

Cleaning Up Toxic Public Discourse for Meaningful Engagement





Dave Biggs

Chief Engagement Officer
MetroQuest



A group of people are sitting on a brown leather couch in a modern setting. They are all using laptops or tablets. The people are wearing casual clothing like jeans and sweaters. The floor is made of dark wood planks. The image is used as a background for a presentation slide.

Agenda

When I Realized Things Were Changing
The Toxic State of Public Discourse
How to Detox Public Engagement
Q&A

When I realized things were changing ...



43:17 / 2:06:35





Facebook

FACEBOOK ADMITS IT MIGHT BE POISONING DEMOCRACY

As user trust tumbles, tech giants are forced into a risky gamble.

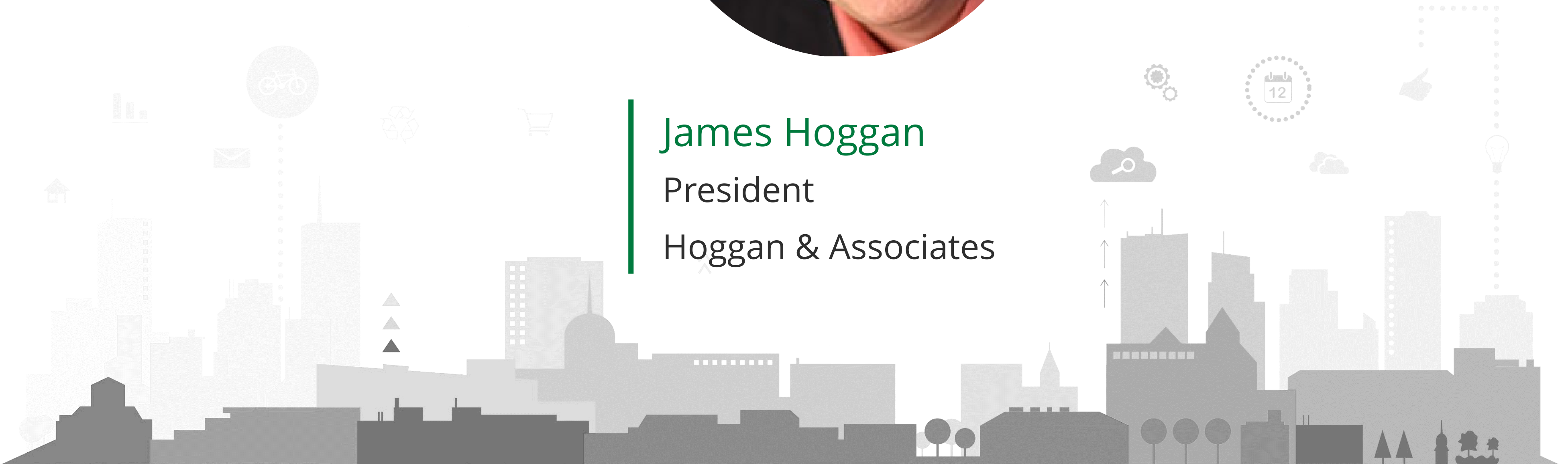


Last week, Apple C.E.O. **Tim Cook**, whose company is inching towards a trillion-dollar market valuation, told a crowd at **Harlow College in Essex, England**, that he's leery of social media's effects on younger generations. "I don't have a kid, but I have a nephew that I put some boundaries on," he said, adding, "There are some things that I won't allow; I don't want them on a social network." He went on to say that he does not "believe in overuse [of technology] . . . I'm not a person that says we've achieved success if you're using it all the time." With the exception of **some early employees**, there's been relatively minimal public hand-wringing over the possibility that Facebook and other social-media platforms could have a net negative impact on society—a question that is so far unresolved. But users' eroding trust has spurred them to grapple with the issue, gambling that the appearance of transparency will counteract any damage done to their bottom lines.

Facebook has, in large part, spearheaded the trend. The company's overtures continued on Monday when it published an **essay series** entitled "Hard Questions," which examines the social-media giant's larger impact. Ultimately, Facebook Civic Engagement Product Manager **Samidh Chakrabarti** writes in one essay, there's no guarantee that Facebook is a net good for democracy, or that the "positives are destined to outweigh the negatives." Still, he says, Facebook has a "moral duty" to understand how its technology affects democracy, and is "working diligently to neutralize [the] risks" of malicious actors weaponizing its



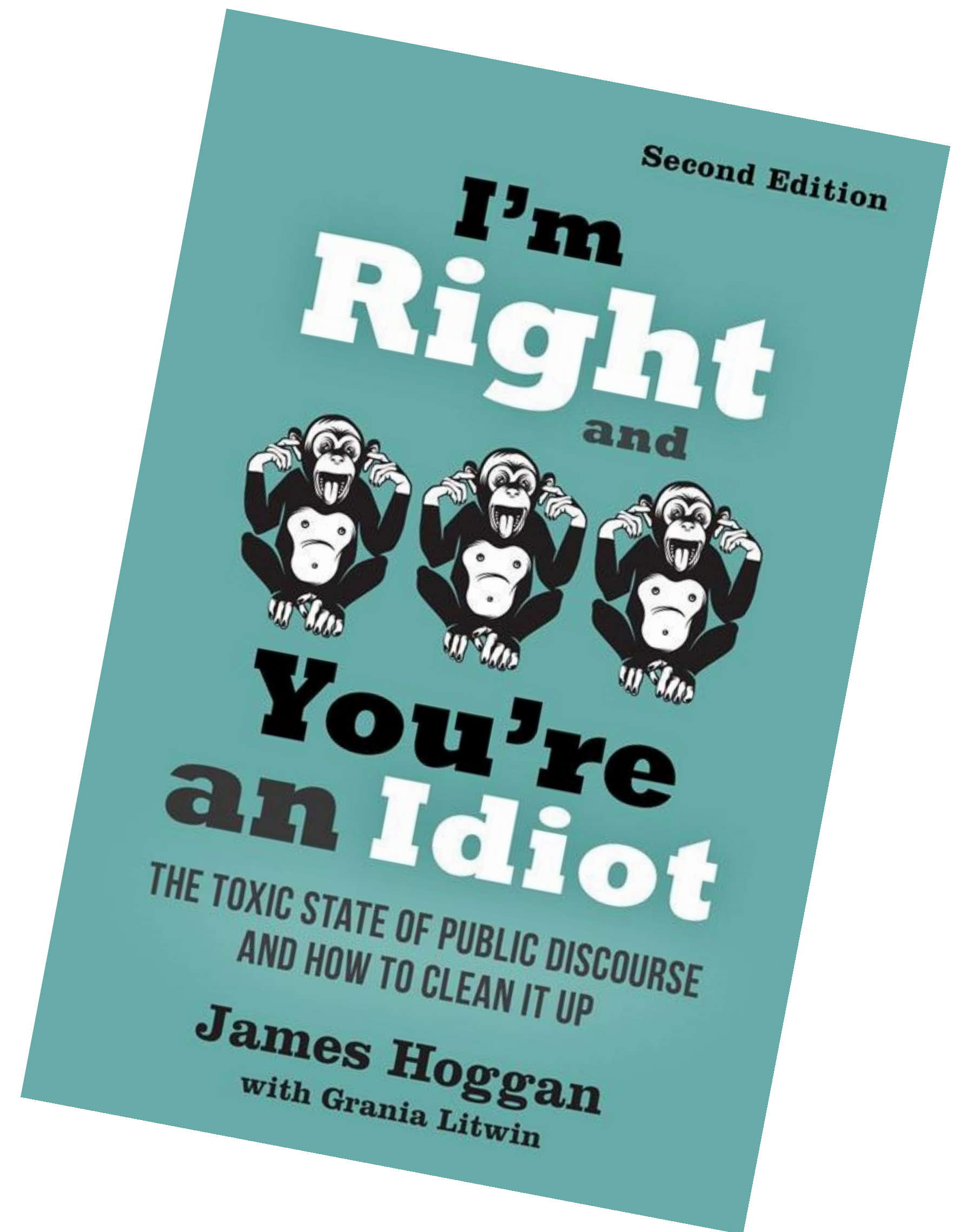
James Hoggan
President
Hoggan & Associates



Closing thoughts ...

I decided I needed to get better at:

1. Deep listening
2. Emotional dialogue
3. Stories of us



20 years! Best practices research



Association of
Metropolitan
Planning
Organizations



Federal Transit
Administration

NCHRP NATIONAL
COOPERATIVE
HIGHWAY
RESEARCH
PROGRAM



Select MetroQuest customers

State Agencies



Local Agencies



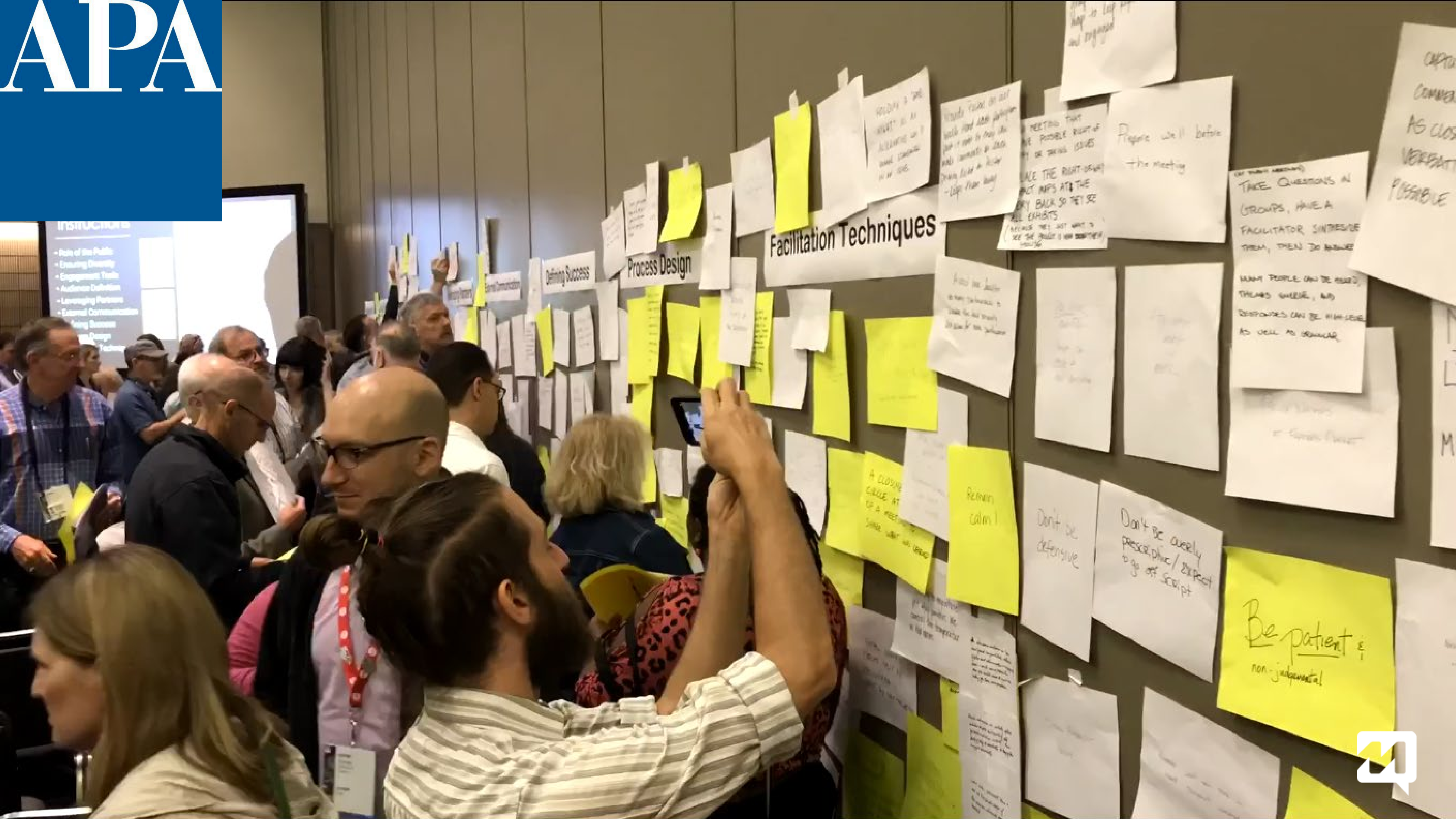
Consulting Firms





iap² international association
for public participation
USA





A photograph of a public meeting. A man in a light-colored jacket is standing in the foreground, shouting with his mouth open and pointing his right index finger towards the crowd. He has a determined and intense expression. Behind him, a large, diverse crowd of people is seated, looking towards him. Some people in the crowd are also looking at the camera. In the background, several white signs with handwritten text are visible, though the text is mostly illegible. One sign on the left has "2012" and "RLE" written on it. Another sign in the center has "Get out of the..." and "Don't..." written on it. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant public gathering or protest.

PUBLIC MEETINGS



SOCIAL MEDIA



ONLINE FORUMS

How to Detox Public Engagement

Seven Lessons Learned

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

1

Gain clarity on
issues early



Engage early ...



Tanya M. Zwahlen, AICP
Principal & Owner
Highland Planning LLC



Susan R. Hopkins, AICP
Project Manager
Highland Planning LLC



Give the opportunity to influence



What is the Decision?

Public engagement involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and uses public input to make the decision.

- Two things must be present:
1. A decision to be made
 2. Opportunity for influence

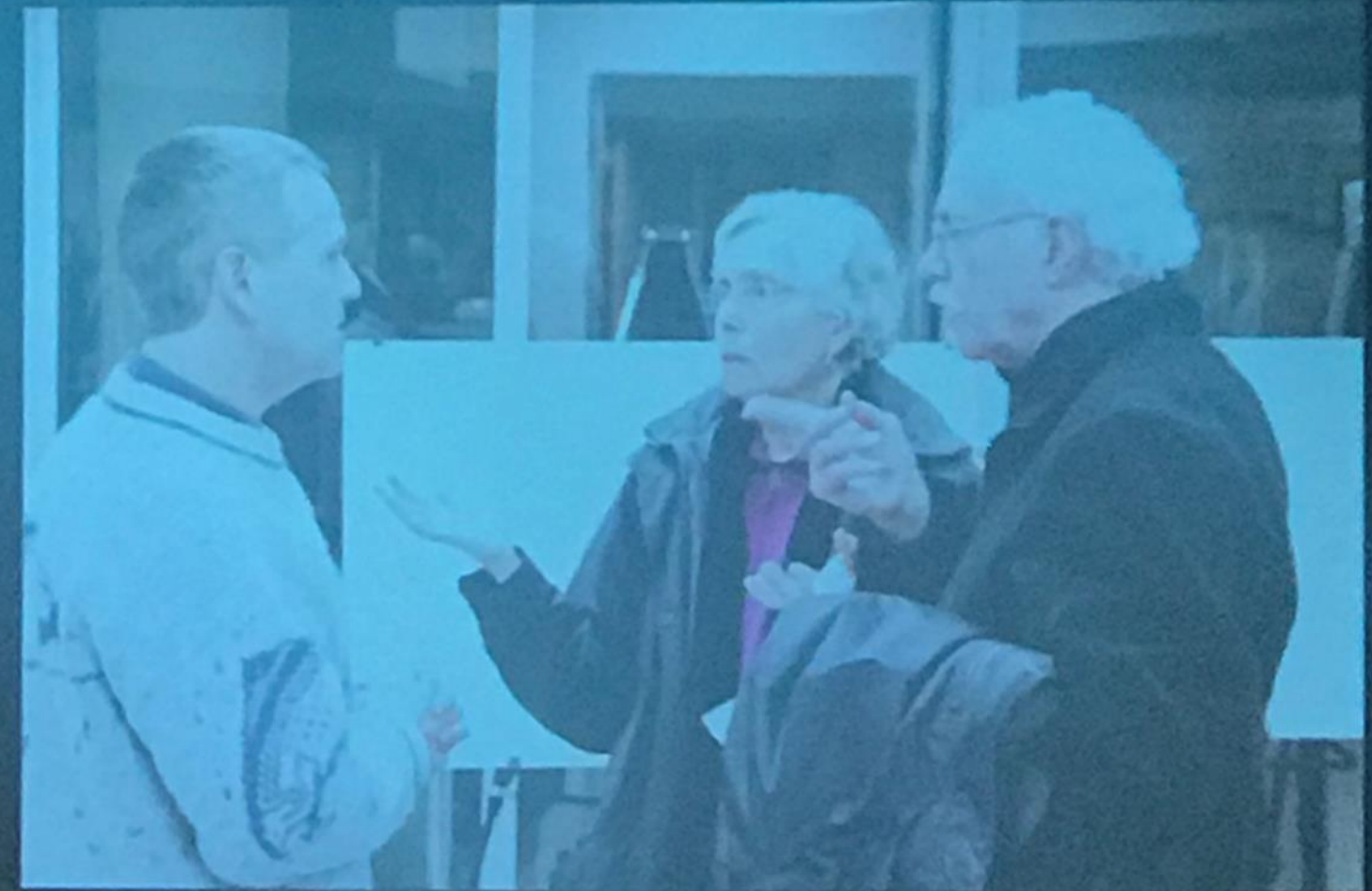
Solution P2

Show empathy for concerns



What Drives Outrage?

- Late engagement
- Feeling threatened
- Fear
- Disagreement about priorities or recommendations
- Anger about an approach
- Potential impacts



2

Focus on local
community priorities



Ask structured questions



3

Create a
safe place



Avoid mics & megaphones



Offer safe & private online surveys



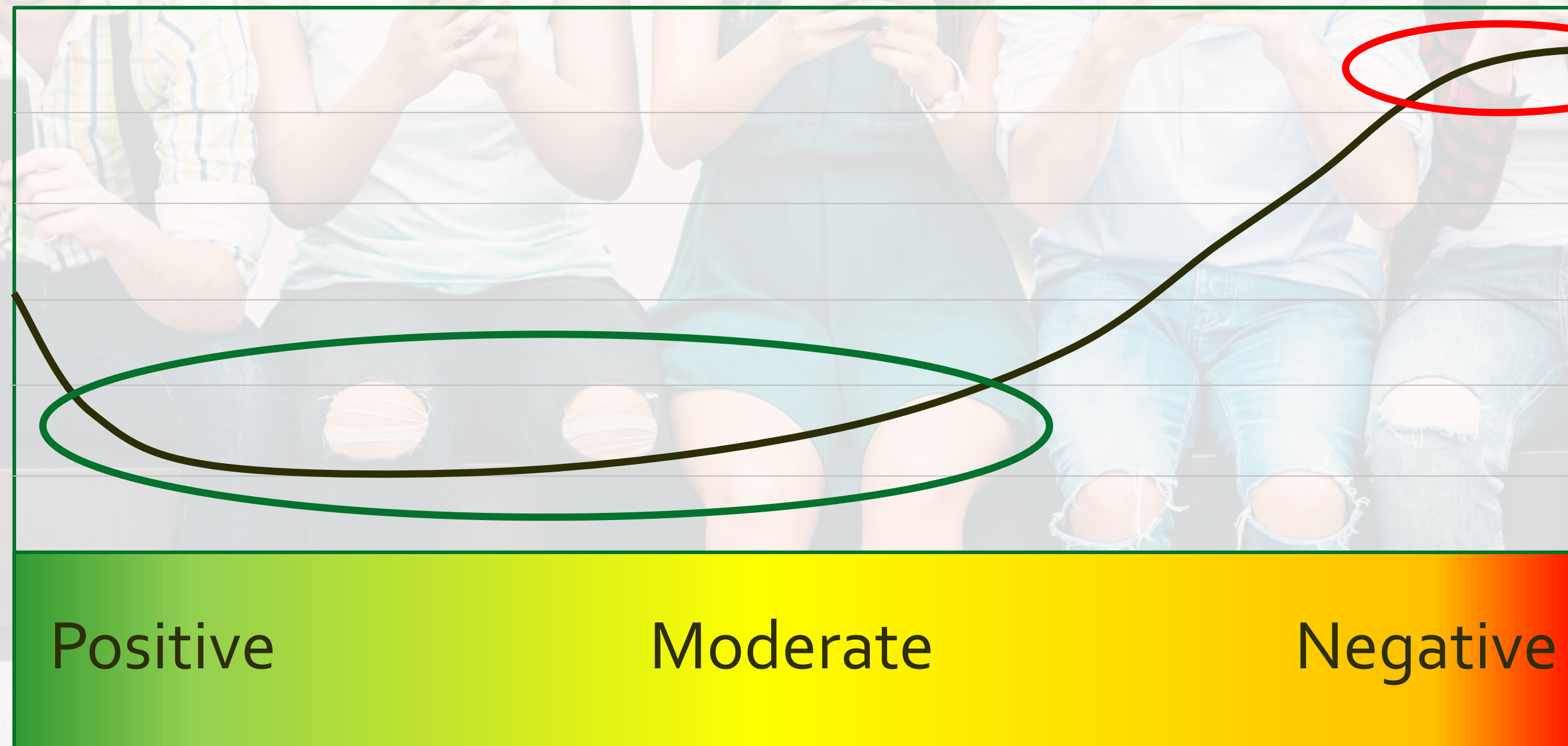
4

Engage the
masses



Attitude vs. Motivation

Level of
Motivation



Attitude

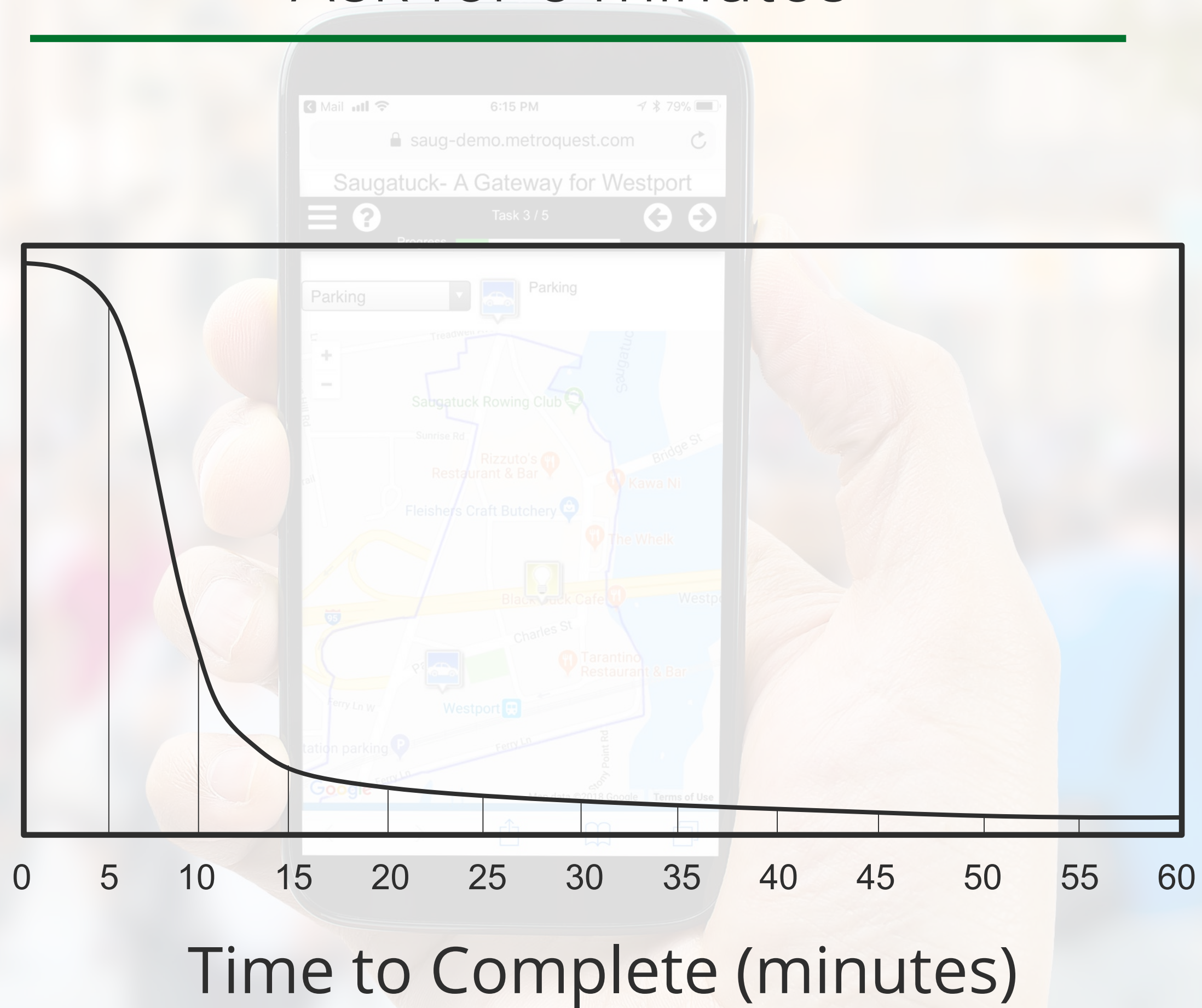


Engage the silent majority to uncover true priorities



Ask for 5 minutes

Participants



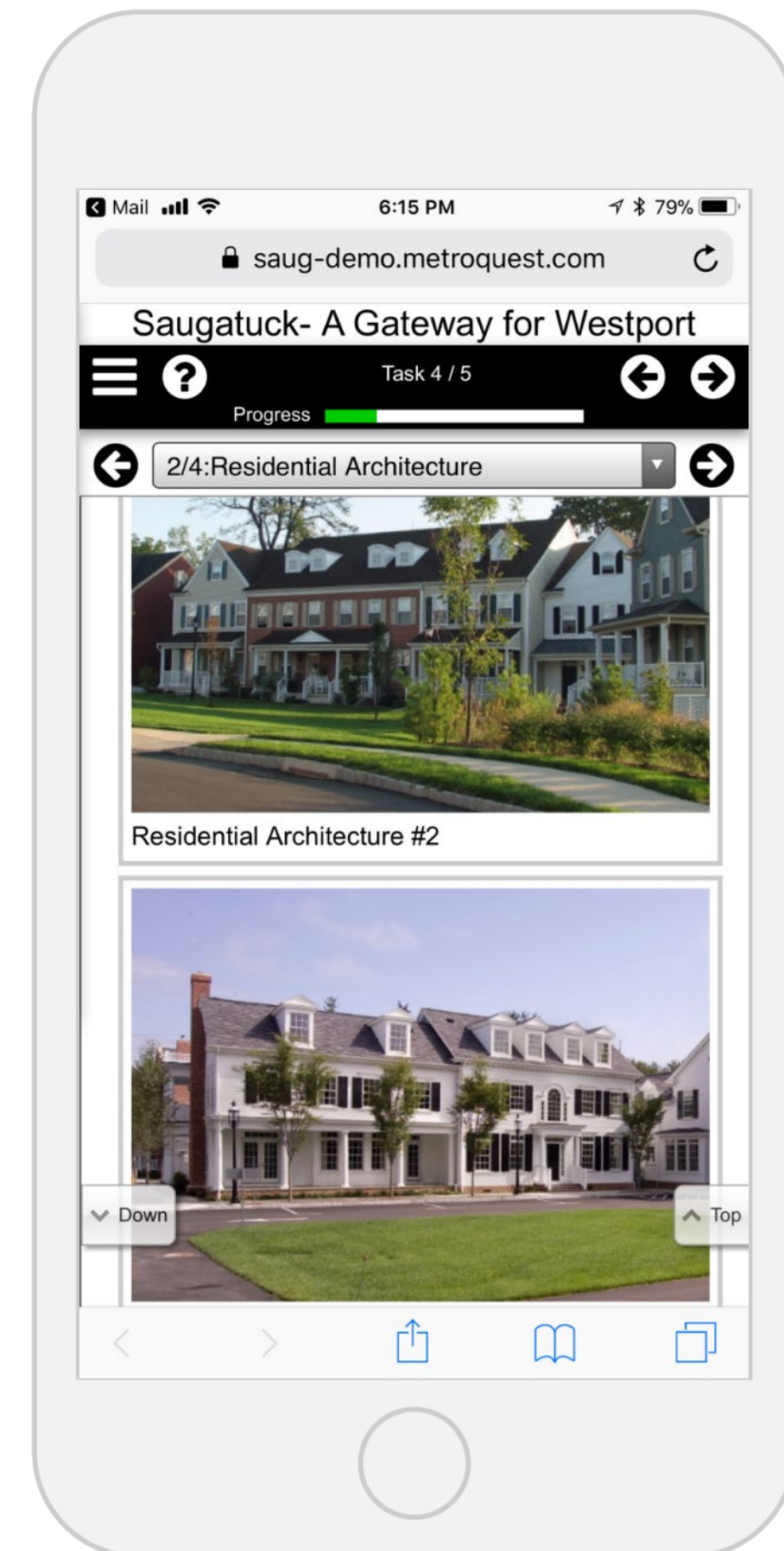
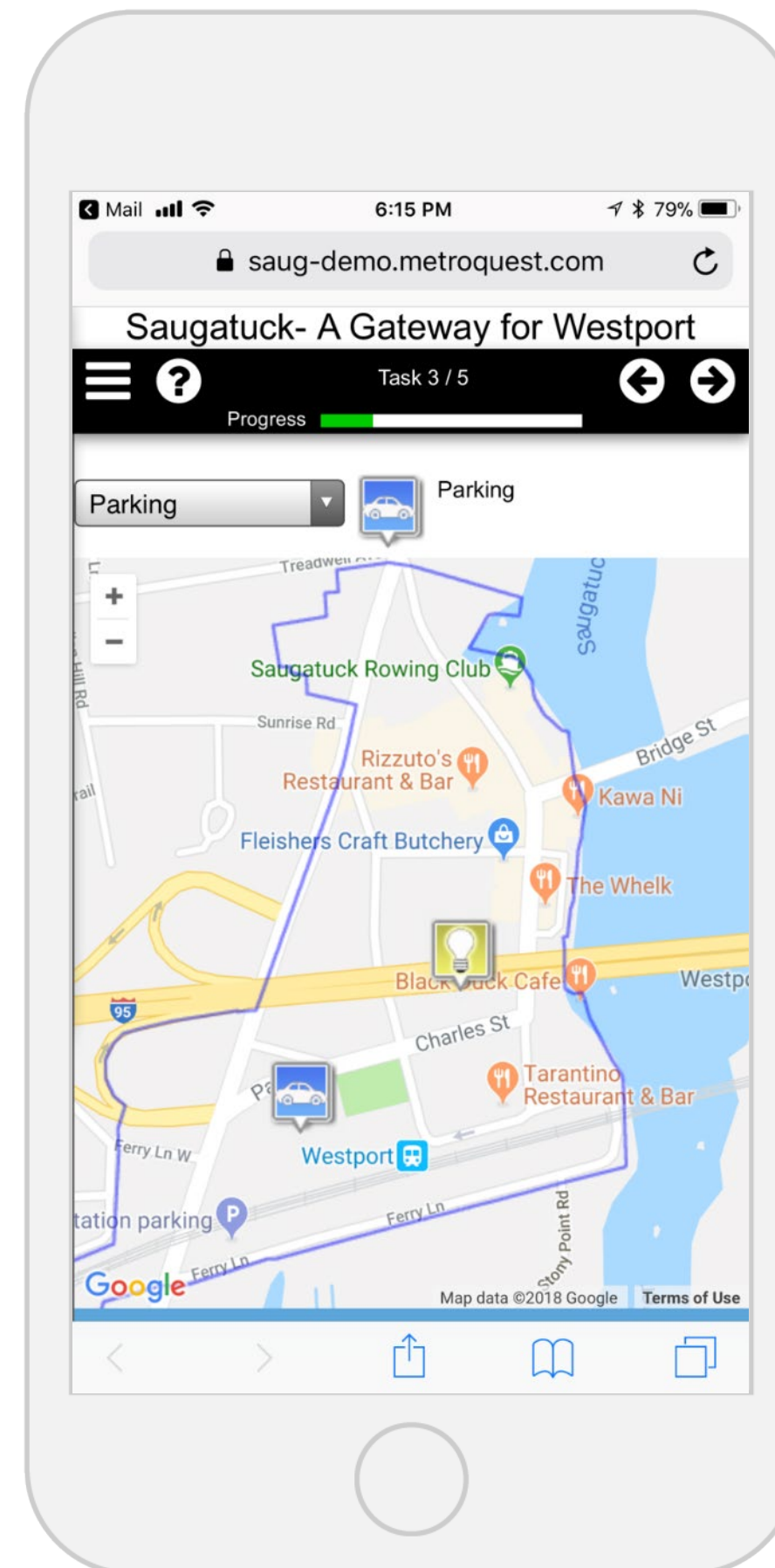
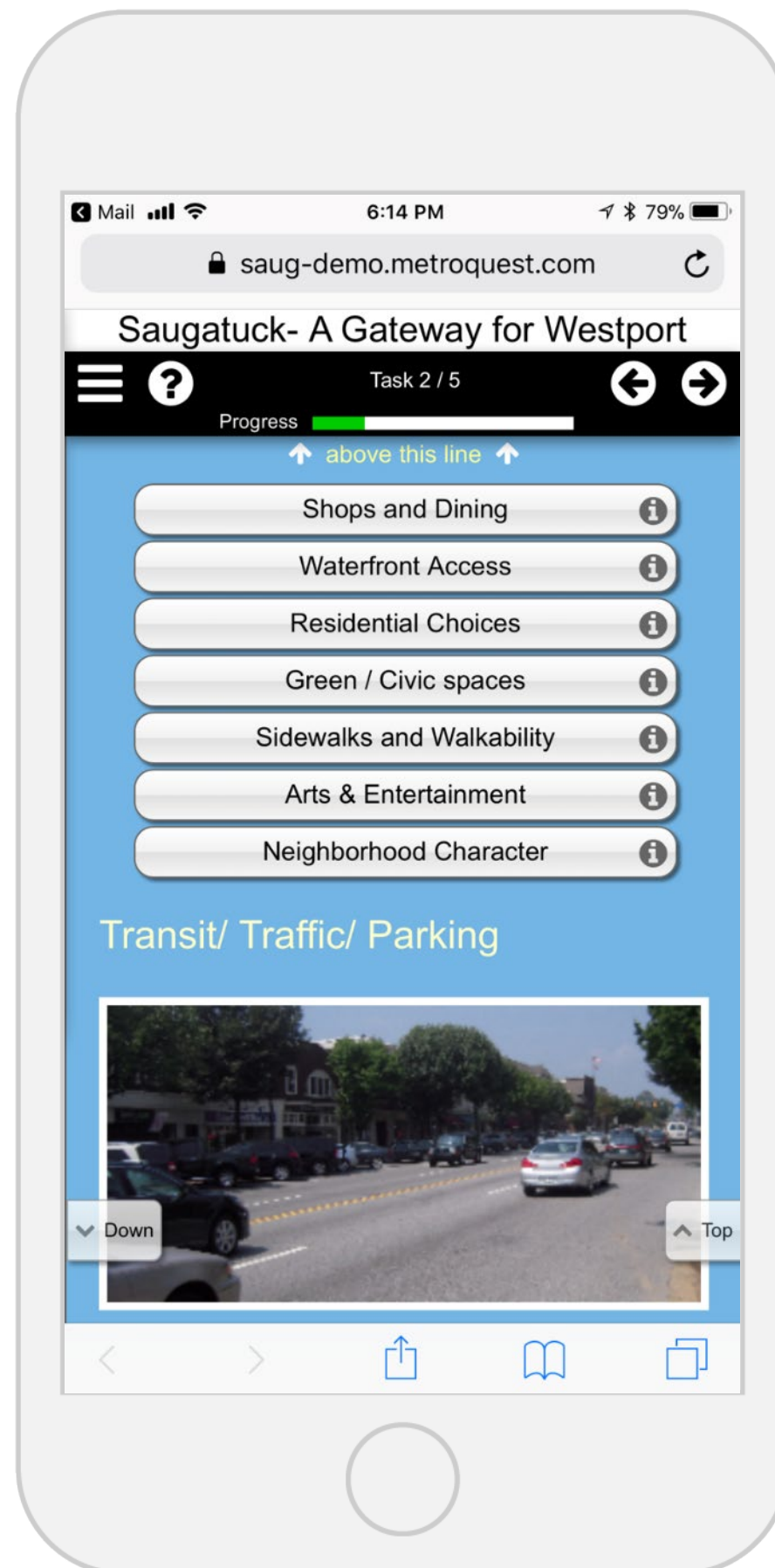
Offer it anytime online



Be multi-channel



Make it delightful on mobile



Have fun with promotions



All right, Nashville.
It's time to pick.

Over the last year, more than 10,000 of you have told us what Nashville can be over the next 25 years. This summer, we're asking you to join us in picking which version of Nashville's future you like best, based on the comments and ideas you gave us. You get to pick your Nashville, and everybody's watching.

LOG ON to NashvilleNext.net or
TEXT PICK to (615) 862-NEXT (6398).

You can also check out our schedule of community events at NashvilleNext.net/picknashville.

Malia, age 2

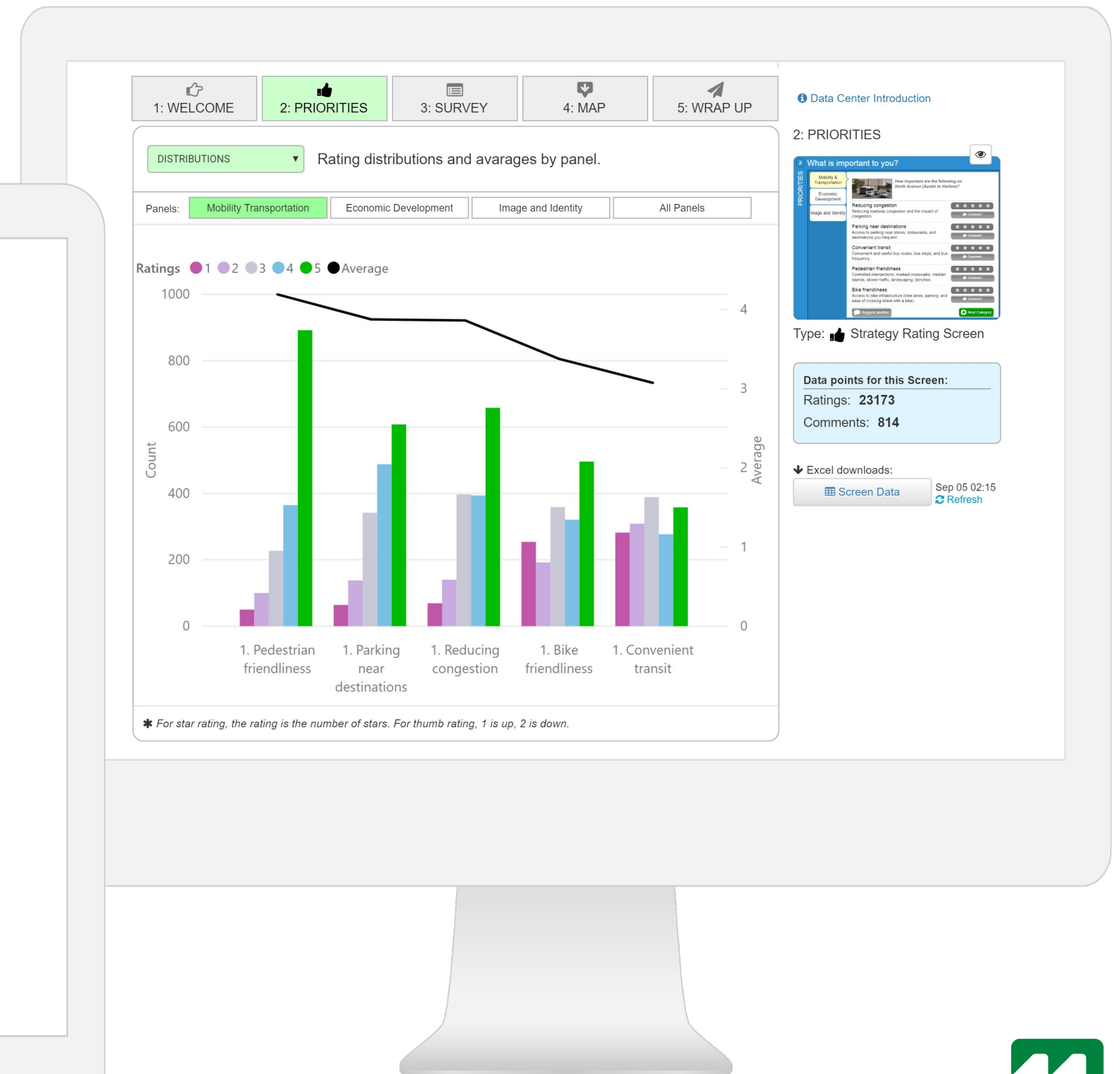
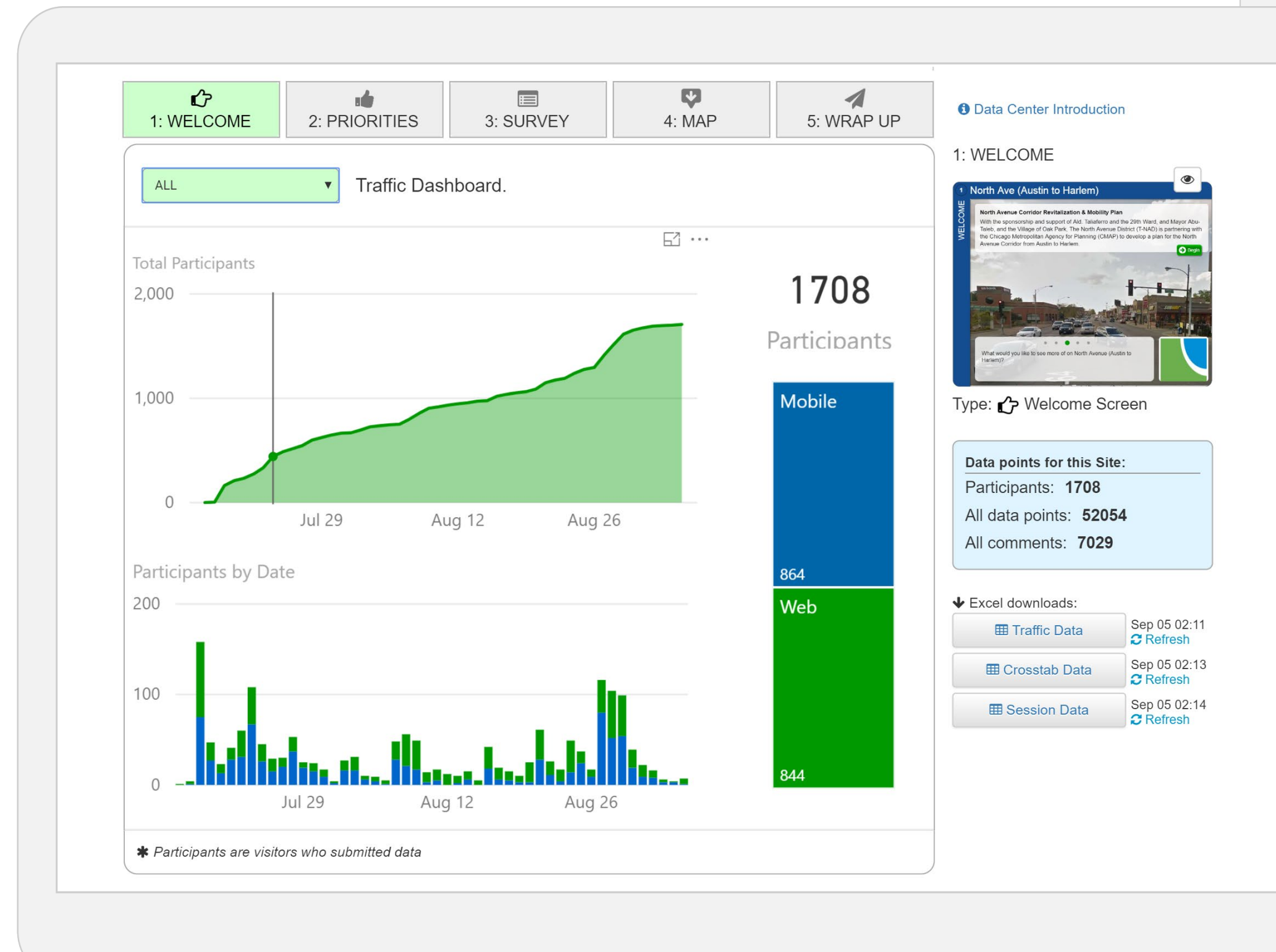
PICK YOUR NASHVILLE

nashvillenext

[/NashvilleNext](https://www.facebook.com/NashvilleNext) [@NashvilleNext](https://twitter.com/NashvilleNext) [Talk.NashvilleNext.Net](https://www.talknashvillenext.net) 615.970.6600



Monitor dashboards for results



Go to them for inclusivity





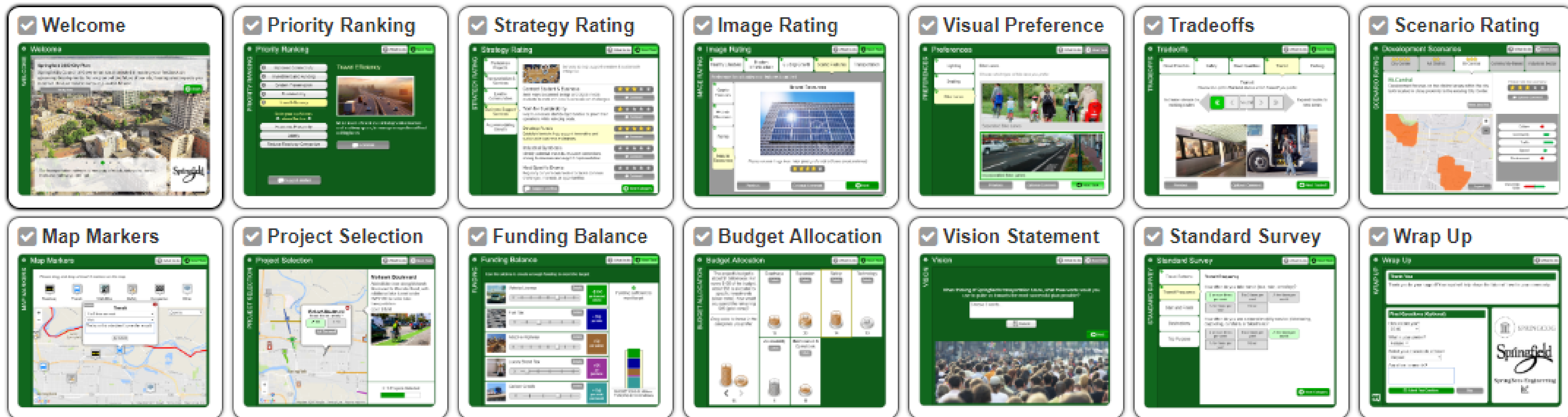
5

Weave in
education

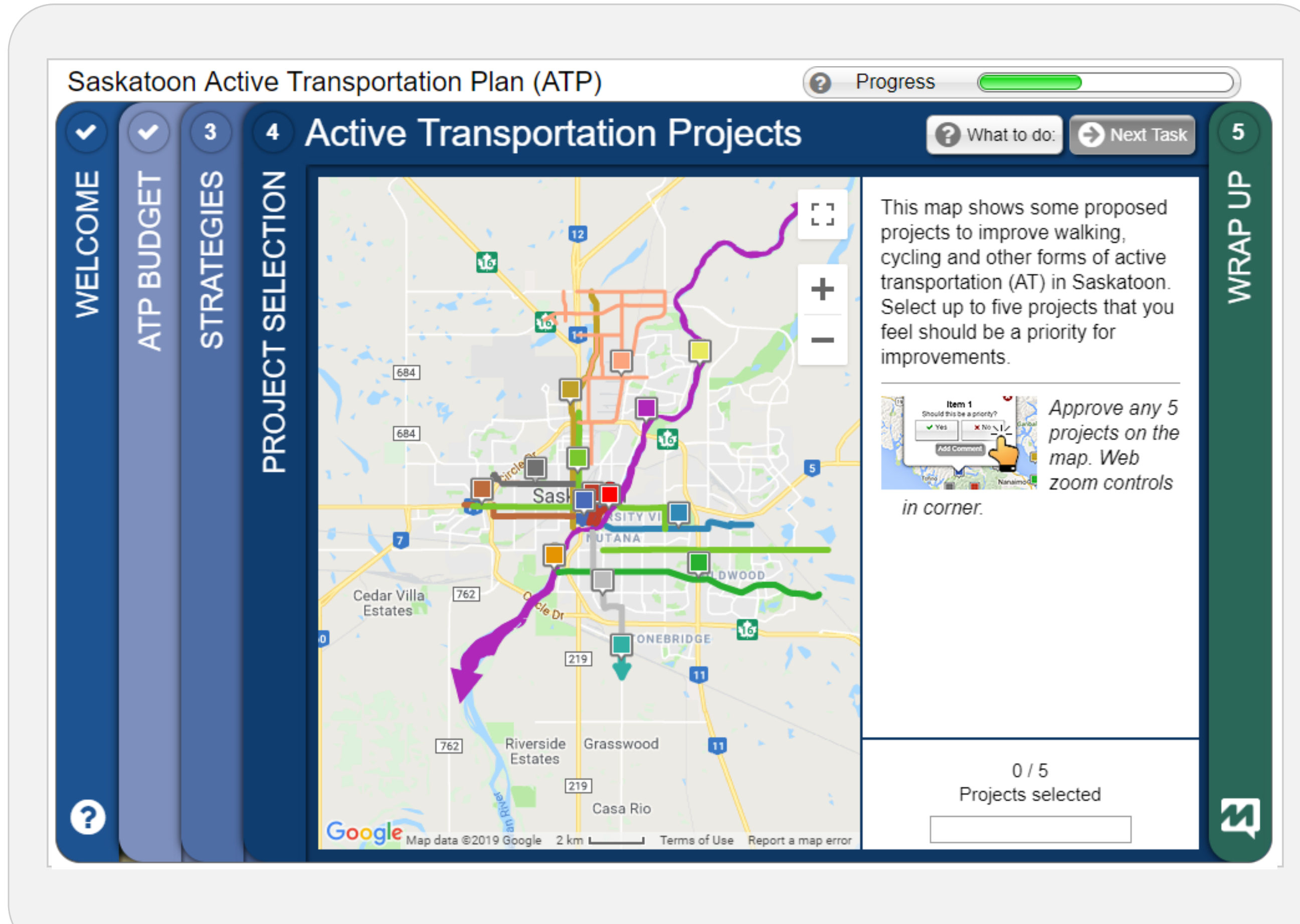
Drop the data – make learning fun



Create microlearning moments



Put citizens in the planner's seat



Gain appreciation for tradeoffs

Truckee Meadows Regional Plan Update 2017

Progress

What to do

Next Task

OVERVIEW

2 RANK CONCERNS

3 ADDRESS CHALLENGES

4 Identify Tradeoffs

5 STAY ENGAGED

Growth

Housing

Transportation


Services/Facilities


What type of housing does our region need?
Choose the option that best shows which tradeoff you prefer

Housing with more land and less access to services and amenities

Neutral

Housing with less land and more access to services and amenities


[TMRPA](#)


[TMRPA](#)

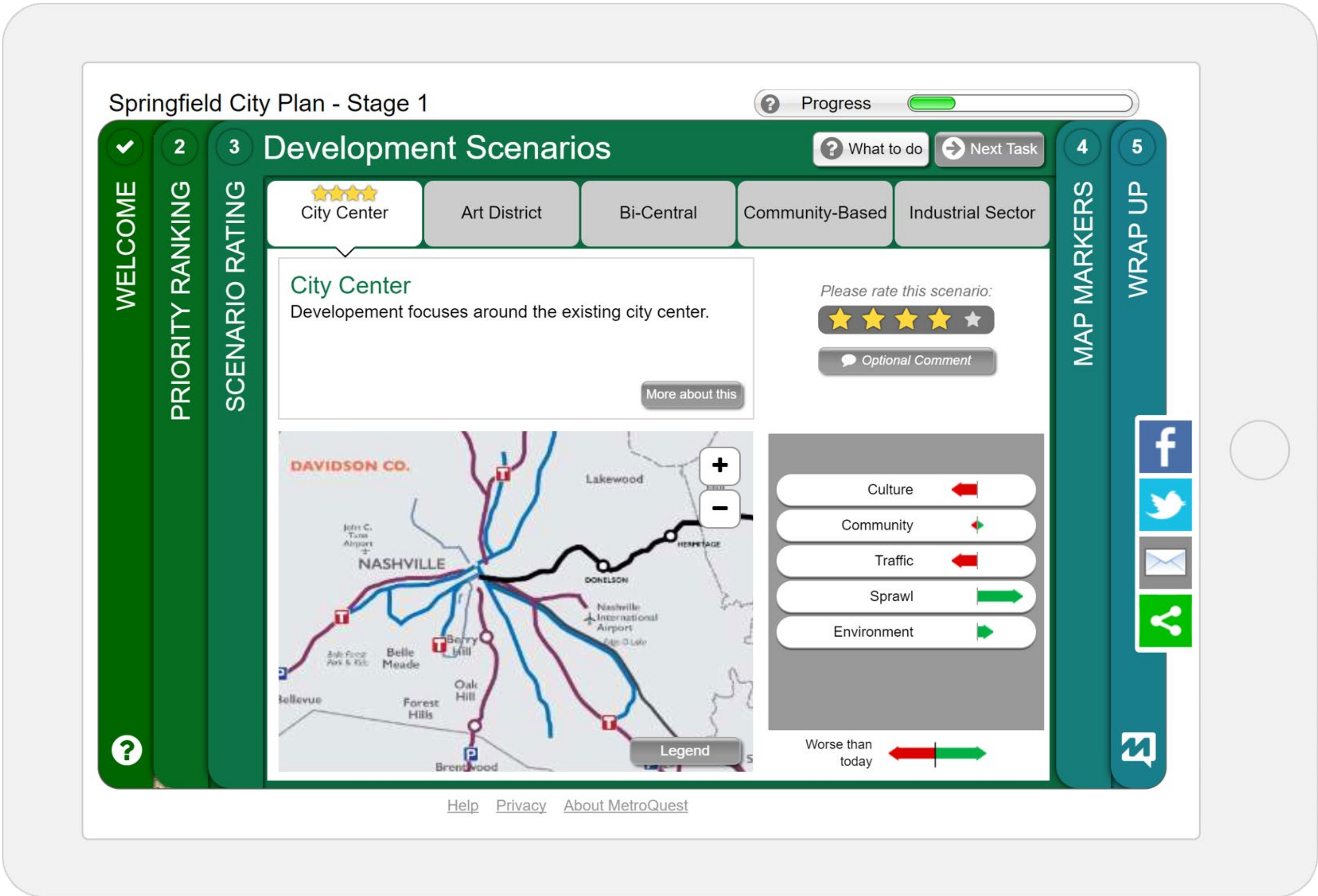
Previous

Optional Comment

Next Tradeoff



Gamify to educate



Gamify constraints & budgeting

Saskatoon Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

Progress

WELCOME

ATP BUDGET

Budget Allocation

What to do:Next Task

The ATP contains a number of strategies and actions to improve walking, cycling and other forms of active transportation (AT) in Saskatoon. Assuming you had \$100 to spend, how would you spend your money?

Drag coins to invest in the categories you prefer.

110

<>

24

Expand/Improve Bike Network Details 10	Expand/Improve Sidewalks Details 10	Expand/Improve Pathways Details 10 40	Bridges, Overpasses and Underpasses Details 0
Intersection Safety & Convenience Details 1 5	Maintenance and Accessibility Details 10 10	Improve Lighting Details 1 1	Invest in Street Amenities Details 0

3 STRATEGIES

4 PROJECT SELECTION

5 WRAP UP



Rate pictures to clarify nuances

1

WELCOME

2

SURVEY

3

INTERACTIVE MAP

4

LEVEL OF COMFORT

5

ABOUT YOU

?

Progress

?

What to do

Next Task

✓


Shared Use Path

Cycle Track

Bike Lane

Shared Lane Marking

Cycle Track



Chicago DOT

Please rate this image from 1 star (Very Uncomfortable) to 5 stars (Very Comfortable)

★

★

★

★

★

★

Previous

Optional Comment

Next



6

Design for
actionable results



Blend quantitative & qualitative

1

WELCOME

?

2

PRIORITY RANKING

3

TRADEOFFS

4

PREFERENCE SURVEY

5

STAY INVOLVED

Image Rating

What to do

Next Task

Landscaping

Lighting

Public Spaces

Streets

Blended Space (Bike/Ped)


Single Travel Lanes

Separate Space (Bike/Ped)

Multiple Travel Lanes

Limited Space (Bike/Ped)

Single Travel Lanes



Please rate this image from 1 star (least preferred) to 5 stars (most preferred)

★★★★★

Previous

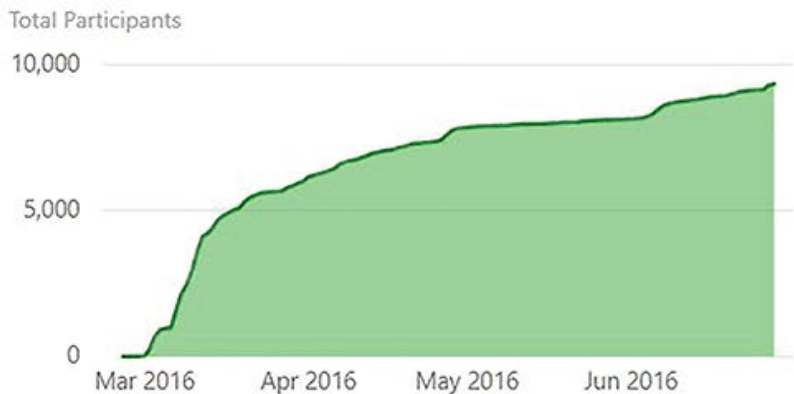
Optional Comment

Next

Deliver quantifiable data

1: WELCOME 2: PRIORITIES 3: SCENARIOS 4: TELL US MO... 5: STAY INVOL...

ALL Traffic Dashboard.



9342
Participants

Participants by Date



* Participants are visitors who submitted data



Data Center Introduction

1: WELCOME



Type: Welcome Screen

Data points for this Site:

Participants: 9342
All data points: 137273
All comments: 15832

Excel downloads:

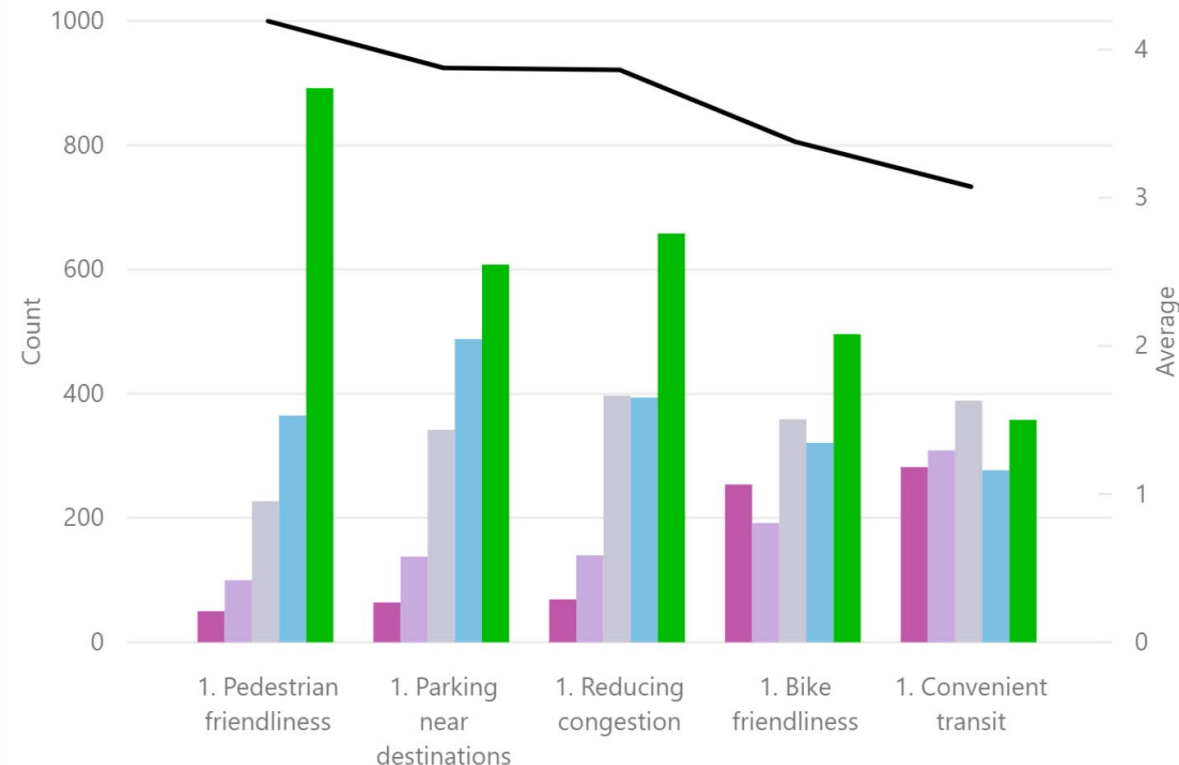
Traffic Data Apr 10 Refresh
Crosstab Data Apr 10 Refresh
Session Data Apr 10 Refresh

1: WELCOME 2: PRIORITIES 3: SURVEY 4: MAP 5: WRAP UP

DISTRIBUTIONS Rating distributions and averages by panel.

Panels: Mobility Transportation Economic Development Image and Identity All Panels

Ratings 1 2 3 4 5 Average

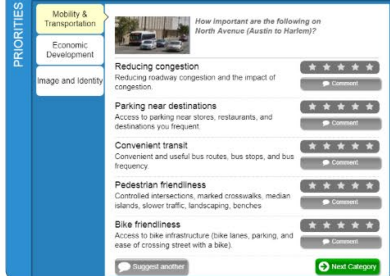


* For star rating, the rating is the number of stars. For thumb rating, 1 is up, 2 is down.

Data Center Introduction

2: PRIORITIES

What is important to you?



Type: Strategy Rating Screen

Data points for this Screen:

Ratings: 23173
Comments: 814

Excel downloads:

Screen Data Sep 05 02:15 Refresh



A grid of six video call participants is shown in the background, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. A large red play button icon is centered over the grid. The text is overlaid on the top half of the grid.

“It gave **courage** to the elected officials...
with data...finally with data!”

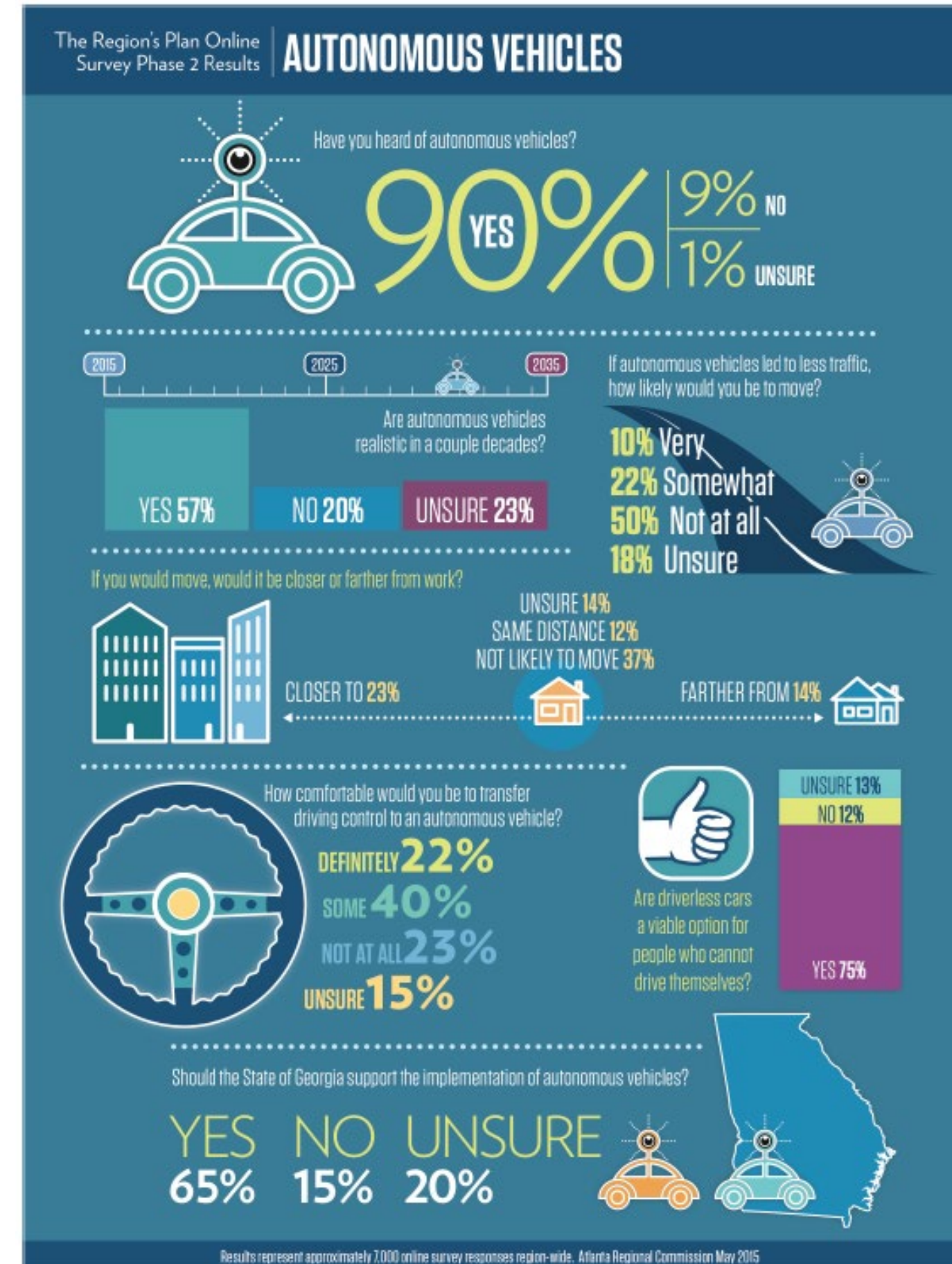
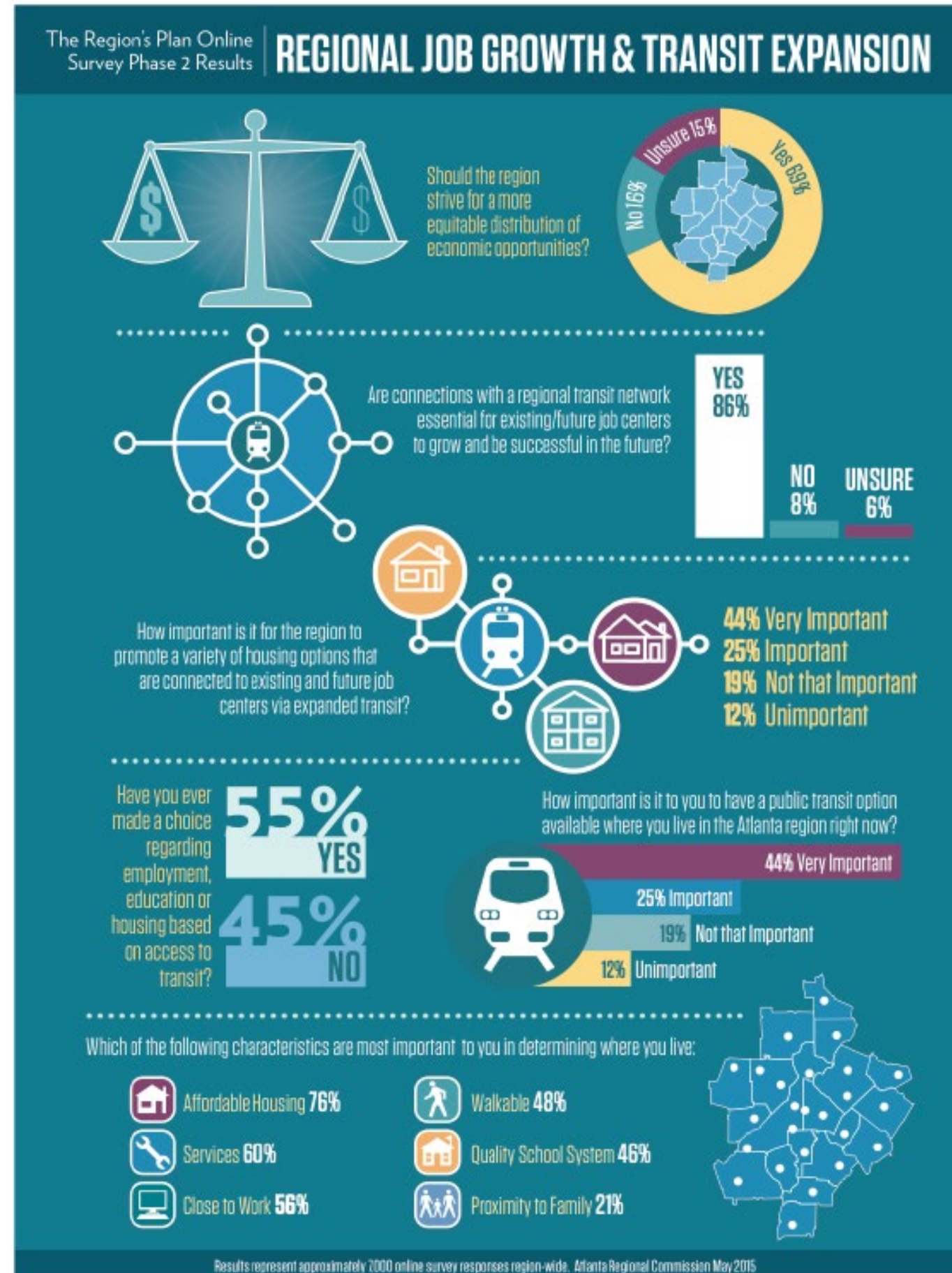
Michael Busha, Treasure Coast RPC

7

Share outcomes
with compassion



Close the loop





How to Create Meaningful Engagement

Seven Key Success Factors

1

2

3

4

5

6

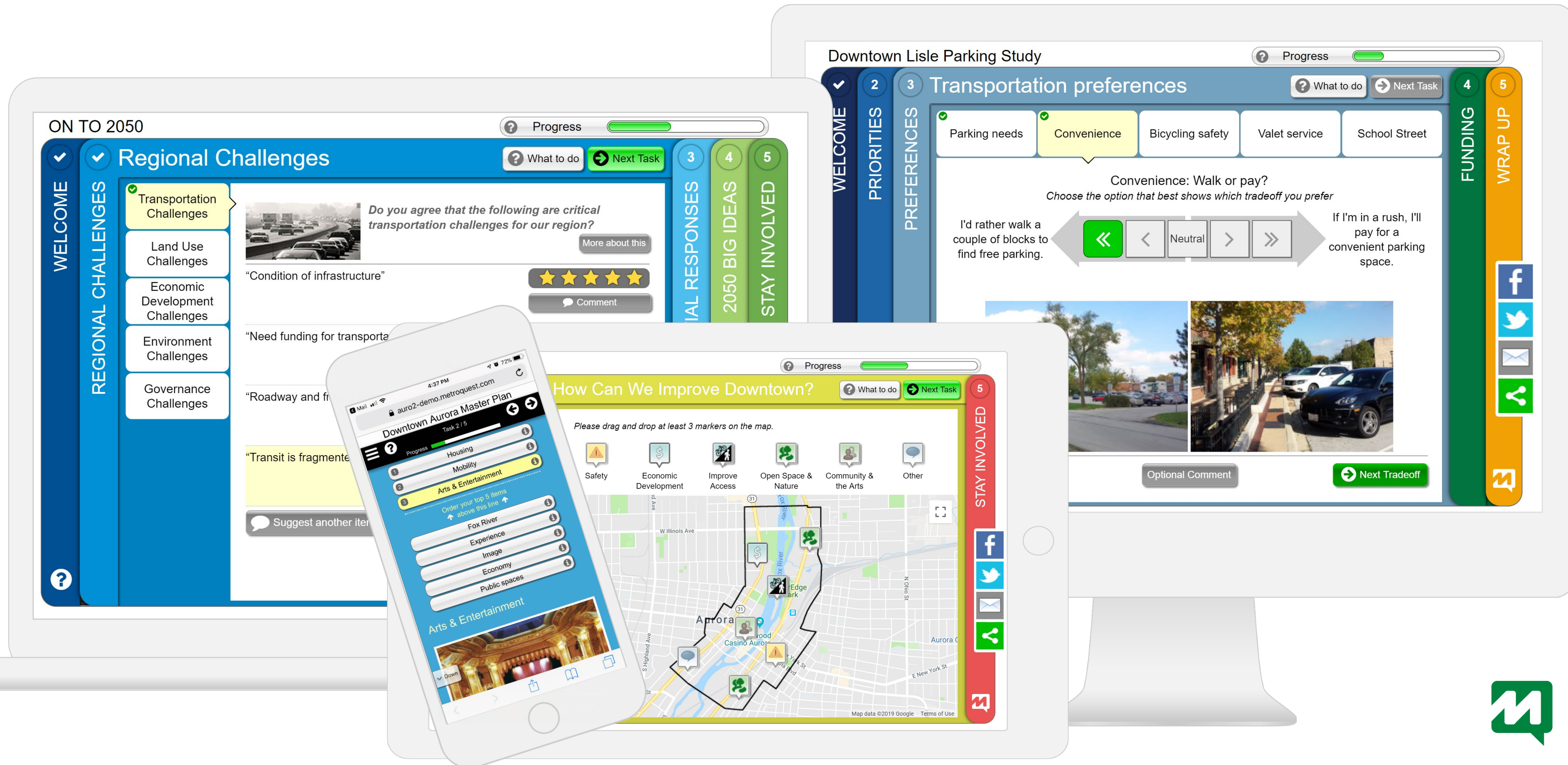
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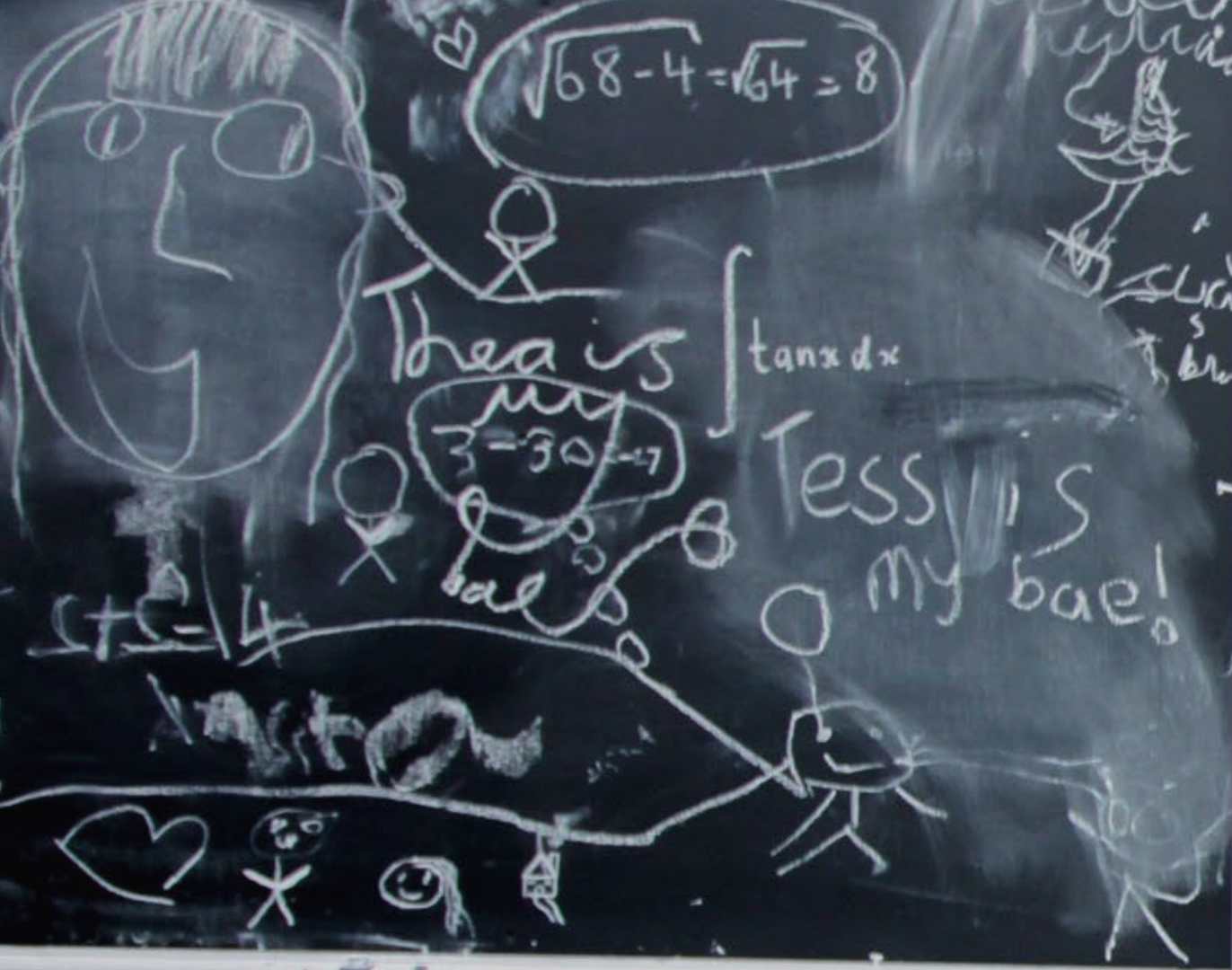
Seven Key Success Factors

1. Gain clarity on the issues early
2. Focus on community priorities
3. Create a safe place
4. Engage the masses
5. Weave in education
6. Design for actionable results
7. Share outcomes compassionately



MetroQuest engagement toolbox





Poll: What
additional information
would you like?



FREE eBook

Facing Contention: 21 Tips to Detox Public Engagement

- 6 Key Success Factors
- 21 Tips
- We will email you a PDF copy!

Thank you:



Next Webinar

Millennials to Boomers | How Michigan DOT Involved 6,300 for Its LRTP!

- Wednesday, June 12th
- 11 am Pacific | 12 pm Mountain | 1 pm Central | 2 pm Eastern (1 hour)
- Educational Credit Available (APA AICP CM)



LIVE WEBINAR

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Poll: Yes, save
me a seat!



Questions



James Hoggan
President
Hoggan & Associates



Dave Biggs
Chief Engagement Officer
MetroQuest

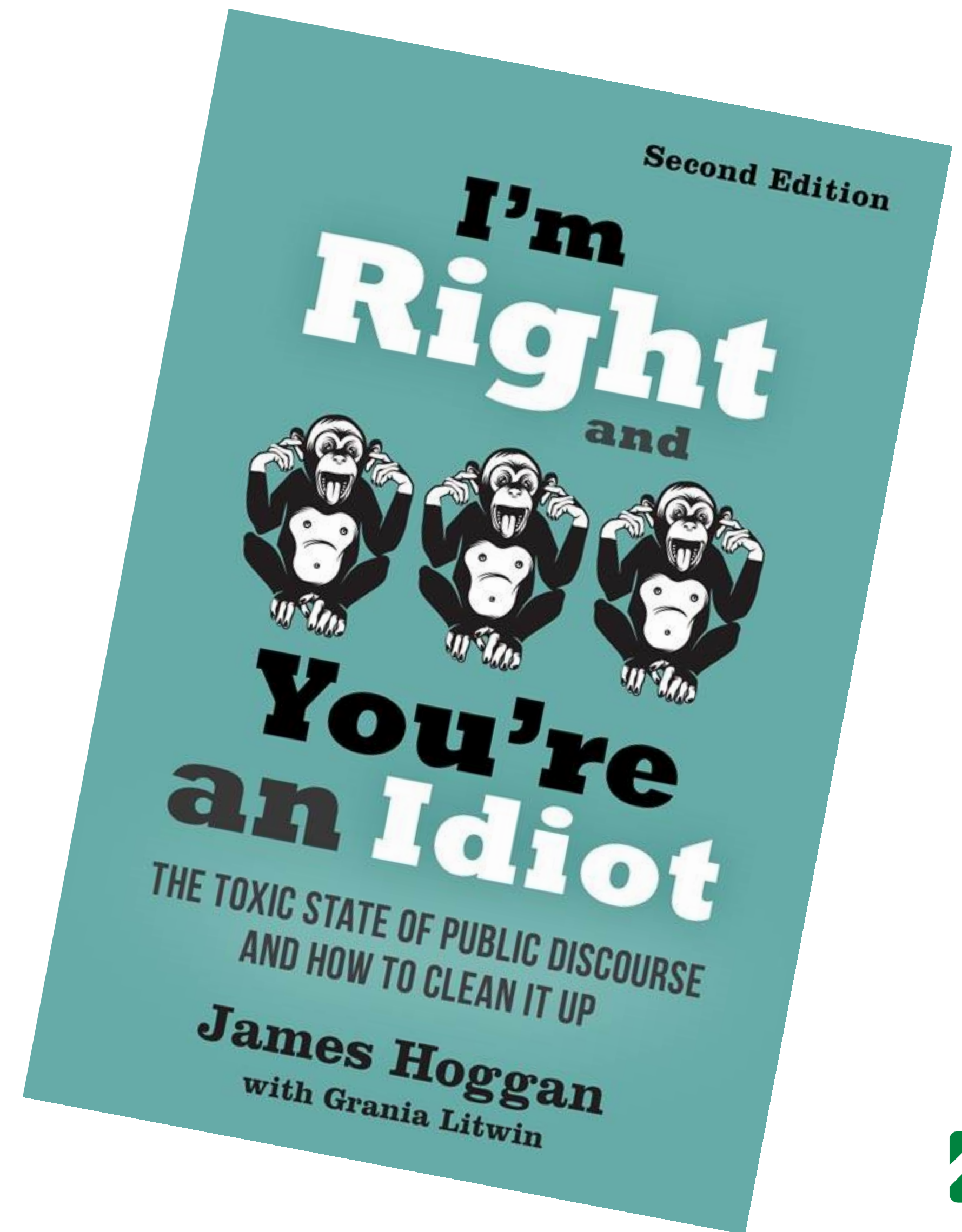



Giveaway



James Hoggan

Author



A photograph of three people in a professional setting. A man with short brown hair, wearing a brown cardigan over a striped shirt, is looking at a laptop screen. Behind him, a woman with dark hair and glasses is also looking at the screen. In the foreground, a woman with long red hair is looking towards the laptop. The background is a blurred office environment.

Thank you for participating!

AICP CM: <https://planning.org/events/course/9177435/>

