



The background is an aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. A red dashed line runs vertically through the center, representing a pipeline. A large red circle is overlaid on the map, centered on the pipeline. The text is overlaid on this circle. Street names visible include 'Essel Run Blvd' at the top, 'White Rock Dr' in the middle, 'Gray Rock Dr' and 'Flippen Way' at the bottom, and 'Olden Rd' on the right side. A large building with a parking lot is visible on the right side of the map.

Planning Near Pipelines

Focus group findings regarding
the Social marketing plan

Prepared for the Pipeline Safety Trust by
Applied Research Northwest, August, 2010

Research Methods

- Researchers and Pipeline Safety Trust staff identified potential participants from among statewide survey respondents
- Invited planning department directors and staff as well as local elected officials
- One group facilitated in eastern Washington and one in Western Washington
- Participants included county and city government perspectives
- Four participants in each group
- Provided feedback and input on Consultation Zone program design

Consultation Zones

- Introduced issues of pipeline safety with an abbreviated version of the MRSC website's presentation
- Followed with description of consultation zones
- Initial reactions:
 - Concerns regarding requiring property owners to make accommodations for pipelines on other people's property
 - Immediate concerns regarding costs of implementing and sustaining these practices
 - Questions of liability of government if there is an accident that the ordinance failed to prevent
 - Need to address property rights questions if pipeline company asks for changes beyond the 20' easement

Marketing Plan: Price

- Described program's proposed elements to lower the cost or barriers
 - Free consulting
 - Accurate maps of where pipelines are in the area
 - Formulas for computing the area
 - grant funding for ordinance development
 - GIS database development
 - Case studies to show how timelines for permitting and costs were impacted in communities with Consultation Zones
- All financial assistance was seen as essential, both for funding the work and for prioritizing it over other demands
- GIS database development may not be needed for all
- Some were skeptical case studies would be trusted

Marketing Plan: Products

- Participants were familiarized with the services and products that might help in supporting communities' adoption of a Consultation Zone
- While information resources are important, participants felt that implementation most requires:
 - Implementation workshops for planners & staff
 - How-to-get-started brochure
 - A Checklist, for planning departments and/or permit applicants
 - Model ordinances

Marketing Plan: Placement

- The advisory group proposed outreach to take place through a variety of channels including:
 - regional planning workshops, conferences, customized presentations in local jurisdictions and one on one discussions
 - Mailing, web and printed newsletters
 - Hot links on other web sites
 - Letters to the editor, opinion features
- In both groups, concerns about public awareness came up first. While all these tools seem useful and effective, keeping the public well informed and motivating their support was key. Radio and TV PSAs, editorial writing in local papers, and public presentations were considered good approaches to raising awareness
- Customized presentations were seen as a good fit, given these concerns
- Would like to see outreach to public and planners
- What about the pipeline folks? will they be presenting or at the table for the discussion of the ordinance?

Marketing Plan: Promotion

- Belief objectives that are trusted are in black:
 - By adopting a communication process, risks can be reduced
 - The area designated for communications is reasonably derived
 - The process and ordinance are customized to each community's needs
 - This reduces hassles for staff and developers by indentifying problems before permitting is completed.
 - This is a proactive approach to pipeline safety
 - This does not require that specific standards are met
 - It does not impact planning staff authority in the approval or veto of a project

Marketing Plan: Promotion

“I’m not sure it reduces hassles... anytime we’re adding legislation or any kind of mandate it doesn’t make things easier. It never does. It’s something else we have to track, period. That’s staff time.”

– City Planning Director

Marketing Plan: Promotion

- ~~Won't~~ Shouldn't delay development (edited by participants)
- Won't increase costs (no body believes this is true)

"Somewhere along the line somebody's going to have to pay for it. If you're going to require a plan or someone has to submit a plan, they're going to have to pay for it."

"Some experts going to have to make that decision and sign on the line... "

"...and then he's going to want to get paid. "

- Conversation between county and city planners

"It's one more thing cities and counties are tracking, and remember when we track something, it's from today 'til eternity. Once it goes into our system we gotta keep it. ... So it has a cost for us, as little as it may be, it has a cost for us."

- City Planning Director

- **Protect the public and protect the pipeline – this message resonates the most**
- Pipelines are in your community (raise awareness of their presence and location for planners, landowners and elected officials)
- Your pipelines' characteristics and community preferences will determine the area affected
- Know what's in your community and plan accordingly
- Lessen the likelihood of rupture during and after construction

Concerns about delays

What's a reasonable expectation of the property owner for a turnaround time on a communication with a pipeline company?... That's going to be really important. The property owner, they're not going to be calling them [the pipeline company] they're going to be calling me, and say, 'Where's my permit? Why can't you guys help us get this done?'"

- County planning staff member

"That's the first thing they ask, 'When is this going to be done?'"

- County planning staff member

"We're the lightning rod."

- Elected official

"They're going to come to him [the elected official] and say 'Why can't your planning guys get this done?'"

- County planner

Marketing Plan: Messengers

- The UTC is seen as the most authoritative source and one that would not be ignored.
- Pipeline operators are also seen as solid sources of information about Consultation Zones.

Other information

- Effectiveness
 - Participants were split between feeling Consultation Zones will not be effective and yet still needing people to plan properly around pipelines.
 - Concerns about effectiveness of the process for non-permitted activities that may also impact pipelines
 - Concerns that the quality of the conversation between operator and developer would be mixed
- Confusion, needs for clarification
 - Concerns were voiced about customizing within jurisdictions – adjacent counties with different requirements – confusing for developers working in both counties.
 - Need clarification about who/what kind of projects would be targeted for consultation – define issues of public health and safety, processes for subdivisions versus single lot development
- Concerns regarding resistance
 - Concerns that pipeline companies won't agree with the ordinance, or with each other – e.g. one agrees the other doesn't
 - Concerns that that the local associations will not buy into the ordinance simply because the national office has (e.g. BIA)
- Public Outreach requests
 - Although there has been little push back from the public so far, planners would like to see outreach to people who are in Consultation Zones, explaining risks and benefits to the community and the property owner.
 - Want Consultation Zones to be based on very high quality information to justify the effort required for the policy
- One participant asserts that pipelines move up and down and side to side within the easements
- Consultation Zones are seen to favor the operators, not the property owners

Recommendations

- Secondary audience research is needed, including:
 - Pipeline operators' responsiveness, knowledge and protocols for dealing with Consultation requests
 - Developers reactions to the recommendations for best practices and how they follow through with the Consultation – need examples of accommodations that have been made and how they impacted profitability.
 - Property owner's recognition and understanding of pipeline safety should also be evaluated for an effective awareness campaign.
- Pipeline Operators should raise awareness of property owners near pipelines through effective, ongoing public messaging (radio & TV PSAs, editorials etc.). Consider assigning a pipeline company staff member the duties of Community Education and Consultation.
 - Deal with property ownership changes with annual letters. These letters should be crafted for salience and recognition by a market research firm with a strong understanding of area homeowners. Messages and images may need to be customized regionally to make them effective. The goal of the messages should be to produce proactive planning on the part of the property owner.
- Consider adding protocols for what needs to happen during the consultation to standardize expectations and quality
- Planning offices need a protocol to follow internally to assure the Consultation Zone is being implemented appropriately
- Make the process as easy as possible - Online- web based facilitation of consultation
- Rather than trying to argue it will not be costly, make the case that the costs and extra work are worth the benefit
- City and County Managers Association would be a good place to do outreach (WCCMA)

Recommendations

- Consider more non-regulatory approaches – focus on education and voluntary changes. The Consultation Zone is seen as essentially a voluntary program since no one is requiring anyone to make changes to the plans. It relies heavily on the goodwill of the developer.
- Disclosure at time of property sale could also be a method for providing information to owners. This may be especially useful since operators have no regulatory authority over the property outside of the easement.
- Add benefits – e.g. higher density etc. for those builders who better accommodate pipelines and apply best planning practices.
- A strong program would involve all stakeholders (developers, residents, pipeline companies, and planning departments) and promote a common understanding of standard approaches to safe planning near pipelines. Just as people understand that speed limits and traffic signals serve to make driving cars safer, some common practices around pipelines should be promoted that people will understand serve to keep their community and the pipeline safe.

“I think the more that you can focus on what this does for a community, what this does for a neighborhood and if you can use good examples where communities have been built in close proximity to these pipelines and how you can incorporate open space and protection and the amenities and benefits it brings to show the public benefit.

“So there’s a public benefit in terms of open space; there’s also a public benefit in that you are protecting life and property and it’s just not viewed as something industry is paying for and trying to get for nothing.”

- County Planning Director