



Engage Resource Unit

Research and Engagement Library // Document Overview

Document Overview

Project Name: Raingarden Pilot Project: Winston Heights/ Mountainview NE

Document Type: Engagement Plan or Strategy

What is an **Engagement Plan** or **Strategy**?

A document that outlines the objectives for conducting engagement, who we planned to engage with and what engagement activities were planned.

What is a **What we Heard Report**?

A document that outlines the feedback that was heard through an engagement process.

What is a **Final Summary Report**?

A document that describes the purpose for engagement, who we talked to, and how their input was used by The City to help make decisions.

Why are we engaging?

To find alternative stormwater management solutions for Winston Heights and Mountainview NE.

What stakeholders are involved?

Council, Ward 9 Office, General Manager and Directors of The City of Calgary, Water Management Team, 311, Parks, Community and Neighbourhood Services, LID Steering Committee, The City of Calgary Staff, Residents of WHMV, Community Association, ALIDPA, Citizens

What are we talking to stakeholders about?

The location of the pilot rain gardens in Winston Heights and Mountain and the planting style and design of them.

When did this engagement happen?

2011



Engagement Plan

Raingarden Pilot Project: Winston Heights/ Mountainview NE

Revised September 2011

Note: This is a living document and should be updated regularly based on feedback received during the engagement process.

Background

The City of Calgary's Stormwater Management Strategy helps ensure Calgary's water resources are protected by:

- Reducing both rate and volume of stormwater runoff; and
- Reducing sediment loading to the Bow River thereby contributing to The City's ability to stay within the legislated river loading limit.

Stormwater management facilities (such as wet ponds) can help reduce the sediment loading and stormwater runoff intensity to the watersheds; however, there are areas of Calgary where more traditional facilities are not practical or economical. To meet the goals of the Stormwater Management Strategy, it is necessary to find alternative stormwater management solutions for these communities. Rain gardens have been identified as a potential solution.

About the WHMV Pilot Project

The City of Calgary has identified Winston Heights/Mountview (WH/MV) as a suitable community for the construction of a pilot community rain gardens (to be constructed on City land).

The pilot community gardens is an important step towards reaching the goals of the Stormwater Strategy because it will allow The City to evaluate the effectiveness of rain gardens as a solution for treating stormwater runoff in communities where traditional facilities (like wet ponds) aren't practical or economical.

This pilot project will also support The City's efforts to educate the public about the important value of rain gardens, in direct relation to stormwater and stormwater infrastructure.

Priority communication requirements and tactics were determined through a review of existing citizen research. The Engage Plan was developed by Water Resources in conjunction with the Engage Resource Unit and incorporated the following: Lessons learned from the Lakeview Sustainable Streetscape Project, existing water conservation initiatives and a thorough discussion with the Engage Resource Unit, Residential Program team and Planning & Policy team in Strategic Services.

The key learnings and successes of this project will aid in the future rain garden projects.

Recent Developments/ Current Situation

In 2009, a stormwater education and outreach program was implemented to support a multi-year strategy to evaluate the acceptance of retrofitting bio-retention areas (also known as rain gardens) into existing communities. The outreach program included educational outreach (residential home visits) to educate about stormwater and a community-based community program ("Stormwater Community Challenge"). This outreach program was piloted in Winston Heights/Mountview and Bridgeland/Riverside.

- a) Winston Heights/Mountview: Water Resources staff made community visits (face-to-face) and completed short surveys with 20% of homeowners and tenants in the community: 92% indicated they had already adopted at least one stormwater behaviour such as using a rain barrel or washing their car at a carwash, and 17% voluntarily chose to participate in the Community Stormwater Challenge.
- b) Following the completion (Dec 2009) of the outreach program, Water Resources staff facilitated discussions with the Winston Heights/Mountview Community Association to

present The City's stormwater strategy and to review the role of source control technologies such as bio-retention areas (rain gardens).

- c) Water Resources invited the Community Association to work with The City through a community engagement process that would explore the acceptance of bio-retention area, which will result in the construction of a demonstration project (rain gardens).
- d) At this stage the Community Association was supportive of the strategy and proposed projects; The City collected their feedback and was tasked with addressing some standard questions before proceeding with rain garden construction: safety, maintenance, mosquitoes, etc.

In 2010 The City participated in a rain barrel sale, Ecofair, and a Community Healthy Yards program, in partnership with the communities of Winston Heights/Mountview. These initiatives helped maintain and build a strong relationship with community stakeholders.

There has also been a series of articles provided for the community newspaper.

The City has retained Dillon as the contractor for this pilot project; the contractor will play a support role in delivering all communications initiatives in the community.

Project Definition

The Issue

In order to meet the goals of the Stormwater Management Strategy it is necessary to find alternate stormwater management solutions for older communities in Calgary where more traditional facilities (such as wetlands) are not practical or economical to build. Rain gardens have been identified as one solution for these communities.

Although rain gardens have been included in the design of newer communities, The City has not installed a rain garden in an existing community as a retrofit stormwater management feature. The City identified WH/MV as a suitable community for construction of pilot (retro fit) community rain gardens. This project will be constructed on City land, with input from citizens regarding design.

The two rain gardens will be installed at the following two locations in Winston Heights/Mountview:

1. Winston Heights/Mountview Community Association (520 27 Avenue NE)
 - Good option for a site behind the building
 - No irrigation lines that interfere
2. Cul-de-sac at Marlowe Place and 17th Ave NE
 - Good for small garden
 - Parks would need to be updated re: maintenance moving forward

The pilot project is an important step towards reaching the goals of the stormwater strategy because it will allow The City to evaluate the effectiveness of rain gardens for treating stormwater run off. It will also support The City's efforts to educate the public about rain gardens.

The Question(s) to be asked; the decision(s) to be sought

1. Rain Garden Location

The City has reviewed the community for potential site locations for pilot rain gardens in Winston Heights/Mountview. Potential sites were screened for technical and social criteria. Of these potential sites, two feasible locations for a pilot community rain garden

have been identified by The City. ***Question to be asked:*** The City wants to understand stakeholder perceptions of benefits and drawbacks for each of the two proposed rain garden locations in the community.

2. Planting Design/Style:

Rain gardens must be constructed to achieve specific technical requirements that influence the garden's final position within an area, its size and the general list of plants suitable for this environment. Within these parameters, several options regarding selection and layout of the garden vegetation exist. ***Questions to be asked:*** The City wants to obtain input from stakeholders regarding the three sample design styles to better understand:

- What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of the three proposed rain garden styles?
- Why certain attributes are seen as beneficial or a drawback?
- What is important about the ***look and feel*** of a rain garden that would make it a successful part of the surrounding community?
- Which design should be used at each location?

What is the scope of our engagement?

1. **Inform** external stakeholders on what rain gardens are and why they are important for stormwater management in Calgary.
2. **Inform** external stakeholders on why a rain garden demonstration project is being undertaken in the community of Winston Heights/Mountainview.
3. **Listen & Learn** with external stakeholders to identify perceived benefits and drawbacks for each of the two feasible rain garden locations in the community.
4. **Consult** with external stakeholders to identify perceived benefits and drawbacks for each of the three rain garden design styles.

A. What decisions have been made that are not open to stakeholder input?

The City has determined two rain gardens will be installed on City land within the community of Winston Heights /Mountainview.

The City has determined the technical requirements for the pilot project. Technical requirements will drive key decisions about:

- Location options
- Rain garden size
- Maintenance schedule
- Acceptable plants (but not the "design" of acceptable landscape using the acceptable plants)
- Timeline for construction
- Total cost

B. What is not negotiable?

- Expanding the list of feasible sites. All prospective locations have been carefully screened according to the technical criteria and in some cases, sites were deemed as

being not suitable due to other factors beyond The City's control (the presence of wildlife; a need to adhere to existing project timelines).

- Technical requirements (as outlined above)
- After a final design has been reached, it will not be reconsidered.

Goals/Objectives

A. Why are we doing this?

In order to meet the goals of the Stormwater Management Strategy, it is necessary to find alternate stormwater management solutions for these areas. Rain gardens have been identified as a potential solution for these areas.

The City of Calgary has identified Winston Heights/Mountview (WH/MV) as a suitable community for the construction of a pilot community rain garden, which would be constructed on City land.

The pilot community rain garden is an important step towards reaching the goals of the stormwater strategy in that it will allow The City to evaluate the effectiveness of using a rain garden to treat stormwater run off in older communities where traditional facilities (like wet ponds) aren't practical or economical. The rain garden will also support The City's efforts to educate the public about the important value of rain gardens and how they work and how individuals can play a role in stormwater management.

B. What is it we hope to achieve?

A well planned and delivered engagement strategy that ensures external stakeholders are given opportunities to be involved in site design theme decisions.

In addition, learning from this engagement process may better inform and support future raingarden development in other communities.

C. What is the role of stakeholders for this engagement?

Stakeholders will be consulted and their input will be incorporated to the maximum extent possible in order to arrive at the final decisions of design theme.

D. The goals of the engagement process are to:

1. Inform external stakeholders on what rain gardens are and why they are important for stormwater management in Calgary.
2. Inform external stakeholders on why a rain garden demonstration project is being undertaken in the community of Winston Hieghts/Mountainview.
3. Listen to and Learn from external stakeholders to identify perceived benefits and drawbacks for each of the two feasible rain garden locations in the community.
4. Consult with external stakeholders to identify perceived benefits and drawbacks for each of the three rain garden design styles.

E. Anticipated benefits

- Improved stormwater treatment
- Enhancement to community

- Stronger stakeholder relationships
- Tangible demonstration to share success and build on

F. What do we want to avoid?

The City wants to avoid an incomplete engagement that fails to maximize opportunities for involvement and input for external stakeholders.

Sensitivity/Risk

- The WH/MV pilot project is the second attempt to introduce Calgary residents to a new technology – this fact alone may pre-dispose residents against the pilot project.
- Misconceptions and/or lack of public knowledge about rain gardens could lead to resident resistance to the pilot project.

Communication tactics described in the communications plan, together with a clear and transparent engagement plan outlined in this document aim to mitigate these risks through education, clear communication and a positive experience involving residents in some of the project decisions.

Strategies

	Stakeholder	Level of Involvement	Description
Internal Stakeholders	Council	Inform	Members of Council (excepting the area Alderman) can be kept up to date on the project with briefing notes as well as the Report to Council via the SPC on U&E.
	Ward 9 Alderman and Office	Inform	The Ward 9 Alderman will need to be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.
	GM, Directors	Inform	The GM and Directors will need to be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.
	Water Management Team	Inform	The Water Management Team will need to be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.
	311	Inform	3-1-1 will need to be kept informed of the progression of the project as well as instructions on where/how to direct citizen inquiries. This will be further covered in the communications plan.

	Stakeholder	Level of Involvement	Description
	Parks	Collaborate	Parks input into location and maintenance will need to be factored in to project decisions.
	Community & Neighbourhood Services (CNS) – CRC's	Listen & Learn	CNS CRC's are a wealth of community knowledge and are a great resource for making community connections and information on community events. The CRC's will need to be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.
	LID Steering Committee:	Inform	The LID Steering Committee will need to be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.
	Field Services	Inform	
	Infrastructure Delivery	Inform	
	Water Quality Monitoring	Inform	
	Development Approvals	Inform	
	Water Employees	Inform	
City Staff	Inform	City Staff will be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.	
External Stakeholders	Residents of WHMV	Consult	Residents will be invited to vote and comment on the design of each location (from a palette of options) ultimately informing the project decision of which design is planted at each site. <i>(There will be a need for informational/educational support and this is being addressed further in the communications plan.)</i>
	Community Association	Listen & Learn	The community association is a valuable project resource for disseminating information about the project, and hosting engagement events.
	AB Low Impact Development Partnership (ALIDP)	Listen & Learn	Alberta Low Impact Development Partnership are enthusiastic supporters of rain gardens and can offer salient advice to the project team.
	Interested Stakeholders outside of community (NGO's, developers, advocates, LID Community)	Inform	Stakeholders outside of the community will be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.

	Stakeholder	Level of Involvement	Description
	Citizens of Calgary	Inform	Citizens will be kept up to date with the progression of the project. This will be covered further in the communications plan.

Techniques/Tactics

Stakeholder: Residents of WHMV

Strategy: Consult	Technique: Information Sessions, Dotmocracy Exercise
Dates & Times: March 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th , 2011	
Participants: Residents of WHMV, Stuart P., Tara N., Krista V., ERU facilitators, Ward 9 Alderman and/or Aldermanic Staff	
Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: Solicit feedback on the locations and design themes, as well as determine a community preference for which design theme to implement at which location. • Secondary: to provide an opportunity for storm water management education. 	
Notes: The results of the dotmocracy exercise from these three public facing events will need to be collated and incorporated into the construction plans.	

Stakeholder: Community Association of WHMV

Strategy: Listen & Learn	Technique: Small Group Meetings
Dates & Times: Monthly Community Association (CA) Meetings	
Participants: Members of CA Board (Gardening group), Stuart P., Tara N., Krista V., CRC	
Purpose: Utilize established community networks to disseminate project information. Learn from CA about ways to reach community residents, also learn about any ongoing community initiatives that may provide synergies for increased stormwater/ raingarden education.	
Notes: This technique may be considered in addition to providing a community-wide project eNewsletter as outlined in the communications plan.	

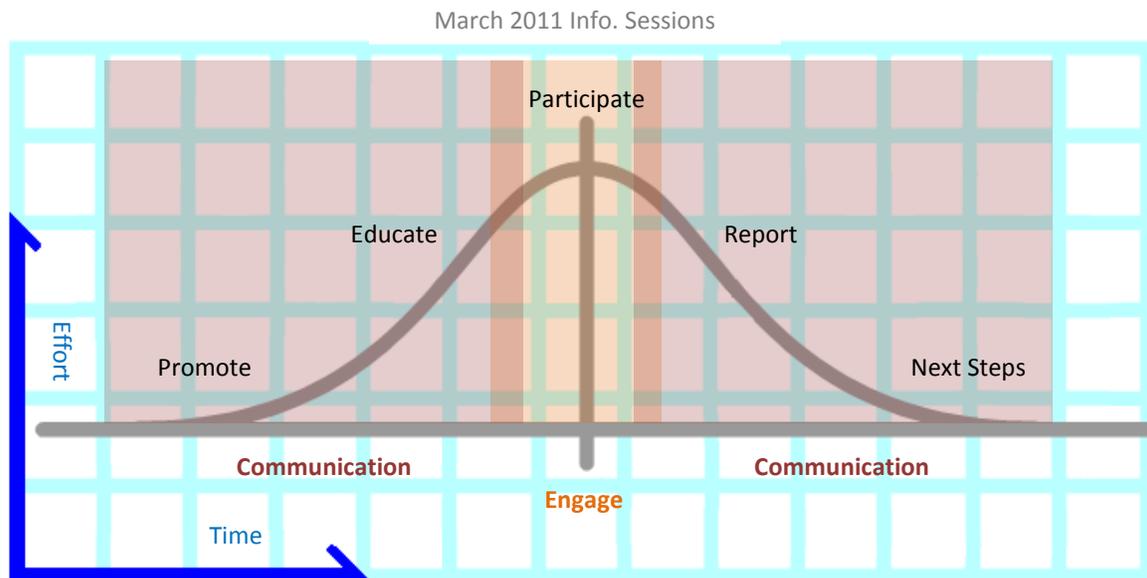
Stakeholder: Community Association of WHMV

Strategy: Inform (<i>reporting back</i>)	Technique: Presentations
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Dates & Times: Sept 2011 - Centennial Garden Party; Spring 2012 – Eco-fair
Participants: Residents of WHMV, Project team
Purpose: Centennial Garden Party – announce completion of construction. Eco-fair – project wrap-up with the community.

Alignment

This engagement plan has been developed in conjunction with the “Winston Heights/ Mountainview Rain Garden Project: Communications Plan Version 4.2” prepared by Tara Nychkalo, Communications Advisor, Water Resources, rev. Apr 14, 2010



Timeline	Target Audience/ Stakeholder(s)	Objective	engage! Spectrum	Tool/ Technique	Delegate(s)	Technical Advisors on site
03/02/2011 Community Ctr 6:30-9 PM	WHMV Residents	Preference for design themes and why	Consult	Info Session & Dotmocracy	Krista Vopicka	yes
03/03/2011 Community Ctr 6:30-9 PM	WHMV Residents	Preference for design themes and why	Consult	Info Session & Dotmocracy	Krista Vopicka	yes
03/05/2011 Community Ctr 10:30 AM-2 PM	WHMV Residents	Preference for location planting themes and why	Consult	Info Session & Dotmocracy	Krista Vopicka	yes

Timeline	Target Audience/ Stakeholder(s)	Objective	engage! Spectrum	Tool/ Technique	Delegate(s)	Technical Advisors on site
Apr-Oct Monthly Project Updates	WHMV Residents	Keep stakeholders informed on progress and decisions	Inform	eNewsletter, Community Nsltr, Website	Tara Nychkalo, Krista Vopicka	-
Apr-May 2011	WHMV Residents	Display Final Design at community events	Inform	Display Boards	Tara Nychkalo, Krista Vopicka	-
Sept 2011	WHMV Residents	Construction Complete	Inform	Participate in community event with tours/ stormwater games/ thank you flower take-aways	Krista Vopicka, Outreach group (?)	yes
Nov 2011	WHMV Residents	Thank you for community support	Inform	Community Nsltr.	Tara Nychkalo	-
May 2012	WHMV Residents	Wrap the project, reveal the completed RainGarden and any preliminary data results (if available)	Inform	Presentation and tour at community Eco-fair and rain barrel sale	Tara Nychkalo, Krista Vopicka	yes
TBD	WHMV Residents	Evaluation: to better understand the impact/ acceptance of rain gardens in a community	Listen & Learn	Survey (?)	Outreach group	-

Budget/Required Resources

Include pertinent information from project budget

Evaluation

While there was a lower resident turn-out (30) than hoped for, the depth and usability of feedback received from residents was of the highest quality. This, along with the feedback received on event

evaluation forms, suggests that the format and process were well-matched to the desired outcomes for engagement on this project.

Several factors contributed to the success of this engagement, including:

- The project team leveraged ongoing Stormwater outreach initiatives to approach the community with the idea, and to build a relationship with the Community Association Gardening Committee. This genuine relationship resulted in the Gardening Committee championing the project – and soliciting their neighbours to participate.
- The project team “went to where the people are;” meaning that they approached the Community Association, asked about the best ways to reach people in the community without asking the Community Association to represent the community’s views, and planned their final design reveals at water management related events in the community.
- The presence of ERU in the role of greeter at the events, explaining the engagement process, facilitated crowd management and allowed Water Resources subject matter experts to focus on answering attendees technical questions.
- Before going out to the public, the team clearly framed the project, the parameters for citizen engagement and the objective of the engagement.
- Prompt follow-up by the project team after engagement events demonstrated sincere consideration of and inclusion of participant feedback; rewarding the community’s trust that the project team had built through their engagement process.

Reporting

Reporting Back to Stakeholders

- Monthly project updates will be available Apr-Oct 2011 via 3-1-1, and subscription to a project e-newsletter (e-mailed). A project update will also be submitted to the Winston Heights/ Mountainview Community Newsletter for printing, the community newsletter is a bi-monthly publication.
- The results of the dotmocracy exercise from the Mar 2, 3 & 5 information sessions, will be consolidated and available as the first project update in early April 2011.
- Final design and results of the dotmocracy exercise will be displayed to the community at a series of water management related events in the community (eg: Healthy Yards and the annual Rain Barrel Sale) through late April and May 2011.
- Completion of construction and project wrap-up notification to the community will be coordinated with community events relevant to the project timeline. Construction completion in September 2011 will coincide with attendance at the community’s Centennial Garden party. Project wrap-up in Spring 2012 will coincide with attendance at the community’s Eco-fair.