

The Art of Engaging: *Power and Possibility of Authentic University/Community Dialogue*



Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Goals of the Session

- Consider processes and tools that have successfully supported authentic engagement and dialogue -- with strong results
- Recognize the challenges and role of “power” when actively “engaging” with community from within an institution (e.g. university)
- Discuss the differences between “organizing” and “engaging”
- Understand learnings from strong community
 - focused engagement to impact university efforts and overcome inherent challenges

Agenda

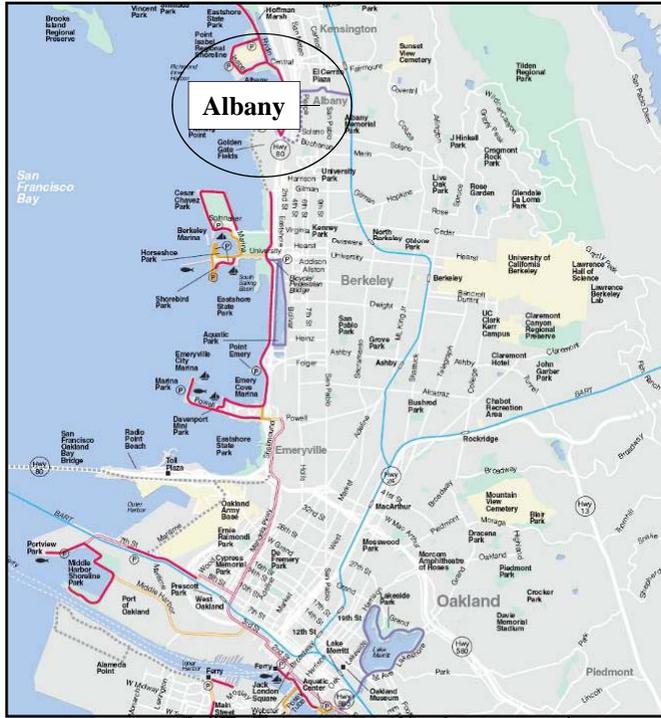
- Introductions
- Goals of the Session
- “The Art and Power of Engaging” (Part One)
- Play the “Albany Waterfront Game”
- “The Art and Power of Engaging” (Part Two)
- Discussion/ Core Questions

Albany, California

A Community Voices its Vision



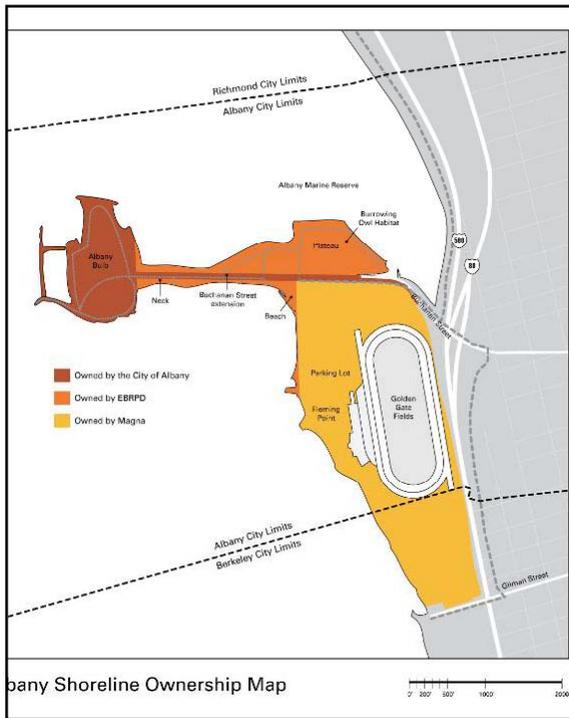
Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger



Albany, CA

- 16,444 residents; 1.7 sq miles
- Located north of Berkeley, CA
- High education, upper middle income residents
- General Fund - \$14M (7% from waterfront racetrack)

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger



Albany Shoreline Ownership Map

0 200 400 600 800 1000 2000

Albany Waterfront

- 200+ acres; 60% privately owned
- Bedrock plus landfill - formed over 100 years
- Current zoning: sports/ water sports-related commercial sales/ services, utilities, park/ rec facilities, bars, commercial rec, parking, restaurants..... and horse racing
- Local initiative (1990) requires citizen vote for zoning changes

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger



Problem/Issue - 2008

Following bitter disputes, anger, and divisiveness throughout the small city -- resulting from a 2006 development proposal -- **new City Council wants a community-driven plan (vision) for the waterfront.**

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Issues: Solutions

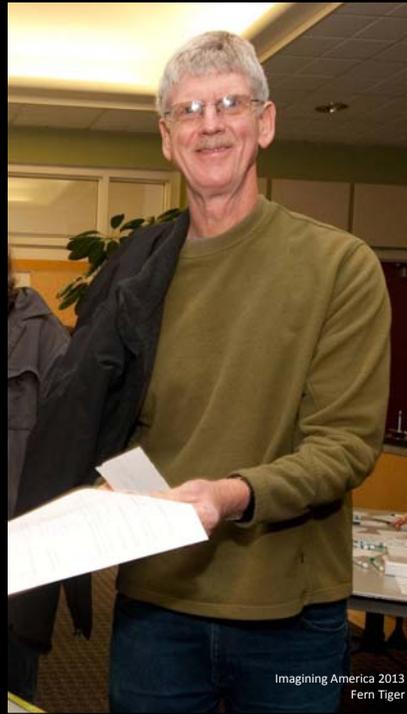
- **History of conflict (40+ years)**
 - *Hear, reflect, respect diverse opinions*
- **Lack of trust; issue fatigue**
 - *Design authentic engagement process (accessible, hands-on, different from developer sessions); “development” and vision based on facts; be open to input, respond to questions quickly; no hidden agenda, no “presentations”*
- **Widespread misinformation**
 - *Create comprehensive public education materials, backed by research; disseminate to every household (not just participants)*
- **Fear that “outsiders” and diehards dominate process**
 - *Albany residents only; one-time only*



Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Block-by-Block Approach

- Build community; 38 identical neighborhood sessions; RSVP
- 10 - 50 people per session; work in small groups of five and fewer; Albany residents
- Ensure “safe” place to voice opinions
- Encourage big thinking, grounded in reality and facts
- Encourage participation beyond diehards; door-to-door invitations



A process unfolded, based on research, history, findings: “Not your typical meeting!”






The Albany Waterfront Game

- Review map (1" = 200') and site parameters (elevations, setbacks, geotechnical, etc.)
- Discuss vision, big picture, personal goals for site
- Review "chips" (uses, sq. footage, acreage, height, parking requirements, tax revenue); "bright idea chips"
- Position chips on map; locate uses; calculate revenue; "name the plan;" note concerns and community benefits
- Present to full group



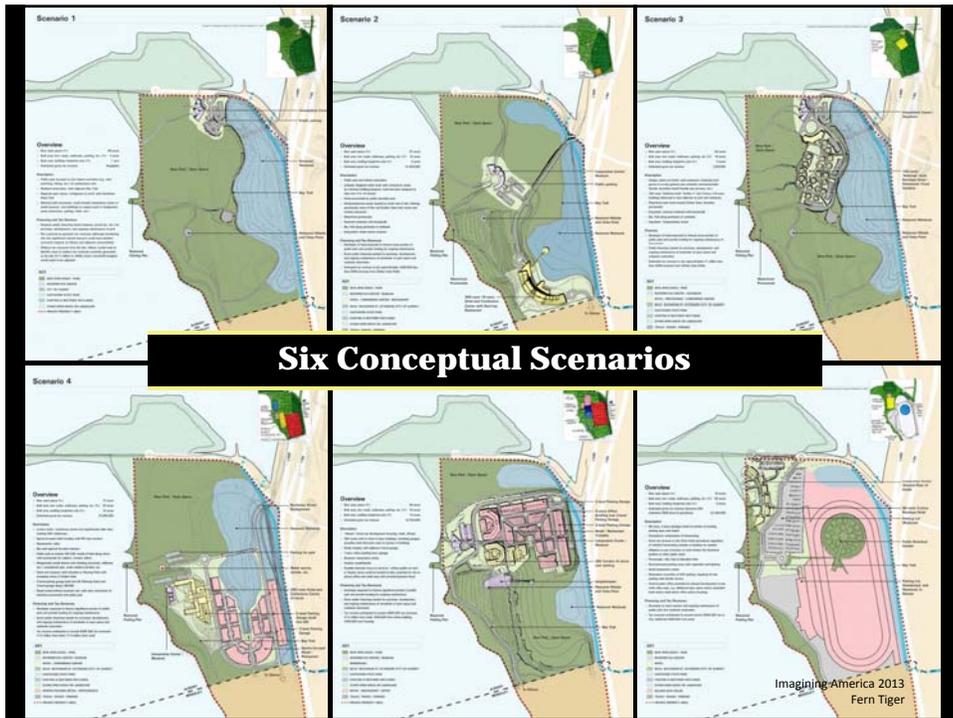
Let's Play!

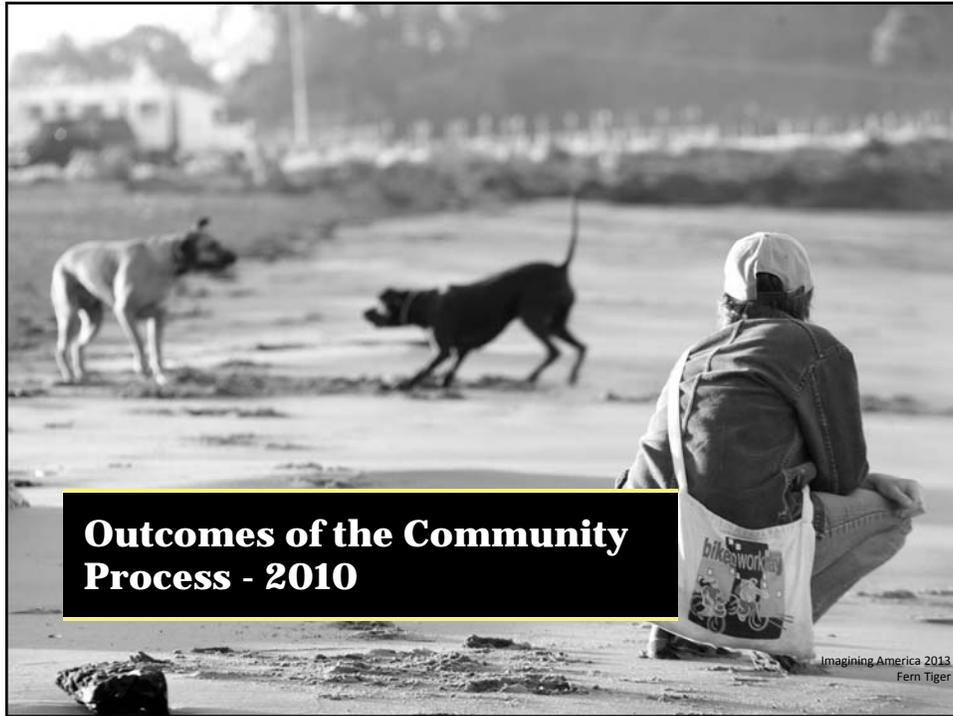
THE ALBANY WATERFRONT GAME

Results

- 38 sessions; 670 unduplicated participants +100 youth; all Albany residents; 195 maps (one per table group)
- Vision consistent (adults differ from youth)
- Maps indicate open space and concern about revenues (majority dedicated >60 acres to new park; majority showed uses generating >\$1M)
- Hotel (eco-hotel) most popular use (80%); housing and office not popular; retail controversial
- Solutions more similar than different
- Follow up – Online Survey (+270 new partic.)

Imagining Ame





Outcomes of the Community Process - 2010

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger



Analysis

- Open space requirements met with 72 acres for majority (62%)
- Max three-story height (40 ft)
- Preference for development at south end of site (Berkeley)
- 44% think \$1.4M lowest revenue acceptable (24%, \$2.3M lowest; 13%, \$700K lowest)
- Majority want park/ hotel/ conference center
- 36% think hotel and retail (new uses) “appropriate” combination, this scenario most favored
- Strict site development standards

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

2011: Unexpected Proposal

- LBNL (National DOE Lab) desires second campus (2M sq. ft.)
- GGF one of 6 finalists (surprise submission)
- DOE/UC involvement impacts city tax revenue and local control
- GGF site: involves 2 “active” cities
- GGF desires total of 2.5 – 3M sq ft *beyond* LBNL
- LBNL decision in 6 months (cannot comply with Measure C – required vote of residents)
- University/LBNL “process” secretive and non-engaging



Voices to Vision “2”

- City forced developer to re-ignite (fund) Voices to Vision
- Empowered community demanded real information and meaningful process - participatory process + Task Force
- Broad community concerns emerged
- Issues identified, analyzed, discussed (revenues, open space, building heights, land uses, lack of community control, Measure C compliance, uncertainties)
- Benefits vs. costs to city/community reviewed
- Informed dialogue; capacity to disagree; expanded knowledge base; trust in information built from process

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger



Real Time Results - 2011

- *Task Force analysis indicated many unresolved issues and concerns:*
 - *Security of funding for University project from DOE*
 - *University apparent lack of support for community input (design, data, process)*
 - *Lack of trust in developer; lack of trust in UC*
- *Neither consensus nor acrimony*
- *No overwhelming support to encourage LBNL to select Albany site (Other cities fiercely promoted themselves)*
- *New information indicated that the “right” development proposal could gain community support*
- *Guiding principles of V2V remained*

Imagining America 2013 Fern Tiger

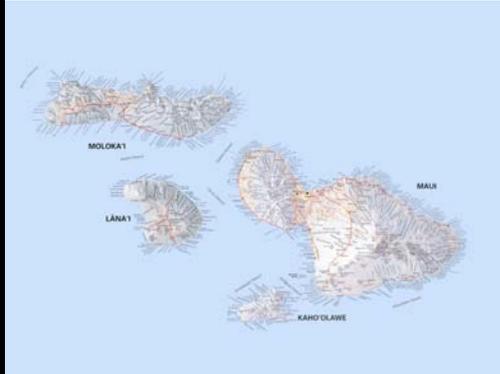


What Happened Next? – 2012-13

- *LBNL/UC selected Richmond Field Station site (owned by University of California)*
- *City of Richmond elated!*
- *UC hired Project Manager*
- *UC did not get \$1.5 billion DOE funding critical to site planning and development of microscope/accelerator (key unresolved question raised by community – what happens if...?)*
- *Unknown future*

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Focus Maui Nui – *Our Islands Our Future*

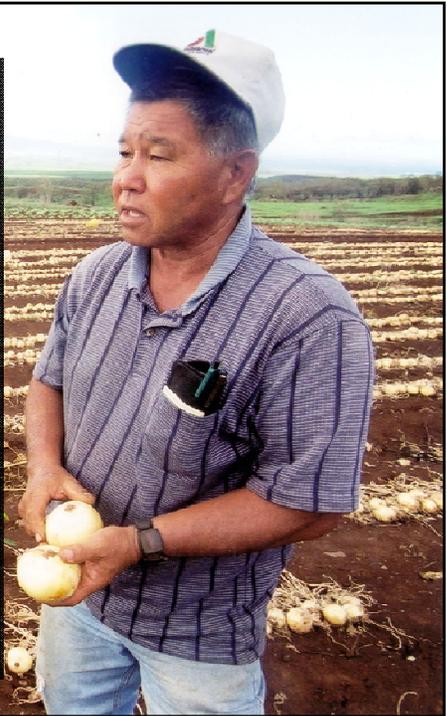


- Population 138,000
- 3 populated islands

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Background (observation, interviews, research)

- Maui long-term residents do not attend large meetings (“newcomers” attend meetings)
- Geographic and “real-life” constraints to participation
- Comfort level with “participation” low
- Belief that government “doesn’t care;” lowest voter turnout in US
- Burn-out on previous “processes;” lack of follow-through
- No history of accountability or sustainability



The Problem/Issue

- Catalytic moment: Economic Futures Summit (MEDB)
- Polarized views about development, growth, priorities
- Community lacked unified vision for the future
- Demographics of the county changing rapidly
- Lack of participation by “locals;” newcomers vocal



Primary Goals

- Reach **broad cross-section** of residents to discuss future and determine community “values”
- Understand **priorities**; educate residents to understand “trade-offs”
- Develop a **vision** for the County and its future – ensuring vision is based on widely-shared, mutually agreed-upon core principles
- Ensure ‘**sustainability**’ of vision

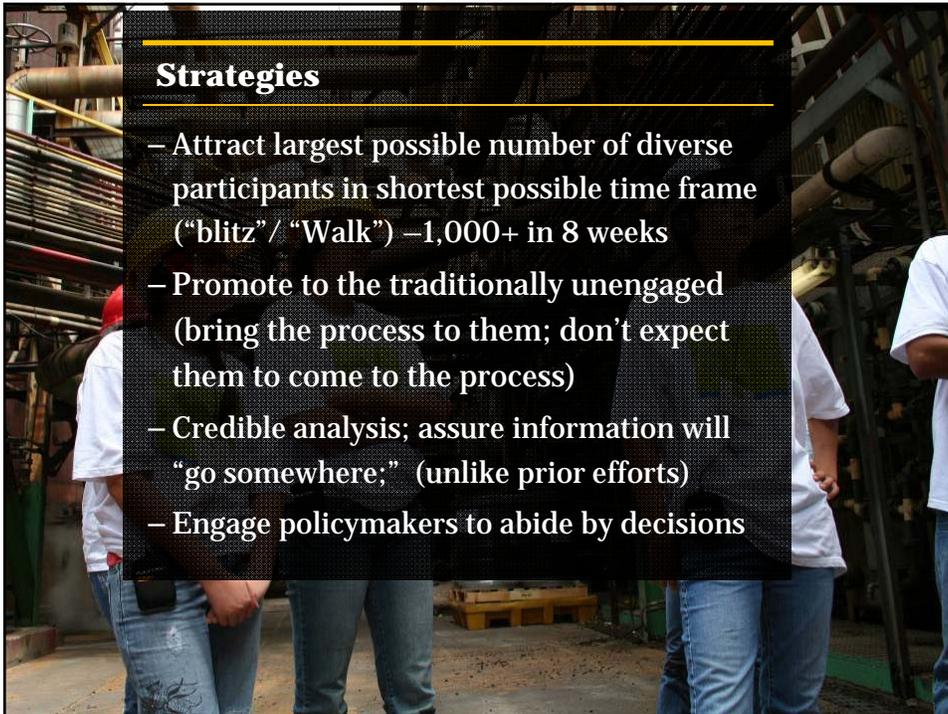
Core Decisions

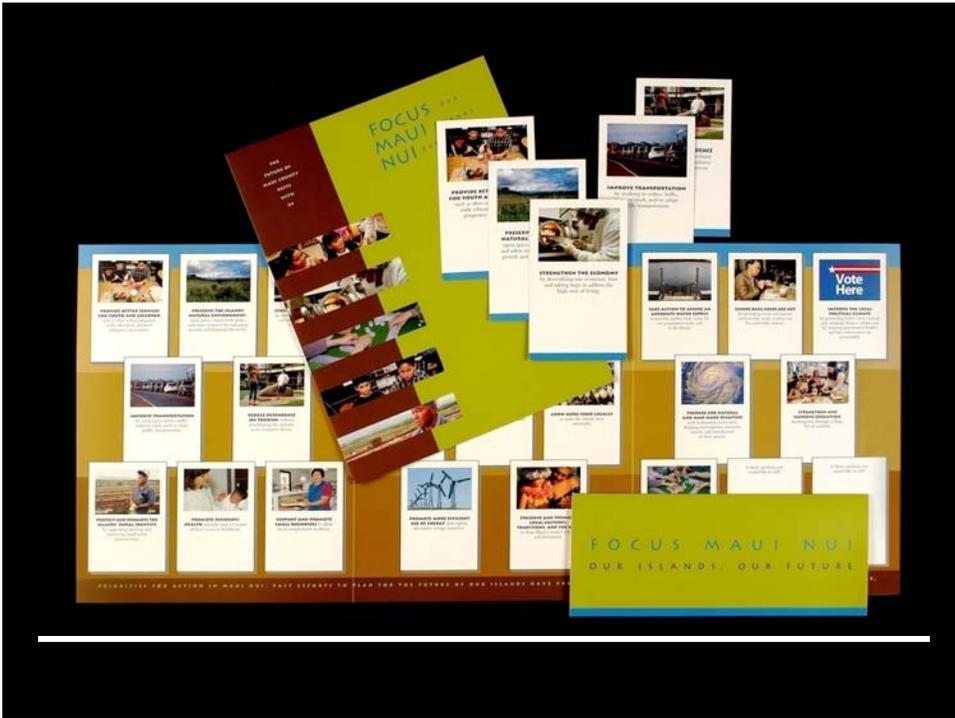
- Create diverse advisory committee
- Respect prior efforts
- Collect/analyze quantitative/qualitative data
- Disseminate vision after completion
- Develop prioritized principles to guide County decisionmaking, based on shared values and dreams
- *Develop series of small “convenings” (<12) where host is responsible for identifying participants*
- *Same content at each session*
- *Strong, appropriate “brand”*



Strategies

- Attract largest possible number of diverse participants in shortest possible time frame (“blitz”/ “Walk”) –1,000+ in 8 weeks
- Promote to the traditionally unengaged (bring the process to them; don’t expect them to come to the process)
- Credible analysis; assure information will “go somewhere;” (unlike prior efforts)
- Engage policymakers to abide by decisions

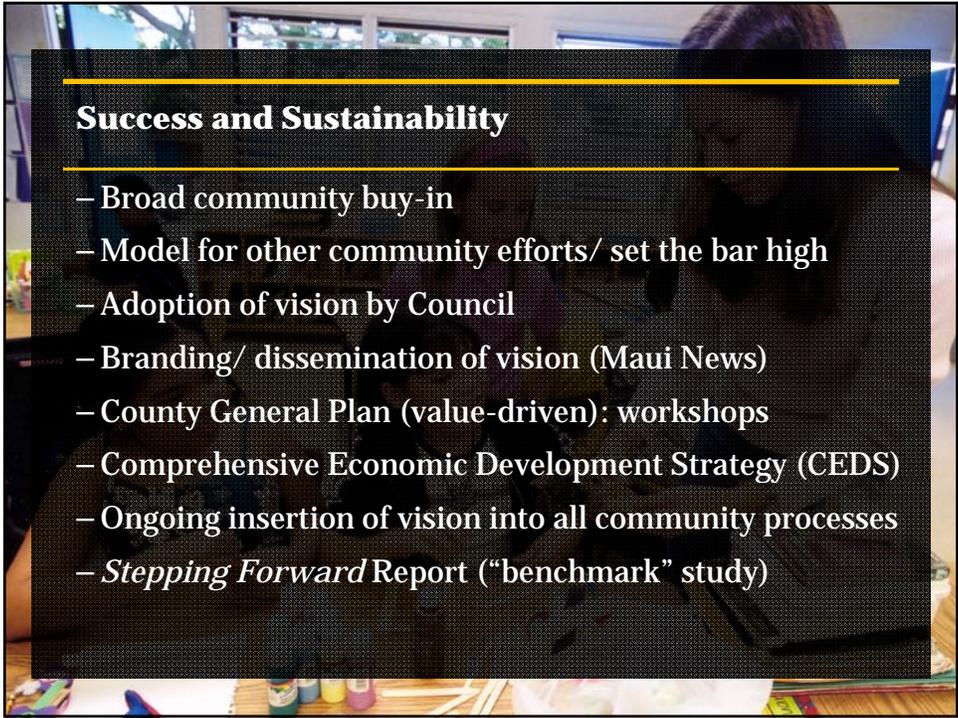




Actual Engagement

- Approximately 1,700 participants in 12 weeks (167 sessions)
- Participation from all inhabited islands
- **40% never attended public meetings;**
- **30% hadn't voted**
- Demographics mirrored population





Success and Sustainability

- Broad community buy-in
- Model for other community efforts/ set the bar high
- Adoption of vision by Council
- Branding/ dissemination of vision (Maui News)
- County General Plan (value-driven): workshops
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- Ongoing insertion of vision into all community processes
- *Stepping Forward* Report (“benchmark” study)



**Unique communities.
Unique issues.
Unique processes.**

Imagining America 2013
Fern Tiger

Other Examples

- Berkeley Unified School District (engagement to develop community-supported school enrollment plan)
- Bayer Biotechnology (engagement to establish company/community dialogue and strategy ultimately to enable company expansion, community benefit program, and new zoning)
- University of Washington Tacoma (stakeholder/leader engagement to confirm long term University direction)
- ASU (plan for “social embeddedness” of largest university in US in rapidly changing city)

Questions

- How can the engagement experiences of creative and progressive cities be brought to bear on universities in their efforts to establish authentic involvement with their communities (beyond the campus)?
- What gets in the way of authentic engagement between communities and universities?
- How can authentic engagement impact community capacity?
- How does authentic engagement address inherent power imbalances between communities and universities?