



Earth Hour City Challenge Public Engagement Guide

Sharing the “Power to Prepare” for
Local Climate Impacts with Your Citizens

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Content Partner

AMERICASPEAKS
Engaging Citizens in Governance

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Preface

On March 31st, 2012, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) launched the inaugural Earth Hour City Challenge with the City of Tucson, Arizona's Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development. The City Challenge builds upon the spirit and symbolic action of Earth Hour, the world's largest campaign for the planet in which cities and citizens around the world turn out the lights for one hour in support of action on climate change. Earth Hour 2012 was the largest demonstration since Earth Hour began in 2007, with over 6,500 cities and towns in 150 countries and territories participating.

As part of the launch event, WWF and the City of Tucson co-hosted an event that brought over 120 citizens and community leaders together to discuss both how Tucson can prepare for threats such as extreme heat, persistent drought, and flash flooding, as well as ways to reduce the City's carbon footprint. This exciting event, titled "The Power to Prepare Tucson: A Summit to Ready Our Communities for A Changing Climate," was facilitated by *AmericaSpeaks*, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster citizens' participation in the policy-making that affect their lives.

The toolkit presented here covers the top-level processes and tools WWF and the City of Tucson used to design the *Power to Prepare* summit. WWF is presenting this toolkit as part of the resources available to Earth Hour City Challenge participants to support their efforts to engage local citizens. It draws upon the principles *AmericaSpeaks* has put into practice in their work, including citizen engagement events for Ground Zero in New York City and post-Katrina recovery planning in New Orleans. Citizens around the country employed many of these tools to great success in 2009 as part of the *National Conversation on Climate Action*.

The Principles of this approach are: diverse representation, informed participation, facilitated deliberation, and links to action.

WWF, through the Earth Hour City Challenge, encourages local governments to share with their citizens the *Power to Prepare*. We hope this toolkit can support and enhance existing efforts, offering a foundation on which your community can build its own unique engagement strategy.

To see handouts and presentations produced for the "*Power to Prepare Tucson*" summit please visit: <http://bit.ly/TucsonPowertoPrepareSummit/>.



Overview

What is the Earth Hour City Challenge?

To inspire cities to address the growing threat of climate change, WWF launched the Earth Hour City Challenge, a competition among cities to prepare for increasingly extreme weather and take steps to transition towards a 100% renewable energy future.

The Earth Hour City Challenge offers a platform and benefits package that will empower and reward participating local governments that take steps to reduce their carbon footprint and prepare for climate-related severe weather such as drought, flooding rains, extreme heat, and more intense coastal storms coupled with sea level rise.

"The degree to which cities are planned for long-term sustainability in the face of now-certain climate change may affect their very survival."

-Former EPA Administrator William K. Reilly

Participating cities that implement the most ambitious actions and engage their citizens will receive public recognition for their leadership and be eligible to win grants. Additionally, cities will better understand their vulnerability to severe weather, learn best practices from their peers and experts, and be prepared to make their communities safer, healthier and more livable.

How will this guide help your local planning?

Important things can happen when people come together—citizens get informed, issues are brought to light, and policies are changed or enhanced. Hosting a *Power to Prepare* event contributes to leveraging public understanding and support for an effective response to climate change.

This guide is intended to provide simple tips for creating a more engaging program for your event that will foster meaningful discussion, action and change. In this guide you will find:

- An overview of the process and how a *Power to Prepare* event works.
- Guidance on planning an event, including tips on picking a time and place, reaching out to participants and more.
- Sample agenda, guidance on moderating the discussion and facilitator tips.
- Information on what happens after the event is over.

Getting Started

Hosting a successful public planning event requires a commitment of staff time and attention that can be difficult to find among all the other draws on already strained resources. Often the heaviest lift is getting started in designing the event. The guidance presented here, and in the following sections, can help provide the necessary momentum to carry your staff towards a meaningful public engagement event on local climate action and sustainability.

Setting Goals and Outcomes

The broad goal for public engagement events on the topic of the “Power to Prepare” is to inform and activate your community on how to best prepare for the growing risks of extreme weather and climate threats. It is critical to choose specific objectives to accomplish in your event, no matter the length. For example, your objectives may be to:

- Inform your community about the ways in which the city is vulnerable to changes in climate
- Explore strategies for addressing local climate vulnerabilities
- Support participants to take on a new commitment to help address our vulnerabilities
- Inform community members about and engage them in local plans to better prepare the city

The more focused your objectives are, the more likely it is that they can be effectively achieved through a single event.

Why have discussions at your event?

Your efforts to inform and better prepare your community or city will be more likely to succeed if residents have a personal understanding of the issues and opportunities involved. Small group discussions on your key topics provide an opportunity for participants to express their own priorities and learn from their neighbors. Event participants will also retain more information if they have had a chance to share their reactions and ask questions of presenters.

In the following pages, especially in the section “Planning the Discussion,” you’ll find strategies and methods for ensuring participants engage with each other in a productive and structured manner.

What outcomes will you focus on?

As the host, you can develop your event so that it leads to the kinds of outcomes that best fit your community and its goals. This guide offers a sample agenda for preparing for climate change and looking for ways to take collective action. However, your outcomes should focus on the specifics of your city and its current context and situation.

Planning Your Event

This type of event is designed to be flexible and easily tailored to the needs and interests of your participants. Most events will feature presenters who will talk about climate vulnerabilities or strategies for local climate action or preparation. Rather than hosting a typical Q&A afterwards, you may want to give people a chance to talk about what they heard and identify shared questions.

Once you select a format for your event, you need to make several choices about the event you will host. The choices you face are described briefly below in the form of five questions.

Planning Worksheet

As you answer each of these questions, you may find it helpful to fill out the form below to summarize your answers.

Who will participate? _____

How large will the event be? _____

How long will it be? _____

Where will it take place? _____

Time of day? _____

1. Who will be invited to participate?

First you need to decide who you want to invite to participate. You could plan your event for an existing group – like a climate/energy working group or an existing set of stakeholders – or you could invite a unique group of people to come together just for a conversation. Participants might include members of community groups, local government staff, business leaders, church/faith-based groups, students, or anyone who may see a flyer you post. We recommend combining multiple groups, so that people are exposed to new or different points of view.

2. How large will the conversation be?

The design presented here works just as well with a few people as it does with 100 or more. If you plan to host more than 10–12 people, then you will need to break the group up into multiple small groups seated at round tables to ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate.

3. How long will your conversation last?

The recommended time for an event is 2-3 hours and the materials in this guide are geared towards a three-hour conversation. However, we recognize that many groups may have more or less time. Therefore, you may need to adapt the materials included here. The important thing is that you budget sufficient time for participant discussion in small groups.

4. Where will it take place?

Pick a location that is comfortable, quiet, and accessible to your participants. The location you use should have room for people to sit comfortably (ideally at round tables). Participants can be seated at round tables or chairs can be arranged in circles if tables are not available. If possible, the venue should have a computer and/or LCD projector and screen.

5. What time of day?

If you are hosting an event for the general public, you might choose the evening, so that people who work during the day can attend. If your event will be focused mostly on city, town, or county staff or other professionals, then a mid-day, brown bag lunch during the week may be the best time. Consider piggy-backing on existing events in your community or host your event in conjunction with a previously scheduled climate or sustainability event.

Who to Invite and How

Busy schedules and competing priorities make it hard to find a time that works for everyone. Everyone has a role to play to prepare their community and city more effectively for climate change. However, some people don't yet see themselves as actors in this change. To engage a broad-spectrum of people in your event, think about taking some extra steps to reach out to specific members in your community who may not usually participate.

Inviting Participants

Diverse participation in your meeting will ensure higher quality dialogue and will allow participants the opportunity to learn from each other and be exposed to different perspectives and experiences. Try to involve people of different ages, ethnic groups, income levels, backgrounds, and walks of life to add to the richness of the experience for everyone involved.

The best way to attract a diverse group is to co-host the session with organizations which may have connections to different networks that have been previously engaged in your local government's work on climate or energy issues. Try to push your boundaries and do what you can to bring in other perspectives and diversity to the meeting.

Identify your target audience

Spend some time thinking about the type of person who will be most interested in participating in your conversation. How can you best reach out to these people: where do they work, play or live? How do they hear about local news and events?

Invite lots of people

Assume that a significant number of people whom you invite will not be able to attend.

Especially if you are inviting people who have not been previously engaged in this issue, it may be necessary to invite three or four times as many people as you want to attend, in order to reach your target.

Work With Community Leaders

Who can spread your message into parts of the community that aren't currently active on climate change issues? Reach out to leaders in your community who can help spread the word. Brainstorm a list of organizations and individuals that have influence in your community: media personalities, local celebrities, business leaders, ministers, principals & teachers, union leaders, respected elders, etc.

Make Personal Connections

There is no substitute for a personal invitation. Email, phone calls, and letters are great ways to promote your event, but a face-to-face invitation will always generate the best results. You may be surprised at how many individuals and organizations will respond to a personal touch. Go to where people congregate with posters and flyers, and introduce your event at local community meetings.

Go to the Public to Bring the Public In

Where do the people who you hope will attend your event congregate? Send a team of staff or volunteers to this street corner, shopping mall, park or church to give out flyers and talk about the event. If you have the staff capacity, register people on the spot and follow up with a reminder email or phone call. Publicize your event on local community calendars, websites, newsletters or listservs.

Remind people to attend

A few days before your event make phone calls and send emails to remind people about the date, time and location.

Event Invitation (sample)

Dear Community Leader,

To be a desirable destination for businesses and residents in the 21st Century, our city needs to prepare for the growing risks of extreme weather and climate disruption while building communities that use clean energy efficiently.

Is (Name City) prepared for the changing future? Are we building a community that can weather these changes?

Join other community leaders on **Day, Month & Date from X to Y p.m. at the LOCATION** for a discussion about preparing our community for a changing climate.

These topics are critical to the future of our city and the only way we will find solutions is through dialogue by people who care enough to begin putting effective solutions in place.





Please join us and become part of the solution to getting our city better prepared. Better yet, bring a friend or colleague!

Please RSVP to _____ by April XX.

Best regards,

Jane Doe
Title

Public flyer (sample)

 	<p>City of Tucson invites you to</p> <h2>The Power to Prepare Tucson:</h2> <p>A SUMMIT TO READY OUR COMMUNITIES FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE</p> <p>To be a desirable destination for businesses and residents in the 21st Century, cities need to prepare for the growing risks of extreme weather and climate disruption while building communities that use clean energy efficiently.</p> <p>In preparation for this changing future, Tucson's Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the University of Arizona, recently completed a report of climate impacts on the City of Tucson. We want to discuss these vulnerabilities with the broader community. This discussion will be a unique opportunity to learn how climate change may impact you and your community, while collaborating on priorities and solutions for addressing these vulnerabilities.</p>
<p>Calling all Community Leaders and Residents of Tucson and Pima County to help shape our response to a Changing Climate</p> <p>Saturday, March 31, 2012</p> <p>3 p.m.–7:15 p.m.</p> <p>Tucson Convention Center 260 South Church Ave Tucson, AZ 85701</p> <p>Light Dinner will be provided</p> <p>Please RSVP for this free event at http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/wwfpower</p> <p>Questions: Call (520) 791-4675</p>	<p>This unique event will be moderated by AmericaSpeaks, a national nonprofit whose mission is to help citizens participate more directly, and with greater impact, in issues that affect their lives. AmericaSpeaks will bring their 21st Century Town Meeting® method that integrates small group discussion with interactive technologies. Space is limited, so reserve your spot now.</p> <p>This engagement event will also kick off a new national initiative by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to encourage local communities and city leadership to have a collaborative dialogue around preparing for a changing climate. With communities all over the country vulnerable to the harmful consequences of increasingly extreme weather, WWF will showcase Tucson's leadership as a model other cities should follow, engaging their own constituents on this critical issue.</p>
<p>THIS SUMMIT IS HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH</p>  	

Getting Your Message to the Media

The scope of your communications effort should always be evaluated in the context of the project's outreach goals. After determining the meeting size and goals for reaching participants and stakeholders, it is now possible to determine what type of communications effort will be necessary to support these goals. If your plan is to have a relatively small meeting (30-40 or less) you probably don't need a media plan. However, if you're aiming for larger numbers of attendees, it may make sense to get the media involved.

Key to your strategy is the development of key messages. What are the two or three messages you want the media to pay attention to about this event? You can develop these messages by answering succinctly, and in compelling fashion, these four questions:

- Why is this meeting so important?
- Why is preparation for climate change so important?
- What outcomes are you hoping to achieve?
- Why is this important to individual residents?

After developing your messages, it is also important to assess how easy/difficult it might be to get coverage in the local media market. Some key considerations in assessing the scope of the required communications effort include:

- What is the mass media's record in covering this issue? Is there a great deal of involvement on the part of the media in promoting these initiatives/meetings in advance?
- Do local media outlets often serve as sponsors of civic/community events? If so, do they often provide special story coverage, PSAs, etc.?
- Will paid advertising (radio, TV) likely be necessary to supplement grassroots outreach efforts to recruit key audiences? If so, which outlets would be likely targets? What are the costs of advertising in those outlets?
- Is there an influential person from the community that could author a newspaper editorial in support of climate action, and advertising your event? (see former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt's editorial for "Power to Prepare Tucson" in the *Arizona Daily Star* [here](#))

Media Strategy

Develop a media strategy to create momentum leading up to the meeting. Be sure to include tactics which broadcast public priorities and raise visibility. Forming media partnerships, if feasible, will help keep the spotlight on actions and build accountability.

Consider forming an Outreach & Communications Committee to recruit demographically representative participants, write outreach materials, and ensure good press coverage. This committee should be comprised of no more than 2-4 people committed to recruiting participants to achieve the outreach targets and/or readjust targets. In some cases they may contract or partner with others to help in recruitment or implement media strategy. Its key tasks are to:

- Develop outreach and media strategy
- Develop overall web strategy and plan
- Monitor outreach targets vs. registrations
- Develop outreach materials and documents
- Coordinate and integrate media strategy with outreach efforts
- Write press releases, op-eds, letters to the editor, and pitch stories
- Design and place paid advertisements, PSAs as needed
- Select a media coordinator and spokes person prior to the event
- Conduct follow-up publicity for a post-event report

After your event, contact non-attending media and send them a summary report or press release of the outcomes, pursue follow-up stories and prepare a comprehensive log of media coverage. This log will allow you to report (internally and externally) on the extent of your coverage.

Planning the Discussion

Once you have set the desired goals and outcomes for your event and determined who your target audiences are, it is time to plan the agenda for the day. The model presented here relies heavily on an active facilitator, engaging and impactful speakers, and an agenda that is designed to be followed.

Finding a Facilitator

Following the format of the “Power to Prepare Tucson” summit, you will need a facilitator and engaging speakers. The role of the facilitator is to help the group stay on task, make sure that everyone’s voice is heard, and foster group discussion and agreements. The facilitator can follow the section on Leading Your Discussion which will take him/her through each step of the process. The summit also used table facilitators, individuals at each table that helped ensure everyone at the table gave input during the table discussion periods.

Who might serve as a facilitator? If you feel like you have the skills, you might select yourself. If you don’t, look for someone who you’ve seen do a good job playing that role in your various circles, whether at work, in the civic sector, someone at your religious institution, or someone from a local school, college, or university.

Key Tips for the Facilitator

The facilitator’s role is to help support the discussion. The best way to do that is to maintain a neutral position and to hold back on voicing your own opinions. Instead, focus on keeping the discussion going and making sure everyone has a voice.

Set the Room Up to Enable Good Conversation

Plan to set up the room in a manner that supports participant conversations by using round tables with seats for 5-10 people. Or if that is not feasible, organize chairs in circles of 5-10.

Establish Ground Rules for the Group

Begin by agreeing on clear ground rules for the conversation. For example:
Listen respectfully • Hear from everyone • One person talks at a time • Stay on task

You Do Not Have to be an Expert

Don’t feel that you must be an expert on the issues. Before your discussion, read the materials you’ve been provided. If questions come up during the discussion, ask your host for clarification.

Provide Sufficient Time for Small Group Discussions

Plan to allocate sufficient time for everyone around a table to be heard, and to allow ample time to explore the key issues. Generally, tables need 20-40 minutes for a robust conversation, depending on the topic. Choose one or two specific questions for each discussion period and provide a worksheet with the questions typed on them (or projected on the screen if you're using a projector). Allow a couple of minutes of quiet time for participants to write their answers down before beginning their table conversations.

Ask Probing Questions

You may find that in order to get the best from your group, you'll need to prod them a bit; sometimes inviting participants to be clearer, sometimes encouraging conversation about a point that you think merits more discussion, sometimes seeking to find common ground. Some useful questions you may want to ask at the right moment:

- What is the key point here?
- Does anyone want to support or challenge that point?
- Could you give an example to illustrate the point?
- Are there any points on which most of us agree?

Reflect Back Themes from the Discussions

As you begin to hear common themes or areas of agreement, it will be useful to reflect back to the group what you are hearing and check in to see if everyone agrees. You might say: "So, it sounds like several of you are saying" Or: "What I hear the group saying is Is that right?" Make sure you capture these themes and agreements publicly – either on a flip chart or by someone typing the agreements into a computer that is projected onto a screen for all to see.

Be Mindful of Time and Take Notes

You will want to pay attention to the time of each task to ensure that you are able to complete each step of the meeting. Some moderators find it useful to ask a volunteer from the group to keep time and/or to take notes.

Selecting Speakers

Whether it's a local executive, industry or academic leader, or a professional speaker, a successful program will identify speakers early in the planning process. Having a speaker is critical to achieving your overall mission and creating the best impact for your event. You want to select a guest speaker who is a good match for your group.

Create a clear roadmap

After you have established an overall theme and desired outcome for the event with your program committee, think about what kind of speaker you need. Do you want to motivate or encourage your attendees?

Are you looking for an educational speaker or a results-oriented speaker? Begin with identifying a specific climate preparation topic for your speaker to address. The “Power to Prepare Tucson” summit focused on impacts to public health and economic development. From there, you can work with the speaker to refine the general topic into more specific areas that will provide listeners the most value.

Selecting a Speaker

You most likely have numerous resources available in your agency and/or within your local networks to use when identifying speakers. Seek recommendations from colleagues, local universities, associations and professional organizations. There is no substitute for research. Learn more about who the industry leaders are and national resources on the topics you want to present.

Ideally, you want to select someone who is known and respected in the community. Frequently, you:

- can find a faculty member from a local campus who knows the issues well
- know someone from a respected non-profit who deals with the issues regularly
- can find someone from the business community who is well versed on these issues by virtue of his/her participation on a local or state board or in a multi-sector coalition

Areas of expertise, credentials, and background are all important items to consider, but the most critical factor in selecting the right speaker for your group is presentation quality. It helps to select someone who you – or someone on your committee – has seen speak before and has an excellent blend of tone, information/message, and humor. To the extent possible, you may also consider what characteristics of a speaker will resonate most with your anticipated audience, whether that is a particular influential person, an academic, or a business leader.

Setting the Agenda

This engagement model is more structured than most traditional public forums and so a relatively detailed agenda will be an important piece to get right when designing the event. The agenda should reflect this level of detail by showing the structure and flow of the proceedings with descriptive text of each element, and specific time required for each element. An example agenda for a 2.5 hour event is presented on the following page.

Event Agenda (sample)

Power to Prepare [Our City] Summit (2.5 hours)

Objectives:

- Inform participants about climate change and the need for climate preparation
- Encourage and support participants in making concrete commitments to take action for climate change preparation
- Share information about local government climate preparation activities

Start Time	Length	Agenda item
0:00	8 min	Welcome Short welcome by host and/or community leader or elected leader
0:08	7	Overview Review purpose of event, day's agenda
0:15	10	Introduction of Participants Participants at round tables introduce their name, where they live, and answer a short discussion question like: "What personal actions to reduce climate impact are you proud of already taking, and where would you like to take more action?" Fill out table sign-in sheet.
0:25	15	Presentation – Preparing for Climate Change Climate change expert on effectively preparing for climate change provides high-level review of the issues, including key trends, and where key issues are likely headed. Provide a handout that summarizes some of the key points from the presentation for participants.
0:40	20	Table Discussions – Preparing for Climate Change Participants spend 20 minutes talking in smaller groups of 5-10 on what they've heard and what they believe is the highest priority to address.
1:00	15	Oral Reports from Tables / Plenary Discussion If a large group, have only 3-4 table groups report back the key ideas from their discussion; for smaller group, you can have them all report. Use a microphone for a larger group.
1:15	15	Interactive Q&A The main speaker offers his/her thoughts on the reports. Speaker engages in further Q&A. Use a microphone for a larger group
1:30	25	Taking Collective Action Participants discuss what action they can take as a group to make a significant difference in preparing our community for the impacts of climate change. They should develop at least one proposal they think could make a difference.

1:55	20	<p>Reports from Tables - Action</p> <p>For a large group, have only 3-4 table groups report back one proposal for action; for a smaller group, have all tables report. Ask for a show of hands for expressions of support for this proposal getting further developed.</p>
2:15	8	<p>Individual Commitments</p> <p>Participants individually read and fill out an Action Commitment Form, which could include committing to participate in ongoing efforts to prepare the city more effectively for climate change.</p>
2:23	7	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <p>Host (and any public official in attendance) reflect back what they've heard and make commitments to act on what they've heard. Review next steps that participants</p>
2:30		<p>Adjourn</p>

Gathering Materials to Support Discussion

Handouts and supporting documents can help reinforce the information presented by your guest speakers. People learn and retain information in a variety of ways. Presentations, paired with written materials help address the preferences of your participants. It will also be important to have written materials that they can refer to during the breakout discussion periods. If one of your objectives is to educate participants on climate change science and the impacts of climate-related weather and events, there are existing materials from the U.S. Global Change Research Program that can be useful.

- Climate Impacts in the U.S. and Regional Highlights:
<http://www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts/usimpacts-brochures>

Providing written example strategies is important if one of your objectives is to solicit feedback on particular strategies to reduce carbon emissions, save electricity, or prepare for extreme heat or flooding. Strategies could be specific policy options your local government may be considering or they could simply serve as examples for brainstorming. Examples were written into a table format at the “Power to Prepare Tucson” summit. Each example strategy was paired with an associated climate impact (i.e., extreme heat, flash flooding).

- To see all the materials and presentations given at the “Power to Prepare Tucson” summit visit:
<http://bit.ly/TucsonPowertoPrepareSummit/>

The following websites can serve as a resource for finding additional examples of response strategies to a variety of climate impacts.

Ready.gov..... <http://www.ready.gov/>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention..... <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/>
*Preparing for Climate Change: A Guidebook for
Local, Regional, and State Government*..... <http://cses.washington.edu/cig/fpt/guidebook.shtml>

Leading Your Discussion

The section presents ideas on how to encourage active dialogue with and among the participants, as well as tips for your facilitator and proven strategies for communicating about climate science and the importance of planning for climate change.

Participant Introductions

Participants will find your program more engaging if they have a chance to speak early on, rather than spending the first hour of the forum listening to speakers on the stage. A good way to bring more energy into the room and create a stronger connection between participants is to give them a chance to introduce themselves to one another.

Take 10–15 minutes for participants to introduce themselves in small groups of five to ten people. In addition to introducing themselves, each participant should share something about why he or she chose to participate. Pass around sign-in sheets (see next page for a sample) before or during this exercise.

Possible Discussion Task

Ask each participant to introduce themselves to the others in their small group (see a sample Introductions Worksheet on page 18).

- Share your name and where you live in the community.
- In a sentence or two, share with the group what inspired you to participate in today's conversation.

Alternative questions:

- What do you hope to learn or accomplish during today's conversation?
- What is your greatest hope and greatest concern about how our community will address the issue of climate change?

Tips for Supporting the Discussion

- Before the discussions begin, ask everyone to take a moment of silence to think about the discussion questions and to jot down their answers on a worksheet. This will help ensure that people are thoughtful with their answers and able to listen while others are speaking.
- Ask each table to appoint someone to take notes and someone to keep time.

Sign-in Sheet (sample)

Table # _____

Name	Email Address	Phone Number	Mailing Address	
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>

Keep Me Informed
about the outcomes
of today's Conversation

Worksheet on Presentation (sample)

Now that you have listened to a presentation on climate change and our community, take a few moments to discuss the following questions with the other people sitting at your table. Use this worksheet to take notes and to write down your own thoughts.

What, if anything, did you learn from the presentation that surprised you or stood out to you?

What question would your table like to ask the presenters to help you understand what is most important for our community to do to address the issue of climate change?

Tips for Facilitating

As the Host, you may be serving as the discussion lead facilitator for your event. You may also want to recruit a group of facilitators to each facilitate a smaller break-out or table-based discussion, making sure they stay on task and that everyone's voice is heard.

Below are tips to help you as you lead your *Power to Prepare* event. These tips can also be helpful if you have recruited table facilitators for the table discussions:

- **Greet participants** – As they arrive, encourage participants to introduce themselves to each other. Creating a welcoming and safe environment is critical to the success of your event.
- **Ensure everyone has a voice** – Involve all participants and prevent any one person from dominating the conversation. “I want to make sure we get a chance to hear from everyone.”
- **Be prepared for change** – These discussions are designed to be responsive to participants' needs and interests. There will inevitably be changes and additions to the conversation. If there are significant changes, especially with time, check in with the group before proceeding.
- **Listen actively** – This is the most important part of any conversation. Conversations cannot enter new territory if participants are busy thinking of something else. Set an example for the rest of the group by letting the participants know that you are listening.
- **Make eye contact** – Nod. Say “yes”, “I see”, “That’s interesting”, or something similar to give them clues that you are paying attention.
- **Ask clarifying or probing questions** – “What was most important for you?”, “Can you say more about that experience?” etc.
- **Explore different points of view** – “So ___ has talked about the importance of X, and ___ has raised some concerns with X, I’m wondering how others see it”. Make sure the discussion stays respectful. Consider taking a deadlocked conversation to a more abstract level, focusing on the principles or values that should guide our response to climate action.
- **Encourage listening, not convincing** – Diversity is highly valued in community conversations. Support participants to listen and ask questions for understanding.
- **Curb off-topic anecdotes** – Personal experiences are an important part of talking about climate action. However, lengthy or off-topic personal anecdotes can quickly sidetrack discussions. When this occurs, try to gently coax the participant to finish their anecdote. “You have a lot of valuable things to share, but I want to make sure we can also hear from others. Please tell us just one last important idea about your experience.”
- **Allow participants to reflect** – Encourage a few silent moments to write down their answer before opening the conversation, before responding to discussion questions.
- **Do not panic over lulls** – This is a time when you can draw out participants that haven't been heard from yet. Use the pause to move on to the next discussion.
- **Take a break** – If you feel the discussion is getting too heated or if people need a moment to collect themselves after an emotional segment, recess for five minutes.
- **If the press shows up**, and you grant them access to your meeting, be sure to ask each participant if they are comfortable being recorded and ensure the reporter respects their wishes.

Ten Tips for Communicating to the Public on Climate Change

Climate change, in all the layers of data and models and answering the “who-what-where-when” questions, is a complex issue. The magnitude of the threat and is part of what makes it so complex, and also so contentious. Here are a few proven strategies to use when discussing climate science and preparing for the risks of climate change with participants at your event.

- 1. Engaging your audience on preparing for climate change (also called “climate change adaptation”) may not require that you begin by talking about climate change.** Climate change is a concept that is not easy for everyone to understand and we know that many people disbelieve or are doubtful about its existence and causes. People experience climate change through weather anomalies. If you have skeptics in your audience, talk about severe and changing weather patterns (storms and floods, drought, intense snowfall). Explain that there is no reason to believe that these patterns will return to what they once were.
- 2. But preparing for climate change does require talking about vulnerability to changing and severe weather and how to reduce those vulnerabilities.** People instinctively want to protect themselves from perceived threats. That is why we have an insurance industry. If people understand how changing and severe weather will affect them personally and their communities AND what can be done to reduce their vulnerability to these threats, they will be much more likely to support policies and initiatives that prepare the community for climate change.
- 3. Climate change must connect with issues that people already care about.** What is it in your community that people value most? If people care about jobs, talk about how industries are likely to be affected. If it is historic architecture, talk about how the community’s oldest buildings might be vulnerable to severe weather. If it is the local sports team, talk about how sports venues may be vulnerable. And keep it local. People really are not motivated by what is happening in other parts of the country.
- 4. Begin with what is well-understood.** When discussing climate change, people often begin by talking about projected changes. All climate change projections carry with them various amounts of uncertainty, which is quite difficult to communicate to an audience, particularly those who may be skeptical about climate change. It is usually better to talk about observed changes in weather and climate over the past 30 years. If record-breaking weather has occurred in the last five years, talk about that too, and the harm it caused to people, property, and livelihoods. Be careful to not over emphasize the negative however. See Tip 7 and 8 on how to balance the message.

5. **Use language that your audience will understand. Tell stories.** People quickly get lost and tune out if they hear lots of scientific terminology, city planning jargon and acronyms that don't make sense to them. Use words that everyone will understand. Use analogies to explain difficult concepts. And the best way to engage your audience and keep their attention is to tell stories, particularly those that highlight successes in your own community or mistakes in other communities (i.e., "Let's not do what they did!").
6. **Don't oversell or rely too heavily on the science in communications. Uncertainty is real.** While our actions should always be grounded in sound science, making your case to prepare for climate change is not always best done with scientific arguments. People are often skeptical of what scientists tell us or are confused by overly scientific messages that are difficult to understand.
7. **Be cautious of emphasizing impacts and using "doom and gloom" to get in the door.** People are not motivated to change by messages that cause fear and anxiety. Talking about the dire consequences of severe weather if we do not act now is often a turn-off for most people. The typical response is to doubt or deny. If your or a neighboring community has recently experienced catastrophic weather, people will want to create a sense of normalcy – to return to the way things used to be. This is generally not a good time to be talking about creating change for the future.
8. **Provide a sense of realistic hope and a feasible path of action.** Just as people are not motivated to change by messages of doom and gloom, providing a sense of realistic hope for the future can be very powerful. Discuss what courses of action can be taken to reduce vulnerability to severe and changing weather. Start by talking about things the community has already done that will be helpful in preparing for climate change. Then talk about new activities that are relatively simple, inexpensive, and can be implemented quickly. Save big, long-term, sweeping changes for last or the next discussion.
9. **Mass communications is not enough. Dialogue is most effective.** In an over-saturated media environment, mass communications is often not the best way to reach your audience whether through print, broadcast, or the web. Talking directly to your audience, listening to their concerns and answering their questions is the best way to get the ball rolling. Start with public, face-to-face meetings, such as a *Power to Prepare* event, supplemented with social media.
10. **Jointly developed visions and solutions are more powerful.** Telling people what the problem is and how you want to solve it is not an effective way to build support for a climate preparedness initiative. Involve your community in creating a vision for your community's future, discuss how that vision may be at risk due to changing and severe weather, and ask for ideas on how to best reduce risks. Community ownership of both the problems and the solutions will help ensure support and commitment to building a brighter future.

Some Thoughts about Climate Change Skepticism

One final note about climate change skepticism as you prepare to lead and host this event: Be aware that those who deny the existence of human-induced climate change or who don't believe that action needs to be taken to address climate change may be in attendance. The specific format and discussion structure of this type of forum is designed to be inclusive of all voices; not allowing a single person or perspective to take over the event. In particular, it is important to consider:

- **Seating:** If this is a public meeting or an open invitation meeting, they have every right to be there. If you are aware before the meeting starts individuals' stances on the topic (through a registration question for example) make sure that each table has a good mix of opinion.
- **Ground Rules:** It will be essential that as part of the host's opening, that it is quite clear that this is a meeting to share information and explore views *respectfully*. Also, emphasize clearly the ground rules the meeting will follow to enable *everyone's* full and effective participation.
- **Small Group Discussion:** It will also be essential to include several segments of the program in which discussions are occurring in small groups and not just in large group. It is often easier to manage people's behavior when they are in a smaller, more intimate group setting.
- **Large Group Discussion:** When you move into larger group or plenary activities, make sure that everyone is clear on what process will be followed, how much time is being allotted for the activity, and that all questions and/or comments must be brief, and that the role of the moderator is to ensure people stay focused in their comments.

Continuing the Discussion

Consider the kinds of actions you want people to take as a result of their conversations. Do you want participants to collaborate on a focused issue or opportunity that's important to them? Or, do you want people with diverse interests to inspire one another to take a variety of actions?

Use the answers to these questions to guide the discussion exercises. Encourage a process that creates opportunities for further action and enables city and participants to take ownership on what they can impact. Ask participants to take 20-30 minutes to identify actions they could take to address climate change. Remind participants when they have five minutes left.

Opportunities for Further Action

If most of the participants at your event are community leaders representing local government, local businesses, schools, the faith community, non-profits etc., you may want to focus discussion on what each of their sectors can do. Possible discussion questions may include:

- **What one action** could our sector take that would make a significant contribution to reducing our community's emissions of greenhouse gases from fossil fuels?
- **What one action** could our sector take that would make a significant contribution to preparing our city more effectively for the local impacts of climate change?
- **Who else** would we need to involve to be successful?
- **What commitments** will each of us make to create progress on this action?

If most of your participants are already active in environmental organizations or initiatives, you may want to focus your discussion on the progress of their existing activities and what more they can do together. Possible discussion questions include:

- **What's been most successful** in our efforts to reduce our community's emissions of greenhouse gases and how can we leverage those successes into other areas?
- **What's been most successful** in our efforts to prepare our city effectively on the impacts of climate change and how can we leverage those successes into other areas?
- **What challenges** do we face implementing our goals and what action is required to overcome them?
- **What commitments** will each of us make to collaborate towards reducing our community's emissions as well as preparing for climate risks?

Taking Action Worksheet (sample)

What one action could we take as a group to make a significant difference in preparing our community more effectively for the local impact of climate change?

What resources would we need to be successful in taking action? Whose help would we need?

What commitments will each of us need to make in order to begin work on this action?

Individual Action Exercise

By the end of your event, participants will have heard many new ideas and considered opportunities they have to prepare more effectively for the impacts of climate change. Be sure to provide time for participants to consider the next actions they will take.

Consider setting an example for this activity by inviting elected and community leaders to share from the podium one or two new actions they will take as a result of the meeting.

Your office may not be in a position to do a lot of individual follow-up with participants so you should plan in advance for how you want to plan for any commitments that people make at the meeting and whether you will follow up and support them or not.

Various options include:

- Ask participants to fill out a **postcard** with one or two actions they've committed to on the commitment form. Collect the postcards, input this information into a spreadsheet and then immediately mail them their postcard.
- **Use carbon copy forms.** Keep one copy and have participants take the other home.
- In a small meeting, ask each participant to **stand up and share a commitment.** Have someone ready to type names and summaries of the commitments or video record their testimonies.
- Circulate **action sign-up sheets** for specific tasks or working groups.
- Ask for potential table captains or someone willing to help lead and follow up on commitments and opportunities to further engage on the issue.
- If you won't be following up in the above ways, you should still consider using some kind of **action commitment form** that encourages people to take action on their own (see next page for sample).

Hand out the participant action forms and ask participants to take 5–10 minutes to read, make notes and choose one or two new actions to commit to.

Clearly share how you will collect (or not collect) their commitments and how you will follow up within a few weeks.

Action Commitment Form (sample)

Name:

Email:

Phone:

I commit to:

Each of us has a role to play in preparing our community effectively for the impacts of climate change.

What's your next step?

[EXAMPLES]

	I Already	I Commit to
Participate in the public planning process for the [Comprehensive plan] and/or [Sustainability Plan]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write a letter, email or call my local newspaper editor about preparing for the impacts of climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write a letter, email or call my Congressperson or Senator about preparing for the impacts of climate change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer for a local organization's climate-related program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sign an on-line petition or send emails to support climate action through I website such as www.EarthHourCityChallenge.org	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talk about preparing for climate change with a friend or family member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If none of the examples suggested are right for you, please write below what specific action(s) you will take as a result of what you learned and discussed today.

Reporting Back Your Results

Supporting Collective Action

There are several steps you can take in order to ensure that your event produces more than just a report to sit on a shelf. Once participants at your meeting make commitments to collective action, it is up to you to make sure they have what they need to realize their goals.

On-Going Communication

An essential way to maintain momentum after the event is to keep in regular contact with participants. Here are a few things you may want to consider to keep people informed:

- Collect email addresses and have a plan in place for immediately entering them into a Database
- Prepare a message before the event that will go out immediately following to thank participants and remind them about next steps
- Ask participants in the meeting to volunteer to keep others at their table or in their small group informed.
- Prepare a regular e-newsletter, update your website, or add them to your listserv.

Participant Evaluation

It is important to give participants an opportunity to give feedback on the event itself. How would they rate the effectiveness of the facilitator and speakers? Did they find the written materials useful as a supplement to presentations and a support for table discussion? Public engagement is an ongoing process. Soliciting this feedback from your participants will help make future efforts more valuable for both you and your audience.

A sample evaluation form is presented on the following page.

Evaluation Form (sample)

What was your table number? ____

How would you rate each of the following items from today's meeting?

Your Table Facilitator	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent
Your Table Discussions	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent
Participant Guide Materials	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent
Use of Technology	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent
Food & Beverage	Very Poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Excellent

What worked well?

What changes would you suggest?

Other comments?

Summary

To provide a resilient and sustainable future for citizens, they must be a part of the planning and implementation of policy decisions. Their support will make decision making feasible. Their voices will make strategies doable. Through this toolkit and participation in WWF's Earth Hour City Challenge, we hope that your efforts to engage your citizens are supported and expanded.

This guide has been prepared to help support local governments' public outreach and engagement efforts by offering the expertise of *AmericaSpeaks* and the experience of implementing this model at the "Power to Prepare Tucson" summit.

For more information, and to see handouts and presentations produced for the "Power to Prepare Tucson" summit please visit: <http://bit.ly/TucsonPowertoPrepareSummit/>.