Capitol Hill Champion

Seattle
$25,000
Dec 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

Objectives

• Broaden outreach and communication with the Capitol Hill community around the design and development of the properties on the new Sound Transit Capitol Hill station and ensure development proposals meet neighborhood goals for affordable housing. Emphasize outreach to underrepresented populations, especially renters, students, and small businesses.
• Cultivate and sustain expanded leadership for the Capitol Hill Champion.

Grantee Background

The Capitol Hill Champion, a joint project of the Capitol Hill Community Council and the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, advocates for the incorporation of community goals in the redevelopment on top of Sound Transit’s Link Light Rail Capitol Hill Station, including affordable housing, a permanent home for the Capitol Hill Farmers Market, cultural and community space, and pedestrian- and transit-friendly design.

Project Overview

Capitol Hill Champion (CHC) focused on outreach and communication by creating and implementing a broad Outreach Plan that targeted multiple stakeholders and included a website and social media strategies, posters/flyers, local media, farmer’s market tabling, and CHC updates at monthly community meetings (East District Council & Capitol Hill Community Council). CHC sought to publicize and communicate broadly with stakeholders around the public process for Sound Transit’s TOD site, as well as identify public activities for participation. For example, when the Seattle City Council was set to vote on a Development Agreement that would implement some of the neighborhood vision, CHC informed and invited the community to attend and/or submit comments via social media, focused flyering/invitations, tabling at the Broadway Farmer’s Market, and announcements at community meetings. Local media (Capitol Hill Times and CHS Blog) did write-ups on the votes as well. Community members and attended one or more of the votes, with community members “standing up with us to be counted” during the final Sound Transit vote. When the proposal was approved, CHC invited the community to attend a special presentation and report back with cupcakes at the Capitol Hill Community Council meeting in May. This was also a chance for the Champion to engage new faces, neighbors and local officials, as the CHCC meeting was also an important meeting about safety issues so attendance was high and diverse.

Champion staff created a list of volunteers, past participants, and interested community members who were identified through outreach and partnerships with neighborhood organizations, in the hopes of identifying new Steering Committee members and community leaders. To build the organizational capacity and redefine the role of the CHC, five new Steering Committee members were brought on, and several sub-groups were formed to address specific projects such as the RFP process, Festival Street Design, and the retail piece of the RFP process. CHC also created an online survey to better understand who they are reaching and gauge which areas of advocacy the community is most invested in. 250 responses were received in the first few weeks and the final results will be presented on the website.
“The final approval of the Development Agreement marks a huge milestone for the Capitol Hill Champion.”

Outcomes

- Seattle's City Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed Development Agreement that will implement some of the neighborhood vision for the station area. The Agreement was eventually approved by Sound Transit Board.
- Restructured the CHC Steering Committee and brought on 4 new members, bringing new energy and more diverse set of interests as enter next phase of process and advocacy.
- Created a website and 500 person listserve, social media presence, and critical visual tools to effectively communicate with multiple stakeholders.

Lessons Learned

- A range of outreach strategies were necessary to engage such a diverse set of stakeholders, including low income renters, seniors, people with disabilities, students and faculty, small business and service workers. Particular outreach strategies proved more successful with certain audiences, for example, direct outreach and tabling at farmers markets was effective with students and seniors, and social media has been effective to get information out to much of the community.
- Capitol Hill has a large young adult and transient population that is hard to organize for a long-term process and CHC will be expanding its efforts to reach SCCC students and low income renters who live closest to the Broadway station site.
- Visual tools can be very effective means of communication, particularly for a process that has been underway now for several years, e.g. Accomplishments and Advocacy To Do List graphic.
- Sound Transit’s timeline is a moving target making it hard to align CHC’s work. A focus on exploring outreach strategies, leadership development, and working with stakeholders on a community vision to inform the developer RFQ has prepared CHC to be a strong player in this process.
- A “community advisors” committee was planned to represent different neighborhood perspectives but instead the steering committee was restructured to bring on more diverse interests and will provide a more sustainble leadership structure. Flexibility to respond as things develop is essential.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Experiment with targeted outreach strategies and learn what works in particular communities. Have a way to evaluate effectiveness (such as the community report back meeting), and a range of ways to get involved. In this project, CHC found that seniors are more likely to attend meetings and hearings, while students and other stakeholders would rather participate in less direct activities such as online written comments, surveys and polls. Targeting these groups on the level they’re most likely to engage at is recommended for future projects.
- Recent elections and staff changes has meant CHC will need to invest in new relationships and alliances for the community moving forward. Any way that electeds, city staff, and agencies such as Sound Transit can facilitate this process would be helpful to build on the investments community groups such as CHC have already made in building these relationships.
Objectives

- Create a diverse Rainier Valley Neighborhood Bike Group that will engage the local community as well as local government around creating safe routes for bicyclists with a particular focus on access to transit.
- Increase the number of people who choose to ride their bicycles to the light rail.

Grantee Background

Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundations’ mission is to create a better community through bicycling. Through education, advocacy, and outreach, CBCEF gets more people bicycling, promotes a more bicycling-friendly environment, improve bicyclists’ safety, and help create more livable communities.

http://www.cascade.org

Project Overview

Cascade Bicycle Club Education Foundation (CBCEF) partnered with Bike Works, a community bike shop working to build sustainable communities by educating youth and promoting bicycling, and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, a volunteer coalition advocating for safe, equitable, comfortable streets. Together, the three groups helped form and develop Rainier Valley and Columbia City bike groups, which met routinely to discuss safe routes to light rail stations in Southeast Seattle.

CBCEF sent Bicycle Ambassadors and outreach staff to 20 events in Rainier Valley, such as farmer’s markets, Bicycle Sundays, mobile “Energizer Stations” along popular bike routes, and three community events. Outreach strategies included a helmet giveaway, brochures on basic bike safety in Spanish and Amharic, and talking with people at various events about riding their bikes to the light rail stations. Midway through this process, CBCEF organized a cultural competency training for all of their Bicycle Ambassadors, to better equip them to engage with multicultural community members.

Initially, these outreach efforts appeared to be reaching mostly the organization’s core audiences--neighborhood advocates, bicycle-enthusiasts, etc. CBCEF staff searched for more community events that would connect with a broader set of stakeholders, and focused later outreach efforts on the results of that search. While the process seemed slow and at times frustrating, the conversation on how to reach new audiences pushed CBCEF into new territory for the organization, and they are working to integrate cultural competency more fully in future programs.

Additionally, outreach staff conducted initial and follow-up bike counts in the morning at four light rail stations in Southeast Seattle, and found that the follow-up count showed an increase in bikes counted per station and total bikes counted.
“We need to do a lot of listening before we begin programs. If we listen first, then we can set out to take feedback and implement more effectively.”

Outcomes

- Bike counts showed an increase in ridership from one year to the next over the grant period.
- A Rainier Valley Bike Group has been established and outreach continues to diversify participation and ensure broad input.

Lessons Learned

- Appealing to residents about personal safety (specifically the benefits of having lively neighborhood streets) resulted in more interest than discussing convenience or destinations.
- Partnering with organizations that have a more established presence in the community can help an organization with a less established reputation.
- In an effort to bolster participation, CBCEF asked community contacts what they wanted from them and reported back to the emerging bike group. Through these conversations, they learned that community contacts wanted more details about why attending infrastructure planning meetings is important so that they can pass that information on to the communities they serve.
- CBCEF is now considering hiring a Spanish-speaking staff member, as the need for translation and potential benefit of reaching Spanish-speaking populations more directly became obvious. Cultural competency training at the beginning of a project can help an organization develop projects more fully and better meet community needs.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Moving forward, CBCEF intends to continually ask for feedback and incorporate it recognizing these perspectives are essential even if community partners cannot always attend meetings.
- Successful methods of outreach and engagement in this project included making personal phone calls and scheduling meetings as things progressed, rather than having a regularly scheduled meeting.
- Start the conversation with communities early. Organizations need to listen first to internalize feedback and create programs that reflect real community needs.
Community Network Council

South King County
$15,000
Dec 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

Objectives

• To build community capacity in the West Hill of Kent and the City of Des Moines and develop community leaders who will advocate for equitable transit oriented development in their community.
• Build local stakeholder capacity in understanding TOD issues and ability to advocate.

Grantee Background

Community Network Council (CNC) is a group of community organizations and volunteers working cooperatively to connect youth with resources that will help them become successful. The goal of the Community Network Council is to increase trust, safety, cooperation, and positive parenting in the community for both children and parents. We will help to implement these benefits by sponsoring different programs to bring the community, families, and organizations together, for the purpose of identifying ways we can all help each other.

http://wacnc.org

Project Overview

CNC focused on community outreach and capacity building in the Midway area along the south corridor. CNC developed surveys for resident and business outreach and identified Data Collectors from the neighborhood to administer the surveys. Before the Data Collectors began their door-to-door outreach, they received information about the upcoming light rail development so they were able to relay information to survey participants. CNC also provided postcards with a link to an online version of the survey, information about the potential light rail development, and a “Save the Date” for CNC’s community forum in September. Data Collectors passed out 400 of these postcards.

CNC organized a Community Transportation Forum to report back survey results and raise awareness about transportation issues in the area. Sound Transit gave a presentation on the upcoming planning process, HomeSight (a peer grantee and member of the Equity Steering Committee) shared lessons learned from their experience in South Seattle, and Forterra provided an overview of GTC strategies and led some small group activities. The result of the forum was an increased awareness for participants of the light rail extension and beginning engagement in conversations about TOD and what this might mean for their communities. In addition to outreach conducted as part of the survey, CNC used social media, and passed out flyers at community events, local businesses, community colleges, and bus stops. CNC also reached out to the Neighborhood Council in Des Moines, schools, and local service providers.

Following up from the forum, CNC produced a newsletter with information about the Federal Way Transit Extension Project and ways to be involved in the planning process (http://wacnc.org/docs/Fall%20Newsletter.pdf). CNC also published information in the Kent Reporter and conducted in-person outreach at various events. They organized a leadership training for emerging community leaders, to better equip them to engage in TOD and planning discussions. CNC also participated in the Equity Summit.
"The light rail station and resulting development will heavily shape Midway for years to come and we want to be sure our community is part of this process and benefits from these changes."

Outcomes

- CNC surveyed 183 Midway residents and 61 business owners along Pacific Highway South about their needs, concerns, and priorities regarding upcoming transit development and used the surveys as an outreach and organizing tool.
- 37 residents from Kent and Des Moines attended the Community Transportation Forum and 7 community leaders participated in an advocacy training workshop.
- Engagement of Midway area residents in Network activities, including the Equity Summit and South King convening, and peer sharing to inform community organizing activities.

Lessons Learned

- Outreach for attendance at meetings and events focused on future light rail development was challenging. Exploring how to emphasize priority issues of concern to residents (including neighborhood safety, access to jobs and education), and connect that to the transit planning as possible, will be important for continued and sustained engagement.
- Capacity is a challenge for grassroots organizations, especially those that are volunteer led such as CNC, but access to some resources allowed the organization to do some initial organizing work and participate in some Network activities which would have been impossible otherwise.

Recommendations and Next Steps

CNC summarized some key recommendations that emerged through the survey and the forum. These include:

- Establish a diverse mix of zoning (residential, retail, and community spaces);
- Establish housing for a variety of family sizes with an emphasis on affordable housing options;
- Minimize the negative impacts of construction including traffic, loss of business, and displacement;
- Ensure additional police presence throughout the community and at stations;
- Invest in family-oriented community spaces and safe gathering places for youth (playgrounds, community centers, libraries, etc);
- Invest in education, healthcare, childcare, and government services; invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements;
- Provide multiple access modes to the light rail station through walking paths, biking lanes, and parking;
- Provide labor jobs during construction for local workers.
Centro Latino/Cross Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County

Objectives

- Initiate a conversation between transportation policy makers and planners and the Cross-Cultural Collaborative including six identified populations.
- Research (through key stakeholder interviews and focus groups) how transportation issues affect the health of our communities, barriers to using light rail, and solutions that are culturally-appropriate and inclusive.
- Engage 100 community members in guided community forums with policy makers and planners, creating an understanding by both parties of how the built environment affects health.

Grantee Background

The mission of the Cross Cultural Collaborative of Pierce County (CCCPC) is to serve, protect, and celebrate diverse populations. CCCPC capitalizes on community assets through leadership and collaboration to promote systematic change that will increase access, availability, and culturally-appropriate health care for all.

www.crossculturalcollaborative.org

Project Overview

The Collaborative invited local planners, transit agency representatives and Regional Equity Network representatives to Collaborative meetings with the goal of “two way education.” Collaborative members learned about sustainability, transit-oriented development, and planning for the regional light rail corridor—Tacoma downtown, Brewery district and MLK neighborhoods. Planners, transportation experts, and policy makers learned more about concepts and local realities of social equity and justice and our members’ views of transportation issues affect on them and their communities. Discussions included ways to engage individual and community voices in planning and policy development processes. Individuals represented low-income, Native American, African-American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQ populations.

The Collaborative then interviewed 24 stakeholders to establish questions for use in the focus groups, and conducted ten focus groups with the six priority populations. University of Washington nursing students volunteered their time as part of a project for their coursework and assisted in conducting and compiling the data. Focus groups included community members, community-based organization representatives, university students, business members, policy makers, and executive directors of the agencies that work with the Collaborative.

Finally, the Collaborative engaged the priority communities in forums where policy makers heard their voices on transportation issues. The forums included discussion about the intersections of transit/health/built environment, mixed use centers, economic development, education, housing and other social determinants of health.
“We are asking the community to rehearse their injustices but not doing anything to fix them. We must earn the community’s trust.”

**Outcomes**

- 24 stakeholders were interviewed and nine focus groups were conducted.
- 12 CCC meetings were attended by policy-makers and planners for joint learning and sharing discussions.
- Cross Cultural Collaborative members together attended 33 transportation planning meetings.
- 24 facilitators from CCC’s target communities were trained to facilitate the focus groups.

**Lessons Learned**

- Technical information compiled from the focus group data needs to be interpreted for the general public for use in future settings.
- Authentic community engagement is a complex endeavor. Due to language, concepts and terms often don’t translate.
- Community members trained as facilitators may need further support.
- Focus groups give attitudes and opinions, but not actions and change.

**Recommendations**

Partner with trusted organizations. Community trust is more easily built on established relationships.

Planners should go to where the people are. Those in the position to influence policy and make decisions should meet the community on their terms to give them full opportunity to be heard.

Prioritize meetings and events for those unfamiliar with the process. There are an overwhelming number of opportunities to be involved, once a community shows capacity to do so—but burnout can only be avoided if those with more experience help prioritize the most important/relevant events.
Objectives

- Create an African Business Association of the Puget Sound (ABAPS).
- Create and analyze survey that will gauge the African business community’s awareness, opinions, and concerns regarding transit corridor policies.
- Organize and host open forums for ABAPS members to engage with public officials.

Grantee Background

East African Community Services (EACS) works to develop and strengthen the capacity of East Africans living in King County. EACS provides culturally-specific advocacy, information, referral, and direct social services to a variety of East African refugee and immigrant populations.

http://www.eastafricancs.org

Project Overview

EACS reached out to local African business owners and created the African Business Association of the Puget Sound (ABAPS), including a leadership panel. The panel and other local leaders helped create a community survey to assess the awareness, needs, and concerns of African business owners near the transit corridor. The results showed that many African business owners shared a few areas of concern—lack of business skills, language barriers to resources, and the need for interest-free loans in accordance with Islamic tradition. African business owners’ opinions of the light rail averaged 2.67 out of 3, meaning “above neutral,” although only 8% reported using (or their employees using) the light rail. An MOI was composed for use in future meetings based on these results.

EACS also used data from the surveys to determine which businesses were not identified on Google Maps, and created profile pages for these businesses to increase their visibility.

EACS organized two open forums where the business owners met with their local policy-makers to discuss their needs—one in Tukwila, and one in Seattle. Business owners got a chance to see officials working with them on permits and zoning and talking to them about their needs in a non-threatening environment. The forum in Tukwila was well attended, although the timing of the Seattle forum conflicted with other events, resulting in lower attendance.
“ABAPS hosts meetings at which local African business owners gather to learn about available resources, share their concerns, discuss their needs, and strategize about what is needed to develop their business community.”

Outcomes
- 100 surveys were completed by African business owners.
- Two open forums were held, connecting business owners to policy-makers.
- Local African businesses were added to Google Maps.

Lessons Learned
- Timing trainings and events is very difficult, as most refugee and immigrant business owners cannot leave their businesses to attend events.
- Poor attendance at trainings and forums resulted in agency representation of the community, rather than individual representation.
- Business trainings will be most effective if delivered one-on-one at the convenience of the business owner.

Recommendations
A full-time permanent position or agency with the role of organizing and training business owners individually could help East African refugees and immigrants tap into their potential, decreasing their risk for displacement.

Encourage/facilitate Islamic banking practices (interest-free loans).

Translate resources into a variety of African languages.

Create a realistic and detailed timeline at the beginning of the project, as this could help keep a project on track and resolve timing issues earlier in the process.
Objectives

- Enhance community understanding of and engagement in the East Link light rail corridor planning process through hosting a Transit Communities Exchange Forum.
- Build capacity in low-income and minority communities to advocate for equitable transit development through a series of Neighborhood Conversation Cafes.

Grantee Background

EERC is a consortium of public and non-profit agencies including human services, local governments, transportation providers, and citizen advocates. EERC’s mission is to identify and initiate coordinated, creative, and sustainable ways to assist transportation disadvantaged individuals in East King County attain a better quality of life by increasing their transportation options.

Project Overview

EERC hosted a Transit Communities Exchange Forum, targeting stakeholders and organizations representing low-income and/or minority communities with the purpose of engaging and educating on the planning process for the East Link light rail. EERC formed a team of agencies to help host and staff the forum and later the Neighborhood Conversation Cafes. Attendees represented local governments, non-profit agencies, advocacy groups, and private businesses—and all 35 attendees were able to increase their understanding of transportation planning fundamentals and best practices for promoting equitable development. Themes emerged, including community-driven impacts to transportation policy change, using an equitable lens to promote sustainability and social justice, developing impactful strategies reflecting community vision, and developing action strategies to guide local transportation investments.

EERC also co-hosted five Neighborhood Conversation Cafes (NCCs) with other agencies on the team. The goals of these events were to share community needs, values, and vision, and to learn about equitable transit communities and how to influence the planning process. The NCCs took place at community centers, libraries, and other relevant community spaces, and were attended by a total of 64 individuals, including low-income workers, older adults, youth, immigrants, refugees, and persons with disabilities. The feedback from the events was very positive and community members expressed better understanding of the planning process, light rail project, and civic engagement.

EERC distributed/presented the report summarizing the NCC findings to team agencies, the East Corridor Task Force, City of Redmond Human Services Commission, City of Mercer Island Youth and Family Services Board, and the City of Bellevue Transportation Commission. The presentations were well-received and presented more opportunities for engagement on varying levels.
Residents of minority and low-income communities are eager to share their opinions and suggestions in order to inform and influence public policy. However, more education on how to get involved in public affairs needs to be done.

Outcomes

- 64 individuals attended five Neighborhood Conversation Cafes.
- 77% of respondents evaluating the Neighborhood Conversation Cafes reported feeling extremely knowledgeable about the planning process.
- More than 90% of respondents were interested in participating in future community engagement activities.
- Transit Communities Exchange Forum Post Event Summary Report (www.impactcapital.org/equity) documented the participating agencies’ involvement and ensuing discussions, which can be built upon for future work.
- The Neighborhood Conversation Cafes Summary Report was (and can continue to be) used in presentations to city officials and other professionals or community members to show methods for communicating planning process information to the community, barriers to civic engagement cited by participants, future community needs, and recommendations.

Lessons Learned

- Staff changes affected the project’s continuity and completion. A planned Outreach Subcommittee was not formed due to changes in staff.
- Low-income participants and participants of color identified many barriers they face to becoming engaged in civic affairs. These barriers require dedicated outreach to overcome.
- Collaboration is key. Engage partnerships with groups who work in the community. This also somewhat ameliorates the weakening of relationships caused by staff changes.

Recommendations

Document key takeaways as they occur during grant projects to ensure they are recorded.

Publish public meeting notifications in community newsletters (including non-English publications) and announce on radio.

Make public notices available in alternative languages upon request.

Occasionally hold public meetings outside of City Hall, such as at elementary schools, libraries, and other facilities located near bus lines and residences.

Schedule public meetings at alternating times to allow participants who cannot attend due to recurring schedule conflicts a chance to get involved.

Encourage community members to attend planning meetings by providing educational materials on the planning process and showing examples of how public input has influenced past decisions.
El Centro de la Raza

South King County

$15,000

June 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

Objectives

- Build the capacity of the Rainbow Haven community in Tukwila to advocate on behalf of themselves in regards to transit-oriented development.
- Gather Latino community input on El Centro de la Raza’s Plaza Roberto Maestas community inspired transit-oriented development.

Grantee Background

El Centro de la Raza is a voice and a hub for Seattle and Martin Luther King, Jr. County’s Latino community, advocating on behalf of Latino people and working to achieve social justice. Through comprehensive programs and services, El Centro empowers members of the Latino community as fully participating members of society, while also working to raise awareness with the general public, and government, business and civic leaders about the needs of the Chicano/Latino community.

http://www.elcentrodelaraza.com/

Project Overview

El Centro de la Raza recognized the importance of working with a specific Latino community—the Rainbow Haven Trailer Park—before redevelopment of the land forced a united community to disperse and find housing elsewhere. El Centro helped support the formation of the Rainbow Haven Leadership Council, worked with key community leaders to build their capacity, and supported the leadership council to establish some organizational structure, including documentation of meetings and solutions-oriented discussion. El Centro helped organize community meetings to discuss topics such as a city strategic planning processes, legal rights as tenants, property issues, safety, affordable housing, etc.

Rainbow Haven community leaders organized a meeting with City of Tukwila representatives from the Mayor’s Office, Economic Development, Police, and Planning to discuss the neighborhood redevelopment plan, code enforcement, community safety, and to provide feedback on improving the area (safety, lighting, etc). The response and communication by city representatives was appreciated. About 15 community members met with the state’s Attorney General’s Office – Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program. They have since utilized the process to address issues related to leases, utilities, safety and cleanliness around the mobile home park, and responsiveness of the park owner.

El Centro helped organize the participation of Rainbow Haven community representatives in discussions with the Seattle mayor and other community leaders on the importance of a Target Local Hire policy. El Centro coordinated the participation of community members in the 2013 Latino Legislative Day to effectively advocate for their needs. They also prepared and organized community members to participate in the Puget Sound Equity Summit and Francisco Calderon, a community leader, co-led a workshop on housing strategies to mitigate displacement. Rainbow Haven Community members provided input on El Centro’s planned housing development, giving feedback on design, rent structure, and plans. Their voices helped shape the plans for the housing development, bolstering the potential for the development to truly meet community needs.
"Police need to know individuals who live here. We are hard-working folks who want what everyone wants."

Outcomes

- Established a Rainbow Haven Leadership Council and some organizational structure to better advocate for community priorities.
- Built relationships with key city departments and established Rainbow Haven as a formal neighborhood association and point of contact for community issues.
- Successfully utilized the mobile home dispute resolution process to improve conditions.
- The designs for Plaza Roberto Maestas reflect input and ideas from future residents.

Lessons Learned

- This project relied heavily on both the existing leadership of Rainbow Haven, which faced many challenges but was somewhat organized and insightful before beginning the project, and the established trust between El Centro and the Rainbow Haven community, many of whom had accessed services from El Centro. Had this relationship not been in place, the project likely would not have progressed as far as it did in this short period.
- The City of Tukwila has been very responsive to the community’s outreach efforts and invested in relationship building activities (attending annual night out activities, etc) that have been effective in building more trust and communication with community members.
- Experiencing an early success from organizing as a community (using the dispute resolution program to get the park owner to address some long-standing issues) has built confidence for community leaders and helped show community members what is possible.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- To truly involve communities in planning, don’t just listen; really engage these communities in the process. Inviting them is often not enough—it is much more beneficial to get out into the community, involve the residents in plans, explain things, and hear them out.
- Communities have been disenfranchised and the structures aren’t yet in place to change that. These processes can’t follow the status quo if they are to truly engage community—to have a more legitimate product, organizations must be more creative in how they engage communities.
- Getting input from potential low-income residents who could actually live in a planned development is valuable and a contrast to the usual neighborhood activists who might attend such meetings. The feedback on the development gave a unique perspective.
- The community is preparing to participate in the comprehensive plan update process for Tukwila and is particularly interested in the housing component.
Friends of Little Saigon/SCIDPDA
Seattle
$20,000
Nov 1, 2011 - May 31, 2013

Objectives

- Build local stakeholder capacity to understand TOD issues and advocate for the community.
- Develop a Little Saigon TOD Core Vision, including framework for a Friends of Little Saigon strategic plan to implement the Core Vision.
- Influence decision-makers to work towards the Core Vision.
- Develop the capacity of the Friends of Little Saigon Board through strategic planning.

Grantee Background

Since 1975, the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority (SCIDPDA) has been a catalyst and lead advocate for community revitalization, with a mission to preserve, promote, and develop the ID as a vibrant community and unique ethnic neighborhood. Programs include real estate development and property management of affordable housing, culturally-responsive senior services, commercial district revitalization, and more.

www.scidpda.org

Project Overview

Through the community outreach and engagement work, Friends of Little Saigon (FLS) formed a leadership committee to address TOD issues. Community gatherings, meetings, and workshops all took place with Little Saigon stakeholders, as well as workshops and trainings on TOD and advocacy, leadership group meetings to discuss issues, community outreach and advocacy work, and the drafting of vision and action plans.

The Little Saigon 2020 Action Plan highlights the need for a Vietnamese cultural, social, and economic hub, and a “Save Little Saigon” Petition, created to gather community support around more investment in the neighborhood from the Seattle Housing Authority and Seattle City Council.

The Little Saigon leadership group met with all 9 City Council members and engaged them in discussions about TOD issues in Little Saigon. City Council approved a City resolution supporting the Little Saigon Landmark proposal. In the resolution, the Council called on all City agencies to work with the community on the proposal and allocated $40,000 toward a feasibility study. In addition, the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) contributed another $100,000 for the feasibility study.

Friends of Little Saigon met with consultants to discuss strategic planning and create an official Board, expanding the capacity and reach of FLS through organizational development.

Key priorities that arose for the Vietnamese community included a cultural center, housing for families and elders, transit connections to other cultural centers, and commercial stabilization (commercial land trust, business assistance, healthcare affordability).
“Holding community gatherings and publishing articles in the local Vietnamese newspapers helped us raise awareness about TOD issues and sparked discussions about how to address the issues affecting the community.”

Outcomes

- FLS Leadership Committee and Board were formed and developed.
- Little Saigon 2020 Action Plan was created.
- At least 9 meetings were held with all City Council members, resulting in varying levels of support.
- Landmark project is currently under feasibility study.

Lessons Learned

- TOD issues may require knowledge that cannot be learned in a few meetings so it was difficult for community members to fully engage.
- Influencing policy takes time and knowledge of the political process—while a few sessions were held on these topics, the group felt they would have needed much more time to effectively cover them.
- Relationships take time and commitment, and FLS only partnered with a few of the many organizations they wished they could. A list of constituency groups was created in the hopes of future coordination.
- The Core Visioning process covered “big picture” ideas which are generally longer-term projects, making it difficult to continually engage the community.
- Understanding and recognizing internal community dynamics can help overcome fragmented or politicized groups.

Recommendations

FLS found that if there is not enough capacity, splitting up meetings so that 1 or 2 representatives can show up at each meeting, instead of gathering the whole group, can help avoid burnout.

When faced with unfamiliar language about policies and development, it is important to focus on the issues that will directly affect and relate to the community.

Even with limited knowledge about the political process, FLS learned that there is power in numbers and personal stories—and these strategies help amplify community voice.

When planning for the future, focusing on the immediate impacts and changes by creating short-term achievable plans can help keep the community engaged.

Reach out and engage the community in visioning/planning before attending planning meetings. The development of an organized board after the community was engaged meant that FLS had a concrete vision and plan to present at meetings.

Reach out to businesses with customized strategies, targeting issues shared by many businesses, and tying support to other outreach efforts.
Futurewise/185th Station Citizen Committee  
North King County  
$15,000  
Dec 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

**Objectives**

- Educate and engage at least half of the households in the 185th and 145th station-areas to build support for increased housing and job opportunities, increased affordable housing options for households making 0-50% AMI, and new neighborhood transportation infrastructure.
- Build a community-based movement for sustainability, development, and equity in Shoreline.

**Grantee Background**

Futurewise is a statewide public interest group working to promote healthy communities and cities while protecting farmland, forests and shorelines today and for future generations. Futurewise’s organizing and advocacy work, public education and legal program, and the technical support provided to local groups have become the foundation of good growth management in Washington.

http://futurewise.org

**Project Overview**

Futurewise began by conducting outreach and education to residents in each station-area. To do this, they began by hiring summer interns, developing canvass materials, training the interns on the materials, and then sending the interns and 185th Station Citizen Committee (SCC) members door-to-door to residences, churches, schools, and senior housing facilities, as well as to a variety of community events. This outreach served several purposes—the interns gave out a survey for residents to complete, flyers advertising future visioning forums were distributed (in English and Chinese), and also the resulting list of contact information was used to invite residents to future meetings and events. Futurewise also completed an Existing Community Conditions Report of the 185th Station Area to help inform citizens about potential opportunities for improvement.

Futurewise then partnered with Senior Services to coordinate visioning meetings. Futurewise also held three public meetings. The first was a public meeting involving Shoreline’s Korean community for the 185th Station Area. The next event was a public event targeted 145th Station Area, and then another public event was held focusing on seniors with modest means.

Futurewise also helped build leadership capacity of the existing 185th SCC by assisting on discussion facilitation, feedback gathering, material production, website production, etc. Futurewise then worked to develop the leadership capacity of 145th Station Area residents by creating a 145th Station Area Committee (14th SCC). Futurewise identified community leaders from Parkwood and Ridgecrest neighborhoods to represent the 145th SCC and provided background information about good transit-oriented—development strategies, Sound Transit’s activities and the City of Shoreline’s activities. Both SCC groups were invited to attend the Rail-Volution National Conference to help educate about national and regional conversations surrounding TOD and equitable development.
“Don’t assume community members have knowledge of the topic or industry jargon, even though they are interested in the topic. Use easily accessible language and communication.”

Outcomes

- Two visioning meetings were held as well as a design workshop.
- 500 residents were reached by interns going door-to-door.
- Three public meetings were held for the Shoreline Korean community in the 185th Station Area, seniors with modest means, and residents in the 145th Station Area.
- 145th Station Citizen Committee was formed.
- Websites were created for both SCCs.
- Local church is now the designated location for monthly meetings of the new 145th SCC.
- Comment letters were submitted to Sound Transit for both SCCs for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- A Transit Oriented Community Workshop was held for the 145th SCC leaders.

Lessons Learned

- Project goals can evolve as the project gets underway. A planned citywide sustainability stakeholder group was determined irrelevant, and instead sustainability efforts were rolled into the priority-setting of each station area planning group.
- It was important to spend adequate time and energy to recruit a dedicated volunteer community leader, as their position is critical.
- Finding consensus on principles rather than detailed points is a good foundation for disparate groups to build trust and commitment. For example, there were strong opposing opinions on the location of the 145th station area, so it helped to find common ground in other areas, such as the need for additional sidewalks and additional services—regardless of the specific station area location.
- Regular communication is important to keep the issue in the forefront of people’s minds and gain momentum.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Include sustainability of the project as an integral part of the planning and include in each meeting agenda.
- Find ways to provide a stipend for the primary citizen group leaders.
- Plan for volunteer attendance at many community-gathering spots, such as farmers markets and festivals.
- Work closely with key stakeholders, such as the city and other community-based organizations to leverage their efforts on the same topic.
Got Green

Seattle

$15,000

June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2013

Objectives

- Increase the number of living wage construction jobs and training/apprentice opportunities available to low income people of color and women on projects developed along the Link Light Rail corridor in Seattle.
- Provide activist/volunteer leaders in the Target Local Hire campaign, supports and training to get skills needed to lead grassroots organizing – expanding Got Green’s capacity and effectiveness.

Grantee Background

Got Green works to ensure that low income people and communities of color in Seattle/King County can gain equal access to and reap benefits of the green movement and the green economy—including green jobs, access to healthy food, energy efficient and healthy homes, and quality public transportation.

www.gotgreenseattle.org

Project Description

Got Green’s South Seattle Jobs Committee (SSJC) partnered with the Construction Jobs Equity Coalition (CJEC), a group of more than 20 organizations committed to the equitable hiring and retention of people of color, women, and other low income workers in living wage, union construction careers. The two groups worked together to develop provisions for a targeted local hiring policy. SSJC and CJEC met with stakeholders from the City of Seattle and the building trade unions to present their provisions and negotiate terms of a community workforce agreement. While tentative agreements were established in the areas of skills training and job standards, many concerns went unaddressed, such as reaching the targeted workforce, monitoring and compliance, and genuine community partnership. Got Green then recruited Southeast Seattle residents to educate community members on the issue of targeted local hiring. SSJC created a checklist for speaker training and community presentations, and 23 residents participated in the trainings. Five presentations were given to a total of about 80 people, who learned about the core principles of targeted local hiring.

Got Green hosted a Community Jobs Forum March 2013 which was attended by 150 people, including two Seattle City Council members, a legislative aid to the City Council President, and representatives from the Office of the Mayor and the City’s Contracting Services Division. The forum was intended as a community conversation to hear how the economic downturn and its lack of job opportunities impacted workers and their families in communities of color and to launch a campaign to win a targeted local hire policy in the City of Seattle.

Got Green was successful in getting Targeted Local Hiring on the Seattle City Council’s radar screen. In September 2013, the Council unanimously voted to allocate dollars and staff time to developing a Targeted Local Hire policy to be voted on in 2014. Got Green continues to develop and support community leadership and a broad-based coalition to educate communities along the link light rail line about the benefits of a local hire policy.
Outcomes

- Grassroots leaders developed provisions for a targeted local hire policy and held eight stakeholder meetings to inform these provisions.
- Trained two dozen Rainier Valley residents and workers to become community educators and outreach workers on the issue of targeted local hiring and community jobs creation.
- 150 people attended the Community Jobs Forum with 106 pledging to take further action.
- Over 600 pledges of support for local hire were signed. Each pledge was the result of an individual, face-to-face conversation.
- Organized City Council hearing to learn more about issue and secured allocation of resources to develop targeted local hire policy for vote in 2014.

Lessons Learned

- Individual outreach strategies - face to face, phone, etc very effective to reach community members most impacted by economic downtown.
- Community members are the most knowledgeable about their experiences. Investing in community leadership, through a strategy like the Speakers Bureau, helps ensure communities most impacted by an issue are leading the discussion.
- Partnership with Columbia Legal Resources has been very effective to provide policy expertise to support grassroots education and community organizing.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- In the digital age, there may be an over-reliance on electronic forms of organizing. Got Green used mailings, phone, and individual conversations to achieve more grassroots engagement, rather than relying solely on technology. For the Community Jobs Forum, 400 calls were made over three nights, in conjunction with other outreach strategies, resulting in 150 attendees for the event.
- Collaboration among small organizations is needed to become more effective.
- Centralizing administrative and payroll duties across organizations would result in reduced costs and higher capacity. Accounting for spending could be simplified, as small organizations are often fiscally sponsored by larger organizations, requiring more coordination to run reports, compile documentation, etc. Got Green relied heavily on previous experience to manage grant process.
**Objectives**

- Increase economic and social opportunities for the Othello and Southeast Seattle communities through capacity-building efforts that foster more effective community participation in the South Corridor Task Force.
- Support small, neighborhood business representation on the South Corridor Task Force.
- Develop and organize two training workshops on planning and policy issues for Othello and Southeast Seattle low-income communities.

**Grantee Background**

HomeSight is a nonprofit community development corporation whose mission is to build strong, vibrant communities through homeownership, economic development, and neighborhood revitalization. HomeSight has a holistic community development approach, including building affordable homes, operating a first-time homebuyer education and counseling program, and providing affordable mortgages to help low-income families buy their own homes and build greater stability and financial security. [www.homesightwa.org](http://www.homesightwa.org)

**Project Overview**

HomeSight contracted with a business organizer who had been active with the MLK Business Association to represent neighborhood businesses on the South Corridor Task Force. HomeSight also recruited two community representatives to be task force members and supported them to effectively participate in monthly task force meetings by connecting in between meetings to review materials and helping them navigate obstacles such as technical jargon. This helped bring community priorities to the task force. Senior staff from HomeSight also co-chaired the South Corridor Task Force.

HomeSight partnered with community members, property owners, and city staff to organize a community forum to educate the public about the Growing Transit Communities strategies, discuss development plans to address the neighborhood issue of vacant properties, and to hear residents’ and business owners’ visions for development and provide a forum for questions and discussion. The forum was well-attended and included a large panel, and the moderator pushed for specific actions and next steps. The result was that a community that had not met in more than two years became re-mobilized, and began planning one-on-one follow up conversations with several panel participants.

HomeSight also conducted a resident survey to understand Othello’s needs, including services and businesses, and targeted underrepresented groups including Vietnamese speakers. The survey results were being analyzed after the grant period but will be used to communicate neighborhood priorities and to ensure program planning and policy reflects community needs. Through these various efforts, small business and Othello community needs were identified and were incorporated to a large extent into the final Growing Transit Communities Strategy.
“Planning and policy language is completely alienating. That’s a barrier to having real participation or fuller engagement.”

Outcomes

• Sustained neighborhood representation on the South Corridor Task Force informed discussions.
• GTC strategies include recommendations to attract and retain small businesses in transit communities and allow mixed commercial activities so jobs can be sited at these centers.
• 100 community members attended an educational forum that re-energized local economic development discussions.
• Over 90 Southeast Seattle residents participated in a survey that will help steer future programs and policies.

Lessons Learned

• Community engagement can be stymied by an emphasis on technical information and jargon in many planning processes. Resourcing a community-based organization that has experience with planning and policy making helped bridge this disconnect through mentoring and individualized support for community representatives.
• The community forum was effective since it was organized by a broad coalition of partners and focused on a priority neighborhood issue (vacant lots along the light rail corridor) as a starting point to discuss larger issues of economic development and upcoming decisions that could impact the neighborhood.
• Small and neighborhood businesses are a challenge to engage directly in these planning discussions due to barriers of time, language, etc but this perspective is critical to incorporate and like many underrepresented voices, will need additional outreach and targeted strategies.

Recommendations and Next Steps

• The light rail station has not catalyzed the private investment that had been anticipated. HomeSight is working with partners to explore further steps for helping the community attract the development it wants in their neighborhood.
• Accommodations like childcare, timing of meetings, and sometimes monetary compensation can ensure more democratic participation.
Objectives

- Increase the number of Eastside organizations committed to participating in a coordinated outreach and engagement effort in support of East Link corridor planning.
- Increase awareness of East Link, existing transit options, and incentive programs among low-income families, people of color, and immigrants and refugees near the Overlake station.

Grantee Background

Hopelink’s mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all community members. As a non-profit community action agency, Hopelink offers food, housing, family development, adult education, energy and financial emergency assistance, and transportation services that enable families in crisis to make progress toward achieving self-sufficiency.

http://www.hope-link.org/

Project Overview

Hopelink hired a community organizer to bring together community-based organizations working with the target populations. Hopelink worked on building relationships with nearly 40 organizations, by reaching out for conversations about capacity, client needs related to transportation, and interest in coordinating efforts. Hopelink also educated them on the East Link Corridor at these meetings. After the meetings, Hopelink created an “Organizational Capacity Evaluation” for each organization, including general information on the mission and organization structure, involvement in planning, transportation, and identified issues of interest, as well as engagement possibilities and capacity needs.

Hopelink and partnering organizations then engaged in several kinds of direct outreach—initially in the Overlake area and then more broadly across the Eastside. Door-to-door outreach yielded some positive responses from residents, although privately managed buildings with secure entrances posed some difficulty. A resident meeting took place at an affordable housing building, which was well attended and focused on community issues of concern to residents. Another method of direct outreach was to hold presentations. Combining education and advocacy, seven member organizations who invited their clients or constituents engaged in a presentation about the East Link Corridor. Hopelink also engaged in phone canvassing, using a voter database—however, the high rate of disconnected numbers resulted in abandonment of this outreach method. The last method of outreach was for Hopelink to engage people at the Overlake Transit Center—but as it turned out, most people there in the afternoon did not fall in the target groups. All outreach focused on the dual goals of both educating participants and encouraging advocacy. **Best outreach method?**
Outcomes

- Nearly 40 organizations engaged in discussions about the East Link Corridor.
- Seven organizations brought community members together for presentations on the East Link Corridor.
- A comprehensive list of Eastside community organizations and their engagement possibilities/capacity needs was created for further use.
- Four organizations chose to take on leadership roles, with one organization applying for and receiving an Equity Grant building from Hopelink’s work.

Lessons Learned

- Low income, immigrant, and refugee communities on the Eastside expressed overwhelming support for transit. Even with limited knowledge of the project, community participants were excited about the potential impacts of the East Link Corridor.
- A focus on community organizing and relationship-building for this project was essential since communities are more dispersed on the Eastside. There is now an emerging conversation among community organizations and service providers about what equitable development might mean for the East Corridor.

Recommendations

- Incentivize engagement by showing participants that their time is valued—through offering a stipend or gift card, refreshments, childcare, and/or a time and location that fits into their schedules.
- Cultivate relationships with staff or board members of an organization, and attend meetings of their members or constituents to engage them in a meaningful way.
- Continue the focus on relationship-building and identifying common concerns among the various community organizations and service providers on the Eastside. There was some coalition-building work done leading up to the Equity Summit to build upon moving forward.

“Bringing some of these groups and some of these community leaders together for an ongoing collaboration could have the effect of shifting the public process so that there is stronger representation from disenfranchised people and so that the public process around new projects in the community is a more balanced and inclusive process that is representative of the broader community.”
Objectives

- Determine how public transportation affects, is used by, or causes concern among low-income or disenfranchised people in study area.
- Understand affordability and availability of current housing options, as well as potential impacts of changes to housing situation in study area.
- Gain information about perceptions of safety and livability in study area.
- Examine perceptions and impacts on housing choices of public schools.

Grantee Background

The mission of the Consortium is to provide strategic leadership in crafting policy and program solutions to affordable housing challenges. The Consortium educates and advocates for affordable housing, focusing on supporting development of housing for disenfranchised people in Snohomish County.

(ftp://www.housingsnohomish.org/)

Project Overview

The chosen focus area for the project was the area within .75 miles of Casino Road & Evergreen Way in Everett. The Consortium created a survey and questionnaire for use in several focus group scenarios and compiled the data afterward with great precision and accuracy. The Southwest quadrant of the study area was deemed the primary study area due to its higher potential to be impacted by zoning changes or mass transit development. Of the 50 participants, approximately 70% were of Latino or Hispanic immigrant origin, and 72% of the study participants lived along the Casino Road Corridor in the Southwest quadrant (primary focus) of the study area.

The focus groups were advertised on flyers at stores, child day care centers, schools, parks, and apartment complexes. The Consortium also did personal outreach (phone calls and site visits) at these locations, as well as apartment buildings and schools. When further participants were needed, previous participants were asked to promote future focus groups to acquaintances. Additionally, participants filled out a supplemental survey and eight additional surveys were given out at a local park within the study area. Focus groups took place at a local community center. The Consortium paid for a Spanish interpreter at 4 of the 5 meetings, as requested.

The data from the focus groups and survey showed the need for infrastructure improvements and community services, as well as the urgency for City leaders to preserve low-rent and affordable housing options to minimize displacement caused by gentrification. A high percentage of participants spent a significant portion of their income on housing costs, which impacted their ability to afford other services such as public transportation. While only 12 participants out of 50 did not have adequate housing for the number of people living there, and 13 did not feel comfortable living where they currently reside, 37 responded that they would move to another area if they had the ability to do so. Barriers to obtaining housing included low credit scores of low-income applicants, the inability to pay security deposits on rental units, and the lack of social security numbers for undocumented immigrants.
“I would like to ride the bus more often, but because they are unpredictable in timing I drive more often than I would like.”

Outcomes

- 5 focus groups were conducted with 42 unduplicated participants.
- Supplemental surveys were given to unduplicated focus group participants and to eight local residents at Cascade View Park.
- Results of the focus groups and surveys were compiled into a comprehensive report including extensive data, which can be used in meetings.

Lessons Learned

- The Consortium had limited success attracting focus group participants through advertising at key locations, and instead found that asking previous attendees to promote focus groups to acquaintances was more effective.
- Staff turnover caused a 3-4 month delay in getting the project off the ground but didn’t affect the ending deadline. Once a contractor was hired to do the work, he was able to quickly familiarize himself with the area and scope of work and move the process along.

Recommendations

The survey data showed the residents of the Casino Road area are impacted greatly by the costs of public transit, the lack of frequency within bus service, safety concerns at bus stops, and limited bus routes. Improvements to bus transit efficiency and value would be of great benefit.

Survey results showed that potential positive impacts to the use of public transit could come from subsidized monthly transit passes, restoration of paper transfers within and between Everett Transit, Sound Transit, and Community Transit, expanding Sunday routes, and coordinated timing between Community Transit and Everett Transit systems.
**Objectives**

- Engage more people and more diverse populations in livable communities issues and reach people who will be impacted by transit investment decisions.
- Organize an expanded Livable Snohomish County Summit to focus on creating livable communities for all and deepen participation of underrepresented communities.

**Grantee Background**

Pilchuck Audubon Society (PAS) is a grass-roots environmental organization with members throughout Snohomish County and Camano Island, Washington. PAS’s mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, for the benefit of the earth’s biological diversity. Through education, advocacy, and community activism, PAS is committed to bringing people closer to wildlife.

www.pilchuckaudubon.org
www.livablesnohomish.org

**Project Overview**

PAS began by doing an inventory of transit stops between Everett Transit Station and Aurora Village along Highway 99. Choosing the most diverse areas (targeting Latino, Vietnamese, and Korean communities) with potential for redevelopment, PAS then visited over 50 businesses in those areas with a survey. The survey aimed to bring awareness to the respondents regarding the possibility of future Transit-Oriented Development, while giving participants a chance to voice their ideas about their community. PAS partnered with Forterra to ensure the education portion of the survey was accurate and helpful, and the survey was given with a clear explanation of the background and context. Business owners responded to questions about safety, affordability, transportation, and general information about their business.

PAS then focused on planning the Livable Snohomish County Summit (LSCS). The LSCS was very informative, and included a councilmember, planner, and keynote speaker from the UW on public health and urban design. The group then split into breakout sessions on a range of topics with local experts. After lunch, council candidates answered questions and afterward parts of the discussion were posted online.
“We don’t have the luxury to relocate our business if the area is redeveloped. It would be unfair for our business to be affected.”

Outcomes
- 51 business owners completed the survey and seven languages were captured by the survey.
- Equity was a central theme of the Livable Snohomish County Summit, expanding a conversation that is newer in Snohomish County.
- Approximately 200 people participated in the Summit, including a few business owners resulting from the survey outreach.

Lessons Learned
- Business owners in this area mostly know about public transportation options but overwhelmingly do not use it. Additionally, comments in the surveys indicate that customers for these businesses also drive. These numbers suggest significant barriers to public transit use, such as convenience.
- Most business owners surveyed had never heard of transit-oriented communities. Disseminating information could be a key step to furthering people’s education about development options.
- Business owners may not want affordable housing near their business, as it may conflict with their intended customer experience. One participant commented, “get rid of the trailer park across the street... nothing but trouble. Put condos there. No low-income apartments.” This perceived conflict between affordability and customer experience poses a challenge to accomplishing multiple goals.

Recommendations and Next Steps
- Equity is a newer conversation in Snohomish County so for many participants, the Livable Communities Summit was the first opportunity to engage with some of these larger themes including the changing demographics of the County. There is an opportunity to build on these discussions and consider what this means for Snohomish County.
- It’s important to plan ahead for translation needs so that language differences don’t become a barrier to survey-taking.
- Small business owners are very pressed for time, and researchers or planners must take this into account when involving them in projects.
- More organizations and leaders along the Highway 99 corridor should do more outreach and education to bring this faction of the community to the table for future planning of the corridor.
Objectives

- Engage youth and resident leaders in developing a Rainier Beach Transit Priorities Action Plan.
- Use Action Plan to engage residents in development decision-making processes and to build coalitions along South Corridor.

Grantee Background

RBCEC’s mission is to build neighborhood capacity to enhance the quality of life in Rainier Beach as well as to address critical issues threatening the welfare of Rainier Beach residents, including family life, education, economic development, public safety, transportation, and the environment. RBCEC envisions a healthy, drug-free, vibrant, and diverse neighborhood.

Project Overview

RBCEC recruited nine youth to participate in the Transit Justice Youth Leadership Project, and trained the youth on how to conduct a survey. They designed a survey that would yield data on Rainier Beach residents’ transportation challenges, including questions about perceptions of safety, ease of use, barriers to public transit, demographics, income, family composition, etc. The youth distributed the surveys and collected the results, finding key themes to be student equity (particularly difficulty with Orca cards), transit station safety (specifically the station at Rainier and Henderson), and disconnected service (between light rail and business/cultural hubs). A full-color Rainier Beach Transit Justice Survey Report Back report was created, as well as an action plan for engaging decision-makers. This action plan included meeting with various agencies and presenting the data, in the hopes of policy changes that would impact the priority areas.

“Buses pass us by without even seeing us.”
Outcomes

- 9 youth leaders completed training and formed the Rainier Beach Transit Justice Youth Team.
- Over 200 Rainier Beach residents were surveyed.
- Report Back report was created for use in future planning meetings.

Lessons Learned

- Youth can create useful, informative deliverables with a strong voice and clear stance.
- Rainier Beach residents surveyed are concerned about student equity, station safety, and relevant connectivity in their neighborhood.
- There are several barriers to student use of public transit, mostly regarding acquisition and refills of ORCA cards.

Recommendations

Student access to reduced-fare ORCA cards is restricted under the current system, and students feel frustrated by a system that doesn’t work for them. Improvements to the ORCA card system (reduced rates, ability to qualify within 2.5 mile radius, neighborhood purchase and reload locations, ability to reload with cash/change) would greatly benefit Rainier Beach students.

Connect service better to cultural and business hubs in the neighborhood, and improve station stops with lighting/shelters.

Encourage youth-led participation in community engagement to be certain of including the youth perspective.
Refugee Federation Service Center

Objectives

- Conduct focus groups in eight languages to gain information on how the refugee community currently uses transit, barriers to the current transit system, and how current transit improvements have impacted them and their communities
- Engage elderly members of East Asian communities in focus groups to inform and improve policy related to the needs of seniors

Grantee Background

The mission of Refugee Federation Service Center is to assist refugees and immigrants by helping them become self-sufficient and productive members of society while maintaining their cultural and ethnic identity; to serve as a resource for local agencies to foster greater understanding of refugee communities, and to strengthen and empower the ethnic refugee communities in order to meet the needs of their respective members.

www.rfsc.org

Project Overview

Refugee Federation Service Center (RFSC) invited specific refugee community groups to participate in the forming of focus groups of several ethnicities. Included in the project were the Khmer, Eritrean, Lao, Indochina Chinese, Vietnamese seniors, Russian/Ukrainian, Bosnian, and East African communities, as well as refugee elders of various ethnicities. The community groups worked with RFSC to determine appropriate topics for the focus groups, honing in on relevant issues. The resulting topics were safety (traffic and crime), public space (including parking), housing, transit cost, and education/schools/community centers.

Each focus group was attended by 15-25 community members and was given in the native language of the participants. The results were collected and compiled into a report with recommendations, although documentation in general was a challenge for the organization due to lack of training-related support.

RFSC found that many participants shared concerns about affordable housing, adequate parking, affordability of transit fare, and crossing safety at transit stops.
Outcomes

- 183 members of refugee communities participated in focus groups.
- Nine ethnicities and a cross-cultural group of elders were represented in the focus groups.

Lessons Learned

- Accountability to community input is critically important for sustained engagement. It was a priority for RFSC to show their community members some progress or next steps that emerged from the focus groups before they could consider pulling their communities together again. For example, understanding how to use the light rail emerged as an issue during the focus groups so Hopelink was able to provide a workshop on using transit through their mobility program.
- Projects with insufficient documentation should be supported (through training or resources) to help ensure the results of the project are recorded and therefore available for future use.

Recommendations and Next Steps

RFSC recommends more gated crossings, higher security (such as cameras) at transit stations, and safety information translated into many languages to increase perceived safety for refugees.

Parking time is limited but transit timing between systems often exceeds the time allowed to park. Increasing access to parking or park-and-rides, as well as syncing up route timetables, would help refugees use transit more efficiently.

Ensuring adequate affordable housing during development of transit to prevent displacement would benefit many refugee community members who have low income. Reduced fares for low-income residents would also ease the financial burdens refugees experience.

Public services are scattered throughout various locations, making efficient travel difficult if not impossible for refugees. A one-stop center for low-income assistance would greatly help refugees in need of services and reduce unnecessary travel.
Objectives

- Educate limited English speaking ethnic groups about proposed light rail.
- Identify and support emerging “Natural Leaders” who can effectively represent their communities at public meetings.
- Motivate participants about the opportunity for civic engagement.

Grantee Background

RISNW provides assistance to refugee and immigrant populations to remove barriers to employment and acculturation. RISNW advocates, promotes, and facilitates information sharing and policy planning—preparing refugees to acquire necessary skills for adapting to life in Washington State.


Project Overview

RISNW conducted language-sensitive and culturally-appropriate workshops that took place at senior centers and community colleges in the Lynnwood and Everett/North Corridor area. The workshops were oriented towards Russian, Vietnamese, Philippine, Mexican, Ethiopian, Iraqi, and African seniors and ESL students. Participants learned about the proposed light rail line, completed surveys about their families, housing, and access to transportation, and wrote letters expressing concerns and needs regarding impacts of the light rail. Transportation was listed across ethnic groups as a major concern for attendees, along with affordable housing and employment—however, most attendees were far more concerned with immediate issues, and did not feel as engaged regarding a transportation project over a decade away. Enthusiasm waned among attendees when they learned of the relatively long time frame of the project, highlighting the challenge of talking with communities about long-term projects. The project scope was adjusted to focus less on light rail and more generally on what the residents want to see as their community changes and develops.

RISNW held a wrap-up event that featured topics selected by participants—housing and transportation—and included representatives from local Housing Authority and Transit agencies. Participants questioned the panel members on subsidized housing waitlists, bus routes, and fares, with several interpreters present. At the end of the event, attendees were engaged in lively conversations with the panel members, with or without the assistance of interpreters. The discussion was animated and the attendees and panelists were pleased—leading to the conclusion that the topic of community development is better discussed with these populations from a shorter-term perspective.
“It was very interesting to see the transformation. The panel members were clearly impressed by our clients. Our clients were impressed by our panel members who clearly made an effort to communicate and were patient while their presentation was put on hold frequently because of the need for interpretation.”

Outcomes

- 29 workshops were attended by 362 participants.
- Natural Leaders were identified and attended a North Corridor Task Force meeting but were unable to sustain the role without support.
- Participants engaged meaningfully on issues important to them--bus transit and housing availability.

Lessons Learned

- “Natural Leaders” could be a very effective force for change, advocating on behalf of their communities--but they need support and assistance to become fully realized.
- Refugee and immigrant populations or others faced with many day-to-day struggles may benefit more from discussions of community values and immediate transportation needs, rather than discussing projects with a longer time frame.
- Refugee communities cannot provide input on issues that do not feel relevant. To engage refugee communities, connections with immediate needs and priorities must be made, starting from what is relevant.

Recommendations

Energize refugee and immigrant populations by working on a level where they feel engaged. Populations struggling with survival issues such as employment or acculturation are more likely to engage if presented with issues pertaining to their lives now.

Create capacity for “Natural Leaders” by supporting them with resources, assistance, stipends (when possible), information, and networks. Ensure a clear path is laid out for “Natural Leaders” and that they have various sources to contact when issues arise. Provide them with as many tools as possible to increase the likelihood of their continued ability to stay involved.

Consider the importance of affordable housing and access to affordable public transit to immigrant and refugee populations when planning development.

Have existing relationships to build on when reaching out to communities of color by including someone who is already connected in that community--or even a small group of connected individuals.
Objectives

• Conduct research with the East African community in Tukwila and SeaTac to investigate the relationship between the light rail development, cost of living and availability of employment as well as the East African community’s needs and priorities related to future planning.
• Organize a community forum to share findings and identify strategies for greater involvement in transportation and land use planning.

Grantee Background

SCSC’s mission is to enhance the well-being of Somalis throughout King County, empower families and individuals, and preserve the community's rich cultural heritage. Formed in 1995 by community leaders, Somali Community Services Coalition (SCSC) seeks to empower East Africans through culturally-appropriate educational and social services. www.somalicsc.org

Project Overview

SCSC created a two-part survey based on light rail research and collaboration with other agencies in the Equity Grant program. The first section collected demographic information and data examining rent and utilities costs, transportation use, employment, and local services and retail that are important to families. The second half of the survey allowed participants to create a narrative about their experiences living in SeaTac and Tukwila and their hopes for future city and transit planning. SCSC then hired two bilingual Data Collectors who were trained in conducting surveys and distributing and explaining transit information. The Data Collectors visited apartment complexes located near the light rail stations in SeaTac and Tukwila to conduct in-person surveys of 100 East African families, who were compensated with a $10 Safeway gift card. SCSC then interviewed landlords of ten apartment complexes, asking questions about current tenant base, tenant turnover rate, and recent changes in housing demand. Finally, SCSC hosted five focus groups to examine specific needs and challenges of youth, elders, women, business owners, and airport workers. These focus groups were held in SCSC’s main office and were conducted in English and Somali.

Findings of the surveys and focus groups included the challenge of securing affordable housing, including family-size appropriate housing, as well as the propensity for East Africans to choose driving over using public transit, despite the close proximity to stations. Another trend highlighted was the need for close proximity to services such as free soccer fields, mosques, culturally-appropriate shopping centers and grocery stores, ESL education, and senior services.
“More Somalis are beginning to use the bus and now there is generally at least one Somali speaker on every bus. Many people don’t understand how to pay, where to get off, and how to stop the bus, but it is easy when you can ask somebody. There are several Somali bus drivers too, which is even better.”

Outcomes
- 100 East African families participated in surveys.
- Five focus groups were held with specific groups within the East African community.
- Ten apartment complex landlords in SeaTac and Tukwila were interviewed about housing demand, tenant base, etc.
- Nearly 60 people attended a community forum to report back on research and discuss priorities.

Lessons Learned
- Though every survey respondent lived within walking distance to the light rail station, 80% said that they had “never used the light rail” or had only used it “once or twice.” These numbers suggest significant barriers to light rail use in this community.
- Soccer is an important part of East African culture but many youth expressed that they rarely have the opportunity to play. Addressing this need could serve multiple purposes.

Recommendations and Next Steps
- Include plans for affordable housing in upcoming development. Living in the area is important for many families who have ties to the larger East African community, East African grocery stores, the mosques, schools, community centers, and local employment. Without more affordable housing, some of these families may be forced to relocate. In particular, develop additional housing for large families.
- Increase oral outreach about public transit, including light rail, buses, and ride programs, since East Africans reported learning about resources and services mostly through word of mouth, and may not be benefitting from services for which they may be qualified.
- Support immigrant-owned businesses, to ensure future development accurately reflects the large and growing immigrant population in the area.
- Ensure that community members have continued access to places of worship and community centers, as these play a vital role in the lives of East Africans living near the light rail stations in SeaTac and Tukwila. The cities should help ensure that their residents continue to have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services and facilities throughout upcoming development.
- Increase opportunities and access to recreation and community building activities, by planning to create sports fields and other recreational activities in future development.
- Continue to build relationships with the City of SeaTac and City of Tukwila and jointly explore how to best ensure continued engagement of the East African community as this area redevelops.
Senior Services
North King County
$15,000
Dec 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

Objectives

- Engage elders, people of color and individuals with limited incomes in a place-making process that connects them to their community and develops confidence in their voices.

Grantee Background

Senior Services is the most comprehensive non-profit agency serving older adults and their loved ones in Washington State. Established in 1967, Senior Services promotes positive aging for thousands of seniors and their families each year through integrated system of quality programs and senior centers.

www.seniorservices.org

Project Overview

Senior Services focused on the Korean community in Shoreline, as well as people of “modest means.” They began by collecting contact information for the target communities to be able to invite community members to relevant meetings. Senior Services tabled at food banks, and volunteered in the community to try to collect contact information, then identified potential “spark plugs” who are from the community and can help connect more people and bring people to an event particularly focused on their community. These “spark plugs” for the Korean community assisted on flyer design, flyer translation, connecting to local Korean churches, newspapers, and translators, finding catering, facilitating the event, and getting involved with other citizen groups. The “modest means” community included nine “spark plugs” who connected with individuals who use the food bank or family support groups, live in King County Housing Authority buildings, liaison with Prince of Peace, etc. The events that took place included videography, translation, food, and other amenities, and had excellent turnout and engagement. Leaders from the two groups have continued to stay involved and attended meetings on visioning and station planning.

After several stakeholder meetings to begin the organizing, it became clear that many elders’ response to helping plan a light rail system that wouldn’t be operative for 10 years was, ‘I’ll be dead by then.’ There was much more interest from the Korean Community and folks of low incomes.
“I’m glad I came. I guess I DO have a voice.”

Outcomes

- 60 people attended the Korean community event and were engaged in relevant conversations.
- Over 50 people attended the “modest means” community event including representatives from agencies that served them.
- Coordinated with other equity grantees in Shoreline (Futurewise and 185th Citizen Committee) to engage with the city, share resources, and elevate issues.

Lessons Learned

- Individuals who rely on certain community services may have significant mental health and/or substance abuse challenges, making outreach and engagement more difficult.
- Cultural differences may prevent registration or attendance information from being collected easily.
- Translating text can be challenging within a formatted flyer with limited space. Setting aside extra time for formatting translated flyers can help mitigate this challenge.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Communicating in person and using media outlets was more successful than email for outreach to Korean communities.

Going to where the modest means community members gathered (food banks, human services office where there is a day care and counselors, community dining and low-income housing coffee hours) and building relationships within the community was the way to engage that community to come to the meeting and get involved.

The most common needs among these groups were built environment amenities, connective bike lanes and storage, pedestrian amenities and accessibility, parking, safety, low-rise density, coffee shops, affordable housing, culturally-relevant businesses, and art. Addressing these needs would serve many purposes and ensure a more equitable planning practice.
Solutions for Humanity, Community, and the Environment
Tacoma/Pierce County
$20,000
June 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2013

Objectives

• Increase participation of youth from underserved communities in public processes, beginning with the Growing Transit Communities forums.

Grantee Background

Solutions for Humanity, Community, and the Environment (S-HCE) is a non-profit organization that focuses on environmental justice concerns in the Puget Sound region. Formed in 2006, S-HCE provides sustainable solutions for environmental and social challenges through intellectual exchange, research, and analysis. S-HCE works to promote human rights and peacefully resolve social, economic and environmental disparities. www.solutions-hce.org

Project Overview

S-HCE selected youth mentors from local organizations to assist in recruiting and training youth participants. Mentors helped select three youth from underserved communities, and worked together with S-HCE to develop a standard level of understanding of civic processes, using Growing Transit Communities as a learning mechanism. Each pair of youth and mentor attended three public meetings and a variety of educational/training meetings. After the public meetings, youth were asked to demonstrate their new knowledge through developing a response letter and video describing their experience in the civic engagement process. In their letters, the youth focused on overarching themes such as making meetings more accessible in terms of time, location, jargon, and language (for those with limited English proficiency), as well as how community input would be incorporated into outcomes. The youth developed recommendations for policy-makers based upon their experiences. These ideas were not tied to any piece of legislation, but reflected the experiences of the youth, and how they believe that transportation could be improved and youth more included in processes.

In the follow-up grant round, one of the Youth Mentors worked with a Youth Leader (a youth participant from the initial round received), guiding the youth in leading additional discussions about transportation with other local youth. This resulted in a number of youth discussions, a youth transportation forum, and the production of two videos (www.youtube.com/user/SolutionsHCE).

S-HCE also co-developed and co-facilitated the local Tacoma-Pierce Equity Summit, which took place on October 24, 2013 at Bates Technical College in Tacoma. The event, aimed at promoting equity along a number of topics, was attended by well over 100 community members. To ensure participation, childcare and transportation was offered, in addition to dinner for participants. Equity focus areas included transportation, environment, health, education, housing, jobs, criminal justice, and more. Goals for the forum were to provide a forum and platform for ongoing equity discussions, and to form a delegate from Tacoma-Pierce County to attend the Regional Equity Summit (November, 2013).
“As a teenager, looking around at these meetings, I was often the only one.”

Outcomes
- Eight youth from targeted communities participated in civic engagement and gave input and feedback to help steer youth engagement projects.
- Three youth mentors from local agencies participated in the development of materials, planning, and working with youth on engaging in the civic process and a youth leader was mentored as part of the second grant.
- Three videos were developed through the two grants to directly capture and share youth voices sharing their experiences and ideas for further engagement.

Lessons Learned
- Youth are capable of learning a great deal about transit planning quickly, and welcome the chance to be involved. All eight youth participants indicated interest in further civic engagement.
- Mentors were a critical component of this project, supporting the young people and helping them navigate the world of public process and meetings, but allowing them to direct the overall project and identify next steps for their project.
- Stipends were an effective tool to facilitate youth participation. Peer to peer engagement of young people is particularly effective.

Recommendations and Next Steps
Youth developed the following recommendations from this process:
- Publicize planning meetings in places that youth frequent.
- Ensure that language used in planning meetings is understandable—offer languages other than English, and keep technical jargon to a minimum.
- Hold planning meetings at places and times that work for youth schedules—not during school hours.
- Explain expectations at planning meetings—including status of decision-making and intended use for participant input.
**Objectives**

- Conduct a survey of seniors to collect data on transportation and issues surrounding mobility for seniors in the region.
- Engage senior community in discussion of transportation issues.

**Grantee Background**

SNOTRAC includes human services agencies, transit agencies, advocacy groups, and others. The coalition aims to develop a coordinated transportation system for persons with special transportation needs using local transportation resources.

(http://www.sssc.org/snotrac.htm)

**Project Overview**

SNOTRAC created a survey for seniors and had it translated into several languages for presentation at senior centers and senior housing locations. The survey included questions about the participants’ household composition, race/ethnicity, primary mode of transportation, frequency and destination of trips, barriers to using public transit, and others. SNOTRAC partnered with local senior centers and community service organizations to develop the survey, and then conducted the survey at 14 different times/locations to gather as much input as possible. The facilitators found that many seniors were unaware of transit projects or services available to them, and the presentations often turned educational to inform them on these subjects.

The data from the surveys was collected and compiled, resulting in a report filled with statistics and facts about seniors and transportation. SNOTRAC found that 23% of seniors felt public transportation was difficult to use and 26% cited transportation problems as a barrier to accessing their community. 39% of participants used a private vehicle as their major form of transportation, meaning there may be more seniors with difficulties using public transit as they age out of the ability to drive. The majority of trips described in the surveys were intended to meet basic needs, including food and medical care.

The report could then be used to provide critical information in planning efforts aimed at ensuring that the community is prepared to meet the needs of seniors.
“Language barriers keep seniors from enjoying their community so it is important to not only have a good translator when information is being delivered but to keep in mind cultural differences in learning new information.”

Outcomes

- 14 survey events were held.
- Extensive survey data was collected for use in future projects/meetings, giving a better understanding of senior mobility issues in the area.

Lessons Learned

- Seniors were often unaware of transportation options available, and adding educational components to workshops was a great benefit.
- Taking geography into account can help add to usefulness of data. A next step for the project could be to consider urban versus rural transportation issues.
- Templates for the final report would have been helpful, as staff changes resulted in a different person compiling the report who had not conducted the surveys.

Recommendations

Seniors perceived a variety of barriers to being fully engaged in their communities, including transportation and language—therefore, an intersectional approach to bridge some of those barriers must be used to address multiple angles.

Public transportation gaps due to service cuts considerably affect seniors, who often don’t know of other options—expanding transit service and educating seniors on alternative options would help overcome this challenge to senior mobility.

Advertising via television and printed materials (with large typeface) is the best option to reach as many area seniors as possible.
Objectives
• Increase knowledge among refugee and immigrant community members regarding transportation barriers.
• Increase involvement from non-English speaking community members in transportation policymaking.
• Give a voice to the refugee community who lack experience with civic engagement, yet are directly impacted by the planning and shaping of the transit system.

Grantee Background
Somali Youth & Family Club (SYFC) is dedicated to providing essential services to Somali and other underserved families and youth in King County. SYFC strongly believes that the protection and educational development of all youth and the access to resources for families is necessary and integral to human progress. SYFC is committed to working with all partners to provide access to services towards the attainment of sustainable quality life. www.syouthclub.org/

Project Overview
SYFC partnered with Hopelink, Bellevue Mosqe, Redmond Mosque, and the Faith Center of Kirkland to connect to individuals and build relationships.

SYFC developed a 15-question survey to give insight on transportation habits of immigrant residents of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond, and Issaquah. SYFC then visited places where the immigrant communities of Eastside are visible, such as shopping and transit centers. They surveyed 40 immigrants from the Eastside in total. These survey responses were used to create a report of recommendations for policy-makers.

SYFC conducted two Community Cafes to continue to engage the refugee community on transportation needs and projects. The Cafes included extensive discussion on issues that impact the community members’ lives including transportation, homelessness, healthcare, education. An incentive of a $25 gift card was provided to participants. The Cafes were well-attended, and affordable housing was identified as the most pressing common issue for many refugees. SYFC also built relationships by attending Council meetings in Bellevue, bringing the refugee voice to discussions with the mayor and other council members.
Outcomes

- 74 people attended a Community Cafe and discussed transportation, education, housing, and healthcare.
- 40 people participated in the 15-question survey on transportation needs.
- Six countries were represented by survey participants--Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.
- Two Community Cafes engaged immigrants residing or working on the Eastside.

Lessons Learned

- 82% of refugees and immigrants own at least one vehicle, so if policy-makers wish to incentivize the use of public transit, this will need to be taken into account.
- Weekdays present the most challenge to Eastside residents who wish to travel around the Puget Sound.

Recommendations

Affordability and efficiency could be key to incentivizing refugees and immigrants who already own a car to use public transit.

Addressing housing needs could greatly reduce the financial burden on immigrant and refugee families.

Safety, quality of life, culture, food, water, housing, schools, and jobs are all of utmost important to refugee and immigrant community members. Many Eastside residents have common goals and values, and want to see their community meet a variety of needs. If policy-makers take more of these priorities into account, more livability and sustainability goals could be met.

“The sheer scale of the transportation challenges presented by the newly arriving immigrant community requires a national response, particularly given their below-the-poverty-line economic conditions.”
**Objectives**

- Incentivize, educate, and engage Tacoma community members in participating in decision-making processes to impact land use.
- Build local stakeholder capacity regarding understanding of land use and transportation issues and ability to advocate. Increase use of high-capacity and local transit.

**Grantee Background**

Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC)'s mission is to bring Washingtonians more and better transportation choices—including bus, train, bike, and walking options. Providing more ways to get around, TCC aims to help create healthier communities while saving time, money, and the planet.

[www.transportationchoices.org](http://www.transportationchoices.org)

---

**Project Overview**

TCC partnered with Tacoma Urban League (TUL) and co-hosted the open house with Sound Transit. TCC and TUL also co-hosted several community forums. These community conversations included elected officials, community members, and transit representatives. Community members who are often not present at such events did attend, particularly at the open house with Sound Transit. For example, many youth voices were heard at the meeting, and seemed to enjoy the opportunity to voice their thoughts and be heard. The success of community conversations may have stemmed from TCC’s outreach method—first reaching out to community leaders, who then encouraged members of their communities to attend.
“Young adults liked the opportunity to say their thoughts and be listened to.”

Outcomes

- Personal relationships were formed and strengthened through the partnership of the two organizations.
- Three Community Forums were held involving local transit agencies, elected officials, city staff, and community representatives. Over 150 people attended one of the three forums.
- Tacoma youth & community members had an opportunity to weigh in on transportation improvement projects in the Tacoma area.
- Sound Transit was able to reach members of the community with their outreach efforts that had not previously participated.

Lessons Learned

- Working with transit agencies can pose challenges for organizations with different roles, especially if transit agencies are facing cuts and have decreased capacity to meet demands.
- Engaging elected officials can be challenging if there is not a clear connection for them between their input and the project.
- Capacity of partner organizations can pose a challenge, as it is difficult to fulfill roles if one organization has less time or funding.
- Outreach to faith based organizations made broader participation more likely.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Partnering with another organization can be a great way of building on existing strengths. The partnership between TUL and TCC not only allowed each organization to do what they do best, but also built capacity and relationships.

Going to community-based organizations and getting to know them and their background is an effective way to begin building partnerships. It is important to start the conversations somewhere.
Objectives

- Engage low-income communities and communities of color in the Tacoma area in the planning process.
- Represent low-income Tacoma residents through participation in committees and workgroups.

Grantee Background

The Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium advocates to expand opportunities for nonprofit corporations and others to finance, produce, and manage housing for low-income people. The five strategic objectives to help support affordable housing are technical education and training, advocacy, public education, and member development and networking.

affordablehousingconsortium.org/

Project Overview

The Tacoma-Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium planned to focus their First Quarter 2012 Public Forum on the Growing Transit Communities program, but saw an opportunity to combine forces with the MLK subarea planning meeting. Rather than ask already-stretched agencies or people to attend multiple events, the Consortium instead focused on outreach for the MLK subarea planning project to ensure more voices were at the table. In total, there were two focus and outreach groups—one community input/charrette, which was filmed between two large focus groups, then later in the year the Consortium had a readout session with easels showing results of the efforts. The Consortium filmed and broadcast two community events, extending the reach of the content. Additionally, the Consortium participated in the Growing Transit Communities Oversight Committee, Affordable Housing Steering Committee, South Corridor Task Force, Equity Network Steering Committee, and Tacoma Committee. This ensured that low-income communities in Tacoma were being considered during the formation of important documents and action plans.

“It’s important to have record of real people expressing what they want to see in their communities.”
Outcomes

- TV Tacoma broadcast the MLK subarea planning meeting for local viewers.
- Growing Transit Communities Corridor Action Strategy includes more consideration for low-income Tacoma residents due to their representation by the Consortium on the Corridor Task Force.
- The Consortium’s capacity was increased to allow for better participation in the Growing Transit Communities program.

Lessons Learned

- Information given to community groups does not necessarily get passed on to residents and business owners.
- Broadcasting information is unidirectional, with no feedback to help steer future information-sharing.
- There are benefits to having a variety of agencies receive grants. More direct service-oriented agencies need agencies like The Consortium to connect the dots.

Recommendations

Documentation of specific results of meetings can help keep a project focused on outcomes.

Feedback on how to get information to residents in this area, through outreach in future projects, would greatly benefit The Consortium in the effort of educating the public.