Strategies to Engage Your Community on Housing Issues

Thursday, August 5, 2021
2:00 – 3:30 pm

Thank You for Joining!

Webinar Host & Moderator

Melissa Kuehne
Senior Program Manager
Institute for Local Government

Today's Agenda

Welcome & Logistics

Setting the Stage

Presentations by:

- Wendy Nowak, Principal, PlaceWorks
- Delo Freitas, Senior Planner, City of Arcata
- Councilmember Ruben Abrica, City of East Palo Alto

Panel Discussion

Q&A

Upcoming Webinars & Wrap Up

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.

Non-Profit, Non-Partisan & Here to Help

ILG is the non-profit training and education affiliate of…

CSDA California Special Districts Association *Districts Stronger Together*

CSAC

LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

We provide practical and easy-to-use resources so local agencies can effectively implement policies on the ground.

ILG's Programs & Services

Program Areas

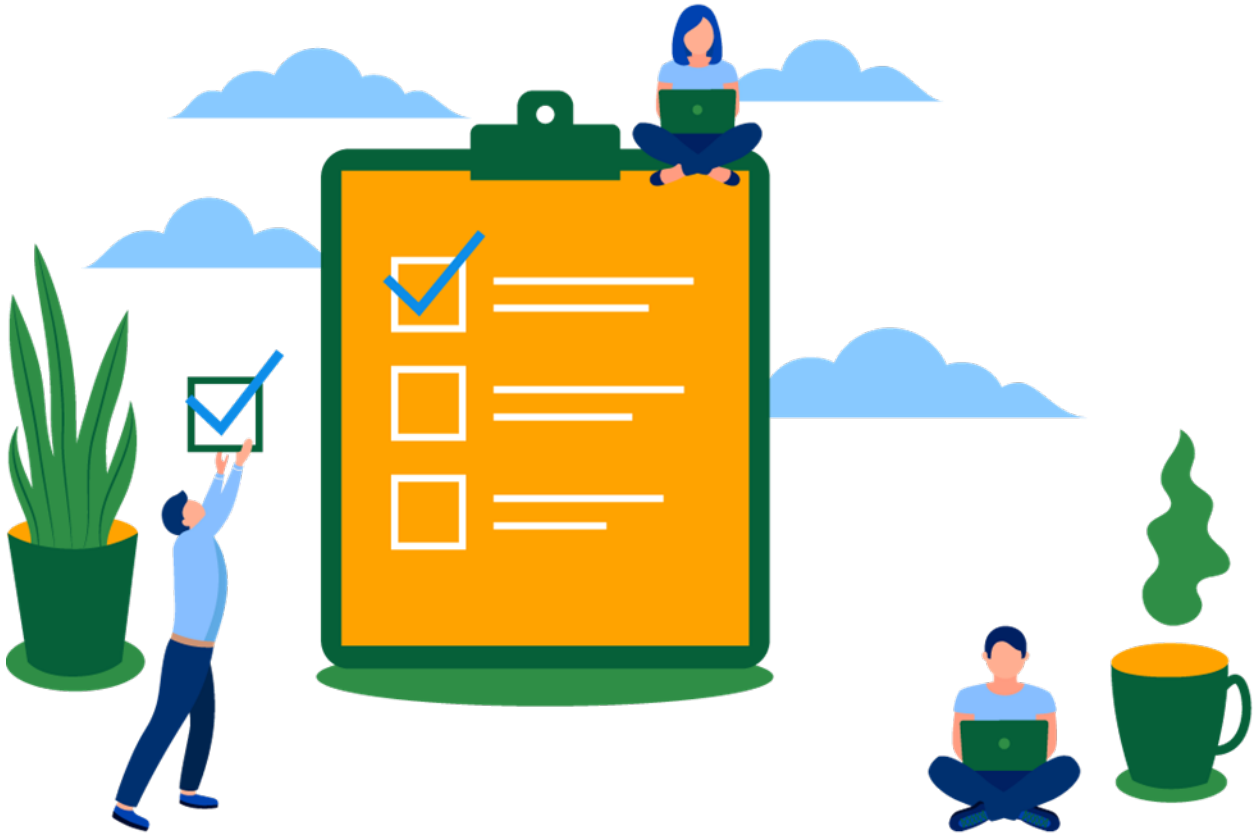
- Leadership & Governance
- Civics Education & Workforce
- Public Engagement
- Sustainable Communities

Services

- Education & Training
- Technical Assistance
- Capacity Building
- Convening

Our mission is to help local government leaders navigate complexity, increase capacity & build trust in their communities

Tell Us More About You – Audience Poll



Today's Presenters

Ruben Abrica,
Councilmember
City of East Palo Alto

Wendy Nowak
Principal
PlaceWorks

Delo Freitas
Senior Planner
City of Arcata

Setting the Stage

Ongoing through June 2023

Statewide Housing Technical Assistance Program

Statewide and Regional TA

Planning Commissioner Handbook

+

Trainings

Elected Official Trainings

What We're Hearing in the Field

- Hard to navigate hybrid engagement/reopening
- Many jurisdictions are seeing more participation in a virtual environment
- Virtual engagement is exacerbating the digital divide
- Challenging to make virtual engagement interactive
- RHNA targets are hard to meet
- Challenging to balance community housing needs and the community's "vision"

Why Engage the Public?

- Better identification of the public's values, ideas and recommendations – and vision for their community
- More informed residents - about issues and about local agencies
- Improved local agency decision-making and actions, with better impacts and outcomes
- More community buy-in and support, with less contentiousness
- Faster project implementation with less need to revisit
- More trust - in each other and in local government
- In some cases, it is required

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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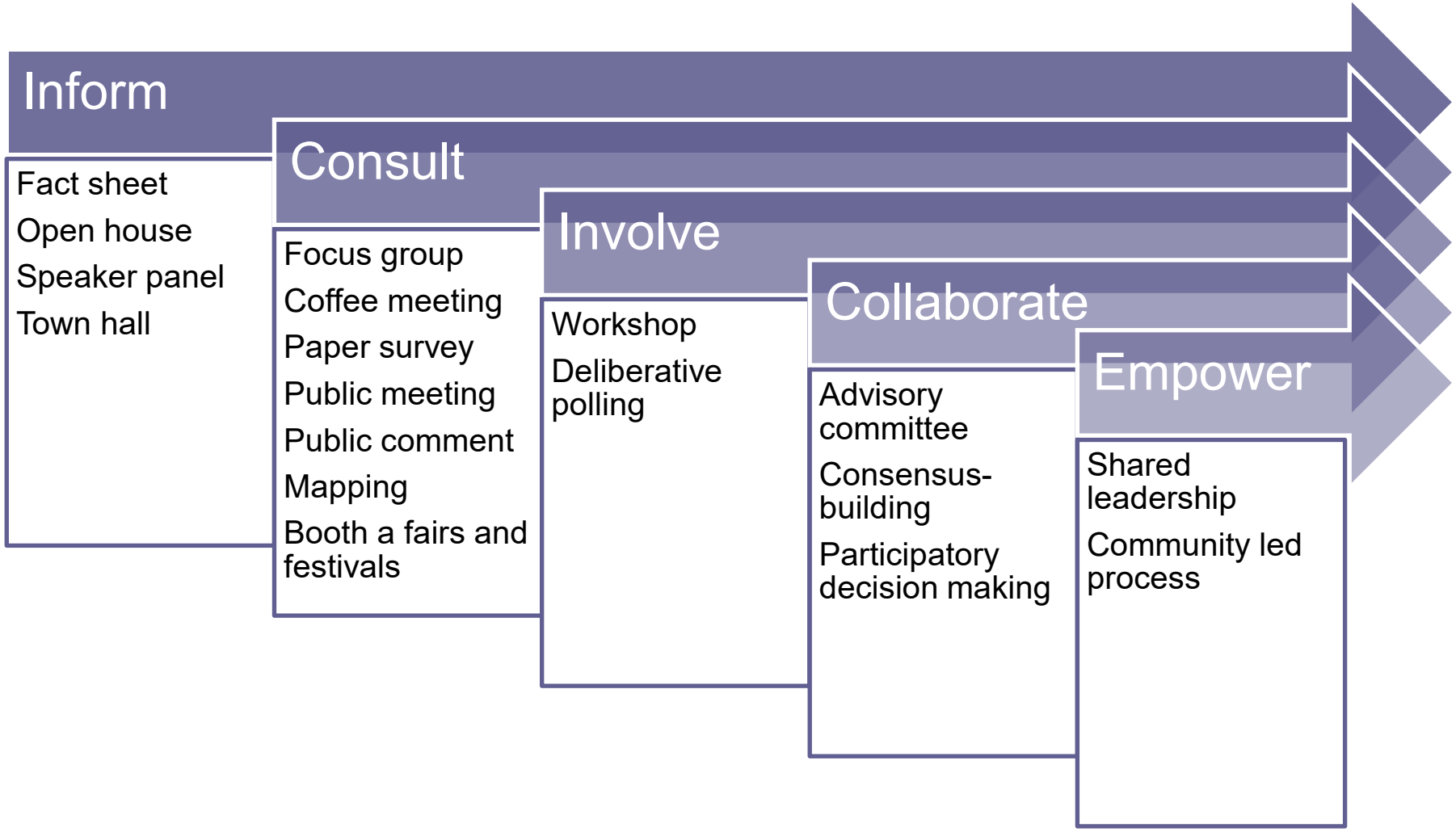
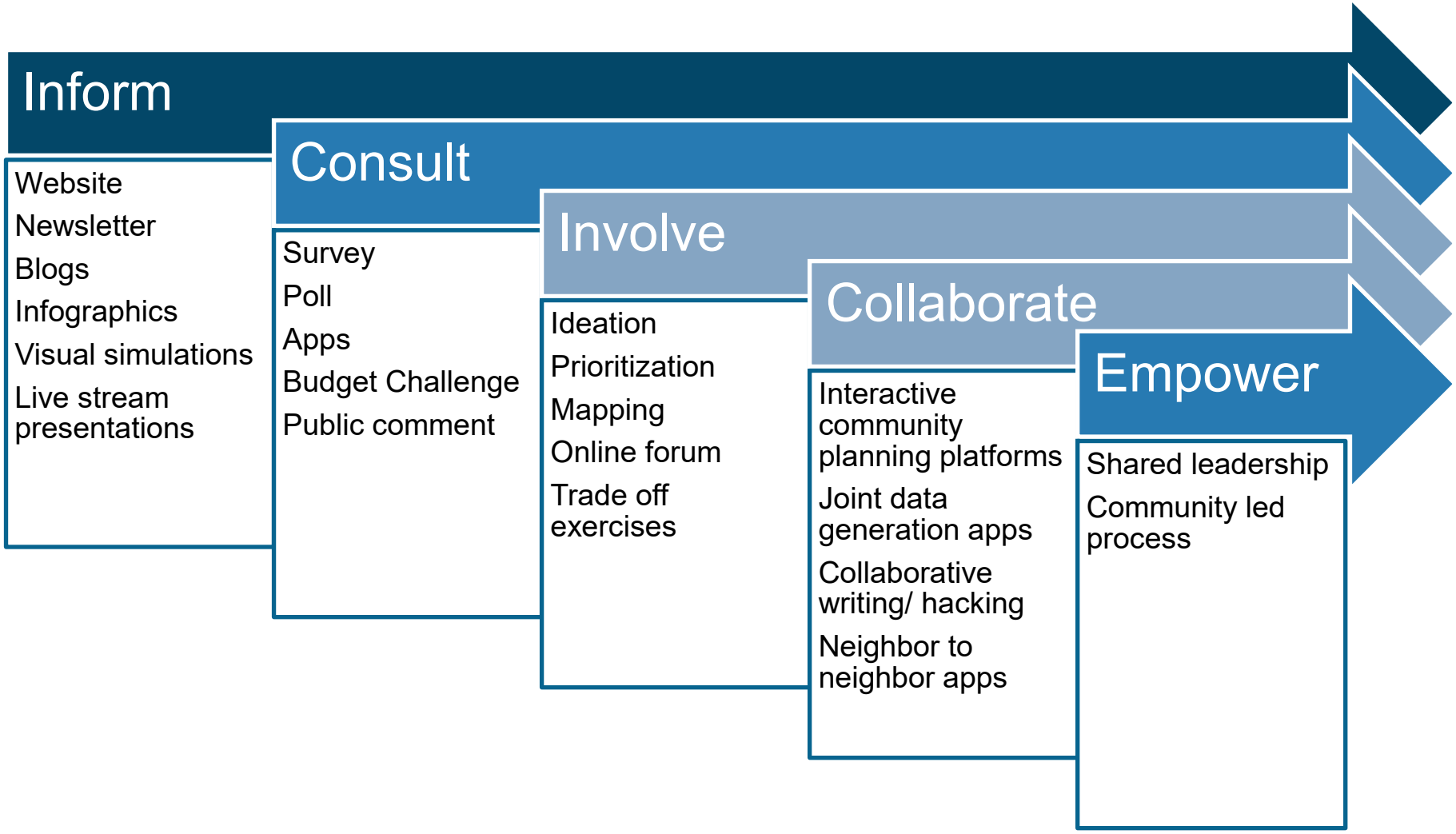
Consider In-Person Options



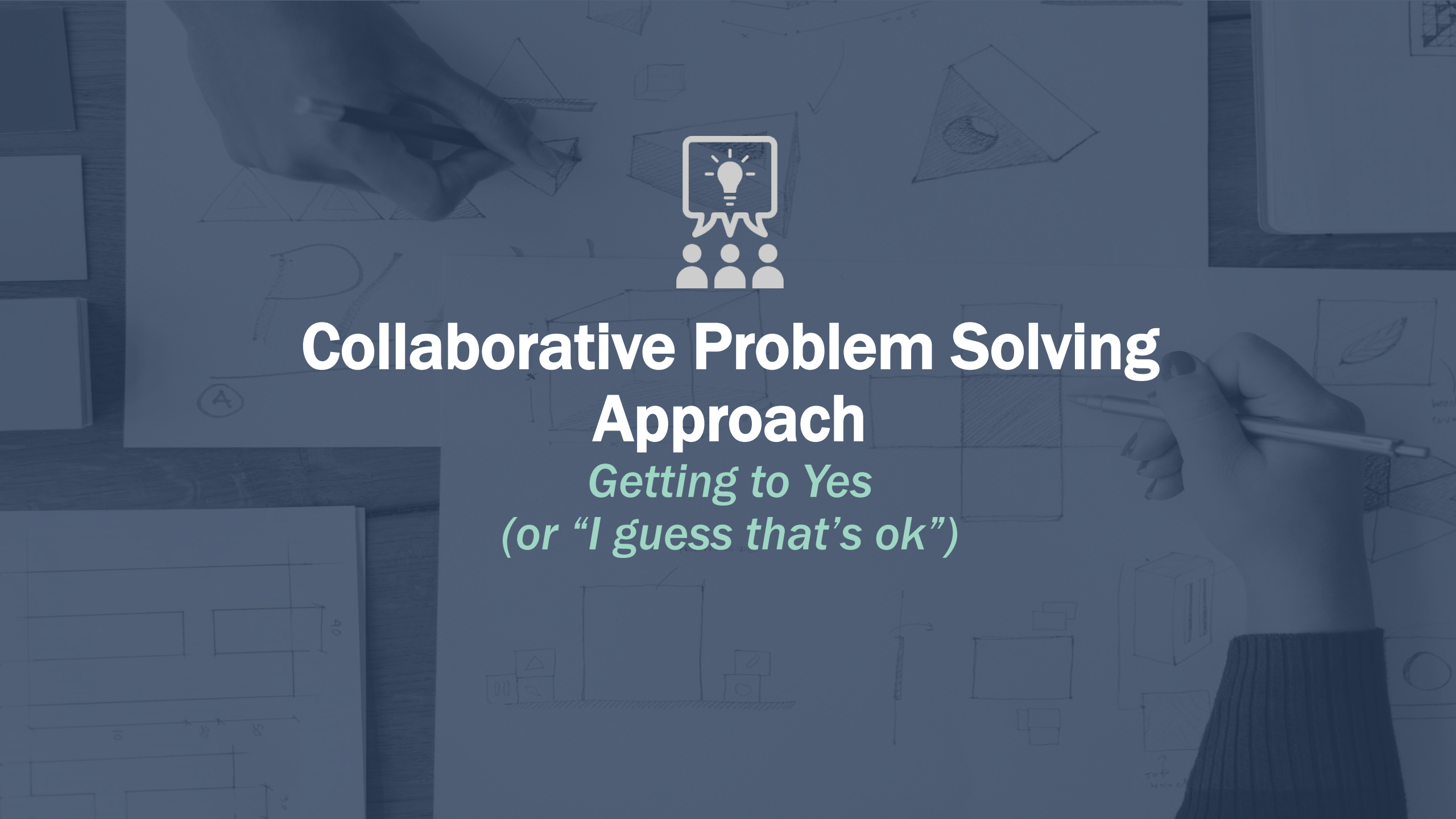
Consider Digital Options



Choosing the "Right" Approach

Key Considerations

- Who is in your community/who are you trying to reach?
- What is the *purpose* of your engagement?
- What input are you seeking?
- Where are you in the process?
- What tools and approaches will help you achieve your goals?
- Do you have a mix of high tech and low tech options?



Collaborative Problem Solving Approach

Getting to Yes

(or "I guess that's ok")

Messaging: How to tell the story

- Convey what you know and why it matters. Why should people care about this issue?
  - Make it relatable, share limitations, if any
  - “Grandma Test”
- Our Commitment
  - What decisions can the community influence
  - To what degree we can address issue at this time and what’s coming next
- Demonstrate you heard community
  - Share majority results but also the alternative views so people see you considered all sides
- Share what actions you took (and couldn’t take and why)

Positional Bargaining

- Positional bargaining is a battle of wills
- Positional bargaining is hard on relationships
- Positional bargaining produces unwise agreements
- Win-lose usually becomes LOSE-LOSE

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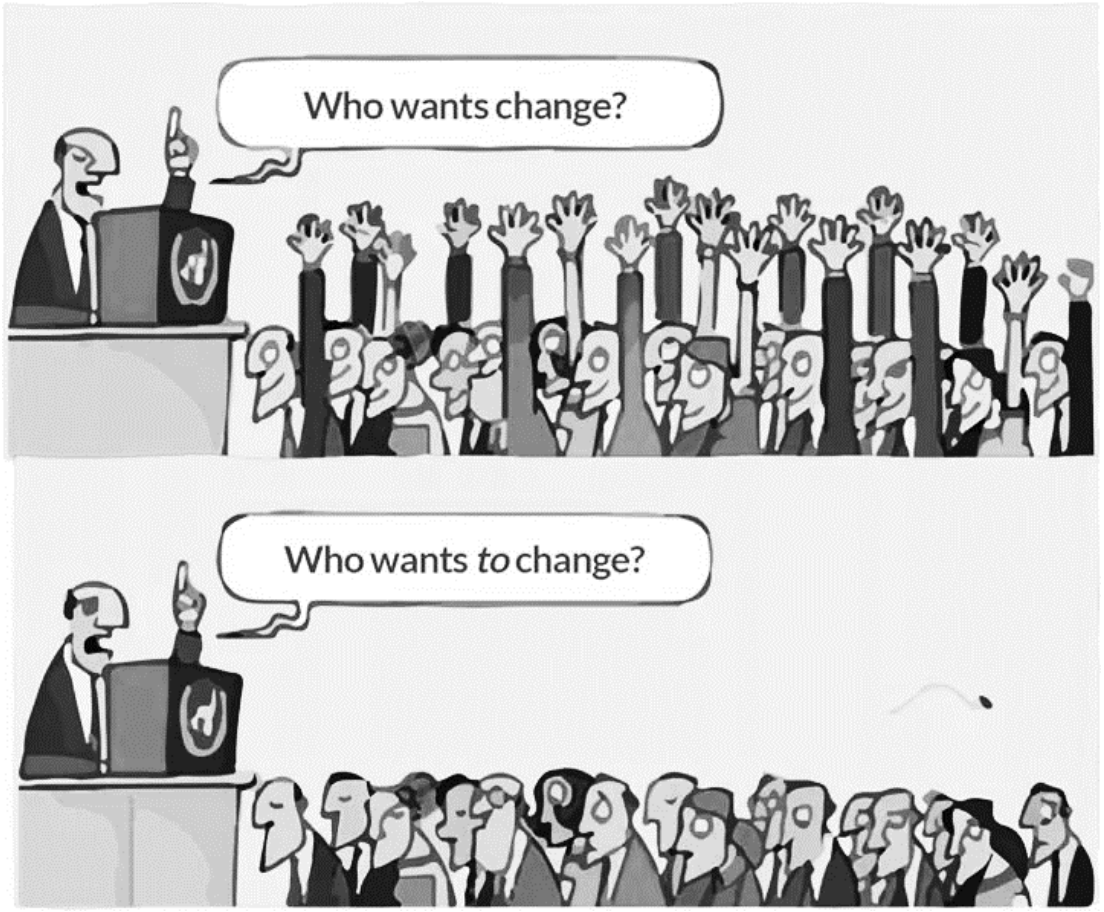
Positions vs. Interests

- Can’t ask people to set aside their interests
- Can ask people to suspend their positions while participating in process
- Intent of collaborative problem solving is to articulate and understand stakeholders’ interests so best solution can be crafted
- Create shared understanding of the problem – if people don’t agree on the problem, they can’t create solutions



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Ground Rules

for Collaborative Problem Solving

- Everyone's perspective is valued
- Listen to understand, not to debate
- Be hard on the issues – soft on the people
- Avoid right-wrong paradigms
- Everyone has an equal opportunity to participate
- What's past is past – focus on the future

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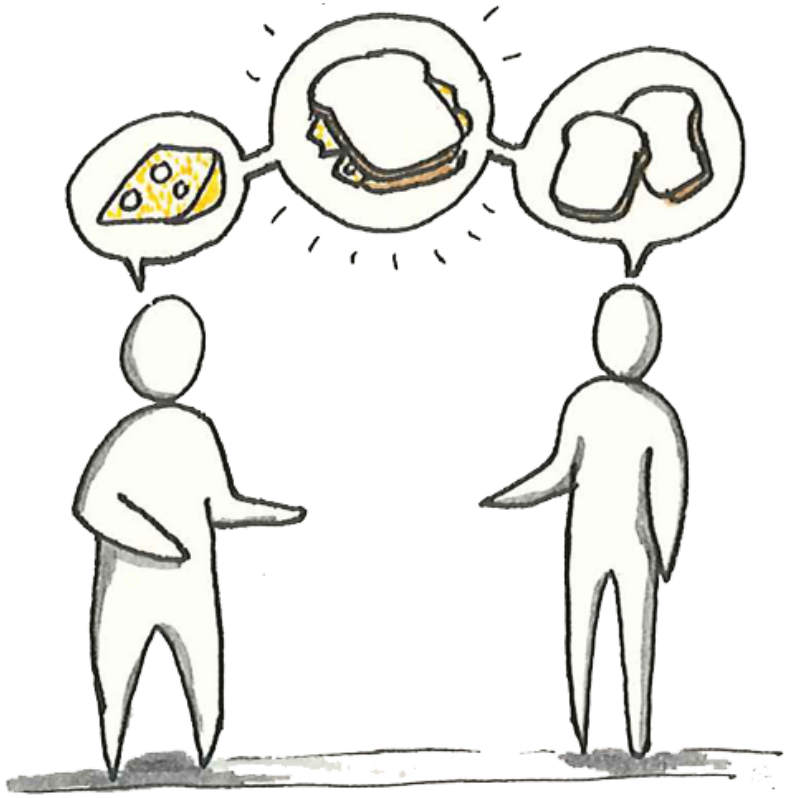
Degrees of Consensus

1. I can say an **unqualified 'yes'** to the decision. I am satisfied that the decision is an expression of the wisdom of the group.
2. I find the decision **perfectly acceptable**. It is the best of the real options we have available to us.
3. I **can live with** the decision. However, I'm not especially enthusiastic about it.
4. I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about it. However, I do not choose to block the decision and will **stand aside**. I am willing to support the decision because I trust the wisdom of the group.
5. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to **block the decision** being accepted as consensus.
6. I feel that we have no clear sense of unity in the group. We need to **do more work** before consensus can be achieved.

Outcomes of Collaborative Problem Solving

- Gain mutual respect for each other's interests
- Develop alternatives that respect everyone's interests
- Not uncommon to develop solutions that no one has imagined yet



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Pointers, Tips & Tricks

- Get creative in the way we connect
  - Digital tools
  - Out of the box thinking and “marketer mindset” to get people involved
  - Leverage community “connectors”
    - Religious organizations

City of Arcata

Delo Freitas, Senior Planner
City of Arcata

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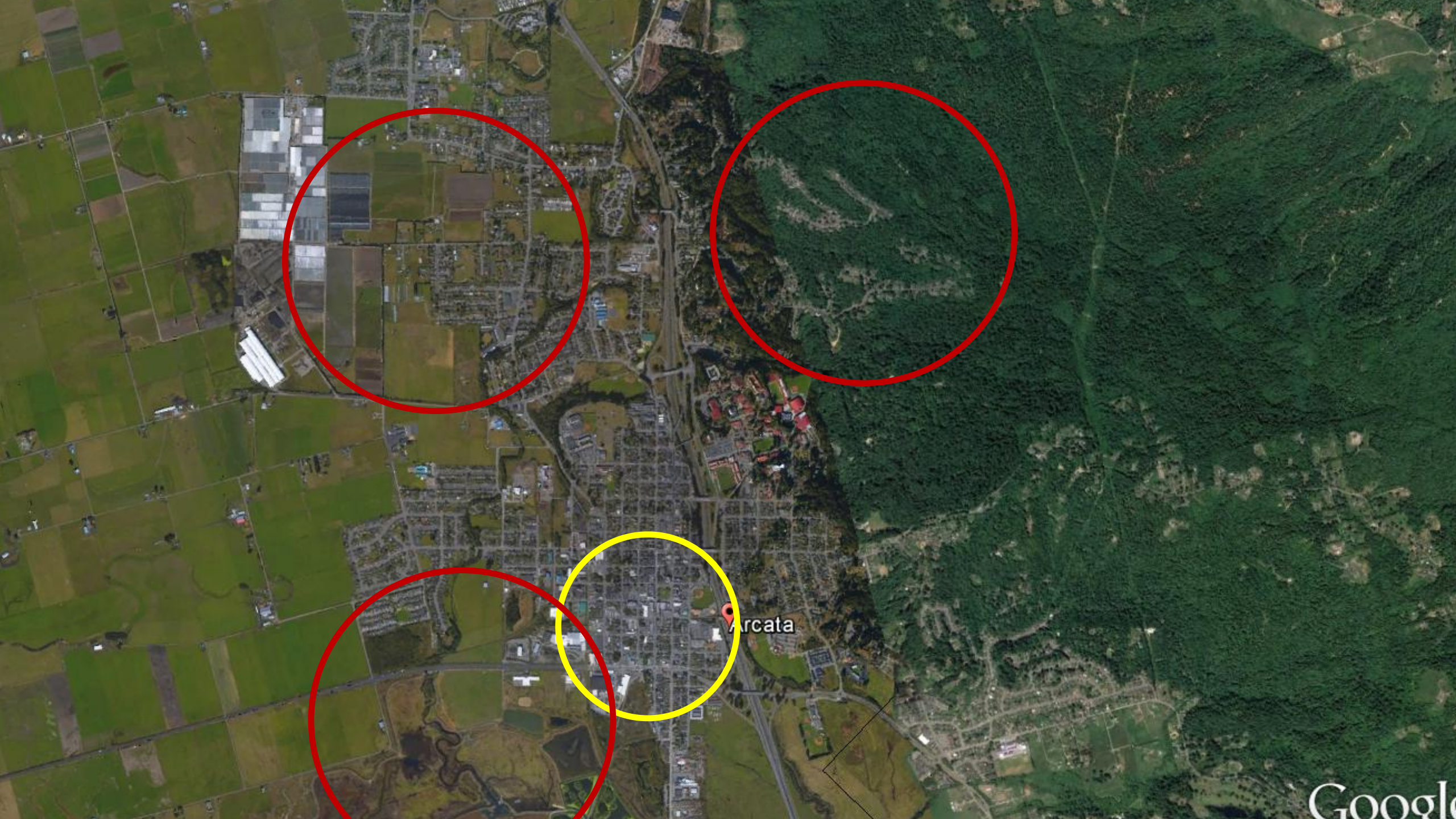
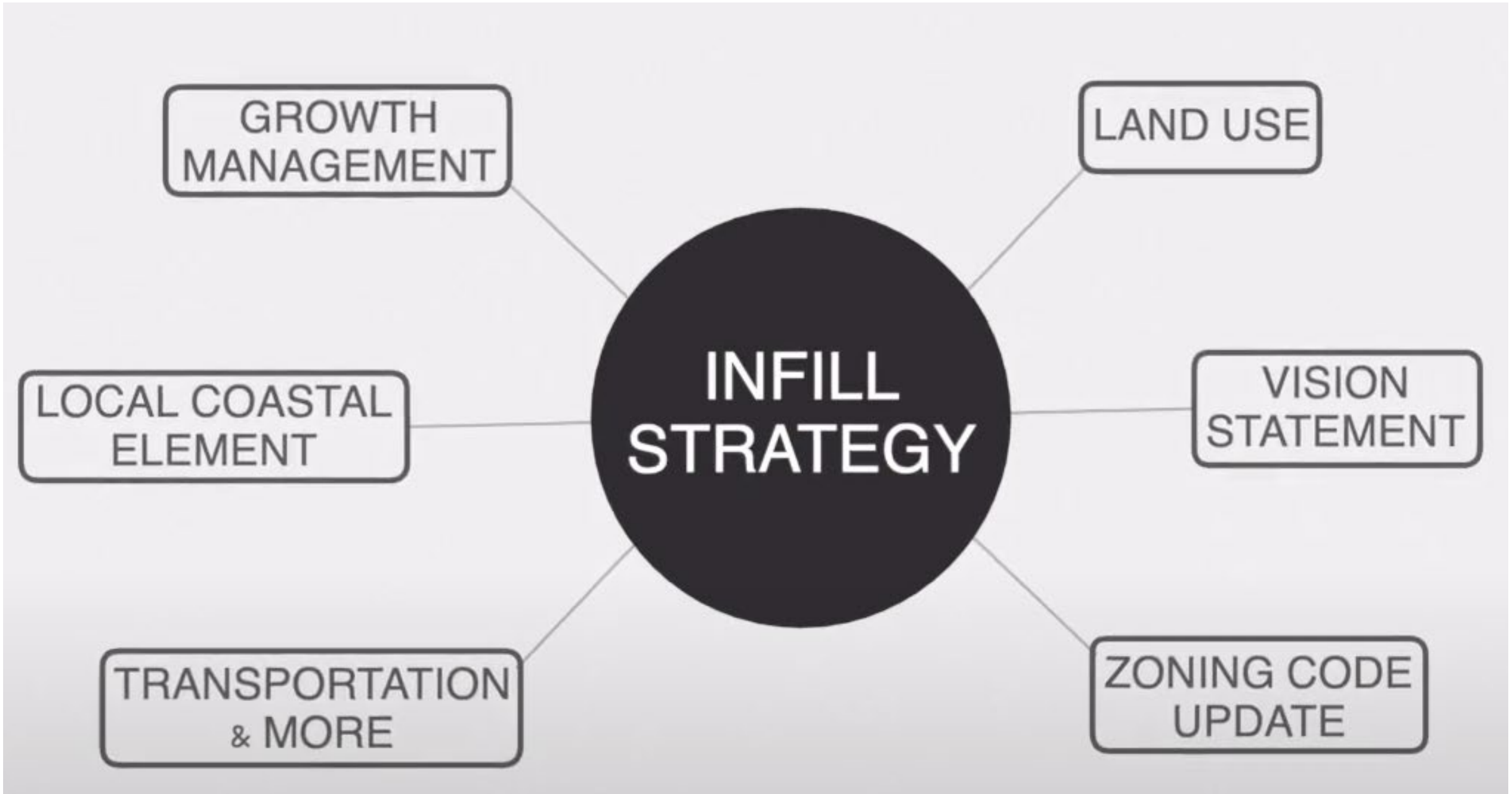
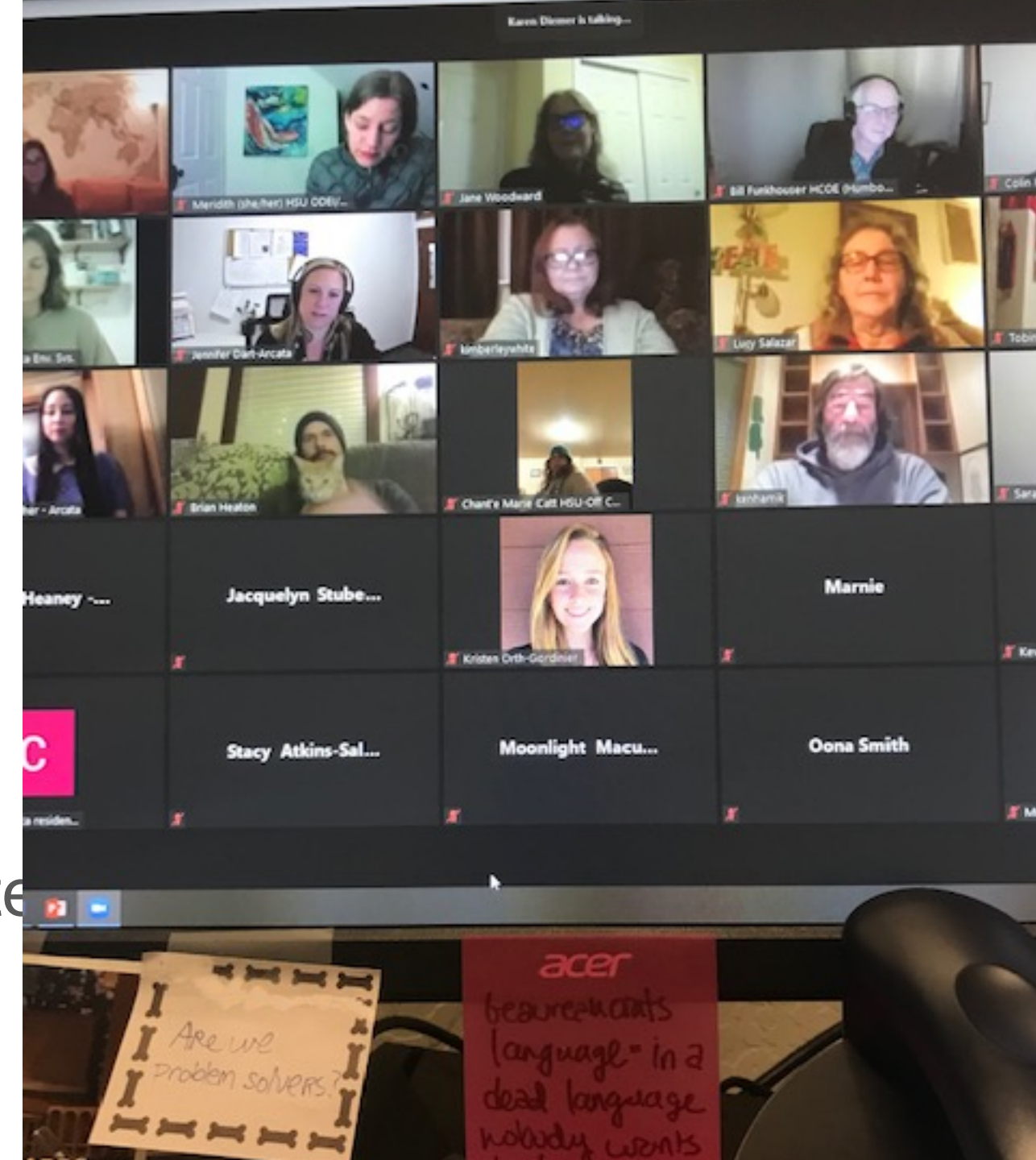
Humboldt
State


Arcata
Google

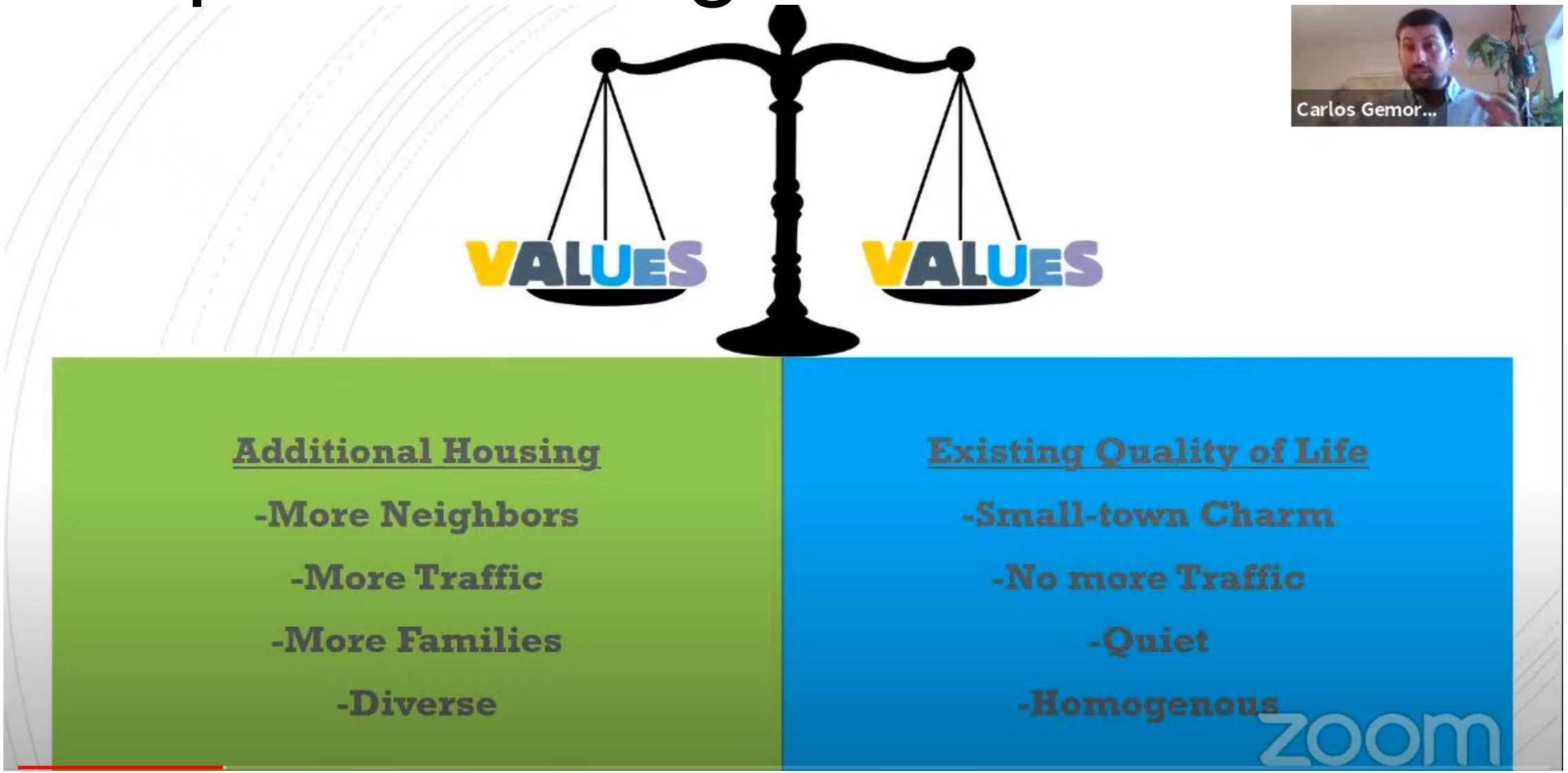

GROWTH MANAGEMENT
LAND USE
INFILL STRATEGY
LOCAL COASTAL ELEMENT
VISION STATEMENT
TRANSPORTATION & MORE
ZONING CODE UPDATE

Outreach to Date

- Two Listening Sessions
- Surveys (English and Spanish)
- Targeted presentations
- Four Walking Tours
- Plus, all the outreach from the Housing Element Update in 2019…



Prepare for “cognitive dissonance”



watch eight minutes (from 12:51 to 21:10) of this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2W25zWjD7oY

Polarity Map

Upsides of focusing on this value

- Predictability
- Safety
- Quality of life
- Infrastructure costs
- Knowing your fellow community
- Lots of people like you
- Don't have to put people near hazards like floodplains or build w/mitigation measures
- Open space remains open space
- Unobstructed views
- Maintain your property footprint (no need for ADU)
- No change in sun into your home

Stability (Little/No Growth)

- Unrealistic
- Exclusionary
- Doesn't acknowledge pop/ growth or kids that grow up here & want a home of their own
- State control if city doesn't act
- No equity
- Deterioration of stock/lack of investment
- More community, traffic to come to Arcata for jobs
- Quality of life
- Students may not want to come here
- Lack of tall full tax income

Downsides of focusing systematically over time to the neglect of the other value

Upsides of focusing on this value

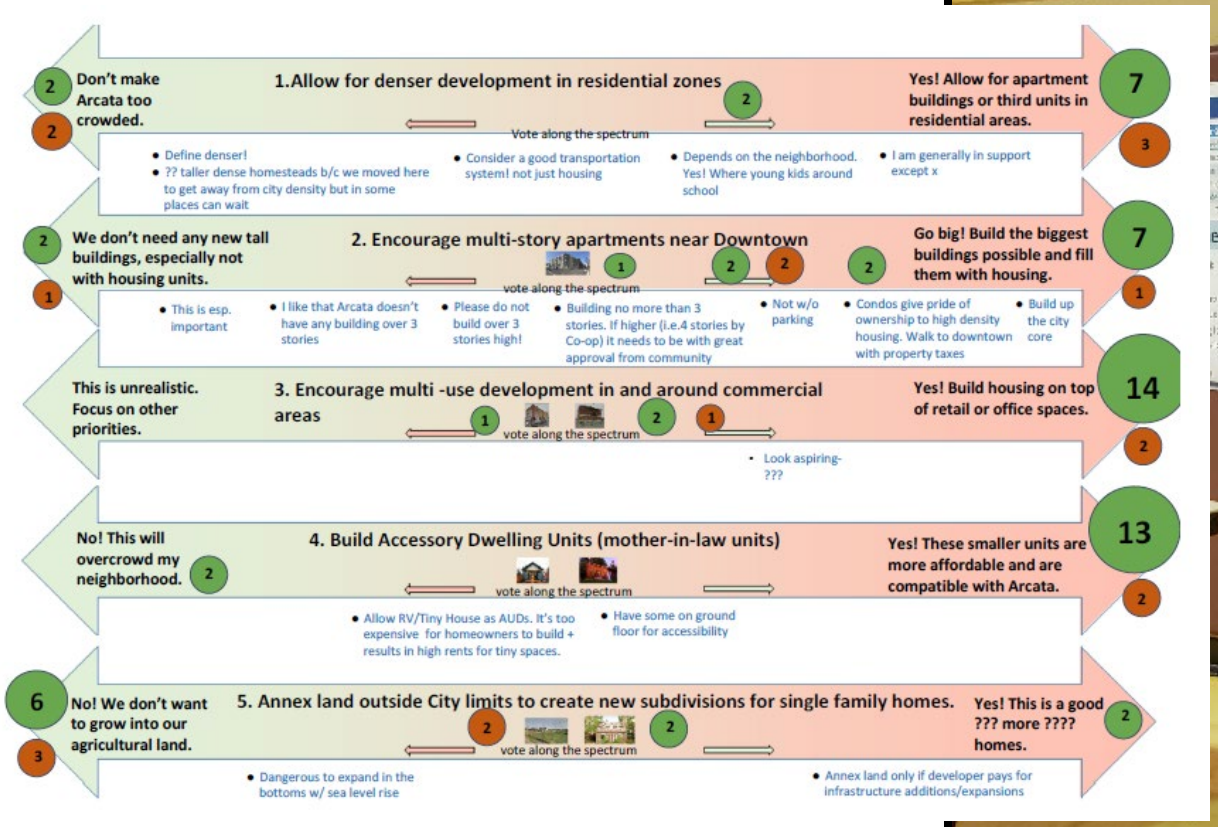
- Diversity
- Investment opportunities
- New Community relationships
- Children grow up & have places to live
- Students want to come/have housing
- New architectural styles- staying current
- Using green buildings & energy efficient appliances
- Chance to learn from bad design, lack of maintenance
- Higher the tax base, more infrastructure
- Better transit options - more use
- Attract talented people
- Enough people to support a universal bus system safer, more eyes
- Nine senior housing - to offer up nine single family homes
- Potentially improved Medical care (? possible)
- Increase (?) tax

Change (Growth)

- Too fast - could be issues if transit & schools infrastructure can't keep pace
- Traffic
- Pollution
- Noise
- Ecosystem disruption - chases out wildlife
- Roadkill
- Urban/Wildland interface
- Crime if jobs/opportunities are not growing at the same pace
- Competition for jobs
- Long standing community member may leave
- More accommodation for seniors
  - Medical care
  - Housing
- Less Medical care
- Views change

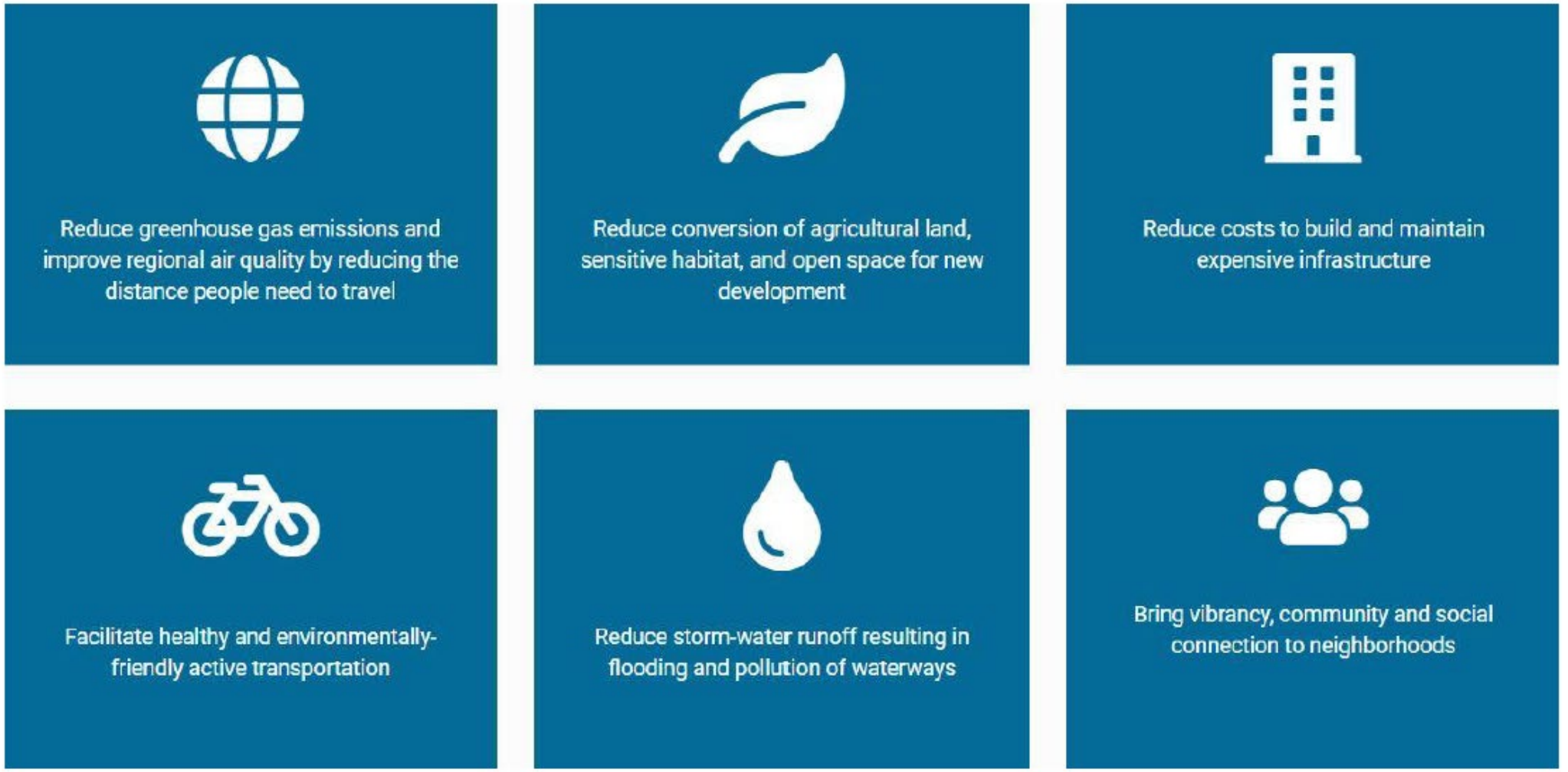
Downsides of focusing systematically over time to the neglect of the other value

Be proactive

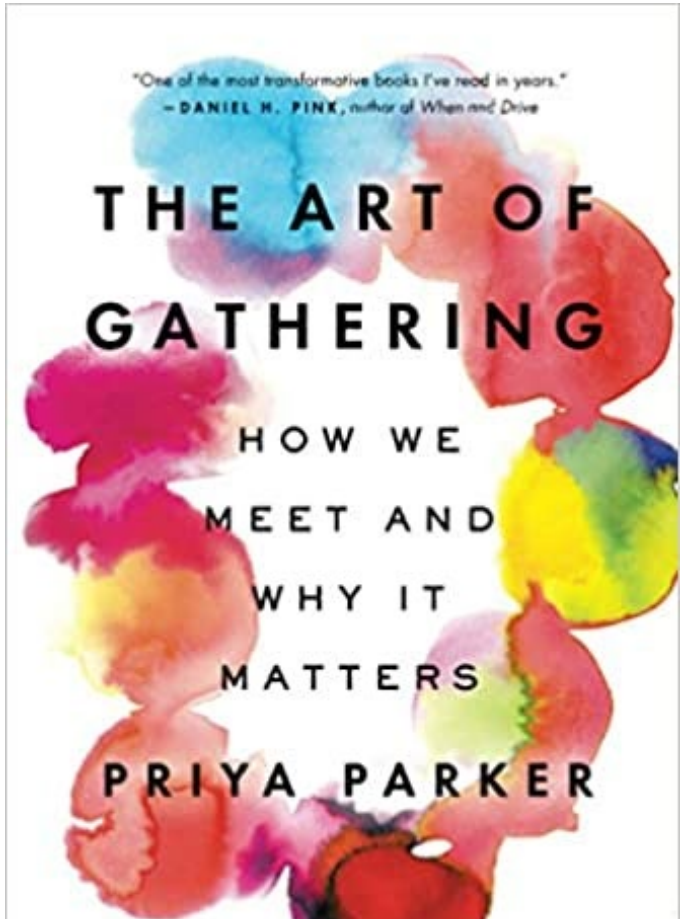


Refine your messaging

“Infill Development” Defined (via https://opr.ca.gov/planning/land-use/infill-development/)



Model intentional engagement



thank you!

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Build • Organize • Optimize • Strengthen • Transform

City of East Palo Alto

Ruben Abrica
Councilmember

Panel Discussion

Q.
A.

Upcoming Webinars

Topics:

- Climate-Resilient Land Use and Housing Policies
- Housing Strategies to Help Address Homelessness
- New Laws and New Money

www.ca-ilg.org/HousingWebinars

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Thank You!

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