

8 simple steps to prepare for a community meeting

- 1. Be on time.** Even if you aren't scheduled to present until later, showing up on time builds rapport with the people you need support from.
- 2. Bring visuals.** It's hard for people to know what you're talking about if they can't see it. You might have people who are new to the area or just can't picture "3rd and Tatnall Street," for example. Having a blown up map, pictures or detailed descriptions of the area you want to change is very helpful.
- 3. Be clear** about what your intentions are and how it will benefit the community.
- 4. Prepare for questions.** When you schedule the meeting, ask the scheduler what questions people might have. Some common ones are:
 - Are there any known hazards?
 - Will you hire locally?
 - Do you have other properties in the area?
- 5. Be respectful** and tell people if you need to leave in your introduction, so they are prepared. Also, have a good excuse for leaving early. It is 2 hours out of your day that can make a huge impact on whether or not your project moves forward so unless you have someplace else you really need to be, don't leave early.
- 6. Remain open-minded.** You may be faced with hostility, so be prepared. People don't like change and they are increasingly skeptical of people coming in to sell them on something. So understand that you will be challenged and be prepared to be honest. If you don't know, just say you don't know.
- 7. Listen.** The community can give you great insight into the feasibility of your project and their questions may get you thinking about things you never considered. Listen carefully and ask follow-up questions as well. It should be a conversation.
- 8. Say thank you.** Send a follow-up thank you email expressing your gratitude. It's the little things that leave a good impression in people's minds.

For an in-depth guide on preparing for public meetings, ask about our trainings!