

# Engaging Residents in the Digital Age

**October 2, 2015**

**League of CA Cities, Annual Conference  
San Jose, CA | 9:00 – 10:30 am**



## Welcome to Today's Session

- Interactive Exercise
- 3 Presenters
- Peer to Peer Learning
- Q and A
- Resources and Take Aways

## Session Panelists

Matt Pressey, Director of Finance

- City of Salinas

Lee Wilcox, Budget Director

- City of San Jose

Michelle Lee, Founder

- Textizen

Moderator: Sarah Rubin, Public Engagement Program Manager

- Institute for Local Government

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)



## Agenda

9:00	Welcome; Interactive Exercise
9:10	Why Contemplate Tech Options?   Sarah
9:20	City of Salinas, \$500 Budget Challenge   Matt
9:40	City of San Jose, Innovations in Budget Engagement   Lee
10:00	The Future of Digital Engagement   Michelle
10:20	Q/A, Wrap Up
10:30	Adjourn

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)



## Your Experience

Think about a challenging aspect of resident engagement in your jurisdiction

- Individually
- Share with your neighbor

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)



**Sarah Rubin**  
**Institute for Local Government**

**Why Contemplate Tech  
Options?**





## ILG Mission

- Promoting good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials

**We**  
  
**Local**  
**Government**



**INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT<sup>SM</sup>**  
Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

ILG is the research and education affiliate of the California State Association of Counties and the League of California Cities.

[Home](#)
[ILG Programs and Resources](#)
[The Publications Center](#)
[About the Institute](#)

Local Government Basics

Ethics & Transparency

Public Engagement

Sustainable Communities

Collaboration & Partnerships



**Cities, Counties and Schools**  
Playing Well Together Pays Off for Children and Families

This resource highlights examples of some of the partnerships featured in the Community Schools Partnerships Toolkit.

[Read more »](#)

**HELPFUL RESOURCES**

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN BUDGETING**  
Resources and case stories to support the use of public engagement to address budget issues.  
[Read more »](#)

**BEACON AWARD**  
A statewide program to assist and recognize California cities and counties that are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and adopt policies and programs that promote sustainability.  
[Read more »](#)

**MEETING RESOURCE CENTER**  
Leaders can increase the effectiveness of public meetings with thoughtful advance planning and by taking a few simple steps.  
[Read more »](#)

**SUPPORT ILG**

Help keep the Institute running with individual or business donations.

[Donate](#)

[Click here for other ways to support ILG's work »](#)

**FEATURED PUBLICATIONS**



**UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS LAWS**

[DEEPLY HELD](#)

## Public Engagement Tech Tool Options



local agencies are experimenting...

Their goals may be to

- broaden participation,
- accelerate progress on decision making,
- or create a "safe space" for feedback on contentious issues.



[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)



# When we talk about tech options, what does that mean?

<i>websites</i>	<i>social media</i>	<i>blogs</i>
<i>local agency TV channels</i>	<i>online surveys</i>	<i>open data</i>
<i>crowdsourcing</i>	<i>mobile apps</i>	<i>webinars</i>

www.ca-ilg.org



## 5 Part Guide

- Pt. 1. Providing & Storing Detailed Info
- Pt. 2. Making the Decision Process Visible
- Pt. 3. Getting the Word Out
- Pt. 4. Inviting Public Input
- Pt. 5. Emerging Technologies

www.ca-ilg.org

## ILG Resources

**INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™**  
AN OFFICE OF CALIFORNIA STATE AFFAIRS

### Broadening Public Participation Using Online Engagement Tools

*Choosing and Using Online Tools to Expand Public Participation in Local Decision-Making*



The vast majority of local agencies in California use their websites to inform residents about upcoming public decisions. More agencies are also adding social media to their engagement tools. Now a growing number also are experimenting with online tools that facilitate two-way communications with residents. These tools present an important opportunity to expand the number and diversity of voices providing input to city or county decision-making.

As context, a common challenge facing local government agencies is the sense that they are only hearing from a narrow cross-section of their communities on local policy decisions. Some believe that this is because residents lack the time, transportation or motivation to get involved. [See research among city and county officials about public participation in decision making.](#) However, other research shows that 35% of U.S. adults have worked with fellow residents to "solve a problem in your community" (the Pew Research Center's Internet & America Life Project Summer 2012 Tracking Survey).

A growing number of "online public participation platforms" provide software that local governments are using to invite input from residents about upcoming policy decisions. Most jurisdictions are not assuming that online engagement replaces in-person contact, but is instead an important complement at the beginning.

*"People are engaged in the community in different ways. They are connected, just not always to us. How do we tap into people, where they are already engaged, about the things that they've already chosen are important to them?"*

Mehmet Taha  
Communications and Engagement Manager, City of Morgan Hill



## Doing More with What you Have

All local agencies have outreach and engagement channels in place

Local governments can take advantage of these current vehicles to better engage the public as well

Although many of these options cost only staff time, that is nevertheless a very valuable resource

## What kind of tool(s) to consider?

Early in Process

- Consider more open-ended oriented input
- If a survey is used, consider general attitude questions which may inform later stages of effort

Later in Process

- More structured questions or prioritization exercises to help look at trade-offs
- Online forums to flesh out perspectives
- Letting people “like” comments

Toward Final Decision

- Online tools can also provide a way to assess how representative of the community participation has or has not been

Most effective engagement efforts make clear where an issue is in the process and how public input is being used in interim and final decisions.

## Framework for Successful Implementation

- Step 1** Define the **purpose** of the engagement and how the input will be used
- Step 2** Set **clear roles and expectations** for staff, elected officials and suppliers
- Step 3** Identify the desired **audiences** and associated communication strategies
- Step 4** Develop and present **community-oriented questions and information**
- Step 5** Establish and analyze **success criteria**

[www.ca-ilg.org](http://www.ca-ilg.org)



### Leaders in online engagement shared some consistent advice

Let the public engagement purpose drive the tool, not vice versa

Understand the staff capacities required for effective implementation

Be strategic about syncing online and face-to-face public engagement to take advantage of the strengths of each

Embrace a “continuous learning” attitude about these online tools across agency departments



Note  
One Key  
Take-  
Away



**QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?**

**Thank You**