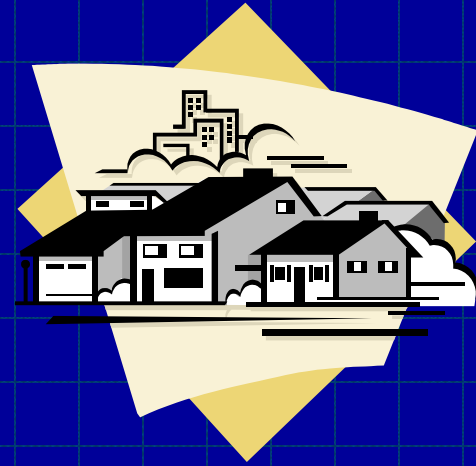


Why Good Public Involvement is Worth the Time and Money



Governments and Growth
March 2006

Today's Reality



NIMBY

Not in my
backyard!

BANANA

Build absolutely nothing
anywhere near anyone

NOPE

Not on planet Earth

NOTE

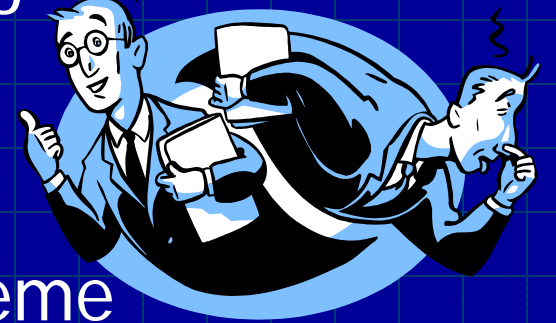
Not over there either

GOOMBY

Get out of my backyard

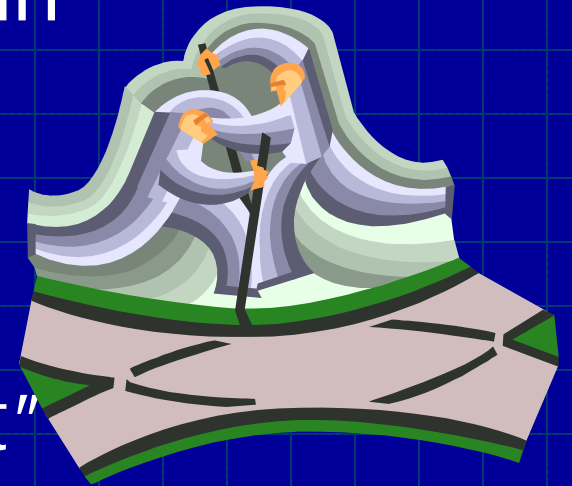
How communities become polarized

- Event triggers feelings of being threatened, thwarted or fear of losing something
- Land use and transportation zingers
- Alliances are formed
- Issues proliferate
- Positions become rigid and extreme
- "Someone is doing something bad to me"



Levels of Conflict

- People quickly move from problem solving to an adversarial approach
- New groups will be brought in
- Communication becomes distorted
- Lobbyists oversimplify solutions: " Why don't ya just"
- Embarrassment and bewilderment



Starting early

- Uninformed public is likely to make up its own facts
- Acknowledge public's right to know
- Disseminate information
- Don't conduct a PR campaign
- Keep it simple and don't overtax the collective attention span
- Expect skepticism and opposition



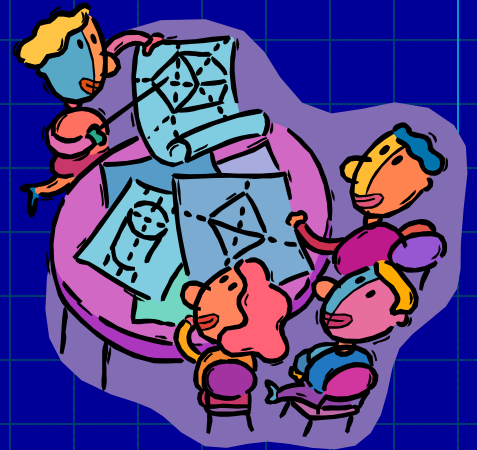
Why Early Involvement

- Channels people's anxiety into problem-solving
- Provides opportunities for discussion at the lowest levels of conflict



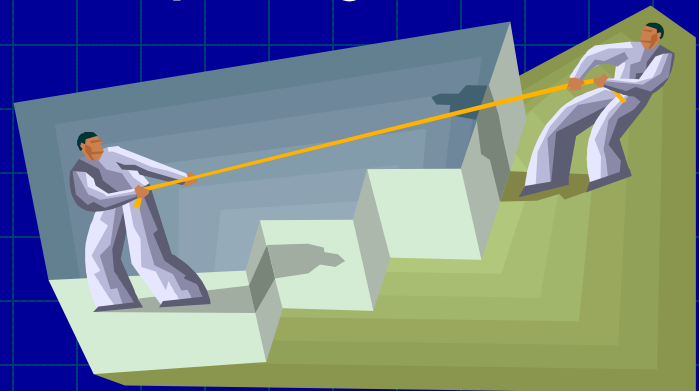
Successful Public Meetings

- Successful meetings are no accident
- All public meetings are not the same
 - inform, or advise, or solve problems
- Manage expectations
- Never leave anything to chance
- Don't make 'em mad
- Keep your hands away from your face
- The best approach with dissenters is to kill them with kindness
- Keep your cool when things get hot



And finally...

- Little time, high uncertainty, narrowed options and high stakes = CRISIS
- Community conflict is costly and time consuming
- Unmanaged conflict creates policy gridlock



So remember...

- Good public involvement allows parties to work *with* rather than *against* each other
- Participants are not forced to face off against each other
- Good PI takes time but it pays off in the end with more pragmatic, easier to implement, longer lasting, less costly results

