FREE WEBINAR
Tailored for Local Gov't Leaders

REFRAMING THE LOCAL PLANNING PROCESS
Tips and Tools to Help Local Planning Departments Weather the COVID Crisis

THURSDAY, JUNE 18
1:30 PM

Register online at
WWW.CA-ILG.ORG
Thank You for Joining!

Webinar Host & Moderator

Melissa Kuehne
Program Manager
Institute for Local Government
The COVID crisis has changed the way that local governments do business. From permit processing to General Plan and Climate Action Plan updates, local governments are finding innovative ways to deliver these essential services and engage their community. Today’s webinar will share some of the pivots that local governments have made in their planning processes to continue to meet the needs of residents, businesses and developers, and what policies and practices they can put into place to be better prepared for future crisis events.
Today’s Agenda

Welcome & Overview

About ILG

Presentations by:
- Brandon James and David Tilley, City of West Sacramento
- Trevor Keith, San Luis Obispo County
- Lynnete Guzman and Mark Teague, PlaceWorks

Q&A

Contact Information
How to Ask a Question During the Webinar

- All webinar participants will be on MUTE during the entire call.
- Please TYPE any questions into the question box at any time during the webinar.
- The moderator will read your questions during the question period at the end of the webinar.
ILG is the non-profit training and education affiliate of…

We provide practical and easy-to-use resources so local agencies can effectively implement policies on the ground.
Our mission is to help local government leaders navigate complexity, increase capacity & build trust in their communities
ILG’s FREE Resources

COVID-19
- www.ca-ilg.org/COVID-19
  - Local Government Resources
  - State and National Resources
  - Tools and Training Opportunities
  - Local Government Response

Sustainability Best Practices During the COVID-19 Crisis
- www.ca-ilg.org/covid-sustainability-best-practices

Housing and Public Engagement Toolkit
- www.ILGHousingToolkit.org

Public Engagement Resources
- www.ca-ilg.org/engagement
  - Basics of Public Engagement
  - ILG’s TIERS Public Engagement Framework
  - Partnering with Community Based Organizations
  - Language Access
COVID-19 Resources

www.cacities.org/Regions/California-Cities

www.csdanet/covid-19-resources

www.counties.org/carousel/resources-regarding-coronavirus-covid-19
Tell Us More About You – Audience Poll
Today’s Presenters

Brandon James
Building Inspector
City of West Sacramento

David Tilley
Principal Planner
City of West Sacramento

Trevor Keith
Director Department of Planning and Building
San Luis Obispo County

Lynnette Guzman
Project Planner
PlaceWorks

Mark Teague
Associate Principal
PlaceWorks
BACKGROUND

• March 16- City Manager directs staff to begin working remotely starting March 17
• Direction is to keep things moving
• Construction is considered essential by the State
BUILDING ADAPTATIONS

- Permit submittal by appointment only
- Use of virtual inspection platform (Blitzz)
  - Not used previously
- Expanded use of electronic plan check (Bluebeam) and email submittal for minor projects
- Field inspections: PPE and physical distancing
VIRTUAL INSPECTIONS

• Pros-
  • Less travel and vehicle insurance liability
  • Personal safety
  • Visual documents for litigatory purposes
  • Educational opportunities
  • Volume of inspections
VIRTUAL INSPECTIONS

• Cons
  • Virtual connection reliability
    • Wi-Fi
    • Equipment
  • communication barriers
    • Language
    • Contact
  • Larger project needs
    • Human factor
PLANNING EFFORTS

• Multiple long-rang planning efforts started prior to COVID-19
  • Specific Plan update
  • Climate Action Plan update
  • Housing Element/General Plan Update (hard statutory deadline)

• Each requires substantial public engagement

• Counted on pop-up events, farmers’ markets, Little League, Earth Day, etc.
CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

- Hard to reach persons may be harder to reach
- Digital divide
- People worried about health, jobs, social issues, etc.
- Virtual meeting fatigue

- Linkage between pandemics and climate change
- Pre-recorded info: people can watch on their time
PLANNING ADAPTATIONS

• CAP: moved outreach to a later phase
  • Piggyback on HE efforts

• Specific Plan Update: virtual workshop
  • Online Q&A
  • Postcards

• Housing Element/General Plan Update
  • Materials in multiple languages
  • Russian radio station
  • Utilize existing community and formal channels
Trevor Keith
Director, Department of Planning and Building
Background

Prior to Shelter at Home:

- Limited Online Permitting Services
- In-Person Only Hearing Participation
Shelter at Home

- 100ish Staff Working Remotely
- Public Counters Closed
- Increase in Phone and Email Inquiries
- Pivot from In-Person Focus
Communication

- Clear Consistent Communication
- Regular Updates to Avoid Information Overload
- Daily Meetings with Managers to Catch Issues Early
Permit Processing

• Permit Tracking System

• Online Permit Processing
Hearings

- Challenges – Broadband Access, Hesitancy with Technology
- Process – Zoom & Practice, Practice, and more Practice

Notice of Temporary Meeting Procedures

TEMPORARY MEETING PROCEDURES

Based on the threat of COVID-19 as reflected in the Proclamations of Emergency issued by both the Governor of the State of California and the San Luis Obispo County Emergency Services Director as well as the Governor’s Executive Order N-29-20 issued on March 17, 2020, relating to the convening of public meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, until further notice all public meetings for the Department of Planning and Building for the County of San Luis Obispo will be closed to members of the public and non-essential County staff.

Below are instructions on how to view the meeting remotely and how to provide public comment. Additionally, hearing body members and officers may attend the meeting via teleconference and participate in the meeting to the same extent as if they were present.

Agendas Posted in Public Locations
Agendas will still be physically posted outside of the San Luis Obispo Superior Courthouse at the Monterey entrance at 1050 Monterey Street and outside of the New Government Center entrance at 1055 Monterey Street. A full copy of the agenda packet, which includes staff reports will now be available for public review at the Public Information Counter in the lobby of the New Government Center at 1055 Monterey Street.

Using the most rapid means of communication available at this time, members of the public are encouraged to participate in meetings in the following ways:

How to Observe the Meeting (no public comment)
- Cable Channel 21 (Planning Commission Only)
- www.slocounty.ca.gov

How to Join Meeting and Provide Spoken Public Comment (ZOOM Platform)

Join Meeting
Members of the public, including applicants/agents, wishing to observe and/or provide live public comment may also participate in the meeting via the ZOOM platform by using one of the following options:

Via Computer or Smart Device (e.g., smartphone, tablet, etc.)
- Follow the meeting link at the top of the agenda.
Staff Working Remotely

- Survey Results
- Lack of Distractions
- Greater Efficiency

Planning & Building Reopening Survey

Thank you for taking the time to help us determine the needs of our department while we plan to move back into the office and open public counters.

Please fill out the survey below.

What's working well with our department's current operational status?:

What could be improved?:

What resources or support do you need to continue working remotely?:

What limitations, if any, do you have if we were to start working in the office in the next 3 months?:

What do you need to feel safe working in the office and working with the public again?:

Comments, Concerns, Suggestions:

Submit
Lessons Learned

Offer More Customer Self Service

Leverage Technology

Improved Communication for Better Engagement

Regular Communication to Staff
Moving Forward

- User-Friendly Website Content
- Improved Process for Managing Customer Requests/Inquiries
- Utilize Permit Tracking Software to its Fullest Capability
- Continuing to Offer Opportunities for Equitable Public Participation
Planning Beyond Traditional Outreach

Lynnette Guzman, Project Planner
Mark Teague, AICP, Associate Principal
How can urban planners do meaningful community engagement?
Lanes Or People?

‘Where am I going to go?’ Dozens of Santa Ana homes will be demolished to widen Warner Avenue

Matt Lemas
June 17, 2015 at 9:12 a.m.
Local News, News, Things To Do

Among those who will be affected by the street widening are Lupe and Robert Fernandez, both 81, who bought their house in Santa Ana’s Delhi neighborhood in 1956.
How do you invest in community partnerships, without spending a dime?

Building bridges is good, but building trust is essential.

Learn how to be the teacher, and learn how to be the student.

Be comfortable with uncertainty and controversy.
What should an outreach plan include?

- **Flexibility, Adaptability and Creativity**
  - Consider a flexible timeline and budget

- **Prioritize Equitable Planning**
  - Include various levels of community engagement

- **Address Unintended Consequences**
  - Sometimes solving one issue may present another issue
Access is Not Equal

- Not Everyone Has High Speed Internet
- Many Do Not Have a Computer
- Many Call-in And Cannot See the Agenda or Presentation
- Agency Websites Confusing on How To Participate
- Have Someone Assigned to Help
Public Outreach Is Not Simply A Notice in the Paper

• Newspaper Notices
• Readership Dropping
• Language Difficult to Understand
• Noticing Is Ineffective

Legally Adequate - Unreadable

Source: Pew Research Center - Newspaper Fact Sheet (June 2018)
US Census Bureau - Historical Households Tables
U.S. Newspaper Readership By Ethnicity 1999 - 2015

2015

- White: 31%
- African American: 27%
- Asian: 22%
- Hispanic: 18%
- Other: 22%
Embrace Social Media

• Not a “Fad”
• Have a Presence
• Can be Both Powerful and Wrong
• Be a Source for Facts

More Americans get news often from social media than print newspapers

% of U.S. adults who get news often on each platform

Note: The difference between social media and print newspapers in 2017 was not statistically significant.
Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Public Outreach

• Start Earlier in The Process
  – Ok to not have all the information
  – Be open to informal off-site meetings
• Meet to Learn, Not to Decide
• Hold Several Smaller Meetings
• Ask Questions
• Listen
• Fairness, Not Speed Is the Intent
• Yes, This Can be Done Online
Online Meeting Observations

• Not Business As Usual
  – No Body Language
  – Harder to Participate
  – More Confusing

• Presentations Are More Important
  – Need to be More Thorough

• Hard to Hear & See
  – Not Everyone Comfortable with Microphone
  – Technology Matters

• Technical “Glitches”
Suggestions for Presenters

• Practice the Presentation
  – Speak Slower Than Normal
  – Practice and if Possible, Record Your Presentation
  – Post the Presentation On-Line (before or after the meeting)

• Simplify the Slide Deck
  – Larger Type
  – Larger Graphics
  – Less Text
  – More Pictures
Review Your Application Procedures

• Paper Forms
• Physical Payment of Fees
• Large Electronic File Transfer
• Additional Time for Review
• Do You Still Use A Fax?
Suggestions for Decision Makers

• All Microphones are ON! Always, and Recording Too!
• All Video Cameras are ON! Always, and transmitting Too!
• Be Sure of Your Video Background
• If Its On the Internet, Its There Forever.
• Mute Your Phone, Radio, TV
• Stay on Mute Until You Need To Talk
• Read Comments Into the Record
• Be Patient with Commenters
“TELL ME & I’LL FORGET
SHOW ME, & I MAY NOT
REMEMBER. INVOLVE ME
& I’LL UNDERSTAND”

American Indian Proverb
Stay Connected & Stay Informed

Like us on Facebook
@InstituteForLocalGovt

Follow us on Twitter
@instlocgov

Sign up for our e-Newsletter
www.ca-ilg.org/stayinformed
Tell Us What You Need Next – Audience Poll
Thank You!

Brandon James
City of West Sacramento
brandonj@cityofwestsacramento.org

David Tilley
City of West Sacramento
davidt@cityofwestsacramento.org

Trevor Keith
San Luis Obispo County
tkeith@co.slo.ca.us

Lynnete Guzman
PlaceWorks
lguzman@placeworks.com

Mark Teague
PlaceWorks
mteague@placeworks.com

Melissa Kuehne
Institute for Local Gov.
mkuehne@ca-ilg.org