

Idea Tournament: North Park Community Association

Real Connect: A model for direct neighbor input in town council/community planning group actions

Summary

This project is the creation of a scalable community-driven model for true neighbor input. *Real Connect* utilizes existing technologies and community-based organizations to better understand the concerns of the silent majority. We intend to solve the problem of making decisions based on the few citizens who have the time or ability to show up to a meeting. *Real Connect* doesn't replace the deeper analysis that Planning Groups, Commissions or City officials perform. Rather, it augments the time-intensive analysis with "opinions on the ground."

Project Details

Real Connect is about making it easy for regular San Diegans to participate in their own neighborhoods. Rather than being the development of an entirely new web-based application, *Real Connect* is a process that combines multiple existing technologies to simplify the core community "loudest voice wins" problem. The process includes three simple steps:

- (1) Neighbors can text, call or email any issue and have it fed into a relational database that queues the issue based on the nature of the concern and the date;
- (2) The database is monitored by one central community group (e.g. town council, community association, planning group) and anonymized entries are open to the public. The monitoring community group assesses on a bi-weekly basis if any action is required; and
- (3) The monitoring community group forwards the information item on to either the elected official, city department or business/non-profit/philanthropic/academic department to address

At the end of 12 months, the project will yield a tested, scalable model for community input that allows regular San Diegans from various communities to more easily communicate their preferences.

Budget, Timeline, Execution Plan

I. Budget

\$15/month for hosting (12 months) - \$180

Technical Support/Set-up from Code for San Diego – pro bono

North Park News & Uptown News Advertisements - \$1,800

Door-to-door “knocking campaign” (2 volunteers/2 employees at \$10/hr) – 80 hours - \$800

Social Media Informational Campaign – pro bono

Flyer/Recycle take-back promotion - \$1,200

Website optimization for survey forms/database management - \$770

Project evaluation tool development with Competitive Edge Research – pro bono

Total Budget: \$4,750

II. Timeline

0 to 30 days: Work with Code for San Diego to set up location-based input platform, back-end and hosting

0 to 45 days: Work with vendor to complete northparksd.org optimization for input management of community input

45 to 120 days: Launch Social Media, Print Media campaigns to raise awareness of available Real Connect tool

100 to 180 days: Overlapping “door knocking” campaign with end of initial phase Social/Print Media campaign

100 to 120 days: Work with survey consultant to validate project evaluation tool

180 to 300 days: Execute Real Connect pilot test with North Park Planning Area boundary

300 to 365 days: Use customized evaluation tool to identify degree of success and potential system modifications. Prepare final reporting assessment.

III. Execution Plan

The execution of this plan tracks the timeline above. The primary points of contact will be NPCA Board Members: Omar Passons, Sean Karafin & Jeff Kucharski, who will be the community monitoring team for the pilot test and coordinate all “knocking campaign” and other project activities.

The NPCA team has already identified technology partner Jeffrey Johnson of Code for San Diego to provide technical support and development for the start-up phase. The team has identified the initial establishment at which to craft the technology solution using a combination of Textizen, Localdata and Shareabouts and modeled in part after the developing Capital Improvement Program infrastructure input web application.

Milestones will be assessed with mandatory reporting to the NPCA Board by the project team at monthly meetings. Final results will be provided in a full execution report.

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