

**Practice Name:****Date Created:** 26-May-09**Author:****Last Updated:****Abstract:****GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Practice	Planning Academy
Date	8-July-08
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**THE ISSUE****Abstract:**

What is the practice you developed or are developing (brief abstract)?

Please briefly describe the final practice developed. (e.g. if you developed a new Council agenda, list the agenda items, or if a new communications plan was created, provide a summary of the plan's goals, objectives and

highlights.)

Planning Academy is an adult public education program designed to provide a better understanding of the planning and development process in Edmonton. The courses offer a dynamic and interactive learning forum designed to share knowledge, build understanding, and inspire communities.

Goals:

- to help participants better understand and participate in the planning process
- to increase awareness of the roles, rights, and interests of all parties involved in the planning process
- to build relationships between stakeholders involved in the planning process.

Course Offerings:

Course 1 - Land Use Planning: The Big Picture

Course 2 – Getting a Grip on Land Use Planning

Course 3 – Come Plan with Us: Using Your Voice

Elective - Transportation

Elective - Urban Design

### Need:

Please describe (just a couple of sentences or bullet points) why you needed to create this practice (policy or process).

What issue made it necessary? (e.g. “We needed a comprehensive plan to deal with...”, or “We needed an annual forecasting tool because...”)

After the City's community planning program ended in the late 1990s and with an increase in the amount of development in existing neighbourhoods in Edmonton, the City was seeing an increase in conflict between multiple stakeholders.

Through community consultation and education, the City of Edmonton can mitigate conflict.

Planning Academy is one strategy to educate the public on planning and development processes to improve communication between stakeholders. In turn, this may create a healthier planning process.

## CREATING YOUR PRACTICE

### Research:

How did you obtain information to help design your practice (including consultation with stakeholders, formal and informal research)?

Please include any research documentation you can share, or give us a source reference (e.g. Web site, literature, “We reviewed the bylaws from other municipalities in the area...”).

- We learned about the City of Calgary's Partners in Planning program.  
<http://www.calgary.ca/>  
City Business > Planning & Building > Land Use Planning > Understanding The Planning Process > Partners In Planning > Partners In Planning
- Looked at other municipal education programs in North America.
- We hired a consultant (Performance Group) for the adult education aspect of the program.

**Process:**

How did you go about designing your practice? For instance, did you create a team, hire a consultant, borrow something ready-made from another jurisdiction?

Describe briefly who did the design work and what process they followed.

We created a project team which included internal staff from the Planning and Development department. The team developed the vision for the program and the broad parameters of the courses. Staff teams then commenced developing the various courses with the assistance from our adult education consultants. While the courses were in development, three staff members assumed the responsibility to manage the project. They ensured that the courses didn't overlap and had a consistent approach. The teams preparing the courses each developed a source document that was refined into a participant's manual, which the consultants used as the basis for a facilitator's guide, adding in activities and guidance to make the courses interesting. Staff received facilitator training Train the Trainer from the consultants. We sent participant manuals out for editing. We had pilot offerings prior to any public offerings. The Planning Academy coordinator is responsible for advertising the program in the local paper. Registration information and the course outline are available on the City of Edmonton website. Participants have the ability to register and pay online. A brochure was created and distributed to community facilities, community leagues, and citizens at public meetings and open houses.

**GETTING APPROVAL FOR YOUR PRACTICE****Authority:**

Whose/what approval did you need to create and implement the practice?

**Reporting:**

How did you inform the decision-maker(s) about the practice and your need for their approval?

Please note the name of any documents provided to the decision-makers that you would be willing to share.

**Consultation:**

Did you consult with stakeholders as part of your approval process?

If so, how? If possible, attach a copy of templates, surveys or other documents you used as part of your consultation.

The Planning Academy was developed under the authority and direction of the General Manager of the Planning and Development Department.

Individual courses were approved by the Planning and Policy Services Branch Leadership Team.

Members of Edmonton City Council were individually briefed about the Planning Academy program early on in the process. Their strong support for the concept added strength to the initiative.

We consulted with the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) and the Urban Development Institute (UDI) at the conceptual level and in the development of each course.

**IMPLEMENTING YOUR PRACTICE****Plan:**

Describe the process you went through to implement the practice. If you used an implementation plan, please note it here.

- Created a project team
- Developed the vision and broad parameters
- Staff teams developed various courses
- Adult Education consultants gave input
- Assigned project managers
- Reviewed course content for overlap and consistency
- Prepared participant manuals
- Developed facilitator guides
- Facilitator training for planners
- Created PowerPoint presentations
- Conducted pilot offerings prior to any public offerings
- Created and distributed brochures
- Created a website for information and registration

**Policy:**

What changes to bylaws, regulations or procedures were needed to implement this practice and how did you deal with them?

None.

Please attach a copy of the change in bylaw, policy or procedure.

**When:**

When did your municipality begin to use the practice?  
Was it implemented all at once or in stages?

**Who:**

Who was responsible for implementing the practice?

If someone else is responsible for ongoing management, who is it?

Course 1 was offered for the first time in the fall of 2005. Courses 2 and 3 were first offered in the Spring and early Summer of 2006. The Transportation elective was first offered in the Fall of 2006.

A Planning Academy Project Manager has been in place since 2005 and is responsible for implementing courses.

**RESOURCES REQUIRED****Budget:**

How much did it cost you to design and implement your practice (i.e. We saved/spent \$XX per year)?

What are your ongoing operational and capital costs, if any?

**Implementation Costs:**

Consultant from 2004-2006

Advertising costs

Printing Brochures

**Operational Costs:**

Printing Material

Binders

Room

Snacks

Staff Overtime

**Revenue:**

We charge between \$25-\$35 and have a limit of 40 people per course. We will be offering the course a minimum of twice a year.

**Staff:**

What human resources did you need to design, implement and manage your practice? (e.g. "It took X staff member (s) X months on this" or "This is part of normal staff duties.")

A number of staff worked on course development as part of their regular duties intermittently over 2 years.

Since the beginning of 2006 a dedicated person has worked full-time as the Planning Academy Coordinator. Now that the program is in place, the coordinator will work on additional projects.

**Infrastructure:**

What "capital costs" (such as information technology, other equipment or building assets) did you need to design, implement, manage, and/or evaluate your practice?

There were no capital costs!

**EVALUATING YOUR PRACTICE****Formal:**

If you did a formal evaluation (e.g. user satisfaction survey, analysis of annual expenditures or number of rate payers served) for your practice, please describe the evaluation tool and the process used.

The participants fill out evaluation forms after each course. The results are tabulated and considered to further improve the course.

Tell us who was involved.

**Informal:**

If you did an informal evaluation, describe what you did (such as discussing the practice with people in the office or on the street, or letters/comments received).

Participants in the pilot course offerings were debriefed for suggestions on improving the courses.

The coordinator meets with course facilitators to discuss course improvement.

**Performance measures:**

Please list the performance measures for this practice (i.e. reduced number of complaints, money saved, or change in equipment life expectancy.)

Questionnaires are completed by participants at the end of each class. They are reviewed by course facilitators and course material is updated when deemed necessary.

Please list the process you used for measuring performance, (i.e. We do annual surveys on...) examples include:

- collecting data
- establishing a baseline
- applying the measures
- results
- follow up

**Changes:**

(a) Based on the evaluation (formal or informal), describe any changes you have made, or would like to make, to your practice as a result. (e.g. "After implementing this practice, we decided that it would be better if...")

- Practical local examples have been added to courses.

- Course activities have been improved.

- Need to strengthen content regarding development permitting.

- We are currently working on a new course in Sustainable Planning.

-or-

(b) Has your practice met your expectations and if so, how?

**LESSONS LEARNED / BENEFITS RECEIVED**

**Benefits:**

What are the benefits of this practice to your municipality? (eg. Preparation of Council agenda packages now requires less time, etc.)

- Starting to see community groups who are more informed about the process.

- Improving relationships between stakeholders.

**Key Lessons:**

What key lessons have you/your municipality learned through the process of:

- designing;
- obtaining approval;
- implementing; and
- evaluating your practice?

- City Council loves it.

- Participants benefit.

- Planning Academy is "neutral ground" where participants learn from each other.

- Adult education expertise helpful.

- A lot of work preparing & running the program.

Include any problems, surprises, and unanticipated benefits. (e.g. "We realized that we needed to spend more time...")

**Advice to Municipal Peers:**

What advice would you give to another municipality that is considering adopting your practice? Is there anything you might have done differently?

It is important to have a project manager from the beginning.

You don't necessarily need to hire an adult education consultant, but it is important to apply adult education principles in your courses.

## PRACTICE UPDATES

### New Information:

There may be some new information to add since this practice was first posted. This is especially true if:

- a new process has been implemented in your municipality;
- there are new practice evaluation results; or
- there has been a change affecting organizational direction. For example, explain how new economic conditions or a new vision/strategy affect the practice.

Please indicate those changes here. Don't forget to list any new documents that may be useful to your peers. Then go to "Other Information" to attach the new documents.

## OTHER INFORMATION

### Suggestions:

Please list relevant information sources that others might use or you would be willing to share (courses, Web sites, literature, experts).

### Documents & Attachments:

Planning Academy Brochure 2008

Please attach (using the "Browse" button below) any documents you would be willing to share with others interested in your practice (e.g. a bylaw, a policy, approval documents, templates).

\* Note: If you do not have an electronic copy of a document, please send Municipal Excellence a paper copy for scanning to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Municipal Excellence Network  
17th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155-102 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 4L4

### Nominations:

Do you have any suggestions of other individuals or municipalities with municipal practices that we should add to the Municipal Excellence network? Please list their practice, municipality, and contact information.

Or, e-mail [menet@gov.ab.ca](mailto:menet@gov.ab.ca) and let us know about a municipal colleague that has a really good way of doing things.

**COMMENTS**

Have we missed something; anything you'd like to add to No the areas we have touched on, or an area we have not mentioned?