

Background

In 2014, Madison Water Utility will oversee a variety of major public works initiatives totaling more than \$26 million. It's vital for our community to have a role in these projects, to become informed and engaged by getting detailed information and giving feedback directly to our engineers, and to become invested in our mission to provide safe, clean water to every family in Madison.

Our current [Public Participation Standard Operating Procedure \(PDF\)](#) was approved by the Water Utility Board and Madison Common Council in 2008. In 2012, a [Public Participation Advisory](#) was presented to the Water Utility Board at the conclusion of the Eastside Water Supply Project. Today, we are updating our process to better engage and serve our community.

To make that happen, we have been reaching out to community members across the city, listening to their ideas about how to get people from all socioeconomic and generational groups involved in major Water Utility projects. Our first ever [Public Participation Survey](#) was widely distributed in December 2013 and completed by over 340 community members. The survey results have guided the development of this revised Public Participation Process along with feedback from our staff and the Water Utility Board.

Goals for an Updated Public Participation Process

- Create larger, more diverse Citizen Advisory Panels (CAPs)
- Provide a means for more effective and frequent communication between CAP members and the engineering team
- Facilitate broader CAP involvement by scheduling fewer meetings and allowing CAP members to access information and give feedback according to their own schedules.
- Demonstrate responsiveness to feedback and highlight ways that public participation impacts our projects
- Develop a more readable and user-friendly document than the current Public Participation Standard Operating Procedure
- Extend the process to include system-wide initiatives and policy changes

PHASE 1 – Establish Public Outreach Budget, Public Notification, and Project Plan

1. ESTABLISH PUBLIC OUTREACH BUDGET

- Determine budget to be used for public outreach. The amount would depend on each project and would generally range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 per project year.

2. INITIAL OUTREACH

- Reach out to alder and relevant neighborhood associations.
- Create project web page.
- Send detailed mailer (tri-fold) to affected citizens.
- Send web page link to any relevant email lists.
- Post web page link on relevant neighborhood list serves.
- Distribute web page link via social media.
- Post sign at project site if in a heavily-trafficked area.
- Attend neighborhood association meeting to outline project if possible.

3. FIRST PUBLIC MEETING/CREATION OF CAP

- Publicize meeting on website, city core site, via social media, with postcard mailer and through neighborhood listservs and/or email lists.
- Create Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP), which includes interested meeting attendees as well as those who cannot attend meetings but wish to be updated and involved in the project and give feedback via email or regular mail.
- Provide access to a laptop or tablet so meeting attendees can sign up for project email notifications via our website.
- Obtain address information for those who are interested in being involved in the project but do not have access to email.

4. GATHER FEEDBACK

- Update website and solicit public feedback through the CAP email list and possible online survey. Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.
- Review, discuss, revise and further revise project plan.

5. WATER UTILITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

- Present recommended project plan.

6. WEB UPDATES

- Make final revisions to draft plan as required by the Water Utility Board.
- Update website with the finalized project plan that was approved by the Water Utility Board, and note any impact public input may have had on the project plan.
- Send an email update to CAP participants. (Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.)

PHASE 2 – Site Selection (if applicable)

1. GATHER FEEDBACK

- Update website with relevant site selection information.
- Provide CAP with potential sites via email or regular mail and solicit other site recommendations.
- Rank potential sites on website based on CAP feedback and other criteria (if applicable), and distribute ranking to email list. Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.

2. PUBLIC MEETING

- Review potential sites and site ranking based on CAP feedback and other criteria (if applicable).
- Answer questions and solicit feedback from attendees.

3. WATER UTILITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

- Present recommended site(s).

4. WEB UPDATES

- Revise site selection as required by Water Utility Board.
- Post final site selection on project web page, and note any impact public input may have had on site selection decisions.
- Send an email update to CAP participants. (Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.)

PHASE 3 – Facility Design (if applicable)

1. GATHER FEEDBACK

- Post all relevant drawings, diagrams and landscaping models on web page.
- Email (or mail) CAP a draft of facility design criteria and solicit feedback.
- Revise design criteria as needed.

2. FACILITY DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING

- Review design criteria.
- Answer questions and solicit feedback from attendees.

3. WATER UTILITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING – FACILITY DESIGN

- Present design criteria.

4. ADDITIONAL APPROVALS- FACILITY DESIGN (IF APPLICABLE)

- Revise design as required by Water Utility Board.
- Present plans to other relevant City Commissions or Committees for approval.

5. WEB UPDATES – SITE SELECTION

- Make final design revisions as required. Post final design on project web page, and note any impact public input may have had on design decisions.
- Send an email update to CAP participants. (Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.)

PHASE 4 – Groundbreaking, Construction, Completion

1. PUBLIC MEETING

- Publicize meeting on website, city core site, via social media, with postcard mailer and through email list(s).
- Inform public of any road closures, traffic or water service disruptions that may be caused by construction. Address questions and concerns.
- Post relevant information on project web page.

2. WEB UPDATES

- Post regular updates on construction progress or changes to initial timeline on project web page, and email update links to CAP. Mail information to CAP members who do not have access to email.
- Post relevant photos of construction progress on website and social media channels.

2. OPEN HOUSE/ COMPLETION MEETING

- Public tour of finished facility.
- Highlight the ways public input impacted various elements of the finished project.