



Designing Healthy Communities

Town Hall Meeting summary: *How to make a healthier community right here, now?*

People ask: Why hold a town hall meeting? What's wrong here? What needs to be fixed?

Dr. Dick Jackson would say: We've built communities for cars, not for people; for commerce and not for well-being; for freeways and not for happiness. If children are the canaries in our society, THEY are suffering as never before and we have not yet taken them into consideration. We are taking years from their lives; we must do better.

How do we change what is going on in the community so that the community owns it? How do we make it organic, in the sense that it is adapted to the place and is vibrant without constant extra inputs? What are the ideas and agreements we must forge; the disputes and fights we must reconcile? What is it that really needs fixing, and who are the allies in this struggle?

Dick Jackson would say: start with a tough, honest meeting. Bring honest people together, people of good will and strong ideas. Harness the energy of the community in a constructive way. The meeting is NOT a destination but a beginning, a station stop to a better future, where passengers can get on and off before proceeding to the next stop in their growth as a healthy community.

Success stories abound: San Luis Obispo, San Diego, San Francisco, Riverside, CA, Fresno, and of course, the Big Apple, among many others...like Wichita. Jackson has been involved with many and more. He listens. He thinks. He explains. He connects dots that are in plain sight. They are seen for the first time in that new alignment...and yet, someone always says: "Why this is just common sense," and the person next to them says: "Yes, then why aren't we doing it." To do it we need to start, change from static inertia to a moving force. This is "organic" for the individual and the community, and it is healthy. Uncovering and releasing the fundamental and healthy ecosystem is the critical first step. The process can exist on its own and can persevere.

1. **Goals:** to maximize community impact of the 4-part series by bringing coalitions, experts, citizens together to build a new agenda for ongoing dialogue, using media as a change-making fulcrum.
2. **Profile of participants:** community leaders, health officials, elected representatives, academics, citizens, activists, urban planners, architects, transit/development people, educators, public health analysts, economists, students. Participants will respond to questions with hand mikes.
3. **TimeLine:** the organizational and funding process requires about two-three months.
4. **Style:** the 100-125 participants and experts are seated within three horseshoes, the 2nd and 3rd rows on risers; behind them hang large graphics and images from the series; black velour drapes—or cyc--- hang behind the pictures. A large studio monitor fills the horseshoe opening. Moderator roams.
5. **Location:** either studio at a local public television station (minimum 75 feet x 75 feet with 16-18 foot ceilings) or large room accessible to loading in 5 television cameras, jib, lights, and other television equipment; needs large electrical capacity.



6. **Time:** usually a morning for 3-4 hours, with gear load-in the day/evening before.
7. **Content:** approximately 15 questions, each formed in a 20-second video clip, are posed on a large monitor for all participants to see and hear; approximately 10-15 minutes is allocated for responses to each question before moving on to the next one; the questions are designed **to localize the national issues raised in the series**. Some questions are directed towards state and national leaders.
8. **Experts:** about 16 ethnically and gender diverse people are selected by MPC, the coalitions, and the station, representing many disciplines in the health/prevention/planning spectrum. One lead expert will be Dr. Dick Jackson; others will come from the local community, but some from state and national levels, too. Experts are “hard-wire miked” enabling them to speak spontaneously. Coalitions, the PBS station, and MPC select the experts jointly.
9. **Moderator:** generally a knowledgeable community leader, either from the PBS station, a commercial station, or elsewhere, whose job is to *find the answer to the questions* from the experts and/or the other participants. Personable, light, engaging, capable of promoting the project, too, with perhaps a very personal reason why she or he is moderating.
10. **Historical root:** a (archival footage?) one-minute reason why we are holding the town hall meeting in this community, so that each location is validated by the Moderator.
11. **Overall process:** first, an entity has to *want* to hold a town hall meeting. The entity could be a person, a coalition, a station or a combination. A three-legged configuration is created, loosely to begin, consisting of MPC, the entity, and the station. Coalitions are brought together over a period of months to form a *new coalition that will create a new, long-term agenda for community dialogue leading to change*. The town hall meeting is simply the *first* goal of the agenda, not the last. An MOU is exchanged between MPC, the station, and a 501c3 coalition. **Joint fund-raising and coalition-raising is next**. National and local funders are sought and contacted. Funds are donated to the 501c3.
12. **Funds needed:** between \$90,000 and \$150,000 depending on situation, comprising a **consortium**; some can cost less.
13. **Funders:** some national, regional, and local; all receive credit in funder pod, conforming to PBS guidelines. Multiple grants generally range from \$50,000-\$1,000. Foundations, corporations, individuals, agencies, NGOs, and coalitions are all invited to join **the consortium of funders**.
14. **Fund raising:** primary responsibility of MPC and coalitions; PBS station helps as it can.



2932 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 203
Santa Monica, CA 90403
Tel: 310.828.2966 | Fax: 310.828.2157
www.mediapolicycenter.org



15. **Benefits for funders:** described in another document, includes “live” events.
16. **Funds expended:** the **station is paid** about 30-35% for the technical production and broadcast; MPC is paid about 45% for organization, style elements and editing; **coalitions receive** about 25%, for website, dissemination and other activities. An MOU binds MPC, coalitions, and PBS station.
17. **Use of media:** all entities involved will have equal access to use the media generated, at cost, for their own purposes and for the joint purposes of the new coalition, after broadcast.
18. **Broadcast time:** usually *after* the series has aired, we stage the town hall meeting. At least 4-5 weeks *after* the staging, the THM is broadcast, perhaps with an episode from the series.
19. **Broadcast Length:** 1-2 hours, depending on station’s needs. Sometimes “live”. Repeats.