

Stakeholders

Building Local Support



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How effectively you develop your plans depends directly on the ideas, energy, interest and expertise of many people. Begin soliciting community participation early to help you identify potential support and also potential opposition.

Planning for the sustainability of a byway is an exciting and dynamic process and requires creative leadership and a steadfast commitment to plan implementation. With a vision, mission with specific goals and clear objectives, the implementation of an action plan can be achieved. It requires effective leadership, a dedicated community, lively public discourse and an effective strategy for management. If you have this, you have a good chance for success.

Reaching Out To the Community

To ensure success, look for ways to bring the public and other interested parties into the process of planning for the sustainability of the byway.

Seek opportunities to involve property owners, government officials, Native American tribes, business people, special interest groups and citizens when doing an inventory, creating a story and evaluating your byway. All of these groups need to be involved.

Potential Stakeholders

Try to recruit representatives of major stakeholder groups within the corridor.

- Property owners along the route (Find the information from county tax records)

- Agencies in charge of managing the roadway
- Local business people, especially those whose businesses would be affected by an increase in tourist traffic
- Convention and Visitor/Tourism Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, and others organizations dedicated to promoting business and tourism
- Representatives of key attractions along the byway

Groups of Stakeholders

It is likely that stakeholders appear in three groups. (1) For: Supporters who seek high traffic flow and outside dollars, (2) Against: Those who are inconvenienced by tourists or impacted by change in their environment and (3) Neutral: Those apathetic about your byway until you impact their livelihood (NIMBY).

When identifying stakeholders, you want all three camps represented to some degree. Sooner or later you will be hearing from each of them. Better now than later. Find the potential speed bumps. Listen to all three camps' motivations and concerns to find common ground.

What Considerations Should You Keep in Mind?

Understand the lifestyles of the people you have involved. If people are retired, they may be able to devote more time. If they have children or full-time work or both, their time may be more limited.

Recruiting Promising Individuals from Stakeholder Groups

To begin recruiting participants, think about who may have a special connection to and interest in the welfare of the byway and its sustainability.

Use questions such as these to help you identify important participants:

- Does this stakeholder offer opportunities for the sustainability of the byway?
- Does this person think challenges or threats can be met successfully along the byway?
- Does this person know a number of key property owners along the byway?
- Does this person know the owners or managers of key destinations along the byway corridor?
- Is this person well acquainted with public officials who can impact the byway?
- Does this person have a vested interest in key destination venues along the byway?
- Does this person have access to agencies that are responsible for byway promotion?

Plan your meetings accordingly. Let people know when there will be a break between major tasks, and for those who are especially busy, ask them to attend particular meetings at particular times to maximize their contributions.

Offer alternative means of involvement and communication beyond attending meetings to maximize opportunities for interested participants. Form subcommittees.

Determine previous experiences and special skills. How much experience do they have with public service? Match the stakeholders with tasks within their comfort zone.

Determine who has access to funding and financial resources. Consider leveraging assets to achieve sustainability. Identify willing financial backers.

By considering these things and planning in advance, you can begin to devise a participation strategy that takes advantage of your group's strengths.

Why Plans Fail: A Short List

- ⇒ The responsible body was not adequately prepared.
- ⇒ The responsible body was not cohesive in its interest.
- ⇒ Citizen participation was not adequate or not encouraged.
- ⇒ Citizen participation became mis-managed.
- ⇒ Negative emotional issues were not diffused.
- ⇒ Special interest dominated the decision-making.
- ⇒ Apathy.
- ⇒ Plan was too ambitious.
- ⇒ Financial support was not planned adequately.
- ⇒ Failure at the implementation stage.

REFERENCES

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