

# Plaza Verde Community Engagement Discussion

(1/30/07)

## Comment

### Main Points

City government wants input from the community but not influence. "Real influence involves financial involvement in communities determined by the people"

"We take pride & ownership in our communities when we see what has been initiated & worked on by us"

Real influence, democracy & community engagement have bigger arrows coming from bottom than top. "By the people for the people".

Communications, accountability of, and follow through needs to improve

Empower and fund neighborhoods

Neighborhood groups are working but not supported enough

City government wants input from community but not influence"

Pay attention to what we say through the neigh. assoc.

NRP is still critically needed esp. in certain n'hoods. Recognize & support successful efforts by n'hoods to improve community.

City has not properly acknowledged end of NRP as a problem.

Purpose of current CE input process is unclear.

### What can the City do to help you better participate in decisions?

Provide a specific place to go to address/resolve problems (311, Office of Getting Things Done)

Leaders need to listen to grass roots - in decision making

Funding pool should be available based on specific criteria, projects, outcomes.

City support (\$) for n'hood events and initiatives it takes credit for as city efforts (I.e.

Powderhorn fireworks display)

Understand if they want people to be empowered, be engaged, they have to have real authority - resources to organize & do projects & programs

Provide money to make decisions real.

Clearer process as to how people can get involved in city processes.

Better communication about what city resources are available. (loan programs, fix up funds)

Continued support for and recognition of small, neighborhood-scale organizations

### What is working now?

Cost effective for city to keep NRP. Tons of free citizen labor from NRP volunteers. Saves hundreds of thousands of dollars of planning money.

Comm. Engagement builds community & civic engagement

Problems are addressed by those closest to problem. Strength comes from those closest to problem.

Green Institute

Community engagement driven cameras, shot spotter, greenway grassroots driven  
BOTTOMS UP not down...

People have fought way through

Election system is working

City does chose who it funds

Council member attendance at N'hood meetings

Councilmember Schiff's & others newsletter  
Existing working relationships between city staff, council, + community  
Councilmembers attend mtg's  
Funding neighborhood orgs  
NRP process  
City support for neighborhood initiatives  
Small, local scale of neighborhood orgs. "small is beautiful"  
Helping communities/neighborhoods get stuff done  
Arrows going both ways - they listen now.  
City boards + commissions work for the people who are on them (not well known)  
Is public television working

### **What needs to change?**

If you want to influence community give them money  
City should re-evaluate commitment to NRP and continue funding it. Especially neighborhoods in dire need.  
Top Heavy  
Things may need to be tweaked & run better. But no reason to end neighborhood programs.  
Who is engaging who: the community is engaging city not vis versa  
Are City electors empowering city or is the city empowering city electors?  
Does not seem MPLS is following true democratic model.  
The community engagement report is another tool keeping citizens away  
Neighborhood organizations need money for capacity, need to be supported in work  
TIF money < get back to original money it's warped into something else  
Community organizations are a tool we use to push things through even though powers downtown (contractors) don't feel the same way.  
NRP Works Bottom up not top down. Report focus is top down  
How reports & surveys are initiated does not work.  
City needs to keep supporting successful & effective community organizations & projects.

N'hoods & residents must be genuinely invited to the table.  
See "regular faces" at these meetings. Those who most need to be involved are not engaged or included.  
Block Clubs and N'hood orgs are best at "door to door" level outreach - this is not properly acknowledged or valued by city.  
Need a clear flow chart - "weight: of activities on pg. 6 not explained - who has the most say, and where?  
Where is this meeting & this process leading?  
Community capacity building at the grassroots level should be better acknowledged & utilized by city  
The energy put into this report and these meetings could have been "put to work" to start fixing the system now instead of just talking about it - need an overall vision.  
Report feels "top-down"  
Language such as "impending decision" is ominous  
Need flow chart to understand process - MPLS gov't harder to understand than Washington D.C.  
Roles of overlapping jurisdictions is very confusing e.g. Library Board, Met Council, ..  
No clear system for building requirements, zoning, codes, etc.  
Culture of respect W/city staff  
Every 5-10 yrs have to start over again w/commmunity engagement discussion  
Clearer engagement processes are needed  
Feedback about outcomes is important (Will the survey really impact anything?)

Did our effort result in something?

Last minute decision making + rushed big projects

Just because someone says they represent a community, doesn't mean they do. Check w/neigh.

Not enough interest in boards or commission

Know difference between public & private relationships. Don't take it personally. People are just expressing frustration.

Communication & Engagement w/immigrant pop.

General disconnect of citizens

Vision statement needed.

Why community voice is important

Relationships!!

Democracy!!

Have to go downtown, middle of day, not time specific or time changes

Systemize between dept's & community engagement on on-going basis.

Not explaining process, unclear

Certain developers have learned to work the system

Empower & fund neighborhoods

Funds to address issues (blighted housing ) others

When individuals have issues, city has not made it easy to communicate & affect change, improve conditions (safety, traffic, others)

Takes a long time to get things done

Lack of follow through