

Public Awareness Tools

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Cynthia Prante
Darren Stokes

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INTRODUCTION

An Internet web site called the Public Awareness Web (PAW) was developed to provide information to the general public on transportation issues and give answers to frequently asked questions concerning transportation planning processes and challenges. This site is expected to improve UDOT/public relations as well as save UDOT time and expense in answering repeated similar questions. The World Wide Web (WWW) was selected as the means of information dissemination because it is a fast, cost-effective method of providing information to the public. In addition, information delivered through the WWW can be continually updated and obsolete information deleted.

WEB SITE FEATURES

The site is introduced by a cartoon web spider, *Willy-Web-Walker*. *Willy-Web-Walker* leads first-time WWW users through a short lesson on how to navigate the web. This tutorial is an effective lead into PAW and may result in the public visiting the site specifically for the tutorial.

Information contained in PAW is presented in two ways:

- (1) A step-by step, question-by-question, tour that involves the reader with cartoon type images developed specifically for this project. *Joe Public* and *Cammy* are hosts of the tour, with *Joe* acting as the average concerned citizen and *Cammy* as the spokesperson for the transportation industry. In the middle of the tour, a UDOT representative appears who answers *Joe's* questions specifically pertaining to the importance of the public in long-range transportation planning. The representative also provides information on

UDOT open houses and other meetings. A *Table of Contents* is provided that allows the user to view a listing of the tour topics and then link with the part of the tour they wish to view.

- (2) A summary, without graphics, contains the same information as the tour, but is presented in text form rather than question/answer form. This summary is for those who may have already visited the site and want a refresher on a subject they may have read about on the tour. The summary is also useful for those who may not have time to go through the entire tour in one sitting. Hyperlinks are located at the bottom of each summary page for quick navigation through the summary.

DEVELOPMENT OF PAW

Originally the Delphi platform was investigated for use as the development tool, but was found to restrain the capability to deliver information. Microsoft Frontpage was then selected as the tool to create PAW. This software allowed bypassing much of the programming code necessary to complete the tasks.

Graphics consisting primarily of photographs were originally used. The photographs used had been taken for recording purposes for UDOT and are part of a traveling display. However, cartoon illustrations were found to be more flexible in depicting required information. In addition, the illustrations took less time for a modem to access, cutting download time by as much as 90 percent. Web pages that take too long to download are often not viewed by web site visitors.

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY PAW

The PAW web site includes:

- a list of UDOT regional contacts
- a list of scheduled public transportation meetings
- a discussion of the public's importance in transportation planning processes
- frequently asked questions and answers concerning transportation issues in Utah
- links to other web sites that provide additional information on transportation issues

An example printout of information provided in PAW is included as an appendix to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF PAW

Future improvements to PAW could include adding interactive capabilities to collect statistics and demographics. Input of the user could be collected using Java and other web-based components. Registration of user email addresses would allow notification to the users of UDOT open houses and other meetings.

Other proposed enhancements include adding a children's section, which would include games and activities. A children's section may prompt parents who might not otherwise visit PAW to visit the site with their children, introducing the parents to the information available at the site.

Addition of sound and video to the site is another way to enhance the information available at the site. Videos concerning transportation issues could be digitized and offered at the site for download. Sound bytes, which are simple to deliver on the WWW, could include voice-overs and music.

Additional topics provided by UDOT, reflecting the experience and knowledge of UDOT personnel, would also be a significant addition to PAW.

APPENDIX

Example Printout of Information Included in PAW

Table of Contents

in page order

Home page and summary menu

Meet Joe Public

Intelligent Transportation Introduction

UDOT regional contacts

Public Transportation Meetings

Public's Importance in the Planning Process

1. Getting Started

2. Defining the Task

3. Making Choices

4. Implementing Decisions

Joe Public's Questions

Why is it going to take so long to reconstruct I-15?

Design/build process

What is being done about coordinating traffic signals?

What is going on in my area?

How can I express my concerns to UDOT?

Why does it take 5 years for a project to be advertised for construction?

Are there other ways that a project can be added to the needs list?

Can road construction affect my property?

Can I place a sign on the highway?

Joe Public's Concerns

Why is it so important to reconstruct I-15, spending a billion dollars and five years and a lot of mess and inconvenience for the citizens?

What is "Non-Attainment?"

What are the myths and facts tell me a little about Traffic Safety?

Guidelines for warranting a traffic light

What exactly do Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) like you do?

Why is there such a fuss about environmental issues in transportation planning and road construction?

How does UDOT protect the wildlife while construction is going on?

What is UDOT doing to preserve human artifacts and historical sites?

What about scenic views? Does UDOT do anything to preserve them?

How does UDOT protect the wetlands?

How do cars and trucks pollute the air?

Did you know that the salt put on the roads
contaminate our water?

How are we going to handle all the cars and
people in the future?

If UDOT builds roads and the UTA handles transit
service that uses the roads, do these two agencies
ever get together to plan for all these
transportation needs?

With as many people as the Olympics are going to
bring in, how are we going to take care of
transportation for all of us?

We didn't always have good roads Joe, would you
like to hear a little about how we came to enjoy
our great highway system?

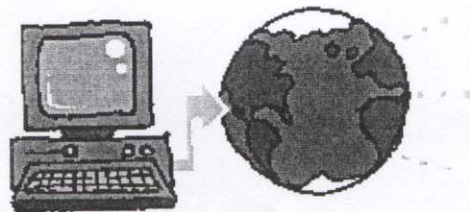


Welcome to the wonderful world wide web! My name is "Willy-Web-Walker," I'm a web spider.



The web is chock full of information and food for the brain. Surfing is easy, I can show you how in just a few minutes. I know you'll pick it up quick, It's a snap!

The World Wide Web is a huge network of computers that connect through each other to send information to and fro. These computers are usually left on 24 hours a day, serving up all kinds of information.



The program that you are using to look at this page is called a "Browser." This program reads a universal "code" which makes up the web. This code is nothing more than regular text written in "tags" that your browser recognizes. This code is known as Hyper Text Markup Language, or "HTML" for short.



Sometimes you'll see a group of words that are a different color/and or underlined, these are called "hyperlinks."

Hyperlinks help you to move around the web and get you to "pages" that you really want to see.

here, try it!

(place your mouse cursor on the underlined, bright yellow "try it!" and press the left mouse button.)

The Public's Importance in the Long Range Planning Process

Well, first of all we need to address the reasons for involving the public in long range planning. The idea here is that we are all equals, having a peer to peer conversation about the issues involved.



This is a great opportunity for you Joe. This is your chance to find out what is happening in your area and what the public officials are up to. Also this gives you a chance to help us with your suggestions and input. We are here to consult with the public.



Instead of asking the public what it wants and going back to the office and trying to work it out there, we work with the public and plan right here at our meetings.



First, primary stakeholders are brought together in a working group for face-to-face collaboration to identify and solve problems.



Secondary stakeholders are offered many ways to participate in forums held all through the process.



The "public-at-large" is kept informed of the proceedings and invited to participate at the open forums.



Well how do the Stakeholders get selected? Do they draw straws?

A stakeholder is defined as:

Those who are, or could be affected by the issues, either directly or indirectly.

Those who could ensure implementation of potential solutions.

Those who could block implementation of potential solutions.

The main idea here is to include anyone who wants to have a say in the process. There are a variety of ways to get involved in the planning process.

The planning process itself is subject to approval by the

stakeholders. This means that the entire group of stakeholders meet together to discuss the design and negotiate any changes necessary for all the stakeholders to feel comfortable with it.

The participants enter into an agreement to use consensus-based decision making as a tool striving to meet three kinds of satisfaction for all stakeholders:



Substantive satisfaction: this refers to the kind of satisfaction that most readily comes to mind in the view of the participant.



Procedural satisfaction: this refers to whether or not the participants perceive the planning process to be fair.



Psychological satisfaction: refers to whether or not the participants feel that their views are heard, respected, and carefully considered by the other participants.

Of course we can't be sure to satisfy everyone, but at least we are able to give everyone a fair say in the planning process. To help you understand how the planning process works, take a look at these four steps that we stick to. Even though these steps are presented in order, understand that the planning process may cycle back through all or part of these steps.

1. Getting Started

2. Defining the Task

3. Making Choices

4. Implementing Decisions

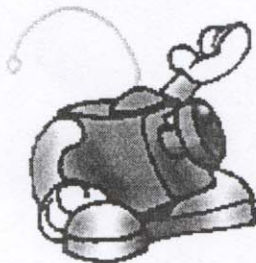
Using this planning process helps us to satisfy the public, prevent mistakes and plan more efficiently. These meetings help to inform the public of their vital role in the process of planning in transportation.

Good bye, Thank you all for coming!



Well, What did you think Joe?

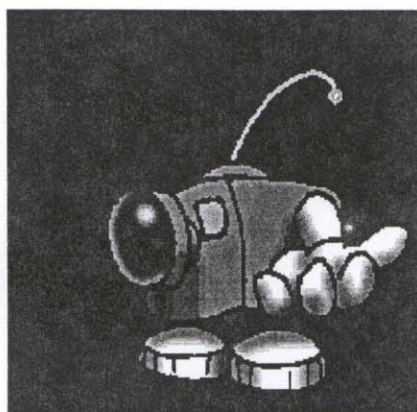
I sure learned a lot Cammy,
and I got most of my questions
answered.



Most of your questions?



Yeah, I saved a few for you.



Ok, ask away!



1. Getting Started



So, how do we get started?

Well, first of all, the planning process starts when someone sees something that really needs to get done. The only way to get something done is to get a plan together.



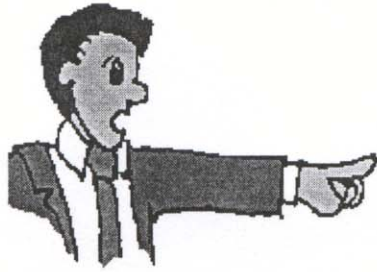
I know there is a planning process, but how do we get it rolling?

There is an initial group of people that meets together to plan the design of a certain project. The people that start the planning are those who will be affected directly or indirectly by the project. These people are called "Stakeholders."

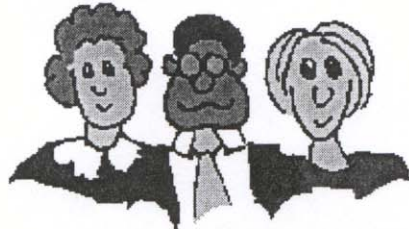


Well how do the Stakeholders get selected? Do they draw straws?

The process is set in motion like this:



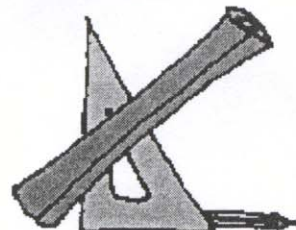
1. Someone sees something that needs to be done and realizes that many people need to come together to make it happen.



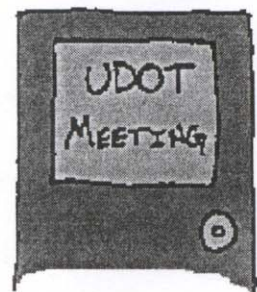
2. Stakeholders are identified



3. Stakeholders are contacted and interviewed.
Stakeholders are offered the chance to participate in planning the project.



4. After the Stakeholders are interviewed and invited to help in the planning process, a preliminary design is drafted.

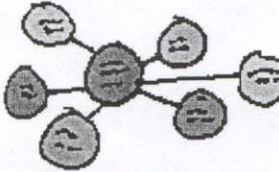


5. Stakeholders meet together to agree on the preliminary design, and are asked to give their input and advice.

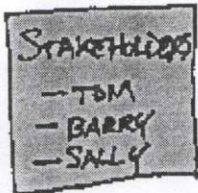
This stage is done when stakeholders agree on a written description of a planning process. The process design should identify:



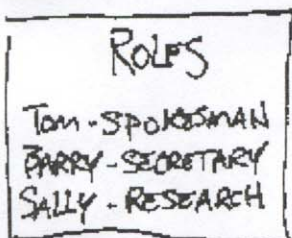
1. The goals and desired products of the planning effort



2. The group that meets together



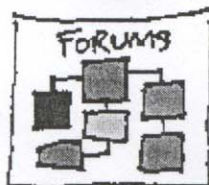
3. An initial list of stakeholders



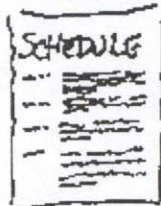
4. What roles everyone will play in the planning process



5. Specific types of forums that will be held in the interest of different types of stakeholders



6. A chart that shows how these different forums relate to one another and how this process as a whole relates to the conventional decision making process



7. A schedule for the planning process



But that's not really what I want to do, I want



to talk about my concerns and have them resolved first.

Most people do Joe, but you have to realize that if we lay down the groundwork in this stage, we will be sure to have less problems later in reaching agreements.



After everyone comes to an agreement of how to move on the project, we are ready to go on to the next stage.

2. Defining the Task



2. Defining the Task

What's the point of this stage?



There are two goals of the "Defining the Task" stage, these are:



1. Define what everyone is trying to achieve in planning together.

2. Brainstorm a lot of options on how to make the plan happen.



If this was a long-range plan, this is the stage where stakeholders would discuss the objective of the plan and propose a few different projects and strategies for possible inclusion in the final document.

While doing this the group needs to consider the prioritization of critical short-term transportation needs.



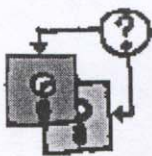
Everyone is different, how would we be able to agree on solutions?

Participants must decide on a shared definition of what they are trying to accomplish. Otherwise, each is likely to be trying to "solve" a slightly different problem.

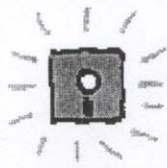


Once the group defines its goals, participants enter a period of mutual education. Each identifies his or her issues and explains their concerns to the rest of the group. Together, they work towards an understanding of the problems they are trying to solve. As the group becomes more educated about the issues, there may be a need to modify the problem statement.

It is usually necessary to gather information during this stage. In this case, stakeholders need to agree on related issues, such as:



1. The type of data needed



2. Good sources of that data



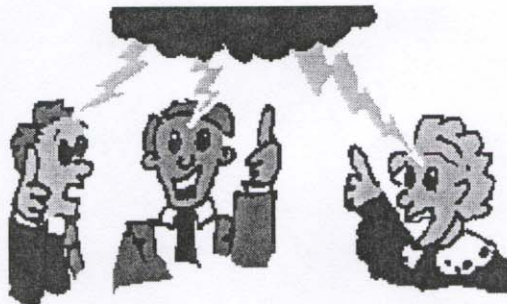
3. Who should collect and analyze it



4. How it should be analyzed

By making these decisions together, participants avoid future disputes over the credibility of data important to developing solutions.

Once participants understand one another's concerns and issues, it is time for everyone to "brainstorm."

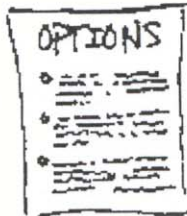


It is very important to generate a lot of options. At this point in time, it's important to remember that there are no dumb ideas. None of the ideas will be decided on until the next stage. If participants have problems in coming up with options, they may find it helpful to spend some time defining a shared vision of what they all want for the outcome and then work backwards to identify many ways of realizing that vision.

This stage will be finished when everyone there agrees on:



A written definition of the "problem" or challenge that all stakeholders are working together to address



A comprehensive list of realistic options on how to address the problem or challenge



After we have our list of options and our "problem" statement, we are ready to make some important choices.

3. Making Choices



3. Making Choices



The goal of the "Making Choices" stage is to choose a solution to the problem from the many that were suggested in the last stage. In developing a long-range plan, the "recommended option" or alternative would be decided during this stage.

CRITERIA	
<input type="checkbox"/>	TIME
<input type="checkbox"/>	BUDGET
<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFICULTY
<input type="checkbox"/>	DAMAGE
<input type="checkbox"/>	SUPPORT

The first step in moving from a range of options to one proposed solution is for the stakeholders to list all possible criteria for, or ways to identify, the best options from their list in the "Defining the Task" stage.

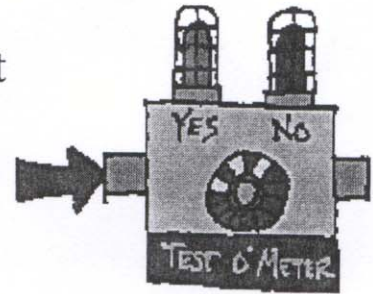
Once a list of criteria is prepared, stakeholders try to agree on which criteria should actually be used. All stakeholders must agree to choose the solution that best meets the group's list of criteria.

CRITERIA	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TIME
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BUDGET
<input type="checkbox"/>	DIFFICULTY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DAMAGE
<input type="checkbox"/>	SUPPORT



Once participants agree on these "evaluation criteria," they apply the criteria to each option.

The group drops the impractical options, gathers more information on certain options, may combine two or more options, and then test the solution they are creating (e.g., a pilot project). When stakeholders have put together a proposed solution which is agreed upon by the group, they then develop an implementation plan for it.



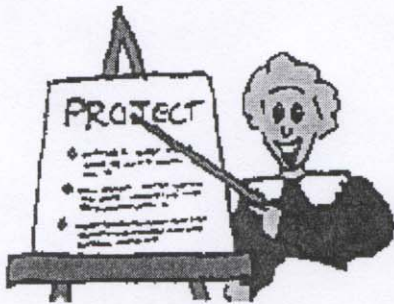
This stage is completed when the group has written up a solution to the problem or challenge that was identified in the "Defining the Task" stage, along with an accompanying implementation plan. Of course, everyone in the group has to agree with this solution and plan.

4. Implementing Decisions

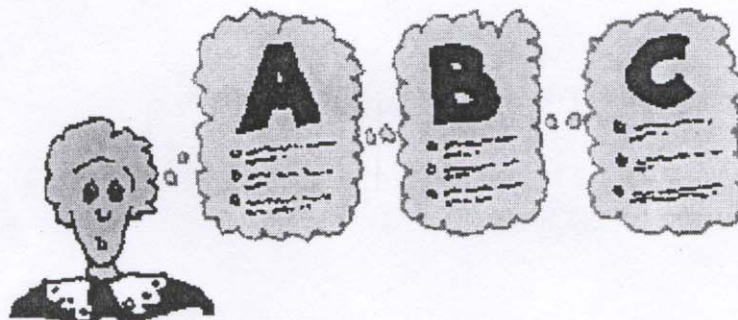


4. Implementing Decisions

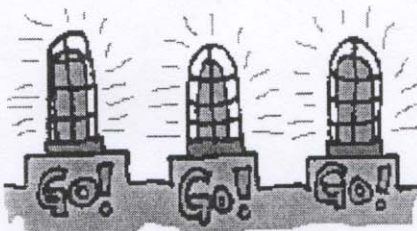
The primary objective of the "Implementing Decisions" stage is to get formal approval for the changes the group proposed during the discussion in the previous stage ("Making Choices").



The purpose of this final stage of the planning process is to present the proposed solution to decision makers for ratification.



Often, a small group of the stakeholders who participated in the earlier planning will "walk the proposal through" the approval process to show how the plan has the support of the many different parts of the communities involved.



As long as decision makers (along with all the different kinds of stakeholders) have been adequately represented in the planning-together process, approval of a plan that all have agreed on is

usually automatic.

This stage is completed when the the solution that was proposed actually works out and can be documented.

