

Hear Every Voice

Case Study: Boulder Matters



A series of public meetings on a variety of topics with a festival-like atmosphere

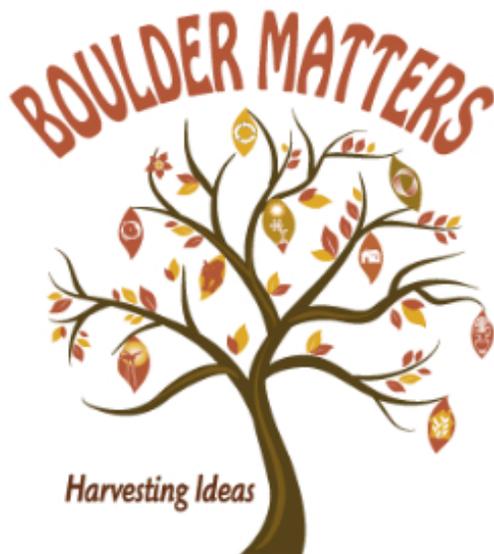
Boulder, Colorado

City of Boulder Community Planning and Sustainability

Public Participation Budget: \$4,800 (Urie, 2010)

Public Involvement: Boulder Matters was a community outreach campaign by the City of Boulder. The City conducted five meetings in October of 2010 in effort to engage citizens on a wide range of topics in “a cornucopia of fun, interactive community meetings” (City of Boulder 2010). The meetings were intended to increase residents’ knowledge on key topics and gather feedback from residents on issues such as energy, comprehensive planning, community solar gardens, and waste reduction. The Boulder Matters effort was successful in its design and branding, as well as in its offering of meeting dates, locations, and activities.

Boulder Matters iconic tree



Source: http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13710&Itemid=4215

The Boulder Matters website and was designed to be highly navigable and contain easy-to-read information. Users could view a quick presentation created by Prezi software to learn more about the community meetings, locations, and events held. Links to additional information were easily distinguishable from informational text, and users could quickly navigate from one meeting to another. Additionally, if residents found they

Project Details

Location

Organizations

Budget

Case Summary

Internet

Meeting Activity

could not make a meeting, they could provide input on the specified topics through the Boulder Matters Feedback Form listed on all pages of the website.

Example of the Prezi slides for Boulder Matters

Prezi is a presentation software product people can use to customize presentations to make them interesting and easy to read.

join us at a meeting [discussing these important topics] ...

coming to neighborhood community center near you!

Oct. 20 - Wednesday, 5 to 7 p.m.
SoBo Community meeting

- where: Fairview High School, 1515 Greenbriar Blvd.
- focus topics: Boulder's energy future, Bear & Mt. Lion info, post-war historic preservation survey, breakout sessions @ 5:30 and 6:15 p.m.
- draw: join fellow SoBo neighbors to discuss community issues that affect you. Pumpkin painting activity for kids; cider and snacks will be provided.

Source: http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13710&Itemid=4215

For the Boulder Matters effort, an iconic tree and the slogan “Harvesting Ideas” became the logo of the campaign. Keeping with the tree theme, each topic was identified by a leaf and specific icon. These icons were helpful for residents to understand what topics would be discussed at the community meetings. All campaign materials—including the website, flyers, event posters, and the online presentation—consistently employed the tree and slogan. This helped residents understand that even though the topics sometimes varied at meetings, they were all part of the same effort. Five festival-like community meetings were scheduled at

“I think we have a very involved community in some areas, but we’re looking always to sort of broaden the involvement to include new involvement and new faces,” said David Driskell, Boulder’s Executive Director of Community Planning (Urie 2010).

Leaf and icon for specific topics



Source: http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13710&Itemid=4215

a variety of times and in different locations in the Boulder area. Scheduling some on weekends during the day and others on weekdays during the evening made the meetings accessible for those who typically could not make evening meetings due to work or family commitments. The community meetings ranged from two hours to half a day depending on the type of activities and focus topics. Meetings addressed multiple topics, such as the community’s comprehensive plan, historic preservation strategy, and mountain lion management plan. Snacks were provided at all meetings, and one Saturday meeting included a pancake breakfast for a nominal cost of \$3.

“The idea is it’s almost a fair or festival kind of atmosphere,” said Chris Meschuk, a city planner. “It will make these (meetings) so it doesn’t feel like you have to sit and listen to a presentation” (Urie 2010). At all events, child-specific events such as pumpkin painting or trick-or-treating were scheduled and children were welcome to attend the meetings to take part in the kid-friendly activities. Adults engaged in a variety of activities as well. Attendees could gather information on focus topics at an information station, provide comments on an interactive comment wall, discuss ideas at a “genius lounge,” attend topic-specific breakout sessions, and win door prizes purchased by the City or donated by local businesses. For those unable to attend the meetings, the website included a Boulder Matters Feedback Form that allowed interested residents to provide input online.

Urie, H. 2010. Trying to entice public to meetings, Boulder offers prizes. Daily Camera http://www.dailycamera.com/ci_16339442

City of Boulder. 2010. Boulder Matters website. http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13710&Itemid=4215

References

Hear Every Voice Contact Information

Vanessa Levingston, MPA

Minnesota Department of Transportation: 395 John Ireland Blvd St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-366-3177 E-mail: Vanessa.Levingston@state.mn.us

Project website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/publicinvolvement/index.html>



Case Studies Developed by:

Carissa Schively Slotterback, PhD, AICP, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Cindy Zerger, ASLA, APA, Center for Changing Landscapes, University of Minnesota

in partnership with the Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota