

# Charting the Table

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## MAKING SPACE

CENTERING EQUITY  
IN PLANNING

### Description

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This tool outlines how you can create opportunities for transparency and accountability at any stage of the engagement process, especially when leading meetings. Being clear about where in the process you are, what is on the table (negotiable) and what is off the table (non-negotiable) provides a starting point for clear communication with community members around what they can have influence over. Being clear about stages of the process (e.g. a development application) and at which stage different types of decisions are made gives community members a holistic view, and simultaneously deepens their civic literacy and ability to engage.

### How to use this worksheet

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#### Step 1

Draw out and present the planning process that the project at hand will be/is following. Highlight the opportunities for community input and partnership throughout the process. If you can, share what kinds of decisions get made at the different stages. Include this map in your presentations/communications to communities.

#### Step 2

Once you have identified the opportunities in the process where community can participate, define clearly which stage of the process you are currently at, and what is on and off the table in terms of influence that the community can have at that stage, whether it be during a community meeting or through other forms of engagement (e.g. online surveys, phone banks). Present this information to the community in clear, simple language.

#### Related How-tos

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- [How to lead an equitable meeting](#)
- [How to communicate with communities](#)

This tool has been inspired and informed by:

- [Community Engagement Toolkit for Planning](#). Queensland, Australia: Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, Queensland Government, December 2017. <https://dilgpprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/Communityengagementtoolkit.pdf>

# Charting the Table



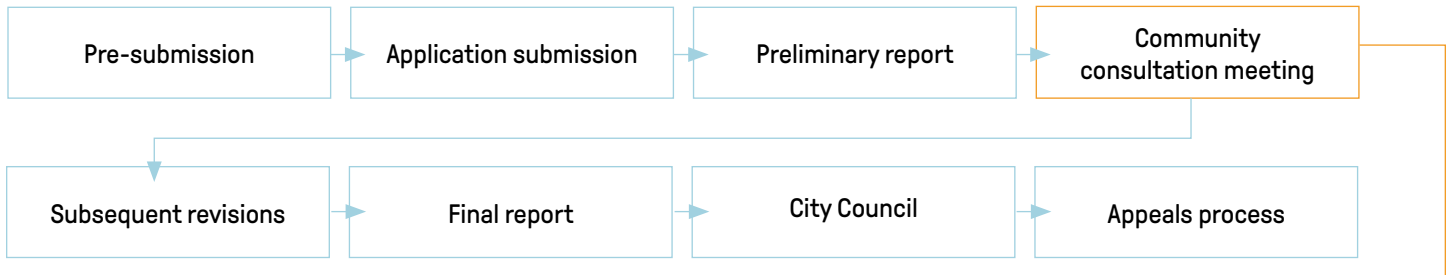
## MAKING SPACE

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STEP 1 EXAMPLE

### Mapping the project process

Example: A Development Application to Amend the Official Plan or Zoning By-law



STEP 2 EXAMPLE

### Clearly outlining what is on and off the table for the current stage of the project

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>On the Table – Negotiable</b></p> <p>Items that are “on the table” are those that the community and stakeholders can currently have influence on. This includes those items that are not bound by legislative or regulatory requirements.</p> <p>e.g. placement and location of buildings</p> | <p><b>Off the Table</b></p> <p>Items that are “off the table” are those that the community and stakeholders cannot have influence on, either during this stage of the process or at all. It is important to make this distinction and to discuss the rationale behind it. Off the table items include those that cannot change and are bound by regulatory processes, budgetary constraints, etc.</p> <p>e.g. size of specific units</p> |
|   | <p><b>Off the Table (for now)</b></p> <p>Remember to tell the community about the items that are not on the table for this phase of the project, but that might be put on the table for future phases. Understanding the timeline of the project and when decisions are made for which items is critical for building trust.</p> <p>e.g. design and material choices for building</p>  |

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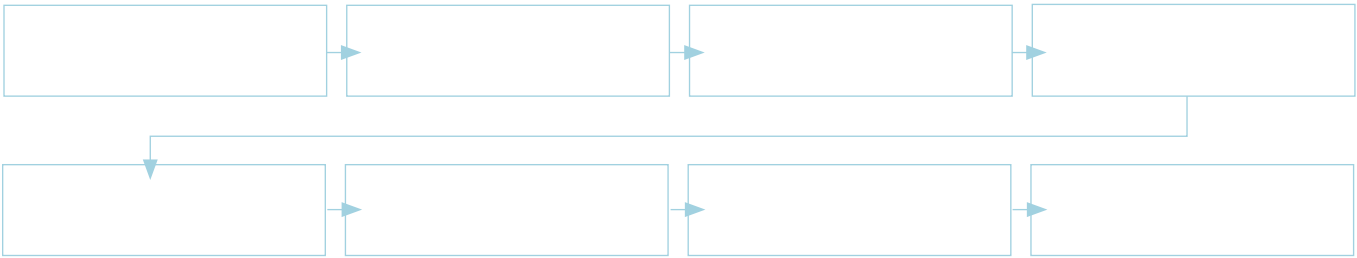
## MAKING SPACE

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### STEP 1

## Mapping the project process

Example: A Development Application to Amend the Official Plan or Zoning By-law



### STEP 2

## Clearly outlining what is on and off the table for the current stage of the project

### On the Table – Negotiable

Items that are “on the table” are those that the community and stakeholders can currently have influence on. This includes those items that are not bound by legislative or regulatory requirements.

### Off the Table

Items that are “off the table” are those that the community and stakeholders can not have influence on, either during this stage of the process or at all. It is important to make this distinction and to discuss the rationale behind it. Off the table items include those that cannot change and are bound by regulatory processes, budgetary constraints, etc.

### Off the Table (for now)

Remember to tell the community about the items that are not on the table for this phase of the project, but that might be put on the table for future phases. Understanding the timeline of the project and when decisions are made for which items is critical for building trust.