Stakeholder Engagement: Public Participation to Enhance Your Clean Water Program

Building Community Resilience Through Climate Change Adaptation
A Case Study within the Minnehaha Creek Watershed

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Clean Water Summit
September 12th, 2013
Increases in heavy precipitation....

Karl et al. 2011
...will impact communities in various ways.
Before this goes too far, you really need some stake-holder input!
Study Goal:
Provide local communities an ‘adaptation framework’ to address continued changes in precipitation patterns.

How did we do this?

Collaborative Approach:

“Collaborative planning that was informed by science and led through a participatory stakeholder process.”
Why? Goals of public participation...

Key Concepts from a NRC 2008 Report: “Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making”

1. Improve quality of outputs

   • Drawing on local knowledge to improve decision making.

   • Using a public process that...
     – Identifies values, interests, and concerns of all who are interested in or might be affected by the process or decisions
     – Uses the best available knowledge
     – Incorporates new information, methods, and concerns
2. Improve legitimacy of decisions made

- Fostering legitimate and equitable decision-making by...
  - A process that is seen by the interested and affected parties as fair and competent
  - A process that follows the governing laws and regulations
3. Improve capacity of environmental assessments and decisions – move forward to implementation

- **Increasing resilience, adaptive capacity, and social capital by...**
  - Engaging the public with vetted data on severe weather trends and best available climate change science
  - Fostering inter-town/region/watershed wide understanding, trust, and collaboration to increase resilience to stormwater risks
  - Developing widely shared understanding of the issues and decision challenges
1. Convening

2. Assessing

3. Visioning and Objectives

4. I.D. Barriers

5. Strategies

6. Partners & Resources

7. Action Plan

8. Leadership Team

9. Actions

10. Feedback & Base of Support

Model we used for collaborative planning...

Inputs (considerations prior to moving into this phase)

Outputs (what is likely to result from this step?)

May be iterative...

Gruber, J. 2013
1. Convene community leaders and a broad list of stakeholders

**Input example:** clear ground rules

**Output example:** greater trust across stakeholder groups

Convened a broad cross-section of stakeholders that included representatives of:

- Education/Academic Organizations
- Local Officials
- Federal Government
- Municipal Employees
- NGO/Conservation Orgs.
- Private Citizens/General Public
- Regional official
- State Agencies Staff
- State Officials
- Students
2. Assessing the situation and affiliated problems

Assessment included research by a science/technical team and discussions during the stakeholder sessions. The goal was to:

- Collect and analyze essential data – Science/technical team
- Document current conditions – Science/technical team and stakeholders
- Include diverse views and perspectives – in small and large group discussions
- Provide an opportunity to reflect on the situation
- Help participants understand the underlying causes or problems

Input example: broad cross-section of public participating
Output example: shared understanding of challenges and systems that need to be addressed
For example: guiding questions...

- In what ways have you observed or heard about land-use/development and changing weather patterns impacting this region?

- Do you think some of these impacts might reoccur?

- What are the underlying causes and/or problems?

- Top reasons why these impacts might reoccur?
  - Participants then voted (with dots) on the top reasons. Results were then grouped into four categories for future Working Groups.
3. Visioning opportunities and articulating objectives

From the previous assessment process…

1. Priority areas were identified
2. “What could be done?” 3-5 objectives identified for each priority area

Work Groups:

A. Education, Outreach, and Stakeholder Engagement
B. Land Use Planning and Policy
C. Stormwater Infrastructure (Green/Grey) and LID
D. Sustainable Funding: Stormwater Infrastructure
Education, outreach objectives....

“What could be done?”

- Identify strategies to increase stakeholder awareness, level of interest, and ownership of stormwater mgmt issues

- Identify strategies to educate local policy-makers about stormwater vulnerabilities, long term needs, and adaptation options

- Identify strategies to inform developers of alternative stormwater methods and techniques

- Foster consensus and cooperation among stakeholders for adaptation planning
**Barriers/challenges** are...financial, political, social, cultural, logistical, and/or philosophical difficulties...that get in the way of accomplishing the objective.
**Objective:** Identify strategies to educate local policy-makers...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers/Challenges</th>
<th>Potential Approaches to Resolve Barriers/Challenges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Lack of knowledge of connections between individual actions and cumulative problem....</td>
<td>1) Educate city councils and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Unclear how problems can be solved and what actions there should be?</td>
<td>2) Use successes of existing unified groups (eg. AIS) and adopt that model</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) ....</td>
<td>3) Recommend new standards or specific actions leaders should take</td>
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<td>4) ...</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. Identification of strategies that recognize barriers and overall objectives

- Prioritizing strategies and tools for implementation
- Assessing impact vs. feasibility of each alternative
5. Identification of strategies that recognize barriers and overall objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEASIBILITY</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
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<tr>
<td>high</td>
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- Prioritizing strategies and tools for implementation
- Assessing impact vs. feasibility of each alternative
6. Identification and engagement of potential partners and types of resources required

- Identifying and forming potential:
  - PPP (public-private partnerships)
  - PPCP (public-private-community partnerships)
  - Other governmental partnerships
  - Etc.
7. Formulating action plans based on data and social values

“How to Proceed”

– Action steps
– Responsible parties
– Timelines
– Resources available/needed
Objective: Identifying strategies to educate local policy makers about stormwater vulnerabilities, long term needs, and options

Timeline: Not identified

Responsible Parties: Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, UMN Extension, Water Resources Center, Freshwater Society, Local Leaders, NOAA, MN Sea Grant

Project: Convene a summit(s) to educate local policy makers about creating resilient stormwater management systems.

Action Items:
1) Identify audience: local decision makers, commissioners, volunteers
   Assess/Prioritize vulnerabilities
2) Convene a focus group of audience. What draws them? Will draw them?
   Needs assessment of targeted audience.
3) Frame the summit – Develop learning objectives with:
   1) Planning team
   2) Include participants in planning summit
4) ....
8. Formalizing inclusive implementation leadership team

Inputs  →  8. Leadership Team  ←  Outputs

Other organisations:
- Minneapolis City of Lakes
- NEMO Northland
- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
- University of Minnesota
- University of Victoria
- Antioch University New England
- Syntectic International

Others.....
9. Initiating actions based on priorities, balancing highest return with feasibility of achieving results

Preparation of Minnesota for Climate Change: A Conference on Climate Adaptation

November 7, 2013
Science Museum of Minnesota
120 Kellogg Blvd
St. Paul, MN
9:00-5:30pm
Reception to follow

Come to Minnesota’s first conference on climate adaptation and learn about strategies for implementing adaptive plans for cities, transportation, natural resources, human health and agriculture.

Register at: wrc.umn.edu
10. Embracing open and dynamic feedback on process and actions taken.

10. Feedback and Base of Support

Continue to build broad base of support...
Types of Positive Responses

“Gaining consensus on issues/impacts.”

“Great conversation!”

“Comments from diverse stakeholders, not just technical professionals, is important.”

“I also like how we got to help shape future efforts.”

“The exercise...brought up different perspectives on the issues of stormwater management.”
“Include people from where the problem is coming from (agriculture, development, big-box stores).”

“Pre-release topics to be discussed so participants can come with suggestions.”

“Well, none really...this is just the start of a long journey.”

“Invite less engineers.”
"I'm hoping this new GPS can help me find the right stakeholders for my project."