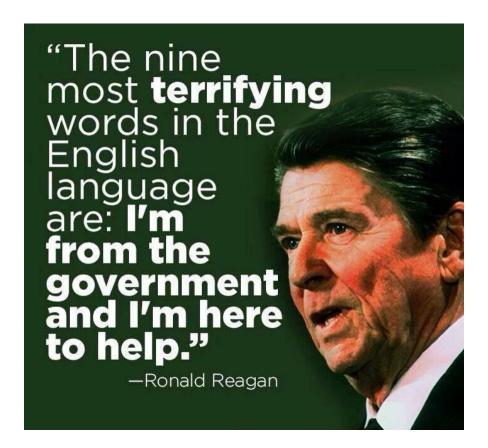
The Dialogue between Local Government & the Community

Megan Scheid, City of Roseville Caitlin Robinett Jachimowicz, City of Morgan Hill



Government Has a Bad Rap



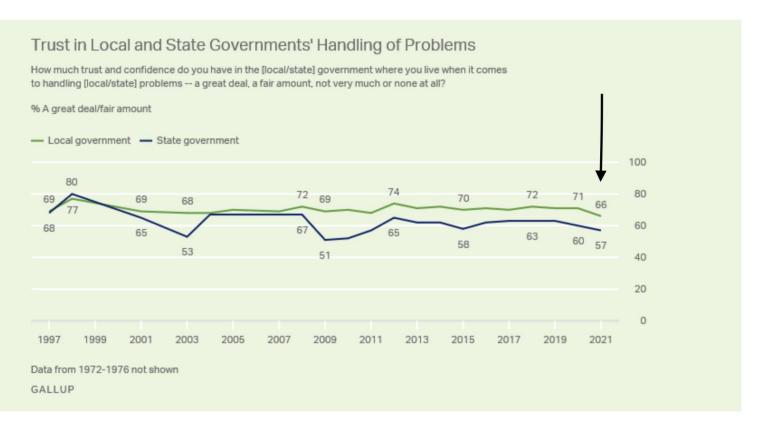
What word comes to mind when you think about interacting with local government?

(Drop in the chat)

What we'll cover

- 1. Temperature Check-Trust in Local Government
- 2. Public Engagement Today
- 3. Building credibility and Relationships **Break**
- 4. The Foundations of Dialogue
- 5. Types of Dialogue
- 6. Bringing It All Together

Trust in government drops



Edelman Trust Barometer 2023

Social fabric weakens amid deepening divisions

- Business is the only institution seen as competent and ethical.
- Fifty-three percent of respondents globally say that their countries are more divided today than in the past.
- CEOs are obligated to improve economic optimism and hold divisive forces accountable.
- Trust in government at all-time low.

Distrust Breeds Polarization

Distrust breeds polarization

Very few would help, live near, or work with someone who disagreed with their point of view:

only 30 %

would help them if they were in need.

only 20 %

would be willing to live in the same neighborhood.

only 20 %

would be willing to have them as a coworker.

Source: https://www.edelman.com/trust/2023/trust-barometer

Dialogue: From Edict to Engagement

Paternalistic →We know what's best for you. We'll tell you what you need

- **Vending machine government** → We're here to give you whatever you request. Order up!
- **Co-creators** → How do we work together and listen to each other to create the best path forward

Public Engagement Today

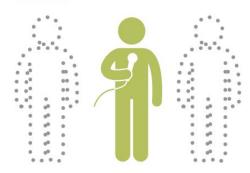
A Look at California

Public Engagement in California ~

OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Public meetings often do not meet the needs of residents or local officials.

Public comment agendas are dominated by narrow interests and negative remarks



Large segments of the public are missing, especially low-income populations, immigrants and young people

Many desire broad-based public participation and stronger collaboration.

Public Engagement in California

TAKING ACTION FOR STRONGER PUBLIC ENGAGE

Local officials and their institutions can gain from:

- Partnering with community-based organizations
- Hiring and training staff to increase public engagement skills
- Networking with colleagues who have effective practices
- Evaluating local efforts

Civic leaders and their organizations can gain from:

- Hiring and training staff to
- Evaluating local efforts

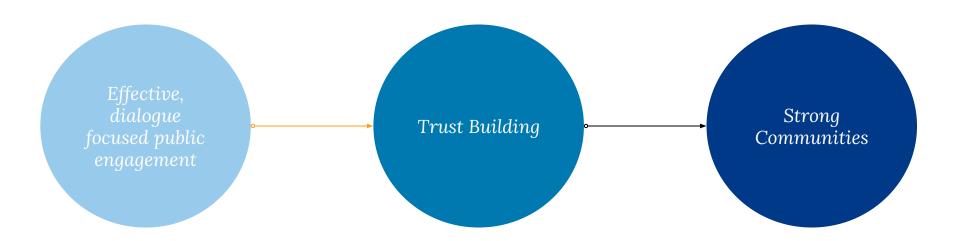
Funders can make a difference by supporting:







The Foundations of **Public Engagement**



It's critical at this point in time to engage in effective dialogue with local government

Realtors Play a Key Role

- Market the community
- First impression of the community
- Ear to the ground in neighborhoods
- Build community
- Trusted source of information

Credibility & Relationship Building

The Role of Dialogue

"Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy, and mutual valuing. - Rollo May

Ways to Boost your Credibility



Understand that these are people, not avatars.

- Know who has jurisdiction so you start at the right place.
- Consistently show up at events, meetings, fundraisers.

Invite electeds or staff to business/neighborhood meetings.

Ways to Boost your Credibility

Use same dynamics as you do for interpersonal relationships:

- Balance positives and negatives
- Voice your opinion when there's a criticism
- Thank them when you think they've done a good job or something to celebrate.





Distractions in dialogue can cause a Sudden Loss of Credibility

- Arrogance: "In my expert opinion"
- Condescendence: "When you get a little older, you'll have a much better understanding"/ "If you were accountable to the bottom line, you'd understand..."
- Political: "We all know that everyone thinks..."
- Insulting: "You have no idea..." "It's obvious you don't care about..."
- Power play: "You deserve to be recalled.."

California's Local Government Structure

Who's in charge of what

Overview of California



58 Counties



482 Incorporated Cities





121 Charter Cities (authority over municipal affairs)



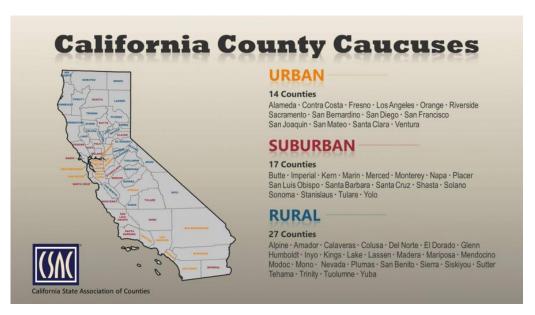


361 General Law Cities (bound by state's general law)



County Governments

- Elections
- Police and Fire
 - Unincorporated areas and contracted with cities
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Development
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Health
- Justice System
- Weights & Measures



City Governments

- Water
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Development
- Police
- Fire
- Parks and Recreation





Regional Governments

- Knowledge and Resource Sharing
- Strategic Cooperation
- Shared Vision
 - Economic Development
 - Sustainability
 - Transportation

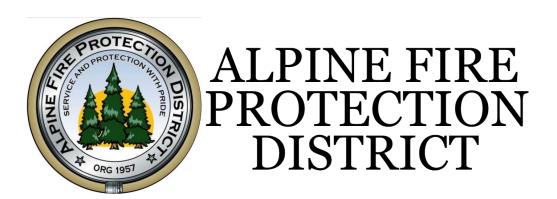




Association of Bay Area Governments

Special Districts

- Over 3,000 special districts across California
- Provide specialized services in areas like:
 - Water
 - Sewage
 - Fire Protection
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Ports
 - Electricity





Other Local Agencies

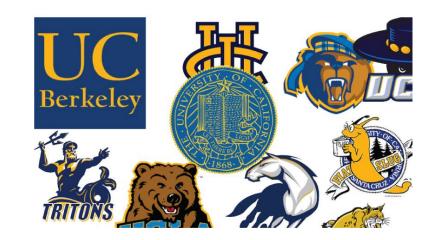
- Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs)
- Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCOs)





Governance of Schools

- Public University Systems
 - University of California (UC)
 - California State University (CSU)
 - Community Colleges
- California Department of Education
 - Oversees K-12 public schools statewide
- County Boards of Education
 - Operates under authority of state with jurisdiction over local schools
 - Elected superintendent of schools
- Local School Districts
 - Most direct control over the day-to-day operations of public schools
 - Elected school board members



Why Does it Matter?

Understanding the roles of local government is key because: It can get complicated when you want your input to matter

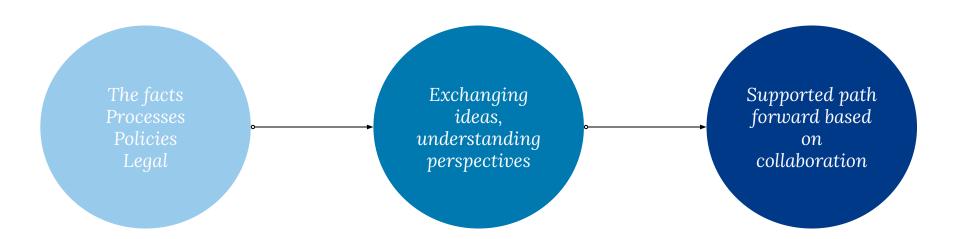
- "Defund the police" Taking police funding (city) to fund mental health (county)
- Telling City Council you have a complaint about the way something was handled in a public school
- A development in an unincorporated section of the county near a new housing development in the city

Midway Q & A

The Foundations of Dialogue

Understanding & Building Trust

The Foundations of Dialogue



Understand the Basics

Various funding, agencies, laws can limit options

- Buckets of funding redevelopment, unrestricted, grants, utilities
- Land use parameters
- Laws and regulations
- General Plan
- Development agreements
- Zoning
- "Historic" buildings
- Crosswalks and speed bumps
- Pensions



Ways to Gain Understanding

- Citizen academies
- Leadership [Your town's name] sponsored by local chamber
- Community forum/town hall
- Public workshops to solicit feedback (public notice required by law, usually on website) gun safety regulations



Ways to Gain Understanding

- Serving on board or commission (contact City Clerk)
- Participate in neighborhood associations (different from HOAs)
- Read the law (municipal code)
- Read contracts
- Ask staff

Drop in the chat ones you have participated in



What Doesn't Build Trust

- Writing uninformed or misinformed opinions or rants on social media or websites
- Unconstructive tirades against staff or elected officials (constructive ones are different)
- Bringing in superfluous or unrelated topics-airing all of your grievances at once and having them all addressed is not possible



Dialogue: Types & Uses

Multiple Ways to Connect



Different Types of Dialogue

- Official
- Unofficial
- Constructive
- Counterproductive



Dialogue is Different Based on the Individual's Role in Local Gov

Elected Official

Listens

Has latitude to express individual opinion

*Caution when it involves Brown Act, indicating a vote on social media before vote is called, for example

Staff

Listens

Provides range of options based on legalities and practicalities.

Has subject-matter expertise but not a vote

Official Public Dialogue

Our definition:

- Part of the official public record available at the Clerk's office, such as:
 - Comments spoken at an official government meeting (City Council, County Board of Supervisors)
 - Comments provided in conjunction with official process (EIR)

Level of candidness in response:

- Low
- Non-existent if it's not on the agenda



Unofficial Public Dialogue

Our definition:

- Happens in less formal settings, such as
 - Chamber meetings
 - Neighborhood meetings
 - Community coffees
 - Neighborhood events like ribbon cuttings

Level of candidness in response:

- Varies depending on previous experience with each other
- Could be higher if trust is there

Hybrid Dialogue

- E-mail, text message
- Social media posts and comments
- Community forums



Constructive Dialogue

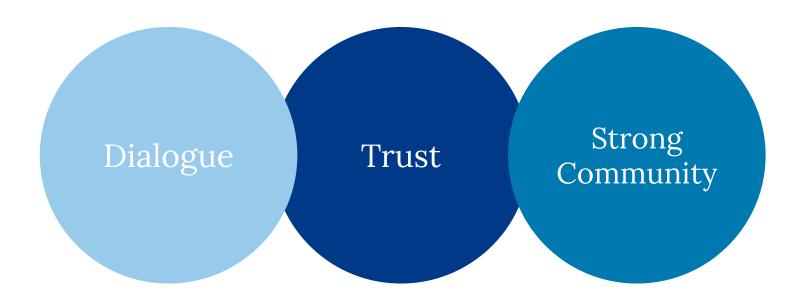


- Respectful most of all
- Understanding of the facts
- Provides insight to another perspective
- Solution-oriented

Why Is This Important?

Bringing It All Together

It Is All Connected



THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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