Community Education about Housing

SEPTMBER 27, 2018
Today We’ll Cover…

1. Findings about the community’s information needs
2. Framing and delivering information for ongoing engagement
3. Design for **community** audiences as well as civic audiences
4. Best practices for plain language/other languages
Community Engagement Principles

Proactive Inclusion

Phased Learning

Collaborative Action
Community Engagement Principles

- **Principle #1: Proactive Inclusion**
  Bring in new perspectives; find people who care about the community but are not civically involved.
Community Engagement Principles

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- **Principle #2: Phased Learning**
  Focus on building shared understanding ahead of any decisions.
Community Engagement Principles

- **Principle #1: Proactive Inclusion**
  Bring in *new perspectives*; find people who *care about the community* but are not civically involved

- **Principle #2: Phased Learning**
  Focus on building *shared understanding* ahead of any decisions

- **Principle #3: Collaborative Action**
  Create the *conditions* that enhance the community’s ability to *work collaboratively*
Everyone is affected by high housing costs

There is no one solution; many are needed

There is more happening than I realized

The problem is huge but together we can make progress

There are many ways to stay informed or involved
Community Information Needs

Personal

- What are current and upcoming types of housing and support?
- Am I eligible for affordable housing?
- What future can I anticipate for my family?
Community Information Needs

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**Community**
- Who lives and works here?
- How are we experiencing the issue of housing?
- Who is affected by current conditions?
- Who else cares?
Community Information Needs

**Personal**
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**Community**
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**Civic System**
- How do new homes get built?
- What decisions are being made?
- What is happening short term, mid-term, long term?
- How will impacts be managed?
Community Curiosity and Energy

- Current actions
- Innovative solutions
- Partnerships
- Related & overlapping issues
- Ways to get involved
The Mind Shift

• Taking the city out of the center
• Reframing to put the issue and the community at the center
Framing Concepts to Keep in Mind

• Data alone won't suffice
• Activate shared values and common identity
• Avoid zero-sum thinking
• Multiple solutions needed
• Emphasize interdependence and collective action
Create the Conditions for Learning

Calm: Ready to listen, learn and participate

Flooded: Anger or fear, fight or flight
Framing for Interdependence

• Emphasize community, interconnections and the “story of us”:
  o Our community is...
  o ...affects all of us
  o Our challenges ...
  o Our opportunities ...
  o When we work together...
Education About “Us”

Portola Valley Community Conversation About Housing

Half Moon Bay Let’s Talk About Housing

Our Community: Housing and Our Future

Burlingame talks together about housing
Housing Information Objectives

How did we get here?
Help community members understand the context for housing decisions

Where are we?
Develop a baseline understanding of how the community is experiencing the issue

What can we do together?
Provide background information that shows types of partnerships as well as how community members can participate and contribute

How can I learn more?
Offer opportunities to go deeper into the topic and/or stay involved
When **community members** talk about development, what do we overhear?
Designing for Community vs Civic

*Civic:*
Formal, legal, rooted in discussions of policy

*Community:*
Informal, human, based on narrative and lived experience

*Share WHY before WHAT and HOW*
Information for Inclusion

If the goal is to engage the broader community, information won’t be accessible if it is designed primarily for...

• City Council members
• Planning Commissioners
• City staff
• Policy advocates
• Lawyers
• Highly engaged community members
Community Demographics

• Take the time to learn about your audience’s experiences, as well as their needs
• Keep in mind that diverse audiences bring diverse needs
Available Online at: factfinder.census.gov

Redwood City city, California

Foreign Born Population

27,036

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Popular tables for this geography:

- 2016 American Community Survey
  - Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations (Sex, Age, Race, Language, Income, Poverty,...)
  - Language Spoken at Home (Age, Citizenship,...)
  - Characteristics of People by Language Spoken at Home (Age, Foreign Born, Citizenship, Poverty, Education,...)
  - Selected Social Characteristics (Household and Family Type, Disability, Citizenship, Ancestry, Language,...)

- Census 2000
  - Selected Social Characteristics (Household and Family Type, Disability, Citizenship, Ancestry, Language,...)

Want more? Need help? Use Guided Search or visit Census.gov's Quick Facts.
## Understand Language Preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Foreign Born Population (%)</th>
<th>Speak Language Other Than English (%)</th>
<th>Speak English Less than Well (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burlingame</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Moon Bay</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portola Valley</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood City</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identify Community Starting Points

• Get a sense of community starting points by going where people are

• **Listen** for questions, hopes, concerns and gaps in understanding (misinformation)
  
  o What does your audience already know?
  
  o How are they experiencing the issue?
  
  o What else do they need to know?
Phased Learning & Information Gathering

INVITE PERSPECTIVES

Community outreach

SHAREd UNDERSTANDING of key issues and each other

NARROW CHOICES

Review options and trade-offs

Decision or action

Learning Space

Decision Space
Phased Learning & Information Gathering

**Information Gathering**
Identify community starting points through pop-ups, intercepts, surveys and feedback forms.
Creating Tiers of Information

• **Introductory** (Minimally Engaged)
  o Key facts and background information that provide the general context

• **Intermediate** (Moderately Engaged)
  o More in-depth information, details that deepen understanding

• **Advanced** (Highly Engaged)
  o Technical details and policy specifics
Plain Language Recommendations

- Keep sentences as short as possible, while retaining meaning
- Use words that are familiar to many audiences
- Be careful with metaphors and idioms (check cultural fit)
- Use bullet points, tables and graphics when possible
- If you have to use a word that your audience might not understand, provide a definition or example

For Plain Language style guides, online editors and word lists, visit: tinyurl.com/writeforeveryone
Channels are as Important as Content

• Know how your audiences like to get their information
  • Websites, social media
  • Newsletters (yours or others)
  • In-person locations
  • From a trusted source
• Community partners can help develop reach, understanding and trust
With a Partner

In pairs, based on your experiences and what we’ve discussed so far...

• Sort pieces of background information into the categories of **introductory**, **intermediate** and **advanced**

• What six pieces of background information would you include during an **introductory conversation** about housing? Why would you choose these pieces of information?
With Your Table

With your whole table, discuss:

• **How accessible is housing information in your city?**
  Is information usually presented for introductory, intermediate or advanced audiences?

• People usually encounter high-level information at council meetings and planning commission meetings. **Where are people receiving introductory to intermediate information?**

• What could you do to make information **more accessible**?
What We’ve Learned

Information needs are diverse
Take time to assess community member starting points

Make introductory information accessible and friendly
Sharing drafts and making revisions shows you care

Proactively address common questions and concerns
Avoid defensive myth busting and long FAQs
Responsive Information Design

• Develop basic information about “what is” and what is being considered

• Test with users and iterate
  o Use **their language** where possible
  o Use **community values** to explain **WHY** before explaining **WHAT**

• Revise and/or add to information based on what you hear