



Methods and Approaches to Enhance Involvement in Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Communities and Neighborhoods

**A Handbook For Mn/DOT Planning and
Project Development Managers**

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1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

This handbook was prepared as a product of Mn/DOT's Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Dialogue Project (NTTSDP), which was conducted in 1995 and 1996. For the purposes of this study, non-traditional transportation stakeholders were defined as people of color, low-income constituencies, communities, neighborhood-based organizations, disabled individuals and civic and cultural groups. The purposes of the year and a half long project are summarized below:

- To identify non-traditional transportation stakeholder groups in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.
- To build better relationships with non-traditional transportation stakeholders.
- To invite those groups to become involved in Mn/DOT's public participation processes.
- To create a forum for dialogue and two-way learning so that:
 - Mn/DOT is better prepared to develop and facilitate effective involvement processes that reach out to non-traditional stakeholders and
 - Non-traditional stakeholders are better prepared to effectively participate in planning and project design processes.

Impetus for Conducting the Project

One of several driving forces behind the NTTSDP was the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. The ISTEA legislation articulated a new transportation decision making paradigm based on the idea of synergistic transportation planning. The intent expressed in the legislation was that metropolitan planning agencies and departments of transportation should develop participatory planning processes, specifically for under-represented groups.

The project was also initiated as a direct response to two of Mn/DOT's strategic initiatives, *Customer Focus* and *Transportation Initiatives that Support Community*.

LEGAL BACKING

In addition to ISTEA and Mn/DOT's internal initiatives, there are legal requirements and guidances that stress the importance of involving the public in planning and project development activities. Many of these speak directly to the need and importance of ensuring that historically underserved and under-represented constituencies are brought into the process. A list of these is provided in the Appendix.

NTTSDP ISSUE FINDINGS

The two most important findings that emerged from the NTTSDP were:

- 1) **Access to transportation planning and design processes** should be improved for non-traditional transportation stakeholders.
- 2) **Opportunities for meaningful involvement** need to be improved so that the values of non-traditional stakeholders can influence outcomes.

Addressing either of these would suggest that Mn/DOT conduct some of its outreach efforts differently than it currently does. The first speaks to the need to develop new partnerships and the challenges of convincing people (some of whom feel disenfranchised from the mainstream) that their presence and participation are welcomed.

The second finding addresses failures of current outreach processes to deal with non-traditional stakeholders in the same manner as traditional stakeholders. What was expressed was a sense that

input provided by the non-traditional public: 1) is not valued as highly as input received from suburban commuters, industry, or other interest groups and 2) lacks real meaning because:

- The public is only listened to as a formality
- Input from the public is received too late to have any real impact and all the critical issues have been resolved by the time the public is invited to participate.

As part of the NTTSDP, 18 dialogue meetings were held throughout the metropolitan area. Five key issues, perceptions were repeated at the 18 dialogue meetings. The five issues/perceptions, listed below, formed the framework for the development of recommendations from dialogue meeting participants:

1. Citizen involvement process is not conducive to constructive or proactive citizen involvement.
2. Mn/DOT's focus on moving cars quickly can work to undermine the livability of communities.
3. Poor communication exists between Mn/DOT and these communities-inadequate information is provided about what Mn/DOT does and why.
4. Public involvement is not valued in Mn/DOT's decision-making process.
5. Obstacles that discourage non-traditional stakeholders from participation need to be addressed.

NTTSDP RECOMMENDATIONS

In total twenty-one recommendations were developed from the 18 dialogue meetings. (See the *Final Report for the Mn/DOT Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Dialogue Project*, Biko Associates, Inc.; April 1997.) As part of the project, dialogue meeting participants were given the opportunity to rank the recommendations.

Mn/DOT RESPONSE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings, recommendations, and priorities developed through the NTTSDP were reviewed by a Mn/DOT Response Team. The Team met to determine: 1) what is feasible for the agency to implement and put into action within immediate and mid- and long-range time frames and 2) which individuals or groups within the agency might best be responsible for implementing recommended actions.

The Response Team developed the following six recommendations to present to Mn/DOT's deputy staff.

1. Review and update Mn/DOT's Public Participation Plan for planning and project development.
2. Conduct follow-up research on the non-traditional stakeholder market segment.
3. Establish a community liaison function within Mn/DOT.
4. Use advanced technology to improve frequency and quality of communication.
5. Develop a "Citizen's Guide to the Transportation Development Process."
6. Develop a proactive participation plan for major projects; ensure inclusion of non-traditional stakeholders through use of citizen task forces and community assessment methods.

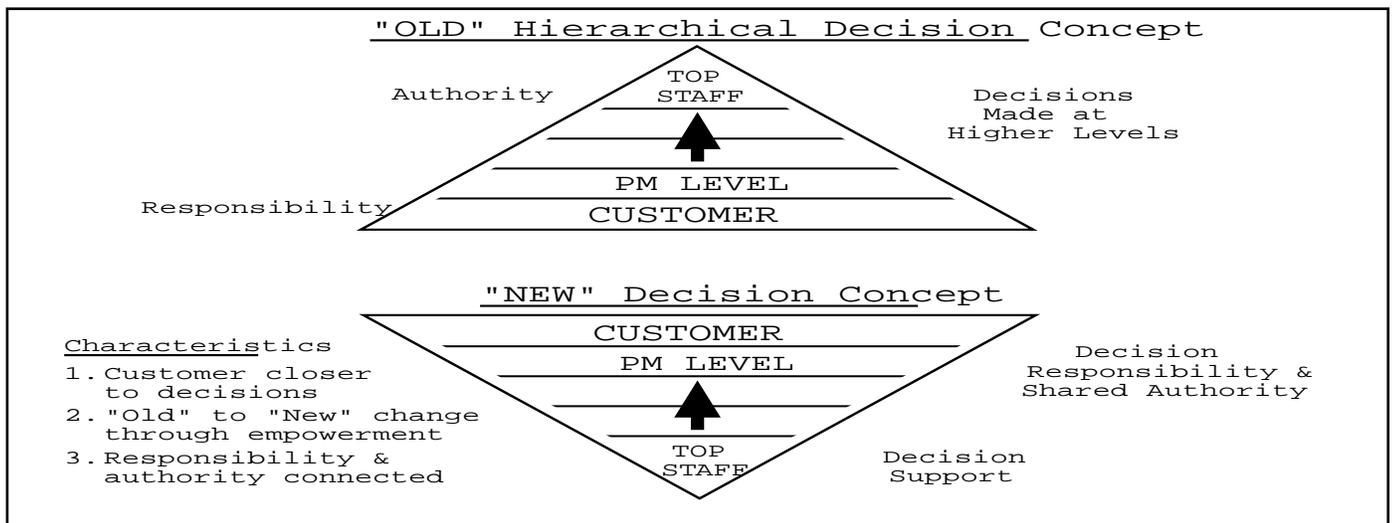
MnDOT'S ONGOING PROJECT MANAGER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The NTTSDP, and resulting recommendations from the Mn/DOT Response Team, are part of the department's ongoing efforts to evaluate and refine public outreach. Work completed for the NTTSDP, while focusing on a distinct market segment, should therefore be incorporated and coordinated with the department's existing and ongoing efforts to improve and enhance the capabilities of project managers. Some of the department's project manager training opportunities are listed below:

- Project Management Task Force, established in 1991, met on a monthly basis. In response to a Project Management Survey conducted in 1992, the Task Force has developed a list of 29 training topics, grouped into four general categories, to become the cornerstones of the recommended Project Management Academy.

The graphic that follows was taken from *New Directions for Project Management at Mn/DOT, Recommendations by the Project Management Task Force to the Project Development Steering Committee*; June 1993. It shows previous and recently adopted decision concepts that have emerged from the Task Force's discussions. Note that the NEW Decision Concept heightens the level of customer influence in decision-making and suggests that decision-making should be a responsibility that is shared between customers and staff.

- Project Management Academy, which provides present and potential project managers with knowledge, tools, and abilities to:
 - plan and organize
 - enhance creative problem solving
 - improve communications skills
 - exchange ideas with peers
 - better understand the role of Mn/DOT project managers
- Project Managers' Forum, a periodic one day meeting developed to provide project managers an opportunity to discover and refine tools necessary for successful project management. The Forums focus on public involvement, new and emerging technologies, updates in the area of environmental impacts, and current best practices in engineering.
- Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC) is a training program provided by the Institute for Participatory Management & Training. SDIC training outlines steps that project managers should follow when working on controversial projects and is designed to improve the effectiveness of interactions with the public. It focuses on management strategies that will result in implementation of projects where there may be opposition.



2. IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PROCESS

HOW TO APPROACH NON-TRADITIONAL TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDERS

During the NTTSDP, traditional transportation stakeholders were defined to include federal, state, regional, and local transportation agencies; multimodal interests; transportation industry lobbyists; private business interests; and, to some extent, suburban commuters.

For purposes of this project, non-traditional stakeholders were defined as:

- people of color
- low-income constituencies
- disabled individuals
- neighborhood-based organizations
- civic and cultural groups.

During the course of the project the operational definition of non-traditional transportation stakeholders was refined based on project findings. By the project's conclusion, the definition had been expanded to also include those who had not been effectively involved in the transportation process.



Approach Non-Traditional Stakeholders With Fore-Knowledge and as Potential Partners

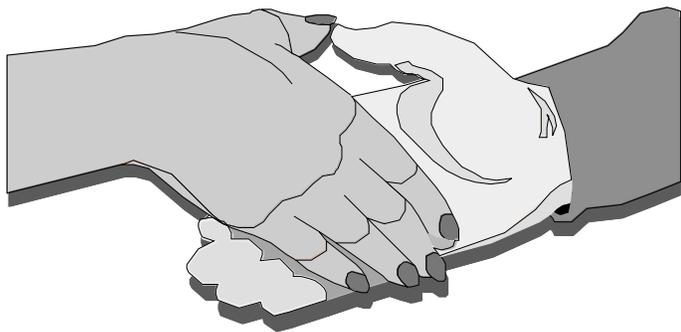
Knowing who the groups are that comprise non-traditional stakeholder communities is a first step in understanding this particular market segment.



Learning about the non-traditional stakeholder community through preparation of “community profile” information is a step that deserves far greater attention than it has received in the past. Typically community profiles have been prepared somewhere near the middle or the end of the environmental review process. Their completion fulfills a formal requirement of environmental documentation, per NEPA. Once the information has been prepared, analyzed, and reviewed, however, it tends to be ignored while other tasks are undertaken, and not much is done with it.

Information developed in the NTTSDP suggests that the community profile should be one of the first items to be completed in planning and project development activities. Equipped with community profile information at the beginning, rather than the middle or end of a planning process or project, will enable the project manager to identify ways to meaningfully involve the public. Used in this way, the community profile becomes an introduction to community life and an analysis tool for gaining greater understanding of community values, plans, issues, and preferences.

The community profile should further enable the project manager to understand who in the community or neighborhood are the appropriate agencies and individuals to engage in discussions about transportation. Almost every community or neighborhood has its network of leaders and local institutions. These networks are not dissimilar to those within the trucking industry, the pavement industry, the Met Council, or city hall. Planners and project managers who approach these traditional transportation stakeholders typically want to be prepared with knowledge of their issues and concerns before they meet. Why shouldn't residents in a community or neighborhood be given the same level of attention?



Elements of a Community Profile

Community profile data required by NEPA is a good starting point for painting a picture of communities that should be involved in planning and project development activities. These data can be divided into three elements: “1) physical, 2) population and demographics, and 3) socio-economic.”¹ To interact effectively, however, it is recommended that a fourth element should be added to the community profile research effort, even if its results are never published in environmental documentation.

The fourth element reflects the need to understand a community's institutions and political connections.

The four elements of a community profile are described below.

1. Physical Characteristics:

Prepare maps that depict the boundaries of impacted areas including neighborhoods and special planning districts. Identify zoning and show the locations of land uses such as public facilities, parks and community centers, schools, religious institutions, entertainment centers, commercial centers, and employment centers and residential areas.

2. Population and Demographic Characteristics:

Prepare tables and graphs that summarize important data such as population demographics, levels of educational attainment, employment trends, number of single parent households, and auto ownership.

3. Social History and Economic Characteristics:

Identify the historical context of the community noting who settled the area and how and when different groups migrated to the area over time. Include those qualitative issues that address community values (family, community, property, security) and aspirations. Identify trends in homeownership and rental occupancy, noting changes that have occurred. Quantify property tax information. Analyze the economic base within the community and assess whether dollars enter or leave for basic goods and services.

4. Institutional and Political Characteristics:

Identify both the obvious and the not so obvious institutions within the community and the network of leaders who run the institutions. The obvious institutions might include the business association or the city-recognized neighborhood organization.

1. Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration), pages 4 and 5; September 1996.

The not so obvious institutions could include the parish council in a Catholic church or the “Mothers of the Church” in an African American Baptist church.



Identify connections the community may have with city hall. For example, is there a relationship between local clergy and a city councilmember? Find out if there are precinct chairs or individuals who are active on advisory committees. Assess whether the community, through its institutions and leaders, is connected or politically disenfranchised.

Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholders in the Twin Cities

The following data in Table 1 is a snapshot in time and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Presented are data from the 1990 Census on population and location for non-traditional communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area:

How Non-Traditional Communities Operate in the Twin Cities

The organizations and groups that were contacted during the NTTSDP can be divided into the following categories:

- Activist
- Civic/social
- Disabled
- District councils in St. Paul and community councils in Minneapolis
- Racial, ethnic, cultural
- Religion-based

Activist Organizations

The activist organizations in the Twin Cities are not recognized by either of the two cities as representative organizations. They are not given special status in zoning and planning issues like the district councils and community councils are. Unlike the district councils and the community councils, the activist organizations receive no funding from the cities. They are accountable, however, to their membership base, which support the organizations with membership dues and fund raising activities.

**TABLE 1
NON-TRADITIONAL STAKEHOLDER DATA FOR THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA 1990**

Group	Minneapolis	Western Suburb	St. Paul	Eastern Suburb
Total Population	368,383	1,013,450	272,235	634,653
African-American	47,948	13,790	20,083	7,329
Asian-American	15,723	17,078	19,197	12,295
Spanish Speaking	7,900	7,106	11,476	6,736
American Indian	12,213	4,839	3,400	2,255
Disabled	13,409	20,796	8,243	12,104
Low-Income Household	151,637	61,438	59,404	31,597
Households Without Vehicles	36,733	17,655	20,114	8,365
Employment	201,917	664,956	139,918	420,590
Avg. Annual Household Income	33,245	48,434	33,259	47,533

Source: 1990 Census Data

1 Under 200% of poverty level in 1989.

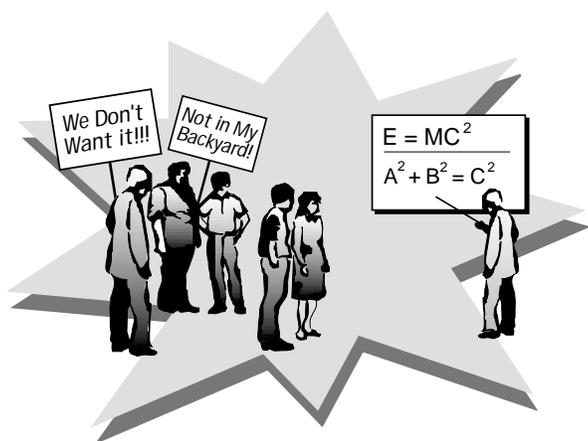
2 Western Suburbs are Hennepin, Anoka, Carver and Scott Counties.

3 Eastern Suburbs are Ramsey, Dakota and Washington Counties.

The activist organizations are often incorporated as non-profit organizations and hire executive directors and community organizer outreach staffs. Some of the activist organizations are tied to regional or national networks. Others, however, are less formally organized and operate without large budgets or staff. There is sometimes racial and economic diversity among the membership, and a cross-section of those involved would include professionals, working class, and unemployed persons.

Depending on the organization, the membership can be either issue- or geographically-based. Those that would be interested in transportation are probably the ones that are focused on community development, environmental, or social and economic justice issues. The Neighborhood Transportation Network (NTN) and Transit for Livable Communities, for example, are exclusively focused on transportation.

The members of these organizations are particularly well-informed on processes and procedures and national and international advances in policy and technology. Many of these groups receive training on issue identification and strategies that should be put into action to win on their issues. As part of their operations, analysis are completed to identify the political and administrative aspects of an issue and where pressure could be applied through direct action of the membership. In recent years the activist organizations have steadily moved from reactive to proactive postures, and their strategies have begun to focus on building partnerships and finding win/win solutions.



Civic and Social Organizations

It was found during the NTTSDP that a significant number of older African American individuals participate in civic/social organizations. Organization members address a variety of issues such as raising money for scholarship funds, assisting single mothers, and other service-oriented projects. They meet once or twice each month to socialize at locally-based community centers such as the Martin Luther King Center in St. Paul.

The members of these groups are long-time residents of the central cities and are most often retired from professional and civil service positions. They are highly respected in the African American community and are regarded as leaders emeritus. Failure to gain their approval on a plan or project could make general acceptance in the African American community difficult.



Disabled Community

The disabled community is better organized in the Twin Cities than in many communities. They have been given a forum through the Met Council and other agencies, and because of their presence and ability to articulate their issues, a number of advances have been made in the delivery of transportation services. These include wheelchair lifts on buses, demand responsive transit, and Tele-Type communications systems at Mn/DOT, for example. However, despite these advances, unmet needs remain to be addressed in the disabled community.

The most important issues to this community are those involving physical access to transportation processes, facilities, and systems. Special considerations for approaching this community are:

- Advance notices published (announced) through a variety of media including Braille and Telecommunication s Devices for the Deaf
- Provision of special transportation services to facilitate attendance at meetings
- Selection of meeting location sites that are accessible (along bus lines and include elevators, ramps, wide aisles, etc.)

District Councils and Community Councils

The district councils in St.Paul and the community councils in Minneapolis are established neighborhood- and community-based organizations that are recognized by the cities as official representatives of citizen interests. In both cities the councils receive funding to hire staff. There are 17 district councils in St. Paul and 81 community councils in Minneapolis. The councils in both cities receive varying levels of public assistance and, for that reason, there can be reasonable certainty about their continued existence and stable participation from residents.

The councils are typically involved in community clean-up activities, youth development programs, housing rehabilitation and development, and review of land use and development proposals. Each of the district councils in St. Paul prepares a District Plan that address physical and administrative issues. Most of the plans contain a transportation element.

The community councils in Minneapolis are currently involved in Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) planning activities. The focus of NRP planning is on physical and social planning. Physical planning activities do include transportation (state highways and streets and transit, pedestrian, and bicycle modes). Approximately \$400 million has been earmarked for NRP planning and project implementation, based on excess tax increment financing receipts from downtown development.

Membership in the councils in both cities is open to anyone who lives, works, or owns property within the official boundaries. Although membership is open, and the councils make good faith efforts to appeal to all residents, membership in the councils tends to be made up of European Americans, most of whom are homeowners.

Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Organizations

Through the NTTSDP, contact was made with four racial groups: African Americans, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and Asian Americans. The African American social/civic organizations have been discussed. Additionally, African Americans were contacted through Club Fed, a social service organization in Minneapolis. The Native American group was an ad hoc group of individuals, representing three tribal organizations. The Mexican American group was contacted through CLUES, a social service organization for Spanish-speaking people. The Asian American group was a Hmong group residing in the Mount Airey Homes housing project.

Each of the groups expressed distrust towards Mn/DOT and complained that they never meet Mn/DOT representatives who look like them, understand their values and issues, or speak their language. These groups also commented that they never hear from Mn/DOT unless Mn/DOT wants something and that Mn/DOT's participation in their community events would demonstrate the agency's genuine concern for their communities and would be appreciated.

Keys to approaching these particular communities are to meet on their turf and to understand their leadership hierarchies and cultural perspectives. This is true for each distinct racial and cultural group, but particularly for the southeast Asian Americans (Hmong and Laotian, for example). This group and others that continue to operate on non-western, cultural principles do not necessarily respond to community involvement in the manner that is familiar to the dominant culture. In these groups councils of elders or clan leaders may be the responsible spokespersons.

When working with Native American groups on or near reservation communities, it will be important for Mn/DOT project managers to understand the special trust relationship American Indian tribes have with the federal government and resulting opportunities and constraints. Outreach activities in these settings would need to be coordinated through the tribal council. This is less of a concern when working with native groups in urban situations, but there are Native American organizations in both of the central cities that could be points of contact for Mn/DOT's outreach efforts.

Information presented in the Appendix further describes Twin Cities communities of color.

Religion-Based Organizations

The religious-based organization that participated in the NTTSDP was an ad hoc group of clergy from a variety of denominations. The dialogue meeting participants were racially diverse as well. While this particular group was assembled for the expressed purpose of participating in the NTTSDP, such groups are formally organized throughout the Twin Cities.



These groups typically meet to discuss opportunities to share resources, hold joint services, and other religious matters. Within the last six or seven years they have become more socially active and have sought to address social and economic justice issues. Catholic, Lutheran, and African American Baptist churches have been leaders in the Twin Cities on these issues.

The clergy in these and other churches have the respect of their congregations and are clearly leaders, both in the pulpit and on the picket line. When organized to work together, the pastors have assembled hundreds of people to attend meetings with local, state, and national elected officials and staff.

TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING ACCESS

As mentioned, the need to improve access to planning and project development citizen participation processes was identified as a major finding in the NTTSDP. Improving access for non-traditional stakeholders begins with the idea that it is Mn/DOT's responsibility to develop new partnerships and convince people (some of whom feel disenfranchised from the mainstream) that their presence and participation are welcomed. Accepting this responsibility is crucial to the success of any effort to improve access. Based on acceptance of this responsibility, the following techniques can be employed:

1. Notification and Involvement:

Regarding notifications for meetings, hearings, and public outreach events, a significant number of people feel that Mn/DOT only attempts to meet the minimum legal requirements, which include publishing a notice in the local newspaper. Dialogue meeting participants felt that the "where", "when", and "how" Mn/DOT communicates is equally as important as "what" Mn/DOT has to communicate.

The "what" is the rationale behind the transportation decision. The "where" is about location and meeting the access needs of the community. People want to meet at accessible, community-based locations. Accessibility encompasses all American with Disabilities Act (ADA) access requirements, including adequate parking. People additionally want to meet "when" it is convenient for them. Seniors prefer to meet during the morning or afternoon. Many refuse to attend evening meetings because of safety concerns. Dialogue participants encouraged Mn/DOT to use community-based organizations' existing meeting times and to keep meetings brief.

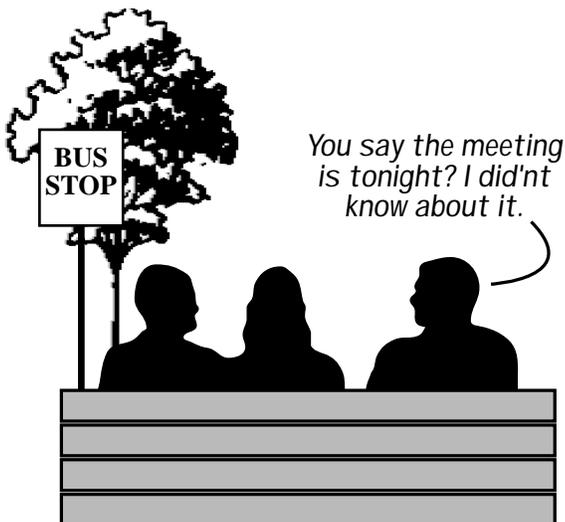
People want Mn/DOT to speak in their language, use culturally-specific media, and initiate contact with people they know and respect in their communities.

2. Enhance Notification and Communication

Procedures:

Proactive public involvement requires creative thinking. Techniques for notification should be selected on the basis of careful analysis of exactly what it is the agency wishes to accomplish, with whom, when and then how. Mn/DOT should consider the following recommendations:

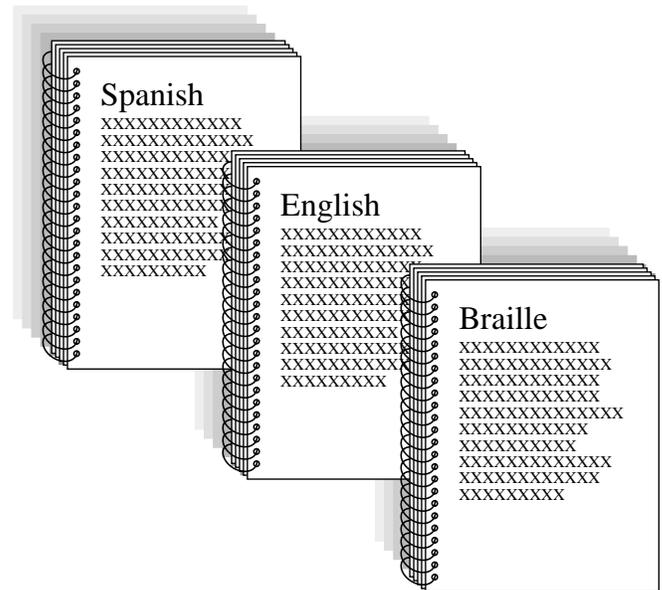
- Create a public participation plan. Making a systematic analysis of the specific circumstance and the public participation techniques that are most appropriate in those circumstances.
- Use postcards or flyers instead of standard notices on letterhead. It is likely to get more attention.
- Use a brochure instead of a report to communicate summary information. Brochures are easily distributed, relatively inexpensive, can be designed as mailers, and should be made eye catching.



- Use word of mouth. Tapping into networks is an effective way to generate interests and commitment.
- Use other groups' newsletters. Most communities in the metro area have newsletters

or newspapers. Well-written articles are often welcomed by neighborhood volunteers who struggle to produce regular newsletters.

- Use human service groups, like Ameri-Corps or Club Fed, who have contacts in the traditionally under-served community. Establishing contact with such agencies provide an opportunity to reach low-income and minority populations.
- Publish a Mn/DOT newspaper insert. Inserts reach a lot of people because of wide circulation and they costs relatively little to produce.



- Print notices in appropriate languages. Make announcements on the radio to accommodate the blind. Always target language to a relatively low literacy level.
- Explore use of visual preference surveys. The visual preference survey is a technique to test alternatives among “non-experts.” Computer technology in this area is only getting better. It is becoming easier and easier to provide pictures that describe impacts more effectively than words can.
- E-mail and electronic bulletin boards are becoming increasingly popular. Almost all the district and community councils are equipped with computers and have E-mail addresses. Assign a staff person to maintain it. This tool can be used to generate input on specific proposals.

- Create a hotline. Hotlines are useful for “hot” issues. Staffing the hotline with knowledgeable people is important for it to be effective.



3. Facilitate Meeting Attendance:

Non-traditional stakeholder constituencies often are low-income people. As such, issues like mobility and child care become critical and can limit participation in public events and meetings. Holding meetings in the community or neighborhood where impacts may occur and facilitating attendance at meetings with guaranteed rides, on-site child care, meals, and, in some cases, stipends, can have a positive effect.

Attendance can also be facilitated if a community-based organization co-sponsors the meeting with Mn/DOT. If approached, community-based organizations might assist in getting the word out, distributing flyers, or sharing mailing lists.

Other creative approaches to facilitating attendance are:

- Pay participants to attend focus group meetings to be held in their neighborhoods.
- Combine a brief Mn/DOT meeting with an existing organization's regularly scheduled meeting.

- Meet with community members where they are:
 - at the laundromat
 - at the community center
 - at the library

4. Staff Diversity Needs and Analysis

Changing demographics in the community require that Mn/DOT should address diversity issues to ensure that its staff reflects the racial and ethnic backgrounds of its customers. Further, addressing diversity issues implies a commitment to inclusion, adaptation, and fairness. Some specific activities planners and project managers can undertake in this arena are to:

- When working with a specific racial, ethnic, or cultural group, conduct a cultural audit to identify the training and development needs of staff regarding diversity and to pinpoint specific areas for development.
- Utilize culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse work force, specifically more people of color and individuals from low-income backgrounds.
- Remain flexible to adjust to what works. Establish a drop-in center in a minority neighborhood to provide information to the community and to gather input. Hold early and informal meetings with leaders in a particular community to learn about the barriers to participation that may exist.



3 PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFLUENCE

THE PUBLIC'S SENTIMENTS

The second major finding to come out of the NTTSDP was that there is a need to improve or enhance opportunities for meaningful involvement so that the values of non-traditional stakeholders can influence outcomes. The sentiment of the non-traditional stakeholders who participated in the NTTSDP was that Mn/DOT does not want to hear what they have to say, because their opinions do not necessarily support the pre-determined decision to build highways. The rationale for their anti-highway sentiments is that they support projects that sustain inner-city neighborhoods, and experience has shown that highways have a negative effect on neighborhood stability. They feel that there is no middle ground and no real opportunities to influence outcomes. Therefore, involvement in the process is a waste of time. They feel they have no choice but to react to Mn/DOT proposals and plans.

These groups went further to state that they have not been consulted on the need for transportation improvement projects, and when Mn/DOT approaches their communities to explain why a project is needed, Mn/DOT is describing a problem that the agency has identified, not a problem that they have identified. The message is that they cannot be expected to accept and embrace solutions to a problem that they do not own.

ENSURING INFLUENCE

Ensuring that the public has influence over transportation decision-making is risky. As part of the discussion surrounding influence is the question of how much influence the public should be allowed to have. At opposite ends of the spectrum are:

- a) providing no opportunities and risking discontent with Mn/DOT decisions and plans and
- b) providing so many opportunities that the public is over burdened with meetings and/or needed projects are not developed.

There are no easy answers to this question, but, if there were a rule of thumb to follow, it would be to treat people with respect and to involve them as early as possible and as often as necessary in planning and project development processes. Early involvement, if nothing else, allows groups to work synergistically with Mn/DOT to:

- Own the issues that will be used to justify a facility improvement and be more apt to accept the need for the project
- Formally include community and neighborhood development plans in the highway development planning process
- Avoid areas within neighborhoods and communities that should be protected or that are slated for development/redevelopment
- Develop mitigation measures to minimize impacts

Early involvement does not translate into public forums or public hearings alone. More importantly, early involvement should involve small, neighborhood-based or single organization-based meetings; first with local leadership and then with rank and file membership. The meetings with local leadership would be conducted as one-on-one interviews, which, according to the U.S. DOT, allows individuals to divulge useful information in a non-threatening environment. “The one-on-one interview with key persons should be used early in the process to learn about the study area and the issues and concerns to be addressed.”²



2. Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making, U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA/FTA, page 47; September 1996..

Early involvement additionally does not mean Mn/DOT has to know all the answers or even all the questions. It is, instead, meeting to discuss transportation issues in an open setting where residents' knowledge of streets and bus routes in the neighborhood is respected just as much as the project manager's knowledge of the larger transportation system.

At such a meeting there would be a give and take of ideas and opinions, and there would be no right or wrong answers. Because the meeting would be conducted very early in the project development process, the project manager would not be in a position of defending a pre-determined course of action.

A critical component of successful community participation that provides opportunities for meaningful involvement is organization. Good and meaningful participation doesn't just happen. Once the what of an overall strategy is in place, an agency has to decide the how. Staff needs to carefully orchestrate ways to contact people, give them needed information, hear their views, respond to their comments, and incorporate their concerns into plans and decisions. Organization establishes a systematic, planned approach to working with people so that an agency gets the kind of information it needs when it needs it.”³

Easier Said Than Done

The project development process, as we currently know it, does not exactly support the notion of a free exchange of ideas. By the time a project is ready to be developed, needs have already been identified and some decisions have already been made. Where then in the process is there room for dialogue?

Ideally, the type of meeting described above should take place during the planning process. It is recognized, however, that it is more difficult to engage the public in early planning activities than

in actual project-related activities. Both agencies depend heavily on elected officials and local staff in the planning stage, which could precede project development by five to eight years or more. Within this time, elected officials and staff may come and go, as could neighborhood residents, and by the time project development activities are ready to begin, Mn/DOT could find that it is involved with a completely new set of people with very little knowledge of previous discussions and decisions.



TECHNIQUES FOR ENSURING EARLY INVOLVEMENT AND AFFECTING INFLUENCE

Logistic issues aside, the responsibility still exists to ensure that the public has every reasonable opportunity to influence project outcomes. The first step toward making this a reality is acceptance of the following premises:

1. In a democratic society the public has a right to be informed of and involved in the development of proposals, plans, and actions of government.
2. In seeking to provide a high quality standard of living, the essential elements of existence must be protected, including neighborhoods and community values.
3. Community involvement in transportation planning and project development can result in an enhanced understanding of the relationships between transportation actions and community life.

3. *ibid.* page 1.

4. Active involvement of parties that might be affected by transportation projects can lead to better decisions and greater acceptance of projects, while creating a sense of community and community ownership.
5. Active involvement of the community can help coordinate and integrate independent plans for land use, economic development, and transportation to achieve common goals...”⁴

The following techniques can be used to initiate and facilitate early involvement and, thus, ensure that reasonable opportunities for influence are provided non-traditional stakeholders:

1. Go Where the People Are:

- Hold a non-traditional conference. Structure the conference so participants can engage in dialogue; first about transportation needs and then about alternative solutions.
- Attend fairs or other special events in the neighborhoods and communities. Set up and attend a booth with exhibits that explain alternative transportation solutions. Events of this nature offer excellent media opportunities.
- Attend district council and community council meetings. Meet with the social/civic organizations and the special interest activist organizations. Engage these groups in discussions about transportation issues.
- Sponsor a transportation fair to interest community members in transportation. The event could be held in the parking lot of a community grocery store or in the atrium of a shopping mall. Feature futuristic vehicles and other visual exhibits such as videos, maps, or models of projects. Hold drawings and give door prizes. Distribute information hand outs on various transportation issues and projects.

2. Use A Variety of Presentation Formats and Approaches:

- Use cable TV as an education tool. TV can generate interest and involvement that you might not otherwise get.
- Make slide or video presentations that provide a visual demonstration that can spark discussion. Not everyone can relate to charts, graphs, tables, or written reports. Sometimes providing the information in another format can generate input that would not otherwise be received.
- Use charrettes, meetings to resolve a problem or issue such as the design of a particular segment of highway. Involve the community in the charrette where opportunities and constraints are presented and break out groups are given aerial photography, scales, T-squares, triangles, and compasses. Each break out group presents its findings at the end of the charrette.



3. Use Non-Threatening Meeting Formats that Encourage an Exchange of Ideas and Two-Way Learning and Training:

- Use the dialogue process, focus groups, telephone surveys, or opinion polls to gauge public opinion. Those techniques that include face-to-face contact are more reliable than others.
- Develop a tool box of facilitation skills to improve staff’s ability to educate, provoke discussion, and de-escalate tensions.

4. Community Impact Assessment: A Quick Reference for Transportation, U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration), pages 4 and 5; September 1996.

- Design a citizen participation plan including a systematic analysis of the project situation and design a culturally appropriate intervention.
- Explore development of contacts with community leaders and non-traditional stakeholder groups to learn how to develop and promote a climate that encourages greater minority involvement.
- Identify and evaluate the individuals or groups who have the power to affect projects you hope

to implement. Develop strategies regarding those who the stakeholders are. Explore ways of broadening the field of stakeholders by learning how to identify and articulate the interests of groups that feel they have no stake or power.

- Design a formal evaluation program to determine if the participation plan is a success and what changes can be made to improve future programs.



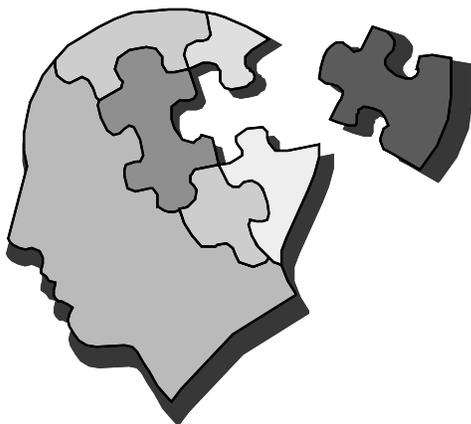
4 CONDUCTING GROUP FACILITATION MEETINGS

ISTEA puts in place the framework for a new vision of transportation in America, but it is only the first step in a very long journey. The biggest challenge that lies ahead is developing informed and empowered citizens, who have alternative visions for transportation and community.

Our communities have become increasingly diverse and competitive. Citizens from any cultural or social background can feel disconnected from political processes. This is particularly true for non-traditional transportation stakeholders, loosely defined as people of color, the elderly, and the poor; members of society who sometimes feel the political process has failed to address their needs or has actually operated against their interests.

Transportation professionals need to (re)establish a role in eroding the substantive barriers that keep non-traditional stakeholders from participating in the transportation planning process. In addition they need to improve their effectiveness at bridging their technical responses with community needs to fight poverty, maintain safety, provide adequate and affordable housing, and preserve natural resources.

There is not one recipe for solving these problems. Each situation should be effectively addressed in a collaborative process tailored to the specifics at hand. This section of the Handbook describes the rationale for collaborative processes and implementation guidelines so you can better think through the unique characteristics of the community in which you are working. Topics addressed in this section deal with how to conduct effective group process.



Two specific group process techniques are presented.

1) *Dialogue* and 2) the *Decision-Making Workshop*.

DIALOGUE; WHAT IS IT?

Dialogue is a group communications tool. The modern inspiration for Dialogue comes from the late physicist, David Bohm, and popularized by Peter Senge in his book the Fifth Discipline. Dialogue as a communications tool is often contrasted with other modes of group communications, such as discussion or debate. The roots of discussion are the same for percussion and concussion, signifying a breaking apart, a fracturing. The intent of discussion is to deliver one's point of view, to convince and persuade. Since points of view may differ widely, especially within cross cultural arenas, discussion often leads to divisiveness and polarization.

In contrast, Dialogue requires us to suspend our attachments to a particular point of view or opinion so that deeper levels of listening, synthesis, and meaning can evolve within a group. This does not mean that one does not have an opinion, rather that one is willing to suspend - cease for a time - attachment to a particular view. The result is the creation of an entirely different atmosphere. Instead of meetings where participants try to figure who is right and who is wrong, they endeavor to discover the meaning behind the various opinions expressed.

Dialogue requires that individual differences be acknowledged and respected. The hope of Dialogue is that it aids in the creation of a community culture of cooperation and shared leadership. It can move a group from dependency, competition, and exclusion to one of increased collaboration, partnership, and inclusion.

WHEN TO USE DIALOGUE

Dialogue should not be used in every group situation. Do not rely solely on Dialogue when you want the group to act or make decisions or when you are working on a tight time schedule; it could be very frustrating. Although it is an excellent

foundation tool to enhance any group process; it is most effectively used when your goals are:

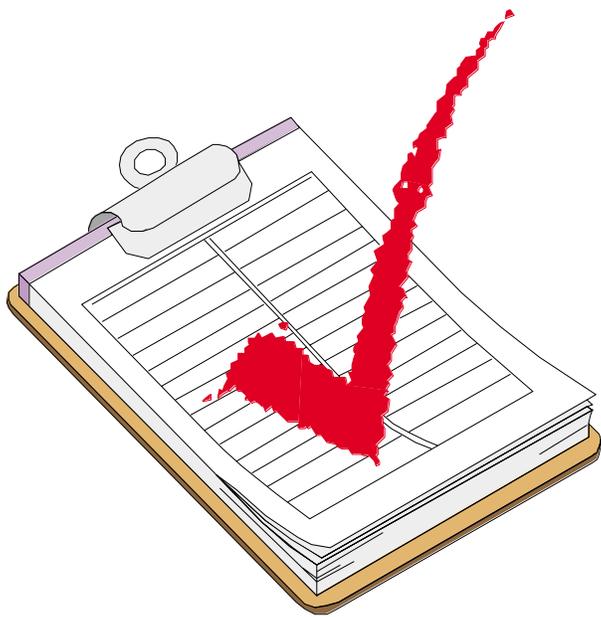
- To get to know members of the community
- To build trust
- To air feelings
- To identify issues and collect basic information about the group

CORE SKILLS OF DIALOGUE

To use the discipline of Dialogue effectively you must develop the following personal development skills.

1. Suspension of Judgment:

One of the primary ways we relate to the world can be described as follows: We collect data. We organize data. We evaluate the data. We act based on our evaluation. Judgment enters the process at many points. What data do we keep? What do we throw away? We use our judgment — our accumulated data bank of thoughts and experiences — to make these decision. Therefore, our perceptions of the current reality is always being filtered through this old data bank.



Suspending judgment means becoming aware of your thought patterns. To do this you must choose not to judge or to react too quickly. You must choose to slow down your thoughts so they can be observed. In other words, you can suspend judgment simply by being aware and listening attentively to your internal responses. Listen and pay attention to your own disagreement, discomfort, or passionate approval of other's ideas.

2. Listening:

The role of listening within the discipline of Dialogue is most accurately described by the definition..."to pay attention." True mastery of listening involves:

- Focus your attention
- Let go of preconceptions, listening empty-minded
- Identify feelings and emotions in the words and actions of others
- Check for accuracy by utilizing feedback loops, asking questions, and other encouragers
- Convey an attitude of acceptance

3. Identify Assumptions

Becoming proficient at identifying assumptions requires first the desire to see. In every act of identifying an assumption, we begin the process of suspending it. This happens because in our recognition, the assumption becomes an object, something outside yourself. By first distancing yourself from the assumption, you can begin to listen to differing opinions without reactions.

Learn to recognize signs that indicate assumptions are present. The following can help you recognize when assumptions are surfacing and need to be explored.

a. Statements like:

- That's just the way it is.
- If.....then.....
- You can't do
- That's crazy!

- b. Internal dialogue like the above or:
- It won't do any good
 - I'll just keep this to myself
 - It's never worked before
 - The policies say.....The process has always been to.....
- c. An angry response to someone else's opinion: Some of the most interesting assumptions can be discovered as a result of being set off by something someone else said. Ask yourself or others: "What's behind that strong reaction?" or "Why such a reaction?"
- d. Feeling discomfort or fear: Feelings of discomfort or fear usually points out an assumption that there will be some negative consequence to an action, statement, etc.
- e. Drawing unsupported conclusions: A statement that appears to draw a conclusion without apparent supporting data, such as, "Due to the financial environment, we may be unable to accomplish X." This implies an assumption that there are set ways of accomplishing X, and that all of them cost more money than is available.

The above are examples. You will discover more as you continue develop the skill of surfacing assumptions.

4. Inquiry and Reflection:

Inquiry and reflection are keys to building shared understanding and meaning. First you ask a question, then wait for the answer to appear. Use reflection to evaluate the answers received from the inquiry. A pitfall of inquiry is that people rush to answers without much reflection. Answers can be regurgitation of old material, because you do not allow time for anything more substantial to happen. It is often necessary in beginning dialogue with groups to purposefully introduce periods of silence to slow down the pace and allow time for deeper insights to emerge.

The combination of inquiry and reflection helps you to learn, to think creatively, and to build on past experiences. To unlock new insights, develop your ability to ask good questions. This involves:

- a. Being Open to Learning:
- Ask for feedback on your questions
 - Listen to answers
 - Experiment and note results
 - Work on listening skills — then do it
 - Pay attention to other good questions
- b. Pushing the Comfort Level:
- Experiment with a lot of diverse individuals
 - Broaden your base of knowledge
 - Think analytically — in your mind ask why? why? why?
- c. Deepening Attention to Others:
- Put self in other's shoes
 - Maintain keen awareness of non-verbal body language
 - Listen to the heart of what is said — not just the words
- d. Trusting Yourself:
- Develop Intuition
 - Trust your intuition
- e. Doing Your Homework
- Be clear on what you want to know
 - Be clean on what you want others to know
 - Be familiar with the topic at hand

HOLDING A DIALOGUE MEETING

Guidance for Dialogue

Creating an atmosphere in which the quality of communication is straightforward, open, honest, and direct is not easy. All sorts of things go wrong in Dialogue. People are so programmed to react defensively, that a minor comment can provoke anyone out of Dialogue. We enter into group interactions with a set of assumptions and

expectations based on past experiences and conditions. We are so closely identified with our assumptions that we start defending them as they define who we are. Conflict is inevitable as people withdraw from conversation, get feelings hurt, get misunderstood, and get frustrated. The following Dialogue guidelines can help you avoid or, at the very least, manage this situation.



The most essential guidelines for Dialogue are:

- Listen and speaking without judgment
- Acknowledge of each speaker
- Respect differences
- Suspend roles and status
- Avoid cross-talk
- Seek the next level of understanding
- Release the need for specific outcomes

Holding a Dialogue Meeting

Step 1 Decide the context for the Dialogue meeting — What is the purpose of the meeting and why use Dialogue? The context or purpose must be relevant for perspective stakeholders.

Step 2 Decide who to invite to the Dialogue meeting. Deciding the “why” or context informs who should be invited to attend the meeting. When identifying stakeholders, a “follow-your-nose” approach is often the most fruitful process. Start with the known stakeholders and ask them who else should be involved in the issue. Make an effort, as well, to determine who might be in the way of implementing a solution? As each new stakeholder group is identified, repeat until no new stakeholders are named. The optimal number of people for a Dialogue meeting is 8-15.

Step 3 Decide the method(s) of communicating the invitation. With non-traditional stakeholders personal visits and, at a minimum, a telephone invitation is most effective, with a written follow-up.

Step 4 Introduce the process of Dialogue, in the written follow-up.

Step 5 Select an appropriate meeting time, location, etc. Structure the room to symbolically equalize status; usually so everyone can see everyone else in a round table formation.

Step 6 Promote a congenial, relaxed, and cooperative atmosphere. Have adequate lighting, food and beverages, and child care.

Step 7 With non-traditional communities, invite a community representative to extend the welcome or kick off the Dialogue meeting.

Step 8 Begin by reviewing guidelines. Note how difficult sticking to the guidelines can be. Ask everyone to commit to try and do it. When it begins to feel like Dialogue is not taking place, stop to reflect and evaluate the conversation. Decide how to proceed based on feedback.

Resources and Support for Dialogue Meetings

For Dialogue to be a useful tool, it must be practiced. Groups need to meet long enough to mature and develop effective patterns of interaction. How long should a group meet? The answer is “it depends.” It depends on the intensity surrounding the issue, the number and complexity and tractability of issues involved. It also depends on the level of urgency felt by stakeholders. As a general rule, Dialogue meetings should be about two hours in length, but some meetings can easily go longer.

Typical kinds of support needed for Dialogues to be useful include:

- Facilities, equipment, materials for Dialogue groups.
- Administration and clerical support for logistical arrangement and distribution of information and notices.
- Between meetings management, tasks, including development of meeting summaries and coordination among stakeholders.

The Federal Highway Administration recommends that a neutral, group facilitator should lead dialogue groups. “This individual should be accepted by the group as unbiased, constructive, and fair. She or he is an experienced professional familiar with assisting group discussions via group processes, communication, and conflict resolution. The facilitator elicits both facts and opinions and helps the group distinguish between them. It is helpful if the facilitator is also intimately familiar with the subject matter of the discussion.”⁵

DECISION-MAKING WORKSHOPS; WHAT ARE THEY?

Workshops are meetings designed so that participants perform assigned tasks, generating a group product. Workshops are particularly useful when dealing with complex topics because they provide time for detailed consideration and a high level of interaction. An optimal number for workshops depends on the situation, but most workshops have 20 - 25 participants.

Below are some general guidelines for designing and conducting workshops:

Designing a Workshop

Step 1 Identify precisely what outcome should result from the meeting, such as a set of alternatives or a list of impacts to be evaluated.

Step 2 Identify information the participants will need in order to complete the desired outcome. This information should be written in simple, understandable language and presented in a format that makes the information easy to find and grasp, so that the least amount of meeting time is spent locating needed information. This material might be incorporated into a small workbook containing group or team assignments, exercise instruction, resource materials, and any hand-in response forms.

Step 3 Select or design a series of activities that will result in the desired outcome. In some cases, there may be previously used meeting formats that will result in the desired product. If not, design a set of activities that will produce meeting results. The usual technique is to write simple, clear instructions for group activities and give the groups substantial responsibility, both in how the activity is completed and the materials produced. The series of activities could incorporate small group processes such as brainstorming or nominal group process (discussed below).

Step 4 Design a simple mechanism for evaluating outcomes. Once participants have completed the work, they still need to evaluate what they have accomplished. Without an opportunity to evaluate, participants may feel restricted by the meeting format or that all points covered during the meeting are receiving equal weight. Most often you have participants place some priority on what they think is most significant. This evaluation mechanism could be a hand-in response form, a straw vote, or a weighted vote to establish priorities.

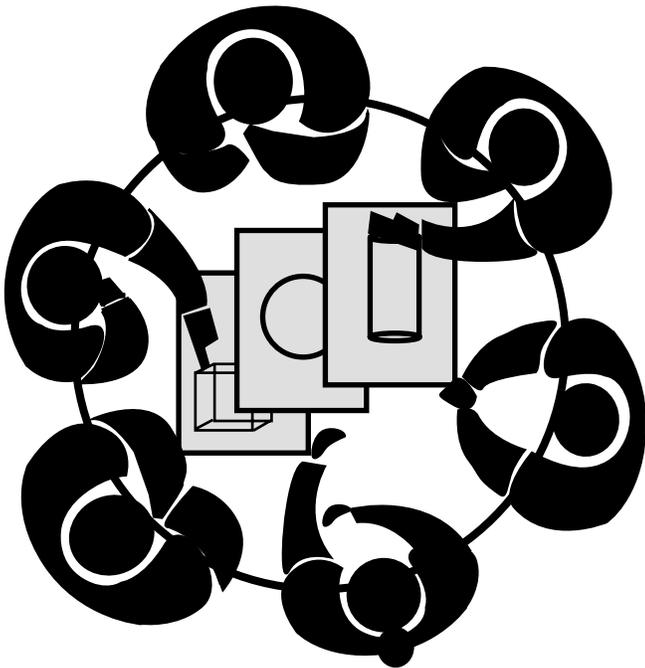
HOW TO USE STRUCTURED SMALL GROUP DECISION-MAKING

There are a number of small group processes that can improve group effectiveness. Two of the most frequently used small group techniques are brainstorming and the nominal group process.

5. Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making, U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA/FTA, page 152; September 1996.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique for increasing the number of creative ideas expressed in a group. In brainstorming, everyone in the groups is encouraged to come up with as many ideas as possible, including wildly divergent ideas. Usually these ideas are recorded on a flip-chart or white board. Brainstorming provides a “psychologically safe” climate in which people feel free of being judged, and this helps groups “break out” of the obvious solutions and push for more creative ones. It also greatly increases the number of solutions generated. Brainstormed lists must be reviewed and evaluated.



Brainstorming is an excellent technique to use with citizen groups, who may not not be acquainted with the more technical aspects of transportation planning or engineering. It is non-threatening and “demonstrates openness and a commitment to working with community participants.

Because brainstorming is something anyone can do, it is a democratic technique where all participants have equal status. No one person’s ideas dominate a brainstorming session, which results in a heightened awareness of community and sensitizes individuals to the behavior of the group and its participants.”⁶

6. Innovations in Public Involvement for Transportation Planning, U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, page C-2; January 1994.

Nominal Group Process

Nominal group process is another technique to help groups generate and prioritize large numbers of ideas. Use this process for consensus formation. The nominal group process is based on research suggesting that people generate more ideas working by themselves, but in the presence of others.

The procedure for nominal group process is as follows:

Step 1 Introduce the nominal group process. After an initial presentation describing the nominal group process, break participants into small groups of 3-5 participants.

Step 2 Each group is assigned a facilitator and a recorder. Flip chart paper, markers, scratch pads, and other supplies are provided.

Step 3 The group’s facilitator presents the question(s) that need to be answered. Questions should be carefully worded to draw out the specific information desired.

Step 4 Participants are asked to work individually to generate responses to the focus question.

Step 5 Use a “round” process, asking each person to share one idea with the group. Responses are summarized on flip charts as accurately as possible. Permit no discussion, except that people may suggest alternative wording to the recorder. Go around the room, one idea per person, until the group is out of ideas. Anyone can pass without giving up their turn on the next round. Participants are not limited to the ideas they have written down but can share new ideas that have been triggered by others’ ideas.

Step 6 Allow discussion of each item, beginning at the top of the list. The discussion should be aimed towards understanding each idea, its importance, and its strengths, and its weaknesses. While people may criticize an idea, it is important

that they simply make their points and not get into extended arguments. Move rapidly through the list, because there is always a tendency to take too long on the first half of the list, not leaving enough time to do justice to the second half. This activity takes about forty minutes to complete, but can be permitted to take longer if needed.

Step 7 Each person then picks the ideas that he or she thinks are best. Instructions would be given to select a specific number, such as the best three, or the best five.

Step 8 Participants can arrange ideas in preferential order, with ones they like most on top.

Step 9 If time permits and participants want to, discuss the results.

Step 10 Remind participants of subsequent analysis. Participants should be reminded that Mn/DOT staff may conduct a detailed analysis of data generated during the workshop, not just the items receiving the highest ranking. Depending on the meeting's purpose, participants should also be reminded that this analysis could result in a considerable change in the ranking of items.

Resources and Support for Small Group Decision-Making

The above group processes can be fraught with difficulties. The most common difficulties are:

- The problem is identified late — now a crisis
- The problem is not well understood — everyone solves a different problem
- Not enough time is taken to generate complete or lasting solutions
- There is a lack of commitment and alignment around the action — the implementors did not participate in the solution and may not understand it fully
- Little learning occurs around what caused the problem in the first place — the problem continues to recycle.

Dialogue might work to diminish some of these

difficulties. Dialogue can help the group in sorting out which issues or problems should take priority. In this way only those issues that are most pressing for the group as a whole need to be considered. Precious meeting time can be saved as the group learns to prioritize together.

Next as the group moves onto the solution generations and decision stage, Dialogue can:

- 1) help clarify the exact nature or definition of the problem (so the same problem is being solved by everyone), and
- 2) can help to generate a full solution set before decisions are made, and
- 3) can help to reflect on the implications of specific solutions.

Finally, as action is taken, members are more likely to be fully aligned and committed. They will all have had a part in identifying, sorting, clarifying, generating and reflecting on solutions around it. As results become available, Dialogue can also serve as a feedback loop, keeping everyone involved in the how their results fit with the final actions.

Stakeholder Identification

When moving toward decision-making, more critical thought needs to be given to stakeholders who are invited to the table. The group facilitator should direct some energy into determining who the legitimate stakeholders are. Legitimacy has traditionally been bestowed upon those directly impacted by the decision. Perceptions of legitimacy often hinge on the stakeholder's capacity to participate. Capacity is most often measured by a stakeholder's skill or expertise. Others have the capacity to influence outcomes through direct action, such as failing to support the final agreement or decision.

Successful stakeholder identification at this stage requires careful balance. A broad enough spectrum of stakeholders must be brought to the table to mirror the critical components of the issue, but selection should be focused enough to get the work done.

The success of the decision-making process

depends on having the legitimate representatives directly involved. Given the opportunity, non-traditional stakeholders will usually identify their representatives, but some may need assistance. If a group such as single mothers lacks organization and cohesion, they may need help identifying their representative.



When Conflict Occurs

Conflict is normal and inevitable. Much conflict can be prevented by attending to group maintenance issues such as establishing ground rules. Attend to conflict at once or it will likely escalate. All tools for generating ideas and exploring issues can be used for working through conflict. Conflict resolution is more about clarifying issues than working through opposing views. It is about coaxing out the issues and discovering where agreement already exists.

Some conflict intervention strategies include:

- Calling a short break
- Sharing in pairs
- Have a round of acknowledgment...ask....
 - What's happening?
 - What's the relationship between this conflict and meeting purpose?
 - What can we do to get back on track?

APPENDIX

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE

LEGAL BACKING

In addition to ISTEA and Mn/DOT's internal initiatives, there are legal requirements and guidance that stress the importance of involving the public in planning and project development activities. Many of these speak directly to the need and importance of ensuring that historically underserved and under-represented constituencies are brought into the process. Legal backing is outlined in the following federal regulations, statutes, policies, technical advisories, and Executive Orders.

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969
- 23 USC 109(h), Federal-Aid-Highway Act of 1970
- 23 CFR 771, Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (1987)
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act (1970, referred to as the "Uniform Act") as amended in 1987
- FHWA Technical Advisory 6640.8A (1987), Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents
- FHWA Environmental Policy Statements (1990 and 1994)
- Executive Order (EO) 12898 on Environmental Justice (1994) and Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice (1997)
- Mn/DOT's Public Involvement Policy

TWIN CITIES' COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

WHO ARE NON-TRADITIONAL TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDERS?

DEMOGRAPHY OF COLOR

Based on study findings, non-traditional transportation stakeholders include people from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, a large percentage of the non-traditional transportation stakeholders Mn/DOT project managers and staff will engage in the future will be non-European Americans (i.e., people of color). Positive and successful relations with these populations will depend on, more than anything else, human relations and personal interaction skills on the part of the project manager. In addition to an ability to interact well with people, familiarity with demographic data on specific groups would be helpful.

The following demographic data come from U.S. Census 1995 data and from *New Voices: The Inter-Race and Media Guidebook*. These data were gathered from official sources, including *Population Notes*, published by the Minnesota State Planning Agency, and *Profiles of Change: Communities of Color in the Twin Cities Area*, published by the Urban Coalition.

People of Color

Minnesota's population of people of color was 7.1 percent of the general population in 1995, according to the U.S. Census. The total minority population was 343 thousand out of a statewide population of 4.6 million in 1995. Minnesota's minority population is projected to be 15 percent of the state population by the year 2020.

Overall, Minnesota's minority population grew by more than 70 percent during the 1980s. By comparison, the state's white population grew by 4.7 percent during the same period. Minnesota's minority population growth of 72 percent from 1980 to 1990 was the fourth highest rate of increase in the country.

The 37 counties that make up northern Minnesota and the Twin Cities have the highest populations of people of color. Fifty (50) of the state's 87 counties have fewer than 500 minority residents. Mahnomon County in northern Minnesota has the state's highest minority population rate at 24 percent of the County's total population. Almost half of the state's minority population reside in Minneapolis and St. Paul, the state's two largest cities. People of color make up 21.3 percent of the population of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Between 1980 and 1990, the population of people of color in Twin Cities suburban communities more than doubled. In 1990, the minority population accounted for 4.6 percent of the suburban total.

African Americans

African-Americans were Minnesota's largest minority group in 1990. Almost 25 percent of the metropolitan area's African American population lived in suburban communities in 1990, compared to only 3 percent in 1960.

Asian and Pacific Islanders

According to the U.S. Census, the Asian-Pacific population in Minnesota is one of the fastest-growing racial/cultural communities in the state. Between 1980-1990, the Asian-Pacific population grew by 194%. This population increased 43% between 1990 and 1995, making it the largest minority population in the state. The Asian-Pacific population is expected to increase to 219,000 by the year 2000. Over 80% of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islanders live in the seven county Twin Cities area. The City of St. Paul has the largest Asian population in the state.

Americans of Hmong decent account for a fourth of all Asian and Pacific Islanders in the Twin Cities area.

Latino/Hispanic Americans

Between 1980 and 1990, Minnesota's Spanish speaking (Hispanic) population grew at a faster rate than the national average. This population grew by 26 percent during the decade. The largest Hispanic population growth during the decade was in Twin Cities suburban communities.

American Indian/Native American

Minnesota's American Indian population grew slightly faster than the national rate of 38 percent between 1980 and 1990. Nationally, Minnesota ranks twelfth in total American Indian population. Over half of Minnesota's American Indian population lives outside the Twin Cities.

Almost 25 percent of American Indians in Minnesota live on reservations. Almost 33 percent Minnesota's American Indians live in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and more than half of the American Indians living in the Twin Cities identify themselves as Ojibwes. Another 15 percent identify themselves as Dakotas.

Children and Youth of Color

Communities of color in the Twin Cities area have much younger populations than the white community. Between 39 percent and 45 percent of each community of color are children under age 18, compared to 24 percent of whites.

Poverty

Poverty, as defined by the federal government, is \$13,950 for a family of four, \$9,190 for a family of two. The level of poverty for people of color increased between 1979 to 1989, rising from:

- 26 percent to 37 percent among African Americans
- 30 percent to 41 percent among American Indians
- 24 percent to 32 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders
- 17 to 19 percent among the Spanish-speaking population
- The poverty rate for white people in the Twin Cities area remained unchanged at just under 6 percent

- The poverty rate for African American and American Indian children in the Twin Cities was eight times as high as the poverty rate for white children
- Per capita income in the white community was roughly twice as high as per capita income in each of the four communities of color

Employment

Men from the African American and American Indian communities are three times as likely as white men to be officially unemployed. Women who are African American or American Indian are four times as likely as white women to be unemployed.

Education

The percentage of people over 25 years of age who have completed high school rose substantially in all racial/ethnic groups in the Twin Cities except among Asian Americans, reflecting the arrival of Southeast Asian refugees to the area.

Asian Americans had the highest college graduation rate of all racial/ethnic groups.

Households

Fewer than 33 percent of African American and American Indian households in the region, and fewer than 50 percent of Asian American and Hispanic households, own their own homes. Approximately one third of African American and American Indian households in the region have no family vehicle.

Eleven (11) percent of African American households and 17 percent of American Indian households in the Twin Cities do not have a telephone in their own home.

Families of Color with Children

For each racial/ethnic group, in both the central cities and the suburban communities, the percentage of families with children that were headed by married couples dropped between 1980 and 1990.

Over half of all African American and American Indian children in the entire Twin Cities were living below the poverty level in 1989.

Sixty (60) percent of all American Indian children in Minneapolis, and 69 percent of all Asian American children in St. Paul were living in poverty.

In the entire Twin Cities region, over two thirds of people over the age of 25 in each racial/ethnic group have either a high school diploma or a GED.

FACILITATING PROJECT MANAGERS' WORKING RELATIONS IN TWIN CITIES NON-TRADITIONAL TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITIES

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE COMMUNITY

Every community has numerous overlapping subgroups based on economic, political, social, and kinship relationships. A major goal is to seek information and advice from community members. People respond most favorably when asked for advice rather than receiving it. To operate effectively and efficiently in communities follow the steps below:

Always coordinate efforts with city staff assigned to the community in which outreach efforts are to be initiated. Then contact the institutionally-sanctioned groups such as registered neighborhood organizations and block clubs (community councils and district councils). Staff with these organizations should be able to provide the names of key individuals in the community or neighborhood. The key individuals may not participate in the councils, but will nevertheless operate as opinion leaders. They may also have decided to operate in the special interest organizations.

Next, contact the key individuals to arrange one-on-one visits. Spending time with these individuals will assist in identification of the community's critical issues and political clout. The discussions should also help in gaining access to the wide range of organizations and institutions that are not formally recognized by the cities as citizen participation organizations.

THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) is an innovative effort that brings residents into the priority-setting process for the City of Minneapolis. NRP brings residents and other neighborhood stakeholders together in partnership with government to create action plans for their particular neighborhood. The Neighborhood Action Plan is a multi-year plan that identifies the visions, goals, objectives, and strategies that will address neighborhood priorities and direct the expenditure of NRP funds. Through NRP, residents are learning to work with city, county, parks, library and school staff to tap new resources in their neighborhoods.

Minneapolis has 81 neighborhoods that use the NRP planning process to identify and meet their neighborhood's housing, safety, economic development, recreation, health, social service, environment and transportation needs. Funding for NRP comes from the Minneapolis

Community Development Agency's (MCDA) Common Project. The program gets \$20 million annually. This funding is used as "start-up" money, the amount of which is limited based on the type of neighborhood. There are three types of neighborhoods:

- Redirection Neighborhoods receive up to \$450,000
- Revitalization Neighborhoods receive up to \$350,000
- Protection Neighborhoods receive up to up \$250,000

The goals of the NRP planning process are to help Minneapolis residents learn to:

- 1) Build neighborhood capacity,
- 2) Work to redesign public services,
- 3) Increase government collaboration, and
- 4) Create a sense of community.

Through the NRP process a significant number of Minneapolis residents have gained sophistication and skill in gathering information, prioritizing needs, and brainstorming solutions and have become accomplished at coordinating services within and among government jurisdictions serving Minneapolis.

For more information about the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, call Program Director, Robert Miller at 673-5140.

Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA)

In addition to the NRP, MCDA has a citizen participation department. The citizen participation department provides funds and technical assistance to neighborhoods groups wanting to deliver citizen participation services in their neighborhoods. Citizen participation services include, but are not limited to the following list:

1. Keeping residents informed about proposed development projects to the neighborhood.
2. Organizing and leading open community forums to review MCDA programs and projects and to solicit comment from residents.
3. Providing regular opportunities for all residents, property and business owners to participate in the decision-making process by attending meetings and serving on committees or task forces.

For more information about the MCDA's citizen participation contact Bob Cooper at 673-5239.

THE CITY OF ST. PAUL

Community Planning Councils

St. Paul has 17 citizen participation districts drawn by neighborhood boundaries. District populations range from 4,300 to 27, 000. Each district has a neighborhood council selected at yearly district elections. Each district council plans and advises on the physical, economic, and social development of its area as well as on citywide issues. In addition, these neighborhood groups identify neighborhood needs and initiate neighborhood programs to meet these needs.

Citizen participation districts are a vital part of the City's communication network. Each neighborhood office serves as an information and referral resource. Each district publishes and distributes a neighborhood newspaper or newsletter to communicate at the district level. The City has also established by resolution an Early Notification System (ENS) that requires city departments to notify a list of district councils, neighborhood organizations, and residents of pending city actions that will affect them. This ENS list is maintained by City staff.

Each district council hires its own Community Organizer (C.O.). The C.O.s are not city employees. Since 1990, each district council has contracted with the City to perform city functions. The City provides the district councils annual grants to fund these activities. Many district councils do local fund raising as well as apply for and receive foundation and corporate dollars for projects and programs. The amount of funding, therefore, varies among the districts. They also receive City funds for crime prevention and neighborhood development through a competitive process.

Questions about the citizen participation process and district council should be directed to the citizen participation contact in the Department of Planning and Economic Development, Bob Hannek, 266-6693.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

There are organized groups of people who often speak as a single voice for a particular cause or community. Included in this category of contacts are non-profit organizations, associations, religious organizations, tribal governments and fraternal orders. Many of these types of groups belong to coalitions or alliances, serve in an advocacy role, and should not be overlooked when initiating an outreach effort. The Minority Affairs Councils, whose primary purpose is to promote the social, economic, and political development of minority communities in Minnesota, are good places to inquire about communities of color. Throughout the course of the Dialogue Project, several such groups were contacted, including the Chicanos Latinos Unidos En Servicio (CLUES), the Minnesota Council of Churches, and the Urban Coalition.

APPROACHING THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ISSUES AND ANSWERS

One of the findings of the Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Dialogue Project was that working productively with non-traditional stakeholder communities is not easy. When conducting community outreach or attempting to encourage people to participate in transportation planning, the following challenges are likely to arise:

1. People do not know why they should participate
2. People do not know how to participate
3. People do not know what they are participating in
4. People lack confidence that the process will work and that their input will actually be considered
5. People in the community have other priorities
6. People have problems and limits that prevent them from participating.

To increase the effectiveness of outreach efforts, adopting the skills of a community organizer could provide positive results. This means establishing a role as a proactive catalyst for collaborative problem solving and community building. The first decision to make is deciding *when* and *how* to enter a community. This will be the most important decision because everything else that follows will be influenced by the initial impression that is made and by how the community initially reacts.

WHEN TO GET INVOLVED

When there is a clear, compelling reason to reach out to a wider community get involved as early as possible. Below are some variables that help determine when wider community support and involvement should be sought.

- Is this a "high stakes", critical decision? What are the consequences, best and worst case, of not involving the community?
- Is the decision not easily reversed?
- Are the critical decisions that will be made characterized by complexity, ambiguity, and severe conflict?
- Is there a significant number of people within the groups or social classes that will be impacted by the outcome? When many people have a stake in the outcome of the decision, it's worth the effort to include everyone's thinking in the development of the decision.

- Are there opportunities, through an outreach process, to educate people to better understand Mn/DOT products and services; to empower them to make group decisions; or work to develop community leadership. This will be of great value in convincing community people of their individual importance in the transportation planning process.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Develop Allies

In situations where race or ethnicity is a factor, it helps to have at least one ally of each race or ethnic group working with on the project management to help make inroads into the community.

The community should be entered in a way that makes it as easy as possible for people to accept and trust the department and the project manager. This will require a level of sophistication in the area of working with differences. The challenge is for project managers to continually increase their language sensitivity and awareness of the stylistic elements of communication.

Language sensitivity requires an awareness of the words and expressions that are appropriate and inappropriate when communicating with diverse groups. The use of language can play a powerful role in reinforcing stereotypes and confusing communication. To avoid this, individuals need to heighten their sensitivity to avoid terms and expressions that ignore and devalue others.

Credibility is closely linked to the ability to effectively communicate with diverse groups. Several suggestions to enhance communications were gathered through the Non-Traditional Transportation Stakeholder Dialogue Project that might be useful:

1. Use words that are inclusive, rather than exclusive.
2. Avoid adjectives that spotlight specific groups and imply that there is an exception, such as blind lawyer, black doctor, Native American pilot.
3. Use quotes, references, analogies that reflect diversity and are from diverse sources.
4. Avoid terms that define, demean, or devalue others.

Analyze the Community

Before entering a community, analyze it. This analysis or community profile typically conducted for environmental assessments is a good place to start. These focus on analysis of demographic and socioeconomic data, neighborhood boundaries, and identification of zoning and community resources. The level of analysis conducted, however, should go beyond what is required by NEPA and should lead to an understanding of how community residents and institutions with the community operate.

The community profile should provide insight into the residents' community values and goals, which form the basis for community-directed development activities and community-oriented programs and services. Analysis of these aspects of a community can lead to an understanding of the importance of historically significant districts, streets, or buildings; planned or proposed commercial or residential developments, parks, or neighborhood service centers.

Today's customer is asking "What will the proposed transportation improvement do to my community; how will it affect my quality of life?" Residents are asking how a regional road proposed to go through their neighborhood or community will benefit or hurt them. To answer this question, project managers must first understand what is important to them, what about their community is not expendable, and how the proposed project will improve their lives and contribute to a more livable community. Explaining how Mn/DOT's transportation decisions can contribute, rather than detract, will lead to wider community acceptance of the agency's proposals.

Build Trust

The extent to which access is gained in a community is directly related to the level of trust that is established. Trust is defined as a willingness to risk, while relying on another person. The first rule of establishing trust is **visibility**. These stakeholder communities tend to be most accepting of that which is familiar. Attend special events that are sponsored by the community. Meeting people away from their institutional settings, in places and situations which are basically neutral, will allow relationships to develop outside the context of a Mn/DOT project.

Another finding of the Dialogue Project is that many stakeholders don't trust the Department of Transportation; therefore, they will not likely trust project managers from Mn/DOT. In order to work cooperatively to achieve mutual goals, mutual trust should be established. The major skills necessary for developing trust involve:

- Demonstrate openness by sharing information, ideas, thoughts feelings, and reactions to the issues.
- Demonstrate cooperation by providing the resources and materials to help others move toward goal attainment.
- Demonstrate acceptance by communicating a high regard for others.
- Demonstrate support by engaging in mutually beneficial activities that use the full talents and perspectives of others.

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