



Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Public Engagement Network
Date/time: Wednesday, September 18, 2013
Place: Metro Regional Center, Council Chambers, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

Welcome and introductions

Patty Unfred opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and giving an overview of the agenda. The Public Engagement Network is a forum for public involvement professionals to share challenges and resources in pursuit of best practices. Everyone was invited to briefly introduce themselves and share any appropriate announcements.

Shared resources survey results and discussion

An expressed interest of the Public Engagement Network has been to engage further through an online platform to network and share resources. Earlier this month, Metro sent out a Survey Monkey to this group to try to scope this interest in sharing resources to develop criteria for evaluation of potential tools. The survey results pointed to an online tool that most people would choose to engage with about once-a-month and allow everyone to contribute and access content. Valerie Cuevas facilitated a further discussion of the criteria for such a tool that will be used by volunteer researchers from this group to evaluate potential tools.

Criteria:

1. Contact and networking tools
 - a. Selected as the most important criteria by survey respondents.
 - b. Ability for everyone to update their own contact information, possibly add photos, specialties and current projects
 - c. Designate standard categories/keywords for easy searching of areas of interest and commonalities
 - d. Establish connection to social media channels
2. Training opportunities
 - a. Could be either a calendar of events with links or actual training materials like documents or presentations
 - b. Also an area for job opportunities
 - c. Post reviews of trainings
 - d. This section could be coordinated with or point to trainings held or endorsed by IAP2 and 3CMA
3. Calendar of public events
 - a. Will require a focused scope for what can be included
 - b. Comprehensive across the region, possibly linking to major calendars on other websites.
 - c. Could be used to call out for support for future events; a forum to seek collaboration on shared events.
 - d. Post venue recommendations and reviews
 - e. Possible resource to the public
4. Document sharing and posting
 - a. Related to training opportunities

- b. Library functionality, could be a place for evaluations, how-to guides and best practices materials
- 5. Project updates
 - a. Learn about projects including announcements/milestones and evaluations/lessons learned
 - b. Data sharing, especially related to underserved communities
- 6. Miscellaneous
 - a. Suggestion to create a Twitter designation for this group
 - b. Minimal to no-cost platform
 - c. Members to be able to easily post/update content without going through an administrator
 - d. Once specific options are identified, further consideration will need to be taken to decide if content is for public consumption or only members. Considerations include duplication of efforts, privacy settings to encourage honest dialogue and the available support to ensure accurate and appropriate content if made public.

The group nominated the following platforms for our volunteer researchers to choose from to investigate based on the above criteria.

1. LinkedIn
2. Google Circles
3. Intuit databases
4. Base Camp
5. Oregon Unlimited, Meyer Memorial Trust
6. Fmyi
7. Facebook private group

Evaluation tools and techniques

Patty Unfred introduced our two presenters for the day, Doug Zenn, Zenn Associates, and Julie Rawls, Portland Development Commission, who shared evaluation tools and techniques employed in recent projects. Patty Unfred also briefly shared handouts from two current Metro projects, the event evaluation form used in the Southwest Corridor project and the evaluation criteria chart in the Public Engagement Guide.

Doug Zenn shared evaluation techniques to help move forward after evaluation by focusing on the question of “what would we do better.” Shared tips included:

- Focus on pre-set objectives when evaluating a project. An objective is how you define success.
- It is very helpful to be able to measure results and feedback over a long period of time. In examples shared of evaluation sheets, data is most useful as more is collected over time. Outliers are marked for follow-up and patterns emerge over time.
- Recommended to debrief from a project directly after using even quick questions about what lessons can be applied to the next activity. It is important to look at a progression on what has been learned and to be able to look back on past challenges to inform similar challenges in the present.

Julie Rawls presented examples of using an agreements scorecard which the project team used to score themselves. All public participation plans should include a detailed section on evaluation. Components of a detailed evaluation plan were shared on the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Two groups were formed to engage to further discuss the preceding presentations. Conversation focused on sharing other evaluation tools and techniques and thinking about how project evaluations impact future practices. Notes from each discussion group follow.

Group A notes

- HOPE Grant, Washington Co.
- Research firms for qualitative measures
- Numbers vs. raising awareness
- Team performance models of observation, quantitative and qualitative
- Peer review and using a neutral third party for review; PSU?
- Mailed in evaluation cards
- Evaluate individual performances
 - Helps current and future projects
 - Mid-course corrections
- Listening, accommodating, paying attention at each step
- Quantify/illustrate support or success; what is the public value?
- Improve decision-making

Group B notes

- Outside audit of printed materials
- Combine evaluations of project and meetings/events
- Tools other than surveys to measure?
 - Focus groups; could target those who did not attend an event
 - Bring together key community groups after the project to solicit feedback
 - Random phone calls to attendees for comments
- Identify key items ahead of time and use for engagement instead of after the process
- Personal asks for participants to fill out demographic information will get more participation
- Use an iPad application instead of hardcopy forms to collect attendee demographic information
- Live document listing key contacts in community by area to further track who is talking about what
- Teach someone to teach or share with others
- This group can collaborate on specific questions to share across projects
- Meeting tips
 - Personally check venue for ADA accessibility
 - Make accessible by transit
 - Quickly respond to public comments, within 24 hours
 - Define the impact of public involvement on the project and decisions to build trust and bring people back. Separate each piece of the decision to determine how public comments will affect outcomes and how input will be shared with policy-makers.

Next steps

Patty Unfred closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and sharing their collective expertise. Metro will take the brainstormed criteria from this meeting and work with volunteers from this group to research options for an online sharing platform discussed in this meeting. Researched options will be reported back to this group for possible selection. If you are interested in researching an online sharing platform and making a recommendation to this group, please contact Valerie Cuevas (valerie.cuevas@oregonmetro.gov, 503-797-1536).

Attachments

Citizen Noise Advisory Committee – retreat evaluation
Julie Rawls, Portland Development Commission – PEN presentation
Public Engagement Guide – evaluation criteria
Southwest Corridor – event evaluation