PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN AN OPEN SMART CITY CONTEXT

Public engagement is a method of engaging members of the public to become more informed about and/or influence public decisions. Public engagement can look like a consultation process, public outreach, public participation, or sustained public problem solving\(^2\). As we navigate the impact of a technologically enabled and supported community, public engagement methods may need to expand and adapt.

**Key Themes**

**Digital Literacy**
A foundational understanding of technology and how it is used, managed and operates within one’s life and community is integral to building meaningful engagement. Digital literacy will be one of the major tools needed for the public to engage in a sustainable way. This can include creating and building public education materials that provide a basic understanding of technologically focused projects. Collaboration with local libraries and digital literacy organizations can also support the building of digital literacy across different neighbourhoods and communities.

**Process**
One of the methods provided in public engagement is sustained public problem solving, this can be a setup of committees and working groups that navigate a topic over the course of several years. In the context of open smart cities, it is important for the process to be extensive to allow for different inputs and sustained public problem solving that is collaborative and meaningful. Time devoted to learning and participation is necessary for people to see the connections to the problem and its possible solutions.

**Residents as Co-creators**
Residents of the community should be able to participate as co-creators. In the context of smart cities, that can mean directly engaging the public before putting forth a solution. The direct push for smarter cities can provide an opportunity to experiment and redefine ways residents can participate\(^3\). Shifting from a top-down approach to a community based practice approach allows for an expansion of creative solutions. This can look like including residents and a variety of stakeholders in every step of the process including the early production phase.

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Who's doing it?

**vTaiwan Open Consultation**

vTaiwan is an online-offline consultation process which brings together government ministries, elected representatives, scholars, experts, business leaders, civil society organizations and citizens. The process helps lawmakers implement decisions with a greater degree of legitimacy. vTaiwan is also an open space, it is a combination of time and space run by participants to work on cases brought in.

Can be found here: https://info.vtaiwan.tw/

**Amsterdam Smart Cities**

Amsterdam Smart City consists of a public private partnership and an international community. By sharing knowledge and by collaborating we come up with innovative solutions for metropolitan issues of a social, economic and ecological nature. This way we ensure that the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area remains liveable, now and in the years to come.

This is an initiative that has supported several projects around Amsterdam and has provided new ways to engage with public and private process.

Can be found here: https://amsterdamsmartcity.com/