

CITY OF WINTERS
GRANT AVENUE / SR 128 / RUSSELL BLVD. / YOLO COUNTY RD. 32 COMPLETE STREETS
COMMUNITY MEETING

*Thursday, May 6, 2010
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Winters Community Center
201 Railroad Ave.*

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

This Facilitator's Guide is intended to help facilitators manage the breakout group discussions. The Guide is organized into two sections:

- Breakout Group Discussion; and
- Facilitation Tips

Each small group table will have:

- A sheet with plan views of existing conditions, general plan concept and Complete Streets Concept;
- A sheet with section views of existing conditions and proposed sections for the two-lane segment (Railroad Ave to E. Main Street), four-lane segment (E. Main Street to the interchange) and the Russell Blvd./County Road 32 segment;
- Flip chart pad with easel and markers for recording any notes not on the plans or sections.

Facilitators include:

- Lou, Paul, Mukul and José from MIG
- Nellie from the City
- Alyssa from Caltrans

The remaining staff (Dawn, Nick, Bruce, Art, Rebecca) will float and be available as technical resources as needed.

We will meet at City Hall at 4:45 on Thursday, May 6, for a facilitator briefing before heading over to the Community Center at 5:30.

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION

Introductions and Group Task (2 minutes)

The facilitator should **introduce** him/herself and emphasize that we are **objective** facilitators charged with moderating a productive discussion.

“As Lou indicated, our task as a group is to review and discuss the Complete Streets Concept Plan for SR 128/ Grant Avenue & Russell Blvd/Yolo County Rd 32. We’d like to report out on our group’s overall support for the Plan, as well as ideas for further refinement.”

“The outcome of our work will help identify community preferences and priorities, which will be considered along with technical and funding criteria to develop potential improvement strategies.”

“We are going to be using the comment card as our guide for discussion. Please use the card to write down your ideas tonight or after the meeting in order for us to capture your thoughts.”

Inform the group that you will need a volunteer at the conclusion of the exercise to share overall findings of the discussion at your table to the larger group.

Providing an Overview (5 minutes)

Using the base map, walk through the corridor. Refer to the north and south sides of the street between each intersection, identifying current uses and landmarks, and note the intersections. Allow locals to assist if they like, but move through the project area quickly enough to allow time for a meaningful discussion on improvements.

Facilitating the Discussion (50 mins)

Go around the table and do a round of introductions and ask participants to say their name and whether they live or work in the area or both. Then proceed through the following questions. Take notes directly on the map or sections as appropriate.

Point out that the next two questions ask about positives and negatives of the corridor; perhaps they will want to identify some of each on their card, or bring them into the discussion questions that follow. In the interest of time, we are going to jump ahead to the question on the back of the comment sheet.

- **What do you like about the Complete Streets concept for SR 128/Grant Avenue & Russell Blvd/ Yolo County Rd 32? (10 minutes)**

This is an ice-breaker; prompt for big ideas such as “gateway to the City”, “pedestrian-friendly”, “calmer traffic”, etc.

- **Based on tonight’s presentation, what opportunities do you see for improving the Complete Streets Concept for SR 128/ Grant & Russell Blvd/ Yolo County Rd 32? Where? (40)**

Start with the western portion of the study area (Railroad Avenue to East Main Street) and review the plan and sections that illustrate the proposed improvements. Ask everyone to indicate on the comment sheet their overall level of support for the improvements to enhance access, mobility and safety for that segment. Then move to the second segment (East Main Street to the western edge of the I-505 interchange). Finally, move to the segment from East Main Street to Railroad Avenue. Ask for level of support as indicated on the card.

If conversation slows, potential topics to discuss include:

- Number of Travel Lanes
- Bike Lanes
- Sidewalks
- Roundabout Locations
- Landscaping
- Gateway Signage
- Lighting

Closing the Discussion (3 minutes)

Select a volunteer to “report out” on the key findings of the group discussion.

Thank the group for their participation and assure them that all of the notes and comment sheets will be summarized in a report of findings from this event. At the “bell”, invite them to attend to the front of the room for the brief summary.

The facilitator should make sure the the comment sheets are collected in a stack, and the map and any flip chart notes are clearly labeled with table number and facilitator’s name.

Thank you very much!

FACILITATION TIPS

Here are a few key principles for facilitating small group discussions:

- **Manage the discussion.** Encourage participants to raise their hands and be recognized before speaking.
- **Recognize speakers who raise their hands.** Be sure to call on each person in turn – acknowledge that you see the next speaker and remember to call on him/her next.
- **Keep the discussion balanced.** If one person begins to dominate the discussion, call on someone else and note that you want to be sure to hear from as many people as possible. (*Let's hear from someone who hasn't had a chance to speak yet.*).
- **Have a good attitude.** Maintain a positive, energetic attitude throughout the session – regardless of the comments made. Try to stay focused and concentrate for the entire small group discussion period.
- **Be aware of your body language.** You want to communicate interest and enthusiasm and maintain control of the discussion.
- **Try to focus comments into the discussion item you are working on.** As many of you know, this is not always an easy task. If someone is not responding to the question directly, help them re-focus their idea into a statement which is relevant to the discussion.
- **Remain objective.** Try not to take a position on a particular issue, react to a participant's statement, or steer the group to a certain conclusion. Your job is to **manage** the discussion and help participants articulate their viewpoints.
- **Manage the discussion and answer questions to the extent you can.** Remember that you are not expected to provide detailed answers to participants' questions. Attempt to turn questions into statements. Questions which really do need answers should be addressed to one of the roving experts.
- **Don't let arguments begin.** If someone adamantly disagrees with another participant's comment, be sure to record the differing opinion. Don't allow bickering – be fair but firm (*Okay, I think it's clear you two disagree. We have both sets of comments on the flipchart; let's give someone else a chance to speak*). If the group is split on a particular issue, it is important that this information is recorded.

- **Handling conflict.** These are difficult issues and conflict may pop up during the discussion – remember that you don’t need to resolve this conflict (*I understand that you don’t agree with the approach to this particular issue, but if I could ask you to address the question we’ve posed here, I’d appreciate it. Be sure to write down your concerns on the comment sheet and we’ll be sure to pass it on to the appropriate staff person.*

DIFFICULT PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS

This section describes approaches for handling difficult people and situations that may arise during the small group discussion.

Difficult People

When an individual group member’s behavior and comments begin to directly impact the overall group’s productivity and participation, the facilitator should:

- Not become alarmed too early;
- Reduce or eliminate undesirable behavior without scolding or embarrassing the person;
- Let the group’s informal leaders tactfully intervene; and
- Encourage other participants to contribute.

Below are some helpful phrases to use when confronted with a difficult participant:

Dominating Person: “Someone else wants to say something, so let’s move on.”...”Let’s hear from (name) now.”...”Looks like you have a lot of ideas. Please just give me one for now and we’ll come back to you later.”

Quiet Person: “Do you have anything you’d like to add?”...”Are there any particular points that are important to you?”

Disagreeing People: “Sounds like we have two views on this. Let’s hold these thoughts and move onto (name) for a different point.”...”We’re here to get everyone’s ideas. If we have time, we’ll come back to (issue). In the meantime, (recorder’s name) will make a note that this point is in dispute.”

Difficult Situations

Sometimes, difficult situations arise during small group discussions. Below are some hints to consider in tackling specific situations.

Lack of Interest and Motivation

- Be enthusiastic and upbeat;
- Explain why the project and their participation is important;
- Stimulate discussion; and
- Relate issues to participants' lives.

Touchy Subjects and Obvious Conflicts

- Anticipate and understand sensitive issues and the basis of potential conflicts;
- Remain neutral and be honest and direct (no smoothing);
- Encourage exploration of common ground and win/win solutions;
- Focus conflicts around ideas, not personalities; and
- Know when to take a break or move on.

Superficial Discussions

- Probe opinions;
- Do not permit oversimplifications;
- Cite cases and facts; and
- Invite participation of most knowledgeable participants.