

CHECKLIST

Planning a Public or Community Event

GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER

Pre-Event



SET A DATE

- ❑ As soon as you get the green light on your event, you need to get to work. The sooner you can pick the date, the better!



EVENT PLANNING TEAM

- ❑ While you may be able to plan the event, and with great success, it's important to understand the value of a team. Event planning projects are often done in teams because it's the most efficient, stress-free and collaborative way of working. Consider identifying key individuals for subcommittees to share the work load.



BUDGET

- ❑ Set a budget and develop a plan for all financial reporting procedures.



VENUE/LOCATION

Here are a few things you should consider when selecting a venue/location:

- ❑ The number of guests attending. This is critical when choosing a venue/location to make certain that everyone can fit comfortably
- ❑ Accessible to all people, specifically those with disabilities. Be sure to consider Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards
- ❑ If held at a park or other public space, confirm if you need to reserve and/or pay for the space
- ❑ Parking for attendees, consider attendees with disabilities—ADA standards

- ❑ Contact city to determine what permits may be needed for your event. Keep a copy of all the permits and licenses to prevent any last-minute problems that may pop-up (i.e. if you set-up a canopy/tent for shelter you may need a permit to stake in ground)

- ❑ Look for electrical hook-ups for computers, projector, microphones, music, etc.

- ❑ Check aesthetics to make sure the photos/videos are well-represented at the event



LOGISTICS

- ❑ Prepare for the unexpected (i.e. weather—provide shelter to keep guests out of the elements like sun, heat, rain, etc.)

- ❑ Event theme. Will it just be government officials and shovels or will it be a celebration. Consider music that fits with event, performances by children's groups, etc.

- ❑ Photographer, video, cable

- ❑ Hire a photographer or appoint a staff person to take photographs

- ❑ Hire a videographer

- ❑ Create a list of photos/videos you want captured (i.e. elected officials, presenters and presentations, groundbreaking, ribbon cutting, interviews, number of candid shots, etc.)

- ❑ Use available public access television resources

- ❑ Rentals: chairs, tables, tents, staging, podium, platform/stage, portable toilets, garbage and recycling receptacles, etc.

- ❑ Rent electrical/generators, amplifiers, projectors/screens, microphones (wireless preferred so you can move around the event area)

- ❑ Items to be taken care of before the event (i.e. lawn mowing, garbage removal, painting, cleaning, etc.)

- ❑ Special security considerations

- ❑ Signage for visitors to find the venue/location, parking, ADA standards, etc.

- ❑ Notify local city and law enforcement in advance about the event



CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)



EVENT SET-UP

- Develop an event set-up layout
 - Do you need a small platform for speaker(s) and podium or will everyone be on same level
 - Where do you want the podium
 - Where will speakers be located (i.e. up front or in the audience)
 - Where will you put chairs and where can people stand
- Determine if you want backdrop(s)
 - Project rendering(s)
 - Make it festive with balloons, banner(s) or make use of the natural backdrop such as a lake, river, park, etc.
- Make sure the set-up arrangement has access to electrical feed or generator
- Consider an amplification system if you anticipate a larger crowd
- Determine number of table(s) needed for news packets, name tags, etc.
- Determine number of table(s) needed for food and beverages
- Determine number of chairs needed for event
- Determine number of garbage and recycling receptacles to keep the site clean



MARKETING

- Develop the “dance” to get the speakers to and from the podium during presentation
- Develop/print name tags, bring extra blank ones and a marker
- Develop/print boards of project rendering(s)
- Consider a multimedia or self-running PowerPoint of the drawings, etc.
- Develop/print a podium sign
- Graphic elements to include at the event (i.e. conference banners, photos, etc.)
- Develop/print signage necessary to get to the site and where to park
- Consider social media opportunities (i.e. Facebook Live, capture photos and post during event, etc.)



PROPS/PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- Hard Hats. Consider painting them with name of project or imprinting them
- Shovels. Consider buying shovels and having them painted with the name and date of event; or partner with a local school and have the kids paint the shovels
- Scissors. Check with your Chamber of Commerce to see if they have ceremonial scissors to use at event or consider purchasing
- Consider a backhoe, firetruck, etc. on site for the event. Put balloons or banners on them
- Promotional items. Do you want to have a give-away for guests



FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- If providing food and/or beverages work with your local Health Department to identify safe practices to serve food at your event
 - Be creative. Decorate a cake with the project rendering (i.e. cutting it can be somewhat ceremonial and provides a photo opportunity; or have cookies with project name or logo)
 - Type of event. If on the river, consider what might be riverfront type vendors (i.e. mini-donuts, hot dogs, lemonade, etc.)
- Select caterer. Refer to Chamber of Commerce members for selections of catering companies
- Will food be buffet style, finger food, etc.
 - Consider food warmers or coolers depending upon what you provide
- Determine type of beverages will be provided
 - Consider coolers, depending upon what you provide (i.e. five-gallon spigot coolers work great for water, lemonade, etc.)
- Order supplies such as cups, napkins, paper plates, plastic utensils, table coverings, office supplies, etc.

CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)



ACCOUNTING

- ☐ If hosting an event that requires payment, consider working directly with your accounting department to consider:
 - ☐ Cash—be sure to have cash available to make change
 - ☐ Credit—look into online payment options
 - ☐ Receipt—provide attendee with a receipt



INVITEES

- ☐ When developing an invite list, consider all stakeholders:
- ☐ Elected officials
 - ☐ Confirm attendance
 - ☐ Confirm any transportation logistics, special accommodations, food, etc.
 - ☐ Provide news packets (refer to media for further details) or other event related information in advance
 - ☐ Notify local city and law enforcement in advance
 - ☐ Confirm those who are speaking prior to the event
- ☐ Government officials—local, county, state, federal
- ☐ Business groups or nearby businesses
- ☐ Resident groups
- ☐ Historical preservation
- ☐ Chamber of Commerce
- ☐ Developers
- ☐ Key community members
- ☐ Participating vendors, contractors, consultants, etc.



INVITATIONS

- ☐ Follow ADA standards to ensure your invite is accessible to all stakeholders (multiple languages, etc.)
- ☐ Identify which tool(s) is best for invitations—mail, email, social media or all of the above
- ☐ If early enough, consider sending a “Save the Date” notice to attendees
- ☐ Send invitation (print or email) 2–4 weeks before the event
- ☐ If elected officials are confirmed, make sure to include on invite (i.e. Honorable Mayor invites you to attend...)

- ☐ Include date, time, location
- ☐ Include map to location
- ☐ RSVP for event
- ☐ Post invite on website
- ☐ Post invite on social media
- ☐ Place an ad in the local newspaper if you would like to include the community
- ☐ Public service announcement to invite public
- ☐ A follow-up email invitation (reminder)



PROGRAM

- ☐ Develop/print a program (handout or printed on a board) and include project information, who will speak and when
- ☐ Consider an emcee to help the flow of presenters
- ☐ Check with elected officials for the proper speaking protocol and for correct introductions
 - ☐ Start with highest ranking elected official to determine preference
- ☐ Determine what each speaker will focus on to avoid duplication in speeches
- ☐ Get speaker bio information and picture
- ☐ Provide each speaker with key messages about the project/event
- ☐ Determine if any speakers would prefer talking points be developed for them or will they develop their own
- ☐ Determine the “dance” to get speakers from the podium to event area (i.e. have an emcee introduce each speaker or first speaker introduce second speaker, etc.)
- ☐ Determine who will be involved in the ceremonial “dig” for a groundbreaking or “cut” for a ribbon cutting



MEDIA

- ☐ Appoint one spokesperson for the project. All media contacts should run through this person
- ☐ Develop key messages—what do you want media/public to know or remember

CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

- ❑ Develop a media list of local, county, state publications, radio and TV
 - ❑ Consider specialty publications. Consider a wire or web service to help distribute your news release if not a current list
- ❑ Determine if the local radio or TV station would consider broadcasting live from the event
- ❑ Prepare a news advisory for the event and send at least two to three days in advance to allow for travel
- ❑ Determine who might be key interviews post event and arrange for reporter to be in touch with that person
- ❑ Write down any questions that may be asked—update your news release if pertinent information is missed
- ❑ Determine beforehand who gets news packets so you have enough. Host information on USB flash drives and have a few printed packets as well
- ❑ Digital or printed media packets, may include the following:
 - ❑ News release (project/event specifics)—include quotes from elected officials, developers, etc.
 - ❑ Program—if there is one; speaking order, etc.
 - ❑ Fact sheet on funding sources
 - ❑ Fact sheet for each consultant (developer, architect, engineer, planning)—they should each provide this
 - ❑ Color rendering(s) of the site
 - ❑ List of key stakeholders—all participating organizations
- ❑ Develop a project website with a media page—include PDFs of all documents above. Include individual photographs of mayor or other key officials
- ❑ Make key media calls to determine who is attending

Day of Event



EVENT SET-UP

- ❑ Be prepared for the unexpected (i.e. check the weather elements like sun, heat, rain, etc., confirm all speakers are able to attend, etc.)
- ❑ Provide event team with diagram of event layout that identifies
 - ❑ Where to set-up staging platform
 - ❑ Where the podium should be
 - ❑ Where the speakers will be seated (i.e. up front or in the audience)
 - ❑ Where to place chairs and standing area(s)



MARKETING

- ❑ Set-up backdrop(s)
- ❑ Set-up electrical feed or generator
- ❑ Set-up and test amplification system
- ❑ Set-up tables(s) for news packets, name tags, etc.
- ❑ Set-up table(s) for food and beverages
- ❑ Provide speakers with any materials needed for the event
- ❑ Place garbage and recycling receptacles around the event site
- ❑ Have name tags ready, extra blank ones and a marker
- ❑ Set-up boards of project rendering(s)
- ❑ Set-up projector for multimedia or self-running PowerPoint of the drawings, etc.
- ❑ Set-up podium sign
- ❑ Set-up banners or additional event graphics
- ❑ Set-up signage to get to the site and where to park
- ❑ Be prepared for social media opportunities (i.e. Facebook Live, charge phones, etc.)



PROPS/PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- ❑ Have hard hats ready for wear (make sure hard hat inserts are securely fastened, etc.)
- ❑ Be shovel and/or scissor and ribbon ready for event
- ❑ Have promotional items ready for distribution to selected key stakeholders



PROGRAM

- ❑ Provide a printed program with project information, who will speak and when to each speaker
- ❑ Introduce emcee to speakers
- ❑ Provide each speaker with key messages about the project/event

CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

- ❑ Provide speakers with talking points (if requested)
- ❑ Provide each speaker with the “dance” and verify they understand their role
- ❑ Notify those individuals who will be involved in the ceremonial “dig” for a groundbreaking or “cut” for a ribbon cutting



MEDIA

- ❑ The assigned person in charge of news packets should greet each media person, introduce themselves as the contact, keep track of all media in attendance, and provide them with a packet (refer to media packets in previous section)
- ❑ Connect with the individual(s) who are key interviews and make introduction to reporter
- ❑ Provide individual(s) with questions that may be asked during the interview and update your news release if pertinent information is missed
- ❑ Update the media page on your website. Send the link to key media unable to attend, most likely this would be metro area dailies, business publications, etc.
- ❑ Conduct follow-up calls if there were notable media missing like the local newspaper, radio or television



GREETER

- ❑ Designate someone to meet guests and to provide name tags, keep list of additional attendees/event information, etc.



THANK YOU

- ❑ Thank everyone who participated in the planning of event



CERTIFICATIONS

- ❑ If your event is offering PDHs/CEUs, provide a certificate to attendees

Post event

- ❑ Assign event team (or ask for volunteers) to be responsible for all aspects of the clean-up
- ❑ Make sure rental places know when to pick up equipment
- ❑ Follow proper tactics to follow-up with media
- ❑ Post photos on website and social media
- ❑ Send thank you cards to key participants
- ❑ Determine opportunities for public access