Managing Effective Public Participation
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February 20-21, 2007
What Will Happen?

• What are the risks?
• What are the gains?
• Who should/should not be involved?
• How much does the designer or project manager need to control?
Lots of Options

- Computer-assisted meetings
- Web-based meetings
- Citizen juries
- Fishbowl or storefront processes
- Charettes
- Games
Design Charettes

- Always interactive and intense activity
- Always visual and map-based
- Often used for site planning or architecture
- Short timeframe (classic is one week)
- Three-dimensional tools help build understanding of vertical and horizontal scale
Pre-Charette

- Advance work (maps, photos, historical documents, topography, zoning, context maps, structures, etc.)
- Pre-charette outreach
Charette Events

• Kick-off event (community event)
  – Walking tour

• Hands-on public session (brainstorming – draw ideas)

• Synthesizing the plan (design team)
  – Scheduled “train wreck” – mid-course public review

• Town meeting (design team’s plan)
Post-Charette

- Follow-up tasks
- Documentation
- Very short timeframe increases post-charette work
Design Charettes

• Not the same as loose “visioning” or facilitated meetings, flip chart sessions, etc.
• Ends with one detailed, physical, visual plan – not a series of alternatives
• Requires a strong design leader
• Final “composite” design is responsibility of design team
Variations on the Theme

- “Not so public” charette (by invitation only)
- “Month in residence” (storefront location)
- Can spread out process in time but will lose impact and intensity
Nothing Guarantees Success

- Not a panacea for political gridlock
- Consensus doesn’t happen magically
- Make sure event isn’t taken over by special interests
- Follow through on promises
- Act on the plan
Role of Facilitator

- Are good communicators (nothing to teach)
- Ask questions (proactive listening)
- Listen and restate when necessary
- Maintain control but empower the group
- Ensure that all views are placed on the table
- Not tied to particular outcome
- Charette: Design Leader plays stronger role, providing professional expertise
Flexibility Is Key to Participatory Design

- System and Network Solutions
- Alignment Alternatives
- Flexibility in Roadway Cross Section
- Aesthetic Design
System Options

- Gaps
- System-wide Improvements
- Alternative Alignments
Alignment Alternatives: Stillwater Bridge
Effect of Design Speed

- Rock cliff
- Natural shoreline erosion at rock cliff base
- State park
- Motorist Views to the lake
- Rest area
- 70 mph design speed alignment
- 55 mph design speed alignment
- Natural shoreline erosion at rock cliff base
Impact of Edges

- Edge treatment changes perception of roadway

55 mph

35 mph

50 mph
Visual Cues through Design
Pedestrian Experience
Character of Place
Development Opportunities

Hiawatha/38th St.
Example: Excelsior Blvd.

- Reduced speed
- 11 foot lanes – no shoulders
- Shorter turn lanes
- 6 ft parking bays (+ 2 ft reaction)
- Street furniture
- 150+ trees
Pedestrian Improvements

- Wide, patterned concrete sidewalks
- Colored pavement on crosswalks
- Medians/wide boulevards
- Pedestrian-level lighting
- Count-down timers at signals
Adjacent Development

Before

After
Modal Priorities
Aesthetic Design Elements
Materials
Public Art
Vegetation
Balancing Competing Interests

- Facilitation and negotiation are necessary skills
- Transportation is always important but may not be the most important outcome
- Participation makes it easier to accept a less than perfect solution
Questions?