



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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July 29, 2004



What is Public Participation?



Public (Citizen) Participation

- Purposeful activity of citizens taking part in governmental decision-making outside the electoral process.
- Citizens advise elected officials and in turn, elected officials advise citizens.

- (Such 1989)



Public (Citizen) Participation

- Process that people who will be affected or interested in a decision get a chance to influence its content before it is made.
- Stakeholders influence and share responsibilities for decisions.
 - (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)



Public (Citizen) Participation

- Process that can meaningfully tie programs to people.
 - (Spiegel, 1969)



Public Participation

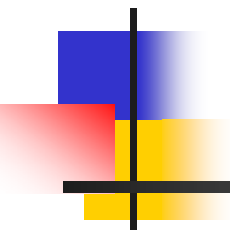
- Process:
 - That makes public aware of the issues
 - That provides information about the issues
 - That obtains input from the public on the issues
 - That fosters interaction with the public on issues
 - Provides final outcomes that are consistent with the public's interest in the issues



Public Participation

- Under Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law:
 - Public Participation is a requirement
 - Plan Commissions must have a formal written plan to engage the public

So how could you really
engage the public?





What You Want to Achieve

- Communicate Issues (Public Awareness)
- Provide Education about Issues (Public Education)
- Gather Information about Issues from the Public (Public Input)
- Develop Dialogue about Issues (Public Interaction)
- Formal Involvement by Public in Meaningful Decisions (Public Partnership)



Public Awareness

- Communicate Issues –
 - Meeting Notices (open meeting law)
 - Direct Mail
 - News Releases and Mass Media
 - Displays and Exhibits



Meeting Notices

- Required by Open Meeting Law
- Must be posted where public has access to it
- Makes people aware of issues to be discussed
- Indicates the meeting is open to public
- Lists a contact person



Direct Mail

- Delivers message to large group of people at once
- Could be direct letter, newsletter, brochure, or other promotional piece
- Provides awareness of the process and issues, as well as education as a secondary opportunity
- Could be done at different stages of planning process
- Lists contact person(s)
- Fairly expensive



News Releases & Mass Media

- Newspaper articles
- Radio interviews
- Public announcements
- Public notices
- Could be done at different stages of planning process
- Expense may be a consideration



Displays & Exhibits

- Made up of pictures, graphs, maps, statements, or any combination
- Purpose:
 - show an issue and
 - build awareness
- Works best in large group public gathering
- Most effective when manned
- Can be costly and difficult to find volunteers



Public Education

- Provide Education about the Issues
 - Public Educational Meetings
 - Web Sites



Public Educational Meetings

- Effective tool to educate the stakeholders about the issues
- Purpose is to provide public with sufficient background – an understanding - to participate effectively



Web Sites

- Effective tool for those with computers
- Website can have minutes, maps, information, other links, and avenues for communication
- Good educational technique because of interaction
- Does not work well if too complex
- Requires substantial financial commitment to establish a web site



Public Input

- Gathering Information –
 - Open House
 - Public Hearing
 - Citizens Advisory Committee(s)
 - Visual Preference Survey
 - Focus Groups
 - Opinion Surveys



Open House

- Public invitation to come together and share information using following methods:
 - Booths
 - Displays
 - Presentation
- Gather comments from participants
- Chance for public to interact with Plan Commission without a formal presentation
- Comments gathered can be used in later planning



Public Hearing

- Minimum legal requirement for public participation
- Is an official or permanent record of a public meeting
- Least effective tool to obtain public participation
- Setting intimidates participants
- May not provide clear direction



Citizen's Advisory Committee

- Provide detailed input on an issue
- Formed to deal with specific issue(s)
- Should have clear purpose and specific directions
- Commonly used in public participation process
- Could become unpopular
- Committees are advisory only



Developing Dialogue about Issues

- Public Interaction
 - Visioning



Visioning

- Uses a set of questions to draw out what the public may see as their future of the community or area, such as:
 - Where are we now?
 - Where are we going if we don't change?
 - Where do we want to go?
 - How do we get there?



Visioning

- Process permits a variety of means for expressing a preferred state:
 - Write their vision
 - Express vision vocally
 - Use drawings or photographs
- Generally used early to inspire public participation and later when developing responses



Public Formal Involvement

- Citizen Planning Commissions
- Referenda



Citizen Planning Commission

- Represents formal planning partnership between citizens & unit of government
- Lends credibility to the process
- Works best when units of government are truly willing to partner
- Invests a tremendous amount of time to gather public input



Budgeting

- Cooperative effort between governing body and Plan Commission
- Not just a money issue,
- It is understanding how strategies or techniques can be completed jointly



Public Participation

- It is a written plan that uses a variety of techniques and strategies to obtain input and direction from all your friends and neighbors to develop a future for your children.