

APPROACH TO PLANNING & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

For physical planning to be truly successful, it must grow from sound principles, balancing the visionary with the realistic. A collaborative approach that actively involves all interested members of the community provides the basis for sustainable solutions to relevant problems. A good planning process will (1) develop the best possible vision for the future and (2) create the institutional will and public support to make that vision reality.

With any large project, these two goals require a well-crafted planning and public participation process that can create an understanding of community needs, surface the important information, and build support for the plan. The public participation effort is not merely an appendage to the “real” work of design and analysis, but an integral part of identifying issues, analyzing data, creating options, and building agreement.

HFA’s project process attempts to develop a physical plan that effectively embodies the community’s mission by integrating four distinct phases of work:

- Assessment/ Convening
- Building the Agreement
- Implementation
- Evaluation

This process is not a linear one, with sequential events occurring in an exact order. The results of one step may send you back to revisit an “earlier” step. However, these stages identify the various tasks that need to be completed to successfully plan and implement a project.

STEP 1: ASSESSMENT/CONVENING

The planning and public participation activities of the first phase of the project are crucial to setting the stage for productive working relationships throughout the rest of the planning process.

Key tasks of this phase include:

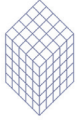
- Identify and interview stakeholders
- Identify issues
- Determine planning process
- Secure commitment to participate
- Arrange first event/meeting
- Agree on working ground rules, including a decision rule

Jennifer Hurley, AICP
Philip E. Franks, AIA, AICP

1429 Walnut Street ♦ Suite 601
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215.988.9440 (p) ♦ 215.988.9441 (f)
<http://www.hfadesign.com>
JLHurley@hfadesign.com
PEFranks@hfadesign.com

♦ Planning ♦ Urban Design ♦
♦ Project Communications & Graphics ♦
♦ Public Involvement ♦



APPROACH TO PLANNING & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholder Interviews & Analysis

The stakeholder interviews are the first step in developing a public participation program tailored to the specific circumstances of the project. Anyone who is affected by the proposed improvement or who can affect the planning and implementation of the project is a stakeholder. Key questions include: What are the interests of different stakeholders? What are their resources, influence, and power? How are the individuals and organizations related to each other? The series of stakeholder interviews identifies the full range of stakeholders to involve in the project or keep informed and also begins the process of identifying issues and visions for the future.

Targeted Participation & Information Campaigns

One of the key features of a successful planning and public participation program is to match the level and type of involvement with the audience and the purpose of participation. For transportation projects, there are generally three primary audiences: (1) agencies directly involved in the implementation of the transportation improvement; (2) other stakeholders, including residents, public officials, transit providers, and the media; and (3) the general public. Each of these “audiences” needs different levels and formats for participation and information.

Groundrules

For a planning process to be effective, everyone involved needs to understand their role and communicate productively. Working groups of volunteer citizens and other stakeholders can add value to a project, but giving people unrealistic expectations of their role or influence is unfair and politically damaging. To foster productive working relationships, we encourage committees and working groups to adopt a set of “Groundrules” for working together, including a decision rule.

Typical Groundrules include:

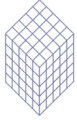
- Start and end on time
- Stick to the agenda
- Listen . . . Don’t interrupt
- Speak up . . . Everyone contributes
- Focus on issues, not people
- Respect confidentiality
- Decide by consensus

Jennifer Hurley, AICP
Philip E. Franks, AIA, AICP

1429 Walnut Street ♦ Suite 601
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215.988.9440 (p) ♦ 215.988.9441 (f)
<http://www.hfadesign.com>
JLHurley@hfadesign.com
PEFranks@hfadesign.com

♦ Planning ♦ Urban Design ♦
♦ Project Communications & Graphics ♦
♦ Public Involvement ♦



APPROACH TO PLANNING & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

STEP 2: BUILDING AGREEMENT

The way we create value is not to begin with a solution, but to begin by defining the problem. When everyone agrees on the problem or task to address, the possibility of finding a sustainable solution becomes reality. In the case of transportation projects, the analytical base includes a study of stakeholder interests and resources as well as the engineering constraints and possibilities.

- Define the problem/task
- Generate options/brainstorming
- Analyze options
- Joint fact-finding
- Package the agreement
- Test the agreement
- Secure support from constituents

STEP 3: IMPLEMENTATION

The only successful plan is one that is implemented. By structuring the planning process from the beginning with an emphasis on identifying all of the stakeholders and addressing their interests, we increase the chances that a plan will be implemented successfully.

- Document the process
- Publicize the agreement
- Influence legal decision-making
- Take action
- Monitor actions
- Re-negotiate

STEP 4: EVALUATION

Planning is a process, and effective planning requires ongoing evaluation of the tools, techniques, and results.

- Evaluation of the Process
 - During the process
 - After agreement
- Evaluation of the Outcome

Jennifer Hurley, AICP
Philip E. Franks, AIA, AICP

1429 Walnut Street ♦ Suite 601
Philadelphia, PA 19102

215.988.9440 (p) ♦ 215.988.9441 (f)
<http://www.hfadesign.com>
JLHurley@hfadesign.com
PEFranks@hfadesign.com

♦ Planning ♦ Urban Design ♦
♦ Project Communications & Graphics ♦
♦ Public Involvement ♦