



PUBLIC HEARINGS

Innovation Lab Report

CONSULTING

The Innovation Lab

Project | User-friendly and Inclusive Public Hearings

Client | City Clerk's & Information Technology

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Executive Summary

In March 2021, Council passed a Motion Arising directing Administration to develop a more user-friendly and inclusive Public Hearing process. In conjunction with City Clerk's Office (Clerk's), Information Technology (IT) and the Engage Resource Unit (Engage), The Innovation Lab gathered and analyzed data from Calgarians (see the "[Data Collection Methods](#)" page) and City employees involved in the Public Hearing process to find opportunities to improve the experience. This report contains a brief summary of the results and proposes recommendations ("[Conclusion & Recommendations](#)" page) for consideration to address limitations of the work due to complexity of the issue and the limited research depth due to time and capacity constraints.

Notwithstanding, this project in an important first step in understand how The City might take actions to make a more user-friendly and inclusive Public Hearings process.

Identified Barriers to Participation in Public Hearings

Many Calgarians interviewed reported having challenging experiences while participating or when considering participation in a Public Hearing. There were several issues that prevented people from participating in a Public Hearing such as:



Inequity: The perceived and felt inequity of the process



Power Imbalance: The perceived and felt power imbalance of how Council Chambers is designed and speaking to Councillors at the podium



Time: The lack of time to participate due to the waiting times and time of day of Public Hearings



Diversity: A lack of awareness and focused outreach to diversify those participating in Public Hearings



Voice: Perceptions that their opinion does not matter and that speaking has little to no impact



Accessibility: The accessibility as a result of childcare commitments, cultural, language and hearing barriers, and parking cost



Environment: Not feeling that members of council were fostering a welcoming and respectful environment



Stress: The stress of preparing to speak and the emotional processes after speaking to personal or traumatic issues



Outdated Information: Hard to find, outdated information about Public Hearings and a lack of support to participate



Priority Opportunities To Address Participation Barriers

As outlined in the Appendix (see “[Problems Prioritized and Themed by Clerk’s Office](#)”), Clerk’s staff highlighted the following as priority opportunities that may be addressed in the short term with changes to internal City processes:

- + Waiting for hours to speak
- + Greater clarity on when it is a participant’s turn to speak
- + Greater clarity on the deadlines for written submissions
- + Discouragement from wanting to participate due to complexity of the process
- + Better transparency and information sharing during the hearings
- + Lack of understanding of the full engagement process before a hearing
- + Lack of understanding of how to participate
- + Conflicting messages from staff
- + Fear / anxiety / apprehension around speaking at Council

Recommendations

Overall, The Innovation Lab recommends that Clerk’s consider further investigation with diverse Calgarians to explore and address some of the barriers and challenges that they face. This will require further research into those currently not reflected in the Public Hearing process and time to develop, test and evaluate different approaches to see what will make Public Hearings more accessible and representative.

Considerations for future action include the exploration of the following recommendations:



Conduct further research with non-users and minority populations to design possible solutions to support equitable participation in the process.



Invest time to achieve internal process quick wins to not lose momentum.



Consider making Public Hearings more accessible and evaluating alignment with The City’s evolving equity and anti-racism strategies.



Utilize resources across the Corporation to increase the awareness and capacity of Calgarians to participate in Public Hearings.



Consider how Public Hearings augments other engagement efforts by The City.



Collect better data on the process and who participates to understand how The City improves the process.

Project Overview

Public participation in City decision making is a fundamental principle of our democratic system. Public Hearings is the process by which Calgary's City Council can hear (and read) opinions directly from Calgarians to inform municipal decision making. When there is a request to a change to a bylaw, change a land use, or there is an issue that Council would like to hear public views, Calgarians can call or go online to sign up and have five minutes to speak at a Council or a Committee meeting about how an issue impacts them.

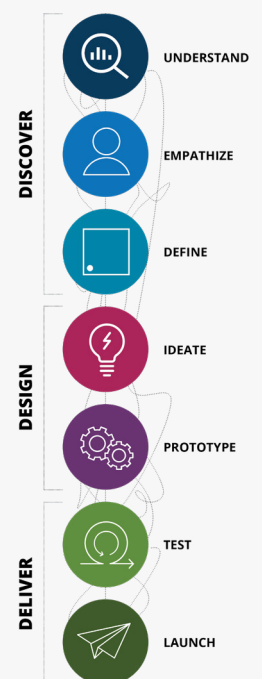
In March 2021, Council directed City Administration through a Motion Arising "to develop a more user-friendly and inclusive Public Hearing process". City Clerk's Office (Clerk's) and the Information Technology (IT) Business Unit were assigned to lead the project, and requested The Innovation Lab's support to explore Calgarians' needs through interviews and surface challenges faced by Clerk's staff in successfully meeting those needs. In parallel to an online survey led by the Engage Resource Unit, The Innovation Lab conducted the following:

- + A small sample of interviews with both users and non-users from around Calgary
- + Interviews with staff from internal City business units that connect into the Public Hearing process
- + Three internal Accelerator workshops with staff from Clerk's, IT, and other relevant business units across The City to review and make sense of the data that came from Calgarians and staff.

Time and capacity constraints limited the Innovation Lab's ability to collect the desired amount of data to inform a clear picture of both internal and external perspectives of the Public Hearing process. This report serves as a summary of the initial data collected and offers recommendations of potential next steps for consideration to further explore the Motion Arising to support a more user-friendly and inclusive Public Hearing process.

The Innovation Lab Approach

The Innovation Lab sought to apply a framework called Design Thinking which considers the human - whether a community member, customer or employee - at all aspects of a design process. The process seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the people that a project, or process, impacts and then develops solutions that are designed to fit their needs. Design Thinking methodology is used to create more people-friendly experiences and has had success in companies like AirBnB, Pinterest, Google and eBay as well as other municipal governments around the world. It is a rigorous and science backed methodology that is considered best practice in the innovation field. Time and resource constraints limited the full application of the Design Thinking methodology, but the methodology is, in part, at the root of the proposed recommendations for further consideration.



Data Collection Methods

The information in this report is based on two points of data collection with Calgarians:

1. An online survey on The City of Calgary Engage Portal
2. Empathy interviews with users and non-users of the Public Hearing process

Empathy Interviews



The Innovation Lab conducted 10 empathy interviews with Calgarians reached through Community Social Workers and Neighborhood Partnership Coordinators through Calgary Neighborhoods. By using City resources with connections to the community, we were able to find those that are underrepresented or not using Public Hearings, as well as those that had participated in many.

The empathy interviews, although small in number, provided insights from Calgarians who would not likely participate in an online survey.

As recommended in [“Conclusion & Recommendations”](#) of this report, more research is needed with a wider sample – especially with diverse and historically underrepresented populations to garner a more complete picture of the how to make the Public Hearing process more inclusive for Calgarians.

What are Empathy Interviews?

Empathy interviews are one-on-one conversations that use open-ended questions to elicit stories about specific experiences that help uncover unacknowledged needs.

The interviewer seeks to delve more deeply into stories than a more traditional interview. Empathy interviews help ensure that the diverse lived experiences of people are centered in decisions and actions.

Online Survey



The Engage Resource Unit led an online survey on The City of Calgary’s Engage Portal that sought to gather views on the barriers and potential solutions to make the Public Hearing process.

The survey had over 226 unique responses, including 17 representing community groups.

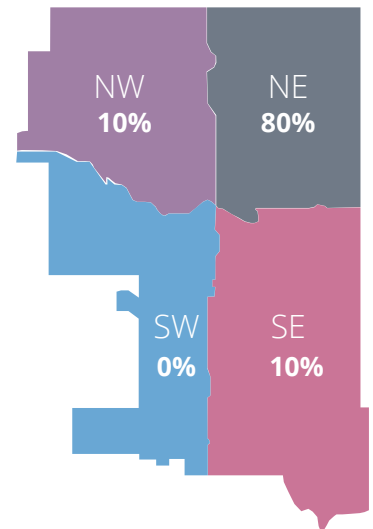
Interview Participant Demographics

The following visual representations display the demographics of the ten people that participated in The Innovation Lab's empathy interviews. The Lab sought to speak to a small sample of:

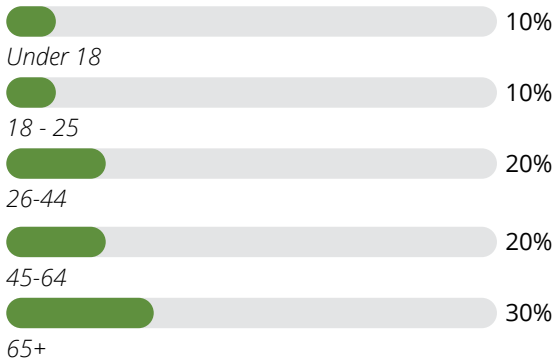
- + Three super users (those that participated in two or more hearings)
- + Two users (those that have participated in a Public Hearing once), and;
- + Five non-users (those that have never participated in a Public Hearing)

Among participants, there was a diversity of people spoken to across all demographic profiles. As the map to the right indicates, given time constraints and limitations in the number of people we could speak to, we were unable to speak to Calgarians in the SW quadrant of the city.

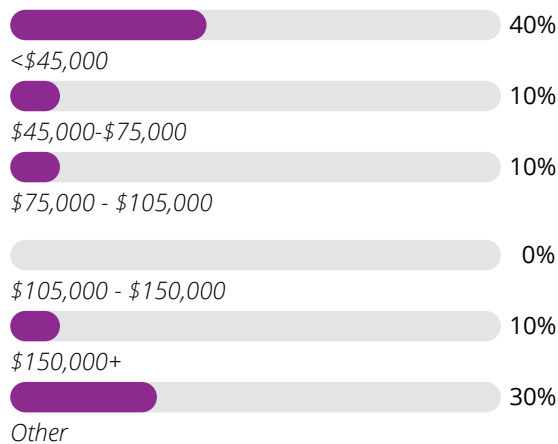
Location in Calgary



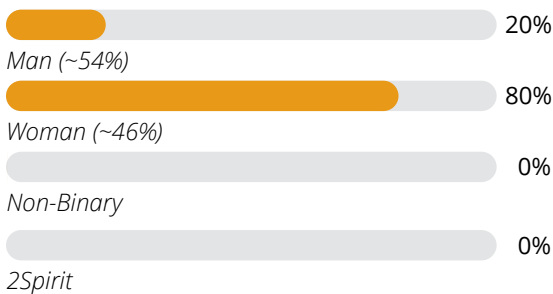
Age



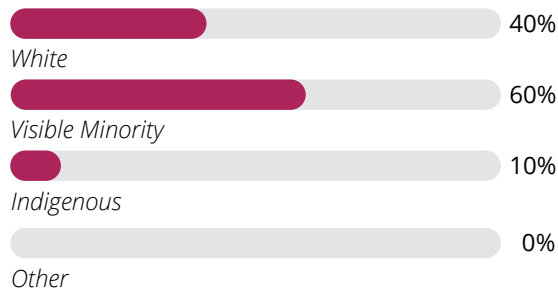
Income



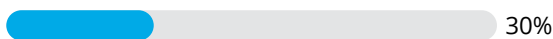
Gender Identity



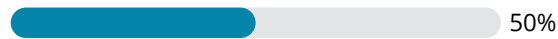
Ethnicity



LGBTQ+



Disability

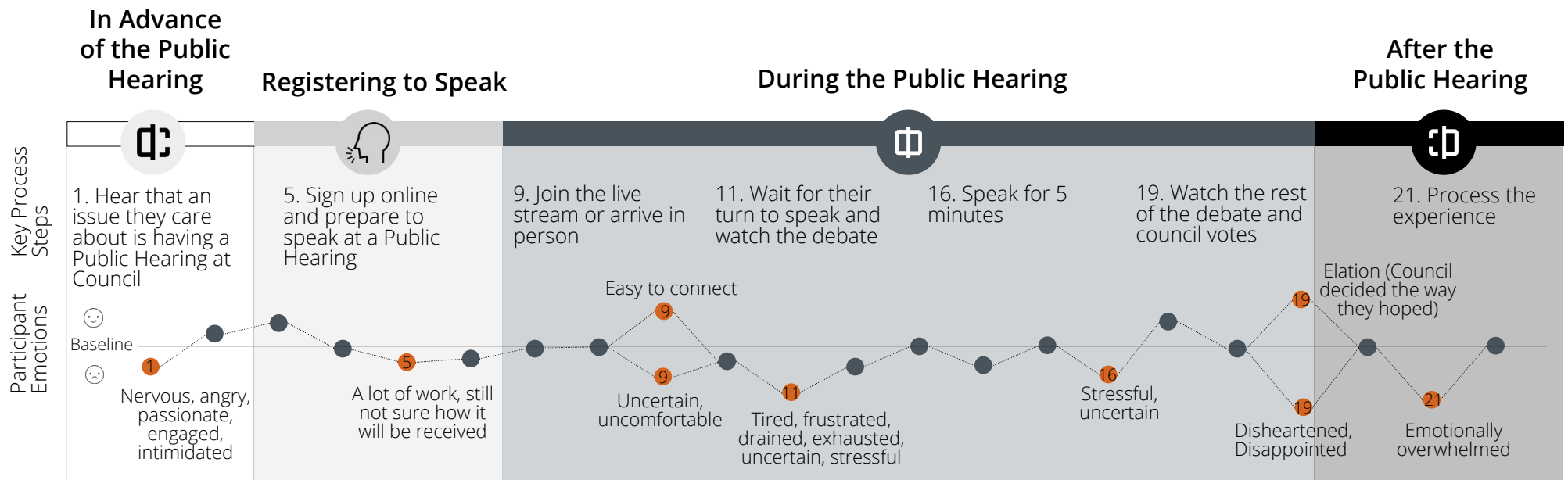


Public Hearing Participant Journey Map

The following graphic is a simplified map of the journey that Calgarians go through when attending a Public Hearing to speak. This process begins before a Public Hearing starts and follows the participant as they register to speak, when they speak at a Public Hearing, and after a Public Hearing take place. The map also provides a snapshot of Calgarian's aggregated emotions, and the needs and frustrations they experience while participating at each stage. The map includes some internal process information to enable the Public Hearing process to happen from a City administration perspective. This was collated by speaking to both City staff and Calgarians. More details on the 23 participant process steps and information from this journey map are in the "Journey Map Breakdown" section in the Appendix.

What is a Journey Map?

A journey map is a visual representation of the journey of someone using a product or service (in this case a Public Hearing). These maps tell the story of a user experiences with a service or product at all touch points. This tool helps us ensure that no user experience is missed, and we take a more holistic view of their interaction with a service or product.



Legend

- Participant Emotion at Each Public Hearing Step
- Critical Step for Participant

Participant Needs in the Public Hearing Process

The following needs (human physical and/or emotional requirements) were captured based on what Calgarians revealed through the analysis of data from interviews and online survey. These needs are categorized below in chronological order of the Public Hearing process, from the perspective of a Calgarian attending a Public Hearing for the first time. Not all needs identified below should necessarily be addressed by The City, however it is important to consider Calgarians' experience with Public Hearings holistically to best meet their needs.

In Advance of a Public Hearing

- + To share information about the Public Hearing with their networks
- + To feel that participating in a Public Hearing is safe
- + To manage their expectations of what the process might yield
- + To find information about upcoming Public Hearings and how to sign up in plain and multiple languages
- + To understand the purpose of a Public Hearing in local government context.
- + To be able to participate in Public Hearings in a way that does not impact their daily responsibility (e.g. work, childcare)
- + To understand their choices for participating (e.g. present at a Public Hearing, written submission, contact City, contact Councillors office etc.)



"We were trying to make our voice heard."

"My mum was politically active, that's why we had to leave where we came from."

- Key Quotes from Calgarians



While Registering to Speak for a Public Hearing

- + To understand how submissions are considered in Council's decisions
- + To access and have time to participate in the Public Hearings system
- + To understand rules for written submissions to ensure they are accepted and considered
- + To understand how the Public Hearing process unfolds & how their contribution is considered
- + To understand what a participant is allowed to speak to at the Public Hearing to prepare appropriately
- + To understand the norms and experience of a Public Hearing process



"I had to go to Value Village to get suit and a tie."

"I got no feedback for quite some time and no information about a time slot."

- Key Quotes from Calgarians



During Participation in a Public Hearing

- + To have support with childcare to be available to participate
- + To focus on the debate to know when their item will come up and when they will be expected to speak at the Public Hearing
- + To understand the live agenda and how it impacts their item timing for speaking
- + To prepare for a potentially long day - emotionally and physically
- + Knowledge of and access to interpretation services to support their participation (e.g. translated instructions to understand how to participate and what is being said before they speak)
- + To feel heard and respected
- + To feel that Councillors are being held to the rules of a Public Hearing by the Chair
- + To feel safe and welcome
- + To feel the process was fair and equitable

When virtual:

- + To understand how to connect to the phone bridge

When in person:

- + To understand what they can and cannot physically bring into Council Chambers
- + Free or cheap, accessible parking for the duration of the hearing
- + To feel comfortable and physically accommodated in the space (e.g. appropriate seating)



"I wish I knew about the long wait. I didn't come prepared. You aren't allowed food or drink in the room."

"It was very confrontational questioning. The hearing went for three days. The numbers [of presenters] dropped off the second day. Everyone was just horrified how we were treated right from the get-go."

- Key Quotes from Calgarians



After a Public Hearing Takes Place

- + To process emotions and unpack the experience to help them move on
- + To understand what happens if an item gets sent back to Committee and how to follow what happens next
- + To understand if/how their views were considered and the outcome of the decision
- + To perceive transparency in the decision making



"It was a very stressful experience listening to people being homophobic. It negatively affected my mood for several days."

- Key Quote from a Calgarian

Calgarian Insights to Improve the Public Hearings Process

An insight is an understanding that enables examination of a service in a fresh and unexpected way. Insights are key to building up a better understanding of the barriers to participation in Public Hearings from the perspective of Calgarians. Powerful insights accelerate good ideas that have the potential to drive greater value for Calgarians in using the Public Hearings process.

The following are insights from Calgarians on the Public Hearings process that should be considered in the next stage of the process to make Public Hearings more user-friendly and inclusive:



Community organizations inform Calgarians about Public Hearing issues that may impact them.



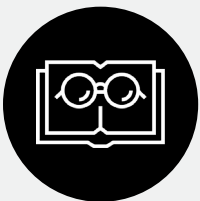
Although generally considered a negative experience, Calgarians appreciate **having their voices heard**.



Active listening and Councillors posing relevant questions leads to much more positive feelings about their experience



There is a **perception that you need hundreds of people** to stand up and speak to affect any change.



There is a **perception that Councillors do not read written submissions** in advance which motivates people to speak in person.

City Staff Insights to Improve the Public Hearings Process

There were several insights from City of Calgary staff that came up in the Innovation Lab information gathering process that are also worth noting. Below are insights from City staff organized into themes:

Participant Support Needed

- + If The City wants Calgarians to attend, we have to ask Calgarians to attend
- + Engagement with the Councillors' Offices would help (in order to make the process less intimidating)
- + There are a lot of gaps in online reference materials (e.g. FAQs)
- + Privacy instructions need to be clearly defined for the public and in plain language
- + There is a preference for pre-recorded audio and video submissions
- + Method for people to know their 5 minutes (count down timer on a screen)
- + More information throughout the process on the interpretation services available

Perceptions of Public Hearing

- + There is a lack of trust in the system/process from Calgarians
- + Perception of non-users that their views do not matter and they have no influence
- + Perception that being in-person matters more

Facility Requirements

- + How is The City creating a welcoming environment - change of space and more friendly faces
- + Offering food & drink would be more inclusive (but challenging for budgets).
- + Post-COVID, keeping with electronic methods to participate
- + Verify but protect participant identities

Other

- + Calgarians continue to contribute through this process even though they find it so overwhelmingly negative
- + The current process does not allow time for Councillors to contemplate all of the information that is required to weigh issues

Ideas from Interview Participants to Improve the Public Hearing Process

Although The Innovation Lab did not solicit ideas from Calgarians, the following are ideas gathered from interviews on what could be done to improve the Public Hearing process. These should be considered alongside the ideas shared through the online survey.

Talk to people that can show they are personally impacted by a process



Provide in-person or over the phone support for sign up to speak



Tell participants who is and isn't participating in Public Hearings



Allow participants to see the council chambers in advance



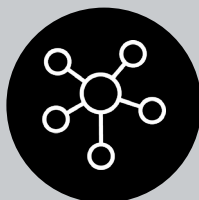
A step-by-step guide of what the experience is like



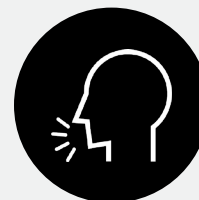
To help prepare to participate, provide opportunity to hear from others that have been through the process



Go directly to the community to garner views: "meet us halfway"



Get information out in social media or other places to get more diversity of the population



Provide more plain language and tell us why it's important to go to Public Hearings

Ideas from City Staff to Improve the Public Hearing Process

As reference in the [Project Overview](#), due to time and capacity strength the entire Design Thinking methodology was not followed in its entirety. Nevertheless, through the work conducted, several ideas were generated from both Clerk's staff and other City staff involved. It is noted, however, that there are limitations due to the depth of research conducted (see [Recommendation 1](#)). These are important to note as there may be some quick wins to improving the Public Hearing experience by testing some of these ideas in the short term. This will help keep momentum for the project, and show Calgarians that The City is listening and seeking to solve their challenges even if only with initial small steps.

Ideas from Clerk's Staff:

- + Allow people to indicate their pronouns before speaking
- + Develop a Councillor orientation training on using plain language
- + Replicate City of Edmonton's 5 minute video on the Public Hearings process
- + Take a short video on a cell phone and post-it showing the Chambers space
- + Update Public Hearing process resources
- + Allow submission of pre-recorded video and audio
- + Influence the Chair to allow people with interpreters to have more than 5 minutes (and set that expectation with people with interpreters)
- + Create better hearing assistance signage or make clearer that this service is available
- + Consider different venue for some Public Hearings that affect single communities
- + Consider alternative methods of sending information that is not an email (i.e. text messages)

Other City Staff Ideas:

- + Create a board with all the languages so that people can indicate what language they need an interpreter for (in-person)
- + Develop a coaching service on what makes a good presentation or online tools
- + Get instructions on how to participate in multiple languages
- + Allow people to tour Council Chambers in advance
- + Translate signage around the building into main languages
- + Have Clerk's staff work with interpreter to give the full context of the meeting to share with the person needing interpretation
- + Create a step by step guide on the website on how to participate in Public Hearings

Conclusion & Recommendations

Public Hearings are an important part of Council's decision making process to incorporate Calgarian's perspectives. However, there are currently many barriers to participation and challenges with the current process that require a more in-depth understanding and further capacity to fully address.

Given the time and staff resource limitation, this report summarizes early and a significant, but limited dataset, on understanding Calgarians' views and opinions. Through investment in time and resources to further explore the overall Public Hearing process, this will contribute to opportunities to support more equitable decision making, improve services, build public trust, and encourage a more civically engaged population.

"For citizens [Public Hearings] gives people a chance to have a voice. In a system where individual voices are usually lost or not heard. There is a lot frustration. But I still think it's an incredible part of a democratic civil process."

- Quote from a Calgarian

The Innovation Lab has laid out the following recommendations for consideration that require commitment of time, resources and political will from Administration and Council.



Recommendation 1

Conduct further research with non-users and minority populations to design possible solutions to support equitable participation in the process:

In order to understand why populations are not participating in Public Hearings and to meet their needs, a larger sample of data needs to be collected from across Calgary (most notable, with BIPOC and historically under-invested populations in Calgary). To reach those currently not participating in the Public Hearings process, it is recommended to utilize research techniques beyond surveys and use Community Social Workers and Social Researchers to target certain populations where further data is needed (e.g., people with disabilities, single family homes, new Calgarians, etc).



Recommendation 2

Consider making Public Hearings more inclusive and evaluating alignment with The City's evolving equity and anti-racism strategies:

The Motion Arising was to focus on making the process more user-friendly and inclusive. As such, it would benefit the project to include a lens of equity, ethics and anti-racism. As these strategies are being pursued across the Corporation, staff with expertise in these areas should apply an analysis of equity/ethics, and actively contribute their subject matter expertise to improve to the Public Hearing process.



Recommendation 3

Invest time to achieve internal process quick wins to not lose momentum:

Several quick wins (see “[Ideas from City Staff to Improve the Public Hearing Process](#)”) were revealed through this project that could improve the Public Hearing process today and not require higher level political permission space. This includes updating and improving Public Hearing resources, producing, or repurposing a low budget explainer video, and improving incoming Councillor training to reiterate the importance of providing a respectful environment for those that attend Public Hearings.



Recommendation 4

Utilize resources across the Corporation to increase the awareness and capacity of Calgarians to participate in Public Hearings:

The City has significant corporate resources embedded in communities in Calgary that it can utilize to improve the capacity to participate in Public Hearings. When considering coaching or sharing resources for Public Hearing participation, The City should consider utilizing Community Social Workers to engage and support communities in Calgary for Public Hearings that most affect them.



Recommendation 5

Consider how Public Hearings augments other engagement efforts by The City:

Public Hearings is only one of many ways that The City engages Calgarians in their decision making and service delivery. Yet, Public Hearings are often considered to be giving a voice to the loudest voices and certain demographics of the population with the privilege of time and resources to participate. Further consideration is needed on how Public Hearings are balanced with other aspects of engagement in The City.



Recommendation 6

Collect better data on the process and who participates to understand how The City improves the process:

Currently, limited data is collected on participants of Public Hearings. To understand how Public Hearings are improving, some anonymized demographic data would be useful to reveal insights on who is and who isn't participating, and how this changes overtime with the actions that The City takes. Without this data, there will be limited quantitative measures to understand if progress is being made on inclusion which will hinder the ability to see where further investment may be needed.



APPENDIX

The Appendix includes all points and contributions made by participants throughout the project. All points noted in the appendix are presented near verbatim.

Appendix 1

Key Learning Public Hearing Participant Challenges

Below is a summary of what was learned about the pains, struggles and frustrations when participating or considering to participate in a Public Hearing, as reported by respondents of the online survey and empathy interviews.



Creating a Welcoming and Respectful Environment

- + Feeling disrespected by Councillors (their tone / language / attitude)
- + Not feeling welcome to participate
- + Security and metal detectors are the first thing you see as you walk in
- + Perception of not wanting certain types of people (no home owners)
- + Feeling as though councillors do not listen
- + Lack of food and drink available
- + Fear or anxiety of speaking at council

Key quote from interview participant: "It was very confrontational questioning. The hearing went for three days. The numbers [of presenters] dropped off the second day. Everyone was just horrified how we were treated right from the get-go."



Improving Outreach / Awareness

- + Hard to know how to participate and what Public Hearings are going on
- + Lack of outreach to certain demographics (e.g. youth, BIPOC populations, new Canadians.)
- + No communication information about the hearings to reach diversity of audience (social media)
- + Lack of information in different languages
- + Miscommunication on process, submission opportunities and methods

Key quote from interview participant: "I am almost 18 and going to vote - and the fact that I had never heard of it is a concern. Need to change the medium that they put out information to get the information out."



Addressing Power Imbalances

- + Power dynamic of the space (speaking up to councillors, going into a formal council chambers)
- + Having to conform to processes and language cadence
- + Having to call the Mayor "Your Worship"
- + Intimidation of speaking to Councillors
- + Speaking in not your first language
- + Perception that process is not for "them"

Key quote from interview participant: "My career/guidance councilor walked me through the steps [of presenting at a Public Hearing] and that I had to call the mayor "his Worship". That's weird Illuminati stuff."



Addressing Time Barriers

- + Ability to wait for hours (sometimes days) for your turn to speak
- + Lack of realistic time frames
- + Sacrificing work and personal life time to speak
- + Not enough time to speak (especially for those that require interpretation)
- + Waiting on hold on the phone or in chambers

Key quote from interview participant: "There is no set time or even realistic timeframe for your opportunity to speak. You need to be able to potentially sacrifice an entire workday in order to be able to participate."



Increasing Accessibility

- + Cultural barriers of speaking in public
- + Access and use of technology
- + Lack of information in different languages
- + Inability provide written submission in different languages
- + Lack of diversity of interpretation services
- + Accessibility and understanding of the interpretation services are available
- + Understanding of hearing support available

Key quote from interview participant: "People whose first language isn't English, that is challenging for them to navigate through the website. It should be a lot more easy than it is."



Addressing Inequity

- + Only certain demographics are participating in the process (older white men)
- + Use of language and cadence of speech caters to a certain type of person (highly educated, English speakers)
- + No equity in the perspectives of one group over another (wealthy residents versus average citizens)
- + Perception that those with the privilege of time to speak is more impactful than other methods of engagement

Key quote from interview participant: "I had to put on my "white man speaking voice" - I'm a person of colour, so I have that going on. It's especially hard as a person of colour. If I speak in my normal voice, you're not going to know what I'm saying. I had to be subservient to them. Let them guide the conversation with their process. I had to adjust my behaviour to babysit the feelings of a rich, white man."



Improving Support and Information Access

- + Lack of understanding of what issues one can speak at for a Public Hearing
- + Public information is technical, full of jargon and inaccessible to the general public
- + Lack of support like coaching or mentorship before speaking
- + Process steps are unclear
- + Lack of clarity of what the point of a Public Hearing is
- + Conflicting messages on the process

Key quote from interview participant: "I'm concerned with the ease with which people can find out how to participate in Public Hearings. It was easier in 2013. The FAQ document is still being shared with the public and it's not up to date."



Influence

- + Feeling like outcomes are predetermined
- + Feeling like Public Hearings are a check box exercise and have no impact
- + No understanding of whose views are considered
- + Feeling as though you need many people to have a decision swayed
- + Feeling as those councilors do not have enough time to consider decisions
- + Lack of trust in government to listen to their voices
- + Councilors have their own agenda to pass laws
- + Process is based on emotional decisions not facts
- + Lack of transparency or understanding of what happens next

Key quote from interview participant: "But the biggest issue is that it seems that the City generally knows the outcomes it wants from these processes and voices in opposition are discarded or disregarded."



Mitigating Emotional Stress

- + Stressful to speak and hear about issues that affect a speak (especially traumatic or deeply personal issues)
- + Stressful to organize community organizations to speak
- + Stress of speaking in front of councilors/peers or making opinions known publicly

Key quote from interview participant: "It was a very stressful experience listening to people being homophobic. It negatively affected my mood for several days. I would never want to participate in a Public Hearing that had an impact on my LGBTQ2s community again. I would go for something like a community debate about speed limits on residential streets"



Capitalizing on Positive Responses

The Calgarians that provided their views largely reported having a negative experience with the Public Hearing process. However, there were some positives that respondents reported as part of the process which includes:

- + Having the opportunity to speak at a Public Hearing
- + The unlimited number of Calgarians that are able to speak, having the ability for councilors to ask them questions
- + The perceived fairness of everyone getting to speak for 5 minutes
- + Being able to participate from home (although not everyone due to technology access issues).

Key quote from interview participants: "Anyone who wanted to speak could sign up to speak at the Hearing. There were no limits on the number of people who could sign up. Since COVID, the meetings have been online so it made it somewhat easier since a speaker did not have to travel downtown."

"When they opened up the [skate]park and there was physical evidence, only then they proved my voice mattered. It wasn't rotary club lip service. They actually did it."

Appendix 2

Public Hearing User Empathy Mapping

After hearing data from the Innovation Lab's interviews and Engage survey, Clerk's staff participated in an empathy mapping session. The goal of empathy mapping is to gain a deeper level of understanding of a stakeholder within your problem space. An empathy-mapping exercise can help identify gaps in understanding and help gain a deeper understanding of the things one does not know yet know.

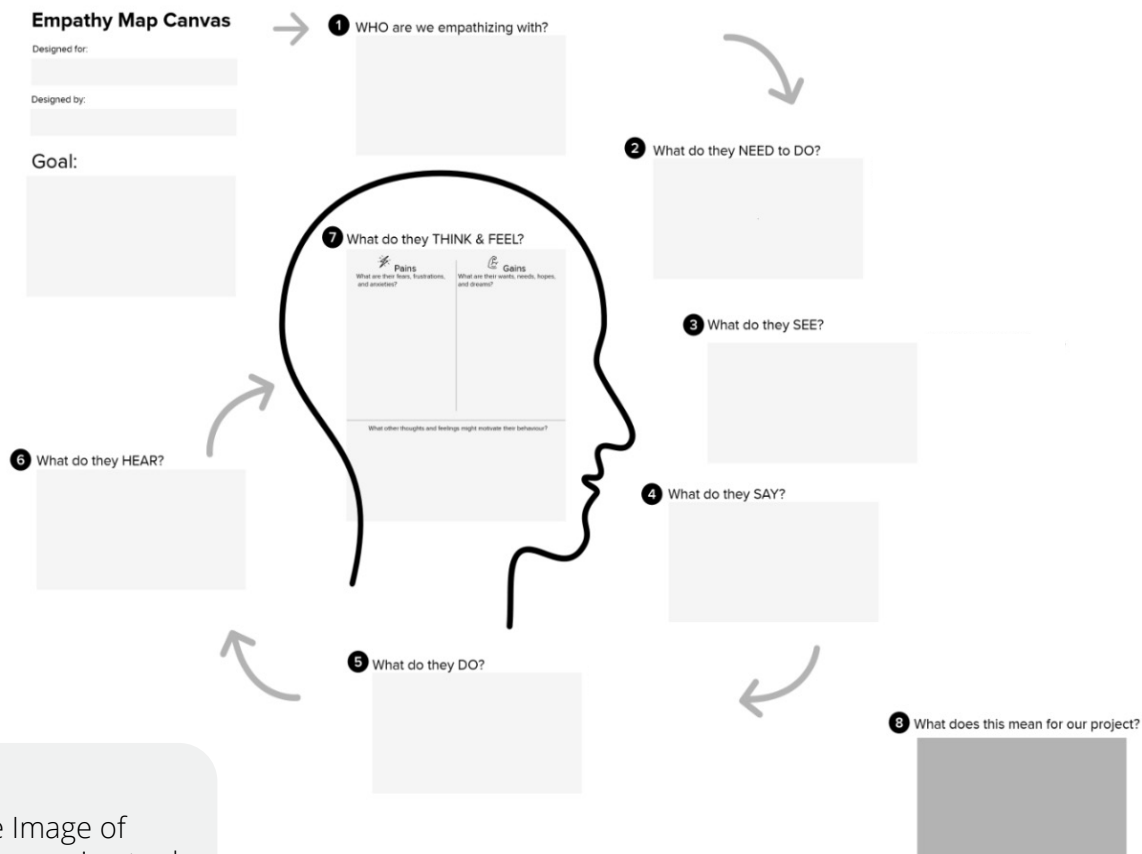
For the Public Hearing process, the empathy map was conducted using the three different user types:

Super-user - someone who has been to more than one Public Hearings

User - someone who has been to one Public Hearing

Non-user - someone who has never been to a Public Hearing

Below is an example of the map used by participants, and the following 3 pages are the data from that session.



Template Image of empathy mapping tool

Super User: A person that attended more than two public hearings

Goal

- + Have some influence over how their neighbourhood changes over time, in order to preserve or accentuate the things they like/need

Who are we empathizing with?

- + Resident (owner or renter)
- + City is making a planning decision
- + Influencer in the City's planning decision

What do they NEED to Do?

- + May provide input/feedback to CA, or may want to speak to council directly
- + Understand WHO makes WHICH decisions and HOW their input influences the outcomes

What do they SEE?

- + Their comments/submissions in the agenda/package
- + How engagement feedback to date has influenced or changed the City recommendation (hopefully)- See the developer/proponent
- + See the council chamber (horseshoe & barriers, security)
- + See online static image that seems separated. See the mayor and clerks and maybe a councillor. MAY NOT see a councillor face-to-face
- + May see Councillors not paying attention

What do they SAY?

- + They are not listened to- combative, argumentative, disrespectful
- + Some thoughtful back and forth- interests of development and tax base is greater than interests of those already there
- + Cllrs have interest in destroying neighbourhoods or supporting developers

What do they DO?

- + Be aware of the specific issue- engage up with clerk's office
- + Prepare their notes or presentation
- + Follow somewhat strict guidelines (procedure bylaw and parliamentary decorum)

What do they HEAR?

- + Process is cumbersome
- + That they are anti-development or anti-change
- + Cllrs don't listen/pre-determined outcome

What do they THINK & FEEL?

- + PAIN: Anti-development/Anti-change
- + PAIN: Developer interest has more weight than average citizen
- + PAIN: Lack of specific time they are up to speak
- + PAIN: Agenda can change on a whim (when items are dealt with)
- + GAIN: Thoughtful engagement/back and forth with decision makers
- + GAIN: Their comments/presentation CAN make a difference/influence

What does this mean for our project?

- + Equal weight given to anyone who participates
- + Participation is not just lip service/checking off a box

User: A person that attended only one public hearing

Goal

- + To understand the process and be heard

Who are we empathizing with?

- + Someone that is engaged in the process
- + They are reachable
- + What is bringing them out?
- + There was a reason they only participated once
- + Moderately following city issues & spurred to action (to speak)

What do they NEED to Do?

- + Because they are reachable, once they get to Clerks, we can't be the barrier for them to continue along the way
- + They need to start the process. They need to engage
- + The user needs to do a bit of research on the process, the item, and their role as a public speaker
- + Ask questions if they don't understand

What do they SEE?

- + What we would like them to see is "clarity" that is well-oiled, that it flows well, that it's simple to understand where to go, where to sit, when to speak, when to leave
- + Online - the faces of those listening?
- + Online - technology, they might see nothing if they are participating by phone
- + They see: formality, security, suits, media cameras. The first thing they see is a metal detector
- + As a user you may be familiar with this, but you still might not like it. "gotta get prepped...build myself up"

What do they SAY?

- + I don't know where to go
- + Where are the washrooms
- + Can I have water?
- + When is it my turn?

What do they DO?

- + Sit...for hours...or days...waiting for their turn to speak. OR...call in advance of their item/panel, and wait to be called upon
- + Speak, present a document or information. In their own voice or on behalf of a group of people or organization

What do they HEAR?

- + Sometimes nothing. No voices, no feedback, no question. Only a "thank you for speaking"
- + Questions from members of Council. Voices from other participants/speakers. Perspectives from City Administration. Opposing voices. The "applicant" (if it's a land use item)

What do they THINK & FEEL?

- + PAIN: Not understanding the process, anxiety b/c of it
- + PAIN: Being "prepared" or "warned" in advance, to know what to expect
- + GAIN: For their voice to be respected
- + GAIN: To believe the decision has not been "already been made". That they are not just a box to be checked-off. That they are not a quota to be reached
- + GAIN: For their voice to matter - that it actually impacts the decision

What does this mean for our project?

- + SO MUCH opportunity to create a welcoming environment!!

Non-User: A person that attended no public hearings

Goal

- + They want to be heard

Who are we empathizing with?

- + A person who has never participated in a Public Hearing
- + Maybe someone who is unaware of the process

What do they NEED to Do?

- + They need help understanding the process
- + They need clear instructions

What do they SEE?

- + Lots of red tape and maybe they don't know where to go or what to do (i.e., when to speak)

What do they SAY?

- + They are afraid of the process
- + The process is unknown and very intimidating. They don't know where to start

What do they DO?

- + Contact us and tell us what they need. Start with an email address
- + Clerk's requires a specific Public Hearing Staff member dedicated to working with the public during Public Hearings?!?

What do they HEAR?

- + They might be hearing incorrect info from friends/neighbours. That the process is intimidating!

What do they THINK & FEEL?

- + PAIN: The process is unknown and very intimidating
- + PAIN: They don't know where to start (who to contact)
- + GAIN: They want to feel heard and respected
- + GAIN: They want to feel like they can participate and be heard
- + OTHER: If they feel like they would be welcomed
- + OTHER: If they knew the remote participation process was easy to follow

What does this mean for our project?

- + It is clear we need a more user-friendly system
- + There are a lot of gaps in our reference materials (online FAQs)
- + More engagement with the community about the process would likely help
- + FOIP instructions need to be clearly defined for the public
- + Engagement with the Councillors' offices would help (in order to make the process less intimidating)
- + We need a guide for the process - step-by-step instructions would help!

Appendix 3

Problems Prioritized & Themed by Clerk's Staff

In a workshop with Clerk's and IT staff, The Innovation Lab facilitated a session where participants categorized the challenges reported by Calgarians and staff and prioritize them based on:

- + Challenges that Clerk's can fix in the short term as they require an internal process change
- + Challenges that could potentially solved with the IT online registration system
- + Challenges that require more investigation and time to review

Clerk's Internal Process Fixes

The following are the challenges indicated by Clerk's that staff believe they could fix in the short term with an internal process change. These were ranked on the impact they would have on making the Public Hearing process more user-friendly.

The following were chosen as the biggest priority:

- + Lack of clarity of process of the Public Hearing process
- + Waiting for hours (in person)
- + Not clear when my turn to speak is
- + Deadlines for written submissions not being clear
- + Discouragement from wanting to participate due to complexity of the process
- + Additional transparency and information sharing during the hearings
- + Lack of understanding of the full engagement process before a hearing
- + Hard to know how to participate
- + Conflicting messages
- + Fear / anxiety / apprehension around speaking at Council

Potential Challenges the IT system Could Fix

The following were indicated by Clerk's participants as issues that may be fixed by an IT solution, which at the time of writing this report, has not been defined:

- + Intimidation of speaking in front of Councillors
- + Fear of peers knowing what you spoke about
- + Disembodied process of not being able to see councillors
- + Participation notices only in newspapers and not in modern media
- + Finding more opportunities to speak
- + Additional transparency and information sharing during hearings
- + Not knowing how many minutes there are to speak
- + Waiting on hold on the phone for several hours
- + Difficulty using technology
- + Asking for interpretation
- + Allowing for pre-recorded audio or video options
- + Access / use of technology
- + Lack of information in different languages

Bigger Challenges

The following are the challenges indicated by Clerk's that staff believe will require more investigation and time to review. Most of these issues were around accessibility of Public Hearings for minority and vulnerable populations, the perception of the process being ineffective or skewed to one side, the trauma associated with Public Hearings, and challenges associated with councillors behavior.

- + Highly structured and formal process
- + Making Public Hearings "less public" as it can discourage some populations from participating
- + Security guards and metal detectors being the first thing you see
- + Feeling disrespected by councillors
- + Not feeling welcome
- + Power dynamics presented by speaking to councillors
- + Addressing the Mayor as "Your Worship"
- + Having to conform to language and procedural norms
- + Having to hear hours of one side to an argument that may be traumatic
- + Lack of outreach to certain populations (youth, BIPOC, etc)
- + Limited use of City resources (like social workers) to increase the capacity of people to speak
- + Time consuming
- + Emotional decisions versus facts
- + Lack of transparency of the process
- + No support to those that experience trauma
- + Lack of feeling that Councillors are accountable
- + No equity of perspective of one group over another
- + Perception that speaking in person is more effective than written submissions or other forms of engagement
- + Limited support for those with hard of hearing
- + Lack of accessibility in other languages
- + Perceptions that Public Hearings make a difference
- + Perception you need 100 people to speak to make a difference
- + Perception that Councillors minds are made up in advance

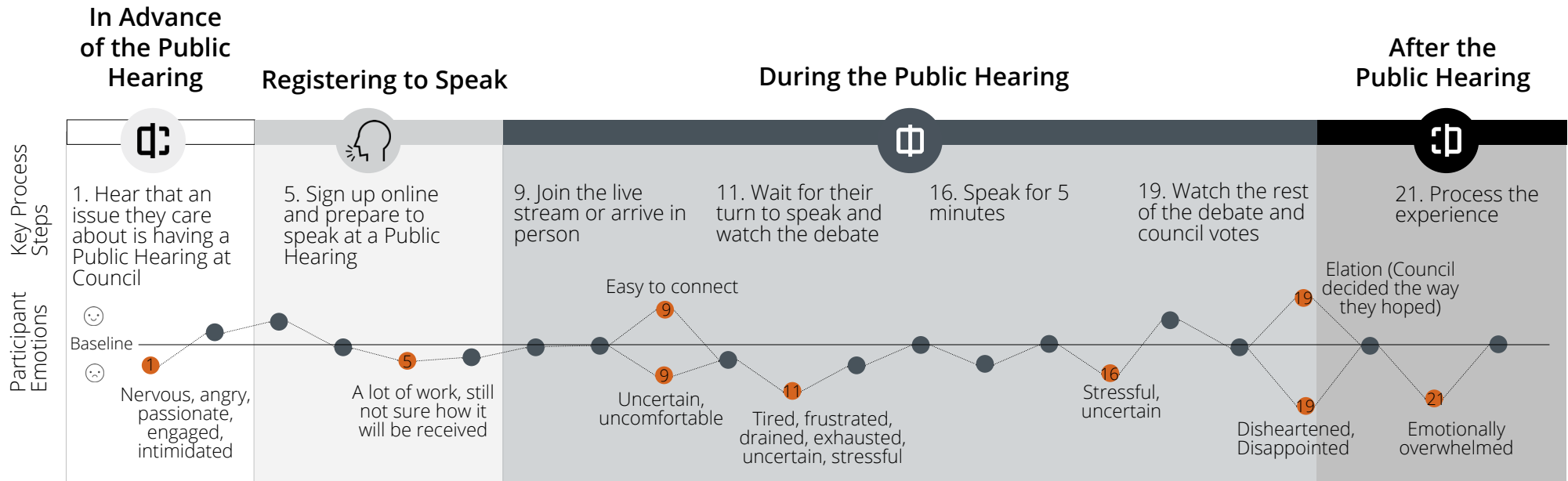
Appendix 4

Public Hearing Participant Journey Map Breakdown

The following pages are a breakdown of each of the four sections of the Public Hearing process journey map.

What is a Journey Map?

A journey map is a visual representation of the journey of someone using a product or service (in this case a Public Hearing). These maps tell the story of a user experience with a service or product at all touch points. This tool helps us ensure that no user experience is missed, and we take a more holistic view of their interaction with a service or product.



Legend

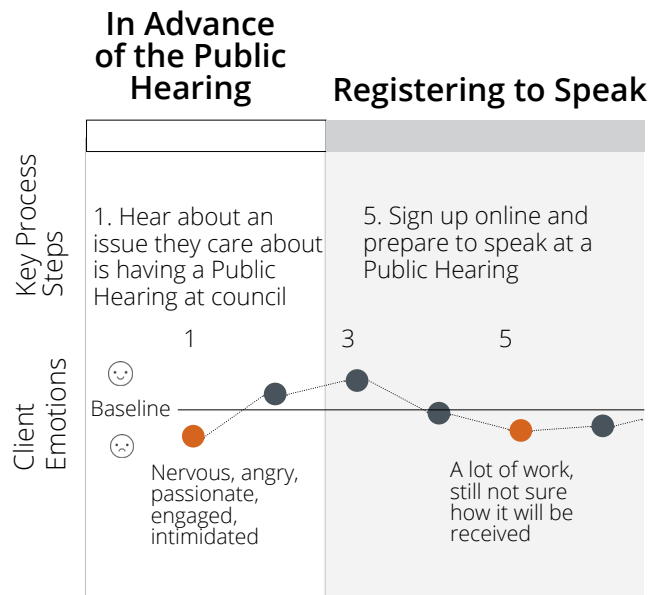
- Participant Emotion at Each Public Hearing Step
- Critical Step for Participant

Journey Map (1 of 3)



The following information is a key point summary of a person's journey through the first two sections, Before signing up for the Public Hearing and Registering to speak, of the Public Hearing process.

There are a total of 23 steps with 6 critical key points; this page dives into steps 1 to 6.



Major Insight

Community organizations inform Calgarians about public hearing issues they should come out to speak at.



Major Need

Calgarians want to know the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the process.

Steps 1 - 6

1. Hear about an issue they care about is having a Public Hearing at council
2. Decide to speak at a Public Hearing at council
3. Put in a request to speak & email written submission by noon the day of
4. Notification that they can speak
5. Prepare to speak at Public Hearings
6. Receive instructions Friday before Public Hearing - Including a list of the speakers & might be put on a panel

Legend

- Participant Emotion at Each Public Hearing Step
- Critical Step for Participant

Journey Map (2 of 3)



The following information is a key point summary of a person's journey through the third section, During the Public Hearing, of the Public Hearing process.

There are a total of 23 steps with 6 critical key points; this page dives into steps 7 to 19.



Major Insight

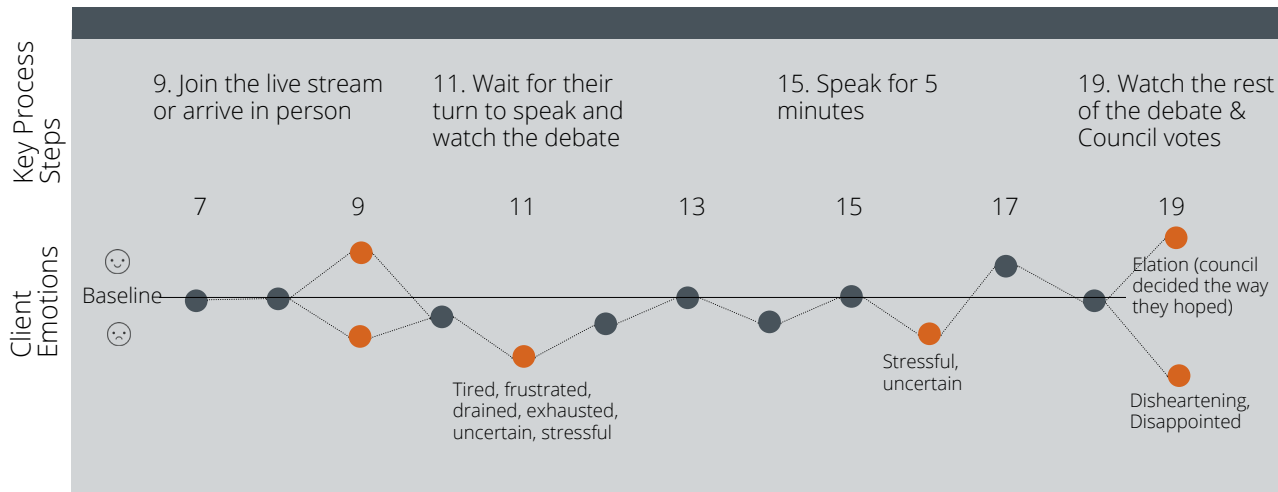
There is a perception that councilors do not read written submissions in advance which motivates people to speak in person



Major Need

To be able to participate in public hearings in a way that does not impact their daily responsibility (e.g. work, childcare)

During the Public Hearing



Steps 7 - 19

7. Provide presentation visuals to Clerks (PowerPoint, video, etc.)
8. May receive email notification about delayed timing to the Public Hearing
9. Arrive at City hall VIRTUAL: Log-in to watch the live stream on a computer
10. Go through security to go into chambers VIRTUAL: Call in to speak, two items before their item and stay on mute
11. See the sign-up sheet to speak and then write their name on it (for contentious items) VIRTUAL: Wait for their turn to speak and watch the debate
12. Sit anywhere in the public gallery
13. Come down from the public gallery and line up at the front of present
14. Step up to the podium one at a time
15. Share the materials they brought with Clerks team for distribution
16. Speak for five minutes
17. Receive and reply to questions from the Mayor and Councillors
18. Return to their seat VIRTUAL: Disconnect from the phone bridge
19. Watch the rest of the debate and Council vote

Legend

- Participant Emotion at Each Public Hearing Step
- Critical Step for Participant

Journey Map (3 of 3)

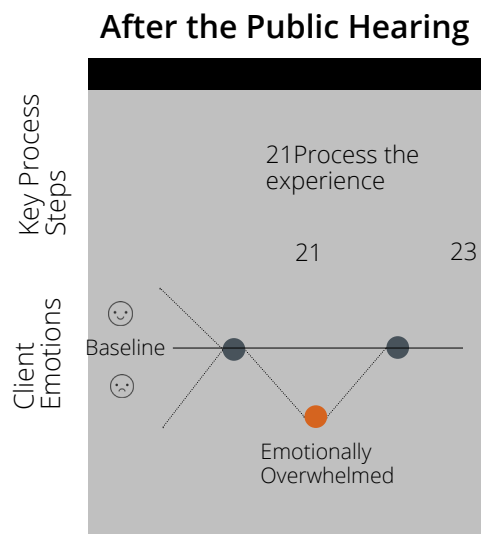
The following information is a key point summary of a person's journey through the last section, After the Public Hearing, of the Public Hearing process.

There are a total of 23 steps with 6 critical key points; this page dives into steps 20 to 23.



Major Need



To understand if/how their views were considered and the outcome of the decision



Steps 20 - 23

20. Leave the chambers VIRTUAL: Turn off the live stream
21. Process the experience
22. Read the meeting minutes
23. Follow-up by email with questions and comments (no recorded client emotions)

Legend

-  Participant Emotion at Each Public Hearing Step
-  Critical Step for Participant

THE INNOVATION LAB

The Innovation Lab helps The City of Calgary transform their programs, processes and people with Design Thinking for effective service delivery and to build a resilient city together.

We are a public-sector lab embedded in and run by The City of Calgary to bring best practices in innovation to internal City business units.

The Innovation Lab concentrates work in three strategic areas



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Find the right path forward and design actionable solutions.

The Innovation Lab leads project teams through complex challenges by using innovation tools and methodologies, design research and data synthesis.



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Expand your toolkit with new ways of approaching your challenges.

The Innovation Lab leads professional learning opportunities to strengthen skills in collaboration, design and innovation.



Innovation network

Connect with people across The City to break down barriers.

The Innovation Lab accelerates innovation at The City by designing opportunities to connect staff, projects and citizen groups.

For more information, connect with us!
innovationlab@calgary.ca