



civic engage

Beyond 'the Usual Suspects': How to reach diverse audiences in public engagement

March 3, 10:30 – 12:00
Local Government Leadership Academy Webinar

SFU

CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

 LGLA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Framing the challenge

- ‘Usual suspects’ have a valid role but...
 - Need representation from broader community to ensure legitimacy
- Must ensure groups with less access aren’t drowned out by dominant perspectives

Framing the challenge

- Think about...
 - Who are the full range of stakeholders in your community?
 - Which are missing from the conversation?
 - What steps can you take to reach them?
- Strategies range from little to high investment

Agenda

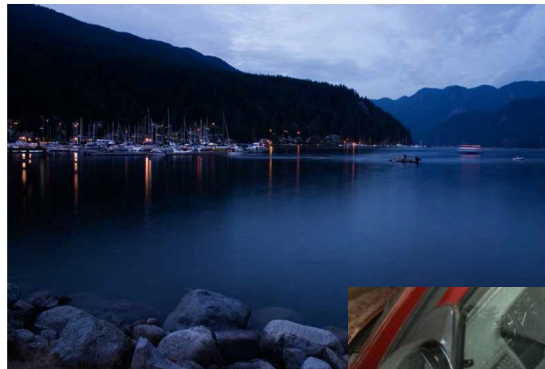
- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Case study 1: *Deep Cove***
- 3. Case study 2: *Thrive! Surrey in 2030***
- 4. Summary: Key takeaways**
- 5. Open discussion/Q&A starts at 11:30am**
- 6. Close**

Case Study 1: Deep Cove

DEEP COVE
PARKING & ACCESS
COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Challenge: Sleepy waterfront community goes global

- 70,000 hikers per year
- Parking crunch – whose village is this?
- Locals versus boaters – cars vandalized
- Building new parking = \$20-70k per space



DEEP COVE AT DUSK. PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM HOLLOSZY.

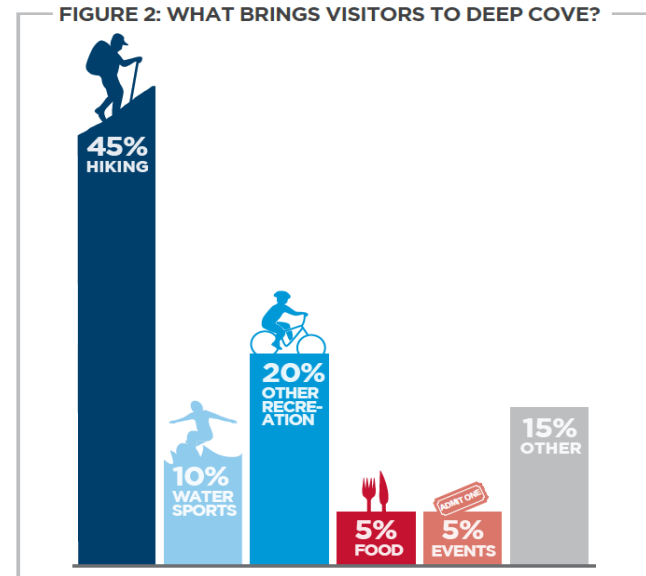


What We Did: Deliberative dialogue



What We Did: Direct outreach

- Identified stakeholders: residents, hikers, youth, business, etc.
- Conducted interviews.
- Used intermediaries: clubs, schools, BIA, etc.
- Reserved seats for all interests.



What We Did: Public promotion

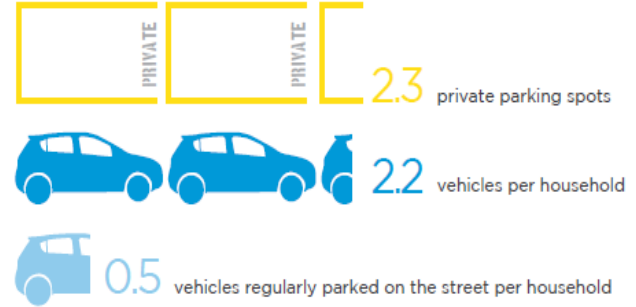
- Bulk mail postcards
- Signs in key locations
- Newspaper column
- Facebook boost targeted to missing interests
- Online survey (parents of young families, etc.)



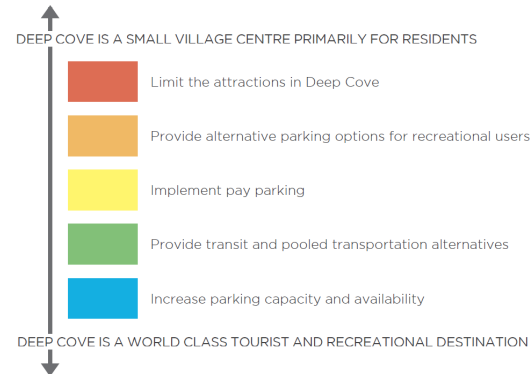
What We Did: Discussion guide

- Reflected back and validated perspectives
- Provided common fact base
- Levelled playing field for those new to issue
- Visual information about options

AVERAGE PARKING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR DEEP COVE RESIDENCES



SPECTRUM OF APPROACHES



What We Did: Results

Q2. As a whole, the dialogue participants represented the full diversity of all stakeholder groups.



Q3. My views on parking and access in Deep Cove have been impacted by hearing the views of other participants.



What We Did: Results

Deep Cove parking issue settled the civilized way

Dear Editor:

I could not believe my eyes when I read your editorial Coneheaded Move (Aug. 7 Viewpoint). Your comments re: "Deep Cove turf war ... a facilitated session of the type usually reserved for the Greek financial crisis..." has me asking

— do you read your own paper and if so can you remember from one year to the next? Deep Cove had terrible parking and traffic issues due to the increased popularity of our area with visitors.

Rather than dealing with this issue through pundits and experts, the

district council asked the community for input. With SFU facilitators we met — high school students, residents, Indian Arm residents, and park and facilities users.

Over one day we met in groups with someone from each constituency in each group. Our ideas

and suggestions, that we developed together, in an atmosphere of friendliness and respect, were forwarded to council. No intense turf war — just a community of people trying to improve things for everyone.

Council adopted many of our recommendations

and *voilà* a hugely improved traffic and parking system. You should remember; you covered our meeting. No fight, no nasty comments just a community of responsible citizens young and old working together.

J. Paul Stevenson
North Vancouver

What We Can Learn

- People respond to authentic opportunities
- Don't assume – ask and reflect back learnings
- Include loud voices for conflict resolution but...
...anchor discussion in general community
- Use proxies for missing groups (e.g. hikers)
- Report back to community members not present

Case Study 2: *Thrive! Surrey in 2030*



The challenge:

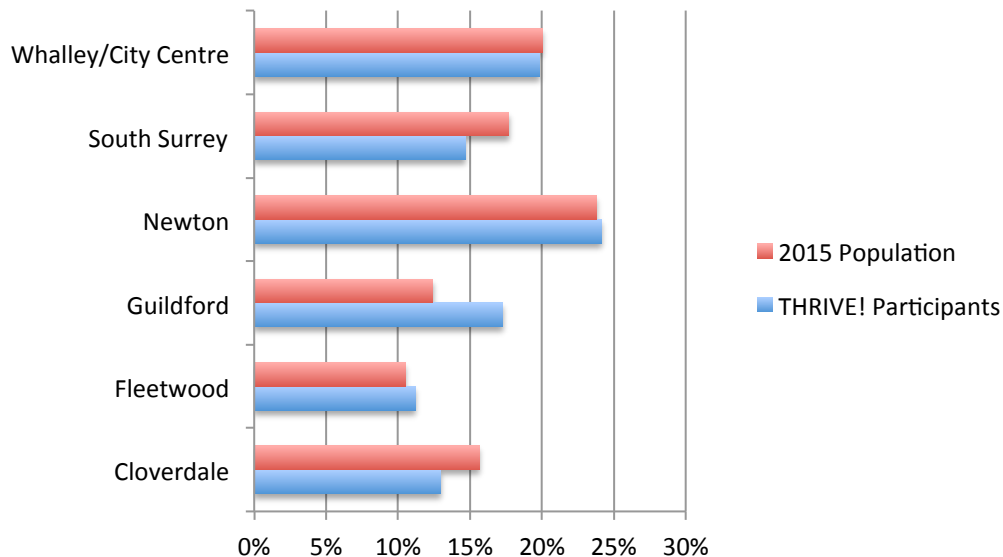
- City of Surrey was seeking input on their Sustainability Charter update
- 4.5-hour dialogue to envision a sustainable future for Surrey with 100-150 residents
- The goal was to convene a ‘mini-public’, engaging previously unengaged residents

What we did

- Identified and researched target audiences
 - 3 major groups: age, neighbourhood, ethno-cultural group
- Used a networked approach to scoping and outreach
 - Partners included: Immigrant services, community services, Board of Trade, BIA, School District, RCMP, SFU Surrey
- Validated residents in their role as experts
- Offered fun and interactive activities
- Emphasized accessibility and inclusivity

Outcomes

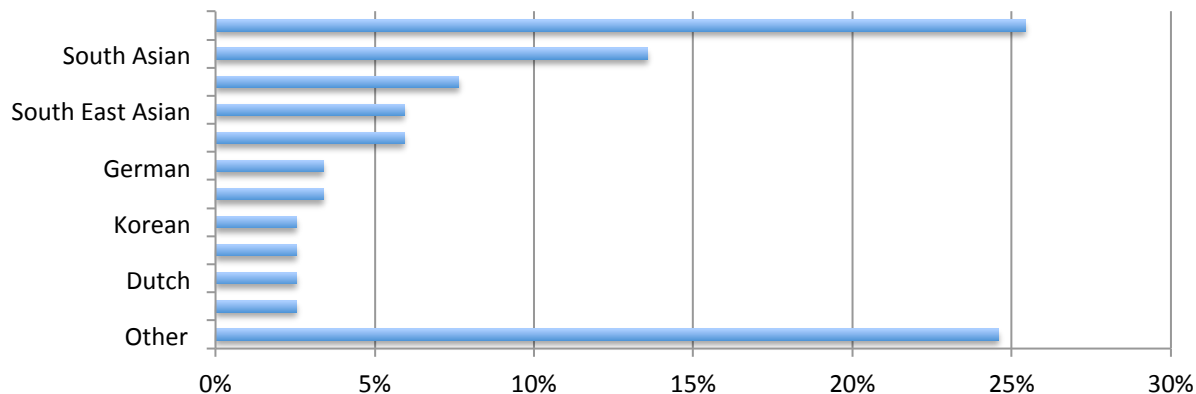
Where do THRIVE! participants live?



- Participants represented all age groups, neighbourhoods, and major ethno-cultural groups

Outcomes

With which cultural or ethnic communities do THRIVE! participants identify primarily?



- 23% aged 25 or younger, 7% under 19
- 48% of participants had not attended a City of Surrey engagement event before

What we can learn

- Understand your audiences
- Build strong partnerships
- Treat residents as experts
- Emphasize accessibility and inclusivity
- Make it fun

Key Takeaways

- Engaging beyond the ‘usual suspects’ requires investment
 - Building trust and culture of participation over time – take incremental steps and build trust with community members, show them their input matters
 - Low cost (e.g. targeted Facebook ads) vs. high cost strategies (discussion guides, advertising on public transit, etc.)
- Map your stakeholders, note who is missing from the process, then go out and find them
 - Consult and partner with groups that can help you reach them; be open to letting them teach you how to engage rather than coming in with pre-conceived ideas and be open to letting them help shape the process
- Make your process accessible, fun & different
 - Change up the event format; how you’re advertising

Key Takeaways: Example



Source: "Antidote to Apathy" TED Talk, Dave Meslin

Key Takeaways: Example

Nike inc.

Sept 22 2010

Notice of Retail Purchase Opportunity

Our regional distribution centre has received notice that product #372G (running shoe) will be available for retail purchase at certain locations, as of October 2nd. Product 372G has a mesh and synthetic nylon material shell with a carbon rubber outer sole. This sole has a circular "waffle" tread for traction. The inner sole is injected with Phylon material. This product is available in men's, women's and children's shoes.

Source: "Antidote to Apathy" TED Talk, Dave Meslin

A few resources...

- [National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation: 10 Ways to Make Your Material More Inclusive](#)
- [TED Talk: Dave Meslin – The Antidote to Apathy](#)
- [Matt Leighninger: Using Online Tools to Engage and Be Engaged By the Public](#)
- [Council of Ontario Universities: A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences](#)

Thank you for participating!

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