Communication

Key Messages

- CSS is about communicating with stakeholders and including them as partners in the decision-making.
- Good communication skills include active listening and genuine respect for others’ values and perspectives.
- Good communication skills are essential for collaborating with stakeholders.
Listening Is #1

- Main professional role with stakeholders is to listen
- Listening is different than “hearing”

Listening Tips

- Stop talking
- Look, act, and be interested
- Don’t interrupt
- Try to get inside the other’s perspective
- Listen between the lines
- Use affirmative body language

Source: LENS METHODS REVIEW
Communication Basics

- Frame your messages positively
- Choose your language
- Avoid bias
- Respond thoughtfully to others
- Demonstrate understanding of audience’s feelings
  - Empathetic listening handout

Asking Tips

- To clarify:
  - Could you tell me more about that?
- To probe:
  - Could you tell me what leads you to that conclusion?
- To generate creative thinking:
  - Assuming we had no constraints, what are some ways that we might…

Source: LENS METHODS REVIEW
Culture, Customs and Individual Needs

- Research the likely make-up of your audience in advance
- Consult knowledgeable sources about cultural and “do-s and don’t-s”
- Find ways to accommodate any special needs

Range of Communication Techniques

- NCHRP 480, Appendix D-e, first three pages of excerpt from “Hear Every Voice”
  - 35 techniques listed and evaluated
- Example public involvement plans in Appendix D-f, D-g, and D-h
  - Oregon minimal
  - Nevada middling
  - Alaska extensive
Conducting Productive Meetings

• Class discussion to generate list

Public Meeting Basics

• How to attract attendees?
• Reminder that professionals are there to listen
• Accessibility (goes for web and all aspects)
• Neutral location
• Recording
• Separate roles
• Clear, simple graphics
• Time limits
• Provision for collecting more input
Workshop Review

• What did the NCDOT do well?

• What could the NCDOT improve at the next similar workshop?

Project Newsletters

• Easier to assemble these days
• Nice take-home
• Helps documentation effort

But,
• Costly to print and difficult to distribute
• What level and language?
• Credibility at issue
• Quickly out-of-date
Small Groups

- Go out into community
- 4-8 ideal size
- Gather more input from everyone
- Can get hands-on input
- Watch body language
  - Call on the shy people?
- Get concurrence that key ideas have been recorded correctly

Technology’s Role in Communications

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Databases for mailing lists
- E-mail

- Simulations/visualizations
- Web sites
  - Static
  - Participatory/interactive

Source: "Public Involvement in the Development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan," FHWA and FL DOT (2001)
Communication Through Visualization

NCDOT 321 Project, Blowing Rock Photomontage

Blowing Rock 321 Simulation

With original cut slopes

NCDOT 321 Project, Blowing Rock
Blowing Rock 321 Simulation

With flatter cut slopes

NCDOT 321 Project, Blowing Rock

Ashe County Bridge Replacement

Source: Chris Parker, NCDOT Roadway Design
Ashe County Bridge Replacement

Source: Chris Parker, NCDOT Roadway Design

NCDOT Visualization Resources

- Roadway Design
  - Chris Parker
    - Tel.: (919) 250-4016
    - E-mail: chrisparker@dot.state.nc.us

- Engineering Application Services
  - Tel.: (919) 212-3142

- Visualization gallery:
  - http://www.doh.dot.state.nc.us/preconstruct/highway/roadway/visualization

- TRB Visualization in Transportation Website
  - http://www.trbvis.org
Project Web Sites

- Find one
- Critique it
- What works and what does not?

Collaborative Decision-Making

**Collaboration** - when two or more people work together to create or achieve the same thing

**Consensus** - general agreement among the members of a given group or community
Collaboration Basics

- Involve everyone up-front
- Listen for complete understanding
- Validate everyone’s needs & interests
- Focus decisions on common needs & interests first
- Seek win-win solutions for what’s left
  - What are the real constraints? How can we work together to overcome those?

Good Negotiation

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Invent options for mutual gain
- Insist on using objective criteria
- Develop your BATNA

Are We Buying Off the Opposition?

• And if so, is that a bad thing?

CSS Collaboration Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEFINE PROBLEM</th>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
<th>IDENTIFY &amp; ANALYZE SOLUTIONS</th>
<th>SELECT BEST ALTERNATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RIGHT PEOPLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD INFORMATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOOD PROCESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consensus  Consensus  Consensus  Consensus
Collaborative Decision-Making

*With CSS collaboration and consensus apply:*

- To all functions
- All types of projects
- In all stages of decision-making
- Internally and externally
- With all stakeholders

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Collaborative Decision-Making

*Consensus is not:*

- Unanimous agreement
- Voting
- Settling for the lowest common denominator
- Selling an idea, decision, or course of action
Is CSS Democratic?

- Votes are OK for gathering inputs
- For discussion: in what ways are votes a poor way of making key decisions

Collaborative Decision-Making

Consensus is reached when all participants are willing to move forward together even if they do not agree on all the details
Facilitation Basics

- Helps a group work together effectively to reach its objectives
- Facilitators assist group members
  - Organize discussion and output
  - Stay focused on task, and on schedule
  - Communicate effectively among themselves
- Neutral facilitator plays key role in stakeholder process
- Include a professional on the team?

Collaboration Summary

- No “right” answers
- Needs and interests are critical
- “Positions” can be misleading
- “Win-lose” is a dead end
- “Win-win” is path to success