TECHNIQUE	ALWAYS THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT	WHAT CAN GO WRONG
PRINTED PUBLIC INFORMATION MATERIALS			
● Fact Sheets ● Newsletters ● Brochures ● Issue Papers	● KISS! - Keep It Short and Simple Make it visually interesting but avoid a slick sales look ● Include a postage-paid comment form to encourage two-way communication and to expand mailing list ● Be sure to explain public role and how public comments have affected project decisions. Q&A format works well	● Can reach large target audience Allows for technical and legal reviews ● Encourages written responses if comment form enclosed ● Facilitates documentation of public involvement process	● Only as good as the mailing list/distribution network ● Limited capability to communicate complicated concepts ● No guarantee materials will be read
INFORMATION REPOSITORIES			
Libraries, city halls, distribution centers, schools, and other public facilities make good locations for housing project-related information	● Make sure personnel at location know where materials are kept ● Keep list of repository items Track usage through a sign-in sheet	● Relevant information is accessible to the public without incurring the costs or complications of tracking multiple copies sent to different people ● Can set up visible distribution centers for project information	● Information repositories are often not well used by the public
TECHNICAL REPORTS			
Technical documents reporting research or policy findings	● Reports are often more credible if prepared by independent groups	● Provides for thorough explanation of project decisions	● Can be more detailed than desired by many participants ● May not be written in clear, accessible language
ADVERTISEMENTS			
Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines	● Figure out the best days and best sections of the paper to reach intended audience ● Avoid rarely read notice sections	● Potentially reaches broad public	● Expensive, especially in urban areas ● Allows for relatively limited amount of information
NEWSPAPER INSERTS			
A "fact sheet" within the local newspaper	● Design needs to get noticed in the pile of inserts ● Try on a day that has few other inserts	● Provides community-wide distribution of information ● Presented in the context of local paper, insert is more likely to be read and taken seriously ● Provides opportunity to include public comment form	● Expensive, especially in urban areas

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FEATURE STORIES			
Focused stories on general project-related issues	● Anticipate visuals or schedule interesting events to help sell the story ● Recognize that reporters are always looking for an angle	● Can heighten the perceived importance of the project ● More likely to be read and taken seriously by the public	● No control over what information is presented or how
BILL STUFFER			
Information flyer included with monthly utility bill	● Design bill stuffers to be eye-catching to encourage readership	● Widespread distribution within service area ● Economical use of existing mailings	● Limited information can be conveyed ● Message may get confused as from the mailing entity
PRESS RELEASES			
	● Fax or e-mail press releases or media kits ● Foster a relationship of editorial board and reporters	● Informs the media of project milestones ● Press release language is often used directly in articles Opportunity for technical and legal reviews	● Low media response rate ● Frequent poor placement of press release within newspapers
NEWS CONFERENCES			
	● Make sure all speakers are trained in media relations	● Opportunity to reach all media in one setting	● Limited to news-worthy events
TELEVISION			
Television programming to present information and elicit audience response	● Cable options are expanding and can be inexpensive ● Check out expanding video options on the internet	● Can be used in multiple geographic areas ● Many people will take the time to watch rather than read	● High expense ● Difficult to gauge impact on audience
INFORMATION CENTERS and FIELD OFFICES			
Offices established with prescribed hours to distribute information and respond to inquiries	● Provide adequate staff to accommodate group tours ● Use brochures and videotapes to advertise and reach broader audience ● Consider providing internet access station ● Select an accessible and frequented location	● Provides opportunity for positive media coverage at groundbreaking and other significant events ● Excellent opportunity to educate school children ● Places information dissemination in a positive educational setting Information is easily accessible to the public ● Provides an opportunity for more responsive ongoing communications focused on specific public involvement activities	● Relatively expensive, especially for project-specific use ● Access is limited to those in vicinity of the center unless facility is mobile

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EXPERT PANELS

Public meeting designed in "Meet the Press" format. Media panel interviews experts from different perspectives.	● Provide opportunity for participation by general public following panel ● Have a neutral moderator Agree on ground rules in advance ● Possibly encourage local organizations to sponsor rather than challenge	● Encourages education of the media ● Presents opportunity for balanced discussion of key issues ● Provides opportunity to dispel scientific misinformation	● Requires substantial preparation and organization ● May enhance public concerns by increasing visibility of issues

BRIEFINGS

Use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate. Normally these groups need speakers. Examples of target audiences: Rotary Club, Lions Clubs, Elks Clubs, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters. Also a good technique for elected officials.	● KISS - Keep it Short and Simple ● Use "show and tell" techniques ● Bring visuals	● Control of information/ presentation ● Opportunity to reach a wide variety of individuals who may not have been attracted to another format ● Opportunity to expand mailing list ● Similar presentations can be used for different groups ● Builds community good will	● Project stakeholders may not be in target audiences ● Topic may be too technical to capture interest of audience

CENTRAL INFORMATION CONTACT

Identify designated contacts for the public and media	● If possible, list a person not a position ● Best if contact person is local Anticipate how phones will be answered ● Make sure message is kept up to date	● People don't get "the run around" when they call ● Controls information flow ● Conveys image of "accessibility"	● Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses ● May filter public message from technical staff and decision makers ● May not serve to answer many of the toughest questions

CENTRAL INFORMATION CONTACT

Providing access to technical expertise to individuals and organizations	● The technical resource must be perceived as credible by the audience	● Builds credibility and helps address public concerns about equity ● Can be effective conflict resolution technique where facts are debated	● Limited opportunities exist for providing technical assistance ● Technical experts may counter project information

Techniques to compile input and provide feedback

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INFORMATION HOT LINE			
Identify a separate line for public access to prerecorded project information or to reach project team members who can answer questions/ obtain input	● Make sure contact has sufficient knowledge to answer most project-related questions ● If possible, list a person not a position ● Best if contact person is local	● People don't get "the run around" when they call ● Controls information flow ● Conveys image of "accessibility" ● Easy to provide updates on project activities	● Designated contact must be committed to and prepared for prompt and accurate responses
INTERVIEWS			
One-to-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus building programs	● Where feasible, interviews should be conducted in-person, particularly when considering candidates for citizens committees	● Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum ● Provides opportunity to obtain feedback from all stakeholders ● Can be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members	● Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming
IN-PERSON SURVEYS			
One-on-one "focus groups" with standardized questionnaire or methodology such as "stated preference"	● Make sure use of result is clear before technique is designed	● Provides traceable data ● Reaches broad, representative public	● Expensive
RESPONSE SHEETS			
Mail-In-forms often included in fact sheets and other project mailings to gain information on public concerns and preferences	● Use prepaid postage ● Include a section to add name to the mailing list ● Document results as part of public involvement record	● Provides input from those who would be unlikely to attend meetings ● Provides a mechanism for expanding mailing list	● Does not generate statistically valid results ● Only as good as the mailing list ● Results can be easily skewed
MAILED SURVEYS & QUESTIONNAIRES			
Inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation	● Make sure you need statistically valid results before making investment ● Survey/questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias ● Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys	● Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings ● Provides input from cross-section of public not just activists ● Statistically tested results are more persuasive with political bodies and the general public	● Response rate is generally low ● For statistically valid results, can be labor intensive and expensive ● Level of detail may be limited

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TELEPHONE SURVEYS/POLLS			
Random sampling of population by telephone to gain specific information for statistical validation	● Make sure you need statistically valid results before making investment ● Survey/Questionnaire should be professionally developed and administered to avoid bias ● Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys	● Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings ● Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list ● Higher response rate than with mail-in surveys	● More expensive and labor intensive than mailed surveys
INTERNET SURVEYS/POLLS			
Web-based response polls	● Be precise in how you set up site, chat rooms or discussion places can generate more input than you can look at	● Provides input from individuals who would be unlikely to attend meetings ● Provides input from cross-section of public, not just those on mailing list ● Higher response rate than other communication forms	● Generally not statistically valid results ● Can be very labor intensive to look at all of the responses ● Cannot control geographic reach of poll ● Results can be easily skewed
COMPUTER-BASED POLLING			
Surveys conducted via computer network	● Appropriate for attitudinal research	● Provides instant analyses of results ● Can be used in multiple areas ● Novelty of technique improves rate of response	● High expense ● Detail of inquiry is limited
COMMUNITY FACILITATORS			
Use qualified individuals in local community organizations to conduct project outreach	● Define roles, responsibilities and limitations up front ● Select and train facilitators carefully	● Promotes community-based involvement ● Capitalizes on existing networks ● Enhances project credibility	● Can be difficult to control information flow ● Can build false expectations
FOCUS GROUPS			
Message testing forum with randomly selected members of target audience. Can also be used to obtain input on planning decisions	● Conduct at least two sessions for a given target ● Use a skilled focus group facilitator to conduct the session	● Provides opportunity to test key messages prior to implementing program ● Works best for select target audience	● Relatively expensive if conducted in focus group testing facility
DELIBERATIVE POLLING			
Measures informed opinion on an issue	● Do not expect or encourage participants to develop a shared view ● Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique	● Can tell decision-makers what the public would think if they had more time and information ● Exposure to different backgrounds, arguments, and views	● Resource intensive ● Often held in conjunction with television companies ● 2 – 3 day meeting

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SIMULATION GAMES			
Exercises that simulate project decisions	● Test "game" before using ● Be clear about how results will be used	● Can be designed to be an effective educational/training technique, especially for local officials	● Requires substantial preparation and time for implementation Can be expensive
TOURS			
Provide tours for key stakeholders, elected officials, advisory group members and the media	● Know how many participants can be accommodated and make plans for overflow ● Plan question/ answer session Consider providing refreshments Demonstrations work better than presentations	● Opportunity to develop rapport with key stakeholders ● Reduces outrage by making choices more familiar	● Number of participants is limited by logistics ● Potentially attractive to protestors
OPEN HOUSES			
An open house to allow the public to tour at their own pace. The facility should be set up with several stations, each addressing a separate issue. Resource people guide participants through the exhibits.	● Someone should explain format at the door ● Have each participant fill out a comment sheet to document their participation ● Be prepared for a crowd all at once - develop a meeting contingency plan ● Encourage people to draw on maps to actively participate ● Set up stations so that several people (6-10) can view at once	● Foster small group or one-on-one communications ● Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions ● Less likely to receive media coverage ● Builds credibility	● Difficult to document public input ● Agitators may stage themselves at each display ● Usually more staff intensive than a meeting
COMMUNITY FAIRS			
Central event with multiple activities to provide project information and raise awareness	● All issues, large and small must be considered ● Make sure adequate resources and staff are available	● Focuses public attention on one element ● Conducive to media coverage ● Allows for different levels of information sharing	● Public must be motivated to attend ● Usually expensive to do it well ● Can damage image if not done well
COFFEE KLATCHES			
Small meetings within neighborhood usually at a person's home	● Make sure staff is very polite and appreciative	● Relaxed setting is conducive to effective dialogue ● Maximizes two-way communication	● Can be costly and labor intensive

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MEETINGS WITH EXISTING GROUPS			
Small meetings with existing groups or in conjunction with another event	● Understand who the likely audience is to be ● Make opportunities for one-on-one meetings	● Opportunity to get on the agenda ● Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum	● May be too selective and can leave out important groups
COMPUTER-FACILITATED WORKSHOP			
Any sized meeting when participants use interactive computer technology to register opinions	● Understand your audience, particularly the demographic categories ● Design the inquiries to provide useful results ● Use facilitator trained in the technique	● Immediate graphic results prompt focused discussion ● Areas of agreement/disagreement easily portrayed ● Minority views are honored ● Responses are private ● Levels the playing field	● Software limits design ● Potential for placing too much emphasis on numbers ● Technology failure
PUBLIC HEARINGS			
Formal meetings with scheduled presentations offered	● Avoid if possible	● Provides opportunity for public to speak without rebuttal	● Does not foster constructive dialogue ● Can perpetuate an us vs. them feeling
DESIGN CHARRETTES			
Intensive session where participants re-design project features	● Best used to foster creative ideas ● Be clear about how results will be used	● Promotes joint problem solving and creative thinking	● Participants may not be seen as representative by larger public
CONSENSUS BUILDING TECHNIQUES			
Techniques for building consensus on project decisions such as criteria and alternative selection. Often used with advisory committees. Techniques include Delphi, nominal group technique, public value assessment and many others.	● Use simplified methodology ● Allow adequate time to reach consensus ● Consider one of the computerized systems that are available ● Define levels of consensus, i.e. a group does not have to agree entirely upon a decision but rather agree enough so the discussion can move forward	● Encourages compromise among different interests ● Provides structured and trackable decision making	● Not appropriate for groups with no interest in compromise ● Clever parties can skew results ● Does not produce a statistically valid solution ● Consensus may not be reached

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ADVISORY COMMITTEES			
A group of representative stakeholders assembled to provide public input to the planning process	● Define roles and responsibilities up front ● Be forthcoming with information ● Use a consistently credible process ● Interview potential committee members in person before selection ● Use third party facilitation	● Provides for detailed analyses for project issues ● Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise	● General public may not embrace committee's recommendations ● Members may not achieve consensus ● Sponsor must accept need for give-and-take ● Time and labor intensive
TASK FORCES			
A group of experts or representative stakeholders formed to develop a specific product or policy recommendation	● Obtain strong leadership in advance ● Make sure membership has credibility with the public	● Findings of a task force of independent or diverse interests will have greater credibility ● Provides constructive opportunity for compromise	● Task force may not come to consensus or results may be too general to be meaningful ● Time and labor intensive
PANELS			
A group assembled to debate or provide input on specific issues	● Most appropriate to show different news to public ● Panelists must be credible with public	● Provides opportunity to dispel misinformation ● Can build credibility if all sides are represented ● May create wanted media attention	● May create unwanted media attention
CITIZEN JURIES			
Small group of ordinary citizens empanelled to learn about an issue, cross examine witnesses, make a recommendation. Always non-binding with no legal standing	● Requires skilled moderator ● Commissioning body must follow recommendations or explain why ● Be clear about how results will be used	● Great opportunity to develop deep understanding of an issue ● Public can identify with the "ordinary" citizens ● Pinpoint fatal flaws or gauge public reaction	● Resource intensive
ROLE-PLAYING			
Participants act out characters in pre-defined situation followed by evaluation of the interaction	● Choose roles carefully. Ensure that all interests are represented. ● People may need encouragement to play a role fully	● Allow people to take risk-free positions and view situation from other perspectives ● Participants gain clearer understanding of issues	● People may not be able to actually achieve goal of seeing another's perspective
SAMOAN CIRCLE			
Leaderless meeting that stimulates active participation	● Set room up with center table surrounded by concentric circles ● Need microphones ● Requires several people to record discussion	● Can be used with 10 to 500 people ● Works best with controversial issues	● Dialogue can stall or become monopolized

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OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY			
Participants offer topics and others participate according to interest	● Important to have a powerful theme or vision statement to generate topics ● Need flexible facilities to accommodate numerous groups of different sizes ● Groundrules and procedures must be carefully explained for success	● Provides structure for giving people opportunity and responsibility to create valuable product or experience ● Includes immediate summary of discussion	● Most important issues could get lost in the shuffle ● Can be difficult to get accurate reporting of results
WORKSHOPS			
An informal public meeting that may include a presentations and exhibits but ends with interactive working groups	● Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop ● Conduct training in advance with small group facilitators. Each should receive a list of instructions, especially where procedures involve weighting/ ranking of factors or criteria	● Excellent for discussions on criteria or analysis of alternatives Fosters small group or one-to-one communication ● Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions ● Builds credibility Maximizes feedback obtained from participants ● Fosters public ownership in solving the problem	● Hostile participants may resist what they perceive to be the "divide and conquer" strategy of breaking into small groups ● Several small-group facilitators are necessary
FUTURE SEARCH CONFERENCE			
Focuses on the future of an organization, a network of people, or community	● Hire a facilitator experienced in this technique	● Can involve hundreds of people simultaneously in major organizational change decisions ● Individuals are experts ● Can lead to substantial changes across entire organization	● Logistically challenging ● May be difficult to gain complete commitment from all stakeholders ● 2 — 3 day meeting