The Public Input Checklist
How to get the input you need and manage the input you get

A summary for CAMA Webinar Attendees CAMA ❖ ACAM

CHECKLIST FOR USEFUL PUBLIC INPUT: NEED 3/3

FACTS		COMMUNITY PREFERENCES	
• New	✅	• Large Number	✅
• True	✅	• Not Self-Selected	✅
• For You	✅	• Good Questions	✅

IGNORE THESE THINGS

USELESS
- Opinions about Opinions ❌
- Opinions about Facts ❌

DANGEROUS
- Unrepresentative Loud Voices ❌
- False Facts ❌

Simple Guides

BASIC GUIDE TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

|	Meetings, Emails, Social Media, Online Engagement/Surveys	Scientific Community Surveys
New Facts, Ideas or Feedback	✓ YES	✓ YES
Community Preferences	✗ NO	✓ YES
Interaction (Q&A)	✓ YES	✗ NO

FULL GUIDE TO COMMUNITY INPUT CHANNELS

Type of Input	How to Do? -Ideas/Facts	How to Do? -Preferences	What to Do? -Ideas/Facts	What to Do? -Preferences
Meeting/Workshop	Y		Y	
Phone Calls	Y		Y	
Emails	Y		Y	
Social Media	Y		Y	
Online Surveys	Y		Y	
Online Engagement	Y		Y	
311	Y		Y	
Scientific Panel	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scientific Mail	Y	Y	Y	Y
Scientific Phone	Y	Y	Y	Y
Elections				Y

Public Input Overview

To understand communications in public service we can look at your "org chart" and see all the different pieces of the machine.

The complete public communications framework is these 9 arrows:
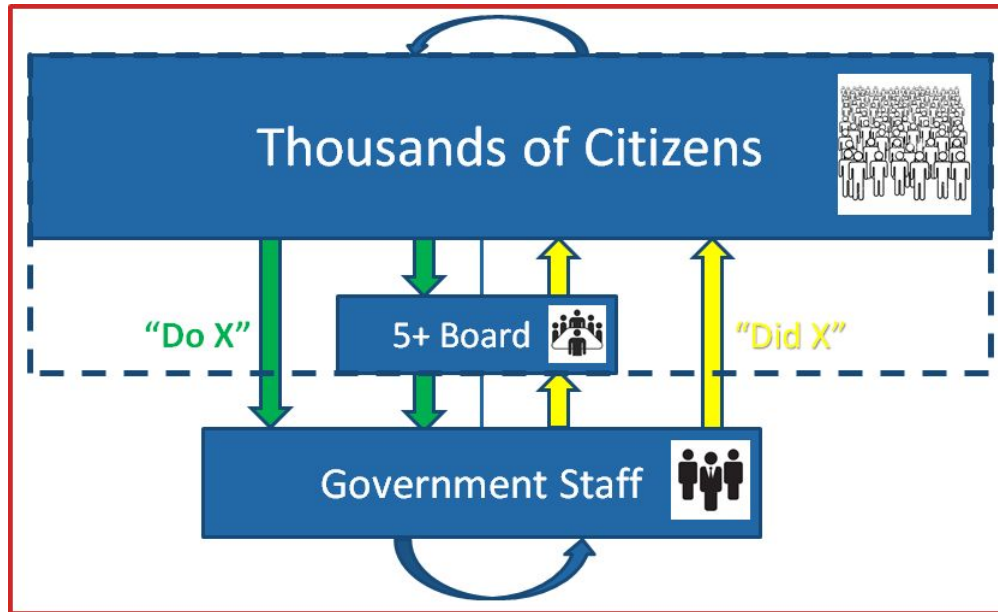
The job of each communications arrow (green, yellow or blue) is explained here with both public input arrows highlighted in the red box:

	→ TO Citizens	→ TO Board	→ TO Staff
FROM Citizens →	Discuss, deliberate and identify public needs, interests and priorities	Give direction and feedback on broad public needs, interests and priorities	Give feedback and suggestions as to the performance of specific activities
FROM Board →	Provide updates on decisions and how the activities chosen best serve the public	Review, deliberate and make decisions to serve the best interests of the public	Direct and oversee activities to ensure public interests are always being served
FROM Staff →	Provide data and updates on ongoing activities and expenditures	Provide objective data and analysis as to the public interest value of various activities	Communicate and coordinate to efficiently execute assigned tasks

Public input boils down to two types of data which can be useful - helpful individual facts/ideas/feedback OR community preferences.

"Working Smarter" = **How** to do

Data ➜ *Facts/Ideas/Feedback*

"Working Wiser" = **What** to do
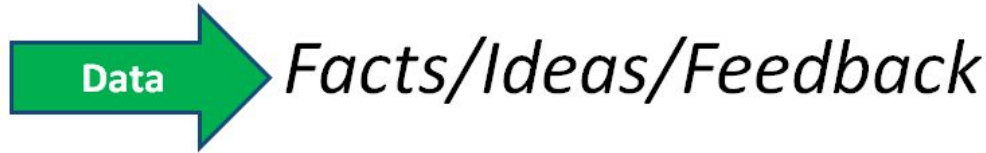
Data ➜ *Community Preferences*

Everything else is just noise. Individual facts/ideas/feedback OR community preferences that are not true or verifiable are also noise - which can be misleading and influential at the same time.

- Facts about Opinions 🙂
- Facts about Facts 🙂

- Opinions about Facts 😐
- Opinions about Opinions ☹️

- Misinformation about Facts ☹️
- Misinformation about Opinions ☹️

When you see or listen to individual input, you can run it through a simple 3 step test to see if the facts/ideas/feedback are useful. If it doesn't score 3 out of 3 as "Yes", you have input you can ignore:

- Is it **new**?
  - Do you already know it? (Yes/No/Not Sure)

- Is it **true**?
  - Is it a statement of fact? (Yes/No/Not Sure)

- Is it **for you**?
  - Does it pertain to your activities? (Yes/No/Not Sure)

When you see or listen to claims about community preferences you can run a different 3 step test to see if they are valid. If you don't get 3 out of 3, you have more noise to ignore:

✔ **A large number** of representative responses
  - Statistically meaningful (250 to 600 is +/-6% to 4%)

✔ **Unbiased responses** that are not self-selected
  - Representative sample (>50% response rate)

✔ **Well structured** questions and answers
  - Unbiased questions targeted to resident knowledge

And remember, no matter how loud or persistent, those self-selected individual opinions are NOT "the community" - even if it feels like it. They

are easier to ignore if you have alternative data from a scientific survey.

You always need true community preference data to understand what the public wants, needs and values - especially the tradeoffs:

	Get More	**Get Less**
Pay More	Ask About Tradeoffs Maybe	No!
Pay Less	Yes!	Ask About Tradeoffs Maybe

But don't expect community preferences to be helpful when it comes to professional expertise - this is why customers stay out of pizza kitchens:

✔ What they want
- Pick toppings
- Pick crust (thin/thick)
- Pick flour (gluten free)

✘ How to make it
- Pick good recipe
- Pick flour producer
- Pick oven type

✔ How it comes out
- Tastes good?

Thanks for reading! We're in the feedback business so please let us

know how these tips work for you, and how to make this guide better.

About FlashVote

FlashVote community panels give you statistically valid community input in 48 hours - on any important topic during the year. You get a full year of survey data for a fraction of the cost of one traditional scientific survey.

For community preferences, FlashVote is designed to be the fastest and most affordable approach, making it a no-brainer for local governments:
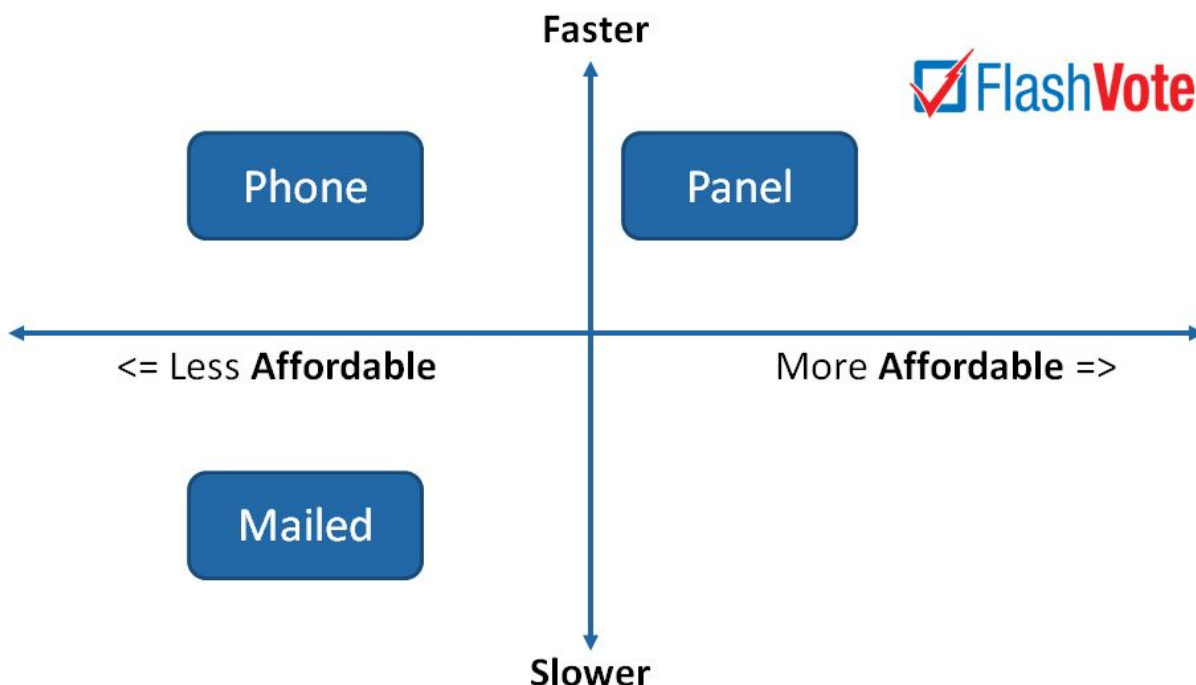
More Info and Resources

How many people do you need to hear from? Try this calculator and watch a video that explains statistics by taking M&Ms out of a bag: https://www.flashvote.com/margin-of-error

Want help explaining input problems to colleagues? Try these videos: https://www.flashvote.com/videos

Want to learn more about FlashVote? Just contact us or go here: https://www.flashvote.com/government