Crafting Effective Public Participation Programs

Road School - March 7, 2012
Presentation team

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Agenda

- Basics of public outreach
- Effective public meetings
- Social media
- Case studies
- Questions
Effective public outreach

- Single point of contact
- Website
- Media relations
- Small group presentations
- Public meetings
- Special events
- Social media
Matching your outreach to your time and dollar investment

- Paid Advertising
- Website
- Media Relations
- Small Group Presentations
- Single Point of Contact
- Public Meetings
- Social Media
Single point of contact

- Create contact cards
  - Include phone number and email
  - Set up hotline so people can leave messages
- Person should stay up-to-date on all details, especially schedule
- Person accountable to elected officials
- Person who receives comments
- Media spokesperson or presenter
Website

- Simple:
  - Can include just a PDF of the fact sheet
  - Helpful for displaying graphics
  - Purchasing familiar URLs that redirect to your website can cost only $7-10/year
  - Supports legal notices for meetings
  - Houses information for people who missed meetings
Website

- Robust:
  - Helpful for displaying graphics, especially maps
  - Can purchase several URLs
  - Supports legal notices for meetings
  - Houses information for people who missed meetings
  - Can store archives of newsletters or news releases
  - Can collect feedback
  - Link to social media sites
Southeast Corridor Public Meeting:
Mon., Feb. 27, 2012, 4:00-6:00 pm
Fletcher Place Arts & Books Building, 642 Virginia Ave.

Read the February edition of "Trail Talk" here.
Media relations

- Inform large audience for a small investment
- Can be formal (news release) or informal (calls to reporters)
- Prepare graphics and handouts
- Helps publicize meetings
Small group presentations

- Consider forming Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to spread your news
- Make yourself available to civic, business or neighborhood groups
- Small investment that buys goodwill
Public meetings - Location

- Hold in accessible, public space (usually free)
- Book room large enough for crowds
- Use signage, if needed
- Have chairs available
- Consider acoustics and lighting
- Make arrangements for and advertise American Sign Language or Spanish interpreters, if needed
Public meetings - Staffing

- Ensure enough staff to handle crowds
- Give team members nametags
- Have a formal sign-in table
- Prepare team with tough Q&A in advance
- Designate one person to handle media
Public meetings – Handling crowds and angry residents

Crowds:
- Clearly label tables and sources of information
- Use your microphone and engage team members in directing residents to the right tables
- Throw out your agenda

Angry residents:
- Isolate the disruptive person, ask them to speak in a quiet area away from the group
- Take a 10- to 15-minute break
Public meetings - Presentation

- Offer open house hours before and after presentation
- Use graphics in your presentation
- Ensure everyone can see presentation
- Make presentation available on website for those who cannot attend
- Determine in advance whether you’ll have a public Q&A
Public meetings - Handouts

- Fact sheets or FAQs help inform
- Maps help answer questions
- Have handouts at displays, not sign-in table
- Prepare extras for those who cannot attend
- Leave extras, or take them to public places like libraries or schools
Special events

- Engage the community
- Engage elected officials
- Garner media coverage
- Can be as small or large as your budget allows
Social media

- Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into interactive dialogue. --Wikipedia
- Small financial investment
- Requires dedicated staff
- Examples: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, texting
Social media

- Growing as source for information
- Free, user-friendly and interactive
- Delivers info in real time, allowing you to communicate a message faster
- People can give feedback and ask questions
  - Allows you to gauge opinions and identify problems or concerns
Social media

- Getting started:
  - Assign a person to oversee and manage accounts
  - Open social media accounts
  - Create a social media campaign
  - Develop protocol for how often you post, responding to posts, removing offensive info
Summary

- Public outreach can be effective with small financial investment
- Scale your time and cost investment against the scope of the project
- Know your regulatory standards
- Keep records of all outreach
US 31 Hamilton County

Overview

- Project crosses three jurisdictions
- Decades of discussion with no action
- Strong business/developer base
- Corridor is already built out
- Hundreds of property owners affected
- Construction began in 2011
US 31 Hamilton County

• Outreach tools:
  — Monthly briefings for elected officials
  — Community advisory committee
  — Website
  — Public meetings
  — Robust selection of handouts
  — Materials in public places, like libraries
  — Contact cards
US 31 Hamilton County

- Outreach tools:
  - Small group presentations
  - Media relations
  - E-newsletter
  - Milestone events
  - Targeted business outreach
  - Developer updates
  - Coming soon: Texting and social media
The US 31 Hamilton County Major Moves project will upgrade US 31 to freeway standards from I-465 at the Marion-Hamilton county line, through Carmel to SR 38 in Westfield.

The purpose of this project is to reduce congestion, improve safety, and provide continuity of commerce and regional travel for a U.S. highway that stretches from Michigan to Alabama.

The US 31 Hamilton County project is part of Governor Mitch Daniels’ Major Moves initiative, it is one of three projects scheduled for the US 31 corridor between Indianapolis and South Bend.

The three US 31 corridor projects – in Hamilton, Howard, Marshall and St. Joseph counties – amount to a $1 billion investment in northern Indiana, which will help increase economic activity, provide better access to areas across the state and create jobs.

The estimated construction cost of this project is $435 million.

Construction will last from 2011 until December 2016.

Literature
Lessons learned

- Define team roles early
- Designate one person to keep website updated
- Inform elected officials of changes first
- Maintain open communication with property owners
Overview

- Initiative to transform the city through investment in infrastructure improvements
- Targets thoroughfares, residential streets, sidewalks and bridges
- Addresses drainage and flooding issues
- Demolishes unsalvageable abandoned homes
- $182 million in 2011, $140 million in 2012
- 2010 to 2015
Keep residents updated on construction projects with pictures, weekly updates
Facebook allowed City to keep residents posted
Residents stay engaged, feel project is coming together right before their eyes
It provides a place for residents to provide feedback, and many times, it’s positive!
Facebook
“DPW is working to repair potholes! See where: this week's pothole repair schedule http://tinyurl.com/235sexb.”
RebuildIndy

Twitter results:

- RebuildIndy
  - 997 followers
  - November - 47 new followers
  - December - 20 new followers
  - January - 28 new followers

- Indy Snow Force
  - 1636 followers
  - November - 122 new followers
  - December - 90 new followers
  - January - 292 new followers
Questions?

Thank you for attending!