

A Planning Process for Public Involvement

Copyright © 1995 by Peter M. Sandman

(Developed jointly with CH2M HILL and the American Water Works Association Research Foundation)

- 1. Identify your goals.** What's the problem. Why are you doing public involvement? What do you hope to get out of it?
- 2. Identify your audiences.** Who do you need to talk to? Who's demanding to be let in? Whose input do you need? Whose legitimacy? Whose buy-in? Who will be outraged later if excluded now?
- 3. Analyze your audiences' goals, vulnerabilities, and constraints.** What do they want? What possible benefits and possible costs are posed for them by your activities? What possible benefits and costs are posed for them by participating in your involvement program?
- 4. Assess your vulnerabilities.** What do you need from your audiences to achieve your goals? What does success look like? Failure?
- 5. Assess your constraints.** What are you allowed to do or not do as you choose? What's forbidden? What's compulsory? What decisions are predetermined? What's your mandate, your budget, your schedule?
- 6. Determine the issues on the table.** Based on both sides' goals, vulnerabilities, and constraints, what's worth discussing? What goals might your audiences have that you can meet? What goals might you have that they can meet? Where is discussion likely to prove fruitful, and where isn't it?
- 7. Determine your process.** Based on all of the above, what sort of process will work? Education? Consultation? Negotiation? Where on the "ladder of public involvement" are you?
- 8. Determine your tools.** Community advisory panel? Constituency meetings? Public hearings? Mediation/arbitration? Role-playing?
- 9. Develop your plan.** And get buy-in internally and externally.
- 10. Implement your plan.** And evaluate and revise as you go along.

Peter M. Sandman, Ph.D.

59 Ridgeview Road
Princeton NJ 08540-7601

Email: peter@psandman.com
Web: www.psandman.com

Phone: 1-609-683-4073
Fax: 1-609-683-0566

Consulting, Training, and Research in Risk Communication