

Blueprint Learning Network
Nov. 13-14, 2007
Oakland

Day 1 Peer-to-Peer Exchange: Engaging Local Elected Officials

Questions:

- 1. No conduit from local to state level – what approach did San Diego use?**
 - Policy committees directly engaged in preparing plan.
 - Working groups with community involvement also provided input to the plan.
 - Workshops and community forums for larger input.
 - Annual planning retreat.

- 2. What’s in it for them?**
 - Explain how land use/transportation plans are linked and that funding would be used to prioritize projects - fund projects that implement the plan.

- 3. How do you prioritize projects for incentive funding?**
 - Every 4 years with the RTP.
 - Incentive grant programs.

- 4. How do you really engage public officials who rely on planning commissions and the board of zoning appeals for land use advice and do not have the land use background to make sound decisions?**
 - Consider working groups to assist.
 - SANDAG TWG (planning directors) assist in education process.
 - SACOG Blueprint process included 1,500 participants and citizens in public meetings, with instant feedback. Changed the way and importance in the way regional decisions were made.
 - Monitor progress on annual basis.
 - Provide feedback on how input is being used.
 - Be sure Electeds agree on public input up front.
 - Need to put pain into getting gain – it can’t be superficial.
 - Need resources to develop shared values with those community members who will be impacted by a plan.
 - Balance levers between community, industry and elected officials – most vulnerable people need to be at the table. Need staff that can do this work. Land being considered is close to most vulnerable populations.
 - Needs to be at local level too (not just regional) – include policymakers on all levels.
 - Need new way to involve the community that is not “tokenism”, needs to be real and meaningful.

- \$850 million for the Environmental Mitigation Program – Working Group making recommendations to the policy and Board of Directors is chaired by an elected official – takes more time than staff-driven process.
- Bay Area example – go community by community, try to make reasonable solution to a problem.
- Challenge is to bring new people into the fold – always changing with elections and term limits – need constant education.
- Understand and participate or it will be done to you.
- Meet with councilmembers to discuss (2 out of 5 members can meet).
- Time and patience.
- You will not get everything you want.
- Local land use is held near and dear. How to fold into regional planning? Need to understand readily identifiable benefits.
- Persistence and perseverance – can't give up.
- Advocates need to go to meetings and stay involved. Don't let anyone forget you.
- Need to balance time of Elected Officials to make best use of their time at a regional level.

5. How do you get new members involved?

- In San Diego, many elected members who come into regional work have backgrounds in planning.
- Televised council meetings.
- Community newsletters.
- Get schools involved.
- To get attention – priority areas for funding.
- Need to document regional decision-making process and make available on website.
- Need language accessibility – if not in meetings, but meeting minutes.
- Community development departments in cities have long history of working with new communities in existing working structure.
- Two examples of community involvement when it went poorly.
- Make process real not just part of a process – keep records.
- Make sure that as plans are implemented the projects reflect community input.
- What can smaller communities do to have input – they are so far away?
- Persistence and articulate problems to your elected officials.

Peer-to-Peer Exchange: Effective Outreach Strategies and Gaining Consensus

Topics for Discussion & Questions:

A. Outreach

- How do we identify community groups?
- Going to the people (factors: time and making it fun)
- Messaging
- Getting people to meetings
- Media

B. Building Solutions and Consensus

- Balance interests and needs
- Long-term vision
- Ongoing issues, “minority issues”

C. Meaningful Engagement?

- Coming to us!
- Managing expectations
- Providing resources
- What is the community’s role?
- Establishing dialogues

Solutions based on Discussion:

A. Meaningful Engagement:

- Clear purpose, agenda and desired outcomes
 - Structure and flexibility
 - Facilitation
- Understand appropriate approach
- Utilize “trends” info
- Communicate:
 - Scope
 - Roles – Public roles, Policymakers roles
- Assess and build trust levels
- Integrated planning

B. Outreach

- Non-traditional methods:
- Web-based
- One-on-one: phone calls, email, outreach trees
- Community collaborations:
 - Churches

- Foundations
- Local Agencies
- Media
- Schools -> Parents

- Amenities/Services
 - Food
 - Transportation
 - Childcare

- Go to the people (diverse issues)
 - BIA's
 - CBO's
 - Ongoing communication to build trust

- Messaging:
 - Target Audiences
 - Clear statewide coordination

- Polling
 - Quantitative