

Consensus

Finding solutions that everyone actively supports or at least can live with; not necessarily complete agreement, but a solution everyone involved is okay with.

Why is it important?

- Shared power and investment in decisions and outcomes
- Cooperation – working with each other rather than for or against each other
- Greater potential impact as recommendation viewed by legislative decision-makers; more likely to result in legislative action

What process will we use?

- Decision/issue identified
- Clarify the decision/issue
- Explore the decision/issue and look for ideas for solving the problem
- Look for emerging proposals
- Discuss, clarify and amend proposal(s)
- Test for agreement: Use hand signals. Note: Virtual participants may vote through the chat box.
 - Agreement: I support the proposal and am willing to implement it – *thumb up*
 - Reservations: I have some reservations but am willing to let the proposal pass – *thumb to the side*
 - Stand asides: I can't support the proposal because... but I don't want to stop the group, so I'll support the decision happening without my active involvement – *thumb to the side*
 - Blocks: I have a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal that has not been resolved – *thumb down*
 - Consensus: Not too many stand asides or reservations and no blocks
- Confirm and implement decision – document and confirm next steps.

Conditions for Consensus

Group agreements that support consensus:

- Common/group goal > personal goal (requires compromise and flexibility)
- Identify needs vs wants (understanding of what you cannot budge on and why)
- Active and honest participation: talking and listening; seeking solutions

Additional considerations:

- Get necessary feedback before contributing to a consensus-based decision
- Revisiting decisions: When is it too late to change your mind?
- Who needs to be included in consensus based decisions?