When the Public Doesn’t Participate

Using Time-Frame Analysis for Broader Public Input and Coalition Building for Transit-Supportive Urban Development

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Why Do Regional Visioning?

Getting and focusing the attention of:

The Public

Stakeholders

Government
Why Don’t More Participate?

Visioning Burnout

Not Enough Time or Money

“Somebody Else’s Problem”

“What’s the Use?”

Honey, What’s for Dinner?

Stuck in Traffic

Just because people may not participate in your process does not mean that they don’t want to have a say in your product.
“Market Research” (or Ethnography, if you prefer) is about learning the preferences, values, and perceptions of people.
San Diegans vary along two key dimensions when considering issues of regional growth and development.
San Diegans tend to cluster into four groups based on their attitudes toward public space and public investment.
When the Public Doesn’t Participate: Using Time-Frame Analysis

Time-Frames

Suburban Edenites
Past (Paradise Lost)

Urban Utopians
Future (Potential)

Victims
Never (Just Go Away)

Little Guys
Present (Here and Now)

Attitudes toward Public Investment

Attitudes toward Public Space
What does the world look like through the prism of each time-frame?
Basic Orientation

Future

“We have to make things better”

Urban Utopians

Past

“We have to keep things from getting worse”

Suburban Edenites

Present

“We have to maintain what we have”

Little Guys

Never

“Let people sort it out themselves without interference”

Victims
Environment

Future

Pro-Density

Urban Utopians

Past

Space

Suburban Edenites

Present

Room for Me?

Little Guys

Never

Get Away

Victims
Language

Future
- Cafes
- Plazas
- "Sustainable"

Past
- "Over-Built"
- Congested
- Crowded

Present
- Potholes
- School Roofs

Never
- Scams
- Suits
- Victims

Urban Utopians
Suburban Edenites
Little Guys
Victims
Key Issue

Future
- Creating a “real” city
- Preparing for the “Drought Years”

Past
- Auto Access Parking

Present
- Spending Priorities Jobs

Never
- Political Corruption
- Individual “Rights”

Urban Utopians
Suburban Edenites
Little Guys
Victims
Movement

- **Future**
  - Transit Pedestrian
  - Urban Utopians

- **Past**
  - Auto
  - Suburban Edenites

- **Present**
  - Whatever Works & Is Cheap
  - Little Guys

- **Never**
  - Auto
  - Victims
"Image" of Shopping

Future
- “Corner Store”
- “Street-Level Retail”

Past
- Lifestyle Center

Present
- Walmart

Never
- Trusted Supplier

Urban Utopians
Suburban Edenites
Little Guys
Victims
Reality of Shopping?

Future
“Corner Store”
“Street-Level Retail”
Internet
IKEA
Urban Utopians

Past
Lifestyle Center
Costco
Suburban Edenites

Present
Walmart
7-11
Little Guys

Never
Trusted Supplier
??
Victims
Coalition Built: New Ballpark

The ballpark vote passed due to a relatively successful coalition of Urban Utopians and Suburban Edenites.
### Coalition Not Built: Main Library

The main library has fallen by the wayside (again) due to the failure of Urban Utopians to build a successful coalition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAST Suburban Edenites</th>
<th>FUTURE Urban Utopians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How am I going to park?</td>
<td>It <em>has</em> to be a downtown palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who needs a library anymore?</td>
<td>Why does it have to be a monument?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims NEVER</td>
<td>Little Guys PRESENT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Attitudes toward Public Investment**

- +
- -

**Attitudes toward Public Space**

- -
- +
# The Challenge for Transit

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban Edenites</td>
<td>Urban Utopians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate real impacts on traffic, parking</td>
<td>Overcome modal biases &amp; images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take cost-effectiveness seriously</td>
<td>Show how it can save time and money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims NEVER</td>
<td>Little Guys PRESENT</td>
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To sell large-scale transit programs, you must understand the needs of each group.
The Challenge for TOD

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<tr>
<td>Suburban Edenites</td>
<td>Urban Utopians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careful urban design; make parking work</td>
<td>What this group wants!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Vicissitudes</th>
<th>Victims</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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Attitudes toward Public Investment

Attitudes toward Public Space
The Challenge for Visioning

Tell everyone’s story.
Conclusions

- Locate your time frames
- Build coalitions
- Understand Utopian limits
- Take concerns seriously
- Tell the stories
Conclusions

• Successful efforts in San Diego usually involve a coalition between neighboring groups.

• Coalitions can be built horizontally (e.g., all those in favor of public investment) or vertically (e.g., all those against public space).

• San Diego is not a European city, nor do sufficient numbers of San Diegans want to see it become one.

• At least until a truly viable alternative exists, you have to take parking and freeway access seriously in this town.

Few San Diegans are truly experienced urban dwellers. Urban Utopians need to be smarter when it comes to selling urbanity.