

Appendix A: Public Engagement and Community Outreach for the Evanston Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan

Developing a Public Engagement Strategy

A significant feature of CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program is the commitment to broad-based public involvement. The local planning projects that result from the program's competitive application process are each strengthened by the engagement of residents, business owners, and other community members from each municipality or study area. In particular, the LTA program focuses on both reaching and involving those groups and populations that are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes, including low-income persons, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities.

It is therefore essential to formulate an approach to public engagement that is tailored to each LTA community. This way, both CMAP and municipal staff can set outreach goals for the project, and keep track of the effectiveness of various strategies to determine what is replicable for future public engagement.

For the Evanston Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan, the project outreach strategy focused on digital engagement with a particular emphasis on homeowner participation and education as well as gathering feedback on business related water recommendations from the Evanston business community. A digital strategy was undertaken due in large part to the type of plan that was being developed. The recommendations of this plan are most relevant to furthering community programming and education around homeowners and business water usage, therefore it was important to hear from those stakeholders. The Evanston community has a strong history of planning and community involvement, and City has been especially successful at online engagement. With over 22,000 people on their community email distribution list, it was important to leverage existing relationships for the project. Equally important was the inclusion of interested parties that either did not have digital capacity, or were not currently participating in the City's distribution lists. To accommodate for this, two face-to-face public meetings were scheduled in an effort to reach these stakeholders.

Overall Lessons Learned

CMAP began the project outreach with the intention of reaching the business community. However, this became one of the primary challenges staff faced. Project staff scheduled a separate community meeting for business representatives, with the intention of providing the business community an arena to discuss water issues specific to operating a business in Evanston. Although, the event was publicized in the business community, there were no attendees present for the event. Upon further reflection, the lack of attendance might have been addressed by shifting the meeting time to prior to the start of the business day (8am-9am) instead of the afternoon (3pm-5pm). Another approach that should be considered in the future would be to conduct the meeting in partnership with the chamber of commerce.

The most successful method of outreach on this project was through a digital survey tool that the team employed. The success of this tool seems to be due in large part to the tech-savvy nature of the community. With the relatively high number of responses from residents who receive the Evanston e-newsletter, it could prove advantageous to work closely with public libraries and not-for-profit organizations, with technology focused missions or technology classes, to create even greater opportunities for participation from residents who may not have internet access and/or an e-newsletter subscription. Additionally, this could help to reach a more diverse sampling of Evanston residents and stakeholders.

Lastly, in addition to focusing on the digital outreach component, Evanston holds numerous community events pertaining to water and sustainability throughout the year. While public meetings were advertised at some of these events, it is recommended that any water-focused or sustainability planning work needing public input coordinate closely with ongoing municipal events and activities.

Outreach Methods

Prior to launching the digital community survey and holding public meetings, outreach staff utilized the CMAP and City of Evanston websites, Evanston electronic newsletter, community organizations and public spaces to inform community stakeholders of the planning process and advertise community input opportunities.

There were two primary means of communication:

Evanston Sustainability Electronic Newsletter. The Evanston Office of Sustainability publishes a monthly newsletter to inform the community on news, events, and updates of the Sustainability Office. The publication currently reaches approximately Evanston 22,000 residents and stakeholders.

Evanston Website. Sustainability staff created a [webpage](#)¹ to keep the Evanston community up to date on all stages and events associated with the Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan and the larger Evanston Water Efficiency Program. This page also links to the CMAP created Evanston Plan [webpage](#)²

Public Engagement and Results

Various meetings were held to gather input for this project. The digital survey and two public meetings focused on hearing from stakeholders about their vision for the Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan.

The following is a list of the meetings and activities conducted for this project.

- Business Focused Public Meeting
- Digital Input Survey
- Resident Focused Public Meeting

¹ <http://www.cityofevanston.org/sustainability/water-conservation/cmap-water-conservation-grant/>

² <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/evanston>

Table 1: Evanston Participation from March 1, 2011 - June 7, 2012

Meeting	Number of Participants
Community Digital Survey Live: March 1, 2012-May 1, 2012	163
Business Based Public Meeting April 26, 2012	0
Resident Based Public Meeting April 26, 2012	5
Community Open Comment on Plan Draft Live: May 1, 2012-June 7, 2012	7
Total	175

Business Focused Public Meeting

The business focused public meeting was scheduled for the afternoon of April 26, 2012, at the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center. Outreach for the meeting was done primarily through digital fliers to business owners and business stakeholders. Business owners and managers of business along main Evanston corridors were also presented with print fliers.

There were no participants for the business focused public meeting. As a result, CMAP and City of Evanston staff thought about how the team could achieve a more favorable outcome during the draft public comment period, including intensive outreach to the Evanston Chamber of Commerce, providing the draft plan link at chamber community events and working in partnership with the City Economic Development Department to promote the comment period.

Digital Input Survey

With the assistance of the City, CMAP staff developed an online survey. The point of the survey was to better understand some of the issues and opportunities for the water plan. This survey was available from March 1, 2012 to April 26, 2012. Over this time, 163 residents participated in the survey. It was advertised to residents through the City of Evanston website, City of Evanston Sustainability e-newsletter and print fliers at strategic Evanston locations (city hall, libraries etc.). In the survey, Evanston residents and stakeholders were asked about demographics, level of awareness of water issues, water use and conservation practices, interest in learning more about related topics, and preferences for receiving information and updates from the City on the planning process.

The survey results were then used to support communication & outreach, residential water fixture and utility billing practice recommendations of the plan. It also showed that many of the participants felt it was at least somewhat important, if not very important to conserve water. Additionally many respondents suggested that they were already taking some steps towards water conservation at home.

Noteworthy results of the survey are as follows:

Table 2: Water Source Results

What is your water source?	Responses
Underground aquifer	0.6%
Lake Michigan	86.9%

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Not sure	12.5%
Totals	100%

Table 3: Daily Water Use

How would you describe your household's daily water use compared To Evanston's 2010 average of 97 gallons per person

	Responses
Use an average amount of water	20.0%
Use more water than average	6.9%
Use less water than average	65.6%
Not sure	7.5%
Totals	100%

Table 4: Household appliances

Which of the following are currently installed in or outside your home? (select all that apply)

	Responses
Low-flow shower head (2.5 gallons/minute, all shower heads manufactured after 1994)	121
Low-flow or high-efficiency toilet (1.6 gallons/flush, all toilets manufactured after 1994)	110
Extra-large (multi-person)tub or multiple shower heads in one shower stall or tub	7
Front-loading clothes washer	54
Rain Barrel or cistern	41
Drought resistant landscapes	37
Chemical free lawn spaces	70
Automatic rain shut-off valve for outdoor sprinkler system	3
None of the Above	9
Not sure	5

Table 5: Water Bill Charges

Your water bill includes charges for water service, sewer consumption and sanitation services. How would you describe the water related (water & sewer) portion of your typical bill? The average Evanston water & sewer portion of a water bill was \$96 in 2011.

	Responses
I pay an average amount for water	20.6%
I pay more than average for water	8.8%
I pay lower than average for water	35.0%
Not sure	35.6%
Totals	100%

Table 6: Change in Usage

If you have noticed your water bill going up, have you considered reducing Your water usage to decrease the bill?

	Responses
Yes, I noticed an increase and did use less water	26.9%
Yes, I noticed an increase but did not use less water	15.0%
No, I did not notice an increase	27.5%
Not sure	30.6%
Totals	100%

Table 7: Future Water Shortage

What do you think the likelihood is of a water shortage occurring in Evanston in the near future?

	Responses
Very likely	6.5%
Likely	14.2%
Not likely	71.6%

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Not sure	7.7%
Totals	100%

Table 8: Water Conservation

How important do you think it is to conserve water right now in Evanston?	Responses
Very important	59.4%
Somewhat important	34.8%
Not very important	3.2%
Not at all important	2.6%
Totals	100%

Table 9: Conservation Activities

Below is a list of actions that residents might take to help conserve and protect Evanston's water. For each, please indicate which of these actions you already do.

	Responses
Install water-efficient plumbing devices (i.e.: high-efficiency toilet or low flow shower head).	112
Participant in an incentive program to replace old toilets and shower heads.	22
Repair leaks from faucets and toilets.	125
Participant in a public information campaign aimed at conserving water.	20
Take a 5 minute or less shower.	97
Convert yard area from lawn to native landscape.	37
Reduce the amount of weed and feed used on lawn.	86
Let lawn go dormant (brown) during periods of drought.	86
Install a rain barrel.	39
Dispose of household hazardous waste, such as motor oil, pesticides and pharmaceuticals, at a community collection day event.	98
Sweep driveways, sidewalks, and steps rather than hosing off.	124
When using a hose, control the flow with an automatic shut-off nozzle.	94
Install water-efficient plumbing devices (for example, high-efficiency toilet or low flow shower head).	112

Table 9: Gender

What is your gender?	Responses
Female	57.8%
Male	39.0%
Prefer not to answer	3.2%
Totals	100%

Table 10: Race/Ethnicity

How would you describe your household's race or ethnicity? (please select all that apply)	Responses
Asian	2.6%
Black or African American	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino	1.9%
White or Caucasian	90.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.6%
Mixed race/ethnicity	5.8%
Prefer not to answer	3.9%

Table 11: Age

Which range below corresponds to your age?	Responses
18-24	0.6%
25-34	8.4%
35-44	20.6%
45-54	18.7%
55-64	26.5%
65+	21.9%
Prefer not to answer	3.3%
Totals	100%

Table 12: Survey Advertisement

How did you hear about this survey? Check all that apply.	Responses
Utility bill	4.6%
Word of mouth	4.6%
Newspaper	0.7%
City website	28.1%
Electronic Newsletter	62.7%
Community group/organization	2.6%
Business/Library/Public space	0.7%
Prefer not to answer	1.3%

Resident Focused Public Meeting

The resident focused public meeting was scheduled for the evening of April 26, 2012, at the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center with a total of 5 residents and community stakeholders in attendance. Outreach for the meeting was done primarily through the Evanston e-newsletter, Evanston website, and the CMAP weekly email. Posters and fliers were also left in key community areas and facilities, City sustainability events and main retail corridors.

The meeting began with an introduction of the Water Conservation and Efficiency planning process, including the working relationship between CMAP and the City of Evanston. Attendees also participated in a keypad polling exercise (see Tables 13-22) that closely mirrored the digital input survey. Lastly, participants discussed water supply concerns, current City activities surrounding water, participated in a Water Tasting exercise to test resident knowledge of bottled versus tap water options and provided feedback on draft plan recommendations.

Tables 13-22: Overview of Resident Public Meeting Keypad Polling Questions & Responses

Table 13

Which of the following is currently installed in or outside your home? (select all that apply)	Responses
Low flow shower head	0%
Low flow or high efficiency toilet	0%
Extra-large tub/multiple shower heads in one stall or tub	0%
Front loading clothes washer	0%
Rain barrel or cistern	0%
Drought resistant landscapes	20%

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Chemical free lawn spaces	60%
Automatic rain shut off valve or outdoor sprinkler system	0%
None of the above	20%
Not sure	0%

Table 14

How important do you think it is to conserve water right now in Evanston?	Responses
Very Important	100%
Somewhat important	0%
Not very important	0%
Not important at all	0%

Table 15

What is the most important reason to conserve water?	Responses
To prevent future shortages	20%
To protect the environment	80%
Saving money on water bill	0%
Not interested in conserving water	0%
Not sure	0%

Table 16

Please rank the following UTILITY recommendations for the plan (priority ranking)	Rank
Increase water related information dissemination	1 st
Update water bill format to inform customers on water usage and efficiency	2 nd

Table 17

Please rank the following CITY recommendations for the plan (priority ranking)	Rank
Incorporate water efficiency policy into city departments & functions (buildings etc.)	2 nd
Participate in annual events around water use, efficiency & conservation	1 st
Phase out bottled water sale and use in city facilities	1 st

Table 18

Please rank the following RESIDENTIAL recommendations for the plan (priority ranking)	Responses
Promote year long communication & outreach on water efficient behaviors for Evanston residents	2 nd
Reduce indoor water use from toilets	1 st
Reduce outdoor water use through information campaign about watering	3 rd

Table 19

Please rank the following BUSINESS recommendations for the plan (priority ranking)	Responses
Encourage use of pre-rinse spray valve installation for building permits at food service businesses	1 st
Promote water efficiency to business customers	2 nd
Reduce water for large users	3 rd

Table 20

What is your gender?	Responses
Female	75%
Male	25%

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Prefer not to answer 0%

Table 21

How would you describe your household's race/ethnicity?	Responses
Asian	0%
Black or African American	0%
Hispanic or Latino	0%
White or Caucasian	100%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
Mixed Race/Ethnicity	0%
Prefer not to answer	0%

Table 22

How did you hear about this public meeting?	Responses
Word of Mouth	66.67%
Public Events	0%
Village Website/Email	33.33%
Community Group/Organization	0%