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1 INTRODUCTION

This Community Engagement Manual sets the approach for implementing a series of communication, consultation and participatory activities that will involve the public in decision making for the Plan Cumberland Municipal Planning Strategy Review. This document is a tool for project leaders, to establish a shared understanding of the big picture and rationale behind the engagement activities. This document also clarifies the tasks, roles and timelines that will structure the engagement process.

1.1 BACKGROUND + PURPOSE

The Municipality of the County of Cumberland is currently undergoing important administrative updates to its Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use Bylaws. This is the first comprehensive review since their adoption in 1993, and it seeks to harmonize repeated plan amendments, as well as the plans and regulations of Springhill and Parrsboro. Perhaps more importantly, the MPS review presents a tremendous opportunity to address challenges and identify opportunities, charting a course for how the communities of Cumberland will change over the next 20 to 30 years. Overarching policies of the MPS that are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the public can be a powerful tool for guiding the Municipality toward a future that is expected and desirable.

Recognizing the importance that policy is practical for residents and landowners, the project Steering Committee is undertaking an engagement process that will enable broad public participation and result in transparent, well-informed decision-making. It will be implemented by Committee members, the project team at UPLAND, municipal staff, and Councillors, using a range of methods.

The process will bring forward assets and challenges as residents perceive them. The public will be asked to consider what they envision for the future of the Municipality with a focus on land use matters. It will demonstrate themes of collective opinion and identify some key priorities upon which to guide MPS policies.

1.2 ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Community engagement is a core task of the Project Steering Committee, and most Committee members, both staff and Council will take up leadership of engagement tasks based on their interests and networks. There are also some staff and Councillors who do not sit on the Steering Committee but are also playing roles in the engagement process.

Engagement Team members will undertake outreach activities, initiate dialogue with their peers, and handle the logistics of planning and implementation. There is a shared understanding of the goals and bigger picture, as each person focuses on their communications and activities. The local team members hold relationships and foster trusting connections with stakeholders and the public. The consultant team members provide strategic direction, materials, facilitation, and integrate the findings into the final MPS. The whole team should also remain open to the potential for new members who may wish to champion particular engagement activities.

In early November 2016, the Engagement Team came together for a planning workshop to define a shared approach and create consensus about the engagement priorities.

1.3 PLANNING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

A 6-hour engagement workshop was held on November 8th, at the Joggins Fossil Museum. It was attended by 12 people, including staff and Council with the Municipality, and the consulting team.

The workshop began with participants sitting in a circle for introductions and setting the principles and agenda for the day. Each person shared a bit about places in Cumberland they enjoy, as well as a story about a time that they felt truly heard.

The first activity was to identify the purpose of the engagement process, by gathering in groups of 4 people to discuss aspirations for process, what residents need, and what it could inspire. Participants recorded major points and framed their ideas as ambitions, insights, questions, and takeaways.

The group moved into an activity that brought limitations and fears to the surface. Participants were asked to consider which perceived obstacles may be tangible, deciding factors at play, and which ones may simply be limiting beliefs which prevent taking alternative routes. Several commonly held fears or concerns emerged, demonstrating a high degree of shared points of view. Only potential future dissolutions or governance changes were identified as binding restrictions.

Shifting gears, there was a presentation about the continuum of public participation, and the different engagement tactics or methods that can be used for different purposes. This gave participants a broad view of what exists, to consider what might be possible locally. After lunch the group came back to a short teaching on the meaning of a good question. Participants were then asked to reflect in solitude, and create questions that could be asked about various issues. These questions were then grouped into different themes.

For the last few hours of the workshop participants delved into workshops that focused on the specific context of their communities and planning issues. Small groups worked through a brainstorming session to list the community assets that would enable engagement. Using a template, resources were identified for:

- Locations or events for reaching the public throughout Cumberland
- Individuals and organizations who may be champions or stakeholders
- Key demographics to target as audiences for engagement

The final activity brought together all of the learnings and reflection of the day, to co-design a series of community engagement actions. Participants were asked to lead a conversation about an idea or opportunity they want to commit to organizing and implementing. These were placed into an agenda, and other participants entered the conversations they felt drawn to. A strong set of engagement activities ultimately emerging from this exercise.



2 APPROACH



This work is being undertaken through a shared point of view and mutual understanding of the core rationale and context. The approach is composed of principles, uncertainties, audiences, stakeholders and questions which guide the engagement actions to be taken.

2.1 PRINCIPLES

The community engagement team is guided by the following set of principles:

- Give a compelling invitation and ask very good questions
- Foster community knowledge and ownership
- Face outwardly, be interactive, and occupy everyday places
- Demonstrate that the public is being heard
- Lead constructive and proactive dialogue
- Build trust and accountability

2.2 UNCERTAINTIES

Collaborative public engagement is an exciting and potentially chaotic approach to gathering input. It involves some unknowns, especially as a team enters into this new way of working for the first time. By articulating these uncertainties they become manageable, and can actually help move into more creative and useful ways of working. The following fears or worries, and responses, are tools for approaching this work:

No one will be interested or want to participate	→	Base the work in real life issues and reach out
Only contrarian or critical views will be shared	→	Respect concerns and focus on solutions
There won't be any consensus or themes	→	Always record input and listen for commonalities
There isn't enough time or resources	→	Collaborate with the team to maintain shared priorities

2.3 TARGET AUDIENCES

It can be useful to consider “the public” as a series of groups, or audiences, rather than as one cohesive entity. Specific engagement activities can be tailored to each audience based on their generally similar lifestyle or shared issues. The engagement team will tailor engagement methods to the needs of each audience, with inquiries that are important to them.

Youth

In general, youth 14-21 years of age tend to be excluded from public processes, and lack awareness of governance and administration systems. Most decisions that affect youth are made for them, and this can result in disinterest toward being involved in community issues. From a practical point of view, youth usually have routine schedules that they must adhere to, and they experience challenges with transportation, especially among rural youth.

Young Families and Professionals

Young families and professionals are often highly concerned about public issues, and willing to provide constructive input. The primary constraint for this group is time; they are very busy with careers and raising children, and are usually not available to join public meetings or presentations. Careful consideration must be given to timing and format of meetings intended to accommodate them. Consultation online or in everyday places are important tools

Seniors

People 65 years and older are a large and diverse segment of the community. They understand how places and issues have evolved over their lifetimes. Most seniors have enough free time for involvement in community matters, and can attend meetings. Communication methods for seniors require careful consideration, as traditional media (papers, radio) have become less dominant. Online consultation may also not be accessible to many seniors.

Businesses

Despite the wide diversity within businesses, land use policies have a bearing on virtually all of them and it is likely that business operators have had past experiences with permitting or regulations. Most business operators are very busy people without much spare time, and may also have quite specific concerns or ideas.

Seasonal Residents and Cottage Owners

On the Amherst and Fundy shores many properties are only occupied during the summer months, while cabins in the Wentworth Valley are primarily used in the winter. Seasonal residents play an important economic role, but can be difficult to reach or involve in local issues. Consultation methods must respond to their presence in the area.

2.4 STAKEHOLDERS

In order to maximize and assess the reach of the community engagement, it is useful to list and track the groups and individuals who are involved. A centralized document will list names, organizations, and contact information, as well as notes on how each stakeholder was contacted. Stakeholders will be grouped into thematic categories based on location or area of interest, including:

- agriculture
- fisheries
- small or home-based businesses
- mid-size business
- industrial operators
- sport, recreation and leisure
- environmental conservation
- events and festivals
- community development organizations
- community service providers
- tourism destinations
- schools
- other governments/ politicians
- farmers' markets
- seniors associations
- volunteer fire departments
- museums/ heritage groups

2.5 KEY QUESTIONS

It is important to ask genuine, memorable questions, raising points that are thought provoking and generate curiosity, stimulate reflective conversation, surface underlying assumptions, and generates more question. For Plan Cumberland, the following series of questions can guide conversation throughout implementation of the engagement activities.

What will your Cumberland be?

- What would you like to see stay the same?
- What do you wish could be different?
- What are you hopeful about?
- What do you worry about for the future?

Development

- What has been your experience with municipal development regulations?
- To what extent should the municipality guide where development can and cannot occur?
- Are there ways that municipal regulations hold you back from a goal you have for your home, business or property?

Business and Industry

- How could small business be supported by municipal land use policies?
- What roadblocks do small businesses face in our community?
- Are there opportunities for more home based businesses?
- What type or scale of business should not be allowed to operate from homes?
- Have you been impacted by industrial land uses?
- In what sort of locations should industrial land uses be located?

Coastal Issues

- How does coastal erosion affect your community?
- To what extent should the municipality take measures to protect people and property from coastal hazards?
- What type of development, if any, should be permitted in flood plains

Agriculture

- What sort of farming should be promoted more widely?
- Is there any type of agriculture that should be limited or restricted more carefully?
- Should there be policies in place to set aside some agricultural land and restrict it from other types of development?

Energy

- How do we encourage and promote renewable energy development in the new planning strategy?
- What regulations should we have concerning energy development, like wind turbines, geothermal, or fracking?
- How will we promote energy initiatives?

Population Decline

- What conditions do young people and new families need in order to feel at home?
- Are there policies that would help attract or retain young people?
- What do older residents need in order to be happy and safe in their home communities?
- How can we best plan for a future with a small population?

Housing

- What types of housing are missing or in short supply?
- Should housing be directed toward certain areas or should people be able to live anywhere?
- Are there certain types of housing that are overly abundant?
- Are there concerns about the condition of quality of housing?

Transportation

- How do you get where you need to go?
- Do you experience challenges getting to the places you need to go?

3 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



Four types of engagement activities will be implemented:

- Communication
 - Creative Outreach
 - Meetings
 - Surveys
-

3.1 COMMUNICATION

Outcome: to raise awareness about the Plan Cumberland process, enable informed dialogue through improved public knowledge of land use planning functions, promote specific engagement activities, and share the engagement results.

Website: this resource provides a centralized location for sharing information with the public for the duration of the project. It will also enable providing input through online surveys.

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Expert Presentations: Some planning issues should be explored in greater detail, and are of a nature that warrants explanation by an expert. It is of educational value to explore these issues in a public forum.

Print: A series of printed materials will be used in a variety of ways, including: promotional business cards, a poster, display boards, branded stickers (I 'heart' Cumberland), and a pamphlet for the tax bill mail out.

Newspaper: A press release will be issued at the launch of the project, during the height of engagement activities, and when the plan is finalized. This will be enhanced by interviews or other earned coverage of activities taking place.

Social Media: Social media content will be generated through the UPLAND Facebook profile, to be shared among individuals and organizations in Cumberland. This will include announcement of events, photographs, and reports.

Engagement Summary Report: A user friendly report will capture the input received, including important themes, points of contention, specific directions and priority issues.

3.2 OUTREACH

Outcome: Trust in the engagement process and a set of broad themes that depict high level issues, aspirations, and values.

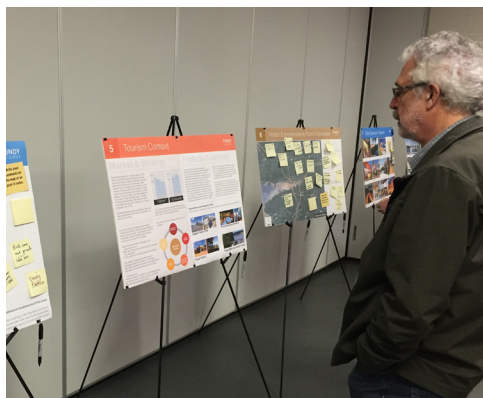
These approaches will be place-based, implemented in spaces where people regularly spend time. The creative outreach activities will encourage participation by making it fun and easy. It will enable people to express their lived experiences and personal values in their own voices, and will demonstrate a genuine acknowledgment of others' views.



Presentations to Community Groups: Various members of the engagement team will conduct presentations that will provide information about Plan Cumberland, and focus on what is most relevant to the audience. Multiple presentations may also be given to the same community group to maintain their involvement and to gather feedback on specific issues as the draft program progresses. The presenter will also pose relevant questions and collect responses, as well as distribute an evaluation and sign-up sheet.

Speech Bubble Pop-ups: The creative tool for gathering input at pop-up engagements will be a portable speech bubble. A facilitator will invite members of the public to provide a comment or idea, and will write it on an oversized speech bubble using a dry erase marker. The participant will then have their photo taken with their bubble statement. The photos will be compiled and put on the project website. The interactions around the speech bubble enable a light hearted place to respond to in-the-moment inquiries in an open and public format.

Display Boards: The boards will hold general information about why and how we plan, and the project process. They can be set up to stand alone, or can be combined with other engagement activities or materials.



Post Cards: The post card feature a photograph on one side, and a few general questions on the back. They are distributed during any in-person engagement activity and can be taken home to complete and submit later, by drop off at predetermined locations.

Youth Photo Project: High school students will take photos of the places that matter to them, in order to visually represent their values and own experiences. The project will be facilitated by a staff person partnered with teacher, and rooted within the school system curriculum. Participants will be asked to take photos which will be interpreted collaboratively and may be exhibited in a public location.

3.3 MEETINGS



Outcome: Deep understanding on specific issues or of points of view, that will directly influence policy on specific important issues, and established trust in the process among community champions.

Workshops: Certain issues will involve building consensus and creating a shared understanding, in order to make tough choices. Workshops are participatory processes be done with the involvement of diverse individuals, as it enables seeing a different perspective on what is commonly, or individually, perceived. Having differing views in the room together helps everyone understand the full scope of an issue. UPLAND will organize and host a general workshop with the Council, as well as public workshops on coastal development, housing, and working from home.

Interviews:

In order to build relationships with stakeholders, and foster support for the new MPS the engagement team will meet for one-on-one interviews. Probing certain points with follow-up questions is a key feature of interviews. There are various styles of interview, but in this case a guided approach will be taken, with general areas of information to be collected and shared and flexibility to adapt questions in conversation. Depending on the people involved, either a one-on-one interview or a focus group may be preferable. The specific individuals who will be interviewed will be identified in the stakeholder tracking document and outreach schedule.

3.4 SURVEYS

Outcomes: Quantifiable relative prevalence of the opinions, needs and concerns about land use issues held by the general public.

The surveys will enable people to provide anonymous input without interference or time restrictions. The results will have uniformity that will allow for standardized interpretation and generalization. They will be promoted as an online survey, but paper copies may be made available through the Municipality.

Chambers of Commerce Survey: An online survey can be completed by business owners any time that is convenient for them. It will explore issues related to mobile business vendors, agriculture livestock, and home base business. It will also inquire about how doing business in Cumberland compares to other parts of the province, and experiences with development permits and the NS Building Codes.

Public Survey on Significant Changes to the MPS: An online survey will be open to the public in order to collect feedback about particular proposed policies or revisions. It will present the draft MSP and draw attention to the sections that were most influenced by public or stakeholder input.

4 IMPLEMENTATION



Bringing the engagement process to fruition is an extremely action-oriented undertaking. It is dynamic and participatory, meaning that the results of first phases, and input from participants, will influence the content design of the later phases. Materials are developed as they are needed for each action, applied in practice, and then adapted as appropriate.

4.1 TEAM CHECK-IN CALLS

Implementation requires ongoing collaboration among the engagement team. This will include check-in conversations at least every two weeks to discuss emerging themes or issues, develop materials or content, distribute the tasks of planning and coordinating logistics, and defining roles. Each call will take around 1 hour and will close with action items for completion before then next call. UPLAND staff, Nelson and Allie will participate in each call, and others on a revolving basis, depending on the piece of the engagement we are focused on at a particular time.

4.2 PREPARATIONS + FOLLOW-UP

At the outset of each action, some or all of the following preparations will be carried out:

- Acquire the required resources and materials
- Assess stakeholder list and determine who to contact
- Secure any permissions to access a property or speak to people
- Arrange times or locations
- Prepare and distribute advance promotion, if necessary

Similarly, the following tasks may be required to ensure that activities are tracked and measured:

- Record the number of people reached, by doing a head count, tracking the quantity of print materials that are distributed, or with an attendance sheet
- Collect email addresses, for follow-up and ongoing communication
- Distribute feedback form when appropriate

Lastly, it is essential to document or otherwise record all input that is provided throughout the engagement:

- Take photos when appropriate
- Write down what people say. It is essential to record all points of view, even those that may seem contrary to the project objectives, so that trust is established. This is best done by using a flip chart that everyone can see.
- Send photos and written notes to the consulting team, and call or email with any follow-up impressions or undocumented points

4.3 RESOURCE LIST

The following list of materials, content and supplies will be created as tools for the implementation.

- Communication materials: business cards/ business card poster stand, promotional business cards, a poster, display boards, branded stickers, and a pamphlet for the tax bill mail out
- Press releases
- PowerPoint presentation and notes
- Evaluation questionnaire and contact sign-up sheet
- Speech bubble supply list
- Creative outreach hosting guide
- Photo voice hosting guide
- Display panels
- Post cards
- Stakeholder tracking document
- Outreach schedule

4.4 FIRST STEPS

Starting the engagement process works best by diving right in. The engagement team can begin at the earliest convenient time by doing outreach presentations with community groups.

The first few team check-in calls will focus on organizing and tracking stakeholder engagement, to define who will be responsible for what, and the methods to be used. Simultaneously we will define the schedule for outreach activities. Upon completion of these organizational tools the engagement team will have a clear path forward.