

Why do you need to engage neighbors?

- Combine ideas within the village, brainstorming together with others in the same community, create unity, everybody is a leader, connection is power, empowering others and ourselves, ownership and inclusiveness when relating with each other, breaking down barriers (elderly coming out, or youth), more co-ownership, increased security, increased leadership, in engaging neighbors increases accountability, increased value and pride in the project, fosters longevity, who you know matters

Why would the neighbors want to be engaged?

- It will ultimately affect them, if a neighbor is not involved can lead to “acting out” or being negative about the project, leads to a sense of exclusion. Try to show neighbors the value of the project to them, to increase neighbor buy-in, find different “doorways” for neighbors to join through/be involved in, more doorways= more opportunities for people to get involved, can connect with others in more ways than just the primary project focus, remember that everyone has their own set of priorities, so try to find a way to speak about the project that will relate to each person’s set of priorities, “change happens at the speed that trust is built”

Post-Lunch Reflection

- Who was a “bridger” in your life?
 - Film school mentor
 - A teacher asked to join board of Murtis Taylor, led to lots of learning and connections
 - Music teacher, improved in math because of music study
- Characteristics of “Bridgers” (aka Connectors):
 - Caring people
 - Giving without a need of anything back
 - Energy
 - Great listener
 - Teaching
 - Engaged
 - Aware
 - These are trusted people in the community, able to reach people in the margins as well as those at the big table
- Look for “Bridgers” to participate in this project with you/ join your team
 - May be neighbors
 - May work at institution
 - May be part of an association

Once you have your team, what do you do next?

- Ways to build energy/excitement:
 1. Talk to people, learning conversations with neighbors
 2. Claim the space and host shared activities at the space, Charrette (i.e., meal, music, brainstorming session, etc.)
 - Creating a hospitable environment: Food, music, color

How to handle a “No”

- Find mutuality, explain from a different perspective
- Consider the person’s physical proximity to the project (next door vs. down the block)

Questions and Answers:

How to approach a land owner who is looking to sell the lot... How can I talk to that person about using that space for a project, without the intention to buy the lot

Activate the space, show the land owner what/how it would work there

Suggest that you maintain the lot for the owner, therefore providing him/her a service in exchange for permission to pursue your project

Converse with land owner about their own interest -> build a reciprocal relationship

Inquiry vs Solution

One idea: Have a written agreement with land owner

One idea: Take notes from meeting with land owner, share notes after the fact

One idea: You don’t want to have “ownership” over someone else’s lot, give the land owner the space/time to take action

Overall: Don’t be afraid to have a conversation, to face the NO