



ALBERTA  
CLIMATE  
DIALOGUE



# BUILDING CAPACITY:

## **Small Group Facilitation and Note-Taking for Dialogue and Deliberation**

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ALBERTA CLIMATE DIALOGUE

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Alberta Climate Dialogue (ABCD) is a community-university research alliance funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada from 2010-2015. Our team is exploring how innovative forms of citizen involvement and deliberation can enhance responses and potentially shift the politics of climate change in Alberta.

By convening deliberations with partners and researching the process, we are able to test theories, better understand how to design citizen participation for maximum effect, and help create capacity-building tools for others. We seek to empower citizens to take action within their communities and give them the opportunity to make recommendations to municipal and provincial governments on climate change policy. For more information please visit us at [AlbertaClimateDialogue.ca](http://AlbertaClimateDialogue.ca).



# CONTENTS

<b>Alberta Climate Dialogue</b> .....	2
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>2. Climate Change Deliberations in Alberta</b> .....	6
<b>3. Questions and Challenges</b> .....	8
3.1 Five Facilitator Types.....	10
<b>4. Knowledge, skills and aptitude: what effective facilitation and note-taking looks like</b> .....	13
4.1 Characteristics of Effective Facilitators and Note-takers.....	14
4.2 Characteristics of Effective Note-takers.....	18
4.3 Summary of Characteristics.....	22
<b>5. Supporting successful small group facilitators and note-takers, before, during and after deliberation</b> .....	24
5.1 Before: Preparation and Training.....	24
5.2 During Deliberation.....	27
5.3 After Deliberation.....	30
<b>6. Conclusions</b> .....	34
<b>References</b> .....	36
<b>Appendix A: Note-taker template, Citizens’ Panel on Edmonton’s Energy and Climate Challenges</b> .....	37
<b>Appendix B: Session #6 Report, Citizens’ Panel on Edmonton’s Energy and Climate Challenges</b> .....	40
<b>Appendix C: Facilitator Guide, Citizens’ Panel on Edmonton’s Energy and Climate Challenges</b> .....	44



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Small group discussions are at the heart of a public deliberation. Participants sit at a table together, express their opinions, hear ideas from other participants, and wrestle together with the issue at hand. Table facilitators and note-takers play an essential supporting role to help each group's conversation effectively inform and contribute to the deliberations of the whole group. Each table facilitator and note-taker therefore has a significant influence on the quality of the deliberation and its outcomes. Yet there is much variation in how these roles are performed. This paper explores causes of and responses to this variation in order to advance the practice of intermediate and expert practitioners and note-takers of deliberative dialogue.

There are many guides and tip sheets about how to facilitate and record an effective dialogue but most of this information is focused on discussions that aim to identify and create greater understanding about an issue and its dimensions. We focus here on the roles of table facilitator and note-taker working with participants who are tasked with making decisions together, with intent to influence next steps, particularly in the context of policy making and/or research.

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An early version of this paper was presented at a National Conference on Dialogue and Deliberation workshop in fall 2014.

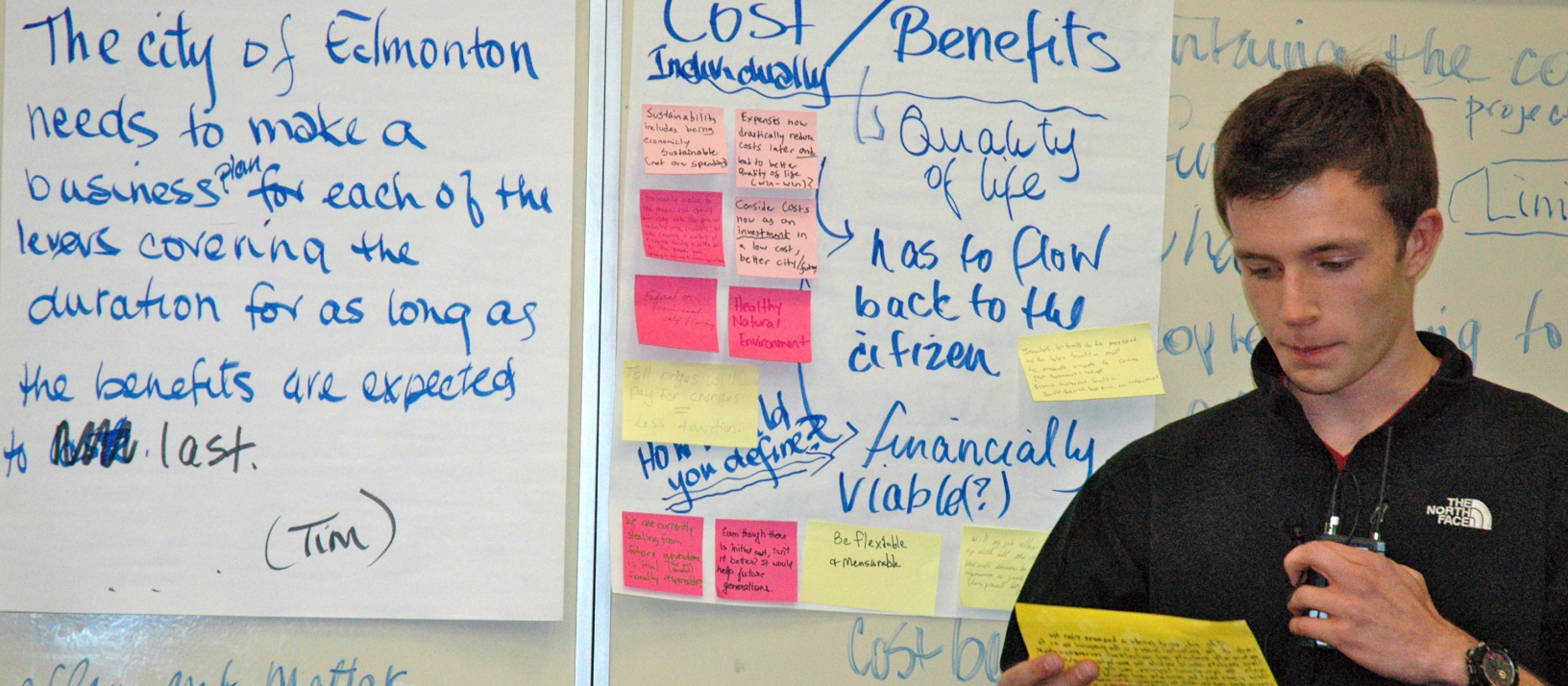
Table facilitators of deliberative dialogues (often referred to as deliberations) serve participants by establishing productive norms for the group, clarifying the task and supporting the group to meet their goals. Note-takers at the table ensure an accurate record of agreements, disagreements and areas of ongoing work to support the group's deliberative process.

The public deliberations we consider in this paper typically involve participants who are demographically and/or attitudinally reflective of the communities most impacted by a proposed policy decision. They come together for

We explore some of the critical requirements, considerations and questions in supporting and working with table facilitators and note-takers in deliberative dialogue.

a half-day to multiple days, to learn about the issue, consider their own views and values, work to understand the views and values of others, and collaborate on recommendations to elected officials or other formal leadership. A public deliberation may have a few, or dozens, of concurrent small discussion groups of six to eight participants. A team of people works to convene these deliberations, often including a project sponsor, design team, lead facilitator, participant recruiters, content experts, writers, researchers, as well as table facilitators and note-takers.

We write this chapter as four public engagement researcher-practitioners who have been intensively involved with Alberta Climate Dialogue (ABCD). In what follows, we explore some of the critical requirements, considerations and questions in supporting and working with table facilitators and note-takers in deliberative dialogue. Section two describes the context for our collective learning about this in ABCD. The third section explores what makes for good facilitation and note-taking in deliberations and what can go wrong and right; followed by section four which discusses the skills and aptitudes needed for good facilitation and note-taking. Section five offers concrete ways to support people in these roles before, during and after deliberations. To conclude we offer some tentative conclusions and pose questions for further reflection by the field of practitioners and academics about what can be taught and what may be more related to aptitude and mindset.



## 2. CLIMATE CHANGE DELIBERATIONS IN ALBERTA

This paper reflects on public engagement work by Alberta Climate Dialogue, a five-year project (2010-2015) exploring how direct participation by citizens in policymaking deliberations can enhance Alberta responses to climate change at municipal and provincial levels. Major funding was provided through a Social Sciences Humanities Research Council Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) grant.

One of the unique aspects of ABCD was its multi-sectoral composition: ABCD was made up of university, government, civil society, deliberation, and industry partners. Researchers and practitioners from Canada, US, Europe, and Australia contributed their expertise to Alberta-based practice and learning. We four authors have been extensively involved with ABCD’s public deliberations and with deliberative democracy in Canada.

### THREE PUBLIC DELIBERATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN ALBERTA

The authors were involved in three ABCD-led public deliberations on issues related to climate change in Alberta. The first was the Citizens’ Panel on Edmonton’s Energy and Climate Challenges (2012) (Citizens’ Panel) that was held over six Saturdays and involved 56 demographically representative and attitudinally diverse Edmontonians. The panel hosts were ABCD, the Centre for Public Involvement and the City of Edmonton. Panelists heard from City

representatives, industry, and experts, and drew on key documents such as a discussion paper on Edmonton's Energy Transition and a Handbook created for the Citizens' Panel. Participants engaged with one another and the issues through a variety of deliberation methods, as well as with keypad voting. The Citizens' Panel was supported by 20 volunteer facilitators and note-takers, most of whom were undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Alberta. The Citizens' Panel's Final Report was completed in January 2013 and presented to City Council's Executive Committee on April 15th, 2013.<sup>1</sup>

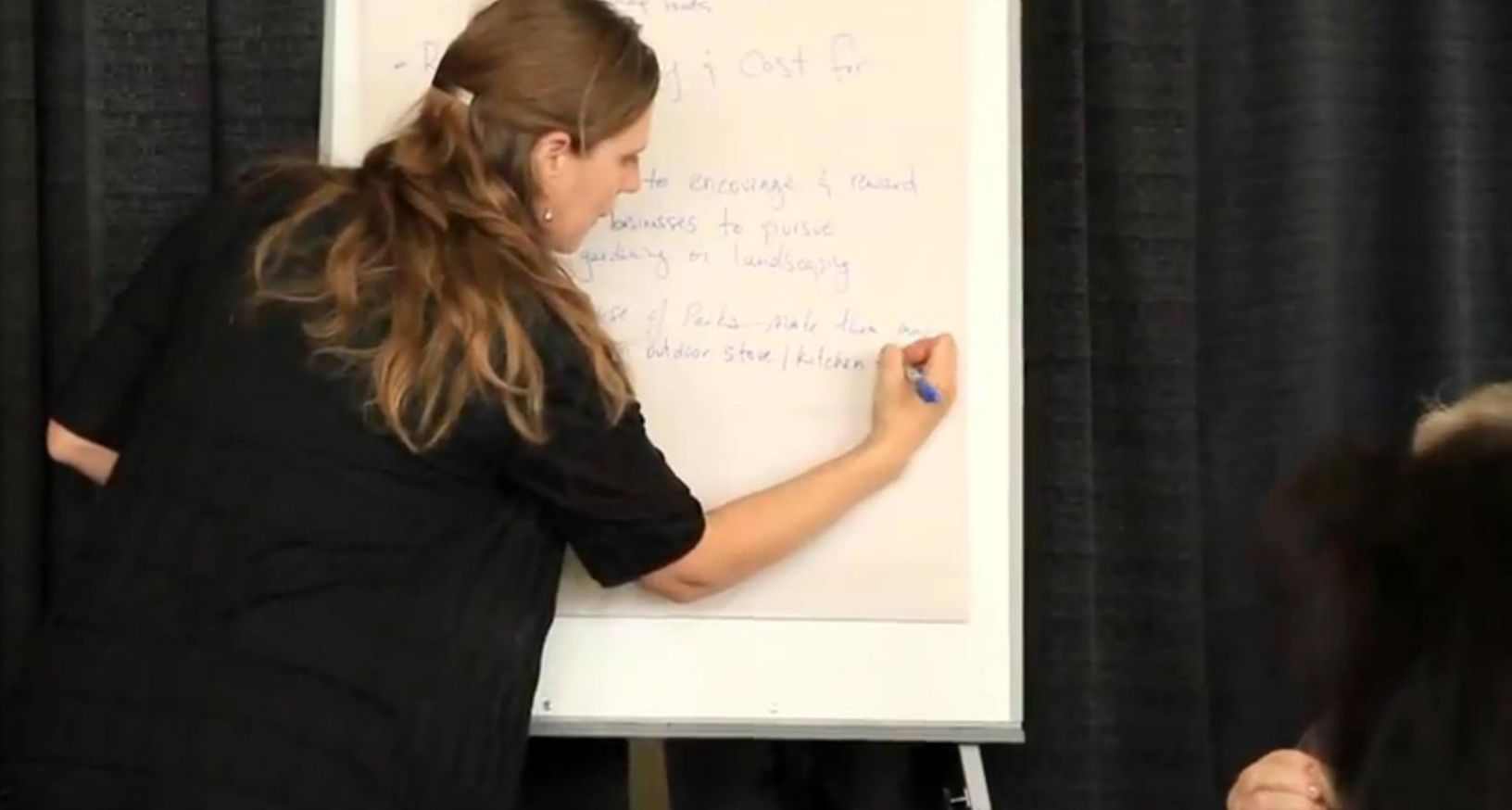
The second deliberation, *Water in a Changing Climate*, was an ABCD-led citizen deliberation that examined the intersections between water and climate change in the Oldman Watershed in southern Alberta. This deliberation was held for one day, with 33 participants, in partnership with the Oldman Watershed Council (OWC) in Southern Alberta. A participant handbook "*Water in a Changing Climate*" was developed to give background for the deliberation. There was an open recruitment process with both demographic and attitudinal criteria. The process of the day included a presentation on climate change in southern Alberta. In addition to the lead facilitator, five volunteer facilitators led small group discussions throughout the day, supported by five small group note-takers. Facilitators and note-takers were local residents from the watershed some of whom were also staff and/or volunteers with OWC.

*Energy Efficiency Choices* was the third, a virtual deliberation that engaged people from across Alberta in a conversation about the provincial government's energy efficiency policies. Hosted by ABCD and the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance, 164 participants met online and/or by phone in one of six available sessions. Each two-hour voice-based discussion featured both plenary sessions, led by a professional facilitator, as well as small breakout group discussions. The small group discussions were facilitated by 13 volunteer facilitators and discussions were recorded by 6 volunteer note-takers. The final report was released spring 2014 and was used by the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance in its communication with the Alberta government.

Training sessions and detailed facilitation and note-taking guides and templates were provided for all three projects. In all three initiatives, the complexity of the topics made for challenging facilitation and note-taking.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the Alberta Climate Dialogue website <http://www.albertaclimatedialogue.ca> for more information about the three deliberations discussed in this paper, including their respective reports and subsequent activities and research.



### 3. QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

Unskilled, inconsistent or inattentive facilitation and note-taking negatively affects group processes, and deliberative dialogue (DD) is no exception. deliberative dialogue calls for a particular form of facilitation that takes a high level of skill and an ability to improvise, while supporting the group to have the best conversation it can. Core facilitation skills such as synthesizing or following a designed process are critical but not enough.<sup>2</sup>

Given this, training in deliberative dialogue processes is generally required even if one is an experienced facilitator in other forms of engagement. At heart, facilitating deliberative dialogue is like jazz – you need to keep the central melody and improvise along with your group around that, flowing with the conversation but still harmonizing the notes to sustain the overall piece. Some facilitators, even experienced ones, are uncomfortable in that role. Managing the Citizens’ Panel provided deep lived experience of this situation. Given the process extended over six full-day weekends, both deliberation planning and recruiting sufficient human resources was a challenging undertaking. A full

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<sup>2</sup> For more on a practical exploration of the theory and practice of small group facilitation and associated issues, see Smith, Mark K. (2001; 2009) ‘Facilitating learning and change in groups’, the encyclopedia of informal education.  
[www.infed.org/mobi/facilitating-learning-and-change-in-groups-and-group-sessions](http://www.infed.org/mobi/facilitating-learning-and-change-in-groups-and-group-sessions)



deliberation plan was continually revised and updated over the weeks of the panel, with new learning happening continually. This process, combined with the other two ABCD deliberations reflected on in this paper, provided a rich learning environment to explore the capacities needed by facilitators and note-takers to support citizens in development of robust recommendations.

Research (Chilvers, 2014 and Escobar, 2012) posits that facilitation is mostly learned through practice. The same could be true

What can we train for and what aspects do we really have to “learn by doing”?

for the deliberation note-taking which requires a high level of self-awareness and the ability to map themes and concepts, often over multiple hours and sessions as in the case of the Citizens’ Panel. This kind of note-taking goes beyond what is typically required in post-secondary or professional contexts.

However, this leaves us with questions: What can we train for and what aspects do we really have to “learn by doing”? How can we experiment and test, without unduly affecting the quality and outcomes of deliberation processes? Are there facilitators and note-takers who are not well suited to deliberation for a variety of reasons including aptitude, mindset and preference? These are critical questions if we want to ensure the deliberative dialogue is an accessible format for groups and communities to use, and doesn’t rely on “elite” facilitators for good deliberation.

Increasingly there are good courses available in dialogue and deliberation, but much less attention is given to the planning and preparation for volunteer facilitators and note-takers within complex deliberations. Often in these types of dialogues, we recruit small group facilitators and note-takers from the host community and from post-secondary institutions, both to keep costs down and to build capacity in the community that can be a legacy of the work. Therefore, it is essential to wrestle with questions and challenges of building capacity for small group facilitator and note-takers.



## 3.1 Five Facilitator Types

Based on our experience in Alberta Climate Dialogue with the three deliberations described earlier, and other deliberative dialogue work with which we've been involved and are aware of, we have identified five small group facilitator types.

### DEER IN THE HEADLIGHT

Facilitating deliberative dialogue takes enhanced facilitation skills. But when people volunteer to be small group facilitators they don't always appreciate that there is a qualitative difference in facilitating, for example, a standard committee meeting and facilitating deliberative dialogue with citizens. In other words, "you don't know what you don't know". Even with training, this can result in some small group facilitators being quickly overwhelmed. The complexity of the topic in these three deliberations and the ongoing process adaptations that took place during sessions, posed real challenges for some of the facilitators who did not have the skills or background experience, to prepare them for what was required. As one ABCD small group facilitator shared after the Water in a Changing Climate (WCC) deliberation: "That was the hardest facilitation I've ever done and totally different from anything else I have facilitated. I found it very difficult and challenging and was very thankful to the lead facilitator for support thru [sic] tough moments."

## **LOST IN PROCESS DETAILS/DIALOGUE**

Deliberative Dialogue facilitators have a lot to manage and sometimes spend time thinking about what the next step in the process is, rather than listening to the participants and helping to clarify, synthesize, probe for meaning, etc. Sometimes the reverse is true and a small group facilitator gets totally absorbed in the conversation and forgets to steward the group and thus the process. Several of the facilitators and note-takers involved in the citizen deliberations were interested because of their passion and commitment to the topics at hand. Their interest coupled with some background knowledge, was at times challenging as they became immersed in the discussions rather than being more attentive to process and to supporting participants who may have differing opinions to them. For example, another WCC facilitator expressed it this way: “I consider myself a reasonably good facilitator, and figured I could do a dialogue. Sometimes I got lost in the discussion and spent time trying to figure where to go next, instead of listening.”

## **LET THE GROUP GO/LAISSEZ-FAIRE (PARTICIPANT DYNAMICS TAKE OVER)**

Implementing climate change deliberations in Alberta demonstrated how the intense and diverse range of opinions citizens have on this topic can impact small group processes. There were some participants who had very strong opinions and many who were used to “being right”, especially as they were used to debate-type processes. Part of a small group deliberation facilitator’s role is to model dialogic behaviour, and hold participants to this, which can be challenging. One WCC facilitator shared an experience of trying to manage the intensity of participants and how it limited the contributions of the group. This facilitator stated that, “Some people came in with their own agendas and tried to promote – I had some very vocal and strong personalities in the group. I struggled with getting them to really listen to each other and explore ideas. The resulting advice did not really push the envelope”.

## **SOME BUMPS IN THE ROAD BUT THEY'LL STAY THE COURSE WITH SUPPORT**

In addition to those participants who came to climate deliberations with well developed, strong opinions, there were also those who were new to or less familiar with the content of deliberations and or who were more liked minded. This offers a different challenge for the small group facilitators who may need support from the lead facilitator at the appropriate time to help them successfully support their group to push their thinking and deliberations further. As a WCC facilitator wrote, “The group was quite agreeable and I had to push them to think of other perspectives. At one point, we had a shopping list of ideas and I was struggling to get them to deliberate on them. With support from the lead facilitator, I was able to get them to reflect on pros and cons on one idea that really resonated for them and we were able to deepen the thinking. The group was very surprised at what they came up with (really felt it was a new idea).”

### **QUALITY FACILITATION**

There are those who really get it. They understand what is at the core of their task and aren't bogged down by the details or misdirected by participant dynamics. A WCC facilitator shared, “We started by exploring values and were really able to deepen the dialogue successfully. It was ‘foundational work’ and allowed them to craft advice that was based out of that. Participants felt that the process allowed them to go deep and come up with ideas that they would not have developed otherwise.”

Throughout the course of three different ABCD citizen deliberations, as we worked with and observed 40 facilitators and note-takers, understanding emerged about the knowledge, skills and aptitudes need for the most effective citizen deliberations of complex and technical topics during citizen deliberations. The next section explores this in depth.



## 4. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND APTITUDE: WHAT EFFECTIVE FACILITATION AND NOTE-TAKING LOOKS LIKE

We distinguish aptitude (a natural ability) from skills and knowledge as it is our experience that theoretical or technical learning alone is insufficient for deliberative dialogue. Having a natural propensity or talent for deliberative dialogue facilitation may make the difference between two equally knowledgeable and skilled facilitators – the one with strong aptitude is better positioned to become an excellent facilitator. For example, those with highly developed emotional intelligence will likely achieve higher order facilitation more readily than those whose who are at a more basic level.

This section also addresses the role of values, which are both implicitly and explicitly alive in deliberative dialogue. Human emotion and values are always at play in any small group discussion but in deliberative dialogues with the public, values are a key element of participants' expertise. Deliberative dialogues are grounded in a belief in the intrinsic worth of individuals, their right and responsibility to contribute to our democracy, the critical importance of listening, openness and respect, and the thoughtful exploration of different values in the context of choice-making. Facilitators and note-takers need to adhere to and model these deliberative dialogue principles.



## 4.1 Characteristics of Effective Facilitators and Note-takers

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Effective deliberative dialogue facilitators and note-takers exhibit interplay of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and value-based behaviour in service to the group and the overall goals of the deliberative process. Informed by our experience with the ABCD work and other deliberative projects and research, we see the following key characteristics of effective facilitation and note-taking.

### **NEUTRALITY WITH COMMITMENT TO HIGH-VALUE DELIBERATIONS**

The ways in which the small group facilitator frames, supports, refocuses and guides the discussion builds participants' trust in the process and in the facilitator. The facilitator does not lead or bias the discussion to privilege a particular position or perspective, or intimate that there is a right answer that is being sought. It is important that facilitators know they are not making decisions for the group. At the same time, facilitators should intervene where necessary to bring the focus back to what is core, rather than peripheral, to the deliberation. The facilitator also helps identify the sticking points and supports the group to improve its effectiveness, without overstepping the boundary between participants and the facilitator (Schwarz, 2002).

Facilitators require skill, sufficient knowledge of the subject and policy content to intelligently redirect (see Content and Context Knowledge below), internal discipline to park their views and preferences, and quiet confidence. While this is one of the most challenging tasks facing the facilitator, it is also the mark of an excellent facilitator. This challenge was witnessed in numerous occasions during the Citizens' Panel as the facilitators juggled in depth

technical content while supporting discussion with a group of citizens who had a range of experiences and understanding. Facilitators were given in advance a participant handbook and materials for the sessions to help prepare them for the content discussion by participants. However, facilitators were also regularly reminded throughout all deliberations to maintain a neutral role on policy directions.

Chilvers' (2014) research explores the tensions facilitators face in remaining neutral while at the same time intervening to focus dialogue on the most critical dimensions of the deliberation. He speaks of deliberative facilitators having "the ability to reconcile multiple

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perspectives and embody the inherent tension of simultaneously intervening in and remaining 'neutral' in dialogue processes." Chilvers goes on to note that "a further theme central to practitioners' talk ... highlighted the *embodied* nature of public participation expertise". This refers to the idea that dialogue takes a "special person" or the "right personality" to handle the tension inherent in deliberative dialogue.

### MANAGING DIVERSITY AND CONFLICT WISELY

Deliberative dialogue small groups bring together diverse individuals reflecting different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, and often conflicting perspectives and values. Effective facilitators are aware of how power dynamics, especially involving marginalized groups, can influence small group interactions and of how to address these dynamics. Facilitators reinforce established and agreed to ground rules for good dialogue and intervene as required to mitigate disrespectful and hurtful behaviour and remarks, whether overt or subconscious. At the same time, the facilitator creates an atmosphere in which it is safe for all participants to express contrary or different views, which is also critical to good dialogue. Achieving this balance is made possible by being comfortable with emotions and disagreements. Facilitators can embrace these situations as opportunities for participants to deepen understanding and ask important questions to understand what is at the heart of different perspectives and views. During the ABCD deliberations, there were many examples of facilitators bringing forward observations or concerns about

participant experiences that were then addressed by the project team during the session or between sessions. This role made an important contribution to participant satisfaction and avoiding attrition.

### ACTIVE LISTENING, EMPATHY AND SYNTHESIS

Effective facilitators are always in active listening mode, working to discern the real or implicit meaning behind the spoken or written words. It takes well-grounded emotional intelligence to pay attention to the whole person – their body language, facial expression and mood – not just the words spoken. This requires empathy – an ability to imagine what the person is feeling and what emotions underlie their words.

Asking powerful and relevant open-ended questions, paraphrasing and synthesizing emerging threads and themes, tensions or new threads in ways that consolidate and or advance the deliberation are core skills practiced by effective facilitators. When there is push back or unease from one or more individuals with the paraphrasing

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or synthesis offered, the facilitator works with the group to arrive at a clearer articulation of what's been said and more importantly in some cases, what has not been said. None of this can be done without full body (heart and head) listening, empathy and good judgement.

### STRUCTURE AND CONSISTENCY TEMPERED WITH FLEXIBILITY

Small group facilitators are usually following processes that have been developed by a lead facilitator or process group. Strong facilitators respect the integrity of the process, the need for consistency and are attentive to how each session contributes to the overall design, in multiple session dialogues. They are also skilful in adapting the process to their small groups' needs and dynamics in ways that are congruent with the dialogue purpose. For example, if interpersonal conflict is distracting or preventing the group from its work, or if participants are struggling with concepts or critical framing, the facilitator will take the time required to address the problem and then move on. As discussed below, the facilitator will also communicate this to the lead facilitator and seek



assistance to get back on track as required. In advance of ABCD deliberations, facilitators were provided with a number of tools or resources that they could use to support small group dialogue if they encountered the situation as described above.

### **CONTENT AND CONTEXT KNOWLEDGE**

Some approaches to facilitation emphasize that facilitators do not need to be familiar with the content of the facilitation (some even go so far as to claim that it is best if they are not). In our view, deliberative dialogues, especially policy-based ones, work best when small group facilitators are at least familiar with the broad content being discussed and understand the context within which the dialogue is happening. This is invaluable for helping the group to focus on what is core to the issue at hand, rather than going down a rabbit hole of detail. Facilitators are also able to determine when to bring external resources or experts into the group to help get over a hurdle that is preventing the group from achieving its tasks.

### **SELF-AWARENESS AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

In addition to the above five attributes, effective facilitators are attuned to their own emotional and cognitive state before, during and after their sessions. They are aware of what they need to bring to the table and what they need to leave at home. The three core attitudes for facilitative practice identified by Carl Rogers (1990) are also critical for effective facilitation of small group dialogue and deliberation:

- Realness: being authentic and genuine; bringing yourself to the table
- Prizing, acceptance and trust: focusing on the needs of participants as human beings not objects of a study
- Empathetic understanding: having a mindset that accepts where participants are without judging; seeks to understand what people bring to the table

An additional characteristic is awareness and understanding of multiple oppressions and dynamics including how gender, race, class and other dimensions are a part of all group processes.



## 4.2 Characteristics of Effective Note-takers

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The need for skilled note-takers and their critical role in citizen deliberations was keenly observed over the course of ABCD deliberations. In this context, note-takers were responsible for capturing the key ideas, themes and decision points of all small group discussions. ABCD note-takers were charged with the balancing act of both capturing individual perspectives while also recording overarching areas of divergence and convergence. Notes taken during ABCD deliberations were used to prepare individual summary sessions and to write the final deliberation reports. As discussed in Section 5, it is essential to craft an advance plan for how the note-takers' records will be used.

Effective note-takers are capable of creating a detailed record of the diverse and unique perspectives that are present in an engagement process while also being able to thoughtfully recognize and capture general themes and interconnections. While doing this, note-takers also support the facilitator, for example, by signalling where additional time or deliberation may be required. Responsive note-takers have the capacity, skills and reflexivity to park their own opinions and knowledge to maintain focus on the deliberation, and ensure the integrity and rigour of the note-taking record. Conversely, note-takers who lack this ability will negatively impact the overall record and hence participants' contributions. Much is lost if the note-taker does not capture a detailed record of what participants articulate and what the note-taker observes.

Note-takers appreciate what makes for good participatory process, are flexible and adaptable to changes and take direction from both the lead and small group facilitators. Effective note-takers understand clearly and explicitly that they are not facilitating and their role is distinct. We have found that it is also important to ensure that in small group processes that one individual is not given a dual role of facilitator and note-taker. Flip charting (which many facilitators will do) is not the same as the detailed note-taking we find useful in policy-oriented deliberative dialogue. As was realized during the ABCD deliberations, in order to provide well documented summary and final reports, the data collection provided by note-takers is essential.

### **ENGAGED LISTENERS AND OBSERVERS OF PROCESS**

In addition to capturing a detailed record of what is explicitly stated, note-takers also support the facilitator by recording when they see emotions or tensions arising in the group. The ability to observe and document these unspoken moments is critical to having a complete and nuanced understanding of the group dynamic, such as when are participants exploring an issue or when are they coming to common ground. Similar to the facilitator, note-takers are better equipped to make a substantial contribution to the deliberative process when they are self-aware and have experience with group dynamics. Essential foundations of group dynamics include an understanding of how racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression and or power can be present during a small group discussion or process as well as an awareness of one's own subconscious biases (Choudhury, 2015). The note-taker can support the facilitator with another set of eyes to ensure the process is inclusive, balanced and fair, to support democratic participation. There were many examples of this skill being used during the ABCD deliberations, as note-takers were able to bring forward observations of participant interactions or experiences that required intervention. These dynamics may have been missed otherwise.

### **MEANING MAKERS**

Note-takers make sense of in-depth discussions and conversations, often around complex topics that may be outside their fields of expertise. It is critical that note-takers are provided with supportive resources in advance of the engagement process to build knowledge about context specific language such as technical terms or acronyms that may be used by facilitators or participants.

In a multiple session process, it is ideal to have a consistent note-taking team so that the overall record builds on the work done in previous sessions. A note-taker who is present for the full duration of the process will be able to more effectively support the facilitator to identify key issues, and recognize points of divergence and convergence. Over multiple sessions, note-takers can also observe any threads of influence by project sponsors or facilitators, so that they can support the project team to ensure that there is no intentional bias being introduced.

Effective note-takers are not stenographers. They know that capturing verbatim discussion may result in losing big picture information or connections and concepts. Note-takers need to be supported to carefully and accurately capture the key and critical ideas, in addition to direct quotations that capture and reflect participant voices and range of opinions. Good note-taking templates have the whole session's process design mapped out, and clarify which aspects of the session are a priority.

A good template also has a space for capturing individual voices or quotes that can be used in summary reports. These guides are critical to assisting note-takers to capture a well-documented record. These

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templates are at their strongest when they are adapted using the experiences and insight of note-takers. See Appendix A for an example of a note-taker guide used for the Citizens' Panel. See Appendix B for an example of a summary report that demonstrates how note-takers' data can track participant participants over multiple sessions.

In addition to well-designed note-taker templates, each note-taker will also have his or her own system to quickly capture and label critical ideas, concepts, and moments quickly, in a way that will make sense at the end of the process.

In highly politicized or contentious processes, it is useful to have teams of two note-takers for each small group so that the sets of notes can be compared and contrasted at the end of a session. This acts as a check and balance for the project sponsors and provides evidence of consistency and neutrality of the note-takers.

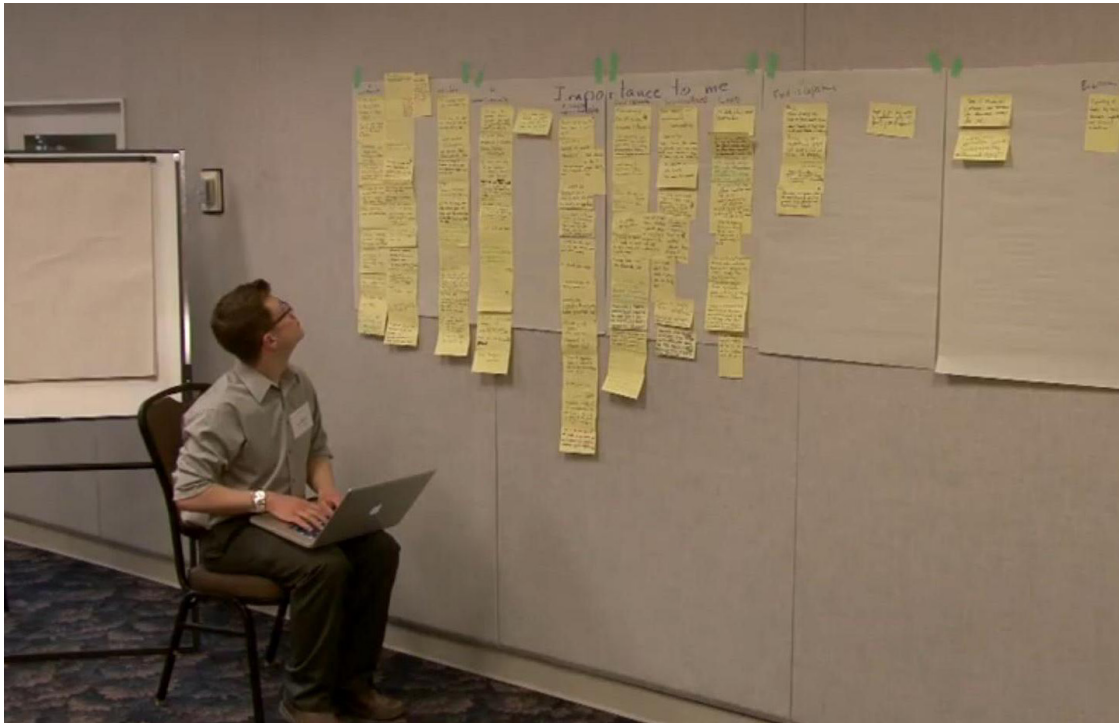


### **REFLEXIVE, ETHICAL OBSERVERS**

A significant challenge for note-takers is to ensure their own opinions, passion or interest in the topic at hand do not impact what is recorded or how it is understood. Their work is to maintain the focus on the voices, process, words and deliberations of the participants, without filtering it through their own lenses. This requires a high degree of self-awareness. One approach to supporting note-takers is to encourage them to reflect in advance on their own connection to a topic or hope for a policy outcome and then thoughtfully and responsibly, manage this, so that they resist the temptation to introduce their ideas or perspectives about the subject matter into notes. A useful way to manage this practically is to determine in advance project team members who will be designated to respond to information or content questions so that note-takers are not required to do this. However, it is important for note-takers to capture questions that arise.

### **ADAPTIVE AND ABLE TO BALANCE THE SPECIFIC AND GENERAL**

Good note-takers are adept at moving continually between specific ideas and topics to capturing big picture themes and connections. Where possible, it can be useful for pairs of note-takers to be provided with distinct roles when working collaboratively. For example, one note-taker can be tasked with capturing the detailed voices and views that are present during the process including when or if there are shifts by participants on ideas or perspectives. The other note-taker can be responsible for scribing big ideas, concepts, tensions, emergent ideas, agreement and disagreement during and across the process.



## 4.3 Summary of Characteristics

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**In summary, the following characteristics of effective facilitators and note-takers rise to the top:**

**Be clear on the purposes of the overall deliberative dialogue as well as each activity.** One can then utilize one's own skills to support productive dialogue without being straitjacketed by the details of a process. This is a constant balancing act, as there needs to be consistency across small groups while still allowing for each group's own dynamics and for diverse facilitator styles.

**Understand the importance of maintaining one's own objectivity about an issue,** but still know enough about it to anchor the conversation and reframe as needed, or to ask for clarification.

**Be able to work with the diversity of participants,** regardless of their perspective or ability to express their ideas. Empathy is particularly important here, as people may express emotions as they speak about issues of importance to them.

Understand that there is a component of power in both facilitation and note-taking roles, and this power has an impact, especially when one is not aware of it. For example, facilitators need to decide when to dive deep in a dialogue, where to synthesize, and where to reinforce the boundaries of discussion. Note-takers, most of whom do not take verbatim notes, are selecting/synthesizing as they go. There is always vulnerability to selective hearing (as illustrated by one of our note-taker's remarks: "I didn't record that because I didn't agree with the point").

Remember that facilitators and note-takers are in service to the group, and must avoid their own perspectives colouring the dialogue. These teams are tasked with supporting participants to exploring and working through their ideas as individuals and as a group.



# 5. SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS AND NOTE-TAKERS BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER DELIBERATION

As discussed above, we believe that effective facilitation and note-taking requires highly nuanced skills, aptitudes, and self-awareness. There are a number of ways to support a team of small group facilitators and note-takers to prepare, implement and follow up on a public deliberation.

## 5.1 Before: Preparation and Training

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Adequately preparing small group facilitators and note-takers for their roles includes providing them with written materials as well as hands-on training and orientation, with opportunities to practice and receive feedback.

### RECRUIT A SKILLED AND RIGHT-SIZED TEAM

Volunteers can be recruited from civil society groups, postsecondary education institutions, and partner organizations. In the ABCD projects, we drew on all of these, and the Centre for Public Involvement recruited facilitators and note-takers from its previous deliberative processes. A simple way to recruit is to use an online sign-up form, asking for name, experience, how they heard about the opportunity, why they want to be involved, and even references. With larger deliberations, it is wise to recruit more people than needed to allow for redundancy and challenges. For projects with multiple sessions, create a complete Human Resources plan to determine all scheduling in advance, if possible with back-up. As discussed above, it is ideal in a multi-session deliberation to have as many of the same people as possible, across sessions.

Once a group is recruited, it is worth checking again to identify the extent and type of experience they have in their respective roles, particularly in terms of deliberative dialogue. This includes clarifying what being 'experienced' in these roles means to them. If possible, check with colleagues who may know their work to confirm the accuracy of their self-assessment.



## **CONFIRM ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS**

Once the team of facilitators and note-takers is recruited, provide a confirmation document that explains purpose of the deliberation, roles, time commitments, expectations, supports and resources, honoraria or payment, and location.

## **PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION FOR ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

Prepare, test and revise detailed facilitation guides and note-taker templates. The team should be provided with an overview of the overall process and critical content on the topic being discussed. The guides and templates should provide sufficient but not overwhelming detail. A guide or template can include tools such as concept or mind-maps that show the progress of discussion, connection of themes, agreement and disagreement, or where further information, clarification or discussion time is needed. For an example of the facilitation guide prepared for the Citizens' Panel, see Appendix C.

## **PROCESS DESIGN FOR EXCELLENT RECORDS OF PARTICIPANT INPUT**

The advance design of the engagement process should intentionally consider and plan for note-taking. This could include building in time at key junctures in the process to allow note-takers to check in with the group to ensure they have adequately collected and summarized key ideas. It can also be useful to build in an activity where participants determine priorities or collectively summarize the ideas they see as most important. Another way to support and verify note-taking, if there are multiple sessions, is creating summary reports and then building in time for participants to reflect and give feedback on those reports. See Appendix B for samples.

## **DATA ANALYSIS PLAN**

We have found that it is essential to have an advance plan for analyzing the records of participant input, which includes quality control and a standardized approach to data integrity and consistency. One of the project team members needs to be tasked with reviewing and managing data across sessions, if applicable and following up with note-takers if needed. In the Citizens' Panel, a Master Writer was employed who took responsibility for this task and generating the first draft of all reports and data summaries. Ideally the data analysis team should include some note-takers to minimize misinterpretation of small group results.

## TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

An orientation and training session or sessions are essential to prepare the team. These sessions can cover background, content, desired outcomes, process, methods, and technology.

- Orientation and training should be in person, typically running 2-4 hours or longer if time permits. In some instances, an additional training session may be required to provide support for less experienced people.
- Provide an overview of the landscape and terrain of the project that includes an understanding of the roles and relationships of people that are present and or participating.
- Incorporate role playing exercises based on the processes to be used in the deliberation. Providing participants with opportunities to both role play and observe helps prepare facilitators and note-takers and can fine-tune instructions.
- Hold training and distribute materials far enough in advance that people have time to review more than once and ask questions, but avoid lengthy pauses during which time people can forget critical aspects.
- In deliberations involving more than one session and particularly with many sessions, additional training sessions are valuable, especially for additional support around facilitation for deliberative exercises. This is critical, as often in longer processes, design is adapted as things proceed.
- Include information and understanding of the foundations and principles of deliberative dialogue excellence. Encourage facilitators and note-takers to integrate these concepts in their roles, as well as to model and communicate them to participants. Examples of this are in the guide shared in Appendix C.



## 5.2 During Deliberation

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### LEAD FACILITATOR SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS

Good preparation is essential, but the rubber hits the road during the session and things can unravel if small group facilitators or note-takers feel overwhelmed, become anxious or lose confidence in their ability to follow the process and be attuned to their groups. It is important for the lead facilitator to check in with the table facilitators and note-takers before the session starts to make sure they are clear on their roles and are prepared for the session.

The lead facilitator can also help mitigate this anxiousness by walking the floor, observing the small groups, assisting as needed, and seeing if discussions or process are going astray. However, it takes sensitivity and diplomacy to intervene appropriately. Often, just an aside to the facilitator can do the trick, but sometimes a firmer hand is needed, for example by sitting down at the table and co-facilitating for a period of time to get the process back on track.

Providing time checks and ensuring small groups are moving forward in a timely way is also part of the lead facilitator's role. The note-taker and facilitator teams need to support their group to finish on time, but sometimes they can get immersed in their conversation. The lead facilitator shepherds the full process and works with the small group teams to ensure they are ready to rejoin the plenary process with appropriate report-backs.

The lead facilitator also supports the small group teams by troubleshooting more challenging cases. With good process design and ground rules, these instances are rare, but it is sometimes necessary for the lead facilitator to take a participant aside so that the small group work can proceed (for example, where there are verbal attacks on other participants or aggressive or hurtful behaviour).

Lead facilitators aim to provide support that, as one table facilitator commented, is “perfectly balanced for maximum clarity and minimum encumbrance.”

### STRONG FACILITATOR NOTE-TAKER TEAMS

Developing an *esprit de corps* on the part of small group facilitators and note-takers also helps support small group process. For example, a good note-taker can support the facilitator as needed by asking clarifying questions or requesting feedback on the notes. It is important for each team to have time to discuss how they’ll work together before the session starts. For deliberation over multiple sessions (e.g. the Citizens’ Panel), good teamwork can grow over time, and it is worthwhile to keep teams together if they are working well.

### COMMUNICATION FOR PROCESS ADJUSTMENTS

Being able to adjust process and communicate changes to the small group teams in real time is also critical. Sometimes this is built into the process design, as was the case for the OWC deliberation, as the team knew the content for the afternoon small groups

Breaks are sometimes the busiest time for facilitators and note-takers as they meet to problem-solve, adjust process and clarify what needs to be reported out from small group work.

would emerge from the morning’s framing. Sometimes these adjustments are made on the fly, which reinforces the need for good communication protocols. Breaks are sometimes the busiest time for facilitators and note-takers as they meet to problem-solve, adjust process and clarify what needs to be reported out from small group work. Ensuring that the small group teams are listening to lead facilitator instructions to the full group is also important when process is revised on the spot. For virtual sessions, having a back-channel for the delivery team helps to communicate process

changes and/or problem solve without disturbing the flow for all, as was the case for Energy Efficiency Choices. In the case of the Citizens' Panel, there was a conference call each week between sessions that provided an opportunity for both a debrief and preparation for the following week.

### ADDRESSING GAPS IN CAPACITY

Despite all of these efforts, uneven facilitation and note-taking will still happen. In a process with multiple sessions, this can get worked on; for example, the lead facilitator gets to know the teams and can provide additional support where needed, assign more difficult tasks to the more skilled facilitators, and change the teams so that they are balanced. With good design it is possible to also build in backups, e.g. have more than one small group focused on the same topic. Shorter sessions like Water in a Changing Climate are more vulnerable to uneven facilitation and note-taking as there is less time to help improve performance.

Both our own experience and research recognizes that facilitation is largely learned by doing. Providing feedback on specific observed behaviours is the most useful support for facilitators to improve their skills, especially on critical performance issues; this should be offered as soon as possible, whether in the moment or immediately afterwards. Note-takers also look for performance feedback and having a lead note-taker who can review the notes before the next session helps to clarify expectations and build capacity.





## 5.3 After Deliberation

### DEBRIEF FOR INDIVIDUAL AND PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

It is valuable to create space for debriefing the event, bringing in the whole team's experiences. This will help to accurately capture the content of participant discussions, allow opportunities for individualized feedback, develop the team's skills for ongoing deliberations, and recognize the contributions of the team. One ABCD small group facilitator from the Edmonton Citizens Panel shared that debriefs "were very useful! A way to share and "get-out" of my mind those reflections about what I observed during the day."

Establishing a norm of soliciting feedback from facilitators and note-takers can contribute to iterative improvements of the deliberation process and the skills of the team members. Our experience is that holding an onsite debrief at the end of each session can elicit detailed and top-of-mind issues. This must be balanced with the fatigue factor: discussion should be concise. As one small group facilitator from the Citizens Panel wrote, "The post session debriefs were a tricky thing because I think they are crucial reflections that need to be captured and shared. On the other hand, after a very long day of facilitating and note-taking – the debriefing sessions just added to a very exhausting day. A post session survey could also be useful to send it out to those that may not have been able to stay during the debrief."

The focus of debriefing activities will depend on context. A one-time deliberation may look to identify any follow-up steps required for participant satisfaction or to clarify deliberation outcomes, and well as lessons for future deliberations. The debrief also provides an important opportunity for table facilitators and note-takers to integrate their experiences through sharing and reflection. When a deliberation is held over multiple sessions, debrief conversations would additionally focus on participants' progress on tasks, important participant dynamics, and skill sharing with peers. It is important that note-takers are able to contribute reflective insights in the debriefing sessions.

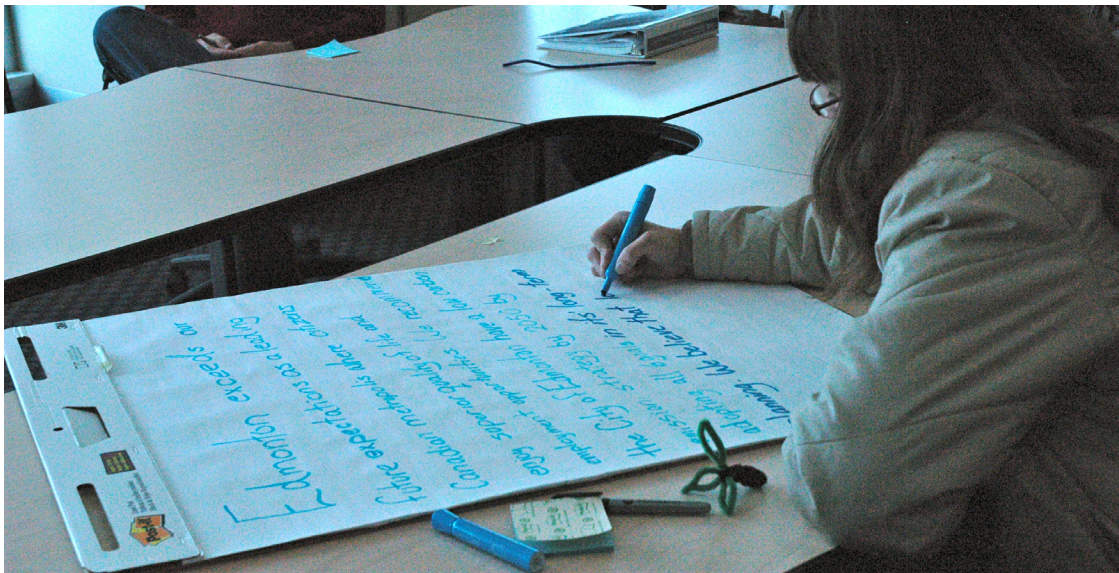
Just as it's important to demonstrate to participants that their input is being considered in next steps, so too should feedback from facilitators and note-takers be considered in the design of subsequent deliberations. Process designers can close the loop with facilitators and note-takers by sending out emails with key themes and follow up actions.

### **FEEDBACK FROM RESEARCHERS**

In the context of ABCD, researchers were an integral part of the entire process and participated as observers in many of the sessions. Having ABCD researchers who observed, collected data, provided their perspectives and points of view, analyzed the findings and wrote constructively about what they observed across the three citizen deliberations gave valuable insights and considerations about the role and performance of the small group facilitators and note-takers.

Collaborating with researchers can be particularly useful to identify themes that emerge over time, within an ongoing deliberation or over a series of comparable deliberations. Having a third party play a role in debriefing activities also provides a neutral forum for facilitators and note-takers to state critical or other views they may otherwise refrain from sharing.

Researcher interviews with the ABCD project team members over the course of the deliberations provided an understanding of key facilitation decision points and learning over time. It also allowed researchers to understand the fluid, adapting context of practitioners and adapt research instruments to capture this.



### ENSURE ACCURACY OF DISCUSSION RECORDS

We worked to ensure table discussions were accurately captured and reported. We have found it effective to ask facilitator/note-taker teams to review the notes from their table's discussion together, within a day or two of the meeting. This collaboration enables each team to clarify participant statements and ensure the report is consistent with what participants discussed. For ongoing deliberations, this interaction can also build rapport and mutual understanding for high functioning facilitator/note-taker teams.

### PROVIDE PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK

People tend to want feedback on their performance. It is important to involve team members in this process, including by asking them to reflect about strengths and areas for growth. While it can be challenging to observe table discussions in a non-invasive way, it is important to look for opportunities to monitor facilitators and note-takers. A low-intensity approach for observing facilitators is to watch the body language of participants, to look for levels of engagement. A higher-intensity approach involves standing behind a participant chair to listen to conversation, or even to pull up a chair to the edge of the group. Note-takers can be observed over their shoulder. It can also be useful to chat during breaks about any important dynamics emerging.



It can also be effective to include questions about these roles in participant surveys. Even very basic participant surveys can elicit trends and individual opinions about facilitators and note-takers. We have asked participants questions about whether they felt the small group facilitators provided a safe environment, were fair or neutral on the issue, and if the small group process was well-managed. Regarding note-takers, we have asked participants if they felt the note-taker was accurately recording their discussion. This type of information can be used for individual feedback, coaching and support.

### **BUILD CAPACITY THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS**

All team members will be learning as they go, so it is important to integrate capacity building and training into the support mechanisms for facilitators and note-takers. Trainings and resources can focus on both their areas of interest as well as skills for upcoming segments of the deliberation.

### **ACKNOWLEDGE PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTIONS**

The main reason people play these roles is because they often enjoy it. It's important to recognize the team's contribution verbally, in writing and, for long-term projects, through a social gathering. Consider providing reference letters if appropriate, such as for student facilitators and note-takers. Volunteer appreciation gatherings are also a way to acknowledge the contribution of facilitators and note-takers and to support the development of a community of practice for future processes.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Facilitation and note-taking for small groups in deliberative dialogues is not for beginners. It takes solid experience and the development of nuanced, well-honed skills. Some of these skills are important in any facilitation and note-taking role, such as being aware of the power of your role, and they are especially critical for deliberative dialogue, where one is supporting a group to come to its own decisions and common ground with minimal influence from the team supporting them. The stakes are yet higher if the results are being used to inform policy decisions.

General deliberative dialogue training can help by providing a framework for facilitators and note-takers to use in their work. This could include providing an understanding of the approach of deliberative dialogue, the concept of common ground, the role of values, tensions and trade-offs, etc. But each particular process takes additional training and support to ensure consistency across groups and authentic, rigorous results.

There are specific tools, templates and approaches that can help do this and we have provided references to a number of them. But like many skills, excellence comes through doing. Lead facilitators and note-takers can provide feedback to small group teams, and they can also help mitigate poor, uneven or even inappropriate facilitation or note-taking in the moment.

Can anyone become a good deliberative dialogue facilitator or note-taker, given adequate instruction, support and practice? Possibly, but in our experience, some aptitude limitations and personal sensibilities can be problematic for good deliberative dialogue. For example, deliberative dialogue facilitators and note-takers are in service to the group – their litmus test is how well they are supporting their group to have the best dialogue they can. It is often detailed and very focused work. Facilitators who are more comfortable leading large groups, keeping them motivated and engaged, similar to an emcee role, can have a difficult time with deliberative dialogue. Note-takers who are more focused on synthesizing data and critiquing input for academic purposes may be frustrated with the need to be where the participants are, not where the note-taker thinks they should be going.

Good deliberative dialogue facilitation and note-taking demand high levels of self-awareness and reflective learning, ability and comfort with improvising, good emotional intelligence, strong multi-tasking ability and excellent listening skills. They also take a willingness and ability to be open to others' perspectives, values and ways of being, putting one's own perspectives and power aside to create space for others and for the group. Some people are just not comfortable or even interested in this type of facilitation or note-taking.

### **So what are the best approaches to the development and support of good facilitators and note-takers for deliberative dialogue processes?**

1. **Have lead facilitator(s) highly experienced in deliberative dialogue**, and interested in supporting others to develop and nurture the skills required for small group work.
2. **Recruit people who have had some practice in requisite skills** and help them assess themselves for the kinds of characteristics and aptitudes discussed in this paper.
3. **Provide training in the particular processes** they will be using.
4. **Provide good materials and supports** like templates and facilitation scripts.
5. **Provide on-site support and feedback.**
6. **Hold structured debriefing sessions** and provide the facilitation and note-taking teams with opportunities to share additional feedback via surveys. Include formal evaluation and feedback on results.

We hope that our reflections here are of use to others in the field, and that readers will find ways to refine, supplement, or challenge our reflections.

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# APPENDIX A: NOTE-TAKER TEMPLATE, CITIZENS' PANEL ON EDMONTON'S ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES

**CITIZENS' PANEL ON EDMONTON'S ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHALLENGES  
NOTE-TAKER TEMPLATE — SESSION #2 —  
OCTOBER 20, 2012 - 9:00AM-4:00PM**

**Note-taker name:**

**Note-taker email:**

**Table #:**

**Table Host:**

**Panelists at your table (first name or initials):**

**Overall framing question:** *What choices are we prepared to make together to meet Edmonton's energy and climate challenges?*

**Note:** Do not paraphrase panelists' comments and questions. Record what they say in their own language. Do not synthesize their comments. Please separate and record panelists' comments individually and when possible indicate their names. Also include table hosts, lead facilitators, and presenters' responses as much as possible. At the same time, please do not worry about recording every single word expressed at your table — you are not expected to be a court reporter! What is most important is to capture panelists' key points.

**Tip:** As you record your notes, ask yourself: "If I wasn't listening to this conversation, would I be able to understand what is being recorded?" We'll be using these notes to prepare the Citizens' Panel draft report and this may mean that the Citizens Writing Group may want to review them. In addition, ABCD researchers may also want to review these for their own research. It is important for us to be able to analyze the table notes for both process and content purposes.

<b>WELCOME, CHECK-IN, AND REVIEW OF DAY</b>		<b>9:00-9:20am</b>
<p>What points and questions do panelists have coming into Session #2 and/or about the agenda/volunteer writing group/anything else?</p>	<p>Other notable questions, quotes, and comments:</p>	
<b>DEEPER DRIVE LEARNING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY VULNERABILITY</b>		<b>9:20-10:25am</b>
<p>What <b>questions</b>/comments do the panelists at your table have about climate change?</p>	<p>Other notable questions, quotes, and comments:</p>	
<b>DEEPER DIVE LEARNING ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY VULNERABILITY (CONT'</b>		<b>10:40-11:25am</b>
<p>What <b>questions</b>/comments do the panelists at your table have about energy economics/science?</p>	<p>Other notable quotes, questions, and comments:</p>	

<b>PANEL: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON/INTERPRETATIONS OF ENERGY VULNERABILITY AND GHG EMISSIONS REDUCTION</b>		<b>12:45-2:05pm</b>
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<p>What are the key points/questions that panelists at your table are making about the panel's ideas/presentation?</p> <p><b>Record your table's key questions for the armchair panelists:</b></p>	<p>Other notable quotes, questions, and comments:</p>
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<b>CREATING VALUES GUIDEPOSTS</b>		<b>2:20-3:50pm</b>
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<p>Record the main threads of conversation about how panelists at your table categorize values and the rationale for the values they chose (please include examples):</p> <p><b>Record your table's top four values</b> (dotmocracy exercise):</p> <p>Record your tables' next 4-6 values:</p> <p><b>Record the key points of discussion after all the tables use keypads to vote for their top four values:</b></p>	<p>Other notable quotes, questions, and comments:</p>
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**ADDITIONAL QUOTES, QUESTIONS, AND COMMENTS FROM PANELISTS**

**PERTINENT OBSERVATIONS FROM TABLE HOST/NOTE-TAKER**



# Session #6 Report

DECEMBER 1, 2012

CITIZENS' PANEL ON EDMONTON'S ENERGY & CLIMATE CHALLENGES

## *What choices are we prepared to make together to meet Edmonton's energy and climate challenges?*

### SESSION OBJECTIVES



- Validate draft report recommendations
  - Key messages
  - Principles and values
  - Recommendations on six goals and corresponding actions
  - Other important points for inclusion
- Where possible strengthen and deepen recommendations
- Identify, explore, decide, and plan Panel actions going forward.

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Dear Citizen Panelist,

Thank you for your hard work and participation over the past eight weeks. The City of Edmonton, Alberta Climate Dialogue and the Centre for Public Involvement truly appreciate your dedication and willingness to develop meaningful strategies on Energy and Climate Challenges. We are very excited to share your recommendations in the final report in January 2013.

Thank you once again, happy holidays and all the best to you in the new year!

Sincerely,

*Citizens' Panel on Energy & Climate Challenges Project Team*





## CITIZENS' PANEL DRAFT REPORT

A large portion of Session #6 was spent reviewing the Draft Report sent to Panelists shortly before December 1, 2012. One round of iClicker voting was held to validate the current content, while another was held to gauge support for amendments Panelists developed in open spaces groups in the late morning. A number of friendly amendments were also passed on to the Citizens' Writing Group without a vote. These friendly amendments, as well as the Draft Report from Session #6, can be found on the Participant Website.

FIRST ROUND OF ICLICKER VOTING (BASED ON DECEMBER 1, 2012 VERSION OF DRAFT REPORT)				
Question	Yes	No	Don't Know	Abstain
Should the 'Big Message' as currently framed be included in the report?	92%	8%		
Should support for the six/goals and corresponding actions be included in the report?	94%	6%		
Should Principle A (strong business case) as currently framed be included in the report?	92%	6%	2%	
Should Principle B (public and transparency processes) as currently framed be included in the report?	96%		4%	
Should Principle C (City leadership) as currently framed be included in the report?	86%	8%	6%	
Should Principle D (multiple reasons) as currently framed be included in the report?	92%	6%	2%	
Should Value 1 (equity) as currently framed be included in the report?	94%	2%	4%	
Should Value 2 (sustainability) as currently framed be included in the report?	94%	4%	2%	
Should Value 3 (quality of life) as currently framed be included in the report?	94%	6%		
Should Value 4 (individual freedom/public good) as currently framed be included in the report?	90%	6%	4%	

SECOND ROUND OF ICLICKER VOTING (BASED ON RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO DRAFT REPORT)		
Question	Yes	No
Which version of Goal 1 do you prefer? <i>(The text for each version can be found on the Participant Website. Also, 4% of Panelists abstained on this question).</i>	Current: 8%	Proposed: 88%
Goal #5 (Buildings) – Do you want to limit the requirement of labeling and retrofits to commercial buildings only?	53%	47%
Go Further, Go Faster – To what extent do you support the following statement: <b>Low carbon case is a good minimal standard, but we should go further and faster.</b>	67%	33%
Go Further, Go Faster – To what extent do you support the following statement: <b>Speed is essential and we want strong, measurable targets in a five-year timeframe.</b>	71%	29%
Go Further, Go Faster – To what extent do you support the following statement: <b>Urban density targets in Discussion Paper are too low and too slow. Go farther, considering best practices elsewhere and overall feasibility.</b>	63%	37%

## ACTION PLANNING FOR BEYOND SESSION #6

The afternoon of Session #6 had Panelists brainstorming actions and strategies they could organize or support to increase the chances of their recommendations being taken up by City Council. Five groups with different themes discussed potential actions. Four of these—Public Awareness, Education and Outreach, Mobilizing Networks and Stakeholders, and Talking to City Council/Councillors—were combined below because of overlap between proposed actions. The exact actions taken and the roles each Panelist plays could change as further action planning takes place.

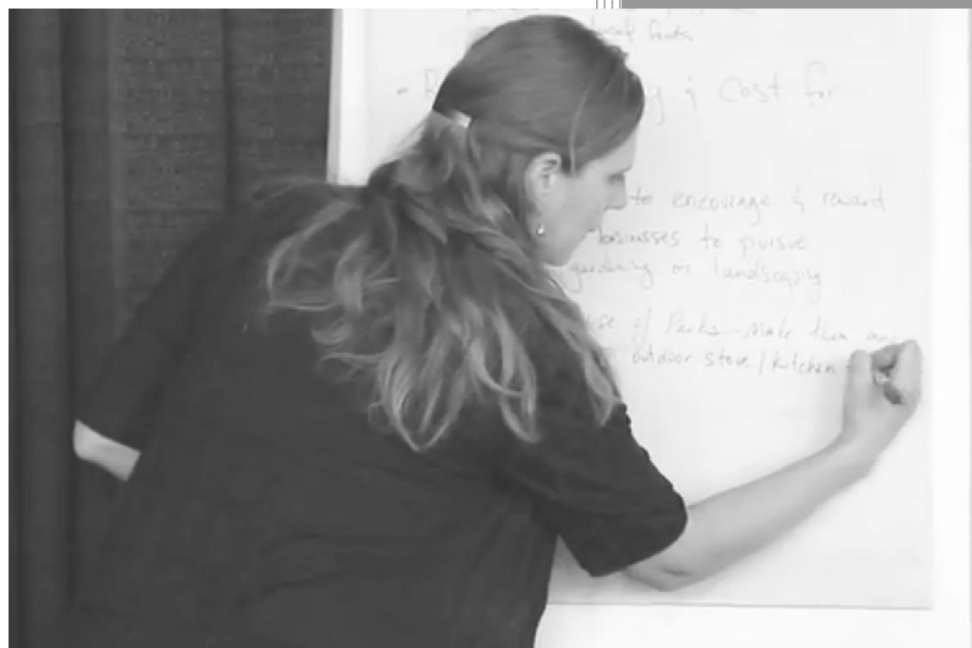
<b>BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS/EDUCATION AND OUTREACH/MOBILIZING NETWORKS AND STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
<b>Overall leaders/conveners: Gerard, Grace, Heather, Christine</b>	<b>Overall supporters/team members: Joan, Paulette, Pravina, Sarah, Twilla, Colleen</b>	
<b>Actions/Strategies</b>	<b>Leaders/Conveners</b>	<b>Supporters/Team Members</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with/send press releases to print media (e.g. Journal, Sun, Examiner, Metro, Vue, 24)</li> </ul>	Paulette	Alex, Scott, Cory, Sylvia, Val, Hasra, Penelope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with radio/television, including preparing Panelists to be interviewed (e.g. CBC, CJSR, CKUA, Global TV)</li> </ul>		Dennis, Cory, Alex, Tim, Val
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect with schools and create a green energy/low carbon mascot for kids in schools</li> </ul>		Michelle, Penelope, Alex, Hasra
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Magnetic advertisements for personal vehicles</li> </ul>	Joan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press conference at City Hall by Panelists</li> </ul>	Gerard, Cameron, Lee	Sarah, Azam, Scott, Penelope, Ian, Christine, Hart, Twilla
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)</li> </ul>	Heather (Twitter)	Dennis, Cory, Alex, Tim, Val
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post in church and community league (including Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues) newsletters</li> </ul>	Grace, Cory	Alex, Hasra
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a logo for the Citizens' Panel</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and facilitate a Citizens' Panel flash mob</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in Family Day events and/or create a Low Carbon Day</li> </ul>		Michelle, Sylvia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with individual Councillors before they vote</li> </ul>	Gerard	Paulette, Pravina
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase advertising space/create posters to increase awareness</li> </ul>		Michelle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring leadership and knowledge from Panel to workplaces</li> </ul>	Hasra	Alex, Cory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach dream home lottery foundations to create an energy efficient demonstration home</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approach industry to make emissions calculators available and encourage companies to share innovative tools</li> </ul>		Cory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend City Council when Report and Energy Transition Plan are being discussed</li> </ul>	Penelope, Therese, Sarah, Lee	Penelope, Scott
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email/talk to friends and family and send them the Citizens' Panel's report and public website</li> </ul>	All Panelists	

**MUNICIPAL ELECTION (OCTOBER 21, 2013)**

Actions/Strategies	Leaders/Conveners	Supporters/Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a 'report card' for candidates that shows which of the Panel's recommendations they support</li> </ul>	<p>Arinna</p>	<p>Twilla</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a website to communicate this 'report card'</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile contact information for candidates</li> </ul>		



October 2012



**CITIZENS' PANEL ON ENERGY & CLIMATE CHALLENGES**  
*Facilitator Guide*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW OF CITIZENS' PANEL ON ENERGY & CLIMATE CHALLENGES.....	4
SUMMARY OF CITIZENS' PANEL ROLES.....	6
Project Leads (fiona and david).....	6
Project Managers (Adèle and Sue).....	6
Lead Facilitators (Mary Pat and Jacquie) .....	6
Facilitators.....	6
Lead Note-taker (Ian).....	6
Note-takers .....	6
Participants .....	6
INTRODUCTION TO DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY.....	7
DEBATE VS. DIALOGUE.....	7
GROUND RULES FOR GOOD DIALOGUE.....	8
FACILITATOR'S & NOTE-TAKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES .....	8
Facilitator Responsibilities for the Citizens' Panel.....	9
Note-Taker's Responsibilities for the Citizens Panel .....	9
AT-A-GLANCE .....	10
October 13 .....	10
October 20 .....	10
October 27 .....	10
November 3 .....	10
November 17 .....	10
December 1.....	11
SESSION 1.....	11
Activity One – Orientation Questions.....	11
Activity Two – Photo Exercise .....	12
Activity Four – Scenarios.....	13
Activity Five – Taking Stock of Scenario Discussions .....	14
FACILITATION 101 .....	15
Differentiating Process and Content.....	15
Best Practice and Skills.....	15
Types of Questions.....	16
Questioning: Dos and Don'ts .....	17
Best and Worst Facilitator Practices .....	17

Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges ..... 18

APPENDIX ..... 21

The City of Edmonton Policy and Framework of Citizen Involvement ..... 21

# OVERVIEW OF CITIZENS' PANEL ON ENERGY & CLIMATE CHALLENGES

*Co-organized by Alberta Climate Dialogue (ABCD), Centre for Public Involvement (CPI), and Office of Environment, City of Edmonton*

The Way We Green (the Environmental Strategic Plan approved by Edmonton City Council in July 2011) identifies climate change and energy as Edmonton's top sustainability and resilience challenges. The plan accepts science-based advice that global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced by 50 to 85 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050 in order to prevent global temperatures from increasing more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. As well, The Way We Green (TWWG) recognizes that Edmonton's major dependence on fossil fuels poses a risk to our city as global fossil fuel supplies are consumed, demand increases and price volatility continues.

After the TWWG was approved, the City hired the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc to develop possible strategies for making Edmonton energy sustainable and carbon neutral, aided by a stakeholder committee and an expert panel. The Discussion Paper that they produced offers detailed recommendations that would help to:

- Reduce the GHG intensity of the provincial electricity grid (e.g. retiring existing coal plants at the end of their economic lives)
- Increase the density of mature neighborhoods
- Reduce energy use in large industrial facilities
- Increase the uptake of distributed energy generation (e.g. more solar heat and power, local natural gas plants producing both heat and power)
- Increase the energy efficiency of buildings
- Reduce gasoline and diesel used in vehicles

The City has not yet decided whether to take up the Discussion Paper's recommendations.

A key next step for this work is to assess community willingness, and align the recommendations in the Discussion Paper with citizens' considered values and priorities. So ABCD and CPI are helping to organize a **Citizens' Panel** process, to take place from October to December 2012. This innovative public involvement process will **engage 60 randomly recruited Edmonton residents, reflective of the city's diversity, in six one-day sessions. Participants will learn about climate change and energy vulnerability from balanced materials, presentations by experts, and collective inquiry; they will explore their own values and priorities in connection with these issues; and they will advise City Administration and City Council about energy resiliency and climate change policy.** Participants will be well supported in their learning and decision-making.

The Citizens' Panel report will offer considered advice about energy pathways for Edmonton, focusing on (but not restricted to) the Discussion Paper recommendations: their acceptability, how far and how fast to implement them, any red flags, and areas of common ground and divergence among citizens. Administration and City Council will seriously consider the directions provided by the Citizens' Panel with a view to informing how the City moves forward. In addition Council members will be invited to

provide formal feedback on the effectiveness of this deliberative approach including how Panel input was used and the overall usefulness of this input.

A strong team of researchers and public involvement specialists are working alongside City Administration to design the Citizens' Panel and to make sure that learning from this process helps to enhance public involvement in our City as well as other jurisdictions.

### **PANEL MEMBERS WILL:**

- Learn about the challenges of climate change and energy vulnerability.
- Decide how Edmonton should respond to these challenges based on their, and others' priorities and values.
- Develop recommendations for City Administration and City Council.

### **THEY WILL MEET SIX TIMES OVER THE COURSE OF EIGHT WEEKS:**

October 13: Meet the other participants. See how it would feel to live in different energy and climate futures. Talk about the values that come up for them.

October 20: Build their understanding of energy and climate challenges facing Edmonton. Hear different perspectives about what we should do about these challenges. Look at values that participants share.

October 27: Learn more about how Edmontonians could change their uses of energy, and about how City of Edmonton policies that could support this.

November 3: Look at obstacles to changing our energy use. Consider advantages and disadvantages of different policies.

November 17: Firm up recommendations that the Panel wants to make to the City. Spend time on recommendations that need it.

December 1: Make sure they're OK with a draft of the Panel's report to the City. Think about whether there are next steps for them and other Panelists. Reflect and celebrate.

### **OVERALL FRAMING QUESTION:**

What choices are we prepared to make together to meet Edmonton's energy and climate challenges?



## SUMMARY OF CITIZENS' PANEL ROLES

**PROJECT LEADS (FIONA AND DAVID)** are responsible for organizing the recruitment of participant, facilitators, note takers and speakers. They ensure the objectives and design of the panels will meet the needs of the City of Edmonton. They coordinate with the research team and facilitators to ensure that research is well integrated into the Panel.

**PROJECT MANAGERS (ADÈLE AND SUE)** take care of communication with Panelists and visitors, venue logistics, production of materials, and catering.

**LEAD FACILITATORS (MARY PAT AND JACQUIE)** are responsible for designing the panel sessions in collaboration with the Core Team and preparing the Facilitator Guide and process deck. They contribute to the Training Manual for facilitators and the discussion primer for citizens (The Handbook). They design and facilitate a training session for all facilitators and note takers. They coach table / small group facilitators and note takers during the six sessions and make modifications to session designs based on their input, gathered through regular debriefs. They work with the researchers to incorporate their research needs. They coordinate with the lead note-taker to prepare the session reports. They will co-facilitate the first and one other session: all other sessions will be split between them.

**FACILITATORS** are highly skilled and experienced individuals who will follow the Facilitator Guide and use best practices in facilitating parts of each session. They will work as table facilitators to help tables stay on track. Facilitators will attend the Training program before the Citizen Panel sessions begin. They will study The Handbook and facilitator guide and come fully prepared to facilitate the process for up to 15 people. in Facilitators will attend two meetings a week, a debrief immediately following each session (Saturdays – 4:15 – 4:45 pm) and a Preparation Meeting on Thursdays. Coaching will be available to them on Fridays with a Lead Facilitator.

**LEAD NOTE-TAKER (IAN)** will work closely with Fiona coordinate the work of the note-takers and prepare a session report after each session. He will prepare the note-taker templates for each session and be available to answer questions from note-takers as needed. He will prepare and co-deliver the note-takers section of the training.

**NOTE-TAKERS** will assist in charting or taking notes in the individual sessions (table notes and plenary notes – the plenary note-taking will be shared among note-takers. They will compile and hand in their notes by Monday noon following each Saturday session. When possible they will attend weekly debrief sessions.

**PARTICIPANTS** are selected randomly (with the exception of a few younger panelists who were recruited through outreach) to ensure panelists represent different ages, income levels and neighbourhoods. They will attend all 6 Citizen Panel sessions.

## INTRODUCTION TO DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

"Deliberative democracy rests on the core notion of citizens and their representatives deliberating about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and refined public judgment; a mutual willingness to understand the values, perspectives, and interests of others; and the possibility of reframing their interests and perspectives in light of a joint search for common interests and mutually acceptable solutions". [www.cprn.org/tools/dictionary/deliberate.html](http://www.cprn.org/tools/dictionary/deliberate.html))

***"Deliberation involves collective problem solving and prioritization resulting in more legitimate decision making processes." (Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond consultation, 2008)***

- Creates opportunities for deep learning and framing of issues, rather than just sharing perspectives, views, and opinions
- Enables a structured deliberative dialogue
- Involves a process to work through difficult choices
- Organizes discussion around values and assumptions
- Determines mutually acceptable compromises
- Facilitates group decisions
- Identifies a common ground for shared agreements

## DEBATE VS. DIALOGUE

DEBATE	DIALOGUE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective is to win</li> <li>• Listening to find flaws to prove the other side wrong</li> <li>• Defends personal assumptions</li> <li>• Criticizes others' point of view</li> <li>• Searches for weaknesses and flaws in the other people's positions</li> <li>• Jumps to judgment</li> <li>• Seeks an outcome that agrees with your position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective is to find common ground</li> <li>• Listening to understand other people's views and why they hold them</li> <li>• Explores and tests personal assumptions</li> <li>• Examines all points of view</li> <li>• Searches for strengths and value in the other people's positions</li> <li>• Suspends judgment</li> <li>• Seeks an outcome that creates new common ground</li> </ul>

## GROUND RULES FOR GOOD DIALOGUE

The purpose of deliberation is to understand, to learn from one another, and to create advice that is grounded in the common ground of the group, including shared values.

- Participants are expected to leave aside their institutional affiliations and speak for themselves only, not as a representative of others' interests.
- Everyone should be treated with respect and equally.
- Participants are encouraged to speak openly and honestly
- Participants should not rush to judgment.
- Participants should listen carefully and respectfully to each person, especially when there is disagreement.
- Keep comments brief and stay focused on task. Share the air time.
- Look for common ground.
- Express disagreement with ideas, not with personalities or motives.
- Identify and clarify assumptions (even your own).
- Look for common ground
- Disagree without being disrespectful.
- Turn off cell phones, tablets, etc. and respect start times.

## FACILITATOR'S & NOTE-TAKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking over control. A facilitator is in service to the group, supporting them to have the best conversation they can have while meeting the objectives of an activity. Facilitators in any group process, make their contribution by:

- Providing a process that helps participant use time efficiently to make high-quality contributions.
- Creating an environment where participants enjoy a positive, stimulating conversation in a respectful manner.
- Guiding group discussion to keep on track.
- Providing a means to collect all input from the participants and table.
- Supporting participants in managing their own interpersonal dynamics.
- Managing conflict using collaborative methods.
- Helping the participants communicate effectively.
- Supporting the building relationships and inclusion of all participants. Assist to identify anything that would support increased or strengthened participation.

## Facilitator Responsibilities for the Citizens' Panel

(Note that you may not be doing all this for every activity. For example, some activities may be brainstorming and therefore not require an exploration of trade-offs. Be sure to know the objectives for each activity you are facilitating.)

- Making sure assumptions are surfaced and tested.
- Supporting the goals and objectives of the Citizens' Panels
- Reviewing the *Handbook, the Facilitator's Guide* and the objectives associated with each session you are to facilitate. Check for and respond to questions of clarification (process and content as possible)
- Support participants to explore values
- Support participants to identify and explore trade-offs
- Helping participants identify where divergence starts and explore the basis for the divergence.
- Managing the process, not necessarily the content. Your overall role is to accomplish the objectives for the session and this is accomplished through the use of the questions and other materials provided in the training and debriefing meetings. Seek support from others, and offer them support when they serve as group facilitators.
- Support ongoing learning of participants with the lead facilitators and support emergent learning.

## Note-Taker's Responsibilities for the Citizens Panel

The note-taker is there to accurately document the dialogue and deliberation in each session and note key ideas to help the group develop shared agreements on issues and strategies and identify divergence. This includes using the template provided for each session:

- Recording the key messages and perspectives raised during the discussions (in their words-avoid paraphrasing or synthesizing what they say). The note-taker should not be shy about asking for clarification at any point during the session, in order to help determine if something represents a shared agreement or if a point is not clear. If the note-taker thinks the facilitator is getting off-track, this can also be a useful way to refocus the discussion.
- Recording any points of shared agreement and disagreement that the group seems to arrive at during their discussion. This should include any trade-offs or compromises the group seems willing to make, any values or principles that the group has identified that they share and feel should guide any possible response to the issue.
- Working with the facilitator to identify the areas of shared agreement for report-back to participants.
- Recording any next steps or action ideas that the group comes up with.
- Noting down key quotes and insights, as possible.
- Writing up the notes to send to the Lead Note-taker.

## AT-A-GLANCE

All sessions start at 9 a.m. and finish at 4 p.m. Lunch is provided.

SESSION	AGENDA	OBJECTIVES
<b>OCTOBER 13</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Welcome and introductions; orientation to issue and process	To get to know each other and the purpose of our work together
<b>Afternoon</b>	Exploring possible energy & climate change futures (two scenarios) and what's important to you as you consider those futures	To begin to learn about the issues; To start to surface values and concerns
<b>OCTOBER 20</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Presentation on energy and climate science; Examining the nature of complexity and scientific uncertainty	To deepen the understanding of the key issues and the complex nature of their interactions and impact
<b>Afternoon</b>	Panel presentations providing different perspectives on energy and climate issues; Presentation on values and activity to explore common values.	To learn about different values and perspectives people bring to the issues; To begin the development of a shared set of values important to the Citizens' Panel.
<b>OCTOBER 27</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Presentation of Edmonton current energy context; Overview of the Discussion Paper; Small group discussions to understand the proposed levers and goals for change.	To provide information critical to the panelists' deliberations and provide the opportunity for panelists to ask questions.
<b>Afternoon</b>	Continued small group work on levers and goals; Activity to explore how the panel's key values relate to the proposed goals.	To do an initial assessment of the proposed goals and how they align with panelists' values and priorities.
<b>NOVEMBER 3</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Presentation on the psychology of climate change action; In-depth small group dialogues on Discussion Paper goals and activities	To develop a greater understanding of internal barriers and fears that we all face around issues of climate change; To begin deliberation on goals and activities.
<b>Afternoon</b>	Continued small group dialogues, with sharing back in plenary	To fully deliberate and determine common-ground, divergence and acceptable trade-offs.
<b>NOVEMBER 17</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Plenary work exploring the deliberation results to-date and the emerging recommendations; Activity to identify areas for further or new deliberation	To deepen our understanding of the interaction between the goals and activities and the potentials tradeoffs involved in making recommendations.

<b>Afternoon</b>	Small group dialogues on areas requiring further deliberation; Plenary report backs and determination of new and revised recommendations and rationales	To refine the emerging recommendations and potentially develop new ones; To clarify common ground and our core values for the Citizens' Panel report.
<b>DECEMBER 1</b>		
<b>Morning</b>	Activity to review and refine the Citizens' Panel draft report (recommendations, conditions, advice & values rationale)	To verify and clearly articulate key recommendations and values/rationale critical to those recommendations. To better understand areas of divergence.
<b>Afternoon</b>	Action planning Next steps Reflection & celebration	To identify opportunities for action both by City and panelists. To celebrate the Panel's journey and share insights.

## SESSION 1

At the start of the session, you'll be assigned a table to sit at. Please assist your group over and above the activities listed below if needed. However please stay neutral and don't use the keypads yourself. They are only for participants.

For this session, there are five activities that will require table facilitators and note-takers. Please also see the Facilitator's Guide to better understand how these activities fit within the design of the full day.

### Activity One – Orientation Questions

The activity provided below is a quick, free-wheeling table conversation to identify and share key questions emerging for the panelists. This kind of activity will be fairly frequent over the course of the Panel's work and the lead facilitators may use additional table conversations without notice if they judge they are needed, e.g. to share reflections at the end of the day.

**Purpose** To clarify their understanding of the Panel

**Timing** 20 minutes total (including plenary Q&A), starting at approximately 9:45 am

**Number of Participants** 6 to 7 at a table

**Process**

1. Ask participants to identify any questions they have following the Orientation to the Panel's work. Have the group select two or three key questions emerging for the group. Ask for or select a volunteer to ask the questions. (5 min)
2. Plenary time for questions (15 min)
3. For any questions that don't get raised in plenary, have 1 or 2 participants write the questions up on yellow stickies to be out on the Questions wall.

## Activity Two – Photo Exercise

- Purpose** To express and see their collective hopes and concerns as a Citizens' Panel
- Timing** 20 minutes total, starting at approximately 10:05 am
- Number of Participants** 6 to 7 at a table
- Process**
1. Ask each person to think about how they are feeling about the process so far, what expectations and concerns they might have brought into the room. Have each person choose one photo to express an expectation / hope for the Citizens' Panel OR a concern/worry photos (something that speaks to their feelings entering into this process). (5 min)
  2. At their round tables, they share their picture and why they choose it. (10 min)
  3. They write a key word or two to capture this on a small sticky and attach to their photo. (5 min)
  4. Leave their photos with attached stickies on the table for the runners/note-takers to place on the designated wall space
  5. Invite participants to take a 15 min break, returning at 10:45 am.
  6. Over break, runners/note-takers put pictures and attached stickies onto a designated wall space (Our Starting Point)

Each table has the same set of 15 photos. It is OK if more than one person chooses the same picture, but have each person do their own sticky note as the photo may mean different things to them.

- Process notes** People may express a hope or concern about the process of the Panel or about the content, e.g. climate change or energy challenges. Either is OK.

## Activity Three – Ground Rules for Working Together

The activity provided below is another quick, free-wheeling table conversation. (15 min.)

- Purpose** To reflect on the ground rules and suggest any changes they feel would be useful.
- Timing** 15 minutes total (including 10 min. plenary time to collect table input), starting at approximately 11:00 am
- Number of Participants** 6 to 7 at a table
- Process**
1. Ask participants for their thoughts on the ground rules and whether, based on their experience, they would suggest any revisions/deletions/additions (5 min)
  2. Ask for a volunteer to share the table's perspectives/ideas.
  3. Plenary time for reflections/changes. (10 min)

## Activity Four – Scenarios

- Purpose** To experience different futures based on different societal choices, explore what this feels like, how it affects lifestyles and choices; To begin to think about trade-offs and interconnections.
- Timing** Two rounds, of Table conversation. Each round is about 35 minutes of table work – 20 minutes for discussion and 15 minutes for determining the sticky notes. Round 1 starts at approximately 12:50 pm; round 2 at about 1:25.
- Number of Participants** 6 to 7 at a table
- Process**
1. Facilitate a discussion at your table on Scenario 1 (see handbook), using the following questions (20 min):
    - How does this scenario feel? How are we reacting?
    - What excites us?
    - What concerns /challenges us?
    - How is Edmonton different?
    - What questions are emerging?
  2. Have the table decide on two things that they find most positive about the scenario that they would like to share back in plenary. Have them write them on two of the large sticky notes – one idea per sticky, using a sharpie.
  3. Repeat for two things that are the most challenging/concerning about the scenario and put these on sticky note.
  4. Repeat Steps 1 to 3 on Scenario 2.
  5. Invite participants to take their break, being ready to start again at 2:25 sharp.
- Process notes** The large sticky notes will be color-coded, e.g. pink for positives on Scenario 1, blue for negatives on Scenario 1. The colors will be confirmed at the session.
- During the afternoon break (about 2:45), table facilitators and lead facilitators will assemble a collage of the tables' points on white board at the front of the room for each scenario.



## Activity Five – Taking Stock of Scenario Discussions

- Purpose** To understand the role of values in policy choices; to identify their values and others' values to set the stage for building their value guideposts / moral compass
- Timing** 25 minutes of work at round tables. Table conversation will start at about 2:55, following a brief presentation by the lead facilitators to share the stickies developed in Activity 4.
- Number of Participants** 6 to 7 at a table.
- Process**
- Step 1: Individual reflection (5 min)
- Ask panelists to individually think about what has emerged from the scenario work and how it links with the values presentation given at about 2:25, reflecting on the question:
    - What are emerging values at play around energy and climate challenges?
  - *Note: These are not just the values people hold dear but also the values that people see in the two different scenarios that they may or may not hold dear but are held by a portion of Edmonton residents.*
  - Ask individuals to use sticky notes to record their ideas – one value per note with example or explanation.
- Step 2: Table discussions (15 min)
- Invite people to share their ideas at their round table, noting any links between a value and what is posted on the scenario walls and post their sticky on flipchart paper. Place similar ideas together if possible.
  - Explore the values for clarification as time permits. There is no censoring of each other's values. People can generate additional values in the table group if time permits.
- Step 3: Posting to wall (5 min)
- Each table posts it flipchart on a wall and then people are invited to do a quiet 5 min walkabout to see the emerging values. (Lead facilitator manages flow.)
- Process notes** The quiet “walk-about” will be followed by a popcorn plenary for panel members to share their reflections.

# FACILITATION 101

## Differentiating Process and Content

A facilitator's role is to manage the process and leave the content to the participants. When a facilitator is neutral on the content and actively orchestrates the action, he or she is acting as the 'process leader' or facilitator. If your participants have content questions that are stopping them from moving forward in the activity, ask for a resource person to come over to the group. If you participants have questions that can be answered later, ask them to put them on yellow stickies and post to the Questions Wall.

CONTENT: WHAT	PROCESS: HOW
The Content of meetings is what is discussed. The content is expressed in the flyers and the agenda. Because it is the verbal part of the meeting, the content is obvious and typically consumes the attention of the participants.	Process deals with how things are discussed: the methods, procedures, format and tools used. Because the design of the meeting is done beforehand, not all are aware of the careful attention to process.

## Best Practice and Skills

FACILITATION SKILL	EXAMPLE OF VERBAL BEHAVIOUR
<b>Stay neutral</b>	Focus on the process and avoid offering your opinions about the topic under discussion. Give examples that are in the materials rather than from your experience.
<b>Listen actively and paraphrase</b>	Look people in the eye, use attentive body language and paraphrase what they are say. "Let me see if I can repeat your point in slightly different words. I want to make sure I understand what you are saying." Or "Are you saying....?"
<b>Synthesize</b>	Help people to comment and build on each other's thoughts to ensure that the ideas recorded represent collective thinking. This builds consensus and commitment. "Jackie, what can you add to Aaron's comments?"
<b>Summarize periodically</b>	A great facilitator listens attentively to everything that is said and then offers concise and timely summaries. Summarize when the group is stuck or when you want to wrap up a discussion. "What I have heard you all say is first....second....and lastly....."
<b>Ask questions (see next section)</b>	"What meaning do you make of the responses that you see on the wall?" (Open) "Which subject got the most votes?" (Closed)
<b>Use Round Robin or Popcorn</b>	Ask participants to go "round robin" in a sequential way so that each participant contributes. In other situations you may prefer "popcorn" style where anyone speaks up that has an idea.
<b>Play ping pong</b>	If someone asks a question or makes a comment, redirect it by sending it back to someone else to answer or build on. "Sally, how would you answer that question that Bill has posed to me?"
<b>Allow participants to reflect</b>	"Before we start, let's take a minute to think to ourselves about the

	discussion question and our responses. Write your ideas on page x in your guide or on your worksheet.”
<b>Set up the discussion clearly and simply</b>	“Our task in the next 20 minutes is to explore this question:....”
<b>Draw out participants</b>	Use eye contact to let people know they can speak next and to prompt the quiet one in the crowd to participate. “I want to make sure that we get a chance to hear from every table.”
<b>Gently limit dominant voices to equalize participation</b>	“I want to see if we could include some other folks in this conversation...”
<b>Exploring different points of view</b>	“So Joe has talked about the importance of X, and Mary has raised some concerns with X. I’m wondering how others see X.”
<b>Testing for support among ideas</b>	“There seem to be several people who share the view that...”
<b>Perception checking</b>	Describe what you perceive is the other person’s inner state. “You appear upset by the last comment that was made. Are you?”
<b>Manage the allotted time</b>	One of the co-facilitators will have the role of time keeper. “We have about 5 minutes left and I want to see if there are any other key ideas that we’ve not heard so far.”
<b>Test for clarity/ shared agreement</b>	“Does this statement convey what you’ve been saying about...”

## Types of Questions

QUESTION		IMPACT
<b>Direct, Open</b>	Joe, What would you do in that kind of situation?	Stimulate one person to think and respond. Tap the known expertise of a person in the room
<b>Direct, Closed</b>	Susan, Do you want Mexican or Italian for lunch?	
<b>Indirect, Open</b>	What just happened with this discussion?	Stimulates everyone’s thinking Allows people to respond voluntarily
<b>Indirect, Closed</b>	What do you want for lunch?	

## Questioning: Dos and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
Ask clear, concise questions covering a single issue	Ask rambling, ambiguous questions that cover multiple issues
Ask challenging questions that will stimulate thought	Ask questions that don't provide an opportunity for thought
Ask reasonable questions based on what people know	Ask questions that most people can't answer
Ask honest and relevant questions	Ask "trick" questions designed to fool them

## Best and Worst Facilitator Practices

SOME OF THE WORST THINGS A FACILITATOR CAN DO	SOME OF THE BEST THINGS A FACILITATOR CAN DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remain oblivious to what the group thinks or needs</li> <li>• Tell the group what to do</li> <li>• Use leading questions (for example, "<i>Don't you think . . .</i>")</li> <li>• Not listen carefully to what is said</li> <li>• Lose track of key ideas</li> <li>• Try to be the center of attention</li> <li>• Get defensive</li> <li>• Put down people</li> <li>• Unassertively manage conflict</li> <li>• Let a few people or a community leader dominate</li> <li>• Never check how the meeting is going</li> <li>• Be overly passive on the process</li> <li>• Push ahead on an irrelevant agenda</li> <li>• Let discussion get badly sidetracked</li> <li>• Be insensitive to cultural diversity issues</li> <li>• Use inappropriate humor</li> <li>• Evaluate what the group says or does (instead, ask them to evaluate their own thinking, decision-making, analysis, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an open and trusting atmosphere</li> <li>• See yourself as a servant to the group's needs</li> <li>• Make the participants the center of attention</li> <li>• Speak in simple and direct language</li> <li>• Work hard to stay neutral</li> <li>• Display energy and excitement</li> <li>• Treat all participants as equals</li> <li>• Make notes that reflect what participants mean</li> <li>• Listen intently to totally understand what is being said</li> <li>• Periodically summarize a complex array of ideas so that they form a coherent summary</li> <li>• Know how to use a wide range of discussion methods</li> <li>• End on a positive and optimistic note.</li> </ul>

## Suggestions for Dealing with Typical Challenges

Most forums go smoothly, but there are challenges in any group process. What follows are some of the most common difficulties that facilitators encounter, along with some possible ways to deal with those difficulties.

CHALLENGE	POSSIBLE RESPONSES
<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot.</li> <li>• Make eye contact – it reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for nonverbal cues that indicate participants are ready to speak.</li> <li>• Frequently, people will feel more comfortable in later stages of the forum and will begin to participate. In later stages ask people who haven't yet spoken if they have anything to add, but also allow them the right to 'pass'.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to manage domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you must intervene and set limits.</li> <li>• Start by limiting your eye contacts with the speaker as many people use this as a signal to talk.</li> <li>• Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate; «Let's hear from some folks who haven't had a chance to speak yet.»</li> <li>• If the person is talking, walk behind them and move out of the circle so they lose contact with you.</li> <li>• If necessary, you can speak to the person by name. «Charlie, we've heard from you; now let's hear what Barbara has to say.» Be careful of your comments and tone of voice – you are trying to make a point without offending the speaker.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to this takes judgement and intuition. Keep an eye on the participants to see how engaged they are, and if you are in doubt, check it out with the group. «We're a little off the topic right now. Would you like to stay with this, or move on to the next question?»</li> <li>• If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to say: «We are wandering off the subject, and I'd like to give others a chance to speak»</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>Someone puts forth information which you know to be false, or participants get hung up in a dispute about facts but no one present knows the answer.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask, «Has anyone heard of conflicting information? » If no one offers a correction, offer one yourself.</li> <li>• If no one knows the facts, put it aside and move on.</li> <li>• Remind the group that experts often disagree and move on.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This rarely happens in forums, but it may occur if the facilitator talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond to questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the group until everyone has a chance to respond.</li> <li>• Occasionally, you might lack excitement in the dialogue because the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case, the leader's job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. «Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation? »</li> </ul>

<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p>Tension or open conflict in the group. Perhaps two participants lock horns and argue. Or, one participant gets angry and confronts another.</p>	<p>Possible responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas are part of the forum. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue: it is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but personal attacks are not acceptable.</li> <li>• Clarify that once an idea is raised, it is the group's idea to talk through.</li> <li>• Interrupt personal attacks, name-calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur. You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviours and encourage tolerance for all views.</li> <li>• Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members bought into the ground rules, they will support you.</li> <li>• As a last resort, consider taking a break to change the energy in the room. You can take the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the participants in question.</li> </ul>
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*\* Thanks to the Study Circles Resource Center for many of these suggestions.*

## APPENDIX

### The City of Edmonton Policy and Framework of Citizen Involvement

*The City of Edmonton is committed to involving the people affected by the decisions it makes. The city seeks diverse opinions, experiences and information so that a wide spectrum of information is available to decision makers.*

At times, the City makes a decision and then informs Edmontonians about the decision (e.g., installing new traffic signals to ensure greater public safety). At other times, the City makes a decision and then seeks public involvement about how it will implement the decision. A decision may be made to extend the LRT. The public is involved in testing ideas about impacts such as aesthetics, neighbourhood impacts, or pedestrian access.

And at other times, the City has not made a decision. The public is consulted to test ideas and concepts. In this way, decision makers are provided with the widest possible spectrum of ideas, views and experiences to help inform their decision making process.

#### **OUR COMMITMENT TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

The City of Edmonton believes that a key element of representative democracy is that people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

#### **OUR COMMITMENT TO HONOURING PEOPLE**

The City of Edmonton Public Involvement process design will ensure people are treated with respect, honesty and integrity.

#### **OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBLE INVOLVEMENT**

The City of Edmonton will ensure public involvement processes are accessible to the public.  
[http://www.edmonton.ca/for\\_residents/public-involvement.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/public-involvement.aspx) (Excerpt from City of Edmonton Policy C513)

#### **CITY OF EDMONTON PUBLIC INVOLVMENT WEBSITE**

[http://www.edmonton.ca/for\\_residents/public-involvement.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/for_residents/public-involvement.aspx)





[www.albertaclimatedialogue.ca](http://www.albertaclimatedialogue.ca)