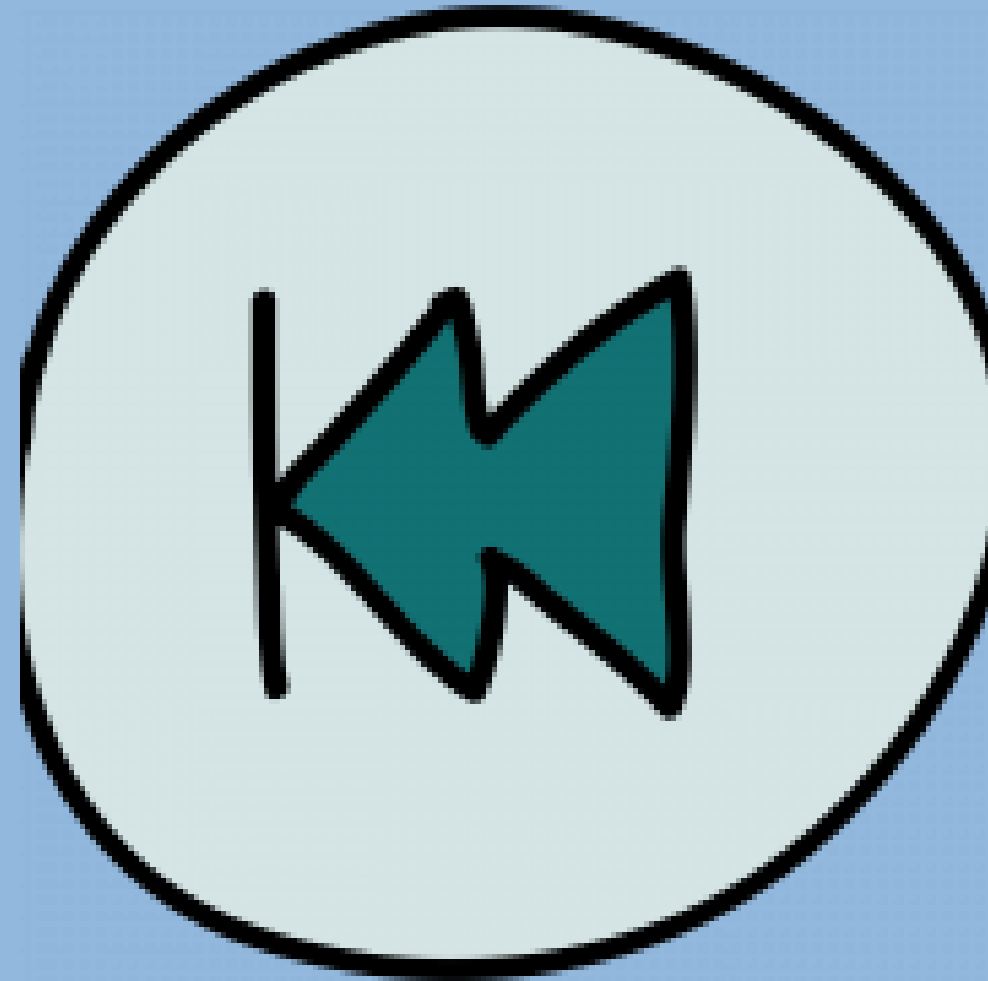


From Dry & Dirty to Engaging & Exciting

Community Engagement Best Practices



Rewind!

**What IS
Community Engagement?**

What is Community Engagement?

- A way to gather input and share information
- A way to work together
- It might be required, but it doesn't have to be boring!

At its best, it is...

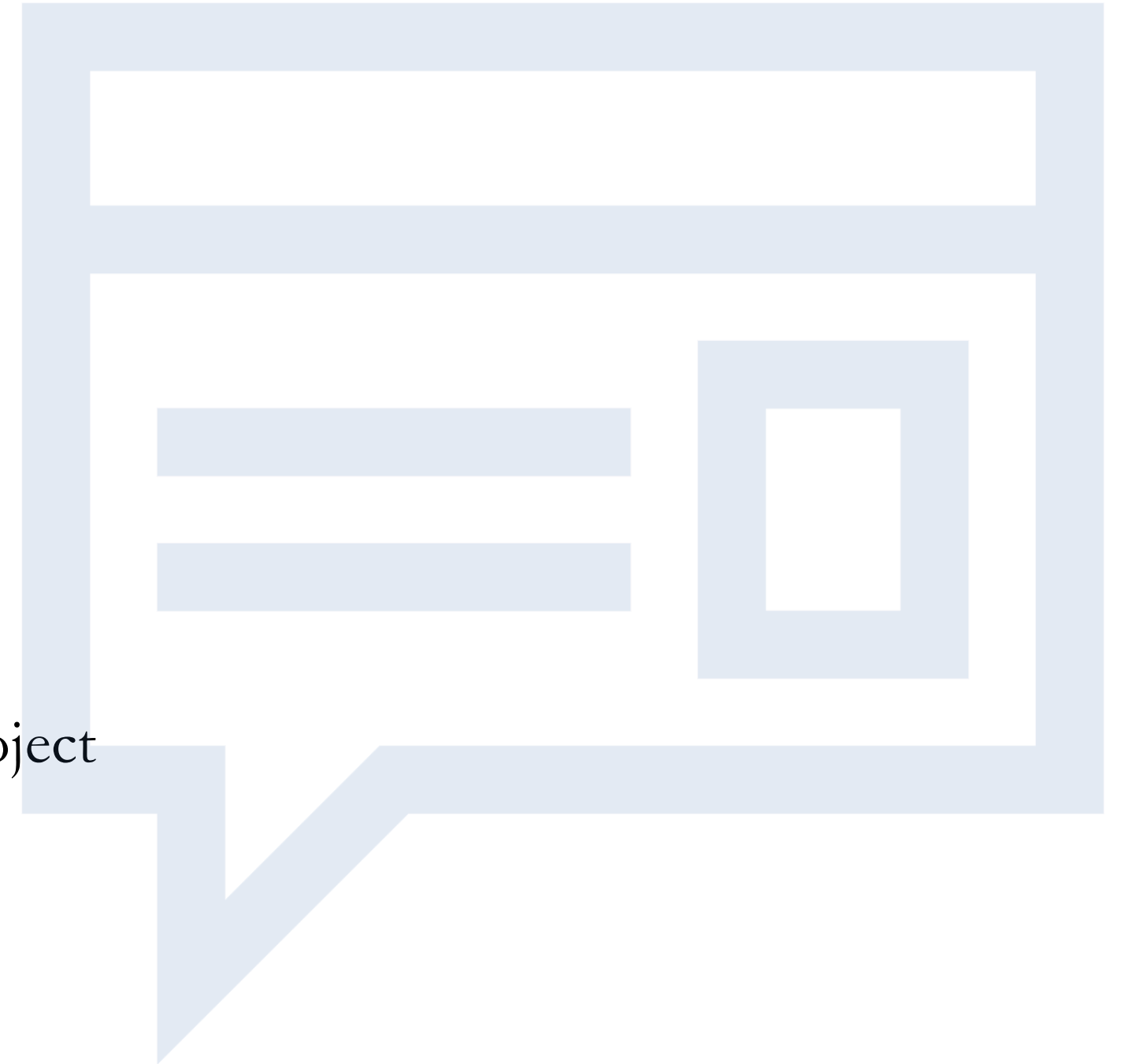
- Inclusive
- Genuine
- Collaborative
- Creative
- Fun





Benefits of community engagement (beside it's a requirement)

- Community buy-in and connection to the project
- Inside scoop
- Instant feedback
- Addressing rumors/hearsay head on.....



How to engage your community?

- Any and every that way that is feasible!
- Different people will want to engage in different ways

Presentations to city council/county commission

Public meetings

Community events

One on one meetings

Reports

Websites and social media

Surveys

...which is why your consultant can be beneficial in public engagement

- Hearing it from an “expert”
- Experience in communicating this type of information to the public
- Can bring the bells and whistles....or maps, diagrams, data tables....





GIG

Grafton Information Gathering

- Grafton First Friday...Harry Potter theme
- Grafton City Council
- Taylor County Commission
- *Growing Tourism in Grafton and Taylor County* report



Meeting Folks Where they Are

A Different Approach to Community Engagement



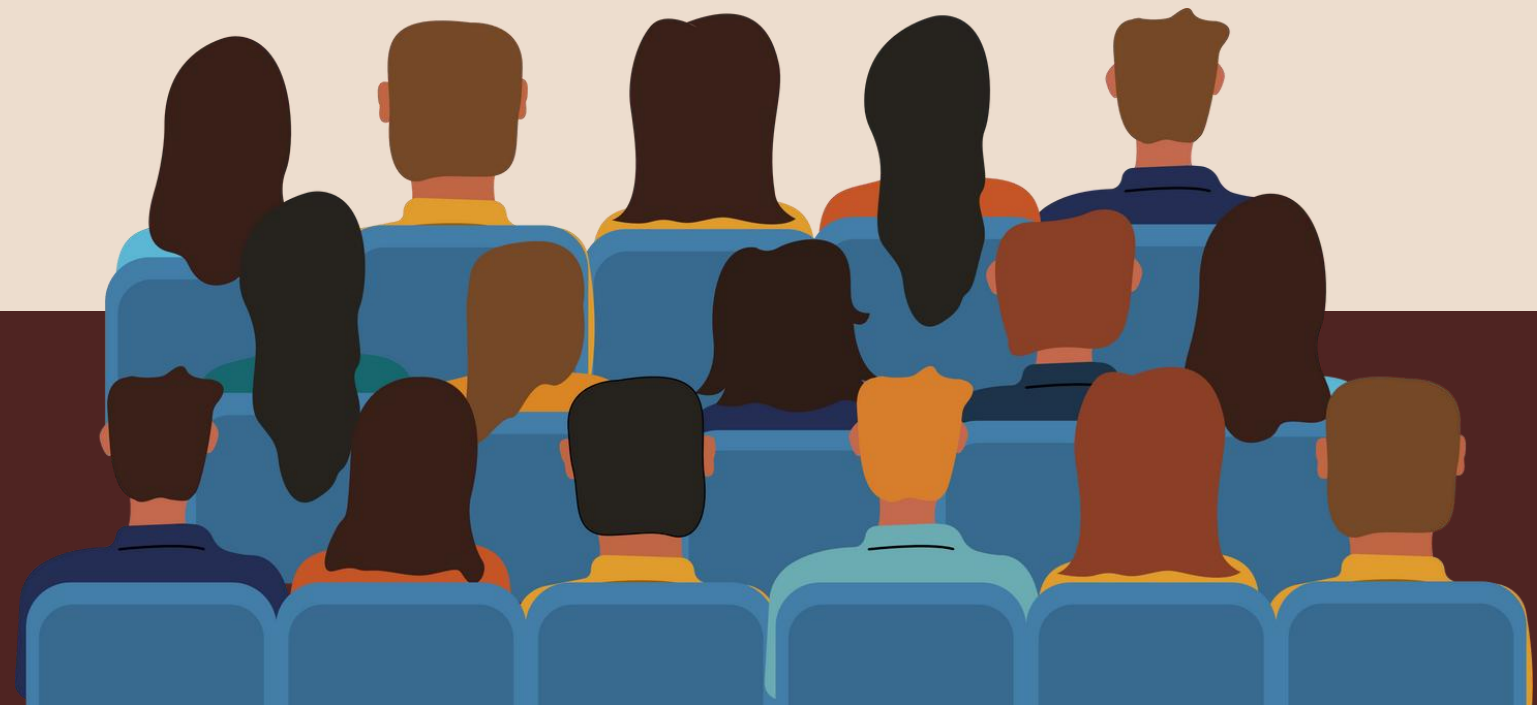
Community Engagement is Essential

- Required by EPA – affects scoring & eligibility
- Public Involvement – notice of plans, comment period, responses, accessible records
- Community Involvement Plan – outline strategy in grant application
- Equity Focus – engage underserved/overburdened groups meaningfully
- Best Practices – early outreach, multiple communication methods, document all engagement



Challenges to community engagement

- Low attendance at public meetings
- General disinterest/not understanding the project
- Requirement to target the specific community where project is located could mean under 50 homes in small cities/rural Appalachia, making targeting extremely difficult
- Official notice requirements in newspapers not read/ hard to get the word out to interested parties or the specific area that needs targeted



So, what can be done different?

COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY!

- Paid for by the Project Sponsor
- Features:
 - FREE FOOD
 - DJ
 - Bounce Houses/Blow Ups
 - Kid Friendly Activities
- Held in the community where the project is taking place



Why it worked

- Created a reason to come to get interested in the project:
 - Flipped the community outreach model on its head- aimed to make disinterested parties interested
- Aimed at families with kids - gave the kids something to do to give mom and dad a break
- Held on a weekend afternoon when families are often looking for things to do
- Had large maps and vision boards printed out so folks could see concepts to spark conversations and ideas



Tips to remember

- HAVE FOOD AND DRINKS!
- Provide a variety of ways that people can participate
- BUT, make sure that the opportunities can realistically be carried out (enough volunteers, funds, etc.)
- Share good news and “wins” whenever you can



Wrapping Up



MID - ATLANTIC
TAB
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO
BROWNFIELDS COMMUNITIES

Mid-Atlantic TAB is here to help with any questions you may have throughout your brownfield journey- And our services are FREE!

We have teams across Region 3 who offer their own services and specialties.

We're ready to assist you with your brownfield projects!

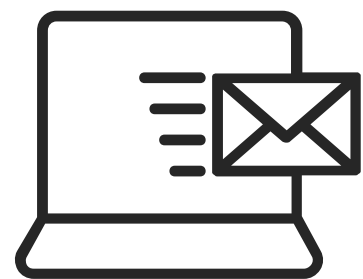


Thank You!



TAB Hotline: [\(304\) 293-7071](tel:(304)293-7071)

Direct Email: wwutab@mail.wvu.edu



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Other Resources

[Brownfields Website](#) | [Brownfields Grants](#) | [Brownfields Solicitations](#) | [Brownfield FAQ](#) | [Brownfields & Infrastructure Law](#) | [Brownfields & EJ](#) | [Mid-Atlantic TAB Website](#)