Designing and Conducting Successful Community Engagements

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Purposes of this Session

- Enhance understanding of community engagement
- Learn how to:
  - Design CE events and meeting formats
  - Frame specific discussion questions
  - Deal with difficult behavior
Quick Reflection on your CE Experiences . . .

- What community engagement events have you been involved in?
- What happened?
  - Successes . . .
  - Challenges . . .
Community Engagement is not ...

- Selling the public on...
- Getting votes for...
- Convincing the public to...
- Council/Board meetings, formal public hearings, etc.
Community Engagement is . . .

- About forming relationships with the public
- A process for eliciting different views and perspectives on issues and policies
- A way to involve the public in framing issues, discussing trade-offs, making decisions
Community Engagement: Working the Gaps
**Design Tool: IAP2 Spectrum**

**Increasing Levels of Public Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your Goal?</th>
<th>Inform</th>
<th>Consult</th>
<th>Involve</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Empower</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide information to the public</td>
<td>Elicit feedback from the public</td>
<td>Work with the public to ensure their views are considered</td>
<td>Partner with the public to ensure their views are incorporated</td>
<td>The public develops the choices and makes the decisions</td>
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| What is your Promise to the Public? | We will keep you informed | We will listen to your views | We will try to include your views | We will include your views | We will implement what you decide |
Design Checklist: What Should Planners Consider

- What are the audiences’ perspectives, needs and expectations?
- What is the participation goal of the meeting?
- Does the audience have the same goal? How do you know?
- How should the issue or topic of the meeting be framed and presented?
- How should the meeting be designed?
Developing Meeting Formats → agendas

- Start with the goal and outcome; work backwards
  - What needs to happen 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd}, etc. to get to the outcome?
  - How will the audience be engaged in light of the participation goal?
- Be creative with formats (small groups, technology, multi-media, post-its, etc.)
Set the Meeting Context

- Welcome and introductions
- Preview agenda; identify goals, outcomes and ground rules
- Bring people up to date; what led to the meeting
- Define roles and meeting format
- Provide information and data that is relevant, concise, valid and accessible
Framing Discussion Questions

- Start with open-ended questions
  - Limited number; accessible wording
  - Include on the agenda
- Follow up with closed-ended questions to clarify and narrow
- Pay attention to wording and tone
  - Avoid leading & argumentative questions
  - Ask *forward leaning* questions
Close Meetings with Clear Direction

- End at the designated time, or check with participants to go beyond
- Summarize key points and decisions; confirm with the participants
- Agree on critical tasks, completion dates and follow-up steps
- Use the results going forward to shape the next steps
Dealing with Difficult Behavior

- Anger and Negative Emotion
  - Don’t take it personally!
  - Acknowledge the anger and emotion
  - Move forward by focusing on the issue, not the person

- Interruptions
  - Respectfully intervene
  - Make use of ground rules
Dealing with Difficult Behavior

- Complaining and Criticizing
  - Acknowledge the concerns expressed
  - Reframe the positive vision behind the person’s complaint
  - Ask for a solution or way forward

- The “Over” Contributor
  - Thank the person for participating
  - Create space for others to speak
Your Turn . . .

Questions and Discussion