Georgia Chapter
Spring Conference

New Advocacy Strategies for Planning

March 21, 2012

www.planning.org/policy
Today’s Challenges for Planning: Political

Commissioners remove smart growth references from the Master Plan

By Christian Alexandersen, Times Staff Writer | Posted: Sunday, May 15, 2011 12:15 am

State suspends midcoast road plan seen by some as ‘global conspiracy’
What we’ve seen ...

- Plans Rejected
- Federal Grants Returned
- Resolutions Opposing ICLEI, APA, Agenda 21
- Events & “Briefings”

- Aggressive Use of Social Media
- Funds Cut
- Programs Targeted for Elimination
- Challenging Future Budget Targets
Today’s Challenges for Planning:
Fiscal & Economic

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
CUTTING JOBS AND SERVICES
Job losses projected to approach 500,000

Federal block grant cuts slicing municipal budgets
Tuesday, July 19, 2011
By Rich Lord, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
What is driving the opponents?

Economics
Social Anxiety
Change
New Technologies re Political Organizing
A Changing Environment?
A Changing Environment?

Election Year Intensity
Expanding the Playing Field with State Legislative Sessions

Agenda 21 Resolutions in NH, KS, TN
BREAKING: New APA Poll on Public Attitudes on Planning

National Poll Findings to Help with Messaging Strategies and Planning Advocacy
APA Poll: Key Takeaways

Attacks from vocal minority
No growth in self-id opponents
Hiding is the wrong approach
Work to do on citizen engagement
Good support but latent
Partnership w business leaders
Definition given for “sustainable communities”: An urban, suburban, or rural community that has more housing and transportation choices, is closer to jobs, shops or schools, is more energy efficient.
Importance of Officials Working to Create Sustainable Communities

Q: Using the scale below, please indicate how important is it to you that your community leaders and elected officials work towards creating more sustainable communities.

* Mean: 7.4

© Ford Foundation, 2010. Poll conducted by Harris Interactive 4th Qt 2010
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Agree National Level</th>
<th>% Agree Southern Region</th>
<th>% Agree Republicans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<td><strong>82%</strong></td>
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<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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</table>

- **84%** The majority agree that our country is too dependent on oil.
- **82%** Most Americans spend more than 50% of their household expenses on housing and transportation costs. That is too much.
- **82%** Rebuilding our economy and creating new jobs is the most important issue of our generation.
- **75%** Infrastructure spending on roads, trains, and buses create jobs and help the economy get stronger.
- **66%** We need to rethink the way we develop housing and transportation in this region. The way we have been doing it isn’t working for most people.
- **58%** I believe that economic growth and environmental quality are interconnected goals.
- **58%** Housing and transportation make up 35% of the US economic base. We can’t fix our economy unless we fix our housing and transportation problems first.

*Ford Foundation, Smart Growth America and Collective Strength poll - 2010*
Key Strategy: Have a Plan

Analyze the Situation
ID Allies, Opponents, Influentials
Define Your Terms ... First
‘Reframe’ Planning in Economic Terms
Craft Conscious & Consistent Messaging
Conduct Aggressive Outreach
Have a Game Plan for the Opposition
Key Strategy:
Cultivate Allies & Messengers

Internal Advocates
Outside Allies
Proactive Media Outreach
Social Media Outreach
Key Messengers
Key Strategy:
Inoculate Elected Officials

Meet Early & Often
Keep Them Prepared
Understand the Political Context
Avoid Excessive Jargon & Technical Detail
Cultivate Influentials
‘Push Back’ as Necessary
Key Strategy: Prepare for Rapid Response

ID Arguments and Prep Responses
Monitor Opponents
Mobilize Supporters
Get in Front of Opponents’ Claims
Correct the Record
Key Strategy: More is More

Preparation
Participation
Partners
Politics
Key Strategy: Be Prepared

Know your Message
Define the Debate
Identify the Benefits
Watch the Opposition
Prep your Champs
Have Responses Ready
Key Strategy:
Eliminate Jargon

Focus on Outcomes
Identify Local Values and Connect to Planning
Specify the Benefits
Tell a Story
New Framing for Planning

Economic Value

Democratic Participation Value
Messaging
Planning =
economic recovery
fiscal responsibility
secure economic future

Demolish the idea that a secure future can ever happen w/out planning

Retake the high ground of freedom and fairness
Crafting Messages ...
Specific, Concise, Positive
Focus on Values & Outcomes
WIIFM
Write it Down
Test it Out
Spread it to Allies
Use it Early and Often
Stick to it
APA Core Messages
Choice
Value
Engagement
Community

“Planning creates communities of lasting value.”

ADD LOCAL PROOF POINTS!
Message Development: Creating Audience-Centered Messages

- Know your audience:
  - What do they know about your topic?
  - What do they care about?
  - What information and facts will capture their attention?
  - What values do your audience care about?
- Create messages that will appeal to them
The Framing Used by Disruptive Groups

• **Planning = Tyranny**
  - End of Property Rights
  - Global Re-education of Children
  - Forcing People into Cities
  - De-population

• **Planning = Communism**
  End of American Liberty

• **Planning = Rich Elites**
  Imposing a “New World Order” Via the United Nations Agenda 21
Attacks are Orchestrated

• Not a “loyal opposition” or interest group
• Not there to testify on a specific topic or plan
• The principal objective is to disrupt and discredit the planning process
• It’s personal
Messaging Preparation

Know the attacks
Be proactive
Build your base
Good defense
Be prepared ... esp @ public meetings
Themes for Positive Messages

Local
Outcomes
Benefits-Driven
Inclusive
Prosperity
Fair
Choice
Good Business Sense
# Building Blocks of a Communications Plan

## 1. Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Analysis</th>
<th>Opposition Research</th>
<th>Context Summary</th>
<th>Issue Review</th>
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</thead>
</table>
### Building Blocks of a Communications Plan

#### 2. Messages

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Develop Benefit-Driven Responses</th>
<th>ID Core Messages</th>
<th>ID &amp; Arm Messengers</th>
<th>ID Delivery Vehicles &amp; Timelines</th>
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- Develop Benefit-Driven Responses
- ID Core Messages
- ID & Arm Messengers
- ID Delivery Vehicles & Timelines
# Building Blocks of a Communications Plan

## 3. Implementation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Monitoring</th>
<th>Feedback &amp; Adjustment</th>
<th>Intel</th>
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American Planning Association  
Making Great Communities Happen
Message Discipline: How to Deliver Them

1. **Prepare** – know what your key messages are and memorize/internalize them
2. Don’t wait until you are asked about your key messages by others: **proactively deliver** them and set the framework for the discussion
3. **Start with your “conclusion”** and then move to develop it; use phrases such as “The key thing to remember is. . . “, “That has to be put in the context of. . . “
4. Generate **“proof points”** using examples from your own community – plans tell stories and these stories are a great way to explain the benefits
5. **Repetition** is important for retention.

6. Remember that **body language and voice tone** are critical elements of your delivery: remain relaxed and maintain a pleasant, firm, authoritative tone (don’t match your opponent’s level of intensity and conflict).

7. **Don’t repeat your opponents negatives** in the process of denying them: i.e. don’t say things like “Planning is not a government plot to take away individual rights.”

8. **Practice** your presentation/messages in advance with your staff.
When pressed ...

learn to counter

and pivot.
“You may be out gunned, but you have to bring a gun.”

- Maine State Legislator to Public Health Advocates
Coordinated Campaign

- Legislative Strategy
- Ground Game
- Communications Plan
Your Campaign Plan

▪ Situation Analysis
▪ *Specific* Goals & Objectives
▪ Targeting
▪ Strategies to Reach Target Audiences
▪ Timeline and Tactics
▪ Structure & Operations
▪ Resource Needs
▪ Measurement, Evaluation & Course Corrections
Early Strategic Decisions

▪ Offense or Defense?
▪ Inside Game or Outside Game (or both)?
▪ Lead or Follow or Facilitate?
  ▪ Agency? Chapter? Allies?
Three Keys

▪ Information

▪ Relationships
  Legislators, Leaders & Champions, Allies, Constituents

▪ Leverage
  Data & Impact, Local Leaders, Allies & Power Brokers, Legislative Process
Relationships with Legislators

Constituency is Paramount
Regular Contact
Involve Them in Planning
Specific Requests
Understand the District
Use Local Electeds
& Civic Leaders
Cultivating Influentials & Linking to Electeds

Find partners who can reach decision makers

Involve champions who can move public opinion
Finding & Creating Champions

Finding
- History
- Issue Interest
- District Connection
- Key Constituent
  Connection
- Committee Role
- Expertise & Past Experience

Creating
- Build Relationship
- Show District Impact
- Involve ‘Influencers’
- ID Opportunity
- Show Value
Relationship Building Activities

Meetings
Briefings
Site Visits
Planning Events
Agency Requests
Visibility Opportunities

District Data
Trend Analysis
‘Low Impact’ Asks
Messages that Move Legislators

What’s the impact in the district?
What’s happening in the district?
How can economic conditions be improved for constituents?
How does a policy / program affect key constituents?
Real world stories highlighting policies
Working with ‘Hostile’ Legislators

Consider the district and legislator’s primary interests in crafting a message

Recruit new messengers

Find legislative champions or supporters who can influence a hostile target

Use your region’s delegation

Look for potential trade-offs

Build working relationship over time and appeal beyond ideology

Not necessary to convince if you can neutralize
Coalitions, Outreach & Engagement
Why Coalitions?

- You need help
- Strength through diversity
- Leveraging partners’ relationship with policymakers, leaders
- Issue awareness, messaging and framing
- Network intelligence
- Influencing (or confronting) critics
- Building broader support
Identifying Partners & Allies

- Make a list
  - Include unlikely targets
- Consider target audiences ... and who reaches them effectively
- Review your competencies and conduct a “gap” analysis
- Consider roles
- Communicate early and often
- Doesn’t have to be formal but must be intentional
Preparing & Deploying the Coalitions

▪ One message, many messengers
▪ Clear roles based on need and core competencies of partners
  use their strengths and play to their credibility
▪ Information flow is vital
▪ Develop rapid response system
▪ Train and arm your allies
▪ Keep people active and engaged ... not just during an emergency
Outreach

Not about giving information
Go to them
Listen
Reflect
Include critics
Be broad ... and strategic
Engagement

Partnership and Process ... Not an Event
A last word on federal policy

Appropriations

Transportation
Transportation

Senate Passes MAP-21
2 years, $109B
Some Planning Changes, Program Reforms

House Progress
Stalled, Controversial

March 31 Deadline
Short term Extension Likely
Appropriations Priorities

CDBG
Choice Neighborhoods
Partnership for Sustainable Communities
TIGER
Water Infrastructure
CDBG Historic Funding

$ in Billions

2.473

2.948
HUD: Partnership for Sustainable Communities

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$ Millions
DOT:
TIGER/National Infrastructure Investments

Of note:
- FY10 included a $35 million set aside for planning grants
- TIGER was created by ARRA with $1.5 billion available in the first round
EPA: Water Infrastructure Funding (Combined)

FY10: $3.48
FY11: $2.49
FY12: $2.39
FY13 Request: $2.03

$ in billions
Questions – Comments - Discussion

For more information ...

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Blog
blogs.planning.org/policy