Engaging communities in policy change

Engaging Communities in Policy Change
Introductions and Definitions

Community engagement is ...
... people and organizations working together - through inspired action and learning - to create and realize a bold vision for their common future.

Adapted from the Tamarack Institute

Community engagement process is:
• transparent
• responsive
• inclusive
• empowering
based on:
• realistic expectations
• mutual respect
• trust

Four Types of Community Engagement
• Informing
• Consulting
• Collaborating
• Empowering

Empowering
Principles
– Community issue identification
– Community control
– Community expertise
– Financial and other resources provided by government/charitable organizations

Tools for Empowerment
Advocacy: action to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular goal, program or group
Capacity-building: activities, resources and supports that strengthen the skills and abilities of people and community groups to assume leadership and take effective action in the development of their communities
Policy Development: guidelines, procedures and regulatory measures at the organizational, municipal, provincial and federal level

Policy
• a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business or individual
– (THCU Policy webinar)
Outline
• Background – the MURF Story
• Community Engagement Framework
• Results
• Lessons learned

The MURF Story
A 36 acre brownfield in the core of Orillia

WSMS Timeline

June 2011

September 2011

West Street Makes Sense!
A Case of Engaging Communities in Policy Change
September 19, 2011

January to March, 2012

March 24, 2012

255 West St., plan dead

Community Engagement Framework

• Community Engagement
• Social Marketing
• The Health Communication Unit’s Policy Road Map

Social Marketing

• the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole.


Social marketing involves…

Best practices in social marketing include:
1. Behaviour change goal
2. Consumer research
3. Segmentation and targeting
4. Marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion)
5. Exchange based
6. Competition analysis

Step 1. Identify the problem

• Long history
• Community polarized
• MURF - a nasty 4-letter word
• Community frustrated and tired of process
• Worry about different political interests
Step 2. Assess community readiness for change

- Not whether community ready for a new policy but whether to turn policy on its head
- Businesses and professionals on board
- Community seemed to not have all the info
- Concern for safety – fears about brownfield

Step 3. Develop goals and objectives

- Campaign objective(s):
  1. Increase community support for Community Centre on West Street
  2. Assist community to pressure Council to change position
  3. Councillors change position on 255 West Street
  4. Minimum of 6 councillors vote for supporting 255 West Street

Step 4. Identify decision-makers and influencers

- Council
  - 3 firm Council supporters
  - 1 possible supporter
  - 5 opposed (including Mayor)
- Business Community
  - 50+ businesses
- Professionals
  - Medical community
  - Well-respected lawyer and former MP
  - Leading scientist
- Community
  - Sports groups
  - Media

Step 5. Build support among decision makers

1. Audiences
2. Message components
3. Campaign elements

Message principles

- Positive tone
- Emotional appeal
- Logical appeal
- Evidence-based
- Action-oriented

Message components

- What?
- So what?
- Now what?
1. Safety
2. Affordability
3. Accessibility
4. Responsibility

Calls to action

- Forms
- Petitions
- Involvement with Steering Committee
- Blog space on newspaper website
- Rally – March 24 – 11:00 am: Opera House
**Campaign elements**
- Logo
- Ads
- Petition
- Banner
- Website
- Social media
- Posters

**Audiences X Channels**

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**Mission statement**

To strengthen our community by being financially, environmentally and politically responsible through locating our community centre in the heart of the City.
Results

Lessons learned

• Approach was appropriate:
  – Logical and evidence-based
  – Positive
  – From low to medium impact
• Good use of messengers and messages
• Good support/engagement of community
• Unable to reach certain councillors
  – Better use of social networks (political figures)
• More/better use of larger media outlets?

Webinar Outcomes

1. Increased awareness of theory, best practices, tools and resources for engaging communities and local government in policy change.
3. Opportunities to share successes, challenges and resources.

Public Policy

• Deliberate decisions that address identified objectives or concerns for the public good
• Sets out the What and the How
  – Road map for the future
  – Influences decision-makers, allocation of funds
• Has measurable outcomes that can justify expenditures
• Leads to systemic change

Case Study #2

Active Transportation in Haliburton County

– 2 hours north of Toronto
– Year-round population of approx. 16,500
– Population swells in the summer (cottagers)

Lead by the Communities in Action Committee (CIA)

– A community coalition formed in 2004
– Chaired by staff at HKPR Health Unit
– Health, Healthy Communities, Cycling, Trails, CED

Roadmap

1. Setting the context – Quick theory review
2. Case Studies
   – City of Orillia (community centre)
   – County of Haliburton (active transpo)
3. Key factors for success
4. Tools and Resources
5. Q & A

Overview

Goal

• Encourage people to build physical activity into their daily lives by removing barriers and improving access to active transportation opportunities (cycling, trails etc)

Process

• Engaged municipal councils and the community as a whole to move forward on AT planning in Haliburton
• Both top-down (municipality) and bottom-up (community) because one influences the other

October 2012 Affordable Access to Recreation
Engaging Municipal Government

• Presentations to council (key player, infrastructure)
  – Benefits of a healthy, active community that 
    encourages AT
  – Economic development, attraction and retention of 
    new people and businesses due to quality of life

• Partnering on projects
  – Workshops: transportation demand management etc
  – Share the Road campaign

• Advocacy
  – Submitted comments at every stage of Official Plan review
  – Letter writing campaign re: paved shoulders

Engaging Municipal Government

• Cycling Master Plan

• AT Plans for Minden and Haliburton

• Community-driven 
  process that made it 
  easier for council to 
  consider innovative 
  solutions, investment

Engaging the Community

Building community support

Politicians don’t create bandwagons: 
they get on them!

Community-based research

– Surveys
– Focus groups
– Focus on hubs

Awareness-raising campaigns

– Share the Road
– Realistic messages (drive to 
town; walk once get there)

Engaging the Community

• Resource Development
  – Cycling guide for the 
    county
  – Walking trail signage
  – Share the Road 
    (general information)
  – Walk And Roll (active 
    commuter’s guide)

Results

Policy Change

Official Plans at the county and local levels now include language to 
support healthy communities and AT specifically.

Infrastructure Improvements

Roads, Trails, Signs

Awareness

Community members and councils are aware of benefits and 
opportunities for AT

Behaviour Change

Dramatic increase in number of people using AT

Results: Infrastructure Improvements

Re
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Frequency of AT Use

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Sometimes Use AT</th>
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Shifting from Organizational to Collaborative Leadership

Organizational

– Hierarchical
– Taking Control
– Having the Answers
– Leaders & Followers
– Responsibility for 
tasks and activities

Community

– Collaborative
– Acting as a Catalyst
– Asking the Right Questions
– Shared Leadership
– Responsibility for 
community outcomes

Community engagement in policy change
Summary

• Community engagement can involve a wide range of activities:
  - Informing
  - Consulting
  - Collaborating
  - Empowering
• Every community engagement process is unique in its context, participants and goals.
• One size doesn’t fit all. Your role as convener is to bring the right people together and adapt the process to suit your community.

Key Factors for Success

• Take time to understand your community, your situation
• Learn about what others are doing
• Involve the “right” people: community leaders, champions, decision-makers, users, those affected
• Partnership and collaboration
• Take time to get organized, but make sure this is…
• Something for the Thinkers and Do-ers
• Start small = Likely to succeed
• Celebrate success early and often
• Seek funding from a variety of sources
• Take evidence-informed action

Policy Tools (Recreation)

• Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians: Policy Framework
• Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians: Policy Development and Implementation Guide
• PARC Workbook for Influencing Physical Activity Policy
  parc.ophea.net/resources/policy-workbook
• Toolkit for Healthier Communities: Influencing Healthy Public Policies
  www.ocdpa.on.ca/ocdpa/docs/ocdpa_hctoolkit.pdf

Tools and Resources

• Tamarack Institute on Community Engagement
  www.tamarack.ca
• The Community Toolbox, University of Kansas
  http://ctb.ku.edu/en
• Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation
  www.c3d.ca
• Appreciative Inquiry Commons
  www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu
• Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making
  www.communityatwork.com

Special “thank you” to Sue Shikaze of the HKPR District Health Unit for letting me raid her slides.

Thanks Sue!