

RISK COMMUNICATION & INTEREST-BASED NEGOTIATION

City of Vernon LWMP Update

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June 1st, 2010

Risk communication is . . .

“any purposeful exchange of information and interaction between interested parties regarding health, safety, or environmental risks.”

1986 Report to the USEPA

Risk communication . . .

- **Is an interactive process involving a ‘sender’ and a ‘receiver’**
- **Provides ‘risk information’ from the sender to the receiver, who responds with ‘risk feedback’; both are equally important in the process**
- **Guarantees full disclosure**

A successful exchange . . .



Developing an effective strategy . . .

1 Determine communication goals and objectives

2 Identify audiences and their concerns

3 Consider risk perception issues

4 Develop appropriate messages

5 Select appropriate communications channels

6 Oversee programs

7 Evaluate program

1. Determine goals and objectives

- **Meet legislative requirements for stakeholder and public input**
- **Ensure the development of a LWMP that reflects residents' wants and needs**
- **Provide multiple opportunities for meaningful and productive input from key stakeholders and the public at strategic points during plan development**

1. Determine goals and objectives

- **Coordinate and facilitate consistent branding and messaging throughout the process**
- **Use a variety of practical and affordable mediums to increase awareness and foster participation**

1. Determine goals and objectives

- **Leverage media coverage to increase target audience reach**
- **Inform key stakeholders and the public of planning outcomes and implementation timelines**

2A. Identify target audiences

■ Internal Audiences

→ Primary

→ *Project team*

→ Secondary

→ *City of Vernon staff*

→ *City of Vernon
elected officials*

→ *Advisory Committee
members*

■ External Audiences

→ Residents

→ Community groups

→ Businesses

→ Business groups

→ Agricultural
community

→ Media

2B. Identify audience concerns

- **Legislative compliance**
- **Environmental protection**
- **Social justice**
- **Economic opportunities**
- **Financial sustainability**
- **Risk management**

3. Consider risk perception issues

- **Voluntary vs. involuntary**
- **Controlled by the system vs. controlled by the individual**
- **Trustworthy vs. untrustworthy sources**
- **Morally relevant vs. morally neutral**
- **Exotic vs. familiar**
- **Dreaded vs. not dreaded**
- **Certainty vs. uncertainty**

4. Develop appropriate messages

- **Be audience specific**
- **Be user-friendly**
 - ***Use Layman's language***
 - ***Concise***
 - ***Photos, graphics***
- **Use branding consistently**

5. *Select communication channels*

- **Be audience-specific**

- *Website*

- *Newspaper ads/articles*

- *Newsletters*

- *Surveys*

- *Open houses*

- **Be innovative**

- **Be collaborative**

- **Be cost-effective**

6. Oversee the program

- **Maintain approval structure**
- **Maintain communications protocol**
- **Focus on details**
- **Ensure flexibility**

7. Evaluate the program

- **Test messages**
- **Analyze input**
- **Refine program**

Long-term benefits of RC . . .

- **Reduce the negative impacts of events beyond a group's control**
- **Build support for unpopular actions**
- **Encourage community-based problem solving**
- **Promote environmental awareness and environmentally-responsible behavior**

RC works because . . .

**“It shouldn’t be ‘us against them’,
but all of us against the problem.”**

So the People May Know, AWWA

Decision-making approach

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- **Interest-based negotiation**

Decision-making approach

■ **Interest-based negotiation**

■ **Position-based negotiation**

Decision-making approach

- **Interest-based negotiation**

- Promotes consensus

- **Position-based negotiation**

Decision-making approach

- **Interest-based negotiation**

- Promotes consensus

- **Position-based negotiation**

- Promotes confrontation

Decision-making approach

- **Interest-based negotiation**

- Promotes consensus

- Example #1

- Protecting water quality*

- **Position-based negotiation**

- Promotes confrontation

Decision-making approach

■ Interest-based negotiation

→ Promotes consensus

→ Example #1

Protecting water quality

■ Position-based negotiation

→ Promotes confrontation

→ Example #1

Disallowing lake discharge

Decision-making approach

■ Interest-based negotiation

→ Promotes consensus

→ Example #1

Protecting water quality

→ Example #2

Using effluent most effectively and affordably

■ Position-based negotiation

→ Promotes confrontation

→ Example #1

Disallowing lake discharge

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■ Interest-based negotiation

→ Promotes consensus

→ Example #1

Protecting water quality

→ Example #2

Using effluent most effectively and affordably

■ Position-based negotiation

→ Promotes confrontation

→ Example #1

Disallowing lake discharge

→ Example #2

Using only spray irrigation

Consensus is...

- **“...general agreement or acceptance of decisions by participants in a decision-making process”**

Consensus is...

- **“...agreement to the extent that all participants are willing to support the outcome or use it as a basis for future discussion.”**

Consensus is...

- **“...agreement on a package of issues and solutions. Participants may not agree with each part, yet agree to the full package.”**

Consensus is...

- **“...general agreement by all members or lack of expressed objection by any members.”**

Consensus is not...

- **Decision made by authority in charge**
- **Majority rules or other voting**
- **Robert's Rules of Order**
- **Mediation or arbitration**
- **A court decision**

Why consensus?

- **Process improves mutual understanding of participants' concerns and priorities**
- **Decisions reflect more knowledge and experience**
- **Participation is meaningful and helps build lasting relationships**

Why consensus?

- **There is greater commitment to resulting decisions... ‘win-win’ solutions more durable than ‘win-lose’ outcomes**

Consensus-building principles

- **The purpose of negotiation is to reach agreement**
- **Participants must:**
 - ➔ ***agree to act in good faith in all aspects of the process***
 - ➔ ***accept the goals and concerns of others***
 - ➔ ***share and focus on interests and concerns rather than on positions and demands***

Consensus-building principles

- explore issues thoroughly, searching for solutions in a problem-solving environment***
- share information in all matters pertinent to the process***
- consider all options and solutions until full agreement is achieved***

Confrontation vs. cooperation

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→ **Confronts people**

Confrontation vs. cooperation

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- **Enables and encourages positivity and fairness**
- **Results in participants sharing freely and respectfully**
- **Emphasizes interests**

Position-based negotiation

- **Traditional approach (hard bargaining based on the bottom line)**
- **Focuses on limited resources**
- **Uses subjective criteria**
- **Commit to position early in process**
- **Individuals' interests and needs are paramount**
- **Win-lose outcome**

Interest-based negotiation

- **Evolving approach**
- **Resources are not necessarily limited (e.g., expanding the number of pieces in the pie)**
- **Considers the triple bottom line**
- **Uses objective criteria**

Interest-based negotiation

- **Respects and reflects mutual interests**
- **Builds long-term relationships**
- **Win-win outcome**

Stages of consensus building

- **Preparation**
- **Stage 1: Establish expectations and define the process**
- **Stage 2: Discuss and define issue categories**
- **Stage 3: Generate options and solutions**

Consensus requires...

- **Good will**
- **Cooperation**
- **Communication**
- **Commitment to a decision**
- **Equality**
- **Patience**