

## Public engagement guidelines update in light of COVID-19

### Overview

Due to the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, the port authority and proponents of projects within the port authority jurisdiction are adjusting engagement strategies to adhere with health authority guidelines for physical distancing, while continuing to facilitate important discussion and obtain feedback about critical trade-enabling projects. The following is a recommended addendum to the existing Project and Environmental Review (PER) public engagement guidelines, with a lens for remote and digital engagement to be undertaken while physical distancing are in place.

Current PER engagement guidelines: <https://www.portvancouver.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018-09-05-PER-Guideline-Public-Engagement.pdf>

### Engagement during physical distancing

The Port of Vancouver plays a vital economic role in Canada by connecting consumers and businesses with the global marketplace. At the port authority, as we respond to the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19, the health and safety of our employees, customers, operators and stakeholders is our top priority. The Port of Vancouver remains open for business, keeping the supply of important goods moving through the port to ensure Canadian businesses and Canadian livelihoods continue to thrive, right across the country.

During this challenging time, the port authority continues to support the delivery of critical trade-enabling projects and public engagement remains an important element for any project progressing within the PER process.

In support of the federal government's guidance to practice physical distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we will ask all proponents to transition to remote and digital engagement and information sharing in lieu of holding in-person meetings, workshops, or information sessions.

As such, we are providing guidelines to facilitate digital engagement for PER projects and provide opportunities for continued meaningful dialogue and input from the community.

### Changes to public comment period timelines

Applicants of proposed projects undergoing category C reviews are required to engage with the public, with a public comment period of 20 business days. **Under these guidelines, the public comment period increases to 25 business days.**

Applicants of proposed projects undergoing category D reviews are required to engage with the public, with a public comment period of 25 business days. **Under these guidelines, the public comment period increases to 30 business days.**

### Remote engagement plan guidelines

The applicant will provide a public engagement plan for review and approval by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. The plan will outline proposed actions the applicant will undertake in relation to their project.

The plan, at a minimum, should describe the following:

- Overview of the proposed project
- Proposed timing of public engagement activities, including proposed timing of engagement period(s), notification, and deadline(s) for feedback

- Target audience
- Engagement objectives
- Proposed public engagement methods to achieve the engagement objectives, such as:
  - Webinars or video conference information sessions
  - Small group meetings, done by video conference
  - Online questionnaires or use of a digital engagement platform
  - Phone-in or mail-in options for those not equipped to participate digitally
  - Telephone town hall
  - Response protocol (how will you invite questions, provide responses, and record the information)
  - Others as proposed by the applicant
- As much detail as possible on how these methods and sessions would be run or facilitated, how the public will be able to evaluate the engagement activity, and a description of the digital tools; including mitigations for possible security and privacy concerns
- Notification methods, activities, and distribution area (e.g., email to mailing lists, newspaper advertising, targeted digital advertising with call to action to fill out the questionnaire or join a webinar, postcard mail-outs or notification letter drops, media release or information bulletin, event listings in local relevant publications, organic or paid social media posts, etc.)
- Proposed public engagement materials, such as:
  - Website
  - Information videos (such as a narrated PowerPoint or recorded webinar)
  - Information sheets
  - Discussion guide
  - Reports
  - Others as proposed by the applicant
- A brief explanation of how you will consider COVID-19 impacts when communicating with your audience (e.g., acknowledging the government guidelines, explaining how you are adjusting your public engagement strategy to make other options available, acknowledging participants may be experiencing hardship at this time)
- An overview of how your remote and digital engagement approach has been designed to make up for a lack of in-person interaction (e.g., more promotion, opportunities for phone calls and emails, longer engagement duration, use of a digital engagement tool when you wouldn't normally use one)
- Consideration for how you will monitor engagement to adjust promotional strategy part way through the engagement period to reach the desired audience if required
- How feedback will be summarized, considered, and communicated back to the public (if applicable)

Please note that the port authority will update the public engagement guidelines to reflect federal and provincial health authority orders, notices and guidance as they roll out over the coming months.

## Security considerations

During the COVID-19 pandemic the port authority will participate remotely in all applicant-led, digital engagement processes. Please note, the port authority may not participate in digital platforms that have security limitations. In this ever-changing environment, the port authority will review the applicant's proposal, and determine if there are security issues according to the most recent information available regarding the digital platform the applicant is considering.

## Thank you

To all our stakeholders and the communities that surround us, we wish you and your families well. We also extend our thanks to the many organizations and people who make up our port community for their continued support to keep the port functioning efficiently during this extraordinary global challenge.