



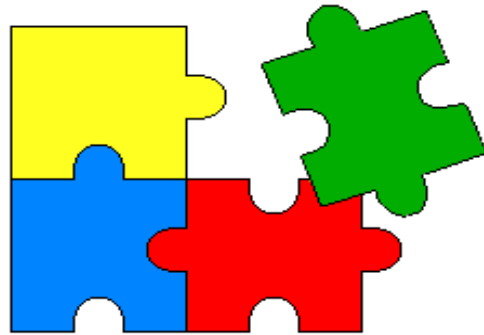
# ***Responding to Contested Views and Values in Public Engagement Processes***

***Offered by  
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ILG Public Engagement Program***



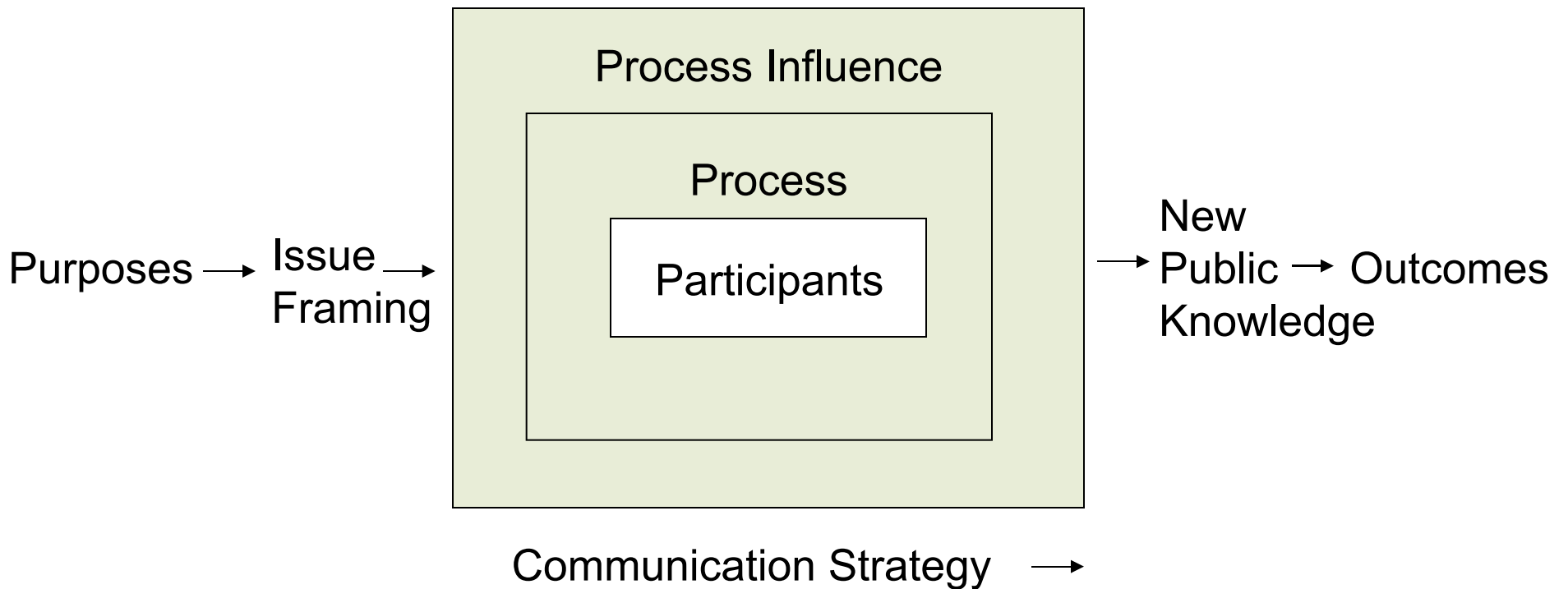
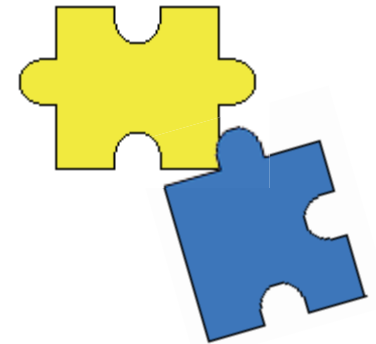
## ILG Mission

- Promoting good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials

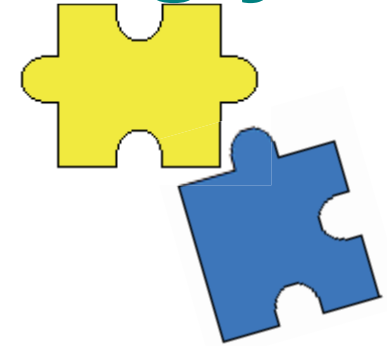


**Purpose: To develop your capacity to design and implement public engagement processes with the greatest chance of success when there are strongly contested views and values.**

# Public Engagement Flow Chart



# Participants May Have Strongly Held Views About:



- The topics to be discussed
- The local (or regional) agency and officials involved and/or
- The planning and/or public engagement process(es)

# Think About Your Likely Participants



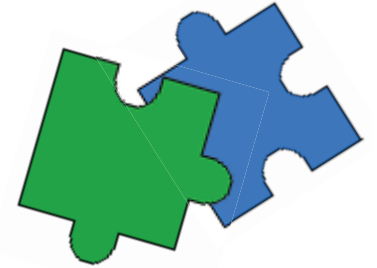
- What are possible individual and/or group concerns and interests?
- How may they view an opportunity for public engagement?
- Are there assumptions/gaps in information?
- What are their past experiences in other settings?

# Plan, Prepare, and Provide Information



- Offer opportunities for early process input and co-sponsorship
- Strive for speakers and participants to reflect diverse population & viewpoints
- Ensure sponsor and facilitator clarity about meeting process & strategy
- Plan for/prepare impartial mtg. facilitators
- “Watch your language”
- Prepare for “What if...”

# Design an Appropriate Process



- Design in flexibility (have a “plan B”)
- Provide info & opportunities for learning
- Acknowledge underlying “policy” history, assumptions, restrictions on actions
- Meet reasonable process needs/interests of those likely to attend (time for questions)
- Consider processes that seek common ground – but allow adequate time
- Focus on a do-able work



# Manage Public Engagement Meetings Transparently



- Describe meeting goals, process, documentation, and what happens next
- Seek agreement on meeting ground rules (or “courtesy guidelines”)
- Clarify how questions and/or comments will be handled – and comments documented
- Allow “none of the above” responses
- Show respect, impartiality & good listening

# Responding to Negative, Challenging or Emotionally Presented Comments



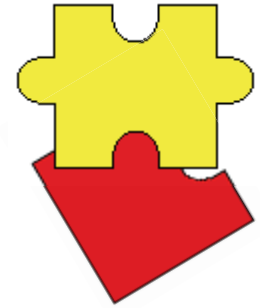
- Remain calm and actively listen
- Identify and respond to the substance of the comment rather than to its tone
- Keep in mind *ALDDD* (Acknowledge, Legitimate, Defer, Delegate or Deal)
- Ask for more explanation (as appropriate)
- Intervene if personal verbal attacks are made

# Responding to Negative, Challenging or Emotionally Presented Comments (cont.)



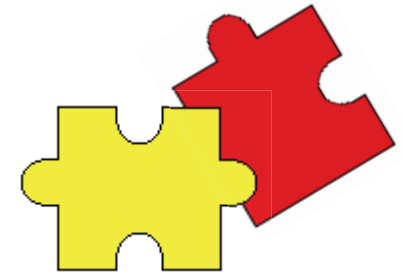
- If appropriate, ask the group for guidance
- Suggest a short break, and, as appropriate, speak to an individual about his or her inappropriate language or interactions
- Be aware that people who do not feel heard are likely to speak loudest

# Take Steps if Participant Behavior is Disruptive



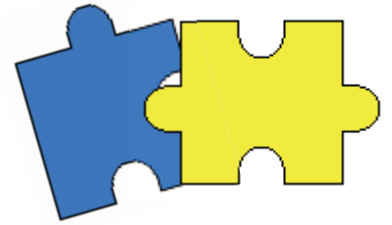
- Review and enforce meeting ground rules
- Maintain control of the microphone
- Ask group whether they wish to continue -or move to another format or process
- Move to “back-up” meeting process
- Ask disorderly participants to leave
- State next steps; conclude the meeting

# Keys to Consider



- Learn from others
- Think about your likely participants
- Ensure clarity among sponsors/facilitator
- Inform and include
- Practice transparency
- Fit the process to the folks\*
- Prepare for “what if...”

# Resources



- See *Agenda 21: Myths and Facts* from the American Planning Association ([www.smartvalleyplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/Agenda21mythsfacts.pdf](http://www.smartvalleyplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/Agenda21mythsfacts.pdf))
- See *The Delphi Technique: Let's Stop Being Manipulated* This document, written from a conservative activist perspective, explains how some view public input processes (<http://www.vlrc.org/articles/110.html>)
- See *The Deniers* from the CA Governor's Office of Planning and Research ([www.opr.ca.gov/s\\_denier.php](http://www.opr.ca.gov/s_denier.php))
- See *Dealing with Deeply Held Concerns and Other Challenges to Public Engagement Processes* (<http://www.ca-ilg.org/DeeplyHeldConcerns>)

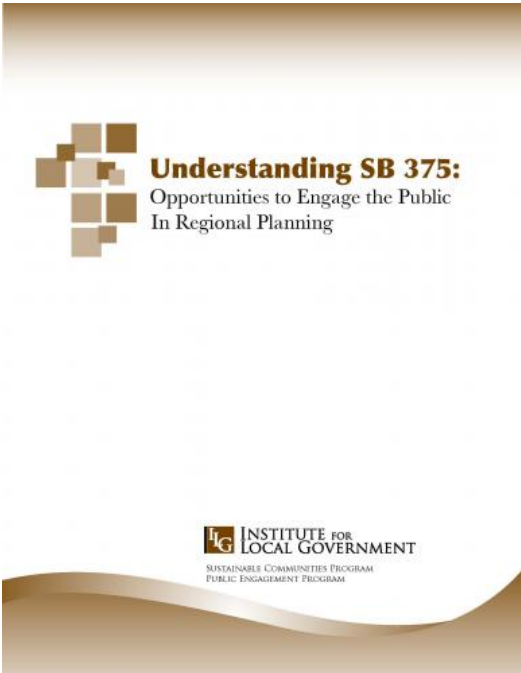
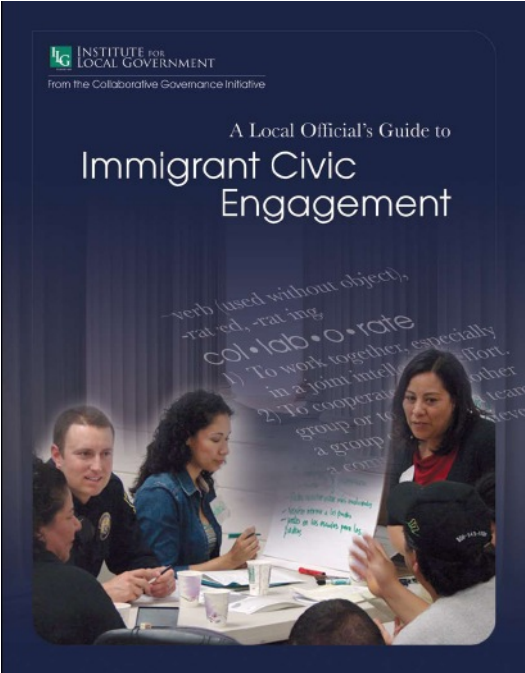
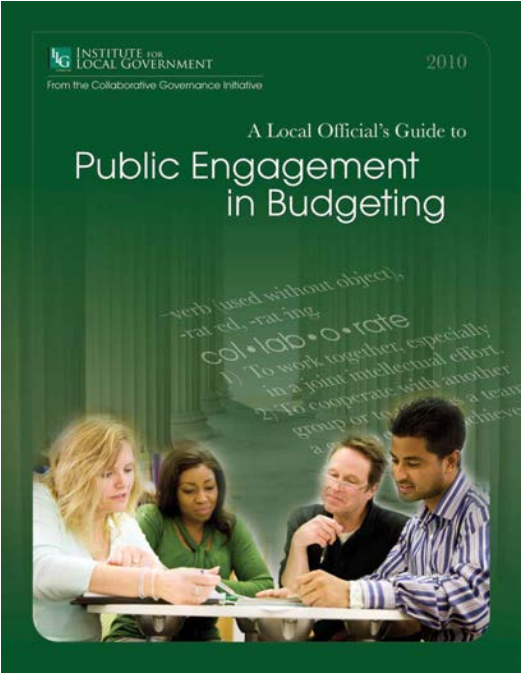
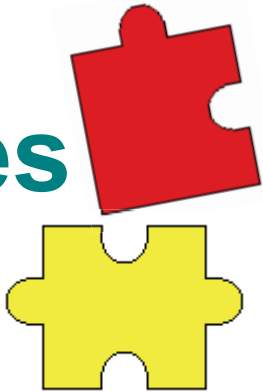
# Resources (cont.)



- Search online for *Agenda 21 + Planning* for perspectives on Agenda 21, planning, sustainability, etc.
- See a video containing excerpts from a San Francisco Bay Area Plan meeting with commentary describing how the presenters' actions were interpreted to be exercises in manipulation towards a pre-determined agenda (<http://goldcountrypatriots.com/2012/01/16/video-exposing-the-delphi-technique-in-public-meetings/>)
- See *Why Planners Need to Take Agenda 21 Criticism More Seriously* (<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/02/why-planners-need-to-take-agenda-21-criticism-more-seriously/1159/>)
- See [www.ca-ilg.org/inclusiveengagement](http://www.ca-ilg.org/inclusiveengagement)
- See [www.ca-ilg.org/PEbasics](http://www.ca-ilg.org/PEbasics)

# Public Engagement Resources

(available through  
[www.ca-ilg.org/publicengagement](http://www.ca-ilg.org/publicengagement))





# Questions or Comments?

