



## Renter Engagement Toolkit

This toolkit serves as a guide for staff to help increase the participation and voice of tenants/renters in City engagement opportunities.

It is intended to complement other City toolkits, such as the Youth Engagement Checklist and Accessibility Checklist, and builds on the [City's Engagement Framework](#), which includes the following principles:

**Inclusiveness:** The City makes best efforts to reach, inform and engage all people who are impacted by the decisions being considered.

**Welcoming:** The City creates safe, welcoming, respectful engagement spaces and processes in which everyone feels comfortable sharing feedback.

**Accessibility:** The City works to remove barriers to participation, with the goal of providing all community members with an opportunity for meaningful engagement.

**Clear information:** The City provides people with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

**Timely information:** The City will provide the community with ample notice of opportunities to participate and provide input.

**Transparency:** The City will be open and transparent in how we share information.

**Commitment:** The City demonstrates its commitment to engaging the community in a meaningful, way, continuously improving practices to remain relevant and effective.

### Background

More than 60 per cent of Victoria's residents rent their home. Despite the City's best efforts, often the perspectives and viewpoints of renters are underrepresented in engagement opportunities including public hearings, land use and local area planning discussions, surveys, and open house events.

A workshop with the City's Renter Advisory Committee identified common themes for improving how the City can better reach and improve engagement with renters.

### Themes:

1. Information should be clear and accessible.
2. Renters need to know that their voice matters.
3. Ensure information on the website is clear and easy to find. Where appropriate, consider information specifically for tenants/renters.

4. Respect people’s time when asking for their participation or input. Make it easy to participate within a short amount of time.
5. Provide multiple methods of sharing information or providing input (online, videos, in person, in rental buildings, in community centres, in libraries).
6. Go to where renters are (events, libraries, community centres). This can remove barriers such as time, transportation and childcare.
7. Include incentives and support such as food, childcare and transportation, whenever possible.
8. Work with community-serving organizations to reach renters in their community. Host renter focused events and look to partner with other organizations that serve and network with renters.
9. For city-wide projects or those that directly impact newcomers or cultural communities, consider opportunities to include other languages for those who don’t have English as a first language.
10. Close the loop with people who participate. Let them know about next steps, future opportunities for input, and how their input informed decisions.

**Tools and Techniques:**

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Tools and Techniques</b>
1.	Information should be clear and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all material is written in plain language including web content, stakeholder emails, surveys, and any other material you are expecting participants to read</li> <li>• Build in enough time to work with engagement staff for a plain-language review/preparation of all material</li> <li>• Technical jargon should be avoided</li> </ul>
2.	Renters need to know that their voice matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate projects with content that is meaningful for tenants/renters and that helps them see themselves in the process.</li> <li>• Let renters/participants know what their input is being used for.</li> <li>• Include information about all steps in the process, other opportunities for input, what other stakeholders will be involved in consultation, and highlight any Council decision points.</li> <li>• Provide an opportunity for participants to sign up to receive updates on the project / housing-related matters.</li> </ul>

3.	Ensure information on the website is clear and easy to find. Where appropriate, consider information specifically for tenants/renters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build in enough time to work with engagement staff for a plain-language review/preparation of material and address accessibility of information online.</li> <li>• Consider use of visuals and videos to help provide information clearly.</li> </ul>
4.	Respect people's time when asking for their participation or input. Make it easy to participate within a short amount of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys should be as short as possible to complete.</li> <li>• Offer multiple ways for people to participate (online, in person, daytime/evening/weekend)</li> <li>• Go to where people are in the community (festivals, events, village centres, libraries, markets) to offer quick/short ways for people to engage as they are going about their daily life</li> </ul>
5.	Provide multiple methods of sharing information or providing input (online, videos, in person, in rental buildings, in community centres).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow enough time to plan engagement for projects in advance, identifying the multiple ways that information will be shared and participants can provide input: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online surveys</li> <li>○ Engage.victoria.ca</li> <li>○ Focus groups/workshops</li> <li>○ Partnership events with other community-serving organizations</li> <li>○ Open house events</li> <li>○ Pop ups / tables at community events</li> <li>○ Town halls</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explore engagement tactics that inspire and encourage participation.</li> </ul>
6.	Go to where renters are (events, libraries, community centres). This can remove barriers such as time, transportation and childcare.	<p>Opportunities for engagement in the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Bay Market</li> <li>• Quadra Village Day</li> <li>• VicWest Street Fest</li> <li>• Selkirk Waterfront Festival</li> <li>• Car Free Day</li> <li>• FernFest</li> <li>• Oaklands Sunset Market</li> <li>• Moss Street Market</li> <li>• Greater Victoria Public Library locations</li> <li>• School Parent Advisory Committees</li> <li>• Community centres and community-serving organization events/family dinners</li> <li>• Check with Engagement for a list of other ongoing or annual</li> </ul>

		events/locations/opportunities/community contacts with community-serving organizations
7.	Include incentives and support such as food, childminding and transportation, whenever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate project budget for childminding, food, and transportation for participants whenever possible</li> <li>• Build in enough time to work with City staff to determine whether a location can provide childminding and to secure staffing</li> <li>• Choose locations that can easily accommodate people arriving by transit or cycling</li> <li>• Plan to provide snacks, if appropriate. Engagement staff can provide a list of local suppliers</li> </ul>
8.	Work with community-serving organizations to reach renters in their community. Host renter-focused events and look to partner with other organizations that serve renters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to community-serving organizations to partner on engagement opportunities. Community-serving groups can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing organizations / advocates</li> <li>○ Community centres</li> <li>○ Libraries</li> <li>○ Faith groups</li> <li>○ Seniors centres</li> <li>○ Accessibility groups</li> <li>○ Family serving groups</li> <li>○ School district / education focused groups</li> <li>○ Newcomer / multicultural groups</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Contact Engagement for a full list community-serving organizations and contact information</li> </ul>
9.	For city-wide projects or those that directly impact newcomers or cultural communities, consider opportunities to include other languages for those who don't have English as a first language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider budget for translation services, when possible</li> <li>• Work with Engagement staff to identify ways that content could be shared in other languages. Engagement can provide examples of approaches being used by other municipalities they may fit a specific project and budget.</li> </ul>
10.	Close the loop with people who participate. Let them know about next steps, future opportunities for input, and how their input informed decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End engagement events/activities by letting people know what will happen next and how they can stay engaged for updates</li> <li>• A stakeholder email to people who have signed up can provide an update on next steps, such as Council decisions, action plan drafting etc)</li> </ul>

\*The Renters' Advisory Committee provided the following additional recommendations:

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>How it is being addressed</b>
Bureaucratic language should be avoided	Addressed under Theme 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information should be clear and accessible, written in plain language</li> <li>• Technical jargon should be avoided.</li> </ul>
Explore engagement tools that encourage participation (e.g. social pressure)	Addressed under Theme 2 and 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate projects with content that is meaningful for tenants/renters and that helps them see themselves in the process.</li> <li>• Provide multiple methods of sharing information or providing input</li> <li>• Explore engagement tactics that encourage participation by reaching people in a way that motivates them to participate.</li> </ul>
Ensure that City documents are searchable and easy to find	This has been passed on to the appropriate department for further exploration
Create a mailing list (email list) for all renters within the City	This has been passed on to the appropriate department for further exploration
Explore a mailing management tool to manage all email distribution lists	This has been passed on to the appropriate department for further exploration