

Overview

Getting Started...Making Choices includes three activities:

Activity 1: *What Do You Know?*

Activity 2: *How to Speak “Planning”*

Activity 3: *Who is Responsible?*

During the following activities, participants will reflect on their local communities as places that have shaped their lives. This bond between people, environment and community constitutes a “sense of place.” By exploring the media, participants define local issues. Articles abound on topics such as new housing developments, traffic, highway construction, land conservation and community character. The activities in this lesson focus on comparing local news articles from various communities throughout Pennsylvania and aligning them to basic land use principles.

Being a community leader requires an understanding of the vocabulary. It is important to learn the language of “planning”. Participants match vocabulary words and definitions to begin to translate the language. Participants share information about themselves and positive aspects of their community. Participants share objects and artifacts that represent the character of their community as they begin to discuss and define the importance of citizen responsibility.

Activity 1:

What Do You Know?

Summary: Communities are important in shaping our lives. Participants will review local articles on land use. They will relate the articles to land use principles and compare issues with other participants. They will analyze what they know and what they need to know. They will develop a concept map for studying land use.

Activity 1

Questions: How do communities influence our lives? What are the six basic principles of land use planning? How do your local issues relate to the principles? What information do you know and what information do you need to better understand the issues to become more involved?

Preparation

- Provide extra articles from the local papers.
- Place “Land Use Principles” posters around the room (pp 8-13).
- Prepare a flip chart or projection of the “Need to Know” chart (p 7).
- Copy and distribute the Concept Map to each participant and display it on a flip chart (pp 14-15).

Procedure

1. Discuss the importance of the community and “a sense of place.” There is a bond between people and place. Places shape people and vice versa. There is a growing awareness about the importance of people, space and environment in shaping perceptions, attitudes, values and world views. Landscapes act as a teacher in shaping our perception of place. For many people, their community and the region where they live is their “life space.” It is important for citizens to be actively involved in defining their community...their life space...so that it will grow and change in a direction that they want for future generations. Discuss how their communities influenced them.

2. Discuss the changes participants have seen in their communities in the past five years. Summarize and list the issues that are addressed. Participants are invited to bring an article from the local newspaper that addresses a land use issue or examples of changes in their community.

Participants are to read their article and be prepared to share it with others.

There are six land use principles that are included in the curriculum as mini posters.

They are printed and displayed around the room.

Review the six principles that are posted around the room. Participants are to move from poster to poster, selecting the one that best relates to their article.

Participants are to stand by a principle that relates to their article. (Establish a maximum number of people who can stop at any one poster.)

Land is a finite natural resource that provides habitat for much of the living world—including humans.

Land is used for many different purposes. If land is used for one purpose, its use for other purposes is limited. Each use has its consequences.

People have different attitudes and values about land use. Those differences may cause conflicts. Resolution requires cooperation, compromise and careful consideration of all information.

Land use planning is a dynamic process that involves local citizens, community leaders and special interest groups, each having an impact on the future decisions of the community as well as the region. “Not to plan” is a decision just as “planning” is a decision.

It is a civic responsibility for citizens to be involved in community decisions that impact the character, values and resources that are important now and for the future.

Ownership of land means you accept responsibility for the care of that land and follow the laws and regulations, making responsible decisions about the use of the land.

3. In their small groups, participants will summarize their articles to the rest of the small group and relate it to the poster.

One person in the group will be assigned to summarize the articles to the whole group. As each group summarizes the issues, the facilitator will project the issues on a flip chart or projection unit upon which a “Need to Know” table is drawn. Participants will discuss similarities and label the issues as local, regional, national and global.

4. Refer to the “Need to Know” chart. As the articles are discussed, summarize the issues. Fill in the “Need to Know” chart. What do participants know and what do they need to learn? The chart is used as a guide to assess the audience levels of understanding. It can be expanded throughout the training.

5. Copy and distribute the Concept Map to each participant. Prepare Concept Map for display.

Using the Concept Map as a guide, participants are invited to consider important topics about land use and to add concepts as they are addressed throughout the workshop. Review the concept map periodically and expand upon it.

6. Summarize and review the activity.

Activity 2:

How to Speak “Planning”

Summary: Participants will match sets of vocabulary cards with the definitions. Discuss vocabulary about land use. Display words on a flipchart throughout the workshop.

Questions: What are some of the vocabulary words used in conversations about land use? Why is it important to understand vocabulary?

Preparation

- Copy the vocabulary words worksheet (pp 16-17).
- Cut the words and definitions and place in an envelope for each team.