Successful Outreach

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Trail Program Manager
Twitter: SanJoseTrails
Outline

- Background
- Outreach plan
- Common challenges
- Case study
### When do you need outreach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Open</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Analysis</td>
<td>Technical Analysis</td>
<td>Environ. Analysis Outreach</td>
<td>Design / Engineer</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Operate / Maintain / Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define</td>
<td>Assemble Funds</td>
<td>Assemble Funds</td>
<td>Assemble Funds</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greenprint reference</th>
<th>Feasibility Study</th>
<th>Master Plan</th>
<th>Plans / Specs</th>
<th>Built Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Operate / Maintain / Patrol

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**Note:** The table and diagram illustrate the stages of project planning and execution, highlighting the importance of outreach at various stages.
Reasons for outreach
Reasons to Conduct Outreach

- ICMA
  - Keep community informed
  - Encourage communication

- CEQA
  - Requires public input

- Agency
  - Limit delays and extra costs
  - Avoid political challenges
  - Improve quality
  - Deliver excellent projects to your client
Who are you speaking with?

Community
Advocate
The Public
Stakeholder
Neighborhood

Client & Customer
• Satisfaction
• Addressing needs
• Repeat business
Challenging outreach

- Doesn’t honor site
- Ignores likely negative reaction
- Too many options
Light Rail storage alongside historic park
- Maintenance road with views into backyards
Lake removal
Outreach plan in eight steps
STEP 1: Determine meeting goal

- Stage
- Data
- Variables
- Community knowledge

TIP: Structure your presentation to obtain all required answers
STEP 2: Define meeting challenges

- Citywide or regional
- Controversial
- Pace
- Distrust

**TIP** Ensure your presentation positively addresses known challenges
Dealing with trust issues
STEP 3: Consider your options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Pro</th>
<th>Con</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Powerpoint</td>
<td>• Engaging</td>
<td>• Lighting, equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visual outline</td>
<td>• One-sided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps/Aerial</td>
<td>• Engaging</td>
<td>• Printing cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Broader context</td>
<td>• Possibly distracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans</td>
<td>• Precise</td>
<td>• Suggests that design is done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improves understanding</td>
<td>• Not everyone “reads” plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renderings</td>
<td>• Easily understood</td>
<td>• False reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reality may not be the same</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Toolbox**

- Easel pads
- Note taker
- Photographer
- Room
- Chairs / tables
- Extension cords
- Business cards
- Handouts
- Question cards

**TIP** Have a backup of your presentation and be flexible.
STEP 4: Address the logistics

- Proximity
- Sufficient space
- Toolbox
- Keys or manager
- Mobile number

TIP: Avoid these venues: restaurants, private home, really large spaces, outdoors (wind, noise, allergies)
STEP 5: Invite the community

- Appropriate range
- Interested parties
- A complete notice
- Secondary tools
  - E-mail
  - Website, Twitter
  - On-line surveys
Step 6: How many meetings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meetings</th>
<th>Types of Outreach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>• Informational (Educate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scope is sufficiently determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>• Check-in (Adjust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scope needs some adjustments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three +</td>
<td>• Iterative (Develop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scope needs to be defined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIP** Be flexible but not unnecessarily so
STEP 7: Keep it interesting

- Short, goal-focused
- Early feedback
- Pictures
- Listen, consider and respond

TIP: Avoid clip art and animation
Step 8: No open-ended questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Ask</th>
<th>Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you want?</td>
<td>Here are options, rate your favorites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you like any of these designs?</td>
<td>Which design do you prefer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do think?</td>
<td>How can we refine this design?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does this list capture all of your ideas?</td>
<td>Rate there options if funding becomes available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where would you like the trail alignment?</td>
<td>What design features enhance the trail?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outreach sours
1. Consensus not achieved

- **Problem:**
  - Unresolved questions
  - Lack of support

- **Solution:**
  - Abandon project:
    - Document what prevents you from moving forward.
  - Restart the process:
    - Different outreach technique
    - New approach
    - Change scope
2. Expectations can’t be met

- Problem:
  - Brainstorming = infeasible project.

- Solution:
  - Manage expectations.
  - Be clear about what is and isn’t possible.
  - Conduct more meetings.
3. Leadership role is lost

- Problem:
  - Community leader takes over meeting, sets new direction.

- Solution:
  - Set ground rules.
  - Never surrender microphone.
  - Use facts for “vocal minority” arguments.
  - Do not tolerate discourteous behavior.
## The vocal minority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Premise</th>
<th>Possible Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you want children hurt?</td>
<td>Trails aren’t safe.</td>
<td>The trail provides access to trail users, maintenance workers and police. They are new “eyes”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you keep “them” out?</td>
<td>Private vs. Public Space, social tensions</td>
<td>What activities are you wishing for us to limit in the park? Or, What have you seen occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We want (don’t want) a restroom.</td>
<td>Desirable vs undesirable</td>
<td>The Council policy permits/prevents a restroom for the following reasons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. You’ve been set up for failure

Problem:
- A flawed project.

Solution:
- Acknowledge mistakes were made.
- Encourage constructive “venting”.
- Offer a better proposal.
- Seek a “win-win”.

TIP
Be advocate for a successful project.
Don’t buy into the premise

Be polite / don’t be frustrated or defensive

Don’t be defined as problem

Use data to prove your points
Know your role

- Anticipate issues and research solutions
- Establish your agency’s commitment and expertise
- Speak for your agency

Define a project that:
- Addresses anticipated concerns
- Results in the highest quality
- Becomes source of community pride
After Outreach

- Negative impact of intense outreach
- Take care of yourself
  - Walk with a friend and talk about it
  - Go to the gym
  - Have coffee with your fellow presenters
  - Finds a means to emotionally complete the process
- Day after - schedule a team meeting
  - Discuss what went well, what could have been better

TIP: You get better with every outreach effort
Case Study: Guadalupe River Trail

- Deliver on promises
  - Gateways
  - Interpretive elements
  - Directional / Informational Signage

- Exceed expectations
  - Public Art
  - Details
  - Extras
6.7 mile trail
Downtown to the Bay
Interpretive Elements
Public Art
LOWER GUADALUPE RIVER TRAIL
GUADALUPE RIVER TRAIL

GUAMILE

5.50

Call 9-1-1 for Emergencies
Outreach steps

- Master Plan
  - Community Meetings (3)
  - Council Memo

- Construction
  - Council Memo
  - Website (Weekly updates)
  - Twitter (pictures, links)
  - Newsletters (Monthly updates; SVBC, SOT)

- Opening
  - Ribbon cutting (Twitter, SVBC, SOT, SJ Bike Party)
  - Press release
  - Opinion piece (San Jose Parks Foundation)
What questions do you have about outreach?