

Seven Common Sins Leading to Public Participation Failure

1. Lack of Commitment

All levels of the organization must be committed to gaining and using public input.

2. The Checklist Approach

Public participation is not an event or meeting, it is a continuous process of learning and input.

3. Public Participation Starts Too Late

Public input cannot start at the proposed decision; public values should be reflected in the decision criteria, alternatives, and even process planning.

4. Public Participation Is Not Integrated Into Decision-Making

Public participation must be conducted as part of, not parallel to, decision making in order for public input to be a meaningful part of the decision.

5. Not All Stakeholder Voices are Heard

A broad cross-section of the community must be engaged for all relevant stakeholder values and interests to be considered.

6. The Public is Not Adequately Informed

Comprehensive and transparent public information must precede meaningful public input to the decision.

7. The Public Receives Inadequate Feedback

Timely and specific feedback is necessary for the public to understand how its input influenced decision-making.

