

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING THE PUBLIC POST-DISASTER

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS
FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



SCHOOL OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
DESIGN & RURAL
DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides recommendations and best practices for engaging a community in the planning process in the wake of a disaster. The need for such a document grew out of an observed void in literature on planning and public engagement for a post-disaster area. The target audience for this report is planners in rural and small towns in North America and their municipalities. It may also be of use to community organizations and support agencies as well as community members seeking opportunities to engage.

PURPOSE AND USE

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance and recommendations for municipalities when engaging the public in planning decisions after a disaster. The recommendations are provided in general terms so that planners or other users of this document can tailor these engagement options to meet their specific needs. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather an array of ideas from which a planner can choose the most appropriate for the local situation. It is not intended as a disaster planning document as it does not address any emergency response actions or responsibilities. Much of this report was written through the lens of public engagement in a community recovering from a tornado. However, many of the recommendations are widely applicable and should not be viewed as exclusive to tornado recovery engagement.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

This document was written with the assumption that the affected area has an emergency plan in place that addresses the immediate needs of individuals and the community and that the area has been deemed safe and secure by appropriate authorities. These are some general considerations to keep in mind when using this document:

- Levels of affectedness may vary between neighbourhood, area, district of town, or region and therefore their recovery processes and time will also vary.
- Emotional shock and trauma affects judgment – try gauge the shock level prior to community decision making and if possible, postpone big decisions to prevent later regrets.
- Communities are resilient and will develop their own unique ways of coping and moving forward.
- This can be an opportunity to delicately address less desirable aspects of the community.
- Tensions may be high; remain calm, take care of yourself, and don't take anything too personally.
- Be cognizant of your time and resources to devote to each engagement. Fewer, well-structured, well-run engagements will be more effective than numerous poorly organized engagements.
- Be flexible – what works in one place at one time may not work in another place or at another time.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

In using this guide, you will find concepts for public engagement that are particularly relevant to a community which is dealing with a post-disaster situation. These concepts have been gleaned from best practices and lessons learned from other communities faced with similar situations.

The public engagement process has been presented using the analogy of a tree. You need to appreciate the components of the tree and how they act as a whole in order to use this guide in the context of your community. We recognize that every community will be different and there may be many potential avenues for success.

You will need to be selective in choosing methods and concepts which apply to your community from this guide. Working with the actions that will be of most value to your community will be the most positive; as a few well-thought out actions may be more helpful than a plethora of haphazardly-executed ones.

EXPLANATION OF THE TREE

The guiding principles of the tree have been developed to help the community set overall objectives for public engagement.

The foundation establishes the 'who' and the 'where' for public engagement.

TRUNK - COMMUNITY

Connecting inclusivity and innovation is the trunk of the tree. Having been established through the inclusivity process, the community provides a strong foundation for our ideas and vision to grow on. Community-based visioning is seen as the most desirable, as this type of visioning will be most reflective of your specific area and needs. If you are reading this guide, it is assumed that you are already aware of the benefits of involving the community in its visioning process and in deciding its own future.

BRANCHING OUT- INNOVATION

Once our roots had been established, the second guiding principle most important for success is innovation. Each community and situation will be different, and as such, this document is by no means a prescription for success. This document should be used as a starting point for public engagement and use not only some of the suggested tools, but also ideas that will be developed in your community. Innovation can be a valuable tool in adapting to change, and as such, connects the community and the concepts for public engagement.

ROOTS - INCLUSIVITY

The root of our tree is inclusivity. This concept is most relevant in establishing the basis for public engagement. The objective should be to include all members of the community from the beginning, with an open, inclusive engagement process.



EXPLANATION OF THE TREE

LEAVES-VITAL, VIBRANT, NEW VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY

The leaves are intended to represent the fruits of your labour, and the product of the public engagement process for which you have been striving. We expect that this will be a work-in-progress, and so the concept of the tree as a whole is appropriate because it is a living organism that is constantly changing and growing. Ultimately, we wish you success in revisioning and rebuilding your community.

This is your vision, and your community will determine the outcome of your public engagement process.

BRANCHES - CONCEPTS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The concepts developed for public engagement have grown from examples put forward in other communities consisting of case studies with both successes and failures. As a result of reviewing these case studies, some common themes emerged in dealing with post-disaster public engagement. These themes are:

- Public Engagement
- Timing
- Administration
- Communication
- Partnerships
- Celebration
- Evaluation



INCLUSIVITY

In the process of post-disaster community planning sometimes the urgency to accomplish objectives drowns out the need to fully engage the public. Thus, it becomes doubly important to prioritize inclusivity throughout every step of revisioning in a community.

When collecting input from a community post-disaster, it is easy to forget that the public needs multiple opportunities to respond. Many people may not be emotionally ready to participate immediately following a disaster but their insights may be essential during later stages of developing or redeveloping their community.

It is important to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable people are engaged. People such as seniors, disengaged school youth, preschoolers, school-aged children, minority ethnic peoples, those who live with physical, mental, or intellectual challenges, and people living in outlying areas (towns, regions, farms) all may rely on the affected community for services or support. Often during the engagement process, planners may unintentionally overlook these individuals or groups. If someone cannot attend the meeting, the meeting could go to them (e.g. schools, seniors' homes, and local coffee shops).

Ultimately decisions lie with the council and planners. However, during the community engagement process it is important to utilize key local players and individuals who have established unique relationships with under-represented groups. This encourages a deeper response and gives government employees and elected officials the opportunity to focus their efforts on other activities.

By ensuring that all post-disaster planning processes are inclusive, planners will draw on the community much like a tree's roots which stabilize and continually draw nourishment from the ground for its growth.

GREENSBURG, KANSAS

“Don’t make life decisions rapidly! Allow everyone in the community time to go through the grieving process .. make sure that when you are making decisions that the community members are emotionally ready to make those decisions” - Mayor, Bob Dixon, Greensburg, Kansas

While preparedness and a planned response are essential in dealing with a crisis situation, recovery and mitigation take on greater importance in the post-disaster community visioning process. Innovations in post-disaster community planning refer to the creation of better or more effective processes and ideas as accepted by all stakeholders.

Throughout post-disaster planning it is vital to implement a variety of innovative community engagement techniques to address vulnerabilities and to build future resilience. Community redevelopment starts with the recognition of a need which may not be obvious to all stakeholders. Even if stakeholders are aware, they may not know how to address or resolve the issue at hand. Consequently, the need must be identified and clearly communicated in order to enlist a wider response from the public and form a cohesive group of community members.

Innovative methods often generate substantive positive community change. However, planners must recognize that when innovation appears at a rapid pace, conflicts about future steps are common as stakeholders may disagree about the different options available or the importance of specific next steps. Individuals often are a part of multiple communities, each with different interests, priorities, abilities to mobilize others, and degrees of power – all of which make community innovation particularly challenging.

This resource guide highlights examples of innovative actions taken from cases studies of different disasters in a variety of communities. These actions include:

- Posting messages quickly around the community;
- Organizing community meals;
- Ensuring that key resource people are available immediately in the disaster zone;
- Creating newsletters on a specifically coloured paper sheets.

Please note that what may be the perfect option in one location may prove to be disastrous in another. Planners must be sensitive to the needs of the community in order to select appropriate and effective engagement methods. For an extensive listing of community engagement techniques please access the International Association of Public Participation Practitioners' Toolbox at <http://www.iap2.org/>. Strategies are laid out as “Techniques to Share Information”; “Techniques to Compile and Provide Feedback”, and “Techniques to Bring People Together” while highlighting, in each, what can go right and what can go wrong.

By recognizing that form follows function - first defining the goals then selecting innovative ways to achieve those goals - planners will creatively use community engagement techniques that garner superior ideas, which in turn will be more readily accepted in post-disaster community revisioning processes.

WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

Public engagement is defined as the inclusion of individuals in the decision-making process for decisions that affect them. This may involve direct collection and use of public opinions for determining outcomes, or may simply inform the public of previously decided objectives. Public engagement typifies a process in which citizens have some control in the decision-making process, though it does not necessarily go beyond the non-participation and tokenism, as identified in Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation.

WHY ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?

Municipalities in post-disaster planning should consider how they approach restorative processes, with an understanding of the role for public engagement. Every disaster will create a different rebuilding environment and public consultation will be needed in varying degrees for municipally directed action. It is the role of the municipal planner and staff to question why they are engaging the public.

The public is represented through the work of municipal staff, whose goal is to represent public and private interests within a realizable plan. In order to understand and ensure the support of interested parties, municipal staff must include the public within the planning process. However, including the public in efforts to redesign and renew following a disaster are not a prerequisite for municipal action and in some situations may not be applicable. It is therefore the responsibility of the municipality to reflect on the desired outcomes and question the best approach to implementation. This will frequently, though not always, involve public engagement.

For the city of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, this question is a prerequisite for action and is written within the municipal policy through the Public Involvement and Involving Edmonton plans. Residents can learn where and how they can be involved in municipal decisions and municipal employees can learn how or when they should involve residents. A delineated framework for public involvement assists all involved in questioning the need for engaging the public so that decisions can be made with the best available information and the support of residents.



The potential benefits of public engagement can include:

- Better quality decisions
- Easier decisions
- Greater trust in decision-makers
- Enhanced public and organizational knowledge

These benefits may be achieved by including understandable knowledge and values, addressing issues as they arise, incorporating and considering concerns, and sharing knowledge throughout the learning process.

HOW TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

Public engagement is undertaken to serve the interests of stakeholders and to include their opinions within the collective objective. It serves to benefit all involved by informing stakeholders throughout the process in order to avoid conflict later on. This can be conducted through multiple methods that are applied to specific cases as appropriate. These approaches to public engagement will be discussed throughout this report with further direction to additional references.

In reviewing post-disaster response from a variety of situations, planners and municipal staff reported that public engagement was a key component in their efforts and that multiple approaches to engaging the public proved instrumental.

In Slave Lake, Alberta, public engagement involved town hall meetings, personal meetings, radio broadcasts, and visioning discussions amongst multiple stakeholders. The importance of citizens and their lives within the community are paramount to any recovery efforts. Loss of doctors and employees from Slave Lake will have longer implications than rebuilding the affected area. Outreach programs should be enacted to engage citizens in rebuilding direction and time frames.

Public engagement is conducted because of the long-term and devastating nature of disasters. Municipal planners and staff should consider the role for public engagement at the outset of the planning process. Answering the question “why are we engaging the public?”, allows planners to frame the next steps in the municipal response, keeping in mind the best intentions for public engagement.

WHAT IS TIMING?

The first question on everyone's mind following a natural disaster may be 'where do we go from here'? Perhaps as important as the where, however, is the when. Determining when the community is ready to move on from a disaster event is the first step in moving forward. Other factors beyond a community's readiness to plan for the future will also come into consideration, as time management can be critical in organizing a sensitive, effective plan for community engagement in its re-building and visioning process.

WHY IS TIMING IMPORTANT?

Having just gone through a major disaster, one ought to be sensitive to the loss the community has experienced, and recognize that there may need to be a healing process that takes place either before or concurrently with the community re-building. Considering the following ideas may help with this process:

- ▶ Recognize that everybody has to be a willing receiver of information. Haste may not move the process forward any faster.
- ▶ Allow time for the community to grieve.
- ▶ Recognize that people are anxious to gain back "some sense of normalcy."
- ▶ Recognize that not all sectors of the community may be ready for visioning at the same time. For example, residential areas may precede commercial areas.

RECOGNIZING TIMING INDICATORS

Timing needs will vary from community to community, so recognizing cues from your community will be more important than sticking to a strict timeline. As a starting point and by no means an exhaustive list, we may refer to the following indicators as timing cues for community engagement:

- ▶ The community approaches the municipality requesting action or with ideas.
- ▶ The community expresses an interest in the future re-development (one or many different groups).
- ▶ A lack of communication or difficulty co-coordinating between different interest groups is surfacing.
- ▶ Conflict may be arising within the community regarding re-development plans.



HOW DO WE CONSIDER TIMING?

The following options could be considered when determining the timing public engagement:

- ▶ The first public meeting may not have an end goal beyond sharing the experience, providing resources, and re-connecting with the community.
- ▶ Mitigating approval processes to decrease wait times. Example - temporarily amend by-laws.
- ▶ Anticipating community planning needs. Example - review the Official Plan and its by-laws to see if changes will be required.
- ▶ Accepting legislative processes that may be outside of your jurisdiction. Example - provincial or federal statutes, regulations or policies. A 30 day waiting period may be required under provincial regulations for demolition approval of a historically significant building.
- ▶ Certain processes may require repetition in order to be effective and to reach everyone.
- ▶ Many updates may be required in a rapidly changing environment.
- ▶ Time meetings so that either the target group or a wide demographic can attend conveniently.
- ▶ Don't make major decisions rapidly.
- ▶ Recognize the difference between immediate needs and long-term goals.
- ▶ Recognize the difference between initial public meetings intended to be sensitive to the healing process of the community, and later meetings which are intended to look forward and establish long term goals.

GREENSBURG, KANSAS

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE COMMUNITY IS READY TO MAKE THOSE DECISIONS?

...If the community has been meeting together to talk about the issues of a brighter tomorrow ... then you'll know when it's time to move on in the planning...

...The community has to meet and start talking together. Then they'll have a collaborate sense of "We're moving on in this process" and part of that is sitting down and knowing who you are as a community and what are your strengths and what are your goals and values. Who are you... Then you'll just know!

- Mayor, Bob Dixson, Greensburg, Kansas

WHAT DOES COMMITTING THE ADMINISTRATION TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEAN?

The local administration governs the institutions and resources that are available to its citizens. The local government plays a key role in the distributive powers of resources in times of need. Community engagement, as a structured dialogue tool, makes joint attempts among formal authorities, citizens, and local leaders to problem solve and to take collaborative action around a pressing public matter. Committing the administration to community engagement can take on many different shapes and forms such as:

- ▶ Allocating adequate timing and financial resources to community engagement in times of need
- ▶ Including a variety of social perspectives in the community engagement process
- ▶ Affirming future collaboration between the administration and stakeholders

WHY IS COMMITTING THE ADMINISTRATION TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Committing the administration to community engagement can be a valuable governance tool that is essential for success in times of despair. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of elected officials to make decisions on behalf of their constituents. Committing the administration to community engagement will:

- ▶ Minimize interdepartmental barriers.
- ▶ Permit local governments and municipalities to maintain a visible presence.
- ▶ Allow stakeholders equal opportunity to affect the outcome of decisions through the participatory process.
- ▶ Move the communication process further by enforcing a two-way flow of information between local authorities and community residents



HOW CAN THE ADMINISTRATION BE COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY?

There are many ways to involve citizens in community engagement, however, the administration must be committed to the process. The local administration can apply various strategies to connect with citizens:

- Incorporate citizen input in the decision making process,
- Educate the public on who is responsible for what,
- Use an external communication expert,
- Dedicate an individual as the community information officer that liaisons between the administration and the community,
- Consider using field offices as facilitated planning opportunities for private landowners.

SIREN, WISCONSIN

A tornado swept through the small northern Wisconsin community. Over a hundred people were left homeless. Local administration had limited presence in the community engagement process and lacked visioning of how to overcome such a disaster. The Salvation Army and Red Cross were the main facilitators for engagement and took on a major role in the community. In addition to this, the Department of Natural Resources coordinated the volunteer efforts while local officials did not create a transparent environment between the community and the administration.

VAUGHAN, ONTARIO

A tornado struck the City of Vaughan on a warm summer day in 2009. The community was left with millions of dollars in damage. The local administration was committed to the community and made itself a visible presence following the disaster. The local government maintained frequent communication via face to face contact, social media, and radio. The administration also implemented an outreach program to engage citizens and made attempts to educate the public regarding pressing matters.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication can take a variety of forms and range from engaging the public to merely contacting members of a community to disseminate information. In the case of a disaster, communication will need to involve both ends of the spectrum to inform citizens of practical information as well as engage citizens in visioning rebuilding efforts - from the outset of the disaster to 20 years down the road.

Communication also includes a wide range of mediums from door-to-door contact or flyer delivery, to online presence and social media. Again, in the case of a disaster, communication will need to take all these forms in order to reach as many stakeholders as possible whether or not they are remaining in the affected area.

WHY COMMUNICATE?

Communication is essential following a disaster and remains paramount throughout the disaster response stage into the post-recovery and visioning stages. However, it is important to keep in mind that the reason for communication, and thereby methods for communication, will likely change throughout these phases.

WHAT CAN COMMUNICATION ACHIEVE?

Particularly during the initial emergency response phase, communication is essential to inform the community of support services, restore order, dispel rumors, and improve morale.

During the visioning stage, it is essential to engage the public in visioning for rebuilding and the future of the community. Communication can help to achieve this by keeping the public actively engaged on an ongoing basis.



HOW SHOULD COMMUNICATION OCCUR FOLLOWING A DISASTER?

The following points present key success factors for communication, immediately following a disaster, or in the long-term:

- ▶ Communication must be rapid, frequent, and ongoing.
- ▶ Do not assume that community members will be familiar with the technical details of the re-building process. Instead, explain your actions and ideas in simple terms.
- ▶ Communicate strategically and know when communication is appropriate
- ▶ Request assistance from neighbouring communities. If communication lines are disrupted, request assistance from unaffected communities nearby in the form of human or technical resources. Seek help in coordinating volunteer efforts.
- ▶ Be aware of privacy rules and know how to work within them so that these are not breached or essential time and resources are not wasted.
- ▶ Ensure everyone is accounted for in order to connect with those who may be displaced. Consider the establishment of a contact information database in order to ensure that everyone is informed and engaged through whatever means they have available.
- ▶ Use appropriate communication methods that are considered the context of the community. Not everyone may be comfortable with online resources. Communication lines (internet, phone, etc.) may be disrupted, particularly for those most in need of information. Sometimes the best way to contact affected groups is through the least technical methods.
- ▶ Particularly in the time immediately following a disaster, rumors will spread rapidly which may be harmful or cause unnecessary concern. It is important to anticipate or counter this through your communication.
- ▶ Know why you are communicating and choose an appropriate method. Sometimes a one-way information session is appropriate while at other times, community involvement and dialogue is important.
- ▶ Consider informal, community building events to increase morale, cohesion, and to share stories and experiences.
- ▶ Ensure all stakeholders are informed and included when visioning the future of the impacted areas. This includes the broader community which may not have been directly affected by the disaster.
- ▶ As part of a social media strategy, consider creating an interactive web-presence to allow for stakeholder participation throughout the visioning process. This enables flexibility for community members with varying schedules and levels of interest.

FLEXIBILITY

Faced without power or internet, the Town of Goderich was unable to disseminate information through radio, television, or internet in the days following the tornado that devastated much of the community. Planning staff created an emergency information flyer which was hand delivered to each house in the Town, twice in the week that followed the storm.

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Many public engagement documents recommend initially holding public meetings that are strictly educational and do not provide a forum for public discussion. Slave Lake, Alberta went against the grain and decided to open the floor up to citizens during public meetings and found this method to be therapeutic and healing for their residents.

MIXED METHODS

- Word of mouth
- Flyers
- Marquees
- Internet, official website
- Social media: Face book, Twitter
- Newspaper
- Television
- Radio
- Public Meetings, workshops
- Circle

SOCIAL MEDIA

With the increasing use of Facebook, Twitter, and live steaming news, there should be an official voice that is credible and accountable. During the evacuation period following forest fires in Slave Lake, Alberta, the municipality did not have a social media strategy and several rumours pertaining to living conditions and municipal services circulated throughout the community. Slave Lake was unable to discount the rumours or disseminate accurate information in a manner as quickly as rumours spread without a social media strategy.

INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

After a tornado in Siren, Wisconsin, communication to and from the public occurred mostly during community meals. The drop-in meals, run by the Salvation Army and Red Cross, also created cohesiveness in the community and gathered public sentiment.



WHAT ARE PARTNERSHIPS?

Partnerships evolve between various groups with either specific or shared interests. They can take the form of formal arrangements among parties or improvised opportunities. However, partnerships do not materialize instantly and take considerable effort to create and maintain.

WHY DO WE NEED PARTNERSHIPS?

Their need arises because of a lack of capacity for individuals or groups to accomplish goals on their own. Partnerships can create synergy within the community by leveraging strengths and minimizing weaknesses.



HOW ARE PARTNERSHIPS ACHIEVED?

Partnerships should be facilitated and led by local leadership when possible. Local leaders need to be the catalysts for engaging the community in grass roots collective action to create a sense of ownership among the community. Furthermore, establishing champions early in the process allows the momentum and trust to be established by local leaders. Selection of appropriate champions can either create ideal circumstances or devolve the process into partisanship. Champions should be visionary and forward thinking of not only the goals of the community, but also of the ability to realize and capitalize on opportunities. In difficult times, positive attitudes are essential to motivate the community. This requires having champions leave their personal issues behind to focus on the issues themselves. Diversity in the selection process helps to reflect the ethos of the community.

Defining the needs of a community is a critical step once a partnership has been formed. Whether these needs are physical (shelter, food, etc.) or mental (grief counseling), there needs to be proper allocation of limited resources to avoid duplication of efforts. External support, whether from government, aid groups, or neighboring communities will likely fulfill some of these needs. Using the local knowledge in how to allocate resources effectively is key to addressing local needs. A community focal point is one method whereby a partnership can make important decisions to meet these needs. Since the focal point will draw members of the community willing to become engaged, it can also become a central point where the decision making can become a participatory process. Moreover, once a decision has been made regarding an issue, the focal point can ensure the community is informed. Sustaining the momentum of these partnerships in achieving goals can be difficult as time progresses. Use of several methods such as community meals, faith based activities, or milestone celebrations are ways that continued growth of the partnership will be maintained. As partnerships grow over time, they tend to become more efficient and effective in accomplishing goals.

WHAT IS CELEBRATION?

Celebration is an event that honours the community and its achievements. While many would not consider a post-disaster landscape as the time or place for celebration, a community-wide event can be used as a strategy or a tool to help the community come together during a challenging period in the process. Celebrations can take many forms and need not always be carried out in formalized processes. Any way that a community can recognize or reflect on their progress is an important step in moving on and creating resolution.

WHY IS CELEBRATION IMPORTANT?

In talking with several post-disaster coordinators, they all reinforced the notion of “recognizing achievements” as a way maintaining momentum of the rebuilding process and creating cohesiveness within a community. Celebrations help provide dignity, remember the history of the community, and highlight the strength of the community. Celebrations also help communities recognize the various small victories that have helped the community return to normalcy. Celebrations provide hope, reassurance, and motivation, as well as highlight the shared views and values of a community.

HOW IS CELEBRATION INCORPORATED?

Celebrations can take shape in various forms ranging from community fairs and civic celebrations to community meals and visioning circles. Many purposes can be served through celebratory events and it is important to gauge where a community is in the rebuilding process to make sure the celebratory event is appropriate. For example, during the first six months of the rebuilding process, a community would not want to have a labour-intensive celebration as people are still coping with fixing their community and returning to normalcy. An event like this could tax resources and create tension within the community causing people to ask why time and money is being spent on a celebration when there is so much to do.

SIREN, WISCONSIN

A year after the community of Siren, Wisconsin was hit by an F3 tornado that caused \$10 million of damage and wiped out 77 per cent of the business district. The community hosted a one year reunion for all the people who helped the Siren community rebuild. This type of event was a good way to see the progress that had occurred over the past year, and provided an opportunity for people to celebrate the achievements with the people who helped get them there. It also provided an opportunity to reach out to surrounding communities in the region who assisted in the rebuilding process. The community of Siren recently hosted a well-received 10 year reunion that allowed for a moment of reflection on the massive amount of positive change that had occurred in the community. As well, they opened up the time capsule that they had created 10 years earlier.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

How do you know if public engagement is working? If it is not working, why not and how can you improve? Evaluation is a structured approach to assessing efforts or programs. It is the systematic gathering, analysis and reporting of data about a program to assist in decision-making. Evaluation should be an integral part of a planning and public engagement cycle. For example, evaluation after meetings provides an opportunity to identify and improve future engagement sessions. Evaluation can also be used as a learning tool to provide invaluable information on how to improve the public engagement process in the future. Generally speaking, evaluation:

- Describes the intended program;
- Documents what was actually implemented;
- Describes participant characteristics; and
- Demonstrates the impact of the program.

WHY EVALUATE?

Public engagement is rarely evaluated because there are no standard criteria and processes are different for every community. Despite these challenges, evaluating public engagement can provide invaluable information on what worked, what did not work and how to improve the process in the future. Evaluation essentially provides an extremely useful tool to manage ongoing work, identify successes and plan effectively for new public engagement initiatives.

Different types of evaluations can be useful in different stages of a program or project development cycle, depending on the decision-making needs. For example, during implementation, process evaluation can be used to improve the operation of an existing project or program when it is not running smoothly. Use an outcome evaluation to assess the impact or effectiveness of a project or program. Health Canada identified that effective evaluation can:

- Account for what has been accomplished
- Provide feedback to inform decision-making at all levels: community, regional, and national
- Contribute to the body of knowledge about public engagement
- Assess the cost-effectiveness of different public engagement strategies
- Increase the effectiveness of project or program management
- Contribute to policy development.



HOW TO EVALUATE?

When trying to design your public engagement evaluation, keep in mind that the process is different for every community or project and there is no one right way of doing an evaluation. Ideally, evaluation should be built into project or program plans before implementation so that the right data is collected at the right time. However, in a post-disaster situation planners may not be able to accomplish this and evaluation should be considered as early in the process as possible. There is no wrong time to perform an evaluation.

Planning steps for an evaluation:

- › Identify stakeholders and establishing an evaluation team
- › Develop evaluation questions
- › Budget for an evaluation
- › Select an evaluator (e.g., municipal staff or consultant)
- › Determine Implementation steps and data-collection methods
- › Collect data
- › Analyze and interpret data
- › Communicate findings and insights
- › Use the results from the evaluation



BARRIE, ONTARIO

On May 31, 1985 a tornado struck Barrie, Ontario, Canada leaving 8 dead and 155 injured. Barrie did not evaluate its public engagement efforts following the tornado. Events such as a tornado can become a distant memory in a relatively short period of time. Twenty-five years after the tornado, city staff did not know if their post-disaster public engagement was successful or not because an evaluation was never conducted. Therefore, it would be beneficial for planners to make a concerted effort to evaluate efforts for future planning.

APPENDIX A - VAUGHAN, ONTARIO

Date of Tornado	August 20th 2009 The tornado started at 6:15 pm ended at approx 7:00 pm
Tornado severity listing (F0-F5)	F2 Environment Canada confirmed an F2 tornado.
Population of Community at time of Disaster	Approximately 270,000 people in Vaughan. In the Maple and Woodbridge Communities the population of those two areas at the time was approximately 180,000
Number of people injured	A small number of people with minor injuries - less than 10 and only one major injury, but that was sustained from a fall and not directly related to the tornado.
Number of people killed	0
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	They have not yet been provided with the total cost of damages related to the Tornado but their best estimates are that it was in excess of 20 million. 44 homes and one school were deemed unsafe while 600 homes were damaged.

BACKGROUND

The City of Vaughan, Ontario consists of 5 distinct communities: Woodbridge, Maple, Concord, Kleinburg and Thornhill. It is predominantly single family residential with a large industrial base of over 9000 industries with small to medium sized manufacturing. Vaughan is a very multicultural community where over 60 different languages are spoken. Woodbridge and Maple have large populations that are of Italian decent. Multiple generations of one family live on the same street or in close proximity. There is a large Muslim enclave in the central north area of Maple including a mosque. Thornhill has a large Jewish population The medium age for Vaughan citizens is 35.9 years and the average household income is over \$86,000. The City has major rail and road transportation networks, heritage and tourism districts. The City has experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years of 276%. The tornado had a substantial impact on the entire community, the most common statement heard was “It was like a war zone.”

REACTIVE

During the initial response phase the city initial engaged the public through media briefings and onsite work. Many citizens and community groups self initiated engagement through direct contact with the City through Access Vaughan (call centre) The Mayor was frequently out in the impacted areas talking directly with citizens. They initiated an outreach procedure to provide assistance in conjunction with the Red Cross, York Region Community Services and City staff to work directly with residents to meet their needs.

TRANSITION

During the Transitional Phase (sometimes referred to as the Recovery Phase), much of the community engagement was done by the Mayor and City Councilors. As they were also applying for Government funding the Finance Department and Red Cross worked together to collect information from residents. During this period several public meetings were conducted regarding proposed planning policies where feedback was solicited.

VISION

A Community Visioning Phase did not occur as all of the damage was to private property. Plans and procedures in place worked and any changes made were purely internal focused.

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

In looking back the city of Vaughan is thankful that their communications with the public was ongoing and frequent. They ensured their messages and information requests were specific. They had and continue to have an open door policy for community input. Due to the nature of their business, their belief is that the cutting off community input is inappropriate.

In their view, the four Best Practices that they used for Engaging the Community were:

- ▶ Communication with the community must be rapid and frequent
- ▶ Utilize all communications vehicles available i.e. social media, web, face to face, radio, TV, etc
- ▶ Educating the public on who is responsible for what - individuals have a responsibility for their own public safety and recovery.
- ▶ Implementing an outreach program to engage citizens during the response.

The city of Vaughan would like to remind other communities that municipal liaisons need to communicate frequently to the public even if you are repeating the same message over and over. Have a visible presence in the community. For instance the Mayor of Vaughan visited each of the impacted areas at least three times a day during and after the tornado. For communities that find themselves having to deal with similar disasters they would recommend that they have building inspectors on the scene or easily available as soon as possible to answer questions regarding building code orders until repairs are initiated. Also, it is important to encourage people who had sustained lesser degrees of damage to report it to the City as they found that when people saw their neighbour's house destroyed and they only had a fence down, they did not report the information. Many told them that it was a matter of perspective - their problem was minor compared to the total loss someone else suffered. Thankfully, in hind-site, there were no public engagement issues that they considered at the time to be really important that have turned out to be not so important, and vice versa.

APPENDIX B - GREENSBURG, KANSAS

Date of Tornado	May 4, 2007 9:45 pm
Tornado severity listing (F0-F5)	EF5 sustained wind of over 205 miles an hour
Population of Community at time of Disaster	1,389 people lived in Greensburg at the time in 730 household units, of which 453 families residing. In 2010 population is now 50% of what it had been in 2000.
Number of people injured	Unknown
Number of people killed	11 people
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	95% of the city was confirmed to be destroyed with the other 5% severely damaged.

BACKGROUND

Greensburg, Kansas is described by the mayor as being a rural farming community with an aging population. There are not a lot of youth returning to the community due to a lack of viable jobs and employment options. Although, as a community, they have always been a close knit community. “After the tornado, that's what sustained us, that we were a close knit community and it was about our relationship to each other. Everybody'd lost everything. Possessions. But what we did have left, was the only truly sustainable thing in life: which was each other.” The tornado that swept through Greensburg destroyed 95% of the city leaving the remaining 5% severely damaged.

REACTIVE

Immediately following the tornado the Chairman of County Commission instituted a State of Emergency. Initially neighbouring communities and their emergency management jumped in, subsequently the state implemented a search and rescue plan to ensure that everybody was accounted for. Immediately after the storm, people were evacuated and housed in neighbouring communities. They were allowed to return on Day 4 to start the clean-up process. The actual debris clean-up was coordinated through the Kansas State, the National Guard, and the Kansas Department of Transportation utilizing equipment loaned from other cities. Private property is the responsibility of individuals; faith-based groups were instrumental in coordinating volunteer groups from outside the community and private companies came in and helped citizens move debris to street. During this Reactive Stage, the Red Cross and Salvation Army set up cots and food in other communities' gymnasiums. It was definitely a time of state and neighbouring communities coordinating their efforts. The municipal council handled infrastructure concerns: “water, sewer, and the plan for all that.” At this point, FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) entered the process - FEMA is mandated federally to “take over” in a time of natural emergency disaster.

TRANSITION

Throughout the weeks that followed the tornado there was much emphasis placed on grief counseling. They were all grieving and had experienced a huge loss. It quickly became apparent that they needed a place to meet as a community, and a large tent was erected on the outskirts of town. “We did everything in that tent: community church services, grief counseling, area mental health centres. We did everything in that tent. Insurance resources, all the resources out there were in that tent. We ate together. We cried together. We did community church together.”

VISION

It was in that tent, three or four weeks post-tornado, that the community commenced the two city plans (The Sustainable Comprehensive Master Plan, and the Long-Term Community Recovery Plan. See website for PDFs of these plans <http://www.greensburgks.org/government/residents/recovery-planning>) under the guidance and facilitation of FEMA and other city planners that came in to volunteer their time. Sometimes between 400 and 500 community members would participate in any given meeting, as they worked towards disaster recovery over a 10-12 week time period. Everyone had input of the recovery and rebuilding of the whole community. There was “tremendous input from the community in the recovery and rebuilding process!”

During that first week of community visioning there were a variety of methods used to engage the public. One in particular that stands out in the mayor's memory is where there were stations around the tent: hospital, school, downtown city hall, etc and each station had flip charts. The community members would select a station to sit at and a facilitator would write down all the input given. Then everybody would switch to another station so as to enable there to be numerous opportunities for community input.

Then during the second week of community visioning meetings the planners would return with renderings of what they imagined things to look like based on the input from the first meeting. “Then at each station you could stick anonymous pieces of paper .. I like .. I don't like .. then discussion on all that again.” Then the following week, we'd do it all again! “That tent served as a hub for our community.”

The biggest way that Greensburg citizens moved from "disaster" to "opportunity" was by continually being part of the planning and discussion.

Collaboratively, “under the tent” they noted the values that represented their community. Recognizing what was important to them. It also allowed them, in midst of disaster, to think about systematic problems that were in the community. And now they realized that they were blessed with the opportunity to address those systemic problems with the values and the issues that they'd thought were important to them as a community. That's where this process was most successful: it started in “Knowing who you are first.” and insisting that outsider perspective was just that - a resource from outside.

APPENDIX B - GREENSBURG, KANSAS

Through-out the transition and visioning phases they had many “lively discussions” on how the community should look and what the focus should be. Some wanted it to be just like it was, while others wanted green space here and here. This community discussion time allowed people to have input but at the same time allowed people to be together in a grieving process of losing everything also. “That's why it was so important to meet together as a community. It gave us the opportunity to be community and interact with each other and be there for each other. We were all displaced, this was our chance to come back together and see each other.”

After those first 10-12 weeks where the community existed in a “scattered” fashion FEMA started putting in temporary housing (trailer and mobile homes) and people started returning to the community. People were anxious to gain back “some sense of normalcy, and part of that is having a roof over your head and being in your own home.”

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

According to the Mayor, Bob Dixson, he would not encourage his community to do anything differently. “To be honest with you, in the midst of having a major disaster you do the best you can as best you can.” It is important to remember to get information disseminated to everybody possible and be cognizant of those people who did have or get input and why didn't they participate in the process. Recognizing that improvement could be implemented at the next community meeting. However, it is equally vital to remember that the participants also hold a responsibility in being receptive. “It takes a commitment on both sides. You have to be a willing receiver of information too!” When asked what the 4 Best Practices for Engaging the Greensburg Community were, Mr. Dixson replied:

- The tent.
- They had a community information officer, who consolidated on one piece of paper (the yellow sheet) everything that community members needed to know as well as all community gatherings: community meetings, community church services, resources, Red Cross, etc. And several people in community distributed this all over town and in the neighbouring communities. It was a great way to disseminate information (initially daily, then weekly) so that people were in the know. This was an immense help especially considering that all the cell phones were down and people were displaced.
- So when people returned to the community for personal and municipal reasons these Yellow Sheets held all the important information. It is still a weekly sheet four and half years later, and is still called “The Yellow Sheet”.
- Finally there is a general acknowledgement of the sensitive work carried out by the Kiowa County Faith Community (KCFC), the ministerial association. Greensburg's philosophy of “Faith, Family, and Friends” solidified at this time. The KCFC organized the community church services. “It was highly important that first summer, as people were coming back into community: healing process, to see each other, of sharing info, and worship together. It was very instrumental in the whole process.”

APPENDIX B - GREENSBURG, KANSAS

For communities that find themselves having to deal with similar disasters they would remind them to remember the number one point: “Don't make life decision rapidly! Allow yourself time in the community to go through the grieving process .. make sure that when you are making decisions that you are emotionally ready to make those decisions.”

As far as public engagement issues that they considered at the time to be really important that have turned out to be not so important, and vice versa it is important to remember in this process, that even with all the community input, it is still the responsibility of the elected official: county, school, hospital or whatever to have to make their own decision for their entities. Decisions can't all be community decisions. Elected officials need to recognize that they have been elected and hold the responsibility to ultimately make the decisions (based on information they have garnered and gleaned from their constituents). “You can't throw it open wide to community input ... you'd never get the building built .. you take the input from the community .. design charrette, and whatever .. and then the council make the decisions .. within the organization.”

“Everybody is doing the best they can to make the community a better place to live and work for all the citizens. It has to be a better place for everyone. And that's sustainability.” - Bob Dixson, Mayor of Greensburg, Kansas, 2011.

APPENDIX C - BARRIE, ONTARIO

Date of Tornado	May 31, 1985
Tornado severity listing (F0-F5)	F3 / F4
Population of Community at time of Disaster	45,000
Number of people injured	155
Number of people killed	8
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	300 homes and some industrial and commercial

BACKGROUND

The City of Barrie specific to the period in time in which the disaster occurred was a regional service-based community serving the surrounding predominantly agricultural community. At the period in time it was beginning to experience rapid growth and development in the south and west ends. It has clear ties to agriculture and the water upon which it is built. Kempenfelt Bay is a deep arm of Lake Simcoe that traditionally provided a transportation route and an opportunity for tourism and activity. The sense of community, which existed even up to the date of the disaster, would be lost in the subsequent rapid growth that followed in next 20 years.

The tornado was devastating to the areas in which it moved through. Additionally surrounding areas even far away, felt connected to the event due to falling debris and the role that Barrie fulfills as the unifying community for the surrounding area.

A volunteer firefighter at the time reported that his actions at the time have now been forgotten; yet he still remembers the frantic search for bodies and survivors. No one knew what had happened or how family and friends were affected. News of the disaster carried internationally with European relatives calling to enquire about their family's safety.

REACTIVE

The existing emergency response plan immediately came into effect following the tornado. The deputy fire chief was in the affected zone when the tornado touched down and was able to call in the damage and initiate the emergency plan.

A communications official was put in charge of maintaining contact between the community media outlets and the municipality informing citizens regarding the actions that they should take and how the municipality was proceeding with the emergency response plan. Word-of-mouth was used in the hardest hit areas, however television and radio communication provided sufficient contact for informing the community regarding what actions to take and how they could proceed. Temporary shelters were built in the hardest hit areas as well as establishing temporary shelters in local churches. St. John's Ambulance, Red Cross, Salvation Army, fire and police services, as well as military support (from the neighbouring base), provided security and helped to search for survivors and clean the streets of debris. The role for these organizations had been established within the existing emergency plan.

The day after the incident, citizens of the affected areas were allowed back into their homes to retrieve personal items for a few hours. Inspectors had already identified dangerous situations and spray painted on the homes whether or not owners could safely enter. No supervision was provided during this retrieval period. Many volunteers rushed into the city after the disaster, including Mennonite groups, to assist in clearing streets and attempting to return function to the municipality. Volunteers were welcomed at first before numbers became too great and they had to be turned away.

TRANSITION

The City of Barrie transitioned from the disaster quickly having identified what their next steps would involve and what next steps would be needed to accomplish these objectives. In the transitioning phase building planners and inspectors were brought in from Toronto and a field office was established so that people could talk to municipal staff and acquire building permits. The community was informed that they could rebuild with little oversight on design or consultation regarding redesign or public space re-envisaging. For this disaster private property had received the brunt of the damage and public engagement was not a priority of the municipality who felt it was a private responsibility to rebuild. The municipality could facilitate the permit and building inspection process but it was up to private landowners to rebuild the city in whichever way they saw fit.

VISION

A great deal of the damage was to private property and people were encouraged to rebuild as soon as possible. Additionally, an internal review of the emergency response process and suggestions for improvement to municipality's actions was conducted. For the most, part private landowners were allowed to rebuild as they saw fit. The municipality's role in community engagement ended with the provision of information on how to proceed at the transitional phase.

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

- Communication using existing media networks that were not affected by the storm proved to be effective. Residents were able to learn quickly and act on the information city officials had provided through television and radio.
- The quick restoration of services was highly beneficial in ensuring that the community could gain access to the information they needed in a format that they were familiar with. As long as the community was aware of what they could do, they were able to act and participate.
- Facilitated planning processes through the use of field offices staffed with building inspectors and planners proved beneficial to the private landowners undertaking rebuilding efforts in the affect community or neighbourhood.
- Events such as these become distant memories in a relatively short period of time and therefore it would be beneficial to make a concerted effort to record the events for future planning.

APPENDIX D - SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

Date of Tornado	May 15, 2011
Fire	Rated Canada's second most costly disaster
Population of Community at time of Disaster	7,000
Number of people injured	0
Number of people killed	1 (Firefighter)
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	\$700 Million 374 homes and town hall which housed both community centre and library

BACKGROUND

Slave Lake is a fairly prosperous community surrounded by the Sawridge First Nation and the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River, which adds about 3500 additional people to the area served by Slave Lake. The town is one of three main population hubs which also include Athabasca and West Lock, each of which is located about 100 km away. The town relies on the oil and gas industry and forestry is also a major employer, although this sector suffers from economic volatility.

EFFECTS OF FIRE ON COMMUNITY

The effects of the fire were huge. The physical damage included the destruction of 370 homes, plus two 100-unit apartment buildings. The nearly new municipal centre, which housed the federal offices, library and town offices was destroyed, as were approximately seven businesses.

The psychological damage was also monumental. Many who worked in the service industry lived in the apartments that were burned. These tended to be young working people who had little insurance and became, in effect, "rootless". Many of these people left town as they could not afford to stay in hotels. In addition, the homes of 44 teachers were burned and 10 of the 13 doctors' homes were also lost. Five of these doctors have since left the community. 730 families were displaced, representing about 2000 people who needed to find temporary shelter in hotels, camps, and with family and friends. "There was tremendous family upheaval."

The fire was so hot that things were vaporized, fire-proof safes were burned, roads and sidewalks were destroyed, yet in the middle of the devastation, there were also things that remained untouched. There was a lot of guilt felt by people who did not lose their homes, although everyone in the community was affected by the disaster.

REACTIVE

During the fire, the community had to be evacuated. “An army of people was provided by the Government of Alberta and the Red Cross. Communication was at its best during the evacuation.” People in the evacuation centres were easy to communicate with because we knew where they were and they were eager for information. There was some attempt to locate people who had left town.

One complicating factor was that the Red Cross took head counts, but due to privacy legislation, was unable to share that with the housing office, so people were encouraged to come forward voluntarily and register. Since the radio station was also burned, that provided a communication challenge. Every day a broad sheet of 8.5 x 11” was posted in various locations throughout the town to try and communicate with people. There was no electricity, but cell phone service was not lost. Facebook and Smartphones played a major role in communicating during this phase.

TRANSITION

On May 27, people were allowed to return to their homes and on June 1, the State of Emergency was lifted, but the community was still under a “transition phase where there was no rulebook.” On June 11, the first weekly public meeting was held to provide information to residents. Against all advice, residents were provided opportunity to speak freely. “We had yelling, crying, and a very emotional response. The information we were providing was superfluous to the need to get together and say ‘how are you?’”

During this phase, elected officials and staff, many of whom had lost their own homes, put up with much abuse from the citizens. The message that it might take between two and three years to rebuild the town was not what people wanted to hear. For the first month, all the meetings were open for anyone to speak, but this was stopped when this format stopped being useful. Eventually it got to the point where the mayor realized that providing a forum for people to vent anger and frustration at municipal staff and councilors was not helpful and was taking away the ability of others to get the information they needed from the meetings. People were still encouraged to meet with the mayor individually if they needed to discuss personal issues. “There came a time when it was unfair to the rest of the room.”

In addition to the weekly meetings, every day the mayor and reeve went on the radio at 9:00 to update people about what was happening.

VISION

On May 27, as people were just being allowed back to their homes and the State of Emergency had not yet been lifted, a TriRegional Council was formed, including Municipal District 124, the Town of Slave Lake, and the Sawridge First Nation. The Alberta Government facilitated a visioning session on this day. While it seemed too soon to some, “we don’t have time for a Kum By Yah” moment”, it proved to be a brilliant move as it forced the three communities to set long term bench marks and think about where they hoped to be in five and ten years. This was not a public meeting, but included members of the various councils. This session provided the foundation of further visioning for a great recovery plan. The actions identified in this meeting were sorted by urgency and then prioritized, in effect being placed into one of nine baskets.

Because the Alberta Government contributed almost \$300 million, the visioning has been government-led and it is accountable to providing good use of this money to the people of Alberta. The TriRegional Council meets monthly. This group of people lacks the capacity to do further community visioning because everyone is so consumed with trying to place people in houses and make the town functional. Providing housing was pivotal to keeping people in the community in the long term and the focus and energy of everyone has largely gone to this goal.

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ Employ local leadership – “the old trusted voice.” To lean heavily on elected officials and staff to recognize that outsiders were not anywhere near as good as insiders to deliver the message. Meant giving people another job. People needed to have hope and someone they trusted to give them messages.
- ▶ As soon as possible and for as long as practical, employ an external communications expert. Get that person on the ground with the understanding that they are not just there for the emergency phase. We had lots of professionals during the emergency phase – but needed someone to transition and recovery. There needs to be a hand off and one person who is there early, but will stick around. That is the person who is the evaluator, the gatekeeper – make the mayors’ time use efficient. For two reasons:
 - The value of having an external expert is that they can take the blame, which is really important. If people aren’t getting the message they want, they say the communications is bad. Mayor and senior officials should not be taking the blame for communications break down. Breadth and consistency. It is vitally important to preserve the integrity of the mayor – you need that leader. In times of crisis, even in staunch old conservative Alberta, people revert to needing someone to blame...
 - The Media from outside the community were not at all sensitive to what was going on. Edmonton media got it over time – the rest did not understand what it cost our mayor and reeve to set aside to talk to them. While we recognized that it was important for all of Canada to know we needed your help and your money, we needed to communicate better that they

APPENDIX D - SLAVE LAKE, ALBERTA

- should have access during specified hours, the rest of the time, leave us alone. But saying that made us look ungrateful and mean spirited.

The Mayor and Reeve's whole life was community engagement at that point.

- ▶ Mobilize or engage a social media strategy as soon as possible – because if you don't, someone else will. Social media, citizen journalism is great, the ability to reach out and touch each other, immediacy is wonderful... BUT in a time of distress – emergency and recovery – there must be an official voice. Once social media is established as a place to snipe, bitch and spread gossip – you can never take that back. Overcoming the noise and speculation on Face book where people who were not even affected were voicing opinions was next to impossible. If we had set up the definitive site on May 16 with real information vs. speculation, but we would have had a credible place where people could go for information. By May 31, there as a page with 3500 members, but we lost a certain authority by it not being ours. Use local media, radio, news papers, social, websites, 8.5x11 pieces of paper and people will still feel they are not getting enough news. Thanks to social media – people want definitive news – “they expect you to come up with facts as quickly as you can come up with rumours.” “We couldn't say what was real until we knew what was real.”

Are there public engagement issues you considered at the time to be really important that have turned out to be not so important, and vice versa?

Too soon to say. Everything we did was necessary – was it efficient, best use of resources, did it achieve what the audience wanted vs. what we wanted? Not sure yet. There is nothing like a disaster to bring out amazing things in people. Lack of capacity, but the extent of what people were willing to do and put up with was far more than we would have predicted. When I am away... I see things every day in Slave Lake that I'm not convinced that I would not be willing to endure. My intuition says no.. it is beyond human capacity... but that is part of rising to the occasion. People persevere and put up with things you wouldn't want to put up with, but that doesn't mean you can't.

Red Cross mandate:

“To meet unmet needs, not unmet wants.”

During recovery, trying to figure out what are wants and needs is a very cruel and arbitrary process. What are psychological needs that maybe don't seem like needs to outsiders? Canadians have been remarkably generous to Slave Lake without knowing really what is going on. That is something we see all the time... people don't have to know anybody at all to write a cheque, which is incredible. There are best practices on that, but we're not there yet. We need to differentiate between disaster and recovery... between the type of community. Slave Lake is not Haiti and it is not New Orleans.. needs and losses are different. No one died, and we live in a province that could step up with \$300 million immediately... and premier immediately provided senior staff... there was exceptional response from the provincial government. on the other hand, people from Slave Lake were better off financially – so they fell further than people who are already destitute.

APPENDIX E - SIREN, WISCONSIN

Date of Tornado	June 18, 2001
Tornado severity listing (F0-F5)	F3
Population of Community at time of Disaster	~ 1000 people in Siren, 17,000 in Burnett County
Number of people injured	17
Number of people killed	3
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	\$10 Million Properties damaged: 77% of business district gone, hockey arena, multiple residences, and 150 homeless.

BACKGROUND

Siren, Wisconsin is a small rural town of roughly 1000 people located in northern Wisconsin near the Minnesota border. Siren hosts numerous fairs and provides access to a host of outdoor recreation activities. Siren is a proud and strong stemming from their collective experiences as not only citizens of Burnett County but as people who have lived across America and have chosen to live in Siren because of the people, land, and opportunity.

At 8:12 pm on June 18th, 2001 a F3 hurricane came through the town of Siren, Wisconsin. Resulting from the destructive capacity of the tornado, 77 percent of the business district was destroyed along with a new hockey arena and approximately 150 people were left homeless. In addition to this, there were 3 human fatalities and 17 injuries. In addition to human casualties, the storm took its toll on dairy cattle. One dead cow was discovered up a tree, while other cattle disappeared from pastures, only to surface days later from the depths of nearby lakes. The ironic part of this story is that the town's only tornado warning siren was inoperable at the time of the storm.

The alarm siren was broken during a previous lightning storm; because of this the police chief went door to door alerting people of the tornado. In addition to this, the police chief organized the immediate post-disaster rescue efforts. Part of this responsibility included placing citizens in leadership positions to spread out the burden of responsibility. Amazingly the tornado hit at 8.20 pm, and by midnight there was a traffic jam coming into town of people wanting to help. Resulting from this outpouring, coordination was required and The Department of Natural Resources for the state of Wisconsin organized these efforts. For approximately one month after the tornado, there were 1500 volunteers a day to organize; this was done by the Department of Natural Resources.

It is important to note that the Police Chief created a working curfew for community stating that people couldn't work between the times of 10pm and 6am. This was done to limit exhaustion and the possible dangers of working alone in that period of time. This curfew was met with opposition but soon people realized the value in taking a step back.

Communication to public occurred mostly at community meals, these meals were drop in and many people accessed them, (they occurred for one month after the tornado). They were run by the Salvation Army and Red Cross. These meals were an excellent venue to create cohesiveness in the community and gather public sentiment. Additionally communication to the public in this period occurred via public meetings (one-way flow, no question periods) as the main function was to inform the public what was happening. As well, business marquees, notes/flyers and word of mouth methods were used as well.

REACTIVE

During the reactive phase the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) coordinated the volunteer efforts; people would check in and then be directed to area where help was needed. On July 4th, the town shutdown clean-up efforts and celebrated their recent successes and as well as the 4th of July. This was seen as an essential thing to do in order to provide residents with a sense of their accomplishments to date as well as celebrate the American spirit.

During this period there was a team assembled to provide psychiatric assistance to the community as well as people who would go around asking if people required help. This occurred at various times throughout reactive/transition phases because people needed different types of help at different times, (if they said no one time that didn't shut them out from receiving help in the future).

TRANSITION

It should be noted that the community of Siren experienced growth before the tornado. Because of this, a sense of momentum was already there to help move the community move forward and realize the possibility for new opportunities.

As mentioned before most of the community engagement occurred at meals, as the PC noted "you can't get mad when you're dead tired and hungry". Many viewed the tornado as an opportunity to do anything they wanted with the town, instead of looking at town and saying "it will never be the same" think of it as a clean slate to make this town how we want it. Dean Roland, the police chief at the time noted that there appeared to be a unified vision of the community citing an occurrence when a detractor at an initial meeting, was booed by the rest of the people at the meeting and thus never returned.

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

Dean Roland noted the following four points as best practices;

- › Must keep people informed and involved in the process, be sure to compromise, and don't start fights!
- › Be aware of the history, make a memorial, hold annual anniversaries, this helps people remember where they have come from and their achievements. This can also happen in memorial plaques and time capsules.
- › Be honest with people and listen to what they need, do not tell them what they need.
- › Understand that people still need to have dignity in these processes....although a person needs help sometimes it is hard to ask for, offer it to people in a dignified way; this creates cohesion and a greater sense of community pride.

Dean also note that it is important to have cheerleaders of the process or rather people who will champion the efforts of the community, to remind people of their achievements, and to create a close bond between residents. He also discussed that early active engagement is important to make sure decision-makers are connecting to the community early so they don't feel alienated from the process.

Another important aspect of community engagement is that you need to get the right leader with the right attitude, meaning, find a leader that has passion and is excited. It is best to have several leaders with these qualities in different sectors of the community to effectively reach out to the community, (choose forward thinking people to lead).

In addition decision-makers need to empathize with people, i.e. put yourself in their shoes and make sure to fully explain your line of thought, don't assume they know the technical requirements of the re-building process. -Transparency and Empathy-

APPENDIX F - GODERICH, ONTARIO

Date of Tornado	August 21, 2011
Tornado severity listing (F0-F5)	F3
Population of Community at time of Disaster	8,000
Number of people injured	37, several more injured in cleanup
Number of people killed	1
Overall Damage: properties deemed unsafe: properties damaged:	\$75-100 Million

BACKGROUND

The Town of Goderich is located within Huron County, in southwestern Ontario on the eastern shore of Lake Huron and known as “Canada’s Prettiest Town”. The Town is home to approximately 8,000 individuals, in an area of 8 square kilometers. Goderich is surrounded by agricultural and other primary industrial practices including Sifto Canada; home to the world’s largest underwater salt mine. Tourists can often be found on the beaches along Lake Huron and in the town centre during the summer and fall seasons. The downtown, or “The Square”, is centered on the Huron County Court House with an octagon traffic circle providing a unique space for commercial, residential, small businesses, and civic space. The town was founded in the early 19th century and as such there are many official and nonofficial residential heritage districts.

The tornado first hit Sifto salt mine, where it unfortunately claimed the life of an employee. The tornado then traveled south east passing St. Patrick’s Street and West Street where the storm caused damage to several homes, pulling down power lines, ripping out trees and injuring several individuals. The tornado then passed through “The Square” and through another residential area and forested area. The downtown centre had lost all but three trees, most of the businesses damaged beyond repair.

The tornado severely damaged the Sifto Canada salt mine, the town centre, and several residential areas. The damage was estimated to be approximately \$75-100million. There was one casualty, a Sifto Canada employee, 37 injured and several more individuals injured during the clean-up. Electricity and gas was lost for several days due to the storm. Many residents were displaced following the tornado and remain displaced as of 18 October. The Town also lost several trees and natural features creating sight lines that did not previously exist.

REACTIVE

There was no engagement with the community in the declaration of the state of emergency, nor the events (turning off gas, restricting areas) that followed.

The first form of engagement was one-way communication, from the Planning Office, to the residents of Goderich. Flyers were printed and hand delivered by volunteers across the Town on August 23rd & 25th, these flyers included emergency information such as; gas and electricity concerns, food safety, garbage removal, and restricted areas.

On 27 August there was a Public Meeting & Public Support Forum hosted by Town staff and councilors, this forum was well attended. Staff & council were focused on keeping this meeting strictly as an information sharing session and time for support, there was no opportunity for question and answer. Chief Building Official with the Town of Goderich had also prepared a letter to help explain to home owners, with damage from the tornado, what documentation is required by the Town building department.

In the first weeks of September council and planning staff met with home and business owners whose property had been damaged to discuss amendments to Town by-laws regarding temporary uses (banking and other businesses in temporary locations), legal non-conforming (i.e. lumber yard in residential), and legal non-complying (i.e. set back standards).

TRANSITION

The first engagement in the transition phase was bottom up, initiated by a community member and neighbours and approached the Town Planner. A concern among the neighbourhood is concerned with the changing look and feel of their street, as homes were destroyed and now in the process of rebuilding. The community met with Denise and an architect to discuss the character of the community as rebuilding takes place.

The second community engagement in the transition stage was a larger scale with the Town Meeting regarding Park & Public Spaces on 24 September. The meeting had two major parts, first an information session or one way communication regarding parks, planting season, donations for trees, funds, and planning concerns. The second half of the session split participants into focus groups of eight topics reflecting different public spaces that were damaged by the tornado (Court House Park, “Square Proper”, Harbour Park). The results of the meeting were recorded and will be taken into account with further planning actions.

BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

- Grass roots engagement: small community meetings initiated by residents. Great transition as emotional support, and the start of visioning to rebuild.
- Small focus groups within large community meetings for public spaces
- Keep on top of communication even into transitioning and visioning stage

Natural disasters and associated events are immense and shocking disturbances that require the judgments and efforts of large numbers of people; not simply those who serve in an official capacity (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007). From volunteer associations, to local governments, many groups of people are needed as an essential ingredient to managing a mass emergency such as a tornado. Because the scale of natural disasters can affect a community on different stages, levels of community engagement can also be impacted (Mathbor, 2007). According to Mathbor (2007), in order to bring together individuals, communities and institutions, social capital/work as a process of building trusting relationships and mutual understanding is needed. When a tragic disaster occurs, such as the tornado that impacted the town of Goderich, a good approach to community engagement should be based on the idea that the more people connect with each other, the further they will trust each and the better off they will be individually and collectively (Mathbor, 2007). The idea behind this is that greater social cohesion tends to have a strong collective aspect amongst its members, and is important to further engagement.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A LEADERSHIP TOOL

According to Schoch-Spana et al (2007), community engagement is defined as a structured dialogue which makes joint attempts among formal authorities, citizens and local leaders, to problem solve, and to take collaborative action around a pressing public matters. As a tool, community engagement can be constructive when managing a large scale crisis (such as a tornado) or mitigating losses to a community. There are a variety of techniques which local governments can employ to take a prominent leadership role when dealing with a natural disaster. The first of these revolves around the notion of effective communication. Local officials who operate in a communication mode tend to convey information to members of the public in a one-way fashion with the intent of informing the general public on a particular issue (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007). Secondly, a public consultation process could be enacted in which civic leaders attempt to solicit the opinions through surveys, focus groups, etc. The purpose of this technique is to gather the public's points of view, criticisms and constructive advice, which may further inform policy options and implementation strategies after a natural disaster (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007). The last and most important technique used as a leadership tool is community engagement. Community engagement takes a unique approach to working with the public in which there is a two-way flow of information between local authorities and community residents. Dialogue, through community engagement, helps to foster a better understanding of complex issues on all sides, when the ultimate goal is to conceive and implement a policy solution (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007). Furthermore, the engagement process presents an opportunity for local resident and community leaders to learn collectively. In conjunction with communication and consultation, community engagement as a technique is generally effective. When all three techniques are used, they improve citizen involvement in matters that impact the greater community.

KEY PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement can be a successful endeavour for a municipality that has been greatly impacted by a natural disaster, such as a tornado. The following is a set of principles which practitioners and theorists have agreed to use during times that impact the general public (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007):

- ▶ Commit the administration to community engagement – All attempts at minimizing interorganizational barriers are needed. Also, the extent to which policy decisions actually incorporate citizen input is important as it will depend on how the administration grants stakeholders equal opportunity to affect the outcome of decisions.
- ▶ Assess the civic infrastructure: build in prior foundations; pour new ones if needed – community leaders need to enhance the capacity of existing networks to be more resilient to disasters when they occur. Community engagement is more likely to succeed when laid upon some prior structure.
- ▶ Work with community partners to define top issues – a common sense approach should be taken in order to develop ideas on how to target efforts that matter most to the community.
- ▶ Allocate sufficient resources to sustain community engagement – like other public endeavours, community engagement requires adequate resources to be successful. Engagement initiatives take time and effort. Even though much of community engagement is built on volunteer efforts made by the public, local leaders need to remember that participants cannot be expected to bear all of the direct costs associated with involvement (such as lost work time, child care expenses, etc).
- ▶ Consciously reach out to groups absent from the policymaking table – people that tend to take active roles in the community are more politically involved and represent a particular demographic. It is important for community leaders to include disenfranchised groups that are not normally involved in policy making decisions.
- ▶ Plan engagement with care from the outset; do not act at the last minute – Community engagement can be a timely process and requires careful planning. People have busy schedules and it is important to work alongside these individuals during times of disaster. Last-minute decisions to involve the public can be costly as it may prove to be a frustrating process for citizens and local groups. A careful attention to process is essential for community engagement.
- ▶ Listen to groups with unresolved trauma and grief from past events – leaders who collaborate with the community should recognize that emotion is a legitimate process and input to policymaking. Individual sentiments will be a common element during the community engagement process after a natural disaster. Local leaders should anticipate and engage with disempowered groups in times of despair as it will be important aspects for successful engagement.

APPENDIX G - LITERATURE REVIEW

The following table contains additional info regarding top principles and actions to help leaders succeed at community engagement (Schoch-Spana et al., 2007, p.18):

Institutional commitment to community engagement

- › Obtain the support of elected officials and agency heads; build top-down support for this bottom-up effort
- › Develop a common purpose through joint problem assessment by top officials, grassroots leaders, and residents at-large
- › Position an organizational champion who can effectively handle interagency concerns about the community engagement initiative
- › Grant community partners genuine opportunities to affect disaster policies

Investment in an enduring community engagement structure

- › Plan for sustained community engagement resisting shortcuts in the form of one-time or sporadic public outreach
- › Assess local civic infrastructure, identify existing networks and enhance their capacity to take on disaster-resilience goals
- › Set aside a sufficient budget, support staff, meeting space, partner incentives and other material necessities
- › Align expectations between officials and community partners about engagement scale, scope, process and time-frames
- › Systematically track community engagement's impact on improved disaster policymaking
- › If possible, recruit trained professionals to facilitate face-to-face interactions, help resolve controversies, and continually improve community engagement capabilities

Input from vocal and reticent communities

- › Consciously recruit and represent groups historically absent in public affairs, including the poor, working class, less educated, etc
- › Enable citizens to juggle home life and civic life better by offering convenient meeting times, travel reimbursement, etc
- › Be receptive to participants expressive input, not just their practical advice
- › Acknowledge that participants venting of anger is not an impediment to engagement

LESSONS LEARNED

The key to successful community engagement is resiliency. Resiliency in this context refers to the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters, and cope with an event that challenges the ability of the social system to re-organize, evolve and learn (Cutler et al., 2008). The role of local leaders in this case is to manage critical resources during catastrophic events. Leaders such as policymakers and planners can improve their ability to govern in a crisis and mitigate community-wide losses by embracing the community engagement approach.

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