

Location: Lancaster

Issue: Lancaster's Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Arts

Methodology: Townsquare – Online tools for community engagement

Link to more: <http://www.migtownsquare.com/Content/10064/preview.html>

In 2006, the City of Lancaster, like many areas of California predicted large growth over the next 15 years. In order to meet the needs of its residents in the future, Lancaster developed a master plan for its parks, recreation, and arts. The master plan included: an analysis of current and future demographics of the City, an inventory of current park and recreation facilities, recreation classes and cultural arts opportunities. The civic engagement element involved a series of interviews and focus groups with local decision-makers and interest groups, phone surveys, plus an assessment of Lancaster as compared to similar cities.

Community involvement was elicited through a variety of forums and opportunities. The 2006 Lancaster Poppy Festival afforded the residents an opportunity to engage in the planning process through an interactive survey and recorded interviews. Additional community involvement included telephone surveys, focus groups, and comments posted on the project website.

Townsquare provided tools to complement traditional community outreach methods. These online tools include a document manager, an email notification administration, news and events coordinator, and a content manager. All of these tools were designed to make the process more accessible to more people and easier to view and edit for the organizers.