

Jim Diers Workshop Summary

Summary

The Jim Diers Workshop was held on 18 August, 2009. The workshop brought together the City's senior staff to collaborate their thoughts and participation throughout the Local Action Plans Strategy 2007-2010 (LAPs). The workshop was designed to allow staff to provide their ideas about how LAPs and Sustainable Sydney 2030 (SS2030) can be integrated to provide localised strategies that meet the short, medium and long term requirements of the 10 identified Village Centres outlined in SS2030. The objective of these strategies that are "grassroots" in nature is to provide a framework for local communities to contribute towards the City achieving the established targets and vision 'to make Sydney green, global and connected'.

Question 1: Employees experience with LAPs

Answers:

- Proactive and positive
- Created community ownership
- Provided the community with skills
- Encouraged community capacity
- Created community expectation of the Council
- Requests were fast tracked
- 'Villages were seen as separate entities
- Created more services and were in closer proximity
- Created roles for all members of the Council
- Matching grants provided new voices and new ideas from the community
- Employed community development workers in villages
- good maintenance of the programs/services
- Considered too general
- Co-ordination of requests and projects was successful
- LAPS only successful because of the availability of capital
- A lot of duplication
- Supported by good planning and consultation

Pros	Cons
Created urgency for projects	Lack of equity in zones
Sense of completion	Fast tracking projects over others
Clear directions for community	Focused on specific areas within Villages
Changed thinking about service delivery	Communities requests based on topic not specific locations
Matching grants allowed community to take initiative and engage the community	Overwhelming feedback and actions required by the City
Matching grants are easy, accessible, clear and simple	Huge Spreadsheets and information required for management – too much information
Flexible	Communities are very dependent on the City to provide everything
Good ideas are funded	
Opportunity to take pride in our work	

HOW TO DO IT DIFFERENTLY

- Develop individual stories about people who have worked or benefited from a LAPs project or matching grants
- Evaluate the relevance of feedback which should be ongoing
- More resourcing for quantity of information
- Allow the community to take ownership of issues/solutions?
- Provide educational programs in collaboration with City projects for the community e.g. Bike safety courses/workshops for new Cycleway
- Provide opportunities for internal and external feedback
- Increase the amount of grant funding – reduce dependence on the view that Council will do everything for you because you are a ratepayer.
- Need to reach new/different people
- Community development workers within the LAPS team
- Provide access to facilities for people that don't usually have access or are closed to them
- Provide updated information about how the City is achieving requests
- Need to provide specific timeframes and dates for projects
- More discussion about LAPs in City processes
- Make priorities clearer
- Re-think framework for delivery
- Need to create actions
- Allocate more responsibility to community members/organisations
- Greater focus on greening, creating and upgrading parks
- Shift in thinking to meet changing demographics
- Provide community leadership training programs through Council
- Need to create and maintain a feel of local places

Question 2: Delivering SS2030 at a local level

Answers:

- Plan for specific villages
- Focus on 'fine grain' development
- Define aims and objectives clearly
- Recognition of community self-perception
- Consider locations of services that are of importance to specific communities
- Localise general nature of requests
- Program should inform service levels required – avoid duplication
- Internal reporting needs to be streamlined and simplified so right hand knows what the left hand is doing
- Provide more tools for the community to have relationships with the City
- Share expert knowledge with Community members
- Win the Communities respect
- Creating more community ownership
- Clear reporting structure for staff and executives
- Online knowledge base (COS Google) focusing on team unit updates –
- One Knowledge Base for all to use
- Align SS2030 objectives with performance reviews
- Consider Place Managers
- Tour Bus for community groups "See Your City"
- A person or team being the village "knowledge hub"
- People telling their own stories not just the City telling stories
- New technologies used for community engagement e.g. Facebook ad DVD's twitter
- Certificates and other ideas to recognise project completion
- Show case achievements
- Find better ways to locate actual representatives of the community
- Consultation through festivals and community gatherings such as BBQs –
- Consultation should be more festive - fun
- Forming community groups and keeping them focused and making it fun
- Giving ownership of projects to the community
- Communities to consult their neighbours
- Pose the question, "what can you do for your community rather than what can the Council do for you?" aka JFK
- Identify the motivators and or apathy generators
- Work out how to harness the highly energetic but generally council negative community members – make your worst customer into your best customer principal.
- Identify the champions in the community and Council
- Identify the constraints
- Remove the barriers – red tape - Eliminate or help with barriers to success (e.g. Public Liability,
- Grow/Expand the champions in the community
- Develop better ways on finding actual representatives of communities rather than just the squeaky wheels
- Source - different people to engage in projects
- Source community members who have specific interests and ideas and channel them into relevant projects that suit their specific expertise.
- Formalise the engagement of community leaders and block captains

- Develop a network between community organisations to share knowledge and expertise
- Use Libraries & community centres as resources for engaging with the community more. Make neighbourhood centres more meaningful/participatory
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- Better communicate with out posted staff
- Both govt & community has to change from ratepayer customer's perspective to partnership matching fund in Seattle
- Cater for growth and the effects of growth
- Breakdown of community fighting vs. comprehensive planning
- Consultation – Neighbourhood planning office to provide expert/technical support – An inter-agency support team to involve local, state, federal
- Reconstruct Council structure to align with villages
- Stewardship – working up/down and across communities
- Recording their stories
- Interdisciplinary teams
- Investigate best models for local forums
- Tie SS2030 goals to business unit goals/objectives KPIs – staff PFS objectives
- Include previous grant recipients in the Matching Grant Assessment process
- Outreach face-to-face contact/invitations to smaller community groups/orgs (Matching Grants)
- Regulations/DAs, mindset, skill levels) identified & creative solutions provided
- Provide Community Development Manager/SS2030 for each village centre & resources)
- Better understanding of strategy by all staff
- Staff need more time for community development and relationship building
- Personal relationships between community organisers + staff
- More often engaging those residents with a stake in a particular issue
- Potentially use 'outreach' kits

Question 3: Improve internal reporting technique

Answers:

- Council twitter
- Internal obligation to report and share information
- Weekly blog
- More use of website
- Use maps, pictures, GIS, E-view instead of spreadsheet
- Internal champion
- Greater use of Round the Square
- Suggestion Box
- LAP's to be part of induction
- Online knowledge base which place-focused. Knowledge base for all to use
- More communication from other departments to update staff
- Neighbourhood Service Centre to be a greater and provide more services
- Planning five years ahead
- Identify long-term works
- Council has so many tools but are not used effectively
- Involvement from top tier
- Training needs to go up & down
- Simpler spreadsheets
- Better/Clearer definition of scope of work
- Common break up of consultation zones – planning maps – traffic zones. Currently all departments in Council have different ways of cutting up the LGA for administrative and operating purposes – should be a common pie that everyone refers to.
- Implementation Plan for SS2030 to break into 'digestible chunks'
- Performance assessments to include KPI's of 2030
- More regular staff briefings on vision and progress against goals – targets
- Ongoing evaluation internally of community consultation techniques
- Guest speakers at team meetings from other Council divisions
- Council create one team for each village centres to work with community working groups
- Breakfast meetings