Inside: Quick Jolts from Paint, Link Resident Ideas with Implementers, More

Find a couple of talented amateur artists, give them some paint and a little shade, and watch your ugly utility box become a colorful wonder. For little cost, you can paint other stuff too, such as your fire hydrants and your intersections. These are great fast wins for summer in your neighborhood.
Link Your Residents' Ideas with Implementing Coalitions

We’re always interested in how to plug community members’ good ideas directly into the power structure. So we loved an article describing how Bucksport, Maine, population about 5,000, worked with 82 community improvement ideas generated by residents.

We would like to see large, medium and small sized cites try the same formula of accepting ideas from everyone; assigning each a high, medium, or low rating on impact and feasibility; and having a full-time paid worker or volunteer knock on doors of local organizations determining their interest in each idea. The ultimate goal was to put together new coalitions for implementation. In a large city, this process of conferring with organizations could easily take a year or more, but think of the benefits.

Buckport used rankings help the community think through project priorities. They also followed up with a volunteer fair where townspeople could talk with project sponsors to see where their volunteer energies might best be used. This is seriously worth a read.

New Website Content This Month: Court monitoring for neighborhoods is a new article with examples along a continuum from "tough on crime" to conciliatory. Another new page on crime is about CPTED, which stands for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. Lastly we added a page on the neighborhood perspective on community policing benefits and pitfalls. We also created a new pdf showing the numerous pages of interest to planning commissioners; find the link in the third paragraph of our sitemap. Visitor Questions Answered: Noise from mosque in
When Single-Family Meets Mixed-Use

Symptomatic of conflicts happening all over the country, we thought this article explaining a density conflict surrounding the redevelopment of a former Ford auto plant in St. Paul, Minnesota, was worth highlighting.

In brief, younger people tended to be quite supportive of the eco-village idea behind a major mixed-use redevelopment aiming to be a net zero energy community. Designed to attract as many as 7,200 residents and 1,500 jobs, major sustainability features proposed include abundant walking and bicycling connections, transit proximity, and a 20 percent affordable housing component.

This would seem to be an urbanologist’s dream project. But residents of the adjacent single-family neighborhood have been fighting the development for the past 10 years, citing predictable concerns about traffic and building scale.

If you work with planning issues in a large or medium-sized city, read the background and then keep your eye on this as the project moves forward.