WATERLOO REGION
Community
Foundation

Community Engagement Toolkit

To engage those with lived experience in designing affordable housing

Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) is situated on the lands within the Haldimand Treaty of 1784, a formally ratified agreement acknowledging six miles on either side of the Grand River as treaty territory belonging to Six Nations of the Grand River. WRCF serves a region that is located within the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Chonnonton and Haudenosaunee peoples. This territory is within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon wampum. We acknowledge the enduring presence, knowledges and philosophies of Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge the continuing accomplishments and contributions Indigenous Peoples make in shaping Waterloo Region. We are committed to understanding the impact of settler colonialism on the Indigenous experience in order to vision and co-create collaborative, respectful paths together in mutuality and reciprocity.

Thank you

The Community Engagement Toolkit was created through a partnership between Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) and the University of Waterloo's School of Planning. Under the guidance of Professor Mark Seasons, two groups of students responded to WRCF's request to develop a design consultation process built on equitable practices. Their final reports created the majority of the content that was adapted, edited, and designed into – what we hope is – a toolkit that provides repeatable, scalable processes and templates.

We thank all who have contributed.

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DESIGN INC.

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Affordable Housing has emerged
as a critical issue for Waterloo Region

Often, neighbourhoods are designed without consultation with the diverse populations who will live there.

In 2021, Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) published the Waterloo Region Vital Signs® Report focused specifically on Affordable Housing to provide more information about this issue that matters to our community; and to help people across our region turn that knowledge into action.

WRCF is committed to continuing to convene conversations, share knowledge, and provide tools to help advance progress on this crisis in our community.

Through our work on affordable housing over the past few years – we discovered a gap. **In neighbourhood design, consultation of diverse community members is often missed.** And, ensuring equity is at the foundational level of the design process is essential for the creation of caring communities. Including the voices of people who live, or plan to live, in new and revitalized developments is important to

create connected and empowered neighbourhoods that foster a space that enhances quality of life.

The region, municipalities and townships are working to engage residents in community planning and design. The Housing Innovation Round Table - a collaborative that is bringing people together from the private, public and philanthropic sector - identified an opportunity to create a Community Engagement Toolkit to assist developers, not for profits, and others in

the affordable housing space in including voices of community in the development of places and spaces. As a result, WRCF partnered with Professor Mark Seasons and two groups of students from the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo, who developed the contents of this Community Engagement Toolkit.

What is community engagement?

"Community engagement is the process of inviting community members into the decision-making strategy to assess, plan, implement, and evaluate solutions to issues that affect their daily lives and environments" (Planh, 2021).

An equitable design consultation process incorporates the following elements to engage community:

- Be accessible – identify potential barriers to participation, and remove them

- Build trust through transparent and clear communication

- Work directly with people who are affected to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered

- Approach your project with an equity lens by ensuring your process provides the opportunity to include diverse voices and perspectives. Focused outreach to people based on gender, race, age, physical and intellectual abilities, and income is essential in the creation of equitable communities

- Start the engagement process early to allow for participants to make meaningful contributions, and then continue it throughout the process to provide updates and gain input along the way

- Create a 'neutral' space for discussion that removes any politically charged discussions and keeps the conversation safe and judgement free

- Ensure there is a two-way flow of information, with a goal of finding mutually beneficial solutions

- Undertake the process with a philosophy of continuous improvement, so that if you learn along the way, you can then incorporate the new information

What is the Community Engagement Toolkit?

Successful neighbourhoods are built from the ground up, and adapt with the changing needs of community. We need to stop, listen, gather feedback, and then act. We need to engage community groups and keep them engaged throughout the entire design, build, and occupancy process.

> **"People are experts in their own lives."**
> – Leilani Farha, Global Director, The Shift

This Community Engagement Toolkit was created to be **flexible, repeatable, and scalable.** It provides a simple framework and consultation process, as well as follow up guides and supplemental materials. It has been designed to demonstrate an ongoing process where groups are continuously engaged for the entire lifecycle of projects. They will allow you to invite everyone into the conversation.

The goal is straightforward - make decisions incorporating the views of people who are affected. Ensure equity is built into the process. Create caring communities where everyone thrives.

Let's work together!

START CONVERSATIONS. TAKE ACTION.
If you or your organization are moved or motivated by what you read, use this toolkit as a starting point for engagement in projects your organization is undertaking. You can use some or all of the tools – it has been designed to be flexible, repeatable and scalable.

PASS IT ON.
Share the toolkit with developers, those in your neighbourhood associations, friends, colleagues, employees, students, neighbours, through your community centre, charities and social enterprises working on and in affordable housing, or an elected official at any level.

FIND OUT MORE.
Learn about the many organizations in our community working to improve access to affordable housing, and see how you too can help.

CONTACT US.
We know about the issues in our community as well as the organizations working on solutions to improve them. If you would like to make a difference, we can help and guide you. www.wrcf.ca

By working together, we can drive positive change so everyone has a place to call home.

Note: This Community Engagement Toolkit was designed to tackle the issue of affordable housing in Waterloo Region. The tools can be adapted to address other issues – let's experiment together, and take action in our community!

Engagement groups

Before you decide how you want to consult with the community to get their input - you first need to determine which members of the community you want to engage.

In this section, we've outlined important members of our community who are in need of core housing. We've pulled information from the Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation's (CMHC) core housing need data.

The following pages contain key demographic groups listed with best practices. Note: Keep in mind that this list is a starting point. It does not cover all of the intersecting demographics, and the many strategies that can be

adopted to ensure the best possible engagement with all community members. It highlights key barriers, some current trends, and best practices to consider when you are seeking input from each demographic group. So, you may need to do additional research to ensure you are including the people who will live in the area that is being developed.

It's also important to build long-term respectful relationships with community members you engage with, including meeting them where possible, and continuing to engage them throughout the planning process. Regular updates and check-ins are advised.

Engagement groups

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Barriers

- Lack of commitment to implementing Calls to Actions for Truth & Reconciliation
- Lack of resources and supports
- Racism/Colonialism
- Lack of accommodation for Indigenous communities' needs during engagement processes
- Indigenous people are often excluded in the due diligence and information delegation phases

Trends

- In 2016, there were 8,985 Indigenous residents in Waterloo Region, representing 1.7% of the population. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population)[1]*
- In 2016, 695 Aboriginal households were identified to be in core housing need. *(Source: CMHC)[2]*

Best Practices

- Work with Indigenous organizations, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers. If you ask Indigenous people to assist with your engagement process, or in sharing knowledge, ensure you offer culturally appropriate thanks for their support
- Increase funding for Indigenous housing and data transparency
- Take time to learn about, and then incorporate, Indigenous engagement practices
- Seek the opinions of local Indigenous Councils
- Organize group meetings and workshops
- Provide Indigenous communities with finance and support to lead Indigenous housing projects
- Maintain relationships throughout the entire engagement process - provide updates and/ or hold additional meetings
- Provide child care, transportation, and monetary incentives
- Work with Indigenous communities, and supply funding assistance for these groups to lead engagement initiatives
- Hold sessions in spaces and locations that are Indigenous-led

Engagement groups

RACIALIZED FOLKS

Barriers

- Noticeable exclusion of groups in the due diligence and information delegation phases
- Racism
- Engagement processes are often not designed to accommodate for language and cultural differences

Best Practices

- Increase data transparency throughout the engagement process
- Establish advisory groups
- Advertise meetings and conduct workshops in various languages; have interpreters available
- Work with groups that represent various groups and ethnicities
- Provide child care, transportation or monetary incentives
- Engage racialized groups by ethnocultural groupings (e.g. Black focus group, South Asian focus group, etc.)
- Work with community groups and supply funding assistance for these groups to lead engagement initiatives

Trends

- The proportion of visible minorities in Waterloo Region increased to 19% in 2016 from 13.1% in 2006. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 and 2016 Census of Population)*[3]
- More than a quarter (26.7%) of visible minorities identify as South Asian, while 15.8% identify as Chinese, and 15.3% identify as Black. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population)*[4]

Engagement groups

IMMIGRANTS

Barriers

- Noticeable exclusion of groups in the due diligence and information delegation phases
- Language and cultural diversity
- Racism
- Discrimination
- Xenophobia
- Islamophobia

Best Practices

- Increase data transparency throughout the engagement process
- Communicate through various channels and spaces that already support immigrant communities for increased engagement
- Establish advisory groups
- Advertise meetings and conduct workshops in various language; have interpreters available
- Work with organizations that support immigrants and with groups that represent various ethnicities
- Provide child care, transportation and monetary incentives

Trends

- Recent immigrant households are six times more likely to live in overcrowded conditions than non-immigrants (19.3% vs 3.2%) in 2016. *(Source: Census of Canada as reported in Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® Report)*[5]
- One in five (19%) respondents in a June 2021 survey of immigrants in Waterloo Region indicated they had experienced discrimination when looking for housing. *(Source: Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® Report)*

Engagement groups

YOUTH

Barriers

- Lack of resources and supports
- Lack of adequate transportation infrastructure
- Feeling that adults won't include their perspective
- Lack of awareness and/or lack of interest

Trends

- In 2016, there were 114,645 children and youth under the age of 18 in Waterloo Region, which accounted for 21.7% of the population.
- 2.2% of the under 18 population in Waterloo Region are Indigenous, which is higher than the 1.7% of the general population.
- In 2015, 1 in 8 children and youth in Waterloo Region were living with low income.

Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population via Children and Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region[6]

Best Practices

- Use engagement methods that appeal to youth specifically (e.g. social media, youth advisory boards, online surveys, public art sessions, etc.)
- Use social media to encourage action (vote, comment), retweet, form groups and pages with visuals
- Use a research method called "Photovoice" where youth can take photos to identify issues or what they like in their surrounding environment. Provide phones with cameras if unavailable to them
- Show up where youth congregate for other things (e.g. put up a booth at a job fair or community event; gather input at local community centres)
- Provide safe spaces for youth
- Build flexibility into your engagement process (time, duration, method of data collection)
- Provide monetary incentives for participation
- Host discussions in locations that are easily accessible by public transit (and then provide transit passes!)
- Involve youth as leaders in designing and hosting your youth engagement process (be there to support them and listen!)

Engagement groups

SENIORS

Barriers

- Poor health
- Lack of awareness or interest
- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of support

Best Practices

- Gather input in settings that are comfortable (i.e. familiar location, accessible, and frequented by senior population)
- Build flexibility into your engagement process (time, duration, method of data collection)
- Provide transportation or monetary incentives
- Include traditional methods of communication in your outreach plan such as print brochures, media releases for the local paper and press, paper surveys, and gathering in person
- Organize discussion groups and workshops
- Establish a seniors advisory committee
- Work closely with agencies that offer social programs and supports to seniors

Trends

- In 2016, seniors accounted for 14.4% of Waterloo Region's population. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population)*[7]
- Between 2006 and 2016, Waterloo Region's senior population grew by 38.8%, compared to a 11.9% increase for the general population. *(Source: Region of Waterloo Census Bulletin 2016)*[8]

Engagement groups

WOMEN

Barriers

- Lack of opportunities
- Power imbalance in many instances
- Lack of resources and supports
- Lack of available time
- Sexism
- Discrimination

Best Practices

- Build flexibility into your engagement process (time, duration, method of data collection)
- Provide free childcare during workshops and meetings
- Create the opportunity for women to meet in ethnocultural groupings
- Consider groupings by age category where applicable
- Partner with organizations that focus on supporting women and girls in your local community
- Provide transportation or monetary support
- Ensure discussions occur in safe spaces and that safety is a topic discussed as part of the design process

Trends

- Women make up 50.6% of Waterloo Region's population. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population)*[9]
- 3,915 female lone-parent households were in core housing need in 2016, as were 3,975 senior women living alone, and 2,815 women under the age of 65 living alone. *(Source: Census of Canada via CMHC)*[10]

Engagement groups

2SLGBTQIA+

Barriers

- Lack of resources and supports
- Lack of accommodation and safe spaces for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community
- Gender-based and sexual orientation discrimination
- Homophobia
- Transphobia

Best Practices

- Ensure gender neutral workshops and group meetings with safe spaces
- Engage through social media and other digital technology
- Advertise with gender neutral language
- Use correct pronouns
- Work with members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and supply funding assistance to lead engagement initiatives
- Provide child care, transportation, and monetary incentives
- Recommend having separate consultations for groups within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community for greater safety across identities

Trends

- About 4% of the Canadian population identifies as LGBTQ2+. *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2015 to 2018 Canadian Community Health Surveys)*[11]
- For the first time, the 2021 Census of Canada collected data on transgender and non-binary people. Of people 15 and older living in a private household in May 2021 in the Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo CMA, 0.11% identified as transgender men, 0.13% identified as transgender women, and 0.16% identified as non-binary. The 0.4% of people identifying as either transgender or non-binary in Waterloo Region was higher than in the general Canadian population (0.33%). *(Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population)*[12]
- 4.5% of Waterloo children and youth ranging from nine to 18 identify as either non-binary (2.5%) or another gender identity other than male or female (2.0%). *(Source: Waterloo Region's Children and Youth Planning Table's 2021 Youth Impact Survey)*[13]

Engagement groups

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Barriers

- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of adequate transportation infrastructure
- Communication barriers
- Crowded or social intensive spaces
- Lack of resources and supports

Best Practices

- Create inviting, accessible environments
- Accommodate for specific needs (brail, ASL interpreter, accessible locations, etc.)
- Host discussions in locations that are easily accessible by public transit (and then provide subsidized or free transit passes!)
- All communications must comply with accessibility requirements
- Provide monetary incentives
- Partner with organizations that provide support to people with disabilities to understand issues, get input, and attract participants for engagement sessions

Trends

- There are almost 87,600 people with severe and mild disabilities in Waterloo Region in 2018.
- The median after-tax income for persons with disabilities who were 25 to 64 years of age in 2017 was estimated at just over $26,826.
- Those with severe disabilities are half as likely to be employed as those with milder disabilities.
- Poverty rates among people with disabilities are much higher than the general public.

Source: Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017[14]

Engagement groups

PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AND/OR NEURODIVERSITY

Barriers

- Lack of professionals who understand autism
- Lack of necessary services
- Financial hardships
- Lack of awareness about autism and understanding that people with autism are affected differently

Best Practices

- Ensure marketing materials are accessible
- Use of assistive technology such as visual scene display apps, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) apps, or built-in digital cameras to ease communications with participants
- Collaborate with service organizations to provide space and support for conversations
- Engage with developers to share considerations for neurodiverse housing options
- Accommodate for specific needs. For example, consider one-on-one interviews to increase the comfort of participants
- Host community consultations in large venues with a meeting structure that provides personal space with warm lighting and low background noise (*Spacial needs for people with autism:* https://www.urbandesignmental-health.com/journal-3---shared-spatial-needs.html)

Trends

- 1 in 66 Canadian children and youth (ages 5-17) have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as of 2018.
- Boys are four to five times more frequently diagnosed with ASD than girls.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada[15]

Engagement groups

PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Barriers

- Crowded or social intensive spaces
- Wider range of adaptability to environment
- Difficulty expressing concerns
- Impact of mental illness on ability to participate
- Mental health stigma and/or lack of understanding of people who live with a mental illness and/or emotional distress

Best Practices

- Engage with service providers and mental health support workers to help select appropriate ways to get input from people with mental illness(es) and support participants throughout the process
- Consider one-on-one interviews as a preferred engagement method to accommodate individual needs
- Host community consultations in spaces that facilitate positive social interaction (e.g. natural outdoor spaces, parks, etc.)
- Create welcoming public places and involve citizens at each stage of design and development
- Build flexibility into your engagement process (time of day, day of the week, duration, method of data collection, ability to reschedule participation)
- Accommodate for specific needs whenever possible (i.e. size of group, physical space, lighting, virtual or in person, time of day)

Trends

- About one-quarter (26.3%) of children and youth under 18 described their mental health as very good or excellent, which was down more than 10% from the 2020 survey (37.4%). *(Source: 2021 Youth Impact Survey)*[16]
- In 2021, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Waterloo Wellington reported a 40 per cent increase in youth accessing mental health services. *(Source: CMHA via CBC News)*[17]
- There were 99 overdose-related deaths in 2021 and 106 in 2020, up significantly from the 62 in 2019 and 61 in 2018. *(Source: Waterloo Regional Police Service Data)*[18]

Engagement groups

LOW INCOME

Barriers

- Lack of free time or interest (e.g. due to multiple jobs)
- Lack of adequate transportation infrastructure
- Lack of resources and supports

Best Practices

- Host discussions in locations that are easily accessible by public transit (and then provide transit passes!)
- Offer rideshare programs
- Build flexibility into your engagement process (time of day, day of the week, duration, method of data collection)
- Include free childcare during workshops and meetings
- Provide monetary incentives
- Do research in your local area, and host sessions in lower income neighbourhoods
- Provide food during the discussion, particularly if it is offered over a meal time

Trends

- 12.2% of Waterloo Region residents were low income in 2015.
- 22.9% of visible minorities were low income in 2015. Arab residents (48.6%) were most likely to be low income.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population, using the low-income measure, after tax[19]

Engagement groups

HOMELESS AND PRECARIOUSLY HOUSED

Barriers

- Lack of interest and/or ability to connect with members of this group
- Lack of accessibility
- Lack of resources and supports
- Lack of access to technology

Best Practices

- Augment communication support if required (i.e. provide phones, data plans, wifi access)
- Host in-person round tables, workshops, and group meetings in spaces frequented by the homeless population
- Work with organizations that support the homeless, such as shelters, to develop participation strategies and implement them
- Create advisory groups and make sure to provide compensation for their time
- Ensure safe spaces and access to supports are available during gatherings/discussions
- Provide transportation or monetary incentives
- Provide food during the discussion, particularly if it is offered over a meal time

Trends

- 365 people were identified as chronically homeless in May 2021 in Waterloo Region, up 34.7% since November 2020. *(Source: Region of Waterloo via CTV News)*[20]
- As of September 2019, there were over 7,000 households seeking community housing *(Source: City of Kitchener Housing Needs Assessment)*[21]. The waitlist and those awaiting assessment for community housing were almost as large as the number of units available.
- The average wait time for community housing for a 1-bedroom apartment for someone less than 65 years old was 7.9 years in 2017, a 110% increase since 2011. *(Source: Region of Waterloo via City of Kitchener Housing Needs Assessment, as reported in Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® Report)*[22]

Consultation process

The consultation process has been designed to walk you through the different phases, as well as the over-arching considerations you should consider to develop neighbourhoods that feel welcoming to everyone.

The goal is to create a vibrant engagement process that fosters discussion in a safe environment to positively impact the community.

Note: This list is not exhaustive, but gives you several tools to consider as you are working through your engagement framework.

PHASE 0

Phase 0 is called Phase 0 because it happens before engagement with the community.

Consult with developers to see if their goals and project vision align with the charities, not for profits, and/or social purpose organizations. Determine who to engage with and what community engagement strategies to use.

PHASE 1

Educate planners and developers in culture, structures, and barriers to engagement. Raise awareness/ inform the community about the project, and connect with community members.

PHASE 2

Capture community input. Consult and involve the community in the planning process through a vibrant engagement process that fosters discussion. Then, collect and apply the feedback, and adjust plans accordingly.

PHASE 3

Further engage community members to collaborate in the planning process. Continue to collect input from the community and apply it to the project.

PHASE 4

Empower community members to make decisions on the project. Finalize input and prepare report.

Framework to Increase Engagement

In addition to the phases, we have pulled together a framework you can use to increase engagement. By ensuring ease of access to engagement events and tools through location, time, etc., you can create a warm and inviting engagement space that meets the needs of the community.

Phase 0

Consult with developers to see if their goals and project vision align with the charities, not for profits, and/or social purpose organizations. Determine who to engage with and what community engagement strategies to use.

Collect Feedback

In all Phases, we recommend you pause at the end to take time to gather feedback; evaluate what was learned, and build it into the next Phase.

Determine Engagement Groups and Tools	Focus Groups	Curated Research Questions	Urban Diagnosis	Urban Digital Technologies

Method Description: Understand who the involved groups are from the community. Determine the best possible community engagement strategies, and plan of action to apply/include community consultations from the engagement process in the project.

Method Description: Meetings that are designated for not for profits/charities to meet with prospective partners (i.e. developers) and discuss whether a partnership can be formed based on similar visions, ideas, and opinions.

Method Description: Develop questions about the potential development/ renovation to ask potential partners. The goal of the questions is to understand a potential partner's vision and ideas for the development, and whether there can be alignment if you work together.

Method Description: Host an exploratory walk of a local environment to identify certain attributes of the environment. This will help ensure "real world examples" are highlighted. Make sure vision and priorities align with planned build and/or site changes.

Tools you can use: Neighbourhood Participatory Process, Recitoire Tool.

Method Description: Include online services that foster collaboration and discussion to ensure that participation is possible without physical presence.

Tools you can use: Digital Storytelling, Online Workshop, interactions through Social Media/ Websites/Email.

Note: These tools are applicable to Charities, Developers, Municipalities, and Not for Profits.

Phase 1

Educate Planners and developers in culture, structures, and barriers to engagement. Raise awareness/inform the community about the project, and connect with community members.

Collect Feedback

In all Phases, we recommend you pause at the end to take time to gather feedback; evaluate what was learned, and build it into the next Phase.

Embed Indigenous Processes into Traditional Planning Practices	Raise Awareness	Community Reference Group (CRG)	SpeakOut (An Informal Open House)	Focus Groups	Storytelling Conversations and Café Style Table Discussions	Use Digital Technologies

Method Description: Work with Indigenous Elders and community members to embed Indigenous practices into the work when the initiative includes housing options for Indigenous Peoples. It is critical to include the voices and expertise of Indigenous Peoples as part of the process development and engagement strategies.

Tools you can use: Learning Circles/ Engagement Sessions, Comprehensive Community Planning process.

This method would be relevant in the context of Indigenous groups.

Method Description: Raise awareness in the community through various mediums to ensure that people who may be impacted, or who would have input, are aware of an upcoming project that requires their participation.

Tools you can use: Advertised Outreach strategies, sharing of information through Social Media/ Websites/Email.

Method Description: Individuals are selected by the local community to facilitate discussions and act as a conduit between planners and developers/ municipalities/ charitable organizations and the specific groups. The CRG would assist in outlining the project, its needs, and participation in the engagement process.

Method Description: Open Houses that are informal and interactive public meetings designed for structured "drop-in" participation by community members. They can be organized at the beginning of the process (introduce a community to a project) — or at the end of a process. (e.g. to gain feedback from material generated through other consultation processes). A SpeakOut can occur in multiple places at different times to ensure maximum engagement.

Method Description: Meetings that are designated for specific groups of people that have interest in the project, or should be engaged in the project, so planners and developers can listen and learn from their discussions.

Method Description: An informal platform where people can discuss their ideas and feel comfortable doing so (i.e. a coffee shop environment). Aims to gain an understanding of the experiences of groups in the urban environment and how their lives are shaped by where they live.

Method Description: Create a webpage, advertise, conduct outreach via social media, and directly call and email community members and community groups to inform them of the project and invite them to collaborate in the planning process. Online surveys can also be sent to begin the consultation process. Send paper mail to individuals and communities who don't have access to technology.

Tools you can use: Online Survey, Online Workshops, Social Media

Note: These tools are applicable to all engagement groups listed on pages 5 to 16. When selecting which tools to use, we recommend including input from the groups you are hoping to engage, and focusing on groups you've identified as highest priority for your project.

Phase 2

Capture community input. Consult and involve the community in the planning process through a vibrant engagement process that fosters discussion. Then, collect and apply the feedback, and adjust plans accordingly.

Collect Feedback

In all Phases, we recommend you pause at the end to take time to gather feedback; evaluate what was learned, and build it into the next Phase.

| Community Boards and Writing Walls | Community Mapping/ Workshops | Urban Diagnosis | Surveys | Reinvent Traditional Participation Methods | Increase Funding and Data Transparency |

Method Description:
Offer people an informal participation board that planners can monitor and incorporate ideas from. Boards or Writing Walls can be set up in neighbourhoods for people to pop by and share their ideas.

Method Description:
Ask people to create a visual map to illustrate how they view their area. Mapping is a useful way to engage people of all levels of capability. A variety of aspects can be mapped including land use, community assets, facilities, and transportation options to develop a snapshot of an area. This can be done in person or conducted online.

Method Description:
An exploratory walk with various groups of a local environment to identify certain attributes of the environment. This will help ensure "real world examples" are highlighted. Make sure vision and priorities align with the planned build and/or site changes.

Tools you can use:
Neighbourhood Participatory Process, Recitoire Tool.

Method Description:
Surveys are a useful tool to identify the needs and views of a large number of people in a standard format. They can be distributed online, via text, or in paper format if you have opportunities as part of the process that you are bringing people together. This is a great way to collect quantitative and qualitative data. In some communities, there might be a need to drop off paper surveys at a central point – like a community centre – and pick the completed surveys up later, based on access to technology. Depending on the audiences you are wanting to engage, consider making the survey available in languages other than English.

Method Description:
Planners must think outside of the box and implement strategies that may not be often used but will most likely have significant positive impacts on the participation of various groups.

Tools you can use:
Advocacy Training, Community Boards and Writing Walls, Urban Diagnosis, Public Art Session.

Method Description:
Planners should look to make information more available and transparent for communities and increase funding for groups that may be underfunded.

Note: These tools are applicable to all engagement groups listed on pages 5 to 16. When selecting which tools to use, we recommend including input from the groups you are hoping to engage, and focusing on groups you've identified as highest priority for your project.

Other tools that can be used during this phase:
Storytelling Conversations and Cafe Style Table Discussions, Public Meeting, Open Space Meeting.

Phase 3

Further engage community members to collaborate in the planning process. Continue to collect input from the community and apply it to the project.

Collect Feedback

In all Phases, we recommend you pause at the end to take time to gather feedback; evaluate what was learned, and build it into the next Phase.

Community Workshop

Method Description:
Community workshops involve bringing community members together to work through an issue and/or develop solutions. Depending on the workshop design, and the problem being discussed, community workshops can be used to inform, consult, involve, or collaborate. This could include a Community Mapping exercise.

Public Art Session

Method Description:
Facilitated sessions that encourage community members to participate in planning processes using art to express their ideas and create a vision for the future of their communities.

Community Summit

Method Description:
An event, typically that is held over one or two days for participants, focused on particular issues or on a particular community/demographic group. It can include a range of interactive, collaborative, and deliberative tools and techniques. This can be a great tool to incorporate other methods such as using art and creativity, community mapping, etc.

Design Charrette Sessions

Method Description:
A Design Charrette is another engagement tool that is held over several days. These generally involve community members and groups, the project team, planning and design professionals, and technical experts. Participants work in small groups and collaboratively work together to identify trends and issues regarding a project's design and development plan – including any constraints, opportunities, and solutions.

Pop-up Urbanism

Method Description:
Low-cost interventions to help community members experience proposed changes before they are implemented. Typically, changes relate to streetscapes, and public and community spaces (e.g. temporary bike lanes or outdoor patio spaces).

Online Forums

Method Description:
Online discussion forums can take place on various platforms such as Facebook, online surveys, social networking, ratings, voting, and digital interactive TV. Web-based activities enable people to choose where, when, and for how long they want to participate. This allows community members to post comments and engage in dialogue about the project in question.

Note: These tools are applicable to all engagement groups listed on pages 5 to 16. When selecting which tools to use, we recommend including input from the groups you are hoping to engage, and focusing on groups you've identified as highest priority for your project.

Other tools that can be used during this phase: Focus Groups, Storytelling Conversations and Cafe Style Table Discussions.

Phase 4

Empower community members to make decisions on the project.
Finalize input and prepare report.

Advocacy Training	Participatory Budget Making	Citizens Jury	Citizens Panel	Finalize and compile feedback

Method Description:
Empower community members to participate in planning processes, and provide them tools and training to communicate directly with decision makers including elected officials. This involves training in public speaking and facilitation.

Method Description:
Community members make decisions on how to spend part of a public budget. This allows taxpayers to work with government staff and decision makers to make the budget decisions that impact their lives.

Method Description:
A group of citizens, who are representative of the general public, meet to consider a complex issue by gathering evidence, deliberating, and then reaching a decision. Typically, an advisory panel with expertise in the area examines the jury's findings or reports and determines what, if any, actions should be taken as a result of the recommendations/decisions. These meetings could be in person or online.

Method Description:
A citizens panel involves ongoing panels of a large group of representatives from the local community (approx. 1,000 to 2,000) who deliberate on various issues over a certain period of time. The panel is surveyed several times a year by mail, telephone, or online to understand community attitudes, feedback, issues, and behaviour.

Method Description:
Since this is the final Phase, it is important to develop and implement a plan to connect with all participants and thank them for their contribution. Provide an overview of how their community input helped to shape the process. Attach a summary of the engagement report. Allow time for the community to provide feedback on the engagement report. Then, find a way for them to be kept up to date on next steps.

Note: These tools are applicable to all engagement groups listed on pages 5 to 16. When selecting which tools to use, we recommend including input from the groups you are hoping to engage, and focusing on groups you've identified as highest priority for your project.

Framework to increase engagement

As you go through the Phases of engagement, we've created a list of 10 "framework" components that should be embedded to ensure ease of access to engagement events and tools through location, time, etc.

1 Create a warm and inviting engagement space that meets the needs of the various groups

It's important to create an environment where every participant feels like they belong and wants to contribute. The presence of different foods help create a warm environment. Consider the layout of the room, and take into consideration individual and collective needs.

2 Increase accessible participation locations

Facilitate discussion and participation activities in locations where marginalized groups can easily get to, and are familiar with – for example, local community centres. When selecting a location, think about how close it is to public transit. In addition, think about how someone with accessibility needs could navigate to and around the space, including entry/exit and use of washroom facilities.

3 Offer varying participation times and durations

Everyone has a different schedule. Hold events at varying times throughout the day and week, to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate. Document outcomes of meetings so if a participant misses one, they feel like they can "jump back in" on the discussion and continue to feel valued in the process.

4 Include free transit/ride share programs

Offer groups vouchers or coupons that provide free local transit to meetings or introduce rideshare programs where volunteers can go pick up people who might need assistance getting to and from sessions.

Framework to
increase engagement

5 Use digital technology/communications

Include more online services that fosters collaboration and discussion to ensure physical presence does not equal participation. Ensure accessibility in digital tools as well. At the same time – don't rely 100% on digital solutions. There are members of marginalized communities that may not have access to technology, which could limit their ability to participate, unless you have other options as well.

7 Provide incentives (gift cards, food, etc.)

Incentives show participants that their time, and input, are valued. For some community members, incentives can also be a motivator to encourage their initial or continued participation because they are being compensated for their time in practical ways that also provide them with much needed assistance.

6 Hire translators/ASL interpreters to overcome language barriers

Wherever possible, written/printed material should be provided in different languages. Provide audio options, when possible. When consulting in person, interpreters should be hired to overcome language barriers. If hearing or visually impaired community members are attending, braille and ASL interpreters should be hired.

8 Provide free child care

Parents and guardians, particularly single parents, with young children should have the opportunity to participate in community consultations. Provide free childcare for participants. Invite children to meetings or meetings could be organized to take place during a child play group to ensure parent participation.

Framework to increase engagement

9 Consult in advance with community leaders or Elders

If you are planning to engage with members of a community, take the time to understand their culture and ways of interacting with one another. Seek out the advice of those who are considered leaders by members of that community, and get their input prior to conducting outreach to ensure your approach and interactions are appropriate and would provide a safe and inviting space for authentic interactions. Compensate these leaders for their input and advice in a way that also aligns with what would be appropriate.

10 Take time to listen, be receptive, and act on feedback provided

The most important point in ensuring engagement is to actively listen to what community members have to say, to respond to their feedback, and act on it.

Community Engagement
Toolkit Matrix

Community Engagement Toolkit Matrix (pdf)

The Community Engagement Toolkit Matrix provides you with options on how to approach the various engagement groups. This document was adapted from a community engagement tools options matrix that was published in 2017 by The State of Queensland, Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning. This matrix incorporated the five levels of public participation as defined by the International Association of Public Participation IAP2 Spectrum.
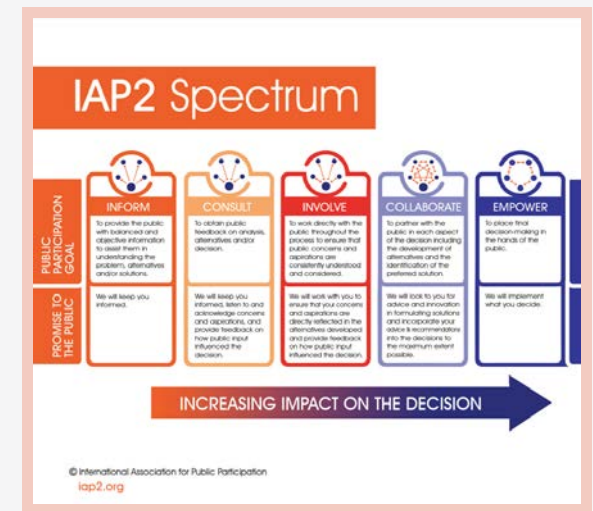
IAP2 Spectrum (pdf)

With permission from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), we've also included a link to the IAP2 Spectrum to provide you with more details on each of the five levels of participation.

www.iap2.org

Additional resources

Pre-planning Questionnaire and Framework (pdf)

The Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia created two engagement plan worksheets that can be used to help you plan in advance for your community engagement process. We've included them as a useful reference tool as part of this toolkit.

Source: https://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/community-engagement-toolkit.pdf
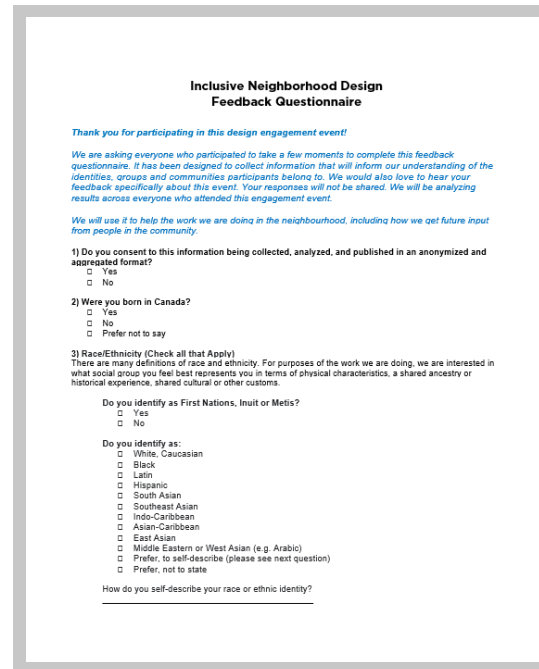
Feedback Questionnaire (docx)

The feedback questionnaire will help you receive honest feedback from participants to: (1) foster transparent communication with the community (2) to evaluate whether equity has been appropriately incorporated in the engagement activity (3) to build input into the moving forward development and process overall.

Case studies

Melbourne, Australia

With representation of approximately 140 different cultures, the city of Melbourne acknowledges and takes pride in its diversity (City of Melbourne, n.d.). Alongside acknowledging the value of its diverse population, Melbourne has created a strong political process and guiding framework to manage community engagement and ensure these diverse voices are heard (Katsonis, 2019). As a member of the International Association for Public Participation, city officials, and planners work to not only follow, but constantly reinvent best practices for community engagement (Chuong et al., 2012).

Through an evaluation of the Future Melbourne 2026 project, in which community members developed a 10 year plan for the city, Katsonis (2019) argues that strong city leadership is necessary for a strong engagement process. Several other best practices can be identified through this project, including the importance of outlining clear objectives and scope for the project early on in the process, and allocating an appropriate amount of time and resources prior to the start of a project (Katsonis, 2019). Melbourne's guiding framework is based on four foundational pillars (Chuong et al., 2012):

1. People
2. Practice
3. Policy
4. Performance

Each pillar involves guiding principles and best practices that can inform community engagement in the context of the Region of Waterloo.

Pillar 1 - People - emphasizes the importance of building organizational or project member's capacity to conduct community engagement activities in an equitable manner (Chuong et al., 2012).

Pillar 2 - Practice - requires that meaningful community engagement is integrated into organizational and project culture (Chuong et al., 2012).

Pillar 3 - Policy - requires that any policy or project development follows recognized community engagement principles (Chuong et al., 2012).

Pillar 4 - Performance - highlights the need to reflect upon and evaluate this process to ensure it is current and as effective as possible (Chuong et al., 2012).

Melbourne, Australia Case Study

The City of Melbourne is increasingly being recognized for its use of authentic and innovative community engagement techniques (U4SSC, 2020). The city and even the broader state of Victoria, Australia, encourages a departure from traditional methods that have been known to be non-inclusive (Chuong et al., 2012).

One interesting example of an innovative method is known as "Appreciative Inquiry" in which the aim is to create an interview or storytelling type of environment to gain perspective on certain topics, issues, or projects (Chuong et al., 2012). Another example is a "Kitchen Table Conversation" where a public official joins a community member(s) at their home to discuss an issue or project, and gain insight from their perspective or experience (U4SSC, 2020).

These methods are viewed as positive ways of engaging with the local community. Several best practices can be extracted from them. For example, when these techniques are used early in the engagement process, the community feels as though their voices are truly being heard and being used to inform a project (Savic, 2015). Going directly to the community, and people you want to hear from, can eliminate barriers for these populations to participate (U4SSC, 2020).

Case studies

Amsterdam, Netherlands Case Study
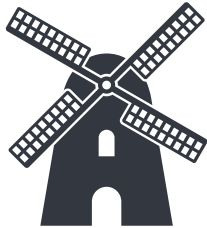
Netherlands is known for cutting edge urban design when it comes to sustainability and minimizing environmental impacts. Its capital, Amsterdam, is not only known as a sustainable city, but a Smart City as well (Capra, 2018). While Smart Cities tend to be associated with technology and technological advancement, the Smart City project in Amsterdam aims to bring citizens together in order to help contribute to urban development projects (Capra, 2018).

In order to improve the lives and quality of life of citizens within a community, a Smart City aims to create engagement by meaningfully connecting all citizens, the local developer community, artists and cultural institutions, entrepreneurs, start-ups, universities, and companies in order to create an accessible and inclusive city (Bates, n.d.).

Amsterdam's Smart City project is part of the Amsterdam Economic Board, the organization that works on the future of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. It aims to create better streets and neighbourhoods by following three main principles (Bates, n.d.):

1. Two-way interaction between citizens and the private sector within the scope of Smart City development (i.e., policy dialogue, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics) that gives citizens an equitable stake in smart city decision-making and outcomes;

2. Equitable access to information and data (accessible to all people including those that use assistive technologies);

3. Closing the feedback loop (i.e., a two-way interaction providing a tangible response to citizen feedback) to meet citizens' needs and expectations for change as created by their engagement and interaction.

By following these principles, Amsterdam's Smart City program ensures that the innovations actually contribute to cleaner, greener, and happier cities by using data and technology to increase the quality of life. Through focusing on citizen and stakeholder collaboration through public-private partnerships, complex issues can be solved by working together to meet common goals (Values First, n.d.).

The Amstelkwartier area in Amsterdam has a rich history, and is unique for its location in the city and the current residents and business owners in the area (Tuinzing, n.d.). By using the Smart City guidelines, the main Amstelkwartier stakeholders (Comprised of

entrepreneurs, real estate developers, artists, and citizens - both from the area and who visit it) and the municipality of Amsterdam collaborated to create key themes for Amstelkwartier:

1. Water (swim spot, triathlon, water taxi, water museum)
2. History (Rembrandt paint spot, art route, storytelling)
3. Circularity (compost project, Energy exchange, water loops,
4. City meets the green rural area
5. Day to day needs (Safety, shops, health, etc.)

These key themes were plugged into the Smart City guidelines to create projects that would be able to address the key themes for Amstelkwartier. Example projects include: a Circularity compost project (collects plastic and wastewater to generate energy and turn waste into new material), Amstelkwartier Safety project (smart public lighting systems), and mobility projects (e-bikes, electric cars).

These projects were not only able to improve the unique identity of Amstelkwartier in Amsterdam, but the initiative created collaboration through numerous engagement groups to create mutual improvement in a location that is important and accessible to all residents and countless visitors.

Case studies

Houston, Texas Case Study

Houston, Texas is America's most diverse city (Greater Houston Partnership, 2021). While issues of systemic racism and racial inequity still exist in the city, many successful community empowerment initiatives have arisen. Project Row Houses (PRH) is Houston, Texas' most successful community experiment that uses art, engagement, and direct action as a way to enrich neighbourhoods (Anspon, 2018).

PRH uses local artists and residents in the planning process for redevelopment plans, reflecting on the respective area's history and culture. This organization uses affordable housing as a strategy to emphasize community engagement through inclusion, and equitable outcomes by placemaking (Ladet & Burrowes, 2018).

Placemaking begins with collaboration between citizens to improve the local environment which goes beyond urban design and supports locally unique patterns of use (McConnell Foundation, 2021). The intersection of community development and art are at the forefront of PRH, which assists in the materialization of longlasting opportunities in marginalized communities. The Project Row site is located in Houston's Third Ward, which is one of the oldest African American neighbourhoods in Houston. Over 25 years, the site now encompasses five city blocks

and 39 housing structures, which provide a space for a variety of community initiatives such as art programs and neighbourhood development activities. Groups who have been empowered through PRH include young single mothers with children, small local enterprises, artists interested in enriching the lives of others, and under resourced neighbours (Project Row Houses, 2021).

Although the PRH initiatives are deeply rooted in the Houston Third Ward, the work achieved extends beyond and the models used for art and social engagement applies to diverse communities all over the world (Project Row Houses, 2021). A key focus for the programming at PRH is to stabilize affordable housing. In 2003 the organization created a branch of its organization called Row House CDC, which evolved out of citizen participation in the Young Mothers Residential Program. A need for housing and social services for young mothers was recognized through this program, where there was a need to foster interdependence and independence.

Row House CDC now provides permanent affordable housing to low-to-moderate incomes now, and as of 2018 had created housing for 56 families (Ladet & Burrowes, 2018).

What makes this case unique is the organization's ability to exercise equitable development, while simultaneously empowering the community legacy and at the same time supporting long-time residents by working against displacement and gentrification through

placemaking. Tying community significance to a space through place-making fosters thriving community spaces. Using a place-making lens, for understanding social value and individuals needs for groups of residents occupying new affordable development projects, can leverage culturally rich and healthy spaces people flourish in.

Place-making strategies and planning efforts emphasize strategies to reimagine a space while also promoting equity with new developments. This project demonstrates that forward-thinking, intentional and equity-based processes can revive an area and reap positive and shared benefits for longstanding and new residents (Ladet & Burrowes, 2018).

As quoted from the Executive Director of PRH, "equitable growth for a community means that residents grow alongside it and that the community continues to grow because of its residents" (Ladet & Burrowes, 2018). The following approaches were taken for equitable placemaking, and all collectively point to the importance of early community engagement:

1. Development of an inventory list of amenities and buildings in the targeted area
2. Encouragement of economic diversity through mixed-income developments
3. Communication of affordable housing initiatives or opportunities to business owners and current residents
4. Increase the awareness of public assistance opportunities for business owners and residents throughout the redevelopment (Ladet & Burrowes, 2018).

Case studies

Vancouver, British Columbia Case Study

Vancouver is known for being one of the most vibrant and livable cities in Canada. It is also recognized as a leader in contributing to sustainable best practices (City of Vancouver, n.d). The city has community plans in place that are used as guiding documents to help create complete communities. For these plans to be successful, citizens have always been encouraged to participate in municipal and community related matters (City of Vancouver, n.d).

This has helped initiate and develop successful engagement practices and strategic plans for building complete communities. The city incorporates the following guiding principles to inform the way community engagement is facilitated:

- Accountability
- Inclusiveness
- Transparency
- Commitment
- Responsiveness

These guiding principles are adapted from Metro Vancouver (a federation of 21 municipalities including the City of Vancouver) These principles are incorporated in

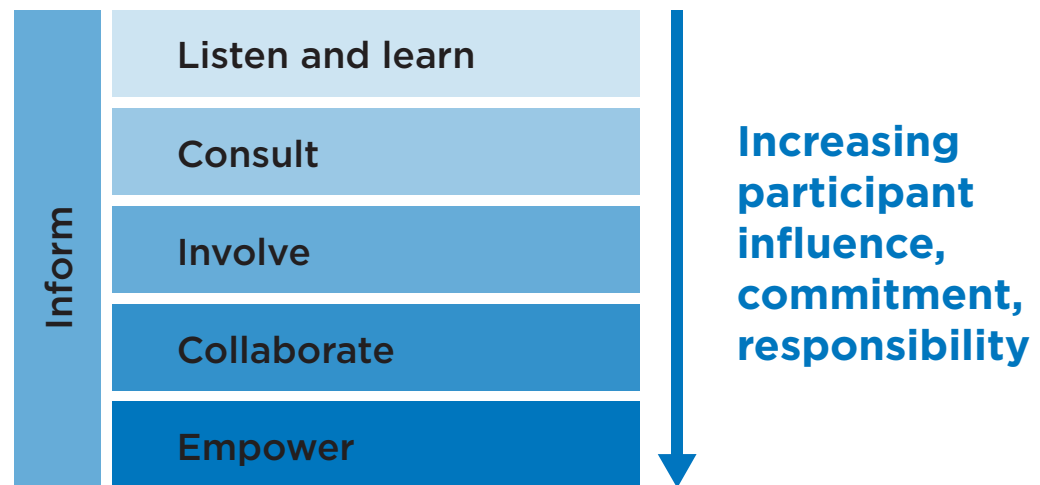community engagement plans and strategies (Metro Vancouver, n.d).

It is a common practice in the City of Vancouver to facilitate public engagement that addresses issues of common importance, gathers insights from different focus groups, solves shared problems, and is focused on engaging the community to create a positive social change and collaborative environment for decision-making (City of Vancouver, n.d).

City officials have shown a strong focus and commitment to ensure Indigenous communities are included in the engagement process through information sharing and

ongoing communication (Metro Vancouver, n.d). The City of Vancouver uses the IAP2 Spectrum, where many of the core values of public participation from this framework helps to design, inform and guide their engagement processes as shown in the diagram below.

A variety of methods are used to engage the community including digital surveys, community meetings, dialogue sessions, in-person interviews and outreach initiatives because their engagement process takes a very broad-based public engagement approach (Planning Vancouver Together, 2020, p.4).

IAP2 Spectrum

Inform	Listen and learn
	Consult
	Involve
	Collaborate
	Empower

Increasing participant influence, commitment, responsibility

(City of Vancouver, n.d)

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ABOUT WATERLOO REGION COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) collaborates with partners to create sustainable, equitable and thriving communities. We connect regionally and locally, working with three cities and four townships – to include the people and places across our region. Together, we develop forward-thinking innovative solutions and seize opportunities to meet current and future needs of our community.

We make philanthropy easy for individuals and companies to support organizations and issues they care about. WRCF is focused on Granting, Impact Investing and Convening to make measurable and sustainable impacts. Gifts are directed to WRCF's endowed funds that drive positive change through grants with the income generated being distributed in partnership with Fundholders to support a wide range of charitable causes within our community. A portion of the endowed funds are also used for impact investments that deliver both financial returns as well as positive social or environmental outcomes.

As a leading community-building organization, we also work to amplify voices and issues of importance by convening conversations and sharing information, while approaching our work with an equity mindset. www.wrcf.ca

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