

# **Creative Approaches to Public Participation**

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CITIES

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ILG

# About ILG

- Promote good government at the local level.
- Provide practical, impartial and easy-to-use resources.



# Civic vs. Public Engagement

## – Civic engagement

- Residents engaging themselves in civic and political life of their community.

## – Public Engagement

- Members of the public become more informed about and/or influence public decisions.

# Types of Public Engagement

- Public information
  - One-way information to the general community or targeted groups
  - City of Chula Vista created a Facebook page for Chula Vista Clean promoting regional sustainability events and opportunities
  - City of Santa Clarita hosts a series of annual events to highlight and promote sustainability such as Bike to Work Day and the Household Hazardous Waste and E-Waste Round Ups
  - Other examples include: website content, mailer, community presentations, workshops and conferences

# Types of Public Engagement

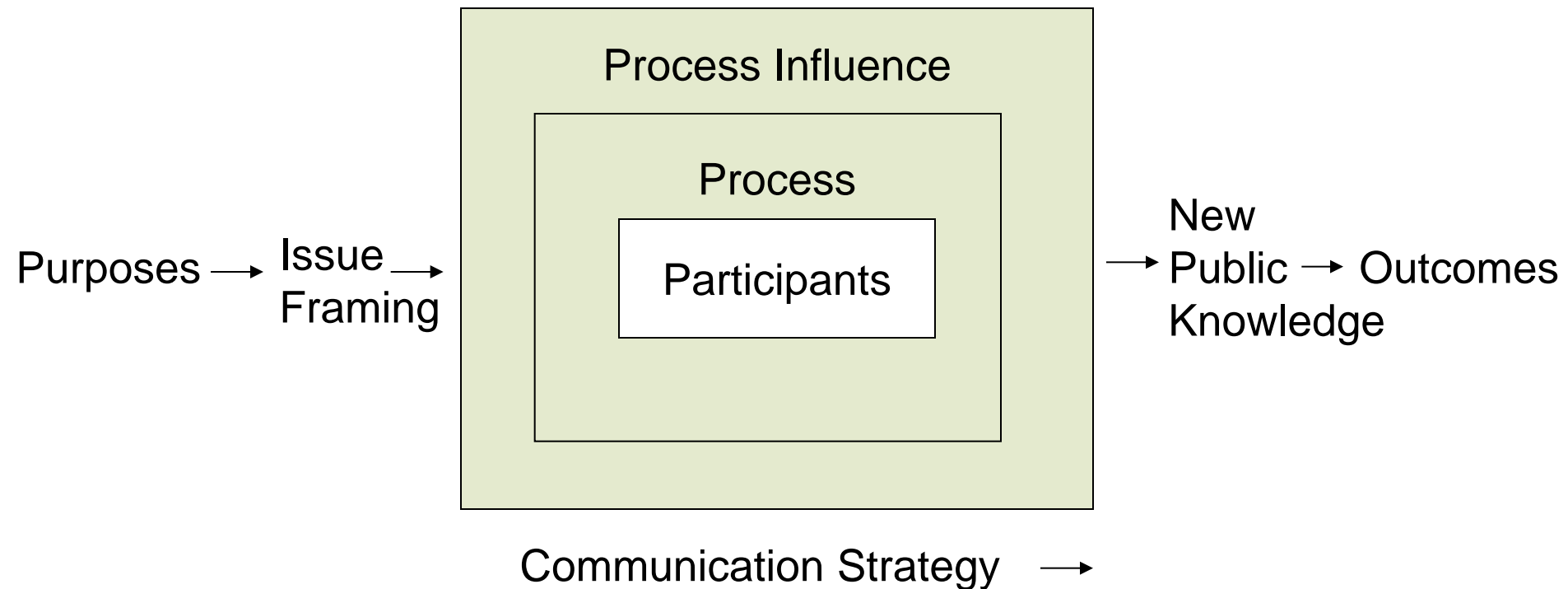
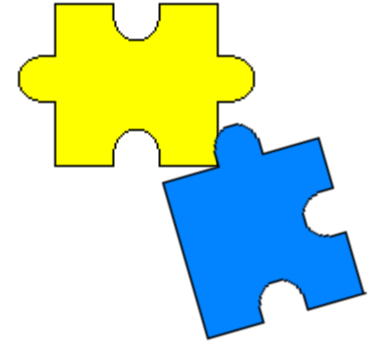
- Public consultation
  - Offers opportunities for individual opinions or feedback on an issue
  - Benicia surveyed businesses to understand attitudes related to climate change when developing its Sustainable Business Management Program
  - Beaumont offers residents with the opportunity to share their thoughts through a "sustainability survey" that is offered on the city's website.
  - Other examples include: public meetings and hearings, council or board comment periods

# Types of Public Engagement

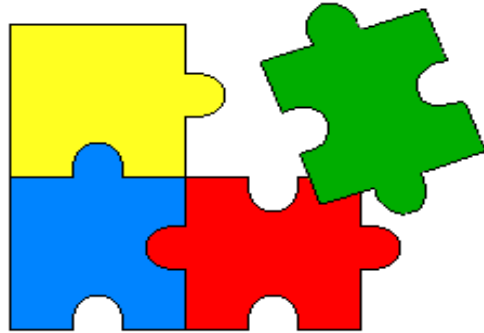
- Public deliberation

- Community members participate together in give and take discussions to develop recommendations or actions for the local agency to consider
- Manhattan Beach established a nineteen member task force of residents and city officials to develop recommendations to address a range of environmental challenges
- Union City established its Climate Protection Task Force to review and provide feedback on the City's CAP and to help monitor and assess plan implementation.
- Other examples include: commissions, committees, and sub committees

# Public Engagement Flow Chart

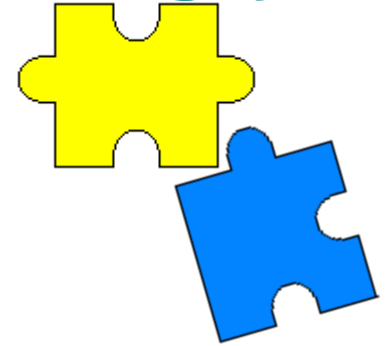






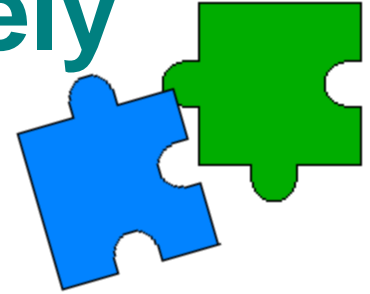
**Purpose: To develop your capacity to design and implement public engagement processes with the greatest chance of success when there are strongly contested views and values.**

# Participants May Have Strongly Held Views About:



- The topics to be discussed
- The local agency and officials involved and/or
- The planning and/or public engagement process(es)

# Think About Your Likely Participants



- What are possible individual and/or group concerns and interests?
- How may they view an opportunity for public engagement?
- Are there assumptions/gaps in information?
- What are their past experiences in other settings?

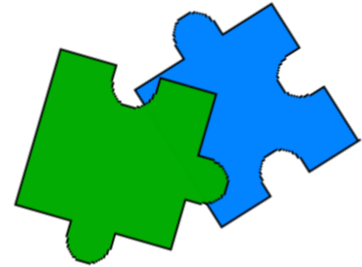
# Plan, Prepare, and Provide Information



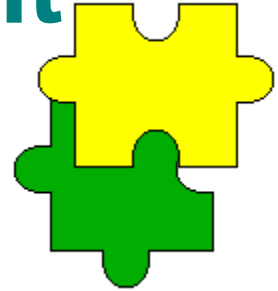
- Offer opportunities for early process input and co-sponsorship
- Strive for speakers and participants to reflect diverse population & viewpoints
- Endure sponsor and facilitator clarity about meeting process & strategy
- Plan for/prepare impartial mtg. facilitators
- “Watch your language”
- Prepare for “What if...”

# Design an Appropriate Process

- Design in flexibility (have a “plan B”)
- Provide info & opportunities for learning
- Acknowledge underlying “policy” history, assumptions, restrictions on actions
- Meet reasonable process needs/interests of those likely to attend (time for questions)
- Consider processes that seek common ground – but allow adequate time
- Focus on a do-able work



# Manage Public Engagement Meetings Transparently



- Describe meeting goals, process, documentation, and what happens next
- Seek agreement on meeting ground rules (or “courtesy guidelines”)
- Clarify how questions and/or comments will be handled – and comments documented
- Allow “none of the above” responses
- Show respect, impartiality & good listening

# Responding to Negative, Challenging or Emotionally Presented Comments



- Remain calm and actively listen
- Identify and respond to the substance of the comment rather than to its tone
- Keep in mind *ALDDD* (Acknowledge, Legitimate, Defer, Delegate or Deal)
- Ask for more explanation (as appropriate)
- Intervene if personal verbal attacks are made

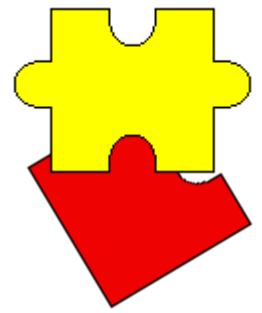
# Responding to Negative, Challenging or Emotionally Presented Comments (cont.)



- If appropriate, ask the group for guidance
- Suggest a short break, and, as appropriate, speak to an individual about his or her inappropriate language or interactions
- Be aware that people who do not feel heard are likely to speak loudest

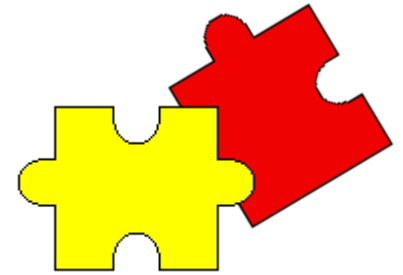


# Take Steps if Participant Behavior is Disruptive



- Review and enforce meeting ground rules
- Maintain control of the microphone
- Ask group whether they wish to continue -or move to another format or process
- Move to “back-up” meeting process
- Ask disorderly participants to leave
- State next steps; conclude the meeting

# Keys to Consider



- Learn from others
- Think about your likely participants
- Ensure clarity among sponsors/facilitator
- Inform and include
- Practice transparency
- Fit the process to the participants
- Prepare for “what if...”

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