



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



Global Best Practices in Community Engagement

Section 1 of 6



northamerica.timefordmocracy.com

Acknowledgement and Thanks

Thank you to our Knowledge and Destination Partners for their invaluable involvement in the Time for DMOCRACY, North America Edition.

Destination Partners in Time for DMOCRACY (North America)

Thank you to our North America Destination Partners who supported, contributed to and collaborated in this important global research study:



Knowledge Partners on Community Participation

Thank you to our Knowledge Partners who contributed their insights and expertise to the Community Participation section of the Time for DMOCRACY report:



Program, Agency and Association Partners in Time for DMOCRACY (North America)



For a full list of the partners & supporters of Time for DMOCRACY see each section of the report, the European edition and TimeforDMOCRACY.com

Introduction

Community participation models are at the heart of this global research and education project. For community engagement to be successful, local communities must be consulted with and involved in how tourism is developed and managed. Community participation models guide the formal structures, processes and management of engagement and how to involve the community in important decisions regarding the future of tourism in the destination.



Lead Author: Chris Adams, Head of Research & Insights at Miles Partnership. In collaboration with the team at Miles Partnership and other partners in the Time for DMOCRACY study.

At a Glance

- Community or citizen participation models are part of a broader international effort to build more open and inclusive governance. These initiatives promote “the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation” (i)
- The Time for DMOCRACY global research project highlighted that the tourism industry is falling far short in reaching open government principles.
- A major survey of sentiment towards tourism highlighted that only a small minority of North American residents (33% in Canada, 29% in the US) agreed with the statement, “Residents are consulted when major tourism development takes place in [my] area” (ii)
- Our review of community participation models in tourism identified four major types of community participation models, including strategy driven consultation, community advisory committees/boards and stand-alone tourism councils involving residents, businesses and local government. Tourism can also be integrated into community participation entities seeking a broader range of feedback from residents.

WHAT TO KNOW

- A majority of DMOs see strong benefits in seeking community participation, including its ability to generate innovative ideas surrounding how tourism is developed or managed and the importance of community participation in ensuring the social license of tourism operations.
- DMOs also noted a range of potential problems, including that the community may highlight “issues that we have little or no control over” or that community input may be “dominated by a few loud voices” (iii)
- The European edition of Time for DMOCRACY has additional information on Community Participation Models, including more on citizen assemblies, online participation platforms, volunteering and citizen science, participatory placemaking, participatory strategizing and participatory budgeting (iv)

WHAT TO DO

Time for DMOCRACY identifies 6 practical recommendations for how DMOs can kick start and develop their community participation models:

1. Review and Refine Your Informal Engagement
2. Select a Participation Model that Works for You and Your Community
3. Build in These Six Best Practices in Community Participation Models:
 1. Get Started Early with Community Participation
 2. Provide a Clear, Meaningful Role for Community Participation
 3. Support Informed Debate and Recommendations
 4. Amplify Community, Business and Government Voices
 5. Encourage Inclusive, Diverse Representation
 6. Integrate Resident Sentiment Research and Destination Management
4. Expand Your Online Community Participation Tools
5. Invest in Volunteer Opportunities for Your Community
6. Explore Community Participation in How Tourism Taxes Are Spent

RESOURCES

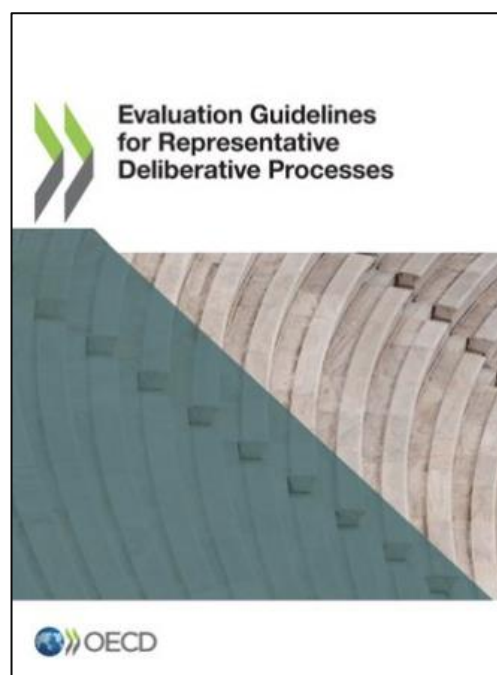
We highlight and share a range of critical research, case study examples and other resources to inform your action. See Page 21.

What To Know

CRITICAL LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS

a. Introduction to Community (Citizen) Participation

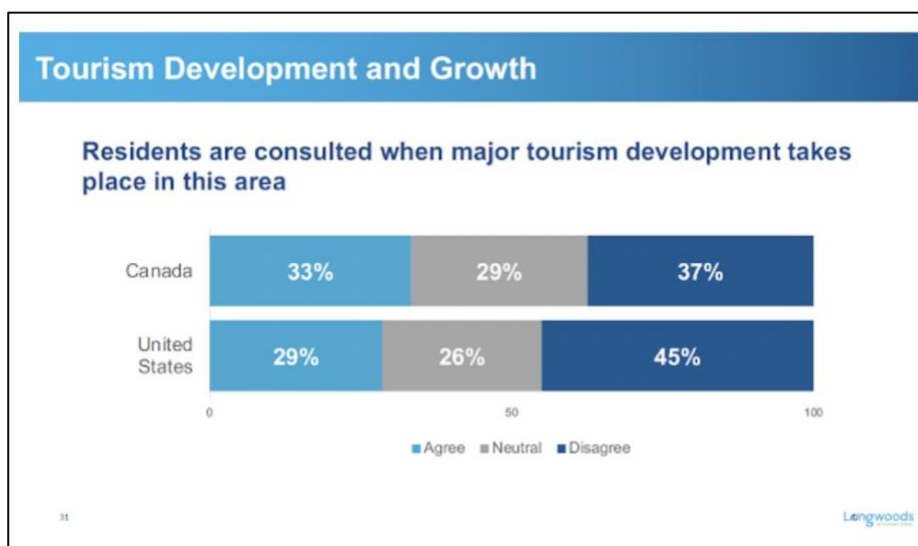
Community or citizen participation models are part of a broader international effort to build more open and inclusive governance. Encompassing themes such as deliberative and participatory democracy, these initiatives promote “the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation” (v). The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the importance of this goal and of addressing rising levels of distrust towards both public and private institutions (vi). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—an international organization of 38 nations committed to both democracy and open markets—is leading much of this work. The OECD emphasizes that good government is good for business and good for tourism. At a practical level, open government and community participation attempts to enhance citizens’ and residents’ involvement in all types of decisions that affect their lives.



How Residents Perceive Tourism in Their Community

The Time for DMOcracy global research project highlighted that the tourism industry is falling short in reaching open government principles. A major survey of sentiment towards tourism highlighted that only a minority of North American residents (33% in Canada, 29% in the U.S.) agreed with the statement, “Residents are consulted when major tourism development takes place in [my] area” (vii).

Only a minority of North American residents (33% in Canada, 29% in the US) agreed with the statement, “Residents are consulted when major tourism development takes place in [my] area” (viii).



When North American DMOs were asked, only 17% assessed that their residents would “feel they have significant influence on tourism’s development and management” (ix). Taken together, these results emphasize the urgent need to build community participation and involvement in the planning and management of tourism.

17%
Of North American DMOs assessed that their residents feel they have significant influence on tourism’s development and management (Europe = 26%)

b. Examples of Community (Citizen) Participation

The OECD has been both promoting and monitoring the adoption of community or citizen participation models. It has identified more than 289 cities, counties, states and provinces across its member countries using some form of community participation model across areas, including transportation decisions and healthcare (see below).



Figure 1 Examples of Community Participation Models span all sectors of society, including consultation entities in transport and healthcare. Pictured is a Canadian example.

c. Community Participation Models in Tourism

Tourism has been slow to invest in community participation models that support a greater degree of participatory democracy in communities. While 46% of DMOs that participated in the Time for DMOcracy survey indicated that they have made efforts around advisory boards, resident panels or other forms of community consultation, many of these efforts are related to strategy or planning processes or specific events requiring community input. There is a far smaller number of DMOs with more sophisticated and ongoing community participation models.

Our review of community participation models in tourism identified four major types of community consultation and participation ranging from event driven consultation to more permanent community participation entities.

1. Community Participation in a Strategy or Planning Process

A wide range of DMOs include some type of structured community consultation in the development or updating of a destination master plan or tourism strategy. This can include community meetings, focus group discussions and more formalized consultation bodies that meet during the planning process.

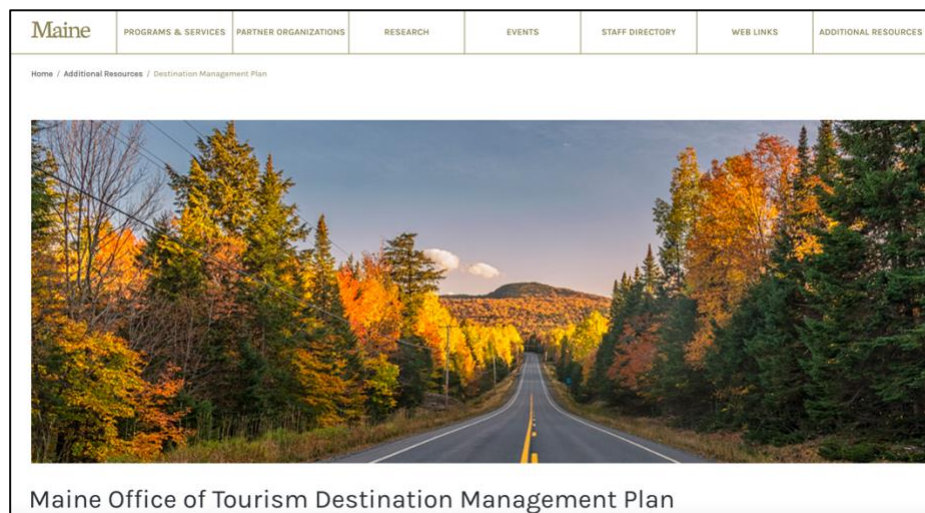


Figure 2. Many destinations such as the Maine Office of Tourism seek community participation when developing or updating their destination master plan and/or tourism strategies.

2. Broader Community Participation Models

A small but growing number of DMOs are actively involved in broader local government consultation entities that engage and empower residents to provide input on decisions in their communities on a wide range of topics, including tourism. [AnaheimFirst](#) is an example of this model(x).



Figure 3. [ANAHEIM FIRST](#) is an example of a community participation model where residents provide input on a range of issues in their community, including tourism.

3. Tourism Advisory Councils

A larger number of DMOs run and support ongoing community advisory committees or groups. These are often attached to the DMO's board, such as the [Discover Los Angeles](#) Community Advisory Board.



Figure 4 The Discover Los Angeles Community Advisory Board includes specific representation from six diverse communities, including African American, Hispanic, Native American, LGBTQ+ and Disabled Communities.

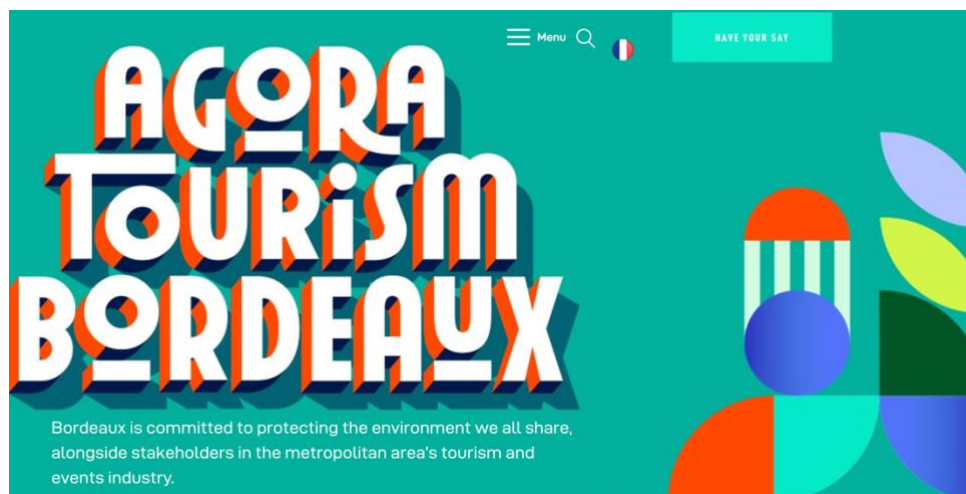
4. Tourism – Government – Industry Councils

A handful of destinations, mostly in Europe, have developed standalone community participation entities with a greater degree of autonomy and authority.



Figure 5. The Barcelona City Tourism Council has been operating for over five years, attempting to provide a more direct way for residents to influence the development and management of tourism in the city.

In community participation, tourism entities can either set up and manage their own community participation model as in [Agora Tourism in Bordeaux, France](#), or the [City Tourism Council in Barcelona](#), Spain, or they can work within a broader community participation model as in [ANAHEI'M FIRST](#) in Anaheim, California.



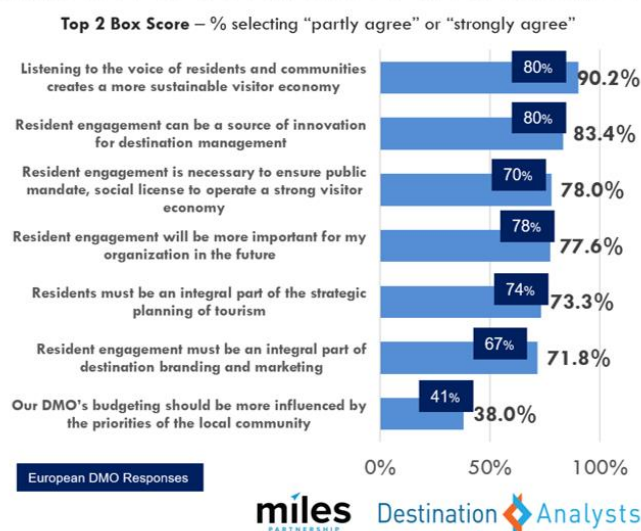
In both approaches it is important for the DMO to collaborate with other government, business and community entities. For example, ANAHEI'M FIRST is a 501c not for profit supported by the city, Visit Anaheim, the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce and Anaheim Community Foundation among other partners. It is focused on empowering local neighborhoods to provide input on important decisions, including the development and management of tourism.

d. Strengths and Weaknesses of Community Engagement

In designing community participation models, it is important to address the perceived strengths and weaknesses of engaging with residents. These were summarized in responses to two questions included in the survey of 292 North American and European DMOs on community engagement perceptions, policies and plans.

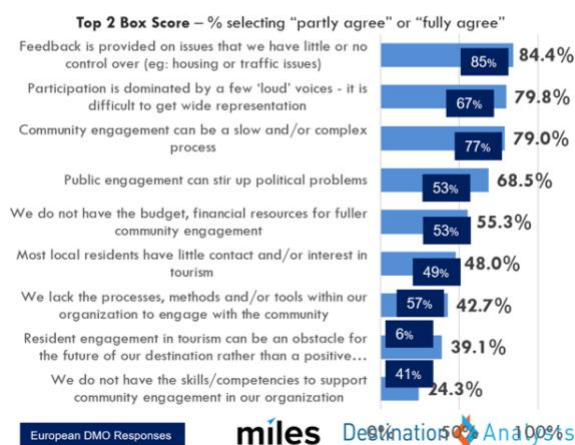
The vast majority of DMOs (78% to 90%) identified community engagement as supporting a more sustainable visitor industry, as a source of innovative ideas and as critical to maintain social license of tourism in the community. A majority of DMOs also noted that the local community is “integral” to destination branding and marketing and highly important when developing tourism strategies and planning.

ORGANIZATION'S **EXPERIENCE** WITH RESIDENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



A range of concerns were also flagged as important to consider in community participation. Around 80% of DMOs noted that residents may highlight “issues that we have little or no control over” or that the input may be “dominated by a few loud voices – it is difficult to get wide representation.” A similar majority noted that community participation can be “a slow and/or complex process” and around 66% noted that “public engagement can stir up political problems.”

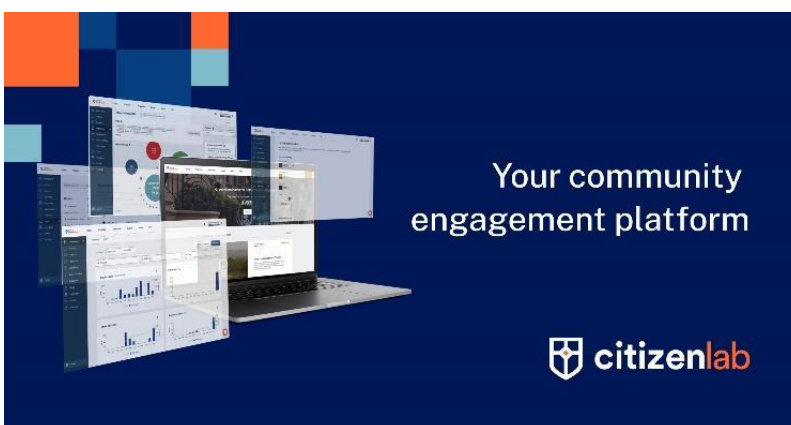
ORGANIZATION'S **CHALLENGES** WITH RESIDENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



e. Online Community Participation Platforms

Interestingly, online community participation platforms continue to increase. Companies from [Granicus](#) (e.g., Open Cities), [Hivebrite](#) and [CitizenLab](#) each offer digital solutions that allow residents or businesses to communicate with each other about local issues including tourism.

Users can query and engage with information on tourism issues and provide suggestions, comments or feedback. Such platforms can enlarge outreach efforts—reaching busy or traveling residents, those who are concerned about public speaking or residents with disabilities who may be unable to participate at in-person events. Such platforms are a useful compliment, but not a replacement to in-person community engagement.



f. Local Greeters, Ambassador and Volunteer Programs



Some North American destinations and a wide range of European destinations (e.g., [Lyon, France](#)) engage with locals by welcoming, hosting and guiding visitors using greeter, ambassador and event programs. Many are volunteer based, and some are paid—either with a fee or request for gratuity. Airbnb's expanding [Experiences program](#) also

centres around encouraging locals to share their passion and expert local insights. Many events that are run or supported by DMOs in destinations such as Aarhus, Denmark, rely heavily on local volunteers. Such programs build connections with residents, creating both part-time opportunities and advocates for tourism from within the community.

g. Participatory Budgeting

An emerging trend in community participation is seeking resident input on how tourism taxation revenue is spent and/or the budget priorities of the DMOs.

In the Netherlands, the regional tourism organization, [Toerisme Veluwe Arnhem Nijmegen](#) facilitates an innovative model for resident input on how a proportion of visitor taxation revenue is spent.



Locals each receive a vote representing a small proportion of visitor tax revenue, worth 7.50 euros each, to apply to a preferred community project. Locals are invited to identify and promote a local project they would like to see happen, such as a new playground or walking/cycling trail. Residents then apply their vote and those that reach a threshold of support get funded. To date, 234 local community projects have been funded with total funding of 228,000 euros. In a North American example, the Six Neighbourhood Councils in the [ANAHEI'M FIRST](#) community engagement program includes their input on the spending priorities in their neighbourhoods, including the use of tourism tax revenue(x).



Resident input on the DMO budget itself is typically limited to the advice of formal community participation models. For example, Barcelona’s City and Tourism Council provides input during the budgeting process on the priorities of Turisme de Barcelona—the official visitor organization(xi). Such input is typically viewed with caution by other DMOs. Only a small number of DMOs across North America (38%) and Europe (41%) noted in the Time for DMOcracy survey(xii).

Tourism and Climate Change: A Citizen Panel



Current research suggests that climate change is likely to have significant impacts on New Zealand’s tourism sector, an important and valuable industry for New Zealand.

Another area of emerging community participation is on climate change. This is part of the growing public concern in many countries on the need for more assertive action. Examples include the [Culture and Climate Change Citizen panel](#) in New Zealand and examples from [Camden in the UK](#), this [Danish Citizen Assembly on Climate Change](#) plus many more.

What To Do

6 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

1. Review and Refine Your Informal Engagement
2. Select a Participation Model That Works for You and Your Community
3. Build in These Six Best Practices in Community Participation Models:
 - a. Get Started Early with Community Participation
 - b. Provide a Clear, Meaningful Role for Community Participation
 - c. Support Informed Debate and Recommendations
 - d. Amplify Community, Business and Government Voices
 - e. Encourage Inclusive, Diverse Representation
 - f. Integrate Resident Sentiment Research and Destination Management
4. Expand Your Online Community Participation Tools
5. Invest in Volunteer Opportunities for Your Community
6. Explore Community Participation in How Tourism Taxes are Spent

1. Review and Refine Your Informal Engagement

Formal community participation models build on informal engagement in your community. Review and refine how you, your staff and trusted partners engage informally with your community, from casual coffee shop conversations with elected officials, to attending local business or neighborhood events that allow you to understand the mood of your community.



2. Select a Participation Model That Works for You and Your Community

There are a range of participation model options to consider, from community advisory committees/boards (e.g., the Discover Los Angeles Community Advisory Board), to stand alone tourism councils, including residents, businesses and local government (e.g., the Barcelona City Tourism Council). You can also work with your local government partners to include tourism more clearly in a broader community participation (e.g., ANAHEI'M FIRST).

3. Build in These Six Best Practices in Participation Models:

From our survey of DMOs, review of existing research and assessment of existing community participation models we identified these six best practices for the setup and management of a community participation model:

1. Get Started Early with Community Participation

We heard from a range of destinations that they wished they had started their community participation models far earlier. An early investment in community participation helps avoid tourism becoming a contentious, political issue that impacts the DMO. For example, Barcelona noted that they should have started the City and Tourism Council at least five years earlier than they did—before tourism became the “hot button” issue that it did in their community.



2. **Provide a Clear, Meaningful Role for Community Participation**

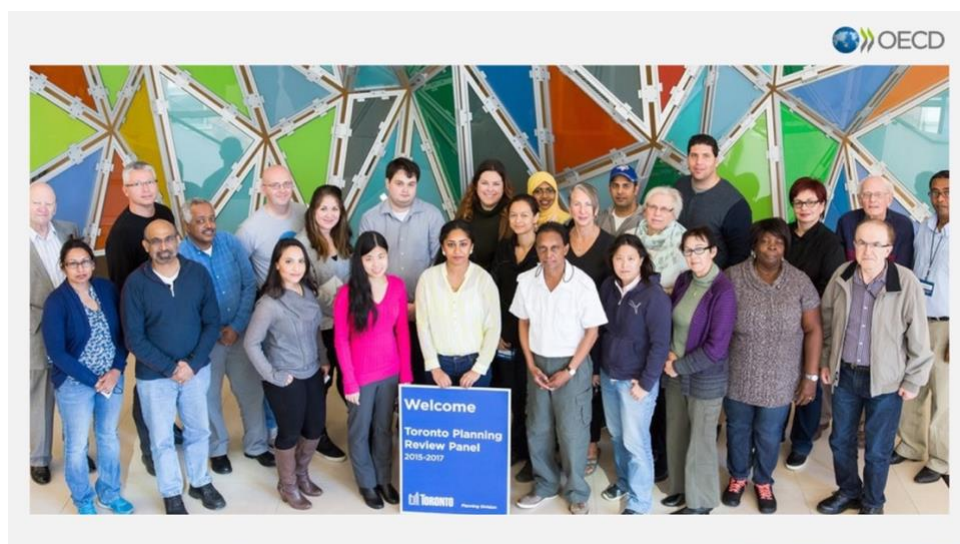
The community participation entity should have a clear and agreed-upon role in providing advice on the management and marketing of tourism in a destination. The entity should provide input on all “meaningful issues,” including important decisions on tourism’s development or management, that impact the community(xiii). While their recommendations are typically advice-only, all relevant public/private organizations with a significant role in managing tourism in a destination need to agree to consider the community’s input as an important part of their decisions. Clear reporting and feedback should then explain how the community feedback was incorporated into final decisions made by these organizations.

3. **Support Informed Debate & Recommendations**

To ensure their input is useful and productive, the community participation entity should be briefed and supported to provide timely, well-informed recommendations. The OECD suggests a 3-step process in their best practices: “orientation and learning,” “deliberation” and “drafting recommendation” (xiv).

4. **Community, Business and Government Voices**

Many community participation models include representation from residents, local businesses and local government. If you choose to have a dedicated local resident forum, ensure you have other mechanisms for consulting with your local business community and local government. The latter includes engaging with the range of agencies and departments that impact tourism, including parks and recreation, transport, housing, planning and others. This engagement ensures you can identify the right agencies who can help act on issues that you “have little or no control over”(xv).

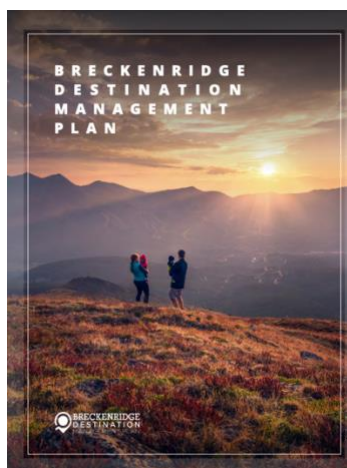


5. Inclusive, Diverse Representation

Whatever form your community participation model takes, you should ensure there are specific efforts made to reach a truly diverse and representative group of residents and local businesses. This ensures that community feedback will not be “dominated by a few loud voices” (xvi). The OECD suggests a range of ways to ensure a broad, representative group of residents, including a lottery system. Ensure you have representation from across your community—a mix of age, geography, ethnicity and professions, as well as representation by people with disabilities and immigrants. Use this outreach to ensure you have a broad, representative sample in your resident sentiment research. This includes building long-term relationships with a wide range of community groups, either directly or through trusted partners. See the Time for DMOCRACY section on Resident Sentiment Research.



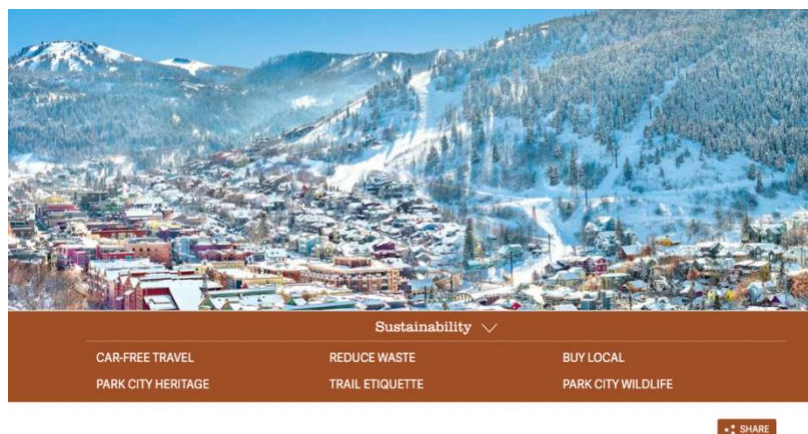
6. Integrate with Your Destination Management



Community participation often starts with developing or updating a destination master plan or sustainable tourism strategy. Ongoing community participation is best undertaken within the framework of this strategy/plan. This provides a “road map” for the community’s involvement in specific destination management activities and goals.

4. Expand Your Online Community Participation Tools

Online tools and platforms supplement, but do not replace in-person community engagement. While there are a range of specialist online community participation platforms available, it is best to expand your engagement using your DMO's existing communication assets. Enhance your own website, email communications, social media and PR efforts to keep residents informed on issues and developments in tourism and to gather feedback. This digital communication along with informal consultation (see #1 above) will provide a sound foundation for considering if you need a specialist community participation platform.



A Sustainable Park City

The Legacy We Share.

People who visit Park City are drawn to the breathtaking beauty of the land, the creative culture of our thriving communities, and the sustainable values woven into the very fabric of our town. As a community, we think of ourselves as a beacon of earth friendliness. With some of the **most ambitious climate goals** in North America, Park City's commitment to our cultural heritage and to sustainability includes sharing with visitors and locals alike how we can all strive to maintain the unique beauty and spirit of this community we call home.

5. Expand Your Online Community Participation Tools

Review and consider expanding opportunities for community participation through volunteer programs that impact tourism. This includes working your partners' events—an area where volunteers can provide invaluable support. Consider targeted volunteer opportunities, especially for youth (e.g., youth internships or greeters programs). These engage younger residents in meeting and guiding visitors, provide invaluable work experience and can be a valuable addition to your staff and workforce development investments.



The European edition of Time for DMOcracy includes detailed information and advice on developing and managing volunteer programs with your community, including a range of case studies involving Brussels (see above), Arhus, Lyon (right) and more.



6. Explore Community Participation in How Tourism Taxes are Spent

While DMOs expressed caution over resident input into their budget priorities, there are powerful opportunities that come with facilitating community participation in how tourism taxes are spent. Getting resident input demonstrates the benefits of tourism—such as the creation of new public funding for the community—in a powerful way.



Arnhem in the Netherlands and Anaheim in California both facilitate community input into how some of the tax revenue generated from visitors is spent

Resources to Use

IMPORTANT RESEARCH, ANALYSIS & OTHER RESOURCES

Highlighted Resources:

1. [Learning Lab 1: Citizen Participation Models](#) – featuring the OECD, Turisme Barcelona & Discover Los Angeles, May 2022
2. [OECD Open Government Resources & Toolkits](#)
3. [Trust in Government](#) – 2021 survey by OECD across 22 OECD nations. OECD, 2021
4. [Time for DMOCRACY Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs](#), August 2022
5. Community Awareness – [Resident Sentiment Towards Tourism, Longwoods research](#) presentation at Destination International Advocacy Summit October 2022
6. Case Study: [Citizen Participation Campaigns, Palau & New Zealand](#), Time for DMOCRACY, 2022
7. Case Study: [San Francisco Travel Association – SF Transportation Taskforce](#), Time for DMOCRACY, 2022
8. Case Study: AnaheimFirst Community Engagement, Time for DMOCRACY, 2022
9. Featured Research – [AIUla Framework for Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism](#) Sep-22
10. Featured Research – [Community Engagement Done Differently](#), September 2022
11. Featured Research – [Eight Ways to Institutionalize Deliberative Democracy](#), September 2022
12. Featured Research – [Towards Destination Stewardship](#), September 2022

References & Sources:

- i. Introduction to the [OECD Open Government resources](#)
- ii. 'Residents Feeling of Influence on Tourism' Question – Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>
- iii. Top responses from the Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>
- iv. Time for DMOcracy European Edition report, January 2023 – see www.timefordmocracy.com
- v. Top responses from the Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>
- vi. OECD Open Government principles and resources: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government>
- vii. Trust in Government – results of 2021 survey by OECD across 22 OECD nations. OECD, 2021. (An equal proportion of respondents, ~41%, indicated broad trust vs. mistrust in their government institutions).
- viii. 'Tourism Development & Growth Questions' – Community Awareness – Resident Sentiment Towards Tourism, Longwoods research presentation at Destination International Advocacy Summit October 2022
- ix. 'Residents Feeling of Influence on Tourism' Question – Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>
- x. AnaheimFirst is a 501c not for profit <https://anaheimfirst.org/>
- xi. See more information on the [Barcelona City Tourism Council here](#).
- xii. Page 25, Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com/>
- xiii. Good Practice Principles for Deliberative Processes for Public Decision Making – [OECD Best Practices, 2021](#)
- xiv. Steps outlined in OECD Open Government Toolkit: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government>
- xv. Top responses from the Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>
- xvi. Top responses from the Time for DMOcracy Survey of 292 North American and European DMOs, August 2022 <https://northamerica.timefordmocracy.com>

Other Resources:

Staying Power: [The Effects of Short-Term Rentals on California's Tourism Economy and Housing Affordability](#), Milken Institute, 2022

[3 Big Questions in Community Engagement](#), Signe Jungersted, Scott Beck, Gracen Chungath and Antonia Koedijk, May 2022

[Engage Liverpool: day tripper campaign case study](#), Gary Proctor, May 2022

[Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions – Catching the Deliberate Wave](#), OECD, October 2020

[Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes](#), OECD, November 2021

[Towards Destination Stewardship](#): Achieving Destination Stewardship through Scenarios & Governance Diagnostics Framework, World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021

[The Interplay of Governance, Power and Citizen Participation in Community Tourism Planning](#), Jordan, Vogt, Kruger, & Grewe, Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events, 2013

[IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum](#), IAP2, 2014

[Finding our Cornerstone: An Advocacy Paper on Destination Organizations Becoming a Community Shared Value](#), Destinations International

[A Manager's Guide to Evaluating Citizen Participation](#), IBM Centre for The Business of Government, 2012

[The End of Tourism as We Know It](#), Strategy: Towards 2020, Wonderful Copenhagen, 2017-2020