



It Takes Two to Tango

Tangoing at the Ballot Box: An overview of one of the most dramatic forms of public participation – an initiative or referendum!

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Our Premise

- Transit Initiatives are in some ways the ultimate form of “public participation”.
- You might even say that they are essentially “bake sales” or “community yard sales” with proceeds going to transit
- Our goal? How to have a truly successful “bake sale”





Transit “Bake Sales” Nationwide

- Need for local financing for transit is increasing
- Record number of local transit initiatives in 2004
- Passage of transit-related initiatives is unrelated to overall political leanings of state
- Transit-related initiatives are passing in urban, rural and suburban areas
- Over 30 Communities considering in 2005 or 2006

Top 10 Ideas for Gaining Community Support for Transit Initiatives

(with apologies to David Letterman)

Number 10

- A Successful Transit Initiative Campaign is About **People, Not Things**





Number 9



- That said, people want to be very clear on “what’s in it for them”. **Be as specific as possible!**



Number 8



- Reach out early and often to the most affected communities. **Don't avoid controversy – neutralize it!**

Number 7

- **Under-promise and over-deliver.**

People want accurate ideas on what it's going to cost and what they'll get out of it. They'd rather hear they're getting less and actually receive it than pie-in-the-sky projections



Number 6



- Different people listen to different sources: **Build Coalitions that can Deliver Your Message to Different Groups!**

Number 5



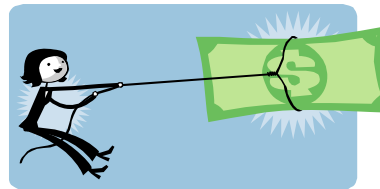
- **Understand your population**
 - Die hard supporters (your volunteer base)
 - General supporters
 - Undecideds
 - “Gettable” opponents
 - Die hard critics (not a good use of time and resources)

Number 4



- **Don't let the critics get you down**
 - Remember that you're paying more attention to them than most of the public

Number 3



- **Your word is your bond**
 - Everyone dealing with the campaign must worry about accountability, from the agency to interest groups to individual spokespeople

Number 2



- **Take off the blinders**

- What you're working on everyday is a small part of everyone else's life. It's only when you're heartily tired of the message and wondering whether it's penetrating that you'll start see results.

Number 1



Transit Rocks!
(and everyone knows it)
... so use it to your advantage!



Resources

- Online Transit Initiative manual at www.cfte.org
- Resources from the two transit initiative conferences (including panels on public participation) available both online and through e-mail at info@cfte.org
- CFTE personnel – Stephanie Vance and Jason Jordan