

Civic Engagement. . . One Size Doesn't Fit All!



Presented by

The Research Partnership of ICMA/Center for Management Strategies, the Alliance for Innovation, and Arizona State University



Your Presenters

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Civic Engagement

Engagement

Citizen

Community Service

Volunteering

Participatory
Governance

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

Deliberative Democracy

What comes to mind when you hear “citizen engagement” or “public participation?”



Citizen Engagement

“...a deliberative process through which groups of citizens, representative of their communities, learn, express their points of view, and discover common ground to influence government decision-making”



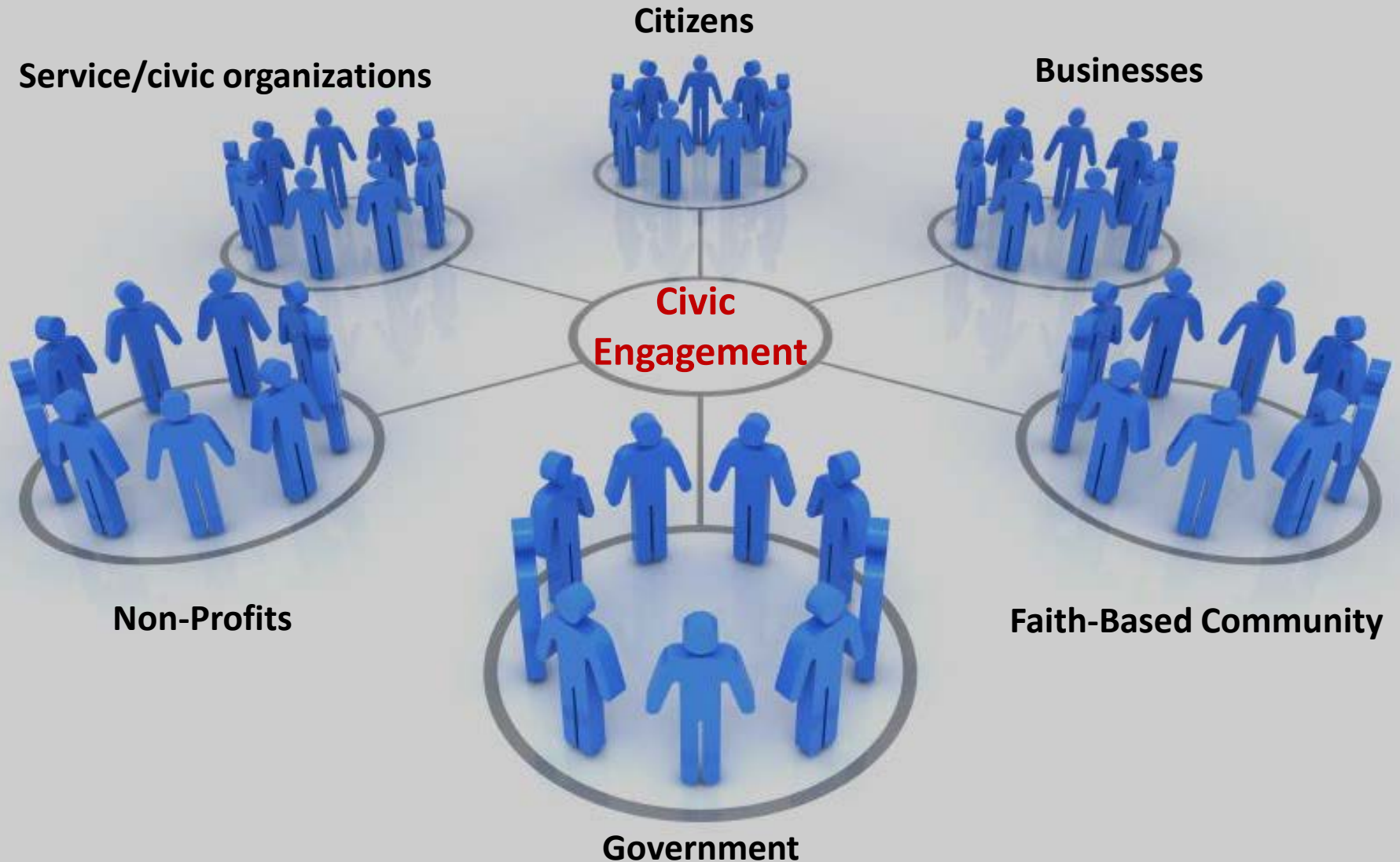
PUBLIC MEETING.

The ELECTORS of Wellington are respectfully informed, that a PUBLIC MEETING will be held at the **Britannia Saloon, on Friday Even.,**
The 5th Day of August, 1853,
To hear the opinion of all the candidates on several important questions. All the Candidates for the Representation of this City, of whatever Political opinion, are requested to attend.
THE CHAIR WILL BE TAKEN AT 7 O'CLOCK PRECISELY.

Wellington, August 3, 1853. (Printed at the "Independent" Office.)



What does it look like?



Goals and Outcomes of Civic Engagement

Educated and Engaged Public

- Improved civic capacity
- Increased community attachment

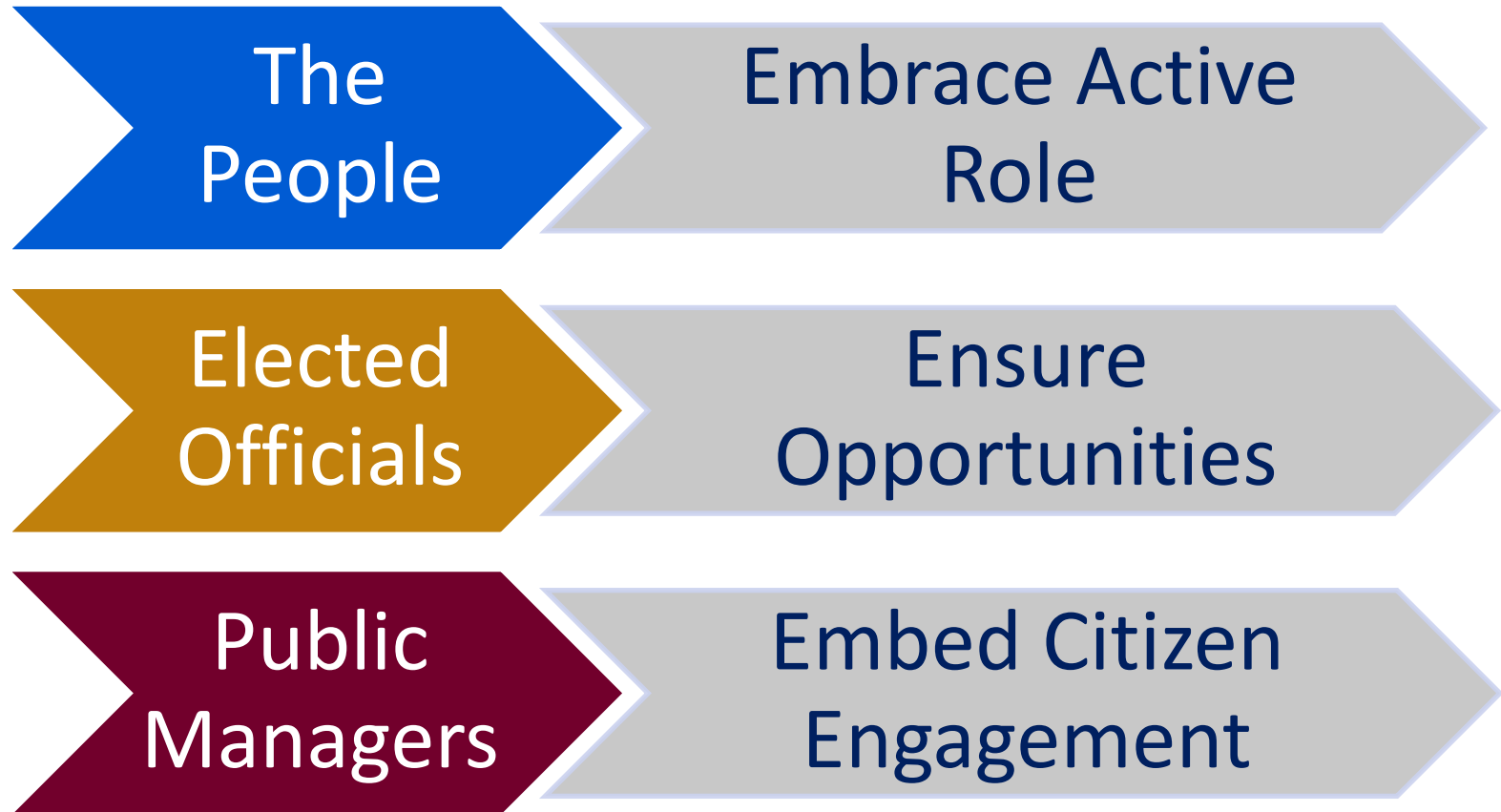
Decisions Shaped by Citizens

- Increased civility
- Increased trust in government

Better Decision Making

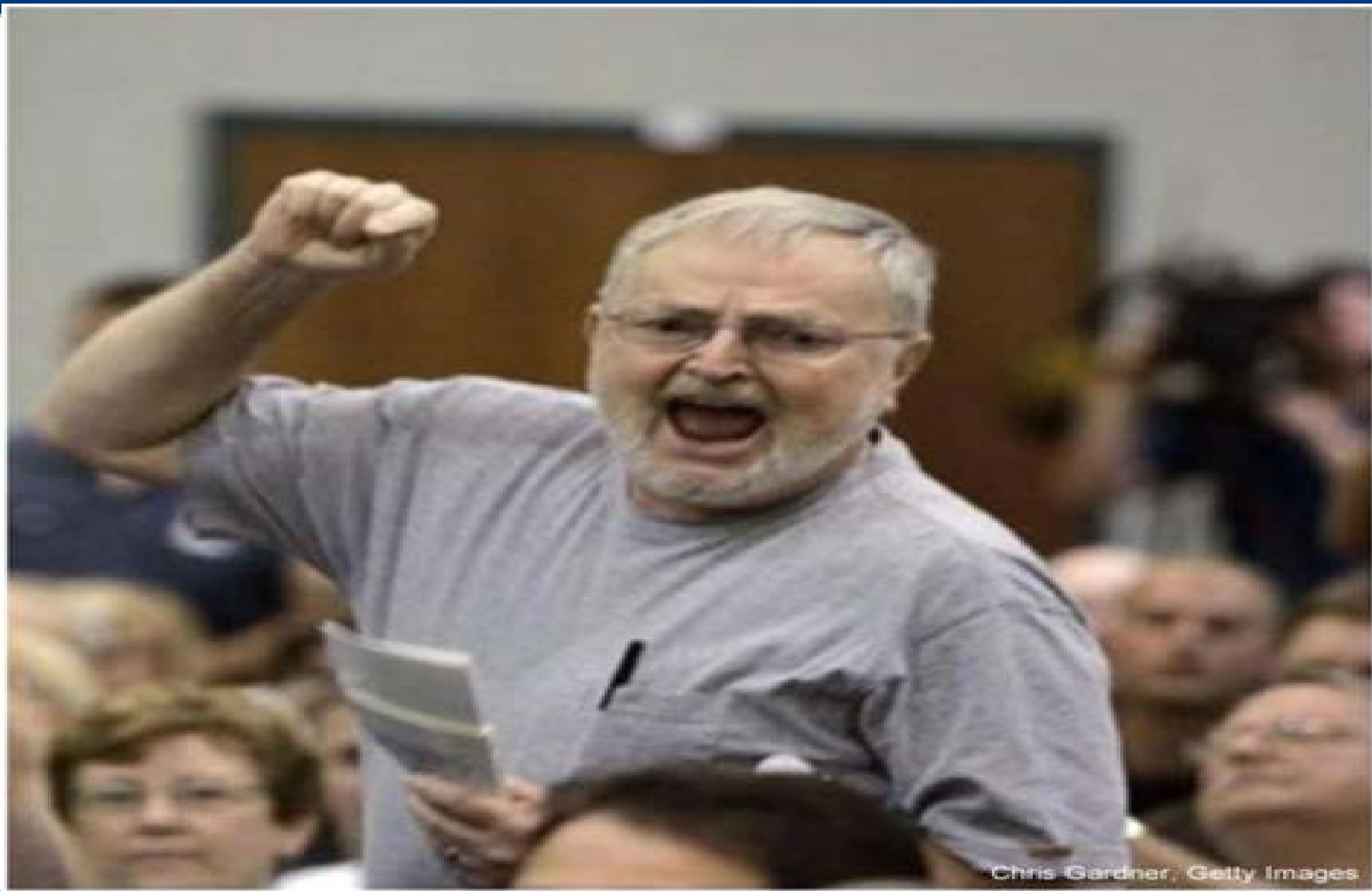
- Policies and programs that hold up over time
- Reduced costs, gridlock, and power of special interests

Who is Responsible?



*Sounds great...
so why are we resistant?*





Chris Gardner, Getty Images

Initial Barriers to Engagement

Public Official Assumptions

Community members...

- *Cannot grasp complex issues*
- *Are easily influenced by the media*
- *Views shaped by narrow interests*
- *Are mostly apathetic*
- *Don't appreciate constraints and processes*
- *Rather blame than problem solve*

Therefore, it is futile and burdensome to involve the community!

Community Assumptions

Public officials...

- *Lack the knowledge to make decisions on complex items*
- *Have ignored us in the past*
- *Have already made up their minds what they want to do*
- *Will not be influenced by the views of the community*
- *Are selectively deaf and unscrupulous*

Therefore, our efforts are a waste of our valuable time!

Engagement Barriers

How do we move beyond these barriers?

- Commit to Core Values about Civic Engagement
- Assess our Organization and Community
- Build Internal Commitment
- Create a Plan



Core Values (IAP2)



International Association
for Public Participation

Public Participation. . .

- Based on belief that those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process
- Includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision
- Promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers

Core Values (IAP2)



International Association
for Public Participation

- Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by, or interested in a decision
- Seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
- Provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way
- Communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

Assess Organization & Community

- Where you are and where you have been
- Readiness
- Capacity



Build Internal Commitment

- Identify existing sources of support/potential champions
- Identify potential obstacles and resistance
- Build commitment to core values of public participation
- Identify multi-year action plan to sustain commitment from elected officials, management leadership, and staff



Create Your Engagement Plan

- Why are you involving the public?
- What do you want to achieve?
- What do you want to know?
- What is the role of the public?



Why are you involving the public?

- What is to be achieved by involving them?
- What is the influence they can have (or *you* will allow) on the decision?



What is your goal?

- Impart information?
- Feedback or advice?
- Understanding?
- New ideas?
- Help in thinking through a problem?
- Agreement or buy in?



What do you want to know?

- What is the problem you want to solve?
- What kind of information or input will help you move ahead in your decision process?
- Do you need consensus before moving ahead to the next step?




What is the role of the public?

- All participation programs are NOT the same.
- Approach must be relevant to the specific project, policy, problem, or decision.
- How much influence can the public have over the decisions?
- What level of influence can they expect?



IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum



Increasing Level of Public Impact 

Inform

Consult

Involve

Collaborate

Empower

Public participation goal

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the public

We will keep you informed.

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

We will implement what you decide.

Example techniques

- Fact sheets
- Web sites
- Open houses

- Public comment
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Public meetings

- Workshops
- Deliberative polling

- Citizen advisory Committees
- Consensus-building
- Participatory decision-making

- Citizen juries
- Ballots
- Delegated decision

Remember!

- Be clear about the level of influence
- Align expectations of public and decision-makers
- Reach outside your comfort zone
- Under promise and over deliver
- And...



Beware of the “Engagement Gaps”

- Lack of diversity of viewpoints at the table
- Lack of cross-sector plans to sustain engagement
- Failure to track and assess participation
- Lack of online tools to complement face-to-face engagement



Scenario #1—Major Street Project

Your elected officials have just approved an \$8 million capital improvement project to redesign and reconstruct one mile of a major arterial bisecting a mixed-use business area. A large grocery chain is expanding on one side; on the other, older businesses are fearful of losing parking. Senior residents are lobbying for safe crosswalks. Bicycle advocates are demanding new bike trails. Previous street projects have been delayed by last minute opposition at final public hearings.

- **What engagement goal would you set? Why?**
- **What promise about engagement would you make to the public?**
- **What engagement techniques would you use?**
- **What challenges might you encounter?**

Scenario #2—Operating Budget

Your current operating budget is \$100 million. After two years of zero increases in all departmental budgets, you need to identify \$3 million in additional expenditure cuts or local revenue increases for next year's budget. Property tax is your only tax revenue and will be frozen again next year. The Council wants more public engagement in the budgeting process.

- What engagement goal would you set? Why?
- What promise about engagement would you make to the public?
- What engagement techniques would you use?
- What challenges might you encounter?

Moving Forward

1. Take stock of what you are already doing, distinguishing between exchange and engagement efforts.
2. Assess your organization's receptivity to initiatives from citizens/community groups and to what extent your culture supports civic engagement.



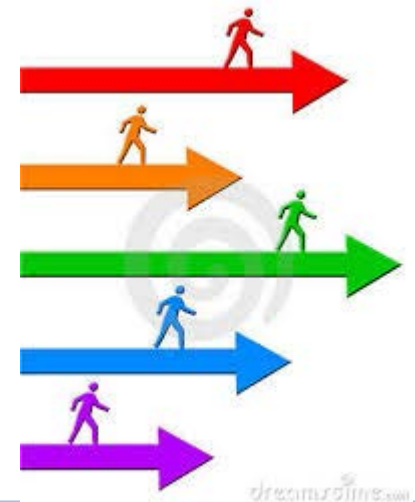
Moving Forward

3. Convene a community conversation to learn how residents wish to be involved.
4. Identify potential issues that need resident engagement and involvement.
5. Plan an engagement event, matching purpose and intended outcomes with appropriate tech activity.



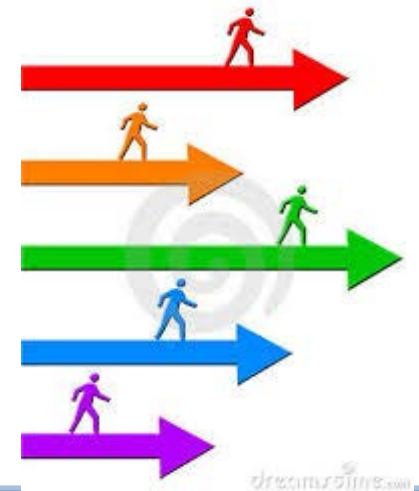
Moving Forward

6. Actively recruit diverse stakeholder groups beyond the “usual suspects.”
7. Provide multiple opportunities in both large forums and small groups to compare values and articulate self interests.
8. Combine both online and face-to-face opportunities.



Moving Forward

9. Move from talk to action through tangible goals and desired outcomes; then measure success.
10. Develop an ongoing program to build meaningful engagement and facilitate resident problem solving.



A Call to Action for All Managers

1. When done well, citizen engagement is both the **right** and smart thing to do.
2. There is a need for a more **comprehensive, intentional and holistic** approach to engagement as opposed to one-shot activities that occur in isolation.



A Call to Action for All Managers

3. Beyond integrated plans with the formal government itself, it is important to develop **cross-sector plans that embed and sustain engagement throughout the community.**
4. Use a **wide range of activities and techniques** to engage with citizens.
5. **Establish the purpose** of the engagement initiative and **be clear about the promise** you are willing to make.



The Center for Management Strategies offers a free civic engagement assessment instrument and resource listing that can help your efforts in engaging the public in your community.

Stop by our booth in the exhibit hall to pick one up today!



Questions/Comments?



Additional Resources



- ICMA's Center for Management Strategies http://icma.org/en/results/management_strategies/home
(Contact CMS for free Citizen Engagement Assessment Tool)
- IBM Center for the Business of Government <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/>
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) <http://www.iap2.org/>
- Institute for Local Government <http://www.ca-ilg.org/engaging-public>
- Davenport Institute <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenport-institute/>
- Deliberative Democracy Consortium <http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/>
- National Civic League <http://www.ncl.org/>
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation <http://ncdd.org/>
- Peak Democracy <http://www.peakdemocracy.com/>

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