

PBIC Webinar

Creating Great Communities Through Public Involvement: How to Create and Run Effective Advisory and Advocacy Groups



Peter Lagerwey, Seattle Regional Office
Director, Toole Design Group

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Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
HIGHWAY SAFETY
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Today's Presentation

- ⇒ **Introduction and housekeeping**
- ⇒ **Audio issues?**
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- ⇒ **Questions at the end**



How to Create and Run an Effective Advisory Board



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Topics Covered

- Why and when to create an official advisory board?
- Challenges and benefits
- Create an advisory board
- How to be an effective board



Why create an official board?

- Increase awareness among decision makers
- Increase longevity and decrease vulnerability to political changes
- Establish credibility, legitimacy



Photo: Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board

Benefits

- Increased public input and transparency at a meaningful time
- Community buy-in
- Innovation through public forum
- Intermediary between staff and community



Challenges

- Efficient use of bicycle/pedestrian staff time
- Tension between community members and staff
- Long term goals vs “now” projects
- Active or passive



Create an Advisory Board

Steps to create a board:

- Get official recognition and support
- Recruit and interview members
- Determine logistic support
- Solicit/provide information
- Set an agenda



Recruit and Interview Members

Considerations:

- Size
- Diversity
- Member qualities
- Member selection
- Leadership



Recruit and Interview Members

Advisory boards should represent the community:

- Neighborhood Groups
- Advocacy and Non-Profit Groups
- Use established groups as liaisons with the community
- Business groups



Recruit and Interview Members

Advisory boards should coordinate with local professionals:

- Local, state transportation and public works departments
- Transit providers (*many pedestrian crashes are related to transit stops*)
- Health Departments

This leads to better coordination, avoiding duplication of efforts.

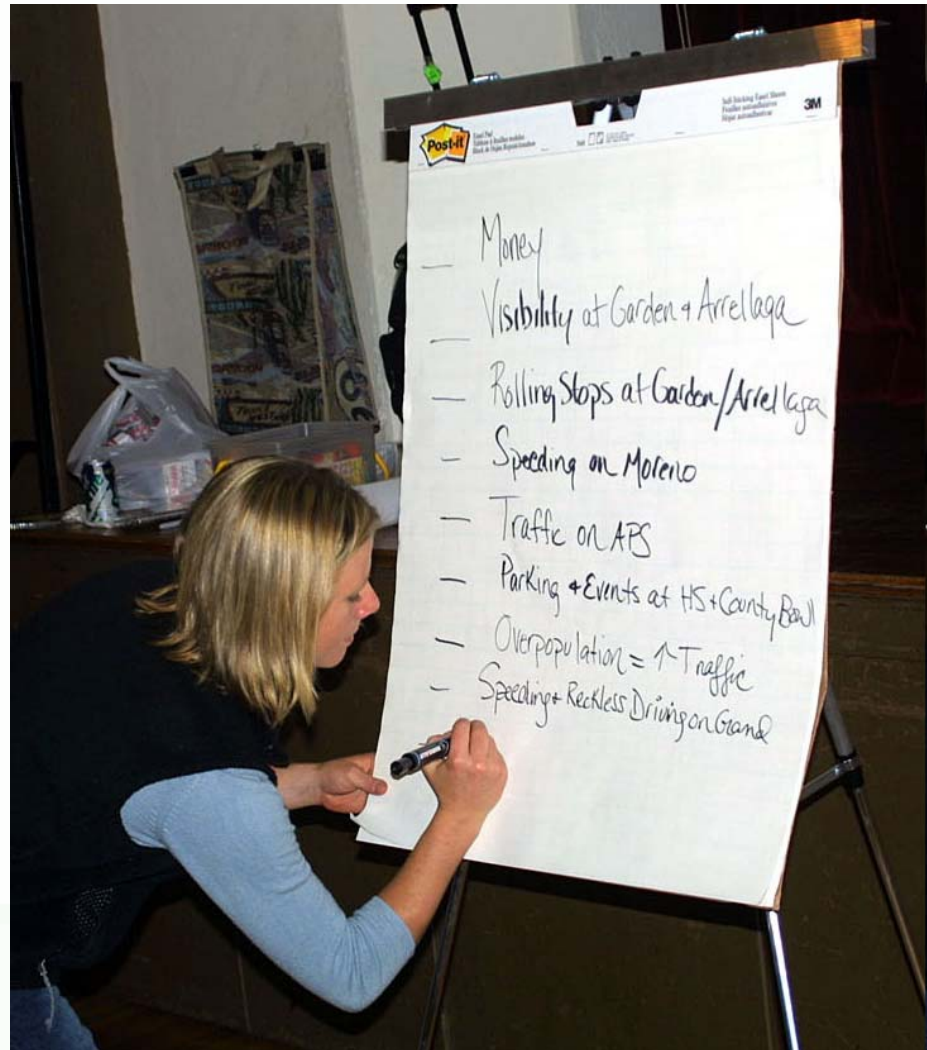
Roles

- Chair
- Staff liaison
- Scribe/note taker
- Sub-committees
- Technical topic leads
- Liaisons to other committees



Logistics

- Staff Support
 - Training
- Board Responsibilities
 - Record Minutes
 - Invite Speakers
 - Agendas



Staff Support

- Recruit and interview members
- Liaison between agency staff and board
- Provide overview of ongoing projects of interest to the committee
- Institutional knowledge
- Organize and post note



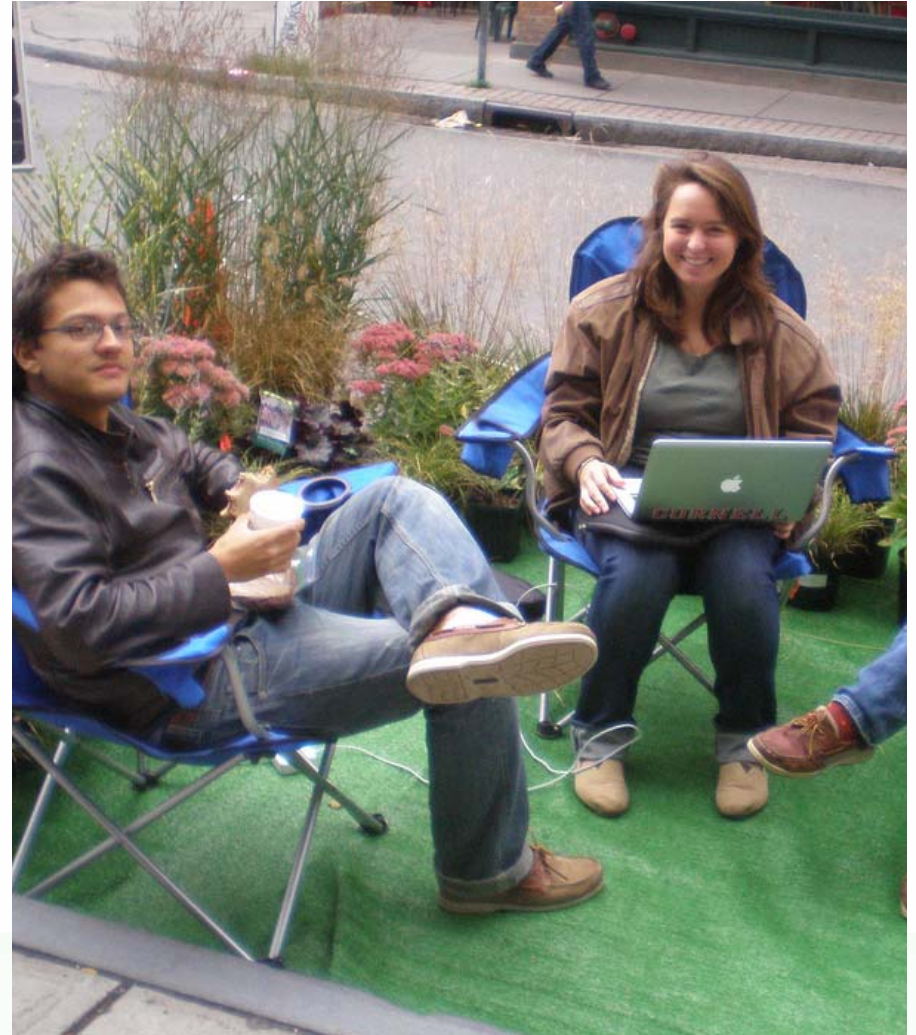
Solicit and Provide Information

- Organize presenters
- Establish project review process
- Technical review
- Provide feedback to project teams
- Written comments / letters
- Advise city council / mayor



Agendas

- Introductions
- Public comment period
- Review and approval of past meeting notes
- Presentations
- Project review
- Committee business
- Adjourn



An Advisory Board Should:

- Ensure quality in work from of elected officials and agency staff
- Expect presentations and chances to give input to agency staff on major projects
- Provide constructive feedback
- Give residents an opportunity to provide meaningful input

An Advisory Board Should Avoid:

- Endorsing candidates or positions
- Concentrating on individuals' pet causes
- Losing sight of the objective



Questions?

How to Create and Run an Effective Advocacy Group



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Learning Objectives

- Define the roles of advocacy groups
- Articulate how 25 people can create positive change



Topics Covered

Why create an advocacy group?

- Members and key roles
- Establish bylaws and define your purpose
- Programming
- Membership and Volunteers
- Communications



Why Create an Advocacy Group

- Community voice for issues
- Social forum for members with common interests
- Lack of existing advocacy on objective area



Members and Key Roles

- Board of Directors
 - Officers
 - President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
- Executive Director



The Magic of 25

- A relatively small group can gain and maintain officials attention
- Commit to two:
 - Blog Posts
 - Emails
 - Letters
 - Phone Calls
 - Meetings

Bronx Activist Committee



You can make real, tangible changes to how streets and sidewalks function in the Bronx. The Bronx Activist Committee chooses local campaigns and fights for changes on-the-ground in their neighborhoods, like bike lanes and new pedestrian plazas.

These are the campaigns the Bronx Activist Committee chose for 2013. Come to the next Bronx Activist Committee Meeting to get involved in making these campaigns a success:

- ▶ [A Safe Bike Network for Co-op City](#)
- ▶ [Boogie on the Boulevard](#)

Have an idea about a Bronx street that needs improvements? Get involved to connect with a network of local Bronx activists who can help you to make change.

Past Victories

Founded in 1993, the Bronx Activist Committee helped develop the Bronx Greenway Plan and organized the first Safe Routes to School

GET INVOLVED

Come to a Bronx Activist Committee Meeting!

Second Wednesday of every month

Bronx Museum
1040 Grand Concourse,
Bronx
6:30 - 8 pm

RSVP for the next Bronx Activist Committee Meeting

'Like' the Bronx Activist Committee on Facebook:



[Join the Google group](#)

Image: Transportation Alternatives, Bronx Activist Committee

Establish Bylaws

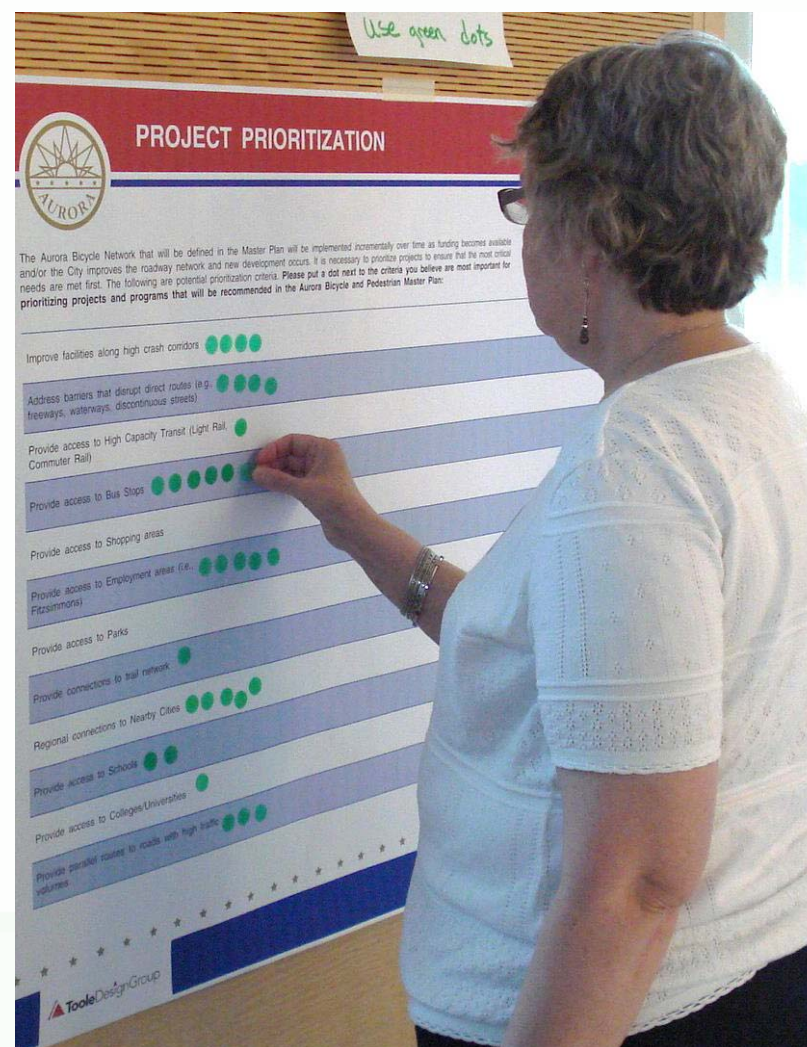
Bylaws should be established in order to provide vision and structure.

- Ensure that group is following through with stated goals and objectives in an efficient manner.
- May be necessary in order to applying for nonprofit status or incorporate as business.



Define Your Purpose

- Establish an objective – what do you hope to achieve?
- Establish goals in support of your objective
- Develop mechanism to review performance
 - Are goals being met?
 - If not, what needs to change



Selecting Issues

- Assess community needs
- Issue history
- Feasibility
- Pitfalls
- Political environment



Establish Meeting Schedule

Meetings provide a chance to socialize, announce new opportunities, and recruit members



Establish Meeting Schedule

How to attract individuals to meetings:

- Plan interesting, fun, and informative programs
- Publicize
- Social meetings at local hot spots
- If you have a formal meeting, keep it short.
- Highlight opportunities for further involvement



Photo : streets.mn

Additional Programs

Group rides or walks:

- Recreational
- Educational
- Policy



Photo : City of Bellingham, WA

Additional Programs

- Maintenance, traffic safety, or other classes
- Youth classes
- Promotional events, celebrations (e.g. bike to work day)
- Presentations: experts, local officials, or pedestrian/bicycle staff



Membership and Retention Strategies

To Recruit and Maintain Members:

- Tone and approach: the gentle nudge and the big thanks
- Strong online presence
- Contacts, utilize board members volunteers etc.



Membership and Retention Strategies

Retention campaign materials:

- Renewal letters
 - Expiration
 - Benefits
- Online renewal schedule and materials.



Photo : NYU Walk Smart

Organizing Volunteers

Organize Volunteers:

- Establish volunteer program mission
- Learn from others
- Assess needs and resources



Organizing Volunteers

Keep volunteers active:

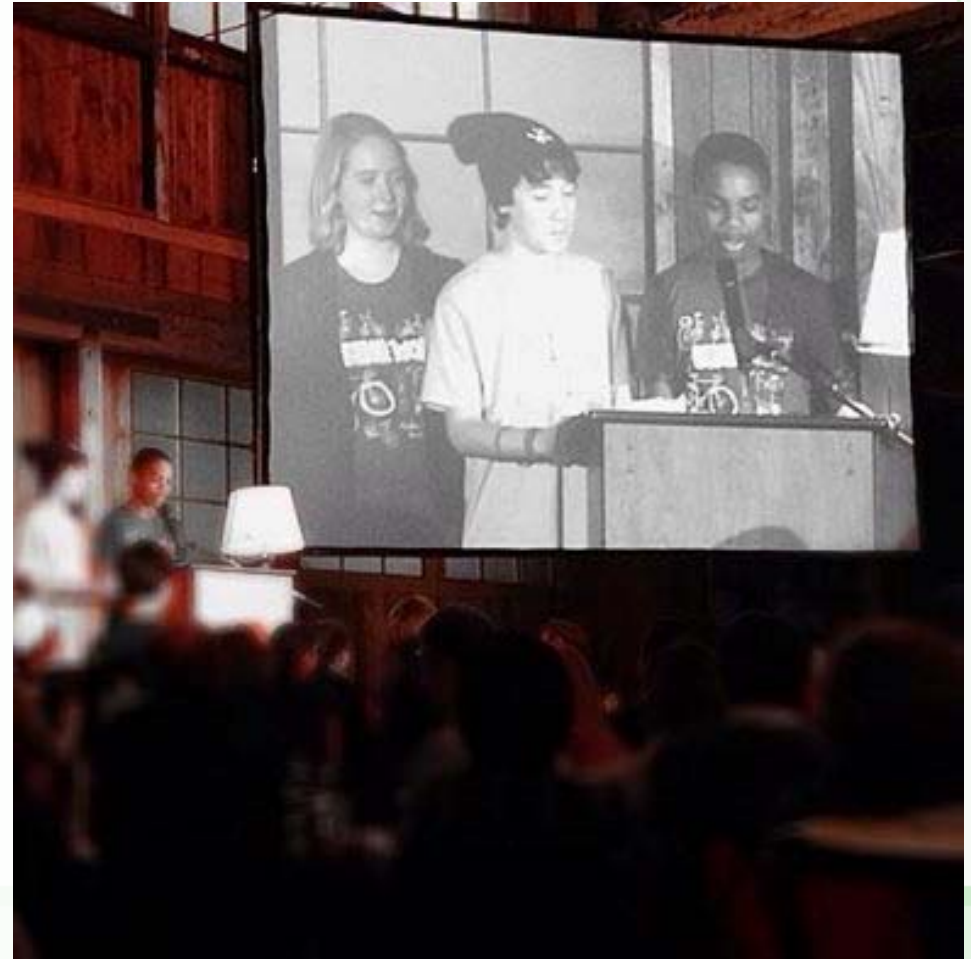
- Keep updated list of opportunities on website and communicate frequently through email
- Provide job descriptions
- Acknowledge effort



Fundraising

Why do people give?

- Give back to their community
- Feels good
- Believe in your cause
- Respects or admires the organization
- Receives something for their money
- Tax-deductions



Fundraising

Some different ways to raise funds consist of the following:

- Donations: member email and direct mail
- Major donor and planned giving programs
- Sponsorships
- Special events
- Grants
- Investments Stocks and mutual funds

Communications

Constant contact must be made between the advocacy group leadership and supporters.

- Website
- Social Media
- Traditional Media



Communications

Commit to establishing a schedule to complete the following monthly tasks:

- Emails and/or letters
- Phone calls
- Meetings



Review of Advocacy Group Fundamentals

- Establish and follow through on goals
- Understand the institutional process
- Identify allies
- Build a strong constituency
- Timing



Photo :Twin Cities Sidewalks

Questions?

Thank You!

⇒ **Archive at www.pedbikeinfo.org/webinars**

- Downloadable and streaming recording, transcript, presentation slides

⇒ **Questions?**

- **Peter Lagerwey**
plagerwey@tooledesign.com

