# Engaging Hard to Reach Populations:
## Lessons from the Field

March 28, 2019

# What's Covered

**Session Purpose**

To discuss ways of engaging people that face barriers to participating in community consultations

**Proposed Session Agenda**

10:15    Introductions
10:20    Presentation & Questions
11:00    Interactive Session
11:30    Get Lunch!

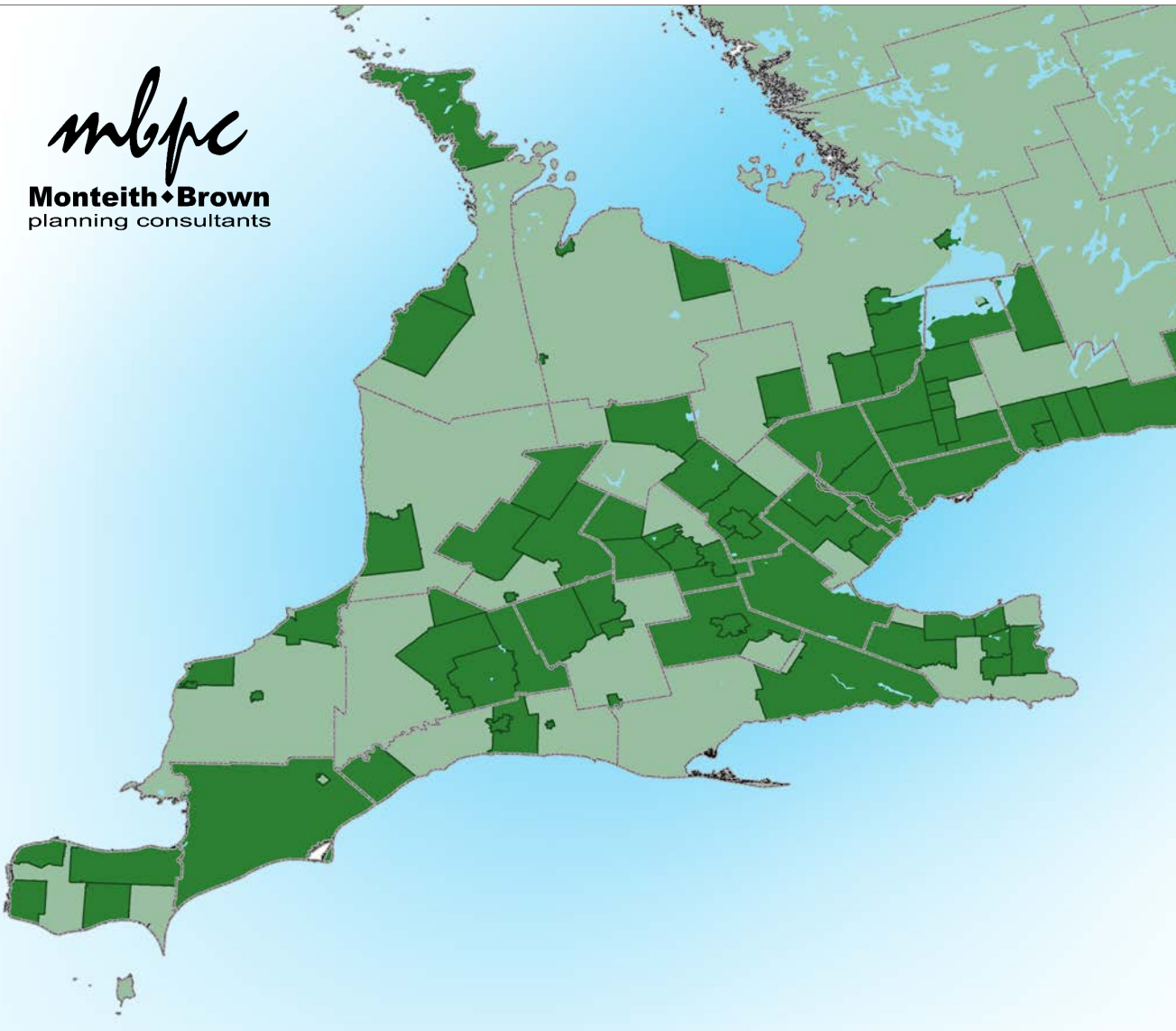# Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

**Who We Are**

We're a team of parks, recreation, and land use planners, designers, facilitators and enthusiasts.

For 40+ years, we've helped governments, non-profit and private sector organizations create facility and service plans to guide their future.

**Past 5 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Amherstburg | Oakville |
| Aurora | Orangeville |
| Barrie | Oshawa |
| Bluewater | Owen Sound |
| Bradford W. Gwillimbury | Perth East |
| Brampton | Pickering |
| Caledon | Puslinch |
| Cambridge | Richmond Hill |
| Centre Wellington | Sarnia |
| Clarington | Saugeen Shores |
| Georgina | Selwyn |
| Greater Sudbury | St. Catharines |
| Guelph/Eramosa | St. Marys |
| Halton Hills | St. Thomas |
| Hamilton | Thames Centre |
| Innisfil | Tillsonburg |
| King | Toronto |
| Kingsville | Vaughan |
| Kitchener | Waterloo |
| Lambton Shores | Welland |
| Lincoln | Wellesley |
| London | Wellington North |
| Lucan Biddulph | West Lincoln |
| Markham | West Perth |
| Middlesex Centre | Whitby |
| Milton | Wilmot |
| Mississauga | Windsor |
| Mono | Woodstock |
| North Bay | Zorra |
| North Perth | |

**2019** Educational Forum and Trade Show
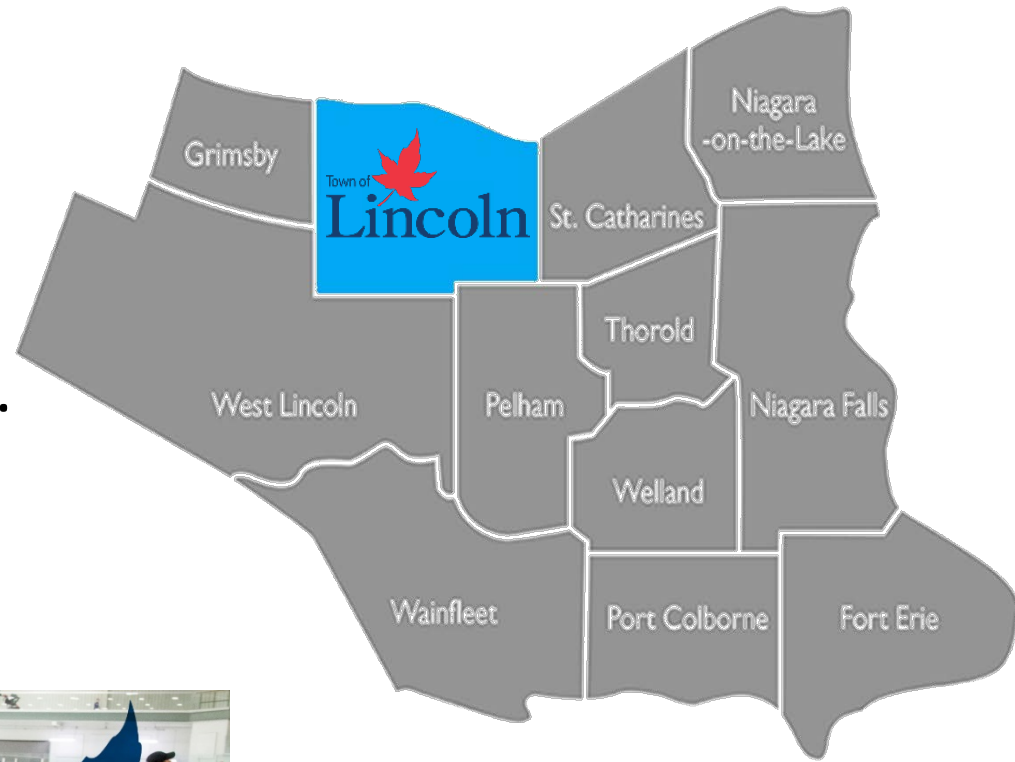
**#PROForum19**

# About the Town of Lincoln

4th fastest growing municipality Niagara.

Urban-rural municipality with a population of 24,000.

Over 50 wineries - more than Niagara-on-the-Lake!



GROW | PROSPER | BELONG

# Community Engagement in Parks & Recreation

The public, user groups and other stakeholders hold valuable insights as "customers" and "partners".

They have a vested interest in the parks, facilities and programs that are provided - they use them and fund them.

The public is less likely to accept decisions where their input has (or perceived to have) been limited.

Successful initiatives consider insight from as many sources as possible!

What I hear when I'm being yelled at is people caring really loudly at me.

# What Effective Engagement Can Achieve for Your Department

Engagement is critical to responding to needs and gaining community support for parks and recreation projects

- Raise awareness (and dispel rumours) about services

- Promote benefits of participation

- Discuss specific proposals

- Identify community priorities and test options

- Identify changing preferences and new ideas

- Create credibility through better informed decisions distinguish between needs and wants

- Build trust, enthusiasm, support and momentum

# Principles of Effective Engagement

| Common Principles | Less Obvious Principles |
|---|---|
| Authenticity | Inclusiveness |
| Transparency | Empathy |
| Respect | Capacity of people |
| Accountability | Reporting back |

# When and Why Should We Engage?

A clearly defined question or concern lends meaning to the engagement

This will influence the engagement tactics, as will the level of public interest

We engage because:

– there is a duty to consult
– it is a regular business practice
– something isn't working or could work better
– there is an emerging opportunity

# Who Do We Engage?

We often engage:

- **Council** $\rightarrow$ decision-makers
- **Stakeholders** $\rightarrow$ influencers, partners (directly affected)
- **General public** $\rightarrow$ taxpayers (indirectly affected)
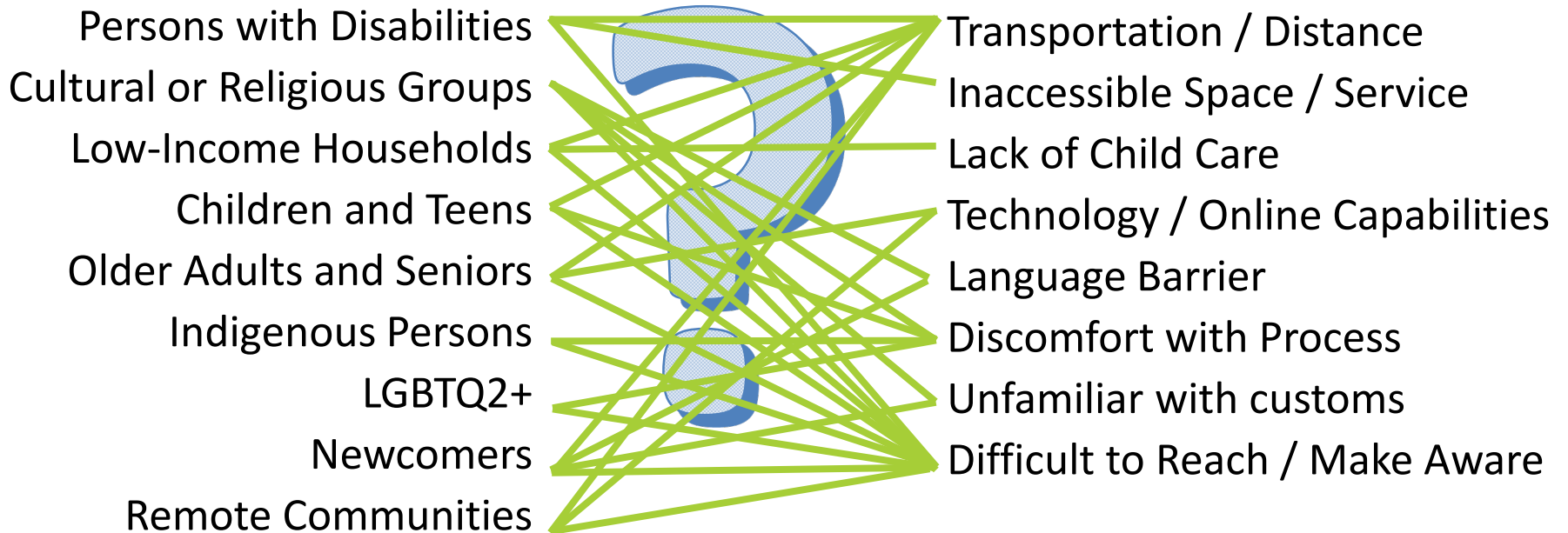- **Staff** $\rightarrow$ advisors, facilitators

Each have different roles

A mapping exercise can be helpful to identifying the right group and the right tactics

But sometimes it can be difficult to engage certain people or groups…

# QUESTION:
## What Groups can be Difficult to Engage in your Community and Why?

Persons with Disabilities

Cultural or Religious Groups

Low-Income Households

Children and Teens

Older Adults and Seniors

Indigenous Persons

LGBTQ2+

Newcomers

Remote Communities

Transportation / Distance

Inaccessible Space / Service

Lack of Child Care

Technology / Online Capabilities

Language Barrier

Discomfort with Process

Unfamiliar with customs

Difficult to Reach / Make Aware

# Inclusivity is Key

Gaps in engagement can undermine the process and lead to ill-informed decisions.

Under-represented groups help us access specialized knowledge and generate support among a broader base.

Must assess who will be impacted by a decision/proposal, then identify and mitigate potential barriers.

Work with advocates / agencies to encourage participation.

# Methods to Engage the Community

**Formal** - meetings, surveys, interviews, workshops, focus groups, written submissions

**Informal** - open houses, pop-ups, websites, social media

# Ways that We've Engaged "Hard to Reach" Groups

# ToL Master Planning Efforts

**Goal:** To facilitate an engagement that was inclusive and representative of a variety of age demographics.

## Population Age Distribution

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Children (0-9 years) | | 10% |
| Youth (10 – 19 years) | | 12% |
| Young Adult (20 – 34 years) | | 16% |
| Mature Adult (35 – 54 years) | | 26% |
| Older Adult (55 – 69 years) | | 20% |
| Seniors (70+ years) | | 15% |

**Source:** *Statistics Canada Census of Population, 2016*

Lake Ontario

QEW

Beamsville

Prudhommes

Vineland

Jordan

Campden
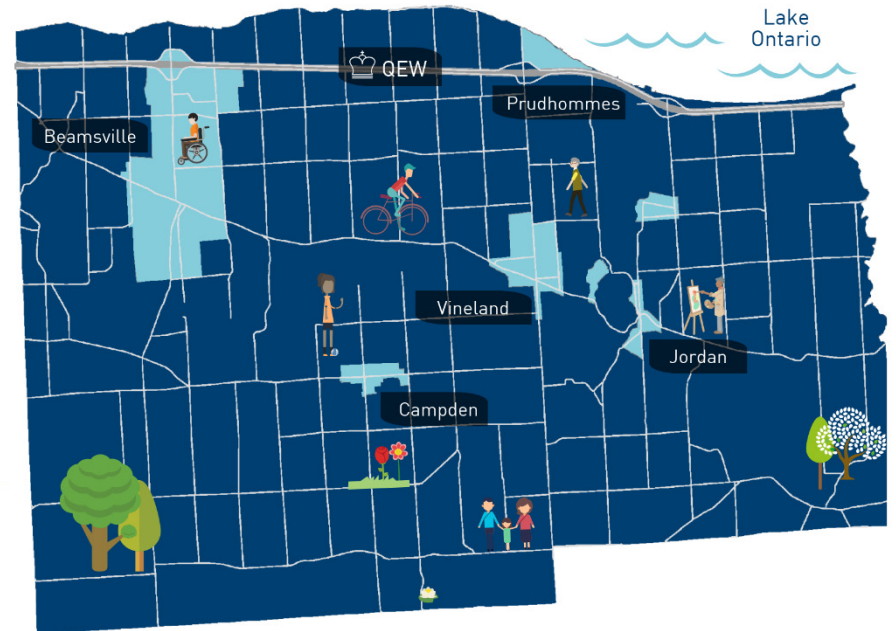
## FACT

The average age of Lincoln residents is 42.9 years

# Engagement Inspiration



## Montreal Kids Vote (2017)

- Pilot project held during municipal election
- Familiarize kids with democracy
- 19 polling stations across the city
- 3,103 children cast votes

Participants had four choices on their ballots:
- Arenas, sport centres and swimming pools
- Buses, the metro and the train
- Libraries, recreation centres and concerts
- Parks, playgrounds and green spaces



### Kids can vote alongside their parents in Sunday's election

Children asked to answer question: 'In Montreal, what is most important to you?'

CBC News · Posted: Nov 01, 2017 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: November 1, 2017

Instead of choosing the city's next mayor, children voting on Nov. 5 will answer the question: "In Montreal, what is most important to you?" (Bob Edme/Associated Press)

# YouthVoice App

## Development Phase:

- Goal of collecting leisure preference data from Lincoln children and youth (U18)
- Partnered with a local technology incubator (Spark Lincoln) to develop an app
- Brock University BRLS student developed content and administered in the community
- All associated project costs were absorbed by Spark Lincoln ($11,400 of in-kind value)

### Specific Project Goals

1. To gain understanding of existing leisure pursuits and interests of Lincoln children/youth.

2. To gain understanding of future leisure pursuits and interests of Lincoln children/youth.

3. To engage Lincoln children and youth in the Parks, Recreation and Culture master planning process.

## Project Partners:

SPARK

Brock University

Town of Lincoln

# YouthVoice App (cont'd)



App a 'Spark' for youth involvement in Lincoln

Survey seeks input from young people into town's parks, recreation and culture plan

COMMUNITY    Jul 18, 2018   by Richard Hutton✉    Grimsby Lincoln News

## Implementation Phase:

- iPads placed at strategic locations throughout the community, such as the museum, libraries, arenas, etc.

- In-person data collection at registered programming, major community events and popular youth destinations during the summer such as parks and sports fields.

- Responses were touchscreen pictograms ensuring even young children were able to participate with the assistance of a parent.

- Included a variety of sport, recreation, parks and open space, culture and heritage options.

- Personal information not tracked.

- Data collected was provided to MBPC as an input for Master Plan.

# YouthVoice App (cont'd)

We asked children and youth under 18 two questions:

1) *What do you love about your community?*

2) *What would make your community a better place?*
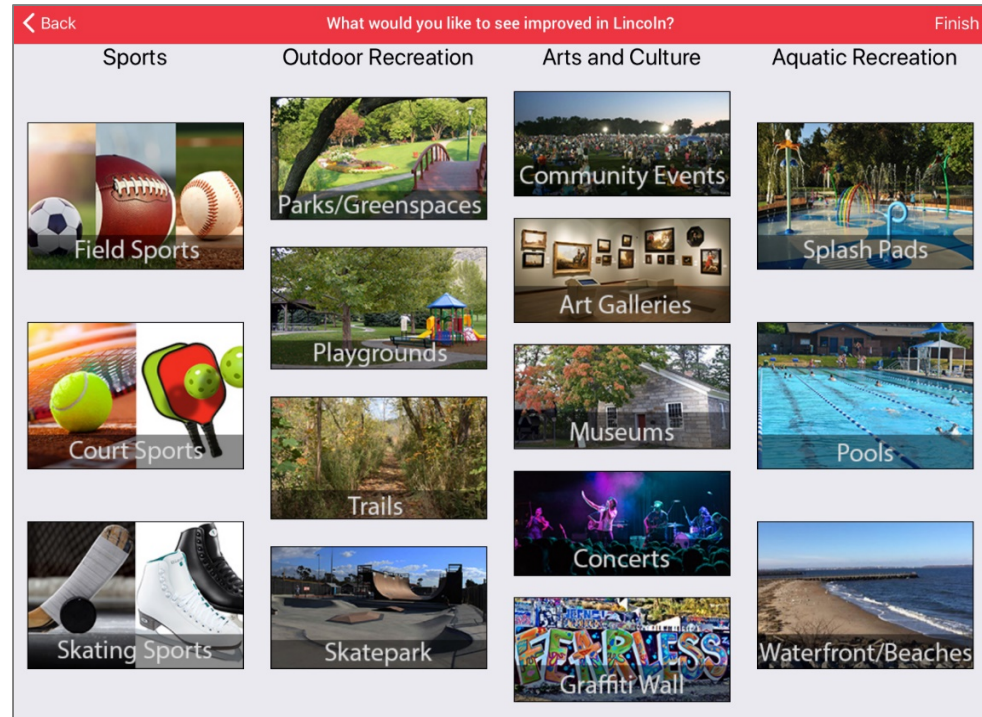
# YouthVoice App Cont'd

## Review Phase:

### Youth Voice App Tabulation

| What's your favourite form of leisure/recreation in Lincoln? | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sport** | **#** | **%** | **Outdoor Recreation** | **#** | **%** | **Arts and Culture** | **#** | **%** | **Aquatic Recreation** | **#** | **%** | | |
| Field Sports | 186 | 44% | Parks/Greenspaces | 97 | 23% | Community Events | 159 | 37% | Splash Pads | 114 | 27% | | |
| Court Sports | 101 | 24% | Playgrounds | 185 | 43% | Art Galleries | 60 | 14% | Pools | 142 | 33% | | |
| Skating Sports | 139 | 33% | Trails | 142 | 33% | Museums | 74 | 17% | Waterfront/Beaches | 170 | 40% | | |

| What would you like to see improved in Lincoln? | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sport** | **#** | **%** | **Outdoor Recreation** | **#** | **%** | **Arts and Culture** | **#** | **%** | **Aquatic Recreation** | **#** | **%** | | |
| Field Sports | 115 | 27% | Parks/Greenspaces | 44 | 10% | Community Events | 93 | 22% | Splash Pads | 105 | 25% | | |
| Court Sports | 170 | 40% | Playgrounds | 112 | 26% | Art Galleries | 48 | 11% | Pools | 205 | 48% | | |
| Skating Sports | 141 | 33% | Trails | 125 | 29% | Museums | 67 | 16% | Waterfront/Beaches | 116 | 27% | | |
| | | | Skatepark | 145 | 34% | Concerts | 112 | 26% | | | | | |
| | | | | | | Graffiti Wall | 106 | 25% | | | | | |

Total
Participants    427

# Engagement Food for Thought

1.  Make it easy to participate – go to the people!

2.  Engage with popular audiences in your community

3.  Begin early with an open mind

    ✓ Don't back yourself into techniques
    ✓ Leverage partner tools
    ✓ Start early – true engagement is time intensive

# Lessons for Engaging "Hard to Reach" Groups

1. Get the Word Out

2. ID Your Local Champions

3. Leverage Technology

4. Go to the People

5. Make it Easy and Fun

6. Transportation & Child-Minding

7. Offer Incentives

8. Cast a Wide Net

9. Be Inclusive

10. Child's Voice

11. Place-Based Learning

12. From Input to Action

# Get the Word Out

Township of Lucan-Biddulph
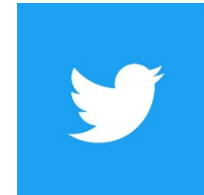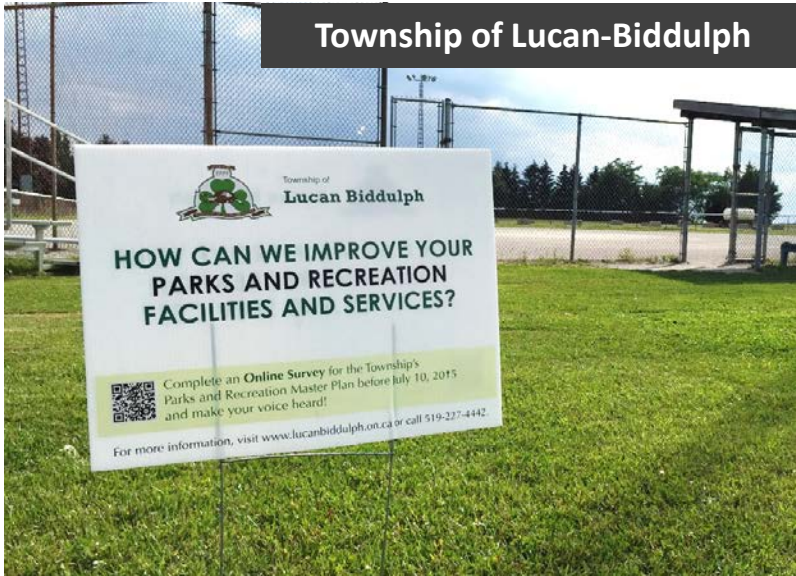
City of Brampton

Township of Centre Wellington

Town of Lincoln

# ID Your Local Champions

City of Toronto



**active spaces | people places**

PARKS AND RECREATION  FACILITIES MASTER PLAN



City of Brampton



Vaughan Libraries Board



Town of Halton Hills

# Leverage Technology





City of Vaughan
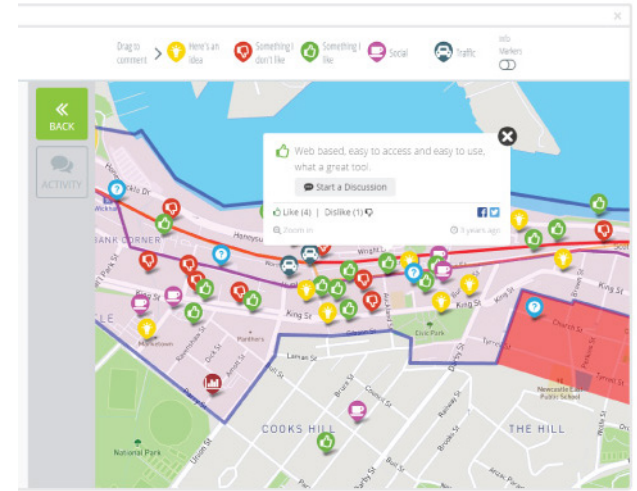
Webcast Example - Gordie Howe International Bridge

# Leverage Technology

# Go to the People


City of Vaughan


City of Oshawa


Splash Pad Features


City of Brampton

# Make it Easy and Fun!


Town of Kingsville

# Transportation & Child-Minding


City of Toronto



## City of London

**Community Information Meeting for the Lorne Avenue Public School to discuss the Request for Proposals Process and New Parkland -** Notice

The Old East Village Community Association and the City of London will be cohosting a community information meeting to discuss the City's purchase of the Lorne Avenue Public School property to create a neighbourhood park and to share the Request for Proposals process for finding a purchaser for the school building. The meeting will offer an opportunity to the community to provide comments and identify potential locations on a portion of the site for the parkland, assuming the sale and retention of the building on the remainder of the site, and to identify the high level goals, objectives, and vision for the parkland.
Child minding services will be available at the meeting.
Date: **Thursday, April 23, 2015**
Time: **7:00 to 9:00 p.m.**
Location: **Lorne Avenue Public School Gymnasium – 723 Lorne Avenue**
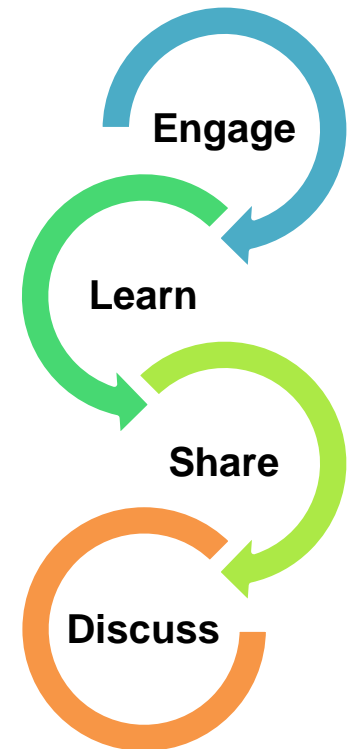
# Offer Incentives

# Cast a Wide Net

**Targeted Focus Groups:**

- Newcomers and Immigrants
- Persons with Disabilities
- Low Income and Homeless Populations
- Indigenous Communities
- Youth
- Seniors

City of London

Engage

Learn

Share

Discuss

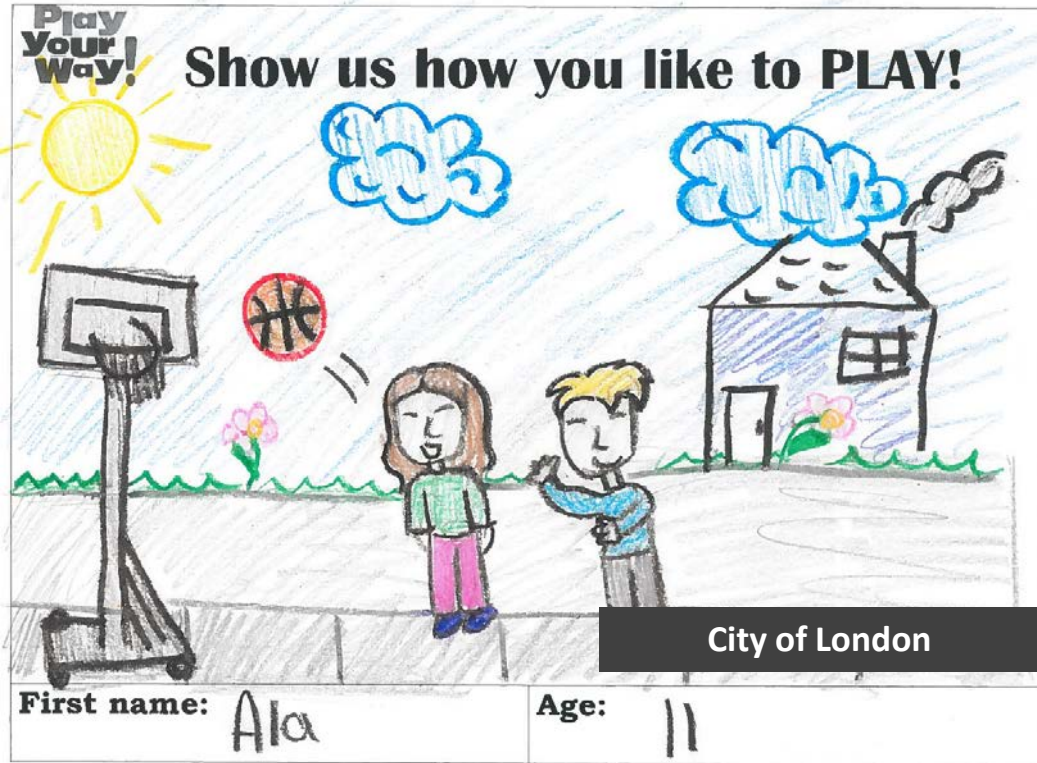# Be Inclusive


TOOLS & RESOURCES: AODA


Town of Milton

Use
Plain
Language

Consider
Translation
Services

# Child's Voice



WTPD — WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY


Town of Lincoln


Town of Halton Hills



Play your Way!

## Show us how you like to PLAY!

First name: Ala    Age: 11

City of London

# Place-Based Learning


Town of Mono

"Park Walks" allowed residents living near a park to share their stories and ideas

# From Input to Action

**London's Neighbourhood Decision-Making program**
(community voting on small-scale capital improvements)

# In Closing

The **process** is as important as the outcome

Be **realistic** about what can be achieved and choose your tool accordingly

**Make it easy** for people to participate

Build your audience throughout the process and **report back**

Be **prepared** by thinking about responses and approaches in advance

# Let's Chat Some More!

1. Do you have any **questions or comments** about anything in the presentation?

2. How do you **connect** with the public and stakeholders in your work?

3. What is one **challenge** you face when you seek community input?

4. What **strategies** have you used to overcome this challenge?
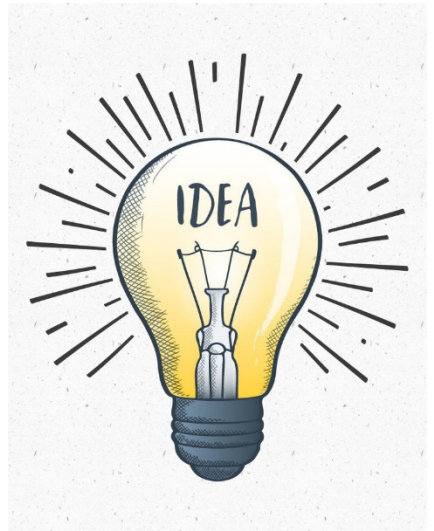
# We're Not Hard to Reach!



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