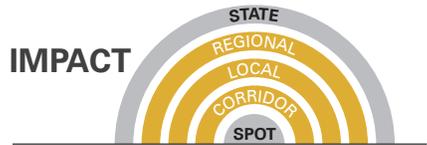




# PUBLIC HEARINGS AND MEETINGS



**WHO**



LEAD AGENCY

**HURDLES**



TIMING AND LOCATION

## SUCCESS STORIES

**The Houston-Galveston Area Council** regularly hosts public meetings for specific purposes. It also provides materials and/or videos to explain the information.

To learn more, visit <http://www.h-gac.com/taq/public-info/mobility-transportation-upcoming-public-meetings.aspx>.

- **Fulfills regulations for public involvement** (public hearings).
- **Can be formatted to fit agency or community needs** (public meetings).
- **Creates relationships** between the agency and the community.

## Implementation Issues

Federal regulations call for early and continuing public involvement. Public hearings that come at the end of a process do not offer enough chances to participate and can make community members feel that they have no influence. Large meetings and formal hearings may intimidate participants from commenting. Public meetings/hearings often have low attendance, so they should be one part of a larger public involvement program.

**More Information:** [tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-engage-people](http://tti.tamu.edu/policy/how-to-engage-people)

## Description

Public hearings and meetings help the public understand a project or proposal. They provide project details and allow the public to ask questions and make comments. Anyone can attend, as an individual or as a representative of a certain interest group. Public hearings and meetings have different functions:

- **Public hearings** are more formal than public meetings. They occur after the development of project location and design studies, but prior to a decision. Officials gather community comments for the official public record.
- **Public meetings** are held throughout the planning process and can be formal or informal. Officials present information, exchange ideas, and gather input from the public. The meetings usually focus on a specific

issue, project, or planning document and can be adapted to specific audiences or community groups.

## Target Market

Public hearings and meetings are open to all. *These types of meetings in practice do not reach all members or groups of the public forum.* This type of engagement favors those who are familiar with the existing process, those who have the time and resources to attend, and those who do not feel alienated by this particular public engagement technique. This can be overcome by scheduling meetings at flexible times and days of the week.

## How Will This Help?

- **Provides accurate and relevant project information.**
- **Allows officials to receive community comments.**

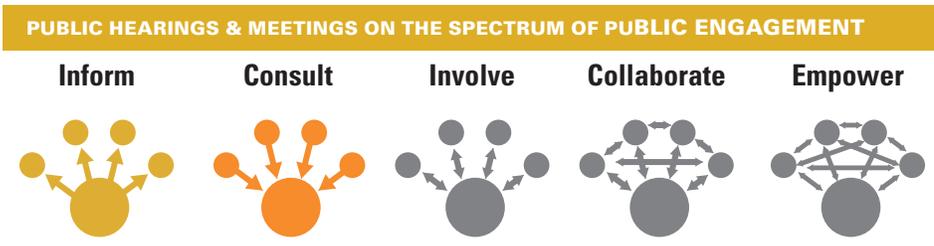


Figure 1. Spectrum of Public Engagement (Source: IAP2)

