Engaging Low-Income Communities:

Strategies for Broadening Participation in Transit Access Planning
Urban Ecology

Who We Are

Oakland, California
Founded in 1975

Mission:
Vibrant and livable urban neighborhoods are the building blocks of sustainable regions.
Urban Ecology

What We Do:

Participatory Urban Design and Land Use Planning

Follow-up Advocacy, Policy Development and Capacity-Building to Implement Plans
Urban Ecology

Where We Work:

San Francisco Bay Area

Disenfranchised Communities

Neighborhoods where car ownership is low, and streets and sidewalks are hazardous
Recent Projects

- 24th Street BART Plaza
- Clinton Park Plan
- Visitation Valley
- 23rd Avenue Action Plan
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Setting:

S.F. Mission Neighborhood

Mixed-Income

Predominantly Low-Income

Entrenched local drug dealing and prostitution
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Failing Station:

Desolate and intimidating

Looked like fortress

Criminal Activity

Piecemeal planning had made it less safe
Community Planning Process:

1. Teamed up with Mission Housing
2. Initial comm. mtg.
3. Focus groups/surveys
4. 2 Community Design Workshops
5. Unveiling
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

1st Design Workshop:

1. Common-ground vision
2. Problems/Opportunities (Large Group)
3. Brainstorm Design Solutions with 3-D models (Small Groups)
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

2nd Design Workshop:

1. Urban Ecology presented design alternatives
2. Participants critiqued (large and small groups)
3. Participants selected preferred elements of each alternative
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Problems Identified:

1. Plazas unsafe/dominated by small-time criminals
2. Visual and physical barriers
3. Disorientating and unwelcoming
4. Disconnection to surrounding buildings
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Solutions:

1. Activate plazas: enable diversity of uses and users (examples: performance space, vendors)

2. Eliminate fence and other barriers blocking sight lines

3. Welcoming design, with amenities like sitting steps, benches and lighting

4. Way-finding signs

5. Plaza-oriented development
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Existing NE Plaza
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Proposed NE Plaza Design
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Proposed SW Plaza
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

SW Plaza: Final Design
Case Study: 16th Street BART Station

Success!
Lessons Learned

Three Keys to Successful Engagement:

1. Relationships
2. Credibility

--partner with community-based organizations--

3. Meet People Where They’re At
   a. Location
   b. Language
   c. Identify, then speak to their self-interests
Lessons Learned

Keys to Collaborative Visioning and Design:

1. Field Trips that take people out of their daily experience
2. Simplify (avoid “planerese”)
Lessons Learned

Keys to Collaborative Visioning and Design (cont.)

3. Photo simulations and 3-D modeling
Lessons Learned

Keys to Collaborative Visioning and Design (cont.)

4. Seize opportunities to have participants train one another
We’d Love to Hear From You!

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