

# BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

*Notes captured on flipcharts*

## Morning Questions

- *Based upon what you have heard this morning and your own experiences, why might it be challenging to truly engage the various stakeholders in decisions that may affect them?*
- *What is the appropriate role of our elected officials?*
- *How might the complexity of an issue or project test the principles of authentic public participation?*

## Afternoon Questions

- *How might we work effectively with multiple Stakeholders who potentially hold strong and conflicting views as to what is best for the community?*
- *How might we effectively convene a group of individual Stakeholders who are reluctant to meet with one another?*
- *What principles could we adopt that would guide genuine public participation?*

## MORNING NOTES:

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*Based upon what you heard this morning and your own experiences, why might it be challenging to truly engage the various stakeholders in decisions that may affect them?*

- Manage expectations
- frame the question
- Objective criteria
- Follow-up on promises
- Having differing opinions
- Lack of trust: sometimes people don't come because they don't trust, sometimes they come just to debate

- Lack of attendance
- Involving people early: it can be difficult to work with people later when decisions are already made
- Understanding what is likely to happen with public response along the way
- Squeaky wheel – how to get around?
- Lack of trust
- Last minute surprises
- How to get the ear of the right elected official or decision-maker, especially if districts do not exist
- Misinformation
- higher degree of knowledge/education – might be misinformation
- Negative perception of government
- Varying expectations about the process and their role
- Start too late – need to clarify issues – “why are we here?”
- Seeing only the big picture sometimes need to drill down

*What is the appropriate role of our elected officials?*

- Listen to all stakeholders, not just residents
- Partnership with staff to go out into community – use appropriate “techniques”
- Represent constituents in their district – weigh information from City and compare impact to their district
- Outreach – council should get out and meet with citizens to determine concerns
- Sometimes all citizens need is to be heard
- Council system is good because they know their communities
- City staff and council need to work together
- Businesses are also important stakeholders
- Hold neighborhood meetings – issues can then be escalated for resolution
- Notify people who may not live in the community, but do business in the area
- City works with other agencies
- Encourage citizens to express their concerns
- Aim for win-win
- Make relationships on “easy” stuff, so participate when difficult issues come up
- No bad-mouthing of employees (treatment of staff)
- Good leaders to “role model” to citizens
- Carry message to constituents
- Don’t alienate/discount a minority idea
- Fair, equitable, committed, decisive, accountable
- No “lip service” regarding public involvement

*How might the complexity of an issue or project test the principles of authentic public participation?*

- People might have preconceived notions/beliefs
- Public assumes somebody will speak for them
- Don't talk or care to participate
- Degree of interest
- Areas of agreement (or disagreement)
- Wanting to make decisions and move too fast before everyone is ready
- Break down complex issues into smaller issues – not as intimidating
- Limit the number of projects so people aren't overwhelmed
- Emphasize long-term versus short-term and define effect of the project
- Provide brief explanation of various projects to provide clarification
- It's alright to admit you're wrong
- If a councilmember is at-large (without direct responsibility to a constituency), how do you reach out?
- The more complex the issue, the more early, detailed information needed
- Clearly defined scope
- Don't confuse complexity with unnecessary detail

**AFTERNOON NOTES:**

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*How might we work effectively with multiple Stakeholders who potentially hold strong and conflicting views as to what is best for the community?*

- Manage expectations
- frame the question
- Objective criteria
- Follow-up on promises
- Identify common ground
- Ground rules
- Expective facilitation – safe forum
- Engage people at the beginning of the process, rather than at the end
- Ability to identify stakeholders and get them to meetings
- Identify how to get information to the public – feeds into trust (use marketing strategies")
- Finding and keeping up with "new" communication methods
- Don't rely only on electronic methods – use direct contact, mail, meetings, networking

- Use non-political community events
- Town hall formats PLUS option for anonymous input
- Listen!!
- Get the big picture
- Focus on resolutions, not the issue itself
- Hold multiple meetings – small venues
- Find areas of commonality
- Us versus them syndrome
- Correct misinformation in advance
- Build relationships – all parties (participants/organizers)
- Incorporate different points of view into solutions
- Set ground rules
- Identify perspectives

*How might we effectively convene a group of individual Stakeholders who are reluctant to meet with one another?*

- Find out best way to reach audience early
- Determine what the public is looking for
- Identify to stakeholders exactly what you want – level of involvement – early in the process
- The information doesn't always get out to the public on how to be involved – make sure multiple methods of announcing a way to be involved – outreach methods
- If you want buy-in, get out into the community and reach out
- consider networking at various events – engage people of different groups to participate in other common events (such as health fairs)
- Be mindful of different languages and cultures
- Take the extra step to reach out to different groups – keep lists of potential stakeholders
- People must be willing to resolve the issues
- Inconclusion
- Decision will be made: be part of it
- Meet with stakeholders separately first
- Create open, inviting environment
- Public events, block party, refreshing
- Initiate contact with stakeholders
- Create safe, non-judgmental environment
- Use neutral site

*What principles could we adopt that would guide genuine public participation?*

- Do separate World Café's for different stakeholders (different questions)
- Change the structure of council
- Have frequent community events
- Advertise what's available in the City and what projects are coming up
- Assign certain areas/subjects to different council members
- Be patient, the process takes time
- Flexibility to modify questions if needed
- Must prepare questions and facilitator
- Must control number of attendees
- Maintain the energy
- Assurance of neutrality
- Establish ground rules
- Determine nature of the Public Participation spectrum
- Must be genuine, honest and ethical
- Encourage creative, constructive dissention
- Stick to the plan
- Convenient location
- Clarify expectations
- Keep promises
- Start by building relationships
- Stakeholders: identify own responsibilities first
- rules of civility
- Have a good moderator

**REPORT BACK NOTES:**

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Lesson learned for the day:

- Morning session believe elected officials should serve as role models (led into Lattie Coor's talk)
- Morning session tackled complex issues (e.g., general plan: let public discuss rather than overwhelm)
- The IAP2 Spectrum seems valuable
- I had never been exposed to focused expression – it was done in simple terms
- World Café has been used for American Lung Association – a very good use for that group

- Younger generation has tools that are teaching them organizational skills (e.g., X-Box, Internet gaming)
- Samoan Circle seems better for small groups rather than large
- Are you looking at changing 5% - 10% public participation? Are the models presented today the answer?
- Neighborhood meetings may be more effective
- Facilitation: realized just how much preparation it takes (know who participants are/issues/pick right technique/be flexible/etc.)
- Good toolkit from IAP2
- The bets \$49 every spent
- Enjoyed Samoan Circle and Focused Conversation – would try these – they are simple
- World Café – good cross-pollination, nobody can dominate
- Questions were difficult
- “Circulation” feature of World Café helps define issues and solutions
- World Café may not work as well to develop a defined course of action
- World Café: like table host recap of previous question