

# GOVERNANCE

## Introduction

The origin of this topic came from a request by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to have the Council clarify the role of boards and commissions in Longmont City government. During the discussion of potential retreat topics, Council members changed the topic to governance. This broader scope will explore how the City can more effectively involve all segments of society in the governance of the Longmont community.

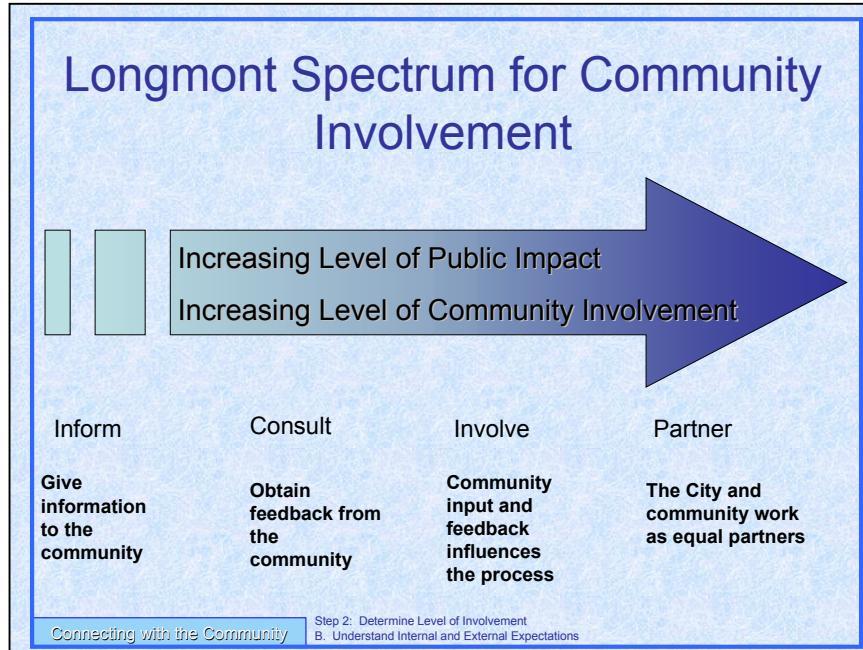
It would appear that this topic presents an opportunity for the Council to build upon existing policies and recent initiatives that aim to increase the involvement of citizens in local government. These opportunities would include the specific policies outlined in the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan (LACP) under the Government chapter and the Community Involvement Initiative, which became a work plan item at the 2001 retreat.

## Background

The City of Longmont organization has a strong commitment to involving the community in addressing issues and solving problems, whether it be on a citywide level or a concern within a single neighborhood. One way the City Council has formalized this commitment is by adopting specific LACP policies, which state that City government will be open and accessible to residents, that the City will encourage community leadership and participation in its government, and that the City will create partnerships in serving our community. The Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan contains a chapter on the role of government with Policies 33.4 and 33.5 directly related to the subject of governance (see Attachment A).

During its 2001 annual retreat, City Council acknowledged the organization's past successes with community involvement efforts, while recognizing the increasing need for productive, inclusive and innovative approaches as the population has grown and the issues facing the community have become more complex. As a result of this retreat discussion, the City has created a community involvement initiative that invites residents, elected officials, and individuals from public agencies, private enterprise, nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations to come together and think collectively and act cooperatively to identify issues and to find solutions to them. This initiative intends to produce results that city officials and community members are willing to accept responsibility for implementing and sustaining.

The cornerstone of the City's community involvement approach—developed in conjunction with residents and approved by the City Council—is the Community Involvement Spectrum. The Spectrum, illustrated below, helps City officials determine which issues are appropriate for some level of community involvement and identify strategies that can be effective in drawing out meaningful public participation on these issues.



The key features of the Spectrum are:

- At different points in a decision process, we may be at different levels on the Spectrum. The overall level, however, reflects the community’s role or degree of influence upon the project decision or outcome.
- From left to right, the Spectrum indicates increasing levels of community involvement.
- For each level, the City is making an overall promise to the community. This promise helps align our expectations about how the community will be involved.

Inform: We will provide you with accurate, balanced and objective information.

Consult: We will consider your comments in the decision-making process.

Involve: We will work with you throughout the process so that your issues and concerns are consistently understood and community comments are reflected in the decision-making process.

Partner: We will work with you as equal partners.

- It is best to view the levels as general guides, not as rules, in planning community involvement.
- The “right” level is whatever level is most appropriate for the project or issue; higher on the Spectrum is not necessarily better.

For each level on the Spectrum, there are numerous tools and techniques we can use to accomplish our community involvement objectives. The use of City advisory boards and commissions is one of many specific tools.

Initial training for staff members has begun so that the Community Involvement framework is understood and its appropriate application is possible at all points in the governing process in Longmont.

### **Discussion Points**

The following are suggested questions to help focus the discussion of this retreat topic:

- Does the City Council wish to more fully understand the community involvement framework and direct that it be widely understood and utilized by boards, commissions, staff, neighborhood groups and ad hoc task forces whenever they are involved in our community (40+ neighborhood groups, boards, commissions, task forces, city departments, active citizens)?
- Does the Council think more or fewer Boards and Commissions would serve it best? (See Attachment C for a list of existing City Boards and Commissions)
- Does City Council wish to further define and/or change the roles of City Boards and Commissions or how it utilizes them to accomplish community involvement objectives?
- If Council is interested in modifying how it utilizes City Boards and Commissions, how might we involve current Board and Commission members in that process?

### **Attachments**

- A. Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan, Sections 33.4 and 33.5
- B. Excerpts from the City of Longmont Community Involvement Training Manual
- C. List of City Boards and Commissions