Effective Public Engagement
Examples from Other Cities

By Ian Schwarzenberg

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TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

Engagement Background

- Definition of engagement in context of planning: communicating with residents to learn how they want their communities to look.[7]

- Engagement does not only mean involving residents in decision making.[7]

- Also means persuading citizens to learn about planning issues, etc.[7]

- Does not have to happen through traditional town hall meetings, ads, etc.[7]

- Events can be fun festival-like activities.[7]

Vision Zero Background

- Started in Sweden in 1997, arrived in NYC in 2014.[6]

- NYC agencies involved: City Hall, DOT, DCAS, DOE, DOHMH, NYPD and TLC.[6]

- With few exceptions, NYC has used many town hall meetings and ad campaigns.[6]

- Efforts like these can be ineffective.

- To improve their efforts, NYC must take them to next level.

- NYC should do this by learning from other cities.

Cities

Examples of Vision Zero Engagement:

- Chicago, IL

- Los Angeles, CA

Other Cities' Good Engagement Programs:

- Brisbane, Australia

- Oshawa, ON

- Vancouver, BC

- Washington DC

Examples of

Vision Zero Engagement

Chicago, IL

- Traffic Safety Schools: poor offenders take free safe driving course instead of paying fines.[2]

- Drivers are charged $46 and face more penalties if they do not take it.[2]

- 4 hours, offered in English, Spanish and Polish, both in-person and online.[2]

- Run by National Safety Council in partnership with Chicago courts.[2]

- Equitable because of online version and removal of financial burden.

- Incentivizes engagement because fines are eliminated.

- NYPD should establish a similar program in NYC.

Los Angeles, CA

- Empowered local nonprofits to lead engagement process.[5]

- Active Streets LA: Nonprofits lead charrettes with residents to design streetscape improvements.[5]

- Many of these have been constructed by city.[5]

- Great Streets Challenge: City gives $200,000 grants to nonprofits so they can hold street festival engagement events.[5]

- Events contain fun attractions and planning activities.[5]

- NYC officials should give more power to community organizations to hold similar events.

Los Angeles, CA Images

Figure 3. Active Streets LA Charrette

Source: "LACntyBikeCoalition". *Twitter*. 2017. <pic.twitter.com/KZ1MMS74vG>.

Figure 4. Great Streets Festival Activity

Source: "SORO NC". *Twitter*. 2017.
<https://twitter.com/SORONC/status/871891632282632192>.

Other Cities'

Good Engagement Programs

Brisbane, Australia

- Participants used virtual reality (VR) to view plans of new development at meeting.[1]

- Participants simulated walking streets and flying above by helicopter.[1]

- 90% of attendees were convinced to support plans after using VR.[1]

- They also felt they thoroughly learned how they would be impacted by plans.[1]

- Viewing goggles for smartphones, instructions for how to use them and videos of simulations for computers were distributed to rest of community.[1]

- NYC can partner with tech firms to incorporate VR into their engagement programs.

Brisbane, Australia Videos

Figure 5. Participants' Views of Plans Video

Figure 6. Viewing Goggles Set-Up Instructions

Source: Moreton Bay Regional Council. "The Mill at Moreton Bay: Main street flythrough". *YouTube.* 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjmiFE9p3bE#action=share>.

Source: Moreton Bay Regional Council. "The Mill Moreton Bay: Google Cardboard Assembly". *YouTube.* 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB_FwYUrjuE#action=share>.

Oshawa, ON

- Created Connect Oshawa, website for all things planning-related.[3]

- Built-in accessibility features make text larger and be read aloud.[3]

- City partnered with ESRI to make spatially illustrated open data portal.[3]

- Residents can provide feedback on projects using discussion forums, Q&A forums, interactive maps, surveys and videos.[3]

- Won Hermes Creative Award for good website design in April 2017.[3]

- NYC should make their Vision Zero websites more accessible.
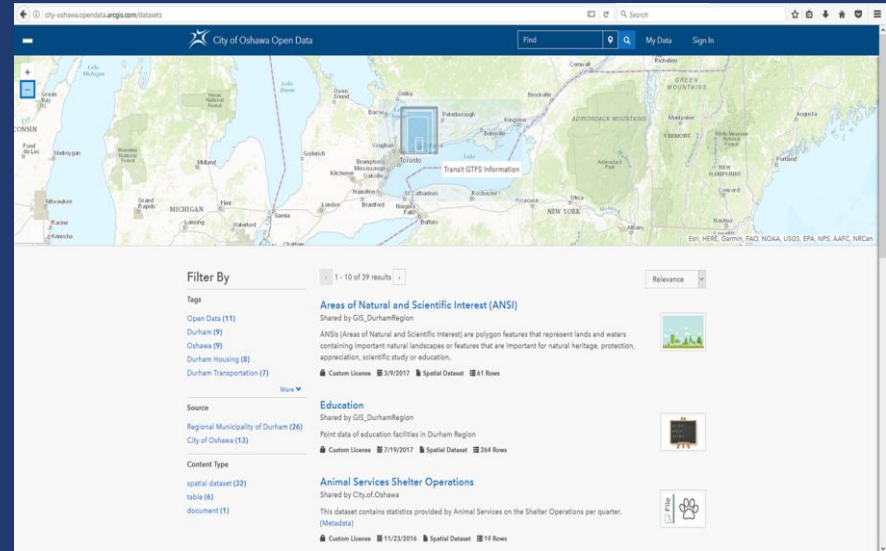
Oshawa, ON Website Images

Figure 7. Accessibility Features and Layout

Source: Connect Oshawa. 2015. <http://www.connectoshawa.ca/>.

Figure 8. Spatially Illustrated Open Data Portal

Source: City of Oshawa Open Data. 2015. <http://city-oshawa.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets>.

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Vancouver, BC

- Held "walkshops": foot and bike tours planners and residents took together of neighborhoods.[10]

- Residents showed planners where new improvements should be built.[10]

- Use of walkshops in neighborhood plan gave it an Award for Planning Excellence.[9]

- Also held public design competitions for small projects like sewer covers. [4, 10]

- Empowers residents to take charge of planning their neighborhoods.

- First competition in 2004 had 640 submissions, 2013 had 1100.[4]

- NYC should have programs similar to these.

Vancouver, BC Images

Figure 9. Walkshop

Figure 10. Sewer Cover Design Competition

Source: Toderian, Brent and Jillian Glover. "10 Lessons in More Engaging Citizen Engagement". *Planetizen.* 2014. <https://www.planetizen.com/node/67656>.

Source: Hager, Mike. "Best manhole cover designs announced by City of Vancouver". *Vancouver Sun.* 2013. <http://www.vancouversun.com/Best+manhole+cover+designs+announced+City+Vancouver/8468475/story.html>.

Washington, DC

- To engage youth, planners got teachers to send students to events for class credit.[8]

- Events had fun and interactive games such as: designing dream streets, mapping daily commutes and identifying decrepit locations on map boards.[8]

- Participants loved games and learned many lessons from them.[8]

- Event leaders gathered extensive information on what participants truly want.[8]

- NYC teachers should incentivize their students to attend Vision Zero events.

Washington, DC Images

Figure 11. Daily Commute Mapping Activity

Source: Smart Growth America. "A Capitol Idea for Public Engagement". *Smart Growth America.* 2015. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/a-capitol-idea-for-public-engagement/>.

Figure 12. Dream Street Activity Pieces

Source: Smart Growth America. "A Capitol Idea for Public Engagement". *Smart Growth America.* 2015. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/a-capitol-idea-for-public-engagement/>.

Notes

[1] Connors, Nathan. "Using Virtual Reality To Engage On Development Projects". *Bang The Table.* 2017. <http://www.bangthetable.com/blog/using-virtual-reality-engage-development-projects/>.

[2] "Cook County Traffic Safety School". *National Safety Council.* <http://www.nsc.org/learn/Safety-Training/InsuranceStateReductionPrgm/Pages/Cook-County-Traffic-Safety-School.aspx>.

[3] Crozier, Matthew. "The City of Oshawa Wins Award For Its Online Community Engagement Platform". *Bang The Table.* 2017. <http://www.bangthetable.com/blog/city-oshawa-wins-award-online-community-engagement-platform/>.

[4] Hager, Mike. "Best manhole cover designs announced by City of Vancouver". *Vancouver Sun.* 2013. <http://www.vancouversun.com/Best+manhole+cover+designs+announced+City+Vancouver/8468475/story.html>.

[5] Los Angeles Department of Transportation. "Vision Zero Los Angeles 2015-2025 Action Plan". *Los Angeles Department of Transportation.* 2017. <http://visionzero.lacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/VisionZeroActionPlan-2017.pdf>.

[6] New York City Mayor's Office of Operations. "Vision Zero Year Three Report". *New York City Mayor's Office of Operations.* 2017. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/visionzero/downloads/pdf/vision-zero-year-3-report.pdf>.

[7] Quick, Kathryn S. and Zhirong Jerry Zhao. "Suggested Design and Management Techniques for Enhancing Public Engagement in Transportation Policymaking". *Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.* 2011. <http://www.cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=1616>.

[8] Smart Growth America. "A Capitol Idea for Public Engagement". *Smart Growth America.* 2015. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/a-capitol-idea-for-public-engagement/>.

[9] Spacing. "Vancouver's Cambie Corridor Plan selected for 2012 Award for Planning Excellence!". *Spacing Vancouver.* 2012. <http://spacing.ca/vancouver/2012/06/27/vancouvers-cambie-corridor-plan-selected-for-2012-award-for-planning-excellence/>.

[10] Toderian, Brent and Jillian Glover. "10 Lessons in More Engaging Citizen Engagement". *Planetizen.* 2014. <https://www.planetizen.com/node/67656>.