

Engaging citizens in neighbourhood revitalization :
Some Insights from Australian Practice

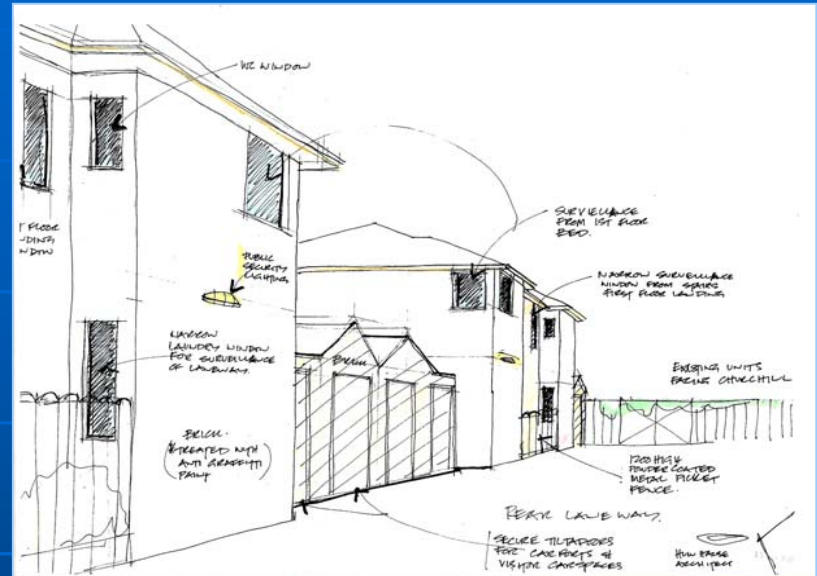
Policy Forum on Neighbourhood Revitalization

Ottawa, 25 October 2005

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My Experiences of Community Renewal Projects

- Redfern, Sydney, 1985-88; 1998-99
- Alexandria, Sydney, 1984-85
- Airds, Sydney, 1998
- Eagleby, Queensland, 1999-2001
- Braybrook, Melbourne 2003
- Granville, Sydney, 2003-4
- Footscray, Melbourne, 2004
- Bonnyrigg, Sydney, 2004-2005
- Minto, Sydney, 1982-83; 2005



The End of Oil

Paul Roberts, 2004

The situation is alarming and irrefutable.

Within thirty years, even by conservative estimates, we will have burned our way through most of the oil that is readily available to us.

Part 1

Three Challenging Questions

Three Questions

Question 1:

How can citizens best be engaged in the policy development process?

Question 2:

What resources, coaching and technical support are required to assist communities that want to engage in neighbourhood revitalization?

Question 3:

How does the local view get reflected in government decision-making?

My Approach

- A quick response
- Some examples from my practice
- A diagnostic tool
- If we have time.... summary of community engagement in community renewal experience in Australia
- Some final thoughts

Question 1:

How can citizens best be engaged in the policy development process?

- Early
- Lots of time
- Intensively
- Honestly
- Transparently
- Inclusionary argumentation
- Using a range of approaches
- In ways that:
 - are appropriate to local issues and concerns
 - Can cope with participants' emotions
 - can touch people deeply
 - are locally appropriate in terms of approach
 - reach people where they are

Question 2:

What resources, coaching and technical support are required to assist communities that want to engage in neighbourhood revitalization?

- Capacity building
- Accountability groups
- Resourcing, including participant assistance schemes
- Technical and financial information
- Advocates
- Facilitation training
- Activist academics
- Appreciative Inquiry and asset-based community development approaches

Question 3:

How does the local view get reflected in government decision-making?

Often:

- Poorly
- Risk management approaches dominate
- Leviathan-like, unwieldy organisations
- Governance done ineptly
- Simplistic approaches to managing cultural difference
- Poor handling of grief and pain (and all other emotions)
- Little monitoring, "policing" or formal feedback