

MEMORANDUM

To: Community Advisory Committee for the Boston Climate Action Plan

From: Walker Larsen (CLF Ventures), Dr. Jonathan Raab (Raab Associates and MIT)

Date: December 7, 2009

RE: Community Engagement Typology Document

Summary

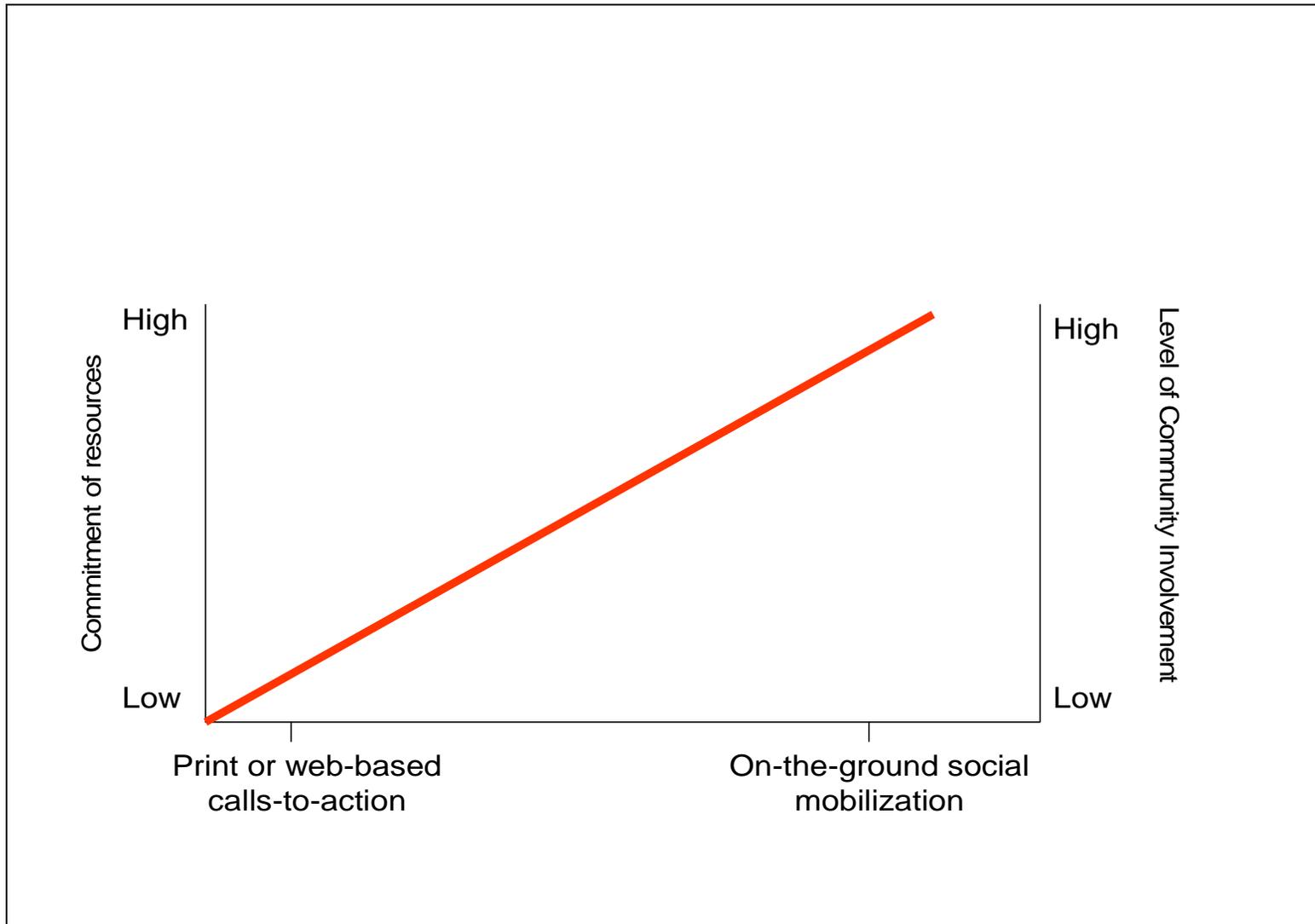
Community “engagement” programs run a wide spectrum. On one end there are basic information portals and on the other end there are programs that support on-the-ground, face-to-face engagement of community members by fellow community members. The options with on-the-ground components all seem to follow a concept described in a Portland, OR effort:

“The early adopters self-select. You want to preach to the choir because the choir will sing loud enough to get everybody into the church.”

In other words, the most effective means of engaging the community at large is to first engage those members of the community who are already interested in participating (e.g. the CAC in Boston). If these “early adopters” are given appropriate tools, resources, and support they will effectively communicate the program message to their peers.

The table below provides a visual interpretation of the community engagement program spectrum. The pages following the table provide brief summaries of community engagement programs that are operating, or were previously operating, in other communities. The programs are loosely ordered from the highest commitment of resources and engagement to the lowest. The final section contains a more detailed summary of the Boulder, CO Social Mobilization strategy.

Typology Overview



Sample Community Engagement Programs Summaries

1. Portland, OR Low Carbon Diet

Major components

- Hard copy work book (plain English guidance)
- Carbon Calculator website
- Peer-support network, lead by early adopters chosen from existing community groups

Basic structure: City provides tools/resources to a small group of residents who then take the message to a larger group of residents

Important caveat: This was done in 2001 in Portland. Climate Change was new and interesting and Portland is a very progressive environmental city.

Link: http://www.solsustainability.org/documents/carbon%20commons/LowCarbDiet_article.pdf

2. Portland, OR Smart Trips

Major components

- Print and in-person information
- City sponsored

Basic structure: mailing campaigns and in-person education to explain how to travel by transit, bicycling, and walking from specific Portland neighborhoods around the city. The program focuses each year on specific neighborhoods to provide targeted outreach and assist with trip planning.

Important caveat: Transportation focus; different neighborhood focus each year

Link: <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=43801>

3. Philadelphia, PA Neighborhood Energy Centers

Major components:

- Network of actual physical buildings located in neighborhoods around the city
- Each center provides energy related services, including energy education and counseling
- Centers provide additional low-income services

Basic structure: Neighborhood Energy Centers are co-located in trusted and commonly visited community organizations; designed to be one-stop shops, trained counselors are there to talk to residents and provide them with options and resources

Important caveat: Appears to be designed to specifically provide services to low-income households

Link: <http://www.ecasavesenergy.org/nec.html>

4. Marshfield Energy Challenge

Major components

- Massachusetts Technology Collaborative funding
- NSTAR backing

Basic structure: holistic approach to meeting growing energy demand by combining targeted energy efficiency efforts with small renewable generation and demand response systems (i.e. doing efficiency upgrades and installing small-scale solar).

Important caveat: pilot-scale program

Link:

http://www.townofmarshfield.org/public_documents/MarshfieldMA_BBoard/Marshfield%20Energy%20Challenge

5. Boston Climate Action Network

Major components

- Website with topical information and advice; blog; events listings
- Event hosting
- Person-to-person community outreach

Basic structure: “By pooling our knowledge, time, and skills, BostonCAN supports our members and makes it easy for them to make a difference.”

Important caveat: Not an official government/municipal program

Link: <http://bostoncan.wordpress.com/>

6. Transition US

Online community and tools designed to mobilize grassroots community involvement based on a centralized model.

Major components:

- Website with guidelines and detailed “launch” information
- In-person trainings/workshops to educate community leaders
- Web-based training tools

Basic structure: Website provides guidance and detailed information for starting, supporting, and expanding a community climate change group that will become part of a larger community of similar groups. Website gives individuals the tools to mobilize themselves, but allows them to officially become part of a centralized movement.

Important caveat: This movement is designed around public engagement in climate issues generally and is not linked to any particular climate action plan of a city or larger area.

Link: <http://www.transitionus.org/>

7. Boulder, CO Social Mobilization

Major components

- TBD (launching fall/winter 2009)

Basic structure: TBD, but including tangible programs and activities designed to get community participation in Boulder GHG reduction goals, including increased participation in utility efficiency programs (Additional information contained in a separate section below).

Important caveat: Program has not yet been fully designed or implemented.

Link: http://www.beclimatesmart.com/pdfs/CAP_Guide.pdf (5MB)

8. NYC Adaptation Education

Major components:

- Five City-run pilot workshops in neighborhoods
- Pilots will inform a more formal and widespread community education campaign

Basic structure: City working with the community to inform them about the potential impacts of climate change and possible solutions-and seek to understand their priorities moving forward; developing a process that can be applied to all at-risk neighborhoods across the city.

Important caveat: This outreach is focused on adaptation measures and education to specific communities that are most at risk from sea level rise

Link: http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030/html/plan/climate_neighborhoods.shtml

9. Seattle Green Blocks Pilot Project

Major components

- Online information
- Appeal to early adopter Green Block Coordinators who coordinate the participation of their neighborhood and submit the block application

Basic structure: The Green Blocks project provides home efficiency assessments and conservation upgrades free of charge to participating Seattle residents. Residents submit applications and are selected based on the number of applicants received from the same city block. All Seattle homeowners are eligible for this program.

Important caveat: this pilot program was only open for a limited time period (several months over the summer)

Link: http://eosalliance.org/green_blocks_pilot/home.html

10 Houston, TX Residential Energy Efficiency Program (REEP)

Major components:

- No-cost weatherization improvements
- Implemented one neighborhood at a time to use resources effectively and efficiently

Basic structure: City focuses on one "super neighborhood" at a time and works with Super Neighborhood committees (made up of chairs of smaller neighborhood assocs.). Neighborhood groups then work with City to canvass their neighborhoods, leave door hangers, etc.

Important caveat: You must live in a “REEP” neighborhood to participate.

Link: <http://www.houstontx.gov/reep/index.html>

11. Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge

Major components

- Website information clearinghouse, including vendor directory
- Three “neighborhood contacts” for 8 Baltimore neighborhoods with pilot programs
- Web tool to provide property-specific action items (need a street address)

Basic structure: Pilot program in eight neighborhoods, working with community groups, volunteers (Neighborhood Energy Captains), and residents. Residents take a pledge and are eligible for a free toolkit for education and outreach.

Important caveat: It appears that you have to register/sign up via the website to participate and use the online tools (need a street address in Baltimore)

Link: <http://baltimoreenergychallenge.org/systems/energy>

12. IMCOOL Climate Action Campaign Toolkit

Partnership between Seattle, Minneapolis, Boston and Salt Lake City, and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability

Major components:

- Website with information about starting a community-based climate campaign
- Printable materials to support climate campaign development
- Web and print templates

Basic structure: Online resources to support community-developed, community-based climate action

Important caveat: This site doesn’t provide much information about climate change; it appears to assume that anyone using the site is already knowledgeable and only needs outreach tools to pass the knowledge to others.

Link: <http://www.imcoolcampaign.org/>

13. Arlington, VA Car Free Diet

Major components

- Website with information and a calculator tool to evaluate how you can reduce your transportation-related carbon footprint

Basic structure: substantial information on how to get around Arlington and the DC metro area without a car, i.e. how to navigate and use public transit, options for car sharing, and bike routes.

Important caveat: Exclusive focus on transportation

Link: <http://www.carfreediet.com/>

14. Sacramento, CA (and National Grid) Utility Bill Comparison outreach

Major components

- Utility bill “report card”
- Print and online information

Basic structure: Utility provides customers with a bill that compares their energy usage with an average of close-by neighbors. Also provides information on how to use less energy and make efficiency improvements

Important caveat: This is essentially a peer pressure tool to take advantage of utility efficiency program offerings

Link: http://www.nationalgridus.com/aboutus/a3-1_news2.asp?document=4503

15. Burlington, VT Legacy Project/Climate Action Plan

Major components

- Website to provide contextual information on Climate Action Plan process and means to submit comments

Basic structure: website provides links to documents that describe Climate Action Plan workgroup activities and invites the public to provide comments via a basic online form

Important caveat: Basically just an invitation for public comments on the Climate Action Plan

Link: <http://www.cedo.ci.burlington.vt.us/legacy/cap.html>

16. United Kingdom 10:10

Cutting 10% of emissions in 2010, online pledge campaign

Major components

- Website with online pledge sign up: <http://www.1010uk.org/>
- Significant website content primarily tailored to individuals but including different business/organization types

Basic structure: Web-based call to action with information on specific, actionable steps

Important caveat: This is definitely a modern program aimed at a younger generation of activists that are very comfortable with online media and who like to “act” via the internet

Link: <http://www.1010uk.org/>

17. Boston Recycle More

Major components

- Web-based information
- Print information and educational materials (including mailers)
- New recycling bin handouts/distribution

Basic structure: Boston implemented single stream recycling and conducted an educational campaign to ensure residents knew of the changes and how to properly participate. Boston also distributed new recycling containers and other materials to assist with the switch.

Important caveat: this outreach and program are for residents that receive municipal waste collection services.

Link: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/publicworks/recycling/curbside.asp>

Example Detailed Description: Boulder Social Mobilization Campaign

Boulder created a Community Guide to its Climate Action Plan, in part to “Serve as a “community guide” to the Climate Action Plan so that every resident and business can easily answer the question: What is Boulder’s climate action strategy, and what can I do? Present social mobilization as the umbrella for delivering climate action programs, education, outreach and reporting.”

http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/CAP_Guide.pdf

It appears that the Climate Action Plan community engage as originally conceived did not provide the necessary results. The community guide states that engagement is being re-tooled in the following ways, which Boston should consider carefully:

Social mobilization will be the umbrella for delivering climate action programs, education, outreach and reporting to everyone who lives, works, shops and plays in Boulder. It has the potential to integrate a broad range of community action efforts into a cohesive whole with one clear measure of success: reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Key components of the social mobilization campaign will include:

- Change agents: Identify change agents in the community—community leaders, neighborhood groups, social and business networks, and other organizations—and involve them.
- Compelling goal: Ensure the goal is made meaningful and compelling.
- Interim goals and measurable outcomes: Create interim goals with measurable outcomes to build momentum toward the ultimate goal and provide doable steps on a defined timeline.
- High-leverage actions: Identify simple, immediate, high-leverage actions that, if done on a broad scale, will achieve the interim goals.
- Communication: Communicate these actions, interim goals and progress toward the 2012 goal to the community regularly. Use sound bites to convey small, specific actions and achievements.
- Visibility: Make actions and results highly visible to the community, to build interest and motivate others to participate.
- Transparency: Provide easy tools for individuals and groups to monitor and share their results and compare them to others’.
- Competition: Set up competitions between groups to add urgency and excitement.
- Connect actions to achievement: Demonstrate a clear connection between individual and group actions and the achievement of the community’s goal, so there is broad understanding that the two are inextricably linked.
- Education: Educate on how and why particular actions do matter.
- ClimateSmart: Re-brand ClimateSmart and incorporate current social marketing techniques into the social mobilization campaign.

The social mobilization campaign will be designed and launched in the fall and winter of 2009 by a consultant experienced in creating local social movements. The effectiveness of the campaign will be monitored, and modifications will be made as needed.

A key element of implementing the campaign will be to redesign the ClimateSmart Web site. More interactive and timely features will be added to boost community excitement and motivation. A new web-based portal will enable individuals, businesses and groups to compare their climate actions and results with their peers and to track progress toward the goal.