

Strings and Ribbons

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Who created this game

Lisa Beever, AICP, PhD
and
Nancy Wagner, AICP
Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO
Florida

Why was it created

In 1997, the Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO evaluated its four-year history of public involvement programs

They found only general issues were being identified

What did they do

They found that they needed a survey of specific needs in the context of costs and available revenue

Strings and Ribbons was born

"Strings and Ribbons" map shows funding flexed from roads to sidewalks, trails, landscaping and public transportation.



Group playing "Strings and Ribbons" at joint Sarasota/Manatee MPO and Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO meeting



What happened

- ◆ Participation increased
- ◆ Events were more fun for citizens and staff
- ◆ Complicated information was easily transferred between citizens and staff
- ◆ The diversity of participation increased

What else does it do

- ◆ It's democratic – everyone has the same power, the same amount of money
- ◆ It's visual so citizens who speak any language and have any level of literacy can play
- ◆ It eliminates the traditional citizens versus DOT/county/MPO conflict
- ◆ It makes citizens reach consensus among themselves

- ◆ It educates the citizens about the cost of each improvement
- ◆ It produces visual documentation of their preferred "alternative"
- ◆ It provides an explanation of why they selected what they selected
- ◆ It provides a ranking mechanism

Where can I go to get more information

www.ciatrans.net/Planning.pdf

[www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/
public_involvement/](http://www.dot.state.fl.us/emo/pubs/public_involvement/)
(Look under Appendix A)

www.vcmpto2025.com

Volusia County MPO

Strings & Ribbons:

A Public Involvement Success Story

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WHY STRINGS AND RIBBONS?

- Engages the public beyond traditional "mile-post" meetings
- Educates public on why we develop the LRTP and the process
- Educates the elected officials and professionals as to the perceived needs of the public
- Provides concrete examples of desired projects

WHY STRINGS AND RIBBONS?

- Avoids the typical process
- Avoids lecturing to the public
- Ensures true “public involvement”
- Allows immediate hands-on participation



WHAT IS STRINGS AND RIBBONS?

- An easy exercise with universal applications
- A simple format to set up and play
- A process requiring minimum materials and expense
- A concrete feedback mechanism



GAME PIECES

- Small calculator
- Ribbons (different colors)
- Yarn (different colors)
- Ruler
- Play money
- Scissors
- Scotch tape
- Project tally sheet
- Stickers (buses, landscaping, bridges, interchanges, traffic signals, etc.)
- Large map of area
- Note pad
- Pens or markers
- Mileage conversion sheet
- Price Sheet

GAME PIECES



GAME PIECES



GAME PIECES



GROUPS THAT HAVE PLAYED

- Churches
- Walking Clubs
- Handicapped and Sight Impaired
- High School Students
- Municipalities
- College Students
- Hispanic Association
- Housing Authority Residents
- Friends of the Library
- School Board
- Transportation Dept.
- Transportation Institute Students

CHURCHES



Macedonia Baptist Church

CHURCHES



Deltona United Church of Christ

WALKING CLUBS



Happy Wanderer's Walking Club

SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS



Handicapped Adults of Volusia County (HAVOC)

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



Atlantic High School
(Law and Government Academy)

LOCAL COLLEGES



Bethune
Cookman
College

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION



Hispanic
Association
of Volusia
County

TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE



Bethune
Cookman
College
Transportation
Institute
(Sponsored
by FHWA)

MUNICIPALITIES



City of Orange City

HELPFUL PRACTICES

- Maintain flexibility when scheduling the sessions
- Reiterate that there is no cost for hosting a session
- Offer to present information on MPO and Strings and Ribbons prior to scheduling a session
- Distribute Layman's Guide to the MPO at the sessions
- Provide food and drinks (optional, but works well)

HELPFUL PRACTICES

- Encourage hosting group to determine who participates
- Stress that the game is fun as well as educational
- Post photos and maps on website within ten days
- Provide photos on CD to hosting organization

ADVANTAGES

- Provides participants with a concrete and interactive method of participating in the planning process
- Requires no specific skills to play the game
- Teaches participants there are more transportation needs than money to meet those needs
- Promotes civility and politeness in a relaxed environment

ADVANTAGES

- Helps promote the different modes of transportation
- Reflects the concerns of the different communities
- Offers possible solutions to address the concerns
- Fits the needs of the hosting agency because of short play time
- Allows the groups to highlight why they selected particular projects

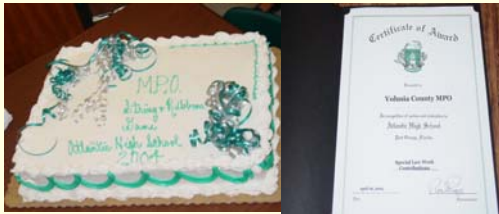
ADVANTAGES

- Provides an excellent tool for developing:
 - Long range plans
 - Short term plans
 - Project specific plans
- Can be used for planning purposes
- Overcomes barriers of literacy and language

BENEFITS

- Removes Department of Transportation and the MPO from the process
- Strongly encourages consensus among the players
- Provides a mechanism to prioritize
- Provides a formal presentation of decision making
- Is an easy and enjoyable game to play
- Makes the process more personable

BENEFITS



HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

- Strings and Ribbons projects will be included in a database
- Database will be used to identify how often each project was selected and prioritize improvements
- Database will be used to identify a "core" set of commonly selected projects
- Core set of projects will be tested and reviewed by MPO Policy Board
- The results will be compared to projects selected by a joint technical/citizens committee

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE USED?

- The MPO Policy Board will be presented with 4 alternative scenarios
 - 3 from the traditional technical/citizens committee process
 - 1 from Strings and Ribbons games
- Strings and Ribbons alternative will be the only "truly" citizen driven alternative
- The other alternatives will be heavily based on input from city/county staff representatives
- MPO Policy Board will choose projects from these 4 alternatives

OUTCOME OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

- Over 1,700 projects were identified
- Over 80 maps were developed
- Over 600 people participated in the Strings and Ribbons sessions held thus far
- Positive feedback was received from people that played the game
- Interest in the MPO Planning Process was increased significantly

LESSONS LEARNED

- Map should be clear and easy to read
- Clarify if special requirements are needed for the sight impaired and/or disabled
- Facilitators should ensure that all players are providing input
- No two sessions will be the same
- Players should be encouraged to help measure and place the game pieces on the map
- Players should sign map or tally sheet
- Extra maps and game pieces should be available

HOW TO PLAY!

Seat 6-8
players and
facilitator at a
table



HOW TO PLAY!

Explain the
purpose of the
game and how
the information
will be used



HOW TO PLAY!

Distribute play
money equally
among the
players



HOW TO PLAY!

Players can develop a list of projects prior to purchasing projects



HOW TO PLAY!

Facilitator calculates cost of project and records it on tally sheet



HOW TO PLAY!

Player pays the facilitator



HOW TO PLAY!

Player attaches
game piece to
map



HOW TO PLAY!

Several
players
contribute to
the cost of a
project



HOW TO PLAY!

Players can
express their
feelings on
the maps



HOW TO PLAY!

Final outcome—the money is gone!



HOW TO PLAY!

Group spokesperson explains the projects purchased



LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) WEBSITE

- Website was created to display every map and photographs from the sessions
- List every group and date of session
- Provides information on the MPO and a link to our main website
- Provides opportunity to contact us

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) WEBSITE



Visit our LRTP website @ www.vcmo2025.com

LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) WEBSITE



To view the maps and photos from the various sessions
Click on the Strings & Ribbons link
Or
Click on "Citizens Input"

VOLUSIA COUNTY MPO

Strings and Ribbons worked for us!

It can work for you too!



Questions & Answers

