

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

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

...forming an international standard.

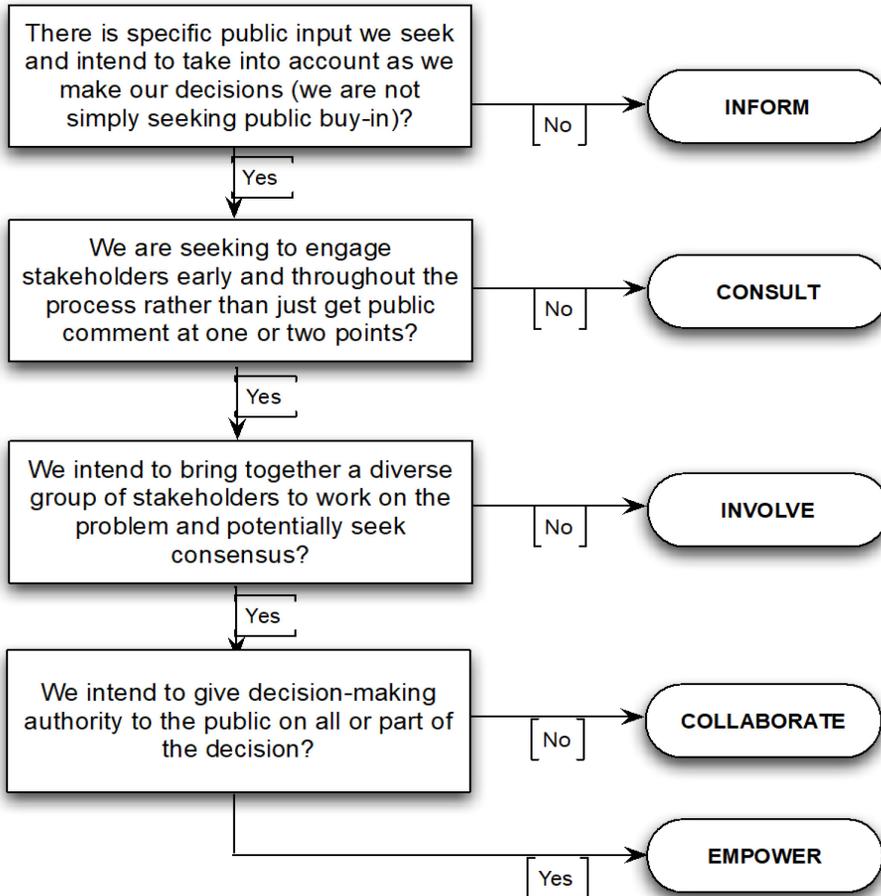
		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

As a decision maker what is your goal for involving the public in decisions? What is the level of influence they can have over that decision? What is your promise to the public as to their impact on the decision and decision process? These are important questions to answer before beginning to involve the public.

As you study the Spectrum, words matter. **Inform** means to tell; **Consult** – to seek advice; **Involve** – to engage or include; **Collaborate** – to work together; and **Empower** – to give power, to authorize. Now read the *goals* for each level. You will see that the public's participation and influence increases as you move to the right. Next, read the *promise* to the public for each level. How much influence are you willing to allow the public to have? How can you best manage their expectations for involvement? The public may want to *collaborate* while the decision maker is most comfortable with *consult*. It isn't "better" to be farther to the right; it is important that you are clear as to the extent the public can affect the outcome. Once you answer these questions, the best participatory process can be designed and techniques selected that will meet your objectives. It is better to "under promise" and "over deliver". As you begin to involve the public, you may find that you can move to the next level of participation.

Using the Spectrum

- Higher is not necessarily better, select the level that is most appropriate to your project, community, and constraints.
- The level you select will be the highest level of potential influence, many stakeholders will choose to engage at lower levels, or not at all.



Flowchart developed by Doug Sarno at doug@forumfg.com.

Ask Yourself:

- What aspects of the decision are already determined?
- What aspects of the decision can the public actually affect?
- At what points in the process can the public be most helpful and/or influential?
- Are we too far down the path of decision-making and can we step back?
- How much are we willing to change from what is proposed?
- How much power are we really willing to share?