Evidence-Based Practices for Designing Public Engagement in Transportation

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4 Key Questions for *Evidence-Based Design*

1. What are the purposes of this public engagement effort?

2. Can we move beyond “participation as input”?

3. How will we manage the engagement?

4. How will we evaluate the outcomes?
Suggested Design and Management Techniques for Enhancing Public Engagement in Transportation Policymaking

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CTS 11-24
Research Methods

- Broad literature search of existing models and critiques of them
- Ethnographic research in Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Theoretical frameworks from prior research
- Dialogues with local transportation professionals
- Preparation for applied research project with LRRB on public communication and engagement for sustaining road systems
Your experiences: Jot a few notes about a public engagement effort in transportation that you have experienced that was noteworthy in some way.
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• What made it noteworthy or memorable?
• What were the goals and outcomes?
• How was it organized?
• What kinds of resources did it require?
HIDDEN SLIDE. These are cues for a dialogue about the panelists’ and audience members’ experiences, for about 10 minutes

Spend a few minutes making some notes. Then, privately rank your example on scale of 1 to 5, 5 being very successful, 1 being very unsuccessful

-discussion of what “success” is
  - Show of hands by rating
  - Examples of “5” – exemplary; what made it so?
  - Examples of “1” – awful; what made it so?

Transition: Congratulations, you’ve covered most of the bases on what’s hard about this work!
State of public engagement in transportation
(Quick and Zhao 2011)

• Dominant paradigm is “participation as input”
• Generally consumes more resources than it produces
• Not very satisfying to agencies or public
• Rarely evaluated

• Ongoing challenges:
  – Public trust and legitimacy
  – Technical complexity of issues
  – Diversity of participants
  – Constraints on decision-making discretion
Lots of innovation! (Quick and Zhao 2011, Table 1)

- Advisory boards and roles for public
  - Citizen project review panel, Puget Sound
  - Steering committee, Grand Rapids, MI

- Small group consultations
  - Focus groups with transit riders, NJDOT
  - Deliberative polls, MN

- Collaborative design exercises
  - Charrettes
  - Online budget or design optimization tools

- Participatory action research (New York)

- Using GIS to identify patterns & gaps (Dulles Corridor)
4 Key Questions for *Evidence-Based Design*

1. What are the purposes of this public engagement effort?
2. Can we move beyond “participation as input”?
3. How will we manage the engagement?
4. How will we evaluate the outcomes?
1. What is the purpose?

(Bryson, Quick, Schively Slotterback, and Crosby 2011)

- Meet legal mandates
- Embody the ideals of democracy
- Engage participants to represent or discover the public interest
- Learn: enable better understanding of problems and options, perhaps generate new solutions
- Share information
- Manage conflict and resolve disputes
- Limit delays, mistakes, and lawsuits
- Produce greater support for the process and outcomes
- Build relationships, social capital, and trust for ongoing work
2. Can we move beyond “participation as input”? (Quick and Zhao 2011; Quick and Feldman 2011)

- participatory: provide input on proposed project or policy
- deliberative: engage in multi-directional dialogue about policy options
- collaborative: coordinate to implement the decisions on an ongoing basis
- adaptive: continually evaluate and adjust their goals and actions
- inclusive: codefine issue and engagement process; connect across issues, perspectives, and time
3. How will we manage the engagement effort?

(Bryson, Quick, Schively Slotterback, and Crosby 2011)

• Match the design with the purpose (see handout)

• Key considerations
  – Topic: Project, program, or overarching policy?
  – Other features of context (e.g., political support, regulatory requirements, engineering or fiscal feasibility)
  – Stakeholders
  – Complexity, divergence, and conflict
  – One-off or ongoing consultations, urgent or anticipatory?
Communicating purpose and expectations

(credit: International Association for Public Participation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increasing Level of Public Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inform</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consult</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Involve</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Empower</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</td>
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**Public participation goal**

- **Promise to the public**
  - We will keep you informed.
  - We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
  - We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
  - We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.
  - We will implement what you decide.
4. How will we evaluate the participation?

- Individual, group, and community level outcomes (e.g., individual and group learning) (Deyle and Slotterback, 2009; Schively, 2007).
- Process-oriented outcomes (e.g., incorporating a diverse stakeholders) (Bikerstaff, Tolley, and Walker, 2002);
- Content-oriented outcomes (e.g., improving transportation safety) (Mandarano, 2008; Margerum, 2002)
- User-oriented outcomes (e.g., participants’ satisfaction with process) (Laurian and Shaw, 2007)
- First-, second-, and third-order outcomes: immediate impacts, impacts once collaboration is underway, and long-term impacts (Innes and Booher, 1999).
Note to panel: the following case example is optional, depending on time. We could skip to have plenty of time for panel & audience discussion.
Learning from Grand Rapids
Grand Rapids experiments in civic engagement
Grand Rapids’ “50/50” rules for Public Engagement

Accomplishing a task

Building a community

Old-timers

Newcomers
Grand Rapids Case: Key Steps in Process

- Redefining “connections” theme in Master Plan
- Founding an inclusive cycling-oriented coalition
- Bike Summit and Bike-Friendly City Application
- Sustained efforts to pass public transit funding measures
- Multi-party congestion management planning
- Ongoing experimentation
Grand Rapids Case: Keys to Success

• 50/50 rule: Building the cause & the community
  – Redefining “transportation” or “green” or “cycling” to bring more people in
  – Building out a sustained, long-term effort
  – Finding and fostering champions

• Boundary work
  – Bringing in different kinds of expertise
  – New & old issues
  – Newcomers & old-timers
Panel and Audience Discussion

• Nick Peterson, Hennepin County, Moderator

• Panelists:
  – Randy Newton, City of Eden Prairie
  – Wayne Sandberg, Washington County
  – John Griffith, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Thank you! Kathy Quick, ksquick@umn.edu