



Creative Public Engagement Strategies

Garnering Public Support and Buy-in

July 12, 2016



Why is community engagement important?

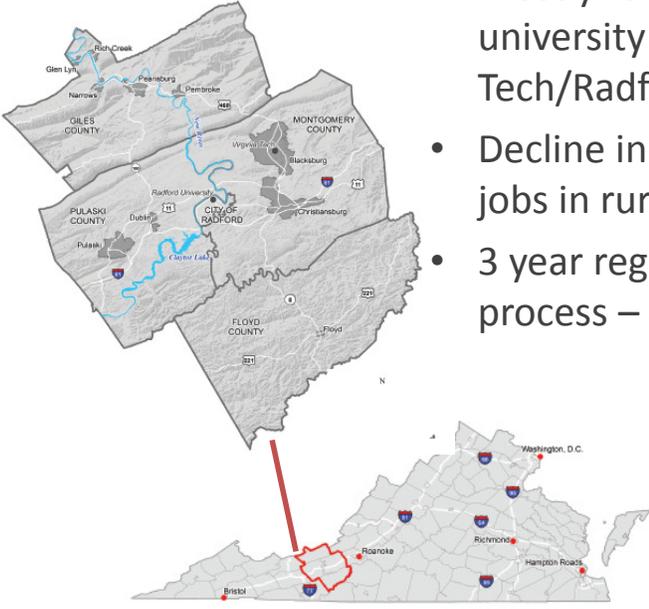


Soul of the Community Project Knight Foundation

[Soul of the Community](#)



New River Valley, Virginia

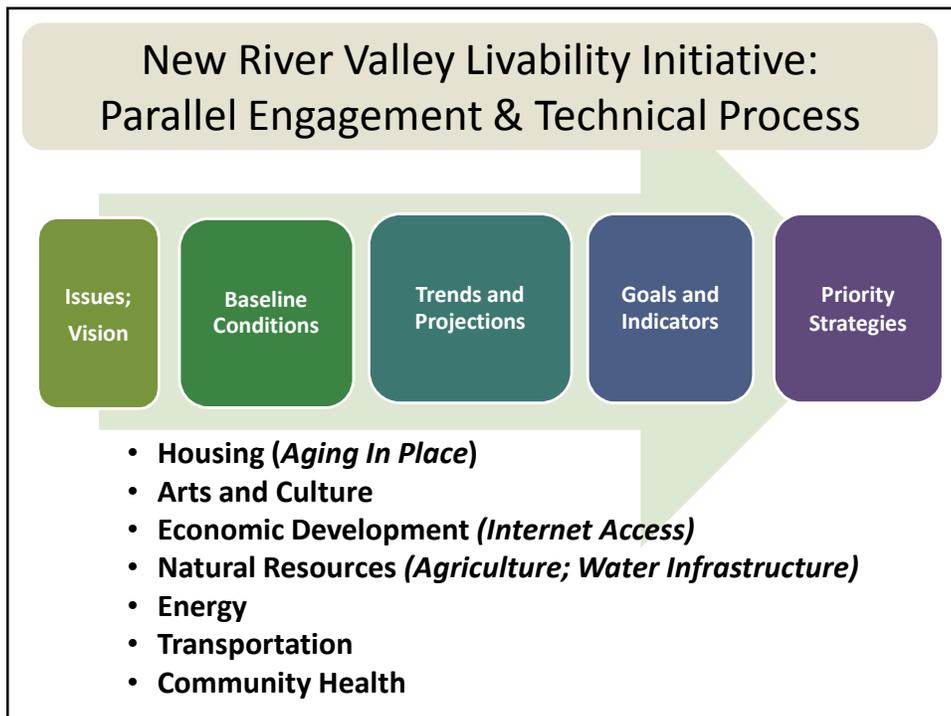


- Mostly rural and small university towns (Virginia Tech/Radford University)
- Decline in manufacturing jobs in rural counties
- 3 year regional planning process – across multiple topic areas




- 9 topic areas/7 working groups
- today, trends, future vision
- new data for decision-making
- regional *and* local approach
- innovative outreach
- preferred regional plan
- build capacity to implement







Our Planning Process Outreach Goals:

- Robust stakeholder engagement - **broad representation**
- **Equity** of engagement – reaching the harder to reach
- Understand **feedback in context** (ex: road conditions)
- Improve **two-way communication** (talk *with* not *at*)
 - elected and staff understanding of citizen needs/concerns
 - citizen understanding of intersecting issues, competing needs, resource limitations
- **Geographic balance:**
 - Common priorities across region *and*
 - Particular needs of communities within region
- Building capacity and norms for **civic problem-solving**

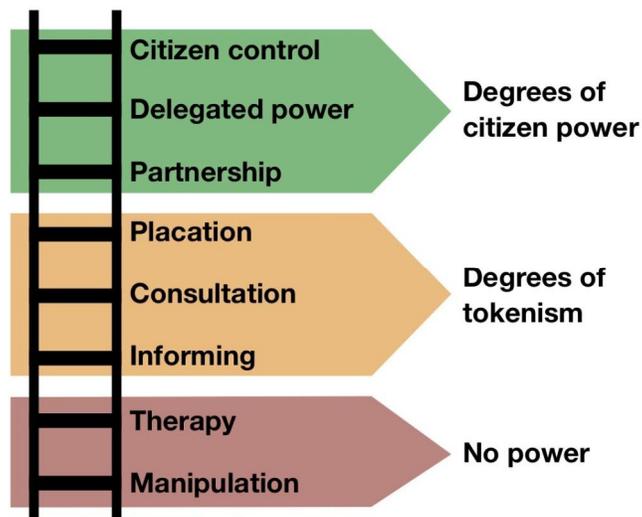




What Makes Engagement Meaningful?



Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation





Informing and Other Forms of Tokenism

Public Meeting

Citizens input is “*welcome*” at a public hearing on codes, bylaws, ordinances and other things beloved by planners and bureaucrats.

Tuesday at 6 p.m. in a room with uncomfortable chairs. Parking limited.

- Low accessibility for non-experts.
- Unclear how citizen input impacts process or outcomes.
- Emerging proposals appear to be “done deals”



The Town Hall Meeting





The Town Hall Meeting



- Has it changed over time?
- How does the public perceive its role?
 - Who does it work for?
 - What is it set up to do?
- High stakes, zero-sum outcomes
 - Dialogue low, often absent
 - Proposal may pass but...



Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

What Gets in the Way?



Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

What Gets in the Way?

- Limited resources (*time/\$\$*)
 - Habits and comfort
 - Fear of conflict
- Desire to maintain control (*info, process, outcomes*)
 - Desire to manage citizen expectations



Some of our “standard” engagement efforts:

- Regional Kick-Off Summit with 150+ participants (table discussions)
- Website – working group progress and draft documents, direct communication with WGs
- Online and paper surveys – several iterations
- Spanish language survey and outreach events with local churches
- Lower-literacy survey (Community Action & Literacy Vol.)
- Community meetings with established groups





And some **“not-so-standard”** engagement methods:

VT Dept of Theater and Cinema - Directing/Public Dialogue

- Building Home: Story circles, Participatory Theater
- Interactive Community Performances: Whether System, Behind A Stranger’s Face

Collaboration between Sojourn Theater, VT, and PlaceMatters

- BUILT NRV game



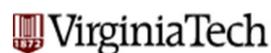
And some **“not-so-standard”** engagement methods:

Collaboration between VT-IPG, NRVRC, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- Healthy NRV (youth engagement)

PlaceMatters

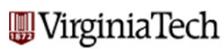
- Keypad polling at Kick-Off and Final Summits
- CrowdGauge – NRV Tomorrow Survey





Performance Based Engagement

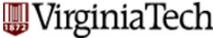
We were *really* skeptical at first.....





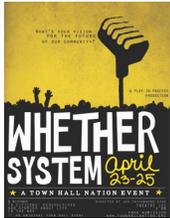

We knew we wanted to

- Have more authentic conversations
- understand root concerns (interests over positions)
- reach the harder-to-reach vs. the usual suspects
- built trust and collaborative spirit, and have fun!
- create capacity for civic problem solving



Building Home - Town Hall Nation



Town Hall Nation
Sojourn Theatre, TEAM,
Imagining America

April 23-26, 2012 - Virginia Tech











SO JOURN
THEATRE





Building Home: Behind A Stranger's Face

November 17th – December 3rd, 2012

behind a stranger's face
an original play, a public conversation.
citizens' stories from the New River Valley, Virginia

directed by jon catherwood-grim
"a friend may be waiting behind a stranger's face."
maya angelou

Nov 17 @2pm
Radford Rec Center
200 garage street

Nov 18 @7:30pm
Pulaski Train Station
29 south newington

Nov 25 @7:30pm
Rays Country Store
206 south local street

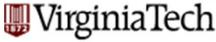
Dec 3, 4 @7:30pm
Theatre 101
Virginia Tech

FREE ADMISSION
generous support for the Building Home project provided by Virginia Tech and the Center for Arts & Works





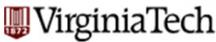
BUILT: Game-Based Engagement





The BUILT Game

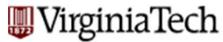
FLEA MARKET	PHARMACY	LIBRARY	SLAUGHTER HOUSE
LIVE MUSIC VENUE	<i>Carol D.</i>	ASSISTED LIVING	



A Different Community Conversation: BUILT NRV

FLEA MARKET	LIVE MUSIC VENUE	ASSISTED LIVING	<i>Carol D.</i>	LIBRARY	PHARMACY	SLAUGHTER HOUSE
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A Different Community Conversation: BUILT NRV

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VirginiaTech

FLEA MARKET	LIVE MUSIC VENUE	ASSISTED LIVING	<i>Carol D.</i>	LIBRARY	PHARMACY	SLAUGHTER HOUSE
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LIVABILITY INITIATIVE
NEW RIVER VALLEY, VA

A Different Community Conversation: BUILT NRV

		•	PHARMACY		
		ASSISTED LIVING		•	
SLAUGHTER HOUSE			<i>Carol D.</i>	LIBRARY	FLEA MARKET
	•				•
		LIVE MUSIC VENUE	•		

VirginiaTech

sojourn
THEATRE

LIVABILITY INITIATIVE
NEW RIVER VALLEY, VA



A Different Community Conversation: BUILT NRV

- Individual Priorities

↓

- Collaboration –
Neighborhood/Town



- Integration –
Town/County



BUILT Game
core values and priorities
key tensions and tradeoffs
obstacles, challenges
potential action strategies

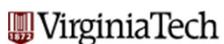


Healthy NRV: Youth Engagement



Frame the issue...

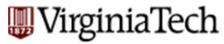
[Healthy NRV Overview Video](#)





Give youth a voice...

Domino Effect



CrowdGauge:
Interactive Web Survey



CrowdGauge/NRV Tomorrow Survey: Imagining the Future

New River Valley Livability Initiative Introduction **Priorities** Impacts Choices

I imagine a New River Valley where...

- ☆☆☆☆☆ I can live a rural lifestyle.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ Private property rights are protected.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ I have convenient and affordable transportation options.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ I can afford to live closer to where I work.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ The scenic beauty and rural character around me is protected.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ My community has a vibrant downtown.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ My community has a variety of job opportunities.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ The road system, utilities and internet in my community are sufficient to attract and retain businesses.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ I have access to healthy food that I can afford and ways to be physically active.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ My community has quality educational opportunities for all ages.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ I can easily stay in my home as I get older.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ The natural environment in my community is protected.
- ☆☆☆☆☆ A variety of arts, music, and cultural events can be...

You have 6 stars left

[See all explanations for establishing and regional Color shows the amount of positive or negative impact](#)

CrowdGauge/NRV Tomorrow Survey: Mock Participatory Budgeting

NRV Tomorrow Survey Introduction Priorities **Budget** Policies [Map the Results](#) | [NRV Livability Home](#)

Put your money where your mouse is... [Next](#)
Show Instructions Again

great outdoors

Help Children and Youth Reach their Full Potential

- Expand and improve pre-school education and daycare options
- Increase screening for developmental progress during the first years of life

Support Economic Vitality

- Expand small business support services
- Restore and redevelop downtown properties
- Expand workforce education and training programs
- Increase modern commercial and industrial building space for new and expanding businesses

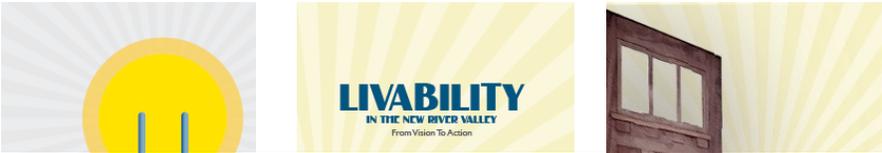
Advance Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy

You have 11 coins left to distribute

Hover over or click the actions for more information. Click the coins to indicate where you would prioritize public dollars.

Color shows how well your choices support your priorities

LOW HIGH



Results from Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement:
Legitimacy, Trust Building, Buy-In, Implementation Partnerships



Meaningful Engagement:
Moves Your Process from Vision to Action



Legitimacy, Trust Building, Buy-In, Implementation Partnerships

**Meaningful Engagement:
Moves Your Process from Vision to Action**

11 partners



Aging Successfully at Home and in Our Communities – A Community Workshop & Design Book..coming soon!

2013 Community Impact Grant: Habitat for Humanity of the NRV for Critical Home Repair



Realignment of program mission and grant-making

9 partners



Solarize Blacksburg

Lowering the Cost and Complexity of Residential Solar: Pilot project in Blacksburg now!



What works in your community?



Contact Info

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