko Takahashi, SSSBC



Sherri Crane (she/her)



Jenny Konkin - Whole Way House



Mariam Larson



Alison Silgado



Sharon



Patsy Craig



Thank you. Questions?

amehdic@newwestcity.ca

604 515 3792