Citizen Participation: The new Frontier
Public Hearings, Social Media, & eGovs

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IT'S ANTI-SOCIAL MEDIA. NOW, GO AWAY!

Bob Englehart, The Hartford Courant
INTRODUCTION

While public officials influence the public, citizens are entitled to their own beliefs and have equal opportunity for input. However, with current participation techniques and methods, members of society may not have the opportunity to equally participate, or some may feel they have no voice given age, income, gender, race, or political identity.

For urban planners and local government, maintaining open communication with community members is essential. It is a task that has long plagues the profession with fault and a need for improvement. Traditional methods alone can no longer sustain open communication and availability for community input. This heeds to the development of new techniques or a broader range of methods to involve the general public.

Public participation and the decision making process are based on an involved and informed public. Traditional techniques try to inform the public on every step of the decision making process. The process is based on understanding how agencies can collaborate and work with the public towards solving problems.

A problem with many traditional techniques is they do not focus on the inclusion of all types of persons in society. For example, a working single parent
who has to work two or three jobs cannot attend a public hearing at six o’clock in the evening, how is this information going to make it this person? Or consider an individual who lives in assisted living, where transportation is not available hindering his/her ability to attend public hearings; how can this person have a voice in the decision? A young member of the community who believes they do not have a voice due to their age, how can her/his input have the same weight as older residents? How can public participation be more available for all members of society?

This project is completed with the City of Lafayette. The current Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Lafayette is based on the requirements for a five year consolidated community plan that outlines the process for citizen participation in planning, implementing and assessing the Consolidated Plan and One Year Action Plan regarding funding for Community Development Block Grant funds and HOME funds. The City of Lafayette is seeking ways to engage the greater public at city meetings outside of the CDBG and HOME public meetings. A survey was given to a sample of the population to learn more about participation patterns that can be enhanced with multiple techniques. Based on this information, recommendations will be made to the 2005 Citizen Participation plan.
Through this project, I plan to demonstrate the need to combine a variety of techniques for effective participation plans to improve the participation process, increase empowerment and trust within a given community.
METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH STRATEGY

Research Strategy:

   Historical Research: Much of my research has been based on case studies with a focus on citizen participation as the national, state, county, and city level. I relied heavily on the Public Participation Handbook; this opened my research to better understand traditional methods of engaging the public as well as the downfalls of each. It was used in setting up the background information or the foundation of this research piece for understanding the rational and importance of citizen participation and allowing my own thought process to evolve and foresee with the assistance of newer articles specifically from Governing magazine where citizen participation is headed. I relied heavily on The Digital Citizen; this gave great insight into understanding what being a digital citizen involves and the problems and implications of a digitally based society. Other articles of less significance have been collected from the journal, Planning and Psychology. Additionally I worked with the City of Lafayette, IN, to update and
revise its current citizen participation program. I read past plans to see how much, if any, change had been implemented to reach more citizens.

Quantitative Research: This is where my research first began. I witnessed the downfall of citizen participation in my hometown of Monticello, Indiana and noted that the citizens were not actively engaged in several government decisions. Aside from my hometown, I realized that many meetings meet either during the day around 11 a.m. or between 4 and 7 p.m. This is a narrow window of time for citizen participation. Especially those who are unable to attend due to work or school, this eliminates the involvement of the standard working class.

Interrupted or missing links in communication create a disarray of facts and leaves message boards to capture the rants and rambles that do not begin to acknowledge the issue discussed. This shows the lack of education of these issues at the public level and the issue with how media, especially newspapers and newscasts can snake the issue to encourage public comment, which in the end poorly educates the public. But on the contrary without the newspapers and newscasts the public would not be informed. Controversy over involvement of the public media and causes a need to be revised with new methods or opportunities for the community gain access to the information without a bend in truth and an opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of community issues.

Qualitative Research: (Survey) Working extensively with the City of Lafayette’s Citizen Participation Plan, I have gained a greater working knowledge of how the citizens of Lafayette participate. I am created a survey that was submitted
through the Community and Economic Development Department as well as the
City’s website. In total 500 surveys were sent to the public.

The survey was based on an 19-question survey which included profile
questions (gender and age), questions pertaining to participation including: have
you attended governmental meetings? (General council, HP Commission, BOW, BZA,
Neighborhood Meetings, Redevelopment Commission, Parking Commission,
Economic Development Commission). Other questions included reasons for not
attending, the use of social media for government meetings, etc. This gave a greater
idea of who participates and how they find out about meetings. Additionally this
gave me insight to guidance for filing the gaps for participation.
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: The Logistics of Participation

Participation has many meanings. The core elements of the definition of citizen participation include:

- Citizen participation applies to administrative, legislative, and policy decisions.
- Citizen participation is not just providing information to the public. It involves an interaction between the people making decisions and the people who want to participate.
- It is an organized process.
- Participants (citizens) have some level of impact or influence on the decision being made. (Creighton, 2005)

Participation is a continuum, a process. It can be seen in the cited four categories, given an infinite number of points along the scale:

1. Inform the public.
2. Listen to the public.
4. Develop agreements. (Creighton, 2005)

It is a process which incorporates public concerns, needs, and values into governmental decision-making. It begins with informing the public. This is an integral part of an effective public participation program. People cannot participate unless they receive complete and objective information to base their judgments. (Creighton, 2005)
The International Association for Public Participation assigns core values for the practice of public participation. They are:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.
- The public participation process communicates the interest and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

The rationale behind public participation focuses on decision-making that incorporates advice of experts, political members, and of course opinions and thoughts of the public. It operates as a value generator for issues addressed by the public, often derived through delegation of officials or experts. Public participation is used to improve quality of decision-making, increase agency efficiency, increase implementation, control confrontation, understand and evaluate public concerns, and work towards a better community or society. (World Bank, 1994)

Public participation is an integral part of representative democracy. It creates a direct link between the public and the decision makers. In it simplest form it is a way of guaranteeing that those who make decisions affecting people’s lives have an open dialogue with the public before making decisions. Public participation increases the public’s influence on decisions that affect their lives. Public
participation enables government officials to see resolutions for issues affecting the public. Public participation is a way to combine the different perspectives ensuring interaction and reassuring the public that all viewpoints are being considered. (Welch, 2005)

Public participation has many benefits. It has improved the quality of decisions, minimized the cost and delay of decision making, consensus building, increased the ease of implementation, avoids worst-case confrontations, maintains credibility and legitimacy, it anticipates public concerns and attitudes, and aids in developing a civil society. These benefits are based on the experience of James Creighton from working on approximately three hundred public participation cases. (Creighton, 2005)

The process of consulting with the public often helps to clarify the objectives and requirements of a project or policy. The public can force rethinking of hidden assumptions that might prevent seeing the most effective solution. Public participation often results in considering new alternatives rather than approaches that have been used in the past. The public may possess crucial information about existing conditions or about how a decision should be implemented, making the difference between a successful or an unsuccessful program. (Welch, 2005)

It makes government actions more transparent for the public. The more opportunities to be involved a greater level of understanding is achieved between the public and government agencies. It creates an open door government.
A benefit of public participation is a better-educated public. Participants not only learn about the subject matter, but they also learn how their government makes decisions. All citizens become involved in public participation programs. They learn how to influence others and how to build coalitions. Public participation is training in working together effectively.

Thomas Beierle and Jerry Cayford recently conducted an analysis of 239 public participation cases of the past thirty years. They evaluated public participation based on five social goals.

Goal 1: Incorporating public values into decisions.
Goal 2: Improving the substantive quality of decisions.
Goal 3: Resolving conflict among competing interests.
Goal 4: Building trust in institutions.
Goal 5: Educating and informing the public.

Breierle and Crayford concluded: “The case study record of the past thirty years paints an encouraging picture of public participation. Involving the public not only frequently produces decisions that are responsive to public values and substantively robust, but is also helps to resolve conflict, build trust, and educate and inform the public about the environment” (Crayford, 2002)

Characteristics of public participation help to legitimize public participation by the organization conducting the process and the public participating in the process.

It is necessary to know why people are interacting with the public, such as determining what issues need to be addressed and what decisions the public can have an impact on. Participation should be fully integrated with the decision-making
process. If it is not, decision makers will find themselves going to the public too early or too late to discuss important decisions. Discussions can be vague on what decision makers actually want from the public. This deters the public from participating, as the public will feel their input affects nothing. This may also lead to off point comments and input.

Important decisions do not occur all at once. They are usually a formulation of smaller decisions made along the way. All people involved should know and understand that these incremental decisions matter. Interested parties want and need to participate for the final decision to be justifiable. In some cases, all parties involved are not completely satisfied with the final decision, but they are willing to go along with it because of the level of satisfaction derived from being included in the earlier decision that led up the final decision. This in no way means that all parties will participate at each stage in the process. The closer to a final decision, the more people are likely to be involved.

The public opinion as well as the public is different from issue to issue. Public participation programs always involve a subset of the public, which changes with the issue. People who participate perceive themselves to have a significant role in the decision being made. People do not participate unless they perceive their interests or values to be affected. People in the public participation field have tried to various ways to describe the changing definitions of the public. People now use the terms ‘stakeholders’ to describe those who choose to involve themselves in a particular issue. The term is workable as long as decision-makers remember that
stakeholders are not a special class of people and do not necessarily represent constituencies beyond themselves. Membership in the stakeholder class is usually self-defined.

Normally public participation programs do not involve one activity. It is a succession of activities, each appropriate for the task of being completed and the audience of interested parties. In many participation programs, many programs are going on at the same time, each reaching a different audience. Not every issue requires multiple methods while other require many different methods; each is designed to accomplish a specific task with a specific audience.

In Chapter 2, a need for multiple methods is discussed as well as a need to understand the characteristics of the public. Chapter 2 ends with a discussion on selecting public participation techniques.
A NEED FOR MULTIPLE TECHNIQUES

Public participation plans and methods must be thought out based on the needs of the public and decision being made as a ‘one-size fits most’ public participation plan does not exist.

To establish a participation plan it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the public. The following are examples Creighton gives for describing and understanding the public.

A public informed or uninformed on the issue. This is a problem that affects the decision-making process inevitably. On certain issues the public is well informed while, on others, it is essential to have a public information program to simply convince the public that the issue is important and requires their involvement. (Creighton, 2005)

Hostile or apathetic public. Public hostility or apathy may be a reaction to a single issue or the result of a generalized perception of the organization. If the public is hostile, opportunities must be provided for people to express anger before they can work together cooperatively. If the public is apathetic, a public information program may need to be designed to stimulate their interest or at least permit and informed choice not to participate. (Creighton, 2005)

Divided or united public. If the public is united, then public participation can be relatively simple. But if the public is divided, it may take a number of conflict
resolution forums and passage of time to arrive at a clear sense of direction from the public. (Creighton, 2005)

**Outside interest.** Some issues generate such intense national interest that people from outside the area are directly affected by the issue will take an active role in the decision. (Creighton, 2005)

**Maturity of the issue.** Some issues cannot be resolved until the time is ripe. Usually that time occurs when all parties affected realize that continued conflict is getting them nowhere and that they will have to compromise in order to obtain what they want. Decisions whether to try to resolve such issues should be made only after an assessment of the parties’ willingness to resolve the issue. (Creighton, 2005)

**Existing institutions.** Sometimes existing institutions in the area, such as homeowners’ associations, can provide a mechanism for participation. Some communities use cable television as a tool for two-way communication. (Creighton, 2005)

For a participation plan to work, knowing and understanding the public and the type of decision being made is essential. Different decisions require different methods; it is best to be clear on why it is necessary to conduct a public participation program. For instance, is public participation required to fulfill regulatory requirements? Is maintaining or improving a working relationship with the public important? Could the public’s involvement threaten implementation due to controversy? In the end the public should ideally be involved in the participation
plan and creating one to meet their needs as well as those of the decision being made is necessary to be affective.

The first stage analyzes the decision-making context, which the public participation program will be conducted. The main task of this stage is to clarify the decision-making process and make a decision about whether public participation is needed for this decision. This is a necessary step to understand and fully integrate the public participation methods into the decision-making process. (World Bank, 1994)

The second stage, which this report focuses mainly on, involves the development of the public participation plan and identifying the public participation activities and how they fit into the sequence of the decision-making process. This is often called process planning and involves the careful analysis of what is trying to be accomplished with the public at each stage in the decision-making process and identifying the techniques that make this possible. (World Bank, 1994)

The third and final stage is the implementation planning. It is the how and when activities are going to occur or the logistical information identifying the key details such as how many people will need to be involved, which needs to attend, and what activities are going to be carried out. (World Bank, 1994)

The purpose of a particular public participation effort drives the selection of the type of program or method is needed. If the goal is to have a better-informed public, it may be more appropriate to conduct a public information program. It is important to remember that a better-informed public is not automatically a more
supportive public. If the goal is strictly to fulfill requirements, then the implementation of a minimal program may be necessary. If the issue is controversial, this kind of public participation will not buy much credibility. The public can tell when minimal requirements are being met. If the goal is to give the public the opportunity to be heard before a final decision is made but you are not expecting interaction among stakeholders, it may be appropriate to conduct the kind of public participation programs that simply satisfy procedural requirements, such as a public hearing. If support or informed consent for a decision is needed, it is usually necessary to use a collaborative problem-solving approach to public participation, with the public having genuine influence on the decision. (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

Most important, is it essential to establish clear expectations with the public and what kind of participation is being provided. The largest problems arise when the public expects a higher level of involvement than the organization is willing to consider. The most important solution is for the organization to be clear with the public about what level of involvement it is actually seeking. (Creighton, 2005)

After identifying the characteristics of the public and the type of decision being made, it is necessary to select the public participation techniques. In order to do this, knowledge about the available techniques and strengths and weaknesses of each is necessary to make the best participation plan. (Creighton, 2005)
Chapter 3 examines the multiple traditional methods or techniques for public participation. Within this chapter, the techniques are examined based on usefulness and limitations of each technique.
TRADITIONAL PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The goal of this chapter is to provide a generalized understanding and overview of the techniques that are traditionally used in public participation. These techniques are focused on getting information to the public so they may now how a decision will affect their interests.

This chapter can be understood to represent participation techniques in two ways. The first deals with how information is represented and provided to the public, and the second is how information is received from the public, for both a look at how useful the given technique is and its limitations is provided. Understanding how information is received and represented is key to understanding the benefits as well as the downfalls of traditional participation techniques.

The following are the most frequently used traditional techniques for providing information to the public.

**Briefings.** Briefings consist of personal visits, small group meetings, or a telephone call to inform people of progress on a decision or action being taken. They
often lead to two-way communication; information can be received from the initial briefing. (Creighton, 2005)

Briefings are particularly important if the result of a decision could lead to political controversy that could affect elected officials or agencies. Information should be provided first no matter if people agree or disagree with the information it is best to present the information rather than parties find out from other sources. This eliminates or decreases the amount of resentment from the element of surprise for elected officials or responsible parties.

Briefings are useful for providing information to the public and offering question and answer periods that allow for clarification of the information and issues that arise. The overall opinion obtained is that of a general interest group which is a small portion of the public.

**Example: City of Salisbury Briefing:**

“The Public Works Department of the City of Salisbury, sponsored a decision briefing for the City Council at their August 28, 2000 City Council meeting by the Cherry Hill Construction Company. Cherry Hill was requesting the partial closure of Armstrong Boulevard near the Coca-Cola Plant in the Northwood Industrial Park for approximately one year starting in September 2000 and ending no later than November 2001. Cherry Hill would like to construct an earth moving conveyor system on Armstrong Boulevard to move fill material from a borrow pit near Connelly Mill Road to their U.S. Route 50 By-pass construction site. They intended to move 1 million cubic yards of earth over the system. A majority of the fill would be for overpasses along the U.S. Route 50 and was presented to the City Council, Mayor Tilghman, and the public attending the August 28, 2000 City Council meeting.” (Jacobs, 2008)

This briefing enabled to public to be fully aware of the context of the project and hear from various members of the community on the affects it would have on the community. Those in attendance were able to understand the project and be
involved from the beginning. After the initial briefing council opened the floor for public comment and after hearing opinions from the public passed the motion and granted the request for Cherry Hill Construction. Many community members appreciated the opportunity to listen to the full scope of the project as well as listen to the discussion between contractor and the council to clarify any questions or problems the public had with the project. It created community support from the beginning to end of the project, the community felt engaged and educated.

**Exhibits and Displays.** Exhibits and displays inform and stimulate people to participate. When displays are set up in public places the community has the chance to view the display or exhibit and interpret the information presented. This is often a costly technique, but if designed correctly it can be used many times at different locations or events. To make exhibits and displays more effective, an added benefit could be the addition of a knowledgeable person who can answer questions and give persons more information. (Creighton, 2005)

Exhibits and displays are useful, because they can present the issue in a creative and attractive way. Obviously limitations can be attributed to cost of the displays as well as the size of the display or exhibit limits the amount of information that can be presented. If a person is not at the display, people may leave not understanding what the display represents, this in return leads to a less informed public.
Example: University of Maryland, Affordable Housing Exhibit

This is just one example of many options for exhibits. The most common thought of an exhibit is that of a museum, but in the same case it is presenting information in a way that every attendee, visitor, or guest will take a new idea or learning experience with them.

“Professors Isabelle Gournay and Ralph Bennett selected projects from across the country to serve as examples of innovative, well designed affordable housing and developed the layout and script of the exhibition. However uneven policymaking and funding of affordable housing have been, architects continue to produce innovative and humane solutions. The exhibition included eighteen examples from many parts of the country, accommodating many populations in many configurations, financed by myriad funding sources obtained by many kinds of sponsors. It remains an inspiring tribute to those efforts and a challenge to do more and better. It was open to the public to ease understanding and offer insights to new ideas for affordable housing options. With it being held on University of Maryland property it eliminated the weight of government approval and openly welcomed questions and comments about affordable housing projects in the area as well as housing projects around the country”. (University of Maryland, 2008)

Mass Mailings. To reach the general public, mass mailings allow publications to be produced and mailed directly to people’s homes. This is one way, along with newspaper inserts, to reach beyond the most actively involved citizens and to be sure that the public at large has an opportunity to be informed. This technique generates great amounts of interest in a short time frame.

In using mass mailings it is important to make sure that the graphic representation or overall appeal of the publication or insert is of decent quality, accurate, and legible to read and understand. The public is sensitive to what they perceive as efforts to buy their support through overzealous materials. This is very important for government agencies. (Creighton, 2005)
Example: Butler City Plan, Zoning Amendment, Legal Mailing

“The Butler City Plan Commission has the authority to hear a petition to amend the zoning map (rezoning) and make a recommendation to the Butler City Council. The Butler City Council considers the Plan Commission recommendation, approves or rejects the recommendation and makes the final decision approving or rejecting the zoning map amendment petition. To amend the zoning map the petitioner (person wishing to amend the map) shall notify interested parties (as defined in the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure of the Butler City Plan Commission and Indiana Code 36-7-4-608) of the public hearing. Notice must be given by certified mail, return receipt requested and postmarked at least 21 days before the public hearing.” (City of Butler, 2005)

Example: City of Houston, Civic Group Mailing

The City of Houston’s Planning and Development Department submit applications via mail to local homeowners association and civic groups that serve as a reminder for prohibited yard parking and request for parking permits. Each mailing consists of a nine page document that includes the parking ordinance, applications for parking permits, a checklists for application submittal, maps of available parking per the location of the organization, and sign specifications. Each year this is mailed to homeowner’s associations and civic organizations. (City of Housing Planning and Development Department, 2009)

Panel discussions. Panel discussions are a way of providing information during a briefing session or public information meeting. It is best to have a panel of individuals representing differing points of view to discuss the issues this is often followed by questions or comments from the audience or small group discussions. A panel, however, should not be confused with the group of individuals on the panel makes a prepared speech and no interaction between the panel occurs, this is not a panel, but rather a group of speakers who address the same problems.
Panels can be very interesting for the community and those involved. They can make the topic interesting since the panelist interact with each other and offer input of differing viewpoints. Panels are useful because they can involve people of differing viewpoints, some that the general public and decision makers may not be able to see or understand, or be aware of. It allows the public to see multiple sides of the given issue. A limitation of panels is if the level of interaction. This does not engage the public to listen or see the varying sides. This hinders the panel, the issue, and the decision-makers. Additionally panel discussions can be used to open an interactive program between community leaders and the public. (Creighton, 2005)

**Example: City of Columbus, Ohio, ‘Our City. Our Future.’**

“On Thursday, February 3, 2011, a panel discussion led by the Geography Graduate Organization brought together community leaders and geographers to discuss timely issues affecting Columbus, ‘Our City, Our Future: Trends, Prospects and Implications for Local Development.’ With Columbus at its center, the Central Ohio region is in a process of transformation as it moves forward in the 21st Century. Civic leaders intend to remake the city as one of the national leaders in economic development. At the same time, local organizations with more specific foci are working to build on the strength of local communities. What will be the outcomes of this transformative process, and who will be the winners and losers as our city grows and changes? All of us have visions for what our city and region should look like in the future. Come join us for a discussion about local initiatives for development and voice your ideas about where Columbus is headed in this productive panel discussion.” (Walker, 2011)

**Presentations to Community Groups.** An effective way of communication presenting the issue and solutions to people in the community. This could include civic groups, business association meetings, environmental groups, neighborhood groups, or homeowners’ association meetings. If a number of presentations are to be given, it is advisable to prepare a slide show or power point presentation or have
visual aids. A visual presentation is not only more interesting to the audience it communicates more information in a short period of time.

Presentations to small groups allow the issue to be addressed as well as solutions and feedback to be given between interested groups and those who can relay information to the larger groups. This can help decision makers in clarifying details for the small groups. This creates an ease of information flow from the community group to the larger groups. This can be very helpful in gaining strength for an issue. A limitation of presentations to community groups can be if the community group is opposed to the issue. If this is the case the community group can gain a great negative response from the greater group. This can be very detrimental to decision makers and the decision-making process. (Creighton, 2005)

Public participation is a means of two-way communication; this section discusses techniques that can be used to obtain information from the public.

Some of these techniques are general-purpose tools and others serve more specified purposes. Considerable differences exist in the levels of interaction, depending on which technique is used. (Crayford, 2002)

**Example: Purdue University Land Use Team:**

The Purdue University Land Use Team presents the importance of comprehensive planning to communities questioning the need for such plans specifically jurisdictions, townships, and counties. The Land Use Team delivers a two-part PowerPoint Presentation to communities which are interested in long range planning (anything exceeding 5 years) covering typical aspects of
comprehensive planning, complete with a cost effective analysis for the economic benefit of long range planning. The Purdue Land Use Team offers eleven educational programs to help citizens, local officials, and other groups explore and discuss current land use issues. (Purdue Land Use Team, 2005)

**Advisory Groups and Task Forces.** Next to public meetings, advisory groups and task forces are the public participation techniques that are most often used. Advisory groups consist of people who represent various interests, points of view, or fields of expertise that is set up to advise and organization on its programs or proposed actions. Some organizations use advisory groups as a primary mechanism for involving the public. (Creighton, 2005)

**Example: West Virginia Redistricting Task Force**

“Acting Senate President Jeff Kessler, announced Friday April 1, 2011, the formation of the Senate Redistricting Task Force chaired by Senate Majority Leader John Unger, D-Berkeley. Senate Majority Leader John Unger, D-Berkeley, chairs the task force according to a news release from Kessler’s office. The U.S. Census Bureau released West Virginia’s population statistics earlier this month. The news release added that the figures showed a dramatic shift in population from the south to the north over the past ten years. “The bi-partisan, geographically diverse task force will be holding meetings around the redistricting cycle,” Kessler said in the news release. “The task force will also representing each of the state’s senatorial districts. Unger stated in the news include the citizens of every region in redrawing the State’s district boundaries.” (13 WOWK News, 2011)

**Appreciative Inquiry Summit.** The technique was created as part of the organization development field and designed to bring about whole system change.

“This is a multiday event usually involving large numbers of people, designed to bring people together to agree on changes needed in an organization or community. Each summit, unique in design, typically lasts from two to five days.
The number of participants ranges from one hundred to twenty-five hundred. Most last only a day but may extend longer; a four-day design might have the following activities:

- **Day One:** The first day is designed to discover the organization’s positive change core – those positive characteristics of the community or organization upon which change can be built. Including: one on one inquiry interviews, small group meetings, creating visual maps, which illustrate the strengths of the organization.
- **Day Two:** The second day is spent envisioning the organization’s greatest potential for positive influence and impact in the world.
- **Day Three:** During day three, participants work on designing an organization in which the positive change core identified on the first day is built into the strategies, processes, and systems of the organization.
- **Day Four:** Small groups brainstorm possible actions and share them with the large groups. Individuals declare publicly their intention for action.” (Creighton, 2005)

At the core of this approach is a constant focus on the existing strengths, capabilities, and positive feelings of the participants, in contrast to approaches that start out by defining organizational needs or deficiencies.

**Example: United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit**

The Global Compact Leaders Summit provides an example of a large-scale leadership summit, but the same format can be carried out by a smaller organization with a fraction of the number of people used in this example. It is very involved and calls for extensive planning from the organization hosting the summit, but it is a way to involve every attendee in a two way communication model.

“During the day of June 24 2004, Secretary-General Kofi Annan convened the Global Compact Leaders Summit at UN Headquarters in New York. With nearly 500 leaders in attendance, it was the largest gathering ever of chief executive officers, government officials and heads of labor and civil society on the topic of global corporate citizenship. The design of the Summit employed Appreciative Inquiry. The methodology, created by Case Western Reserve University, is intended to spur innovative and creative thinking by
establishing one-on-one dialogues among meeting participants and through the utilization of worksheets covering key issue areas. This approach effectively turned the Summit into a working conference.

The Global Compact asks participants to make two commitments: 1) Embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labor standards, environmental sustainability and anti-corruption; and 2) Engage with other partners in projects that give concrete expression to the Global Compact principles, in addition to advancing the broader development goals of the UN. The overarching aim of the Leaders Summit was to deepen the commitments of participating leaders from business, labor and civil society by pursuing three ambitious objectives:

1. Making the Global Compact principles part of business strategy and operations everywhere: To identify significant innovations and achievements in support of human rights, decent working conditions, the environment and anti-corruption.

2. Promoting an inclusive and sustainable globalization process: To realize a shared vision of global markets that benefits all of the world’s people and advances a new understanding of the relationship between business and society in support of development.

3. Supporting multilateral cooperation to promote good governance at national and global levels: To build common agendas and actions in support of multilateral cooperation through voluntary networks.

CEOs, senior executives and board members represented the private sector from 253 companies worldwide (sixty-three of the companies are Global 500 firms located in 17 countries). The others represented small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) from all over the world. When asked about the turnout one executive commented, “Global corporate citizenship has made its way irreversibly into the business agenda at the highest levels of priority; it is the right thing to do for so many reasons - business, societal, ecological and human - and the turnout here shows leaders are solidly prepared to dedicate their time and resources.

More than 40 civil society leaders participated in the Summit, demonstrating their willingness to engage with other actors in finding solutions to the challenges posed by globalization. Thirty-one government ministers and officials, as well as heads of the core UN agencies that support the Global Compact, were also present. At the invitation of the Secretary-General, President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil delivered the keynote luncheon address, speaking to the role of business in society and the private sector’s power to help address pressing global challenges, including poverty alleviation.” (United Nations, 2004)
Beneficiary Assessment. Often used to gain insight and learn the effects a
decision has on those lacking political power and those that are financially
burdened. Beneficiary assessments seek sufficiently large samples that quantitative
results can be developed. Conversations interviews, focus groups discussions, and
participant observation are techniques often used to gain insight from a group of
people who share common concerns. (Crayford, 2002)

Example: Impact assessment of water and sanitation project in Ghana

The Ghana example is useful in understanding how impact assessments are
carried out from beginning to end and the multiple aspects of information collection
that are necessary for a successful assessment and implementation.

“Using innovative methods of data collection, COWI and a local
consultancy firm carried out an impact assessment of the second phase of a
Danida-supported community-based water and sanitation project in Ghana,
measuring changes in quality of life, health and hygiene behaviour.

The original project had provided 50 districts in Ghana with planning,
implementation and monitoring of water supply, including the installation of
more than 1,000 boreholes, 30 small-town pipe schemes, school latrines, as well
as sanitation promotion strategies. The task for the local Ghanaian consultant,
Innovative Services, was to evaluate whether the main objectives had been met
- did the beneficiaries themselves perceive an improvement in health status and
quality of life? And was there a measurable improvement in hygiene behaviour
with respect to the use of safe water and sanitary facilities? COWI’s role was to
build capacity among the local consultants and staff at the Community Water
and Sanitation Agency and to provide technical support and quality control at
all stages of the impact assessment. (Ronnest, 2010)

The beneficiary assessment method, developed by the World Bank,
mixing qualitative interview techniques with quantitative methods of analysis,
was used to ensure that the opinion of the people using the new facilities was
heard. Six consultants carried out semi-structured interviews with 358
beneficiaries and 55 respondents in control communities. Interview findings
were captured in coding sheets and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for
Social Sciences) to quantify findings. This was complimented by quotes and
case stories to bring out the voice of the beneficiaries in the report, and to
provide an understanding of what motivates (and demotivates) people in their
decisions of which water and sanitation facilities to use and whether to change their hygiene behaviour. (Ronnest, 2010)

In order to find out whether hygiene messages had been taken on board, structured observation was used extensively. This included systematic inspection of water and sanitation facilities, structured observation at water points and, most importantly, observation by schoolchildren of the hand-washing and toilet habits within their own households. The children provided insight into private matters within the confines of the home, which would otherwise have been difficult to measure.

The results of the impact assessment show that the implemented interventions have had a significant positive impact on health, hygiene and quality of life. Beyond that, the improved water and sanitation situation has had a broader impact on society as a whole, because it has reduced the time and burden of fetching water, freeing time for better conditions for women, for children to play and attend school, for families to spend time together, as well as boosting income generation in the area.” (Ronnest, 2010)

Charrette. A charrette, or design charrette, is an intense effort that may last for several days to solve a problem or come up with a design in a limited time. Participants agree to work together for three to four days and after an initial kick-off session, participants are broken into small groups, and each group is given the same assignment, such as designing a community center. Each small group is assigned one or more artists or architects who capture the group’s ideas and portray them visually. The groups then discuss what they like and dislike about the proposals developed in the small groups. The small group assignments and large group discussions can be repeated as many times as needed until there is broad general agreement on an approach.

Participants in a charrette may not be required to stay the entire length of time their job is to give input and ideas that will later be used by a design team,
typically a multidisciplinary team of professionals. Their job is to take what they are hearing from the public and translate it into the form that could be implemented.

To be successful a charrette must be well planned. Public relations effort prior to a charrette is necessary to gain the interest and involvement of the community. Another key is the skill of the design team, the team must have the ability to take what they hear from the public and keep their own ideas and biases out of the process and create a final product that is recognizable to the public as a translation of what they told the design team. (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

**Hotlines.** If the organization’s size permits, a hotline can be effective in obtaining information as well as presenting information on a given issue. A hotline is a widely advertised telephone number that rings through to a person who can answer questions. Usually it is set up so that there are several lines that answer to that number, so callers do not get a busy signal. The number is often announced in newsletters, news releases, meeting announcements, or any other place where people are encouraged to ask questions or comment on an issue. It is an effective means of two-way communication since people can give feedback on an issue as well as have their questions answered. (Creighton, 2005)

**Interviews.** Interviews can be an effective part of public participation programs. A series of thirty- to sixty- minute interviews with representatives of the key interests can provide a quick understanding of the issue, the dynamics between the interests, and the intensity of people’s interest in the issue. Several days of
interviews can often produce a large amount of information. (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

**Meetings, Hearings, Open Houses, and Workshops.** Meetings of some kind, whether town meetings, public hearings, workshops, or any of many other kinds of gatherings, are by far the most widely used public participation techniques. Town meetings often are called the purest and most democratic form of government - direct democracy where the town’s business is discussed, debated and voted on by members of the community. Anyone can speak, but unlike the mock town meetings seen on TV and the Internet during debates, with their confrontational and hyperbolic politics, the town meetings are civil and the participants engaged. Input is monitored and taken into consideration by the decision-makers. (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

**Polls and Surveys.** Polls and surveys permit a quantitative assessment of viewpoints in the community. Telephone polling is used by some organizations as an adjunct to their public participant programs. Polls and surveys are effective for assessing public opinion. Their advantage is that they provide a way to measure the proportion of opinion in the community at large, not just among those who participate in the public participations program. A poll or survey can help determine whether the opinions being expressed represent a large segment of public opinion or only a vocal minority. (Crayford, 2002)

**Internet.** The Internet is a powerful tool for informing the public. The potential for using the Internet as an interactive tool is very high and can include
chatrooms, message boards, web conferencing, visual communications, websites, digital newsletters, and social media chapter four looks closer at the growing digital citizen and how decision makers are using the Internet to reach a greater number of participants. (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008)
DIGITAL CITIZENS

Web based participation, also referred as digital citizenship, is the use of web-based surveys, web-based forums or discussions, social media, or web-based applications that endows all members of a political community to be involved. Digital citizenship is defined through the regular use of the Internet, both daily and effectively. But why is this needed or what can it do? (International Association for Public Participation, 2000)

The Internet has the potential to benefit society as a whole, and facilitate the membership of individuals within society, often called social inclusion. Digital citizens are those who use technology frequently and have access to technology at home.

![Cartoon of two people discussing the impact of blogs, podcasts, and Twitter]

Source: 1 Journal and Courier, Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman
and in other settings, and education and technical skills to understand and interpret the information being displayed in digital media.

With Internet access, a majority of members of a developed society can be reached. Americans frequently use the Internet and are considered to be 'highly wired', meaning they are constantly connected. In 2006, 42 percent of Americans were considered 'highly wired' this compares to the 48% of Americans who use the Internet daily. A level of skill and understanding is needed, to make use of digital information and how it is presented. But as the use of the Internet in society increases so does the need to capitalize on the opportunity for the digital age that is continuously progressing. (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008)

By making information available online, citizens socially inclusive and are inclined to participate. When this happens, society as a whole profits from broader and possibly more deliberative participation in the decision-making process. (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008)

Digital media is a unique technology in varied properties with a wide range of uses. It is interactive, enabling point-to-point communication through a variety of methods including e-mail, chat rooms, and instant messaging but also supports the use of broadcast through text, video, and visual images on web sites. It is a telephone, library, and a soapbox. It offers the possibility to store information and channel it for communication. The varied use of digital media enables new forms of participation that can reach a new group of the public. (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008)
Much like traditional techniques, there are digital tools used for information sharing and tools for interaction. Chapters Two and Three of the American Planning Associations Report, *E-Government*, explain and give examples of how communities should use these different means of digital techniques to give and receive information. As with traditional techniques it is essential to provide multiple information systems to a community.

Ways of digital information sharing can be as simple as an online web directory with contact information or as sophisticated as scenario-planning tools. Websites are the most basic tool for sharing information. They allow the user to customize it for their needs and to represent the most important information in an easy to use system.

**Example: Website**

The City of Chicago created a website for the Chicago Climate Action Plan. The website focuses specifically on how Chicago is planning for climate change. It hosts the plan as a downloadable document, provides information of what residents and businesses can do to support the plan, and documents how climate change affects Chicago.

**Example: Video Capture and Distribution**

The City of Bloomington, Minnesota, provides real-time, online webcast videos of planning commission meeting while they are in session. Webcast files are viewable in RealPlayer, a free downloadable software program.
Fayetteville, North Carolina, has a bi-monthly video show about current events that is intended to enhance citizen engagement. It is put together by Kaleidoscope, a third party video production house. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)

**Example: YouTube**

Web video services such as Vimeo and YouTube allow users to post videos and to comment and view the comments of others on posted videos. This online forum for discussion promotes the sharing of ideas, ratings, suggestions, and criticism.

Users may search for videos with a search bar by entering keywords relevant to the topics they wish to view. Searching for ‘city planning’ on Vimeo brings up a video about the Mountain Metro Route Planning kiosk, posted by the City of Colorado Springs ([www.vimeo.com/648762](http://www.vimeo.com/648762)). It is also possible to search for channels that offer groupings of videos based on shared topic content. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)

Implications of the YouTube social networking site for planning are expansive. City websites can create videos and video channels specific to planning, public meetings, and other city news. Videos can quickly be uploaded, and links can be provided on city websites, and in newsletters, RSS feeds, or other such notifications for easy viewing. The director of urban planning for the City of Boston uploaded a video to YouTube explaining some planning topics to a number of individuals. The video can now be shared with millions of other people by sharing
the link to the video or embedding the video in a website. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)

**Example: Mapping**

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mapping are used to assess and manage zoning, parcel information, population characteristics, infrastructure, and a number of other vital pieces of data that promote successful and efficient governance. Just as it helps city staff, planners, and zoning officials to visualize data, it is also helpful to provide such visualizations to citizens and website users in efforts to convey information that might otherwise be difficult to comprehend.

Huntsville, Alabama, offers an engaging GIS webpage as part of its city site. Contact information for the GIS manager is provided alongside photographs of the GIS staff. A series of linked buttons inform users about 22 separate topics. These topics include an explanation of GIS, interactive maps, GIS maps, photo galleries, and GIS-informational videos. The site clearly explains the purpose of GIS and provides a video called ‘Your City as Work’ that features Huntsville GIS staff explaining how mapping and GIS work, both in general and specifically for Huntsville. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)

**Example: Scenario Planning and Calculations**

Scenario planning tools allow the public to engage in understanding the interrelationships between decisions. Calculators allow the public to understand the costs associated with different choices. Planners are using these tools to engage the
public in trade-offs and in helping to make decisions about the future of their communities.

Community leaders actively engage with the public to generate dialogue and to support decision-making. A variety of web-based tools available to communities can help encourage such interaction. Communities can create Facebook groups to encourage discussion about particular projects, or they can create wikis to allow members of the public to help write plans. A number of tools for information sharing exist, continuing to expand the opportunities to participate.

**Example: Wikis and Online Editable Documents**

A wiki is an online system that permits users to access common documents, spreadsheets, or databases, providing forums for collaborative efforts in writing and editing. The most famous wiki is Wikipedia, the user-edited encyclopedia. While wikis are primarily used for internal organizational collaboration, they also have applications for collaboration with external audiences. Wikis provide openly editable documents, encouraging democratic and open use of the Internet for those who might not otherwise have such forums.

Melbourne, Australia used a wiki to create its Future Melbourne Plan. The City invited members of the public to help create a vision for the future by making suggestions and modifications to the draft plan over a month-long period. More than 7,000 people visited the wiki, and 131 people registered to edit the plan’s content. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)
Google Docs and Zoho have capabilities similar to those of a wiki, they allow users to create online documents that may be accessed and edited by designated individuals or groups. Zoho is free for personal use, and for a monthly fee for group use. Zoho allows users to share documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and databases, organize meetings, and create invoices. In addition, Zoho supports project management, human resources, web conferencing, and other activities.

Google Docs is a free service provided by Google that allows users to create and share work online. The user must sign up for a free Google account. Once signed in, the user is directed to a webpage where he or she may create a new document, presentation, spreadsheet, form, or folder directly in a web browser: no additional software is needed. This ensures that a large number of people will be able to easily participate in crafting and editing the documents. Once a document is ready to be shared, it can be published as a webpage, posted to a blog, or published within a company for group. This is an affective alternative to creating documents in word-processing software and e-mailing or sending out hard copies of documents for review and input.

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) used scenario planning as part of its Go To 2040 regional planning process. Participants were able to make choices about the future and see maps and graphs that show what the future of the region would be in 2040. The tool explained that by 2040, 2.8 million additional people are expected to live in the Chicago region. Participants are invited to compare different outcomes and tradeoffs and to create scenarios. Participants
can choose the density of development, location of development, the size of the road network, size of the transit system, transportation mode mix, and resource policies. After creating the scenario, the user can see the expected outcomes of those choices. Participants can compare the plan's scenarios against scenarios that users selected themselves. (Jennifer Evans-Cowley, 2011)

“Today’s Americans are now finding it much easier to use the Web to renew their licenses, apply for permits, pay fines, and even track where government funds are going, according to a study released in 2010. The Pew Internet & American Life Project surveyed more than 2,000 American adults in late 2009. In the study, Pew found that 82 percent of Internet users had looked up information or made a transaction on a government Website throughout the previous year.

The survey concluded that 46 percent had looked up government services, 41 percent had downloaded government forms, 35 percent had researched government statistics and 23 percent had obtained information on or applied for government benefits. The study also found that 33 percent of those surveyed used the Web to renew their driver’s license or car registration. 23 percent said they used the Web to see how the federal stimulus money was being spent, 22 percent downloaded legislation text, and 14 percent wanted to see who was contributing to the politicians that represent them.

Beyond using government services online, 31 percent of those polled said they also used social networking sites, blogs, and email alerts to keep up to date on what the government is up to. 23 percent said they join online debates about government issues and policies. The Pew survey also found that 44 percent of adults found a government Website by using search engines, compared to 16 percent who directly visited a site they have used in the past.” (Pew Reports, 2010)

The Obama administration uses its ‘Open Government Initiative’ to make more data publicly available online. The effort seems to be paying off.

“Nearly half of those who said they visited a government site said they were able to get their business taken care of, while only 5 percent said their experience with a government site was unsuccessful.

Use of government services online went up with income and education. The Pew study found that 91 percent of those with an income greater than $50,000 a year and 89 percent of those with college education had used
government services online. That compares with 76 percent of Internet users who earn less than $50,000 a year and 70 percent who have at most a high school education. The study was based on telephone surveys of 2,258 adults between Nov. 30 and Dec. 27. The margin of error for the survey was about 2.4 percent.” (Pew Reports, 2010)

The basis of participation is a duty towards the community rather than that of the individual. Information technology enhances information capacity and mobilizes citizen participation; it may be defined in terms of republican tradition, but is growing constantly with the explosion of new technologies the E-government and availability of political and community information on the Web means that the Internet is an important resource for civic and political information. (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008) A study completed found that citizens, who have used government Web sites, report more positive attitudes about government at all levels and greater trust in government. It enables the government to be transparent and interactive with the public, in other words, the more information available to the public, the greater the level of trust and participation. (Welch, 2005)

Web based participation methods have the potential to lessen doubt and create an equal level of dependency and trust in public participation. Current techniques used have seen a greater rate of involvement than traditional techniques. Methods of web-based participation include: discussion boards, web based mobile phone applications, federal database for ideas and discussion, social media (such as Facebook and Twitter) place the decisions in the communities hands.

Web based participation is used internationally, at the federal level, the state level, the county level, and the city level. Children in Helsinki, Finland have had
opportunities to work with web-based media to create a vision for their community.
The federal government has created the Open Government Directive to openly solicite ideas from the public to government agencies. The state of Louisiana has used web-based participation to collectively collaborate with experts, community members, and agencies to create a vision and goals for the community through the Louisiana Speaks Project in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Counties use social media to keep the public informed, through Twitter or Facebook; the use of social media has allowed people to become informed and respond to current information. The cities of Washington D.C. and San Jose are using mobile web applications to place control of community problems in the community members hands; this includes graffiti, potholes, traffic congestion, etc.

**Successful Example: Louisiana Speaks**

Planning projects are relying more on Internet based technologies to engage the public in decision making. Following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Louisiana Recovery Authority established the Louisiana Speaks Project as a way to begin the rebuilding process. The project faced many challenges but the end goal was to reach out to the public and develop a vision for the future of Southern Louisiana.

Louisiana Speaks used a variety of public participation methods including web, television, radio, mailings, and community meetings and workshops. The outreach resulted in over 27,000 responses to a survey and thousands of participants in meetings and workshops.
The Louisiana Speaks Project was designed to engage the residents of Southern Louisiana in rethinking and rebuilding the future following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Project was spearheaded by the Louisiana Recovery Authority, and was an attempt to turn this tragedy into a plan for recovery and growth in the region for the next 50 years.

The challenges facing the project leaders were anything but minimal. The largest challenge was the largely displaced and cynical population. Aside from the displaced population issues of reduced access to technology, a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and situations, and an urban area that had been inundated with programs. To reach the public and address these issues, the Project utilized a variety of community outreach techniques, including traditional methods as well as a significant web component.

More than 27,000 residents and stakeholders participated in the Louisiana Speaks Project to develop a vision for the future of South Louisiana. The vision builds on a sustainable recovery that will restore coastal wetlands, construct strategic levees, and reinvest in historic communities. New growth is focused in and around existing communities, linked to investments in protection infrastructure, regional transportation, and economic zones.

Three digital techniques were developed to engage stakeholders in the process: web presence, we-based survey, and email communication.

The development of web presence included the creation of www.louisianaspeaks.org, the official website of Louisiana Speaks. The main
purpose of the website was to disseminate information. Currently, the website hosts information on the results of the Project and the steps being taken to implement plans throughout the state. Visitors can download results of the survey and read the plan developed from the efforts. Web presence was increased through videos posted to YouTube and linking from other related websites including the Center for planning Excellence. Three videos posted on YouTube brought over 1000 views.

The most interactive online tool was the web-based survey. The online survey modeled the paper and phone surveys. The survey resulted in 27,000 responses. Online responses accounted for 53 percent paper accounted for 42 percent and phone for percent. (Lousiana Recovery Act, 2002-2010)

Email communication enabled stakeholders to stay engaged through updates and meeting announcements.

The Louisiana Speaks Project is the largest regional planning outreach campaign ever conducted in the United States to date. With more than half of its public participation coming through online venues, Louisiana Speaks demonstrated an impressive online component of public participation in the planning process. (Lousiana Recovery Act, 2002-2010)

The workshops and community meetings expanded the level of citizen power to that of a partnership, a degree of citizen power. During the workshops, participants examined alternatives and discussed tradeoffs with traditional power-holders, characteristics of a higher level of citizen power. Although large numbers of
people participated via the web, the most powerful forms of citizen power occurred in the traditional techniques through the meetings and workshops.

In analyzing factors that influence online and offline participation, the Project found that people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds possess the factors including Internet skills that allow for more online participation. Offline participation is predicted by the possession of civic skills and political interest. The Project found that those with high levels of civic skills also tend to possess high levels of Internet skills. Additionally, demographics played a role in understanding online versus offline participation. Whites compared to non-whites participate at a greater rate to online activity.

The uneven access to Internet was a challenge during the Project. Targeting lower income populations where they had access to the Internet was a mechanism that was developed later in the Project. It was determined that the factors that enable participation, Internet skills, civic skills, and political interest, are not evenly shared among all members of the population. Extra efforts must be employed to overcome the differences among the population.

Overall the website and web-based survey were an effective way to engage the public. Web-based methods, however, did not result in a strong transfer of power to the participants. In addition, web-based technologies may have presented barriers to entry for many of the stakeholders. The workshops provided the most comprehensive form of public participation. (Louisiana Recovery Act, 2002-2010)
Successful Example: Gov 2.0

New phone applications (apps) are growing in popularity and local governments have envisioned a way to put them towards enhancing public participation. Phone apps help citizens report problems to local government. Some governments applaud the development of Gov 2.0 apps as a new era in voter-city relations. These apps are allowing the public to see responses to problems and issues. It represents the growing digital age and new technologies that are being developed to meet the needs of a growing digital population. (John D. Sutter, 2009)

“Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist and a customer service guru, was riding on a public train in San Francisco California when something common occurred: The railcar filled with people and became uncomfortably hot. If the inconvenience had a happened prior to 2009, nothing could have been done about this nuisance, but this is the age of mobile technology. Newmark pulled out his iPhone, snapped a photo of the train car and, using an app called “SeeClickFix,” sent an instant complaint, complete with GPS coordinates, to City Hall. A response was later received acknowledging the issue and notifying Newmark that is solution is currently being planned.” (John D. Sutter, 2009)

This is only one example of the growing movement being called ‘Gov 2.0’ – where mobile technology and GPS apps are helping give citizens more say in how their local tax money is spent. It is being called public service for the digital age.

“Larger cities from San Francisco to New York have been releasing a wealth of public data to Web and mobile application developers who are focusing on creating data sets for train schedules, complaint systems, potholes, street lamp repairs and city garbage and graffiti into useful applications for mobile phones and the Web.” (John D. Sutter, 2009)

The goal is to let citizens report problems to their local governments more easily and accurately; and to put public information at the fingertips of taxpayers. It is giving power to improve quality of the community in the hands of the public. It is
making government public and ending the passive relationship between
government and the public.

Mobile and Web apps have been made available in larger cities and have created partnerships between Smartphone industries such as Apple’s iPhone. Other methods are beginning to use social media tactics such as Twitter and Facebook.

The level of effectiveness of such applications depends on the size of the community. Many people worry that these technology applications would not take off in smaller municipalities, even if government can afford to make the data available. For small governments it is really challenging to retrieve data sources that are deep sources that are deep enough to do something interesting and beneficial to the public. (John D. Sutter, 2009)

“It is something that takes a lot of man-hours and making departments realize that this information mobility is an important aspect of governing. A benefit of the applications is that they can work for multiple communities if a national standard for municipal data sets and programs to make them useful is developed.” (John D. Sutter, 2009)

This means that something from San Francisco could work for Lafayette, Indiana, as long as the city’s public data is posted online in the right format. This enables cities without big tech communities to benefit from the trend.

For some governments and cities, transition is a scary thing. But this added technology makes governments more accountable and can make them function better.
Successful Example: Social Web Sites Catching on in Counties

Communicating directly with individuals is easier than ever with the proliferation of social media Web sites, but a NACo (National Association of Counties) survey shows 55 percent of counties do not make use of these tools. (Ban, 2009)

Facebook and Twitter, allow users to release information directly to the public into a community of people who have demonstrated interest by becoming a fan of or following a county on those sites, respectively. Rather than relying on a resident to visit a county’s website to read news releases, updates forward directly to user’s accounts. Of 121 respondents, more counties use Twitter than Facebook, but both are frequently used. (Ban, 2009)

Counties are using Twitter to disseminate information in emergency situations. Facebook is often used to maintain information for public libraries, parks and recreation, and tourism. Often planning departments and community school systems will post updates for upcoming meetings and events. (Ban, 2009)

Many communities view social media applications as another effective communication method. Social media threads or discussions are regarded as digital meetings in regards to comments and making postings appropriate for discussions. Many follow the same proceedings as community meetings, if offensive things are said or in this case written the remarks are deleted, much as though the person were being asked to leave the public meeting. (Ban, 2009)
Within this case study the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook were the focus, but were often times used in conjunction with public meetings and other participation methods.

Social media is another way communities can make news and information accessible. The counties that have social media accounts have seen a greater level of participation and people are more involved. It opens another means of communication and opportunity to participate. (Ban, 2009)

While many communities are facing success with online government it still holds some faults and proves that certain aspects of government are not viable online.

“The state of government's online offerings varies by community. Some nominally publicly available information is not online at all, and the data that is online is often not in useful formats. Government should be encouraged to release public information online in a structured, open, and searchable manner. To the extent that government does not modernize, however, a possibility exists where private third parties build unofficial databases and make these available in a useful form to the public.

Even when public information is available online, it is often not available in an easily accessible form. If data is difficult to search for and find, the effect might be the same as if it were not online. Additionally, to allow users to exploit the full potential of the Internet—to subscribe to data streams and to mix and match data sources—data must be presented in a structured machine-readable format”. (HACK, 2008)

**Unsuccessful Examples: Limitations of the Digital Divide**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an independent government agency with an active regulatory agenda that it manages via its online docket system. In theory, users of the FCC website are able to see active rulemakings, search for and read FCC documents and public interest comments filed
by interested parties, and file their own comments. (HACK, 2008)

“The main area of the FCC’s home page contains a listing of news releases, commissioner statements, and public notices relating to new or existing regulatory proceedings. These items are linked to both PDF and Microsoft Word files of the documents despite the fact that someone reading the page will be using a web browser, an application that generally reads neither of those formats. Accessing these documents requires launching a new application; and linking to a document—for example, linking to a commissioner statement from a blog entry—is less straightforward than linking to a simple web page. In most cases, the documents listed on the home page pertain to an open regulatory proceeding, but there are no links to the docket where one could read public interest comments or other related documents.

The dockets containing proposed rules and other official FCC documents, as well as public comments, are available on the website through a search form. There is neither an index of open proceedings nor indexes of documents within each proceeding docket. To obtain a listing of documents in a given docket, you must know the docket’s number and search using that number. The resulting list is presented in chronological order with no way to sort by author, document length, or any other field. Additionally, there is no way of searching within dockets for specific keywords. Even if there were a function that allowed one to search within documents, the results would be incomplete since many documents are posted as image files that are not easily parsed by computers and would not be returned in a search. This applies both to comments submitted by the public and FCC documents. This is the case even though public comments are usually created in word processing applications, such as Microsoft Word, which produce machine-readable electronic documents.” (HACK, 2008)

Some agencies, such as the EPA, do not house their electronic dockets on their own websites. Instead they use Regulations.gov, a combined federal regulatory docket system managed by the Office of Management and Budget and part of President George W. Bush’s “eRulemaking Initiative.” Acknowledging that “online access to comments about regulations, along with other supporting documents, is limited,” the Bush initiative sought to ease matters by creating one website at which users could find, read, and comment on regulations. The Regulations.gov site currently provides the ability to search and view all rulemaking documents
published in the *Federal Register*, and to submit comments to some agencies on their open proceedings. It also houses the complete dockets (i.e., all notices, technical reports, and public comments) of over thirty participating agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency. The initiative’s objective is to eventually house all federal dockets in one unified “Federal Docket Management System.” (HACK, 2008)

“The first building block of a foundation on which Internet technologies can help improve transparency is the idea that, to the greatest extent feasible, government data should be made public. As we have seen, however, data can be made technically available to the public, but generally out of its reach. Data should instead be made meaningfully publicly available and in today’s day and age this means it should be made available online. Government, however, continues to lag.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) recognized that short of a few exceptions (including for national security and personal privacy) all government data should be available to the public. Of course, under the Act a citizen must file a request for information, and a response can take months or years. The 1996 E-FOIA amendments to the Act were aimed at giving meaning to the notion of publicly available information. The reform required government agencies to publish on their websites the most often requested documents. Not only would doing so increase transparency, but by putting online documents that would likely be requested again, agencies would save resources spent on complying with FOIA requests. Also, while FOIA already mandated that opinions and orders, statements of policy, and staff manuals be made available for public inspection, the E-FOIA Amendments added the requirement that they be available online.

The results, however, have been poor. A 2007 survey of 149 agency websites by the National Security Archive at George Washington University “found massive noncompliance with E-FOIA.” Only a fifth of the agencies reviewed made available on their websites all the data required by FOIA. According to the report, 41 percent of agencies had not posted their most requested documents as FOIA mandates.” (HACK, 2008)

There is no excuse for government’s failure not to put data online.

“Almost all data today is created electronically using word processors and other computer applications. Because documents enter the world digitally, the initial step of online publication (i.e., digital formatting) is complete. The
next steps, which include designing and implementing useful websites to host the data, should also come at minimal cost since most agencies already have online presences. The rest of the world has come to understand that electronic dissemination of data presents efficiencies and savings over paper, and government should be no different.” (HACK, 2008)

Aside from the limitations of current levels of government and community-based information, it still leaves ample room for improvement and new technologies to arise.
CITY OF LAFAYETTE'S CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

City Overview:

Based on demographic and social characteristics for the City of Lafayette from the 2010 Census, the total population is 67,140. Slight majority of the population (51.2%) is female followed by male (48.8%). Over 75% of the population is over the age of 18 and just over 11% are over the age of 65. The City of Lafayette is well-educated; of the population over the age of 25 more than eighty percent (82.5%) have obtained high school diplomas or higher and 24 percent of the population have received a bachelor’s degree or higher. It is a workforce driven community with 70.2 percent of the population sixteen years and older are in the labor force. The median age for the city is 28; it is a young community with influences from Purdue University and a growing entrepreneurial industry. (Greater Lafayette Commerce, 2011)

Current Citizen Participation Plan (2005):

The City of Lafayette maintains a Citizen Participation Plan for the purpose of citizen involvement in planning, implementing, and assessing the Consolidated Plan and the One Year Action Plan. A copy of the original Citizen Participation Plan can be found in Appendix A.
The participation methods are focused on traditional methods via verbal and written comments, public hearings, public notices and assistance based on personal inquiries. Comments as well as complaints are welcomed throughout the program process for CDBG and HOME fund allotments.

However, no digital techniques are used to engage the public or keep them up to date on the process of funding aside from minutes from meetings and agendas available online. Aside from this basic citizen participation plan no other tactics are outlined or used by the Community Development Department or other departments within the City to actively engage the citizens of the Greater Lafayette area.

The City of Lafayette has an interactive website and offers many opportunities for citizens to access information whether it be minutes, agendas, audio of council, or video of council meetings. The City is adding new opportunities for public input through the ActionCenter and WeTip. ActionCenter offers community members the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered by the appropriate department within a two to four day time period. WeTip offers community members the opportunity to make anonymous tips to the police department. Aside from these two recent additions to the participation methods, much of the opportunities for two-way communication are still based on traditional methods mainly public hearings and media releases.

Citizen Participation Survey Analysis:
To obtain a greater sense of how the public participates a survey was created to understand how people participate, why they do not participate, which meetings they attend, and other issues that affect levels of participation.

The following section is based on the results of the survey that was given to 500 people randomly selected. Some 400 names were taken directly from the City of Lafayette’s Utility Mailing list and received a hard copy of the survey accompanied by a letter explaining the project (Appendices B and C). The remaining 100 survey instruments were distributed to community members at a public hearing for a proposed streetscape plan, persons on the mailing list for CDBG and HOME funding availability, and persons who visited the Community Development and Economic Development Office.

The responses were private and handled by myself and analyzed using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool.

To better understand what each question and response means to the City of Lafayette, this section will be divided by each question followed by the responses to that question, ending with an analysis and recommendations. Full results of the survey can be found in Appendix D.

The full survey and results can be found as well as cross tab evaluations for the survey with age and gender in Appendices D, E, and F.

- Question: How many times a year does you attend city meetings?
This question was used to gauge the number of meetings the general public attends on an annual basis. From these results it can be understood that 48 percent of respondents do not attend any city meetings. This is followed by just over 20 percent attending one to two meetings annually and 16 percent attending more than five.

- Question: Which city meetings do you attend? Select all that apply.
To increase attendance or awareness it is essential to know which meetings people are attending. Based on the fifty-three responses of those who attend meetings, majority, and 83 percent, attends City Council meetings followed by Neighborhood Associations, Board of Works, and Redevelopment Commission meetings.

The average attendee at a meeting for City Council or other meeting would fit have the profile of male age 55 or older. A drastic difference is seen in gender
attendance of city meetings as women mainly attend Neighborhood Association meetings and rarely any others.

- **Question:** Why do you attend public meetings?

![Table](attachment:table.png)

Of the fifty-three respondents who answered this question, majorities attend meetings because the issue being discussed or addressed affects their business/organization directly. Those attending because the issues being discussed or addressed affects them closely follow this directly. It is also interesting that near 25 percent attend the meeting out of pure interest. This is usually the case for large issues such as streetscape improvements or the changes in utility management, issues that would affect certain areas such as historic districts, the downtown, or the City as a whole.

- **Question:** If you do NOT attend public meetings, please select all that apply.
Majority of respondents do not attend meetings because they simply are unaware. This offers opportunity for improvement for many local agencies or organizations. Time conflict is the second reason people do not attend meetings.

- **Question:** How often do you use the City of Lafayette’s Website?

The City of Lafayette’s website is used a few times a year or rarely occurring to majority of the community. Additionally people using it a few times a month or occasionally used the website to find different information. From this a breakdown of different people with different uses for the website can be determined. Those
who are actively involved in city meetings, often use the website to find meeting information and find the website very easy to use. Where those who use it rarely or never find it difficult to use and do not use it because they feel it is not user friendly. This could play into the updates made by different departments and if a person is using the website rarely, updates and formats change making it more difficult to navigate and find things. But if the website it used frequently it is easier to use and navigate.
• Question: Why do you use the City of Lafayette’s website? Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why do you use the City of Lafayette’s website? Select all that apply.</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find meeting information (location, time, date, etc.)</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read minutes from local meetings</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay current on local news</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find government events</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find basic community information (trash pick-up, snow removal, etc.)</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read city job listings</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay utility bills online</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find visitor information</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay parking tickets</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall people use the City’s website to find basic information in particular when trash pick-up is and what to do in case of a snow emergency, or any information that is general to the public. People additionally use the website to stay current on local news, such as new business and industry being introduced to the area, or read the local newspaper, or read upcoming community events and highlights for community members.
Many people use the website to find information for community meetings such as location and time. The website also offers a digital media section which allows people to read minutes and download agendas as well as listen to audio from local council meetings. It enables those unable to attend to still be informed on community decisions.

- **Question:** Rate the usability (ease of use) of the City’s website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website Usability</th>
<th>Unusable</th>
<th>Difficult to use</th>
<th>Somewhat easy to use</th>
<th>Easy to use</th>
<th>Very easy to use</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1% (6)</td>
<td>13.3% (13)</td>
<td>29.6% (29)</td>
<td>46.9% (46)</td>
<td>4.1% (4)</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost 50 percent of the respondents find the city’s website to be easy to use with near 30 percent finding it somewhat easy to use. A common issue with the website is people do not know where to look for information. Unless a person is familiar with the website and uses it frequently it will be difficult to become acclimated to the website.
• Question: Is being involved in city government important to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question proves that being involved in city government is important to the community. Many respondents actually wrote being involved is important, but it is also dependent on the issue being addressed or decision being made. If it does not affect them, their business or organization, then being involved is not important leaving almost 30 percent to be undecided about their involvement in city government.
• Question: What time(s) would you likely attend city meetings? Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall people would prefer to have meetings held in the evening post 5:00 pm. Many people prefer this time as it does not conflict with work schedules and offers many the time to return home from work and then come back to meetings. Those that selected 5:00 pm stated the reason for 5:00 meetings is simply they can attend meetings right after work and it does not interfere with life after work. This is usually the case with people who have families or children at home or live a distance from the place a meeting would be held.

• Question: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 98
skipped question 6
• Question: Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 24</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>older than 65</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 98
skipped question 6

• Question: Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete high school</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate and/or Post Graduate</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 98
skipped question 6

Based on the results, respondents are well educated with majority having obtained one or more collegiate degrees.
Question: How long have you lived in Tippecanoe County?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 26 years</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A majority of respondents have grown up or lived in Tippecanoe County for more than 26 years. Those who responded less than 5 years are either students or young professionals who have moved to the area recently. More women have lived in Tippecanoe County than men overall.

Question: Have you ever used any of the following? Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WeTip</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ActionCenter</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Action Center is a new addition to the City’s website. It offers citizens the opportunity to direct questions about prominent or popular issues to the accurate department to find answers. It is one way the City could add information and input
opportunities for the public to enhance information access across the community.

WeTip is also a way community members can report safety threats or anonymously send tips to the police department about crime whether is be vandalism or graffiti to more life threatening occurrences.

- Question: Would you like to see more opportunities for public input through technology?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15. Would you like to see more opportunities for public input through technology?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of respondents would like to see more opportunities for public input through technology. With just over 38% responding undecided, it means that people are unsure of the positive aspects for input or how the public would have access.
• Question: If yes, which kinds? Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Applications</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Hotlines</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The public would like to see information hotlines especially for large issues, where informational meetings may be hard to attend due to personal schedules or other obligations. This would allow the information to be readily available to the public and little cost for the City. A close second is the idea of discussion boards. The issue of discussion boards as previously discussed in Chapter Three is the level of administration or having to establish a controlled discussion board where it would be used to express ideas about issues, but would have to be closely monitored to avoid abuse. Growing in popularity amongst other communities, mobile applications are a way to keep the public informed, especially those who are frequently unavailable for meetings.
Question: Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account? Please select.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 95
skipped question 9

With majority of the respondents having a Facebook account, social media is a new direction the City could turn to have information readily available. This could be the first step to a more informed public if mobile applications are not an option. Many members of the general public have Facebook applications on personal smartphone devices.

Question: Would you like to see a City of Lafayette Facebook page or Twitter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 97
skipped question 7

This could be interpreted multiple ways. It could mean the public is not interested in having social media applications associated with government or due to
the marginal differences in yes and no answers with 1.1% responding no, people could simply only want one of the two applications. A pilot program could be used to determine how the public responds and if found to not increase participation, the account(s) can simply be deleted.

- **Question:** Would you attend meetings if information (meeting type, location, time, agenda) were made available on Facebook or Twitter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question attempts to determine how the public feels about social media applications and their use specifically for city information. Majority responded no or undecided. This could change if the City, as stated previously, runs a pilot social media account. The information made available could change to see how people respond and which information appeals to the public to engage not only their interest but also their activity.

Both methods of traditional and digital participation have the ability to engage the general public. The two methods, however, engage different sectors of the population. Apart the two methods leave gaps of the public uninvolved and unable to receive information.
By combining techniques, the two methods reinforce each other and eliminate, or at the very least decrease these information barriers. Traditional methods reach older residents as well as those that have minimal experience in the digital world. Digital methods reach the on-the-go population as well as the younger population in the community. With the amount of usefulness each technique carries, it also holds its limitations, as previously discussed.

Based on the survey those who are currently actively involved in community meetings are 55 and older. This represents an age group who actively uses the City website to not only retrieve community information but find meeting time, location, read minutes, and gain information to actively be engaged within the community. Those who are 45-54 actively participate but not at the levels of the older age categories. But it is a group that actively participates and offers input. The lost age groups or less active are people between the ages of 25-44. This however is the age that is interested in new technologies and innovations to keep themselves informed and still are active within the community. It means in order to engage them either technologies are going to have to be adapted to meet their needs of on-the-go information or new applications and opportunities are going to have to be developed.

With interest sparked in hotlines, although a traditional technique, it is still impeded by people having to wait to hear and obtain the information they wish to find or receive. This works for the older public who already attend meetings, especially when they already attend meetings and may simply need to only hear the
information for updates or new developments on a given scenario. By implementing new interactive tools for people who cannot attend the general meetings or have time to listen to hotlines or meeting audio, something new and technology driven needs to be established.

A starting point could be the City website. By making it more user friendly whether this be through new directories or interactive help options to better navigate and find the information one is searching for, or using Facebook to reach a new group of the public, specifically the younger population who actively use and understand the growing social media world, it is a means of obtaining information at the click of the mouse. This is the same age group that would benefit greatly from the addition of eGov or mobile applications to the City information pool. This creates the opportunity for a mobile government not only for streaming basic community information but also to maintain appeal of the community on everyday topics. Mobile and web surveys are ways to notify the public that their opinion matters. With the growth of eGevs and mobile applications, the information system or availability of system to process and stream data are becoming more unified and simple for communities to use the same systems and adapt it to fit their needs and data available.

If cost and data availability are impediments to this type of technology interface, social media opens many doors to a mobile government or at least one that offers ways for input and the opportunity for community members to share ideas and information. Facebook has options for communities to choose from on
page development. Either will have to be monitored, but the options can fit the needs for information availability. A City of Lafayette Facebook Group could be established. This allows the administrator to place control over what can be added or published on the webpage. It also is less formal and people have the option to ‘Like’ or ‘Join’ the group. The other option is create a City of Lafayette Page. This means the administrator can either invite people to be ‘Friends’ or people can ‘Like’ the page. This option is more secure and offers the opportunity for input, but the administrator has more control.

Calendars, basic information, links to other City WebPages, or upcoming meeting information can all be provided on this page. Discussions and postings by the community would be strongly encouraged with the general knowledge if inappropriate posting will be removed. Much like a discussion board, it has the ability to generate community discussion outside of meetings.

Discussion boards also have the opportunity for community interaction. They too would have to be monitored, but have the option to only be open to certain organizations for committee or internal discussion. It also, like the ActionCenter and Facebook, could require a username and password to use or participate in online discussions. This in some cases would deter negative or inappropriate comments.

By providing more options for readily available information and opportunities for input the public has a greater opportunity and responsibility to be engaged. The City can provide the opportunities to attract and create a plethora of
availability for information but it is inevitably up to the public to make the decision to be involved.

Aside from targeting a specific age group, women generally participate less than men and have less interest in new technology driven participation methods. Addressing this poses more of a dilemma than dealing with age categories. Before solutions can be applied it has to be understood why women do not participate. Since this was an anticipated issue, questions were not developed to understand why a given gender does not participate, and finding that women participate less than men is unusual as in many case studies surveying participants women, specifically ages 30-40 participate the most.

Women who responded to the survey stated the number one reason they did not attend meetings is simply not know a meeting existed or was going to occur. By encouraging women or creating a woman empowering organization information has the opportunity to become more attainable or increase awareness of the importance to participate and be active within the community. If organizations like this already occur, then surveying women would need to be necessary to determine the reason(s) why participation is lacking and how this could be changed. If women do not know about meetings, options previously discussed such as Facebook, discussion boards, or mobile applications, could be made available or advertised to them to make known to them that these other options for input and information obtainment are available.
The more options available to the public to participate and offer input not only creates a more transparent government, it creates an informed proactive community where the public’s input and drive to participate is valued. Increased options increase empowerment and trust within the community. Selecting the best fit participation plan and methods is all based on the individual communities opinion determined by the issue being addressed, the decision being made, and the type of public involved, but the greater the opportunities for input and availability of information enables a greater public based on involvement in meetings and decisions community wide.

**City of Lafayette Example: Upper Main Streetscape Plan**

The Upper Main Street Streetscape Plan extending past streetscape efforts north to create unity and aesthetic appeal to the northern sections of downtown.

The plan was introduced to the public during and informational meeting that allowed the local property owners to give input and ask questions about the plan and what the project entailed for their specific business. It also gave opportunity for suggestions to be made to the current plan and offered opportunity for the city staff to take note to the reaction the community members had to initial plan.

Project boards were displayed for the community to view and formulate topics of interest for the discussion. A Powerpoint presentation was given to describe the project and present background information pertinent to cost, time frame, and project options.
The information was presented and the later half of the meeting was left open for discussion and comments from the public. The greatest issue was the lack of information given to the public for them to better understand or make suggestions. Information pertaining to cost from previous streetscape projects were not made available allowing for a cost analysis for business owners as well as the lack of information as to how a business should operate given a lack of entrance and accessibility. This led to an ill informed public who avidly began to dispute the need for such improvements.

This misinterpretation of facts or lack of information could have been decreased if more information were made available in the weeks leading to the informational meeting, as well as the weeks after to maintain two-way communication.

To better meet the needs of the public the City could have used the city’s website to seek opinion and establish a working appeal with business and building owners in the proposed streetscape plan.

By using the website the City could have highlighted the streetscape plan and used online forums to strike appeal and interest, as well as answer questions and guide open dialogues. This could have been done using a wiki or other digital document.

Interest and appeal had already been established in the community, though most was negative, but to notify the public about the public meetings and give the public a direction of the meeting social media and RSS feeds could have been used to
attract people to the meeting as well as rapidly dispersing talking points or the direction the information will be given as well as a working agenda.

Since people are also interested in hotlines, this give opportunity to those who can’t make the meeting the information that was presented. This can be done through simple talking points that have been recorded or covering the most frequently asked questions. The information is still available for the public. Another method would be to record the meetings and upload them to the website. Or take this one step further and create a video for YouTube in an open discussion with city leaders and the engineers behind the design. This will allow people to better understand the scope of work. Again this can be uploaded to the website allowing more information to be given to the public.

After the meetings, the use of planning scenarios and calculators would greatly benefit the project. As the public was charged to find other solutions to the proposed plan that could help deter portions of the cost, but no options were given from the public. Using scenario planning would allow people to piece together what they feel is a cost effective solution. They could choose from a list of proposed items such as bump outs, trees, planters, pavers, etc. and build what they believe to be the best solution. It allows them to play with different scenarios as well as see how each will affect the cost of the project.

The use of mapping would greatly benefit this project. Especially interactive maps where other information from past streetscapes could be used for people to
look at the expenses of past projects and see what their possible expenses could be based on the given information.

Again forums and discussion boards are means to obtain and present information to work through problems and solutions for large projects and issues of a hesitant public.

As it can be seen and understood, it takes multiple techniques combined in different ways to inform and maintain open communications with the public. It is a system that influences participation and transparency. Public participation and the decision making process are based on an involved and informed public. Traditional and digital techniques try to inform the public on every step of the decision making process. Alone the two inform and maintain information, but when combined gaps in information collection and dissemination are minimized allowing more people to be engaged.

The process is based on understanding how agencies can collaborate and work with the public towards solving problems. It is something more communities are beginning to understand that combined information methods have the capabilities to reach more people when combined and offering many options. Communities are realizing that the public likes to have options where they can select techniques that allow them to be informed in their own way. It is an informational divide that will continue to exist. The only solution is to keep evolving how information can be obtained and dispersed throughout the community making it readily available.
Problems exist with each method and the multiple techniques involved. But when using both methods in a united front to enhance community and citizen engagement, the problems begin to be minimized and in some cases, so much information is available, that the problems are eliminated. Many communities know and understand that an informed community makes the best decisions and in order to have this optimal level of information more has to be done on the city, community, or organizations side. It has to be able to provide information as well as be perceptive to feed back and receive information from the public. It is a system that will continue to evolve and make itself better. More techniques will become available and continue to change enabling more opportunities for citizens and leaders to maintain informational connectivity.
This is the City of Lafayette’s Citizen Participation Plan from 2005. It serves as guidance to involve and include the public during the Community Development Block Grant Program process. This plan is a revised edition of the original 1994 Citizen Participation Plan, after evaluating both, an indistinguishable amount of change was noted.

Citizen Participation Plan
Lafayette, Indiana; 2005

The basic goals of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program are: provide decent housing, provide a suitable living environment, and expand economic opportunities principally for low and moderate-income people. The basic goal of the HOME Investment Partnership program is to expand the supply of decent, affordable housing for low and very-low income families with emphasis on rental housing. To get citizen input on actions to accomplish the goals of these two programs, the City of Lafayette Community Development Department attends neighborhood meetings, collects community data, holds public hearings and solicits comments from citizens.

Every five years, the department prepares a five-year consolidated community development plan that outlines Lafayette program funding priorities for CDBG and county-wide housing funding priorities for HOME. On a yearly basis, the department reevaluates the five-year plan, makes modifications as needed, and develops a one-year action plan to address specific priorities identified in the community development plan. Each spring, it presents this one-year action plan to the City Council for comment and adoption. This plan is also reviewed by the HOME consortium, which includes the cities of West Lafayette, Lafayette, and the unincorporated county.

The following statement of policy outlines the process for citizen participation in planning, implementing and assessing the Consolidated Plan and the One Year Action Plan.

Statement of Citizen Participation Policy

It is the policy of the City of Lafayette to encourage and seek the advice of its citizens in planning, implementing, and assessing the Consolidated Plan and the One Year Action Plan.

Low- and moderate-income persons, members of minority groups, residents of areas where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing, the elderly, the handicapped, and business and civic groups concerned about the program, encourage participation.
All aspects of citizen participation are conducted in an open manner, with freedom of access for all interested persons. However, the City retains the final responsibility and authority for the development of the plans and implementation of the program.

**Information Available to Citizens**

To ensure that citizens, public officials and other interested parties can participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the consolidated plan in an informed manner, the Community Development Department makes available the following information:

- The current Consolidated Plan, and one-year action plan
- Any amendments to the Consolidated Plan or the one-year action plan
- The range of activities undertaken, including amount to benefit low and very low-income people
- All written requests for funding
- Amount of CDBG assistance received each year
- Plans to minimize displacement
- Written complaints and their responses
- The Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Other CDBG information and records are available to the extent consistent with applicable state and local laws concerning personal privacy and confidentiality.

**Citizen Participation Procedures**

1. **Verbal and Written Comments**
   Any citizen is welcome to make comments or suggestions about the Consolidated Plan to the Mayor or the Community Development Director or any City official in person, by phone, or in writing at any time.

   Residents of neighborhoods where a significant amount of activity is proposed or ongoing may also bring comments or questions to the meetings of their neighborhood association, which are usually attended by Community Development staff members.

2. **Public Hearings**
   In addition to ongoing access to information, citizens of the whole community and interested organizations have an opportunity to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan through at least two public hearings that are held at different stages of the planning process and program year.
Appendix A

The first public hearing is held during the winter. The purpose of this hearing is to provide a formal opportunity to educate citizens about the range of activities that can be undertaken with CDBG and HOME funds and to obtain citizen views and responses concerning:

- The assessment of housing needs in Lafayette, West Lafayette, and Tippecanoe County
- The long-range unmet non-housing community development needs of Lafayette
- The proposed activities to be undertaken with CDBG funds in Lafayette
- The proposed activities to be undertaken with HOME funds countywide
- The program performance of the City, the consortium and sub recipients

At this hearing an overview of CDBG and HOME, each program’s prior year’s activities, and the current planning process are presented. Citizens’ views are solicited concerning housing and non-housing community development needs. Community groups are encouraged to present programs to meet specific community needs. While all comments and proposals may be voiced orally at a hearing, to be formally considered for funding, any request or proposal must be submitted in writing before a date specified in the notification letter and at the hearing.

The second public hearing is scheduled in late spring. This hearing is held to solicit comments on the final draft of the Consolidated Plan and One Year Action Plan. As of the date of the second hearing, a 30-day citizen comment period begins. During this period, a summary of the proposed plan is published in the local paper with information on where an entire plan can be reviewed. This comment period is provided to give citizens a final opportunity to comment on the Consolidated Plan before it is submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a 45-day review period.

Public Notification of Hearings and Technical Assistance

Community organizations which have indicated an interest in addressing the priorities of the Five Year Consolidated Plan or who have participated in past programs are notified of hearing dates by letter. The media are notified and encouraged to report on upcoming hearings as a matter of public interest. A newspaper ad (not legal notice) is published for general notification as well. All notification is done at least one week prior to the date of the hearing. Hearings are held at a convenient time and handicapped-accessible location, with accommodation for the physically disabled and non-English speaking residents where appropriate.
Help is provided to groups representative of low and moderate-income persons who request assistance in developing proposals for the use of CDBG funds or for other activities related to planning, assessing, and implementing the Consolidated Plan. The level of assistance will depend on the urgency and importance of the request to the plan, the eligibility of the requested activity, and the availability of funds and staff time.

**Timeline for development and adoption of One Year Community Development Action Plan:**
1. September-December: Meet with Community Groups
2. January: Public Hearing #1: Overview of CDBG and HOME, review of performance, assessment of housing and non-housing needs, funding requests and verbal presentations of priority needs
3. February: Preparation of Consolidated Plan/One Year Action Plan
4. March: Public Hearing #2: Presentation of Consolidated Plan/One Year Action Plan and citizen comments
5. April: Comment Period
6. May: Final action taken on Consolidated Plan/One Year Action Plan by City Council and Consortium

**Citizen Complaints and Comments**

Complaints relative to the CDBG or HOME program may be registered with the Mayor, the Community Development Director, or any City official at any time. However, for a formal written response, complaints must be submitted in writing to the Community Development Director. A written answer will be provided within fifteen working days, if practicable.

A summary of all comments whether accepted or not and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan, any amendments following, or the performance report.

**Criteria for Amendment**

The City will amend its approved Consolidated Plan or One Year Action Plan whenever one of the following decisions is made:

- A substantial change in allocation priorities or method of distributing funds;
- Carrying out an activity or using funds from any program covered by the Five Year Consolidated Plan (including program income) which has not been previously described in the action plan;
- A substantial change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity.
Appendix A

**Definition of Substantial Change**

- Any transfer of funds from one program category to another requiring approval by the City Council;
- Any transfer of funds from one activity to another within a program category that is more than 25% of the total program category

Any proposed amendments to the Consolidated Plan or One Year Action Plan will be made available to the public for comment through a notification of change notice published as a display ad in at least one local newspaper. Interested parties will be provided with at least a 30-day comment period regarding the proposed amendment.

**Amendment or Modification of Citizen Participation Plan**

Any amendments to or modification of the City of Lafayette Citizen Participation Plan will be made available to citizens, public officials, and other interested parties through a notification of change legal notice in at least one local newspaper.

The City of Lafayette will follow this plan in planning, implementing, and monitoring its community development activities.

Revised May 25, 2005
Dear Survey Participant,

I am a Ball State University graduate student working with the City of Lafayette’s Community Development Department through Ball State University. I am conducting a survey that I will use in completing a thesis for my Master of Urban and Regional Planning Degree and that will also help the City of Lafayette in managing its efforts to involve citizens in local government.

I am seeking your opinion on your current level of citizen participation in local city meetings. I want to know and better understand the citizens of Lafayette and how you participate and engage and how it could be improved. Responses are anonymous; we will have no way to trace particular answers to individual respondents.

The results will be made publicly available. This information will be used by the City of Lafayette in reviewing how it provides information to the public, when it holds public meetings, and how it informs people about specific meetings. The questionnaire will take about five minutes to complete.

Should you need further information or have questions about this survey, please contact me directly. I would be grateful for the assistance you can provide to the completion of my project as well as the City of Lafayette.

Please complete and return the enclosed survey by Monday, February 28, 2011.

Emily Gross
Ball State University
Department of Urban Planning
ejgross@bsu.edu
(765) 807-1085

Enclosure: Survey
Appendix C

Citizen Participation Survey

1. How many times a year does you attend city meetings?

☐ 0  ☐ 1-2  ☐ 3-4  ☐ >5

2. Which city meetings do you attend? Mark all that apply.

☐ City Council  ☐ Redevelopment Commission  ☐ Historic Preservation Commission
☐ Board of Works  ☐ Parking Commission  ☐ Economic Development Commission
☐ Lafayette Hearing Authority  ☐ Board of Zoning Appeals  ☐ Traffic Commission
☐ Human Relations Commission  ☐ Youth Council  ☐ Commission on African American Affairs
☐ Commission on Latino and Hispanic Affairs  ☐ Public Hearings for CDBG and HOME Funding Decisions
☐ Neighborhood Association Meetings  ☐ Other: ________________________________

3. Why do you attend public meetings? Please select all that apply.

☐ It is my duty as a taxpayer.  ☐ Issue affects me directly.
☐ Issue affects my business directly.  ☐ Interested in issue being addressed.

4. If you do NOT attend public meetings.

☐ Time conflict  ☐ Unaware of meeting  ☐ No Interest
☐ Other: ________________________________

5. How often do you use the City of Lafayette's website?

☐ Frequently (Weekly)  ☐ Sometimes (Few times a month)  ☐ Rarely (Only as needed)  ☐ Never

6. Why do you use the City of Lafayette's Website? Please select all that apply.

☐ Find meeting information (location, time date, agenda, etc.)
☐ Read minutes from local meetings.
☐ Stay current on local news.
☐ Find Government events.
☐ Find basic community information (trash pick-up, snow removal, etc.)
☐ Read city job listings.
☐ Pay bills online.
☐ Find visitor information.
☐ Pay parking tickets
☐ Other

7. Rate the usability (ease of use) of the City's website. 1 being unusable and 5 being very easy to use.

☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5

8. Have you ever used any of the following? Please select all that apply.

☐ WeTip  ☐ ActionCenter

9. Would you like to see move opportunities for public input through technology?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Undecided

10. If yes, which kinds? Please select all that apply.

☐ Discussion boards
☐ Mobile Applications
☐ Information Hotlines
11. Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account? (Please Select)  
☐ Facebook  ☐ Twitter  ☐ Both

PLEAS TURN OVER: SURVEY CONTINUED ON BACK

12. Would you like to see a City of Lafayette Facebook page or Twitter?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Undecided

13. Would you attend meetings if information (meeting type, location, time, agenda) were made available on Facebook or Twitter?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Undecided

14. Is being involved in city government decisions important to you?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Undecided

15. What time(s) would you likely attend city meetings? Please select all that apply.  
☐ 8:00am  ☐ 10:00am  ☐ 2:00pm  ☐ 5:00pm  ☐ 7:00pm

16. Gender:  
☐ Male  ☐ Female

17. Age: (Please circle.)  
☐ <24  ☐ 25-34  ☐ 35-44  ☐ 45-54  ☐ 55-64  ☐ >65

18. Education Level:  
☐ Did not complete High School  ☐ High School  ☐ Some College  ☐ College  ☐ Graduate and/or Post Graduate

19. How long have you lived in Tippecanoe County? (Please circle.)  
☐ <5 years  ☐ 6-10 years  ☐ 11-15 years  ☐ 16-20 years  ☐ 21-25 years  ☐ >26 years
1. How many times a year do you attend city meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>48.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
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answered question 103

skipped question 1
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<th>Meeting Type</th>
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<td>City Council</td>
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<td>Board of Works</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lafayette Hearing Authority</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations Commission</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on Latino and Hispanic Affairs</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Association Meetings</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redevelopment Commission</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Commission</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Zoning Appeals</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Council</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation Commission</td>
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<td>Economic Development Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic Commission</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission on African American Affairs</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Hearing for CDBG and HOME Funding Decisions</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
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Other (please specify) 3

answered question 53
skipped question 51
### Appendix D

#### 3. Why do you attend public meetings?

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<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>It is my duty as a taxpayer.</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue affects me directly.</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue affects my business/organization directly.</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in issue being addressed.</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Answered question: 55
- Skipped question: 61

#### 4. If you do NOT attend public meetings, please select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time conflict</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaware of meeting</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interest</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Answered question: 63
- Skipped question: 41
6. Why do you use the City of Lafayette's website? Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Find meeting information (location, time, date, etc.)</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read minutes from local meetings</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay current on local news</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find government events</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find basic community information (trash pick-up, snow removal, etc.)</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read city job listings</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay utility bills online</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find visitor information</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay parking tickets</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>answered question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>skipped question</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### 8. Is being involved in city government important to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>29</td>
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</table>

answered question 98
skipped question 6

### 9. What time(s) would you likely attend city meetings? Select all that apply.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 6

### 10. Gender:

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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>51</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 6
### Appendix D

#### 11. Age:

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<td>25-34</td>
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<td>35-44</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
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<td>45-54</td>
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<td>55-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>older than 65</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 6

#### 12. Education Level

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<td>High school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate and/or Post Graduate</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
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answered question 98
skipped question 6
### 13. How long have you lived in Tippecanoe County?

<table>
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<th>Duration</th>
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<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 26 years</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- answered question 98
- skipped question 6

### 14. Have you ever used any of the following: Select all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WeTip</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ActionCenter</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- answered question 21
- skipped question 83

### 15. Would you like to see more opportunities for public input through technology?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- answered question 97
- skipped question 7
### Appendix D

**16. If yes, which kinds? Select all that apply.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Boards</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Applications</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Hotlines</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 51
skipped question 53

**17. Do you have a Facebook or Twitter account? Please select.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 95
skipped question 9

**18. Would you like to see a City of Lafayette Facebook page or Twitter?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 97
skipped question 7
19. Would you attend meetings if information (meeting type, location, time, agenda) were made available on Facebook or Twitter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question: 97
skipped question: 7
Appendix E
Bibliography


