The Risks of CrowdSourcing

How to ask for ideas without asking for trouble

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Three CrowdSourcing Risks

CrowdSourcing Risk 1:

Irrelevant, whacky or unfeasible ideas become popular

Should each of the 50 states select their own Pokemon to represent them?

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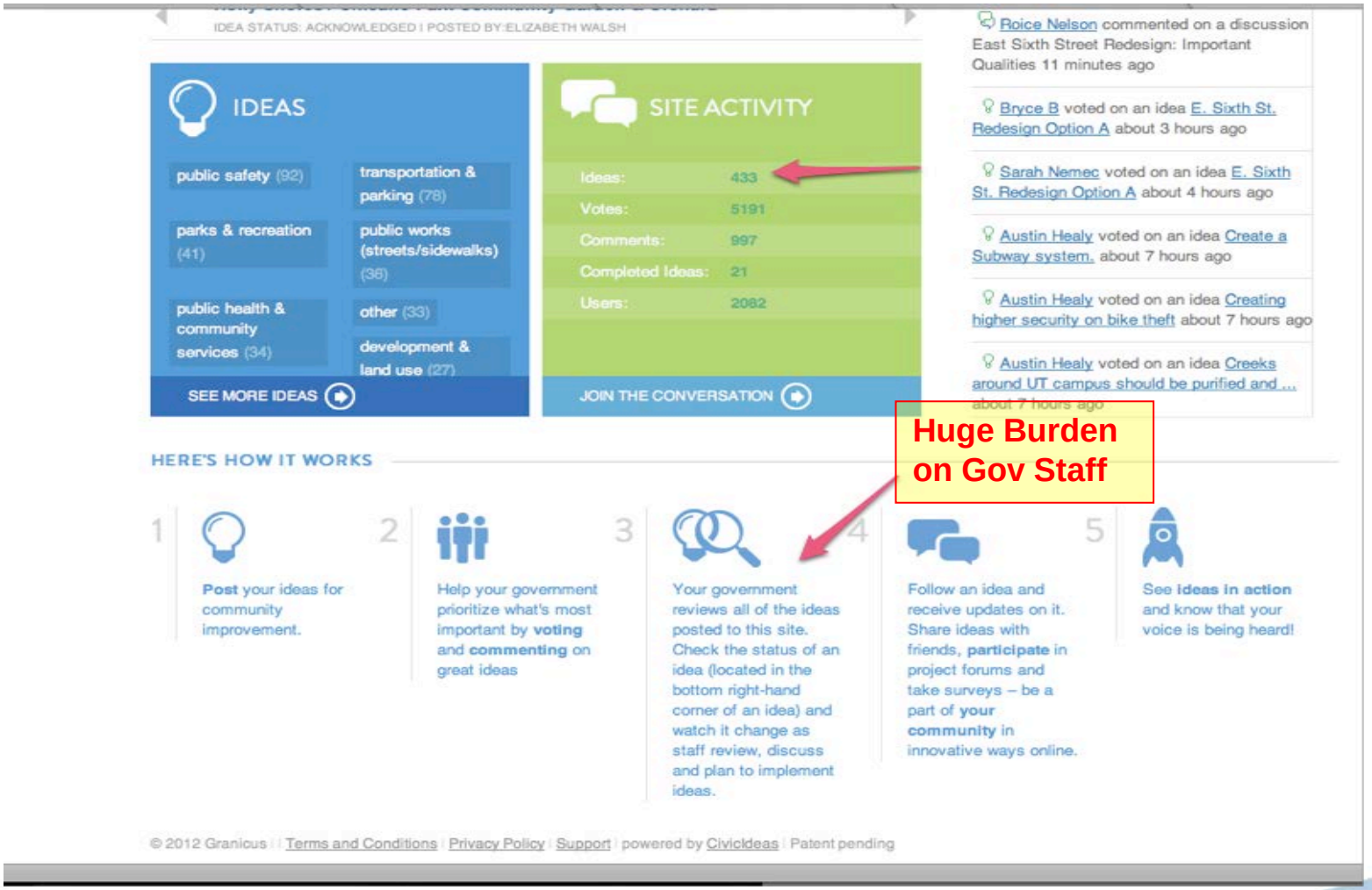
Citizens wonder:
Why is staff asking us for ideas, if they won't act on the popular responses ?

Your citizen engagement backfires, and erodes public trust

CrowdSourcing Risk 2:

Citizens expect that staff will respond to every idea



CrowdSourcing Risk 2:

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CrowdSourcing Risk 3:

Usual suspects will dominate ideation process

Sid: Single Issue Dominator

CrowdSourcing Risk 3:

Usual suspects will dominate ideation process

Citizens Wonder:

Who is Sid, and why is he calling the shots instead of our elected officials?

Your citizen engagement backfires, and erodes public trust

Three CrowdSourcing Risks

Why is staff asking us for ideas, if they won't act on the popular responses?

Why isn't staff responding to every idea?

Who is Sid and why is he calling the shots instead of our elected officials?

Citizens AND elected officials can both be asking these same questions!

How to ask for ideas without asking for trouble.

When communicating with the public, choose your words carefully.

Your words set public expectations.

What should you ask for?

Ideas or Input?

Idea *noun*

: a thought, plan, or suggestion about what to do

AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA COMPANY

Merriam-Webster

m-w.com

Input *noun*

: advice or opinions that help someone make a decision

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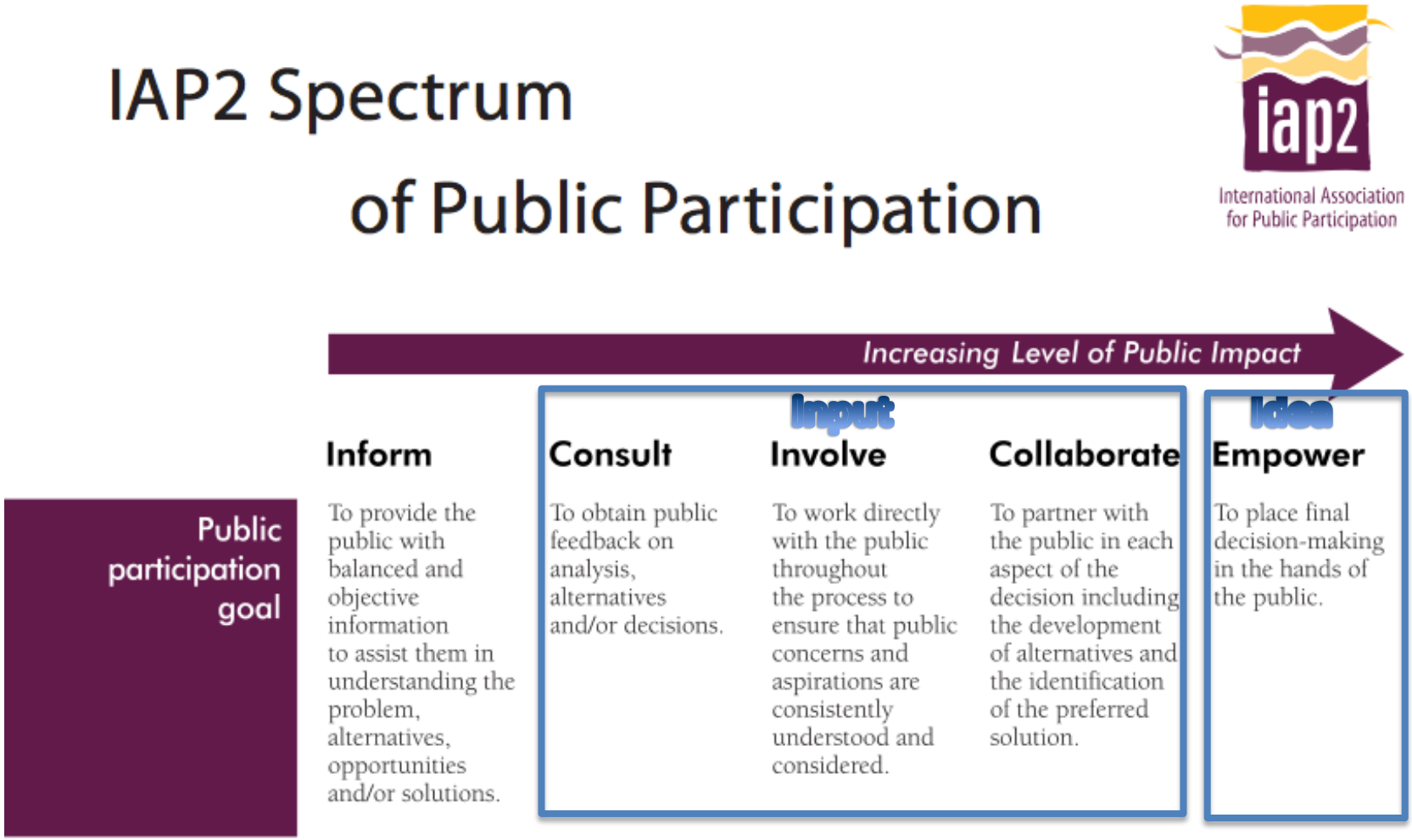
Should you ask for Ideas or Input?

If you want to be told what to do, ask for **ideas.**

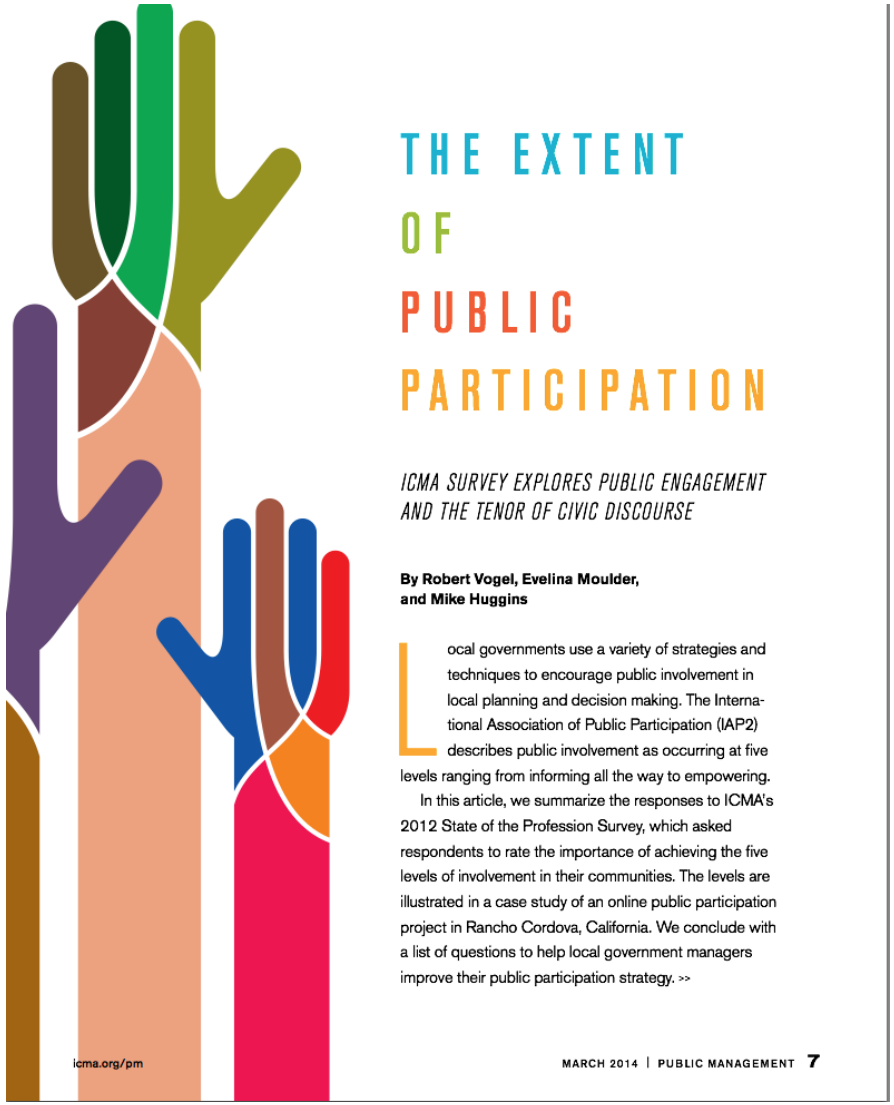
If want help making a decision, ask for **input.**

Usually you want Input more than Ideas

Relationship to the IAP2 Spectrum



Relationship to ICMA Survey



THE EXTENT OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

ICMA SURVEY EXPLORES PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE TENOR OF CIVIC DISCOURSE

By Robert Vogel, Evelina Moulder, and Mike Huggins

Local governments use a variety of strategies and techniques to encourage public involvement in local planning and decision making. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) describes public involvement as occurring at five levels ranging from informing all the way to empowering.

In this article, we summarize the responses to ICMA's 2012 State of the Profession Survey, which asked respondents to rate the importance of achieving the five levels of involvement in their communities. The levels are illustrated in a case study of an online public participation project in Rancho Cordova, California. We conclude with a list of questions to help local government managers improve their public participation strategy. >>

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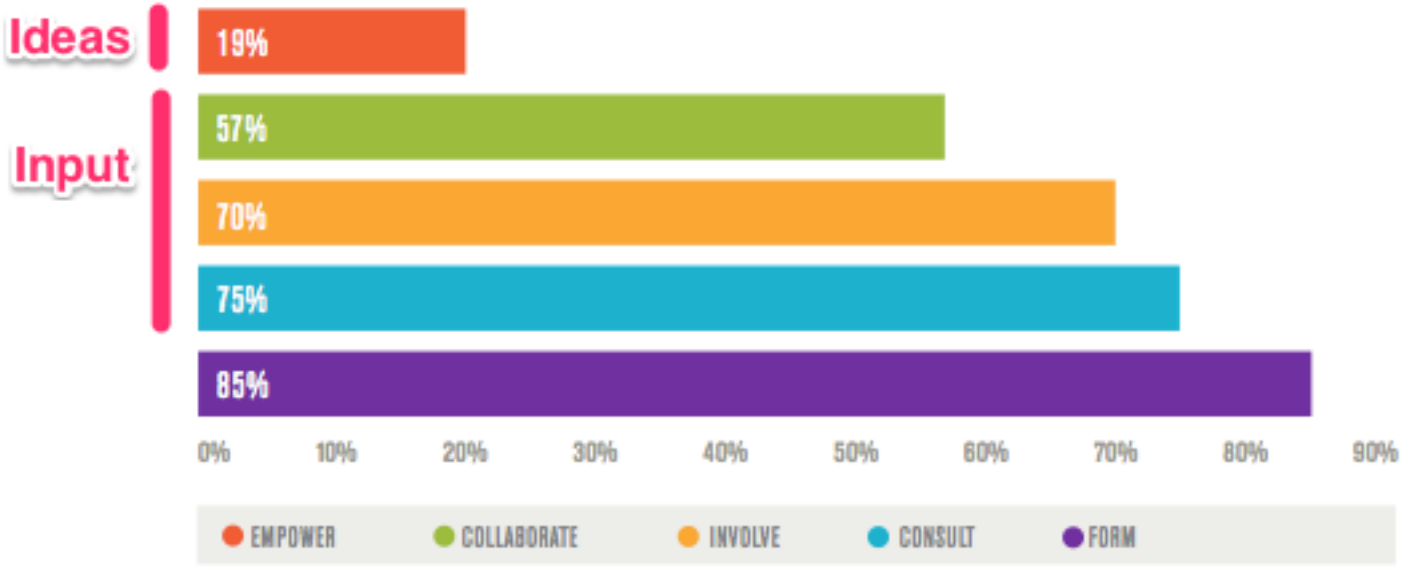
Relationship to ICMA Survey

Figure 1. Percent of Respondents Who Considered the Five Goals Important or Very Important.



Source: ICMA *State of the Profession 2012* survey.

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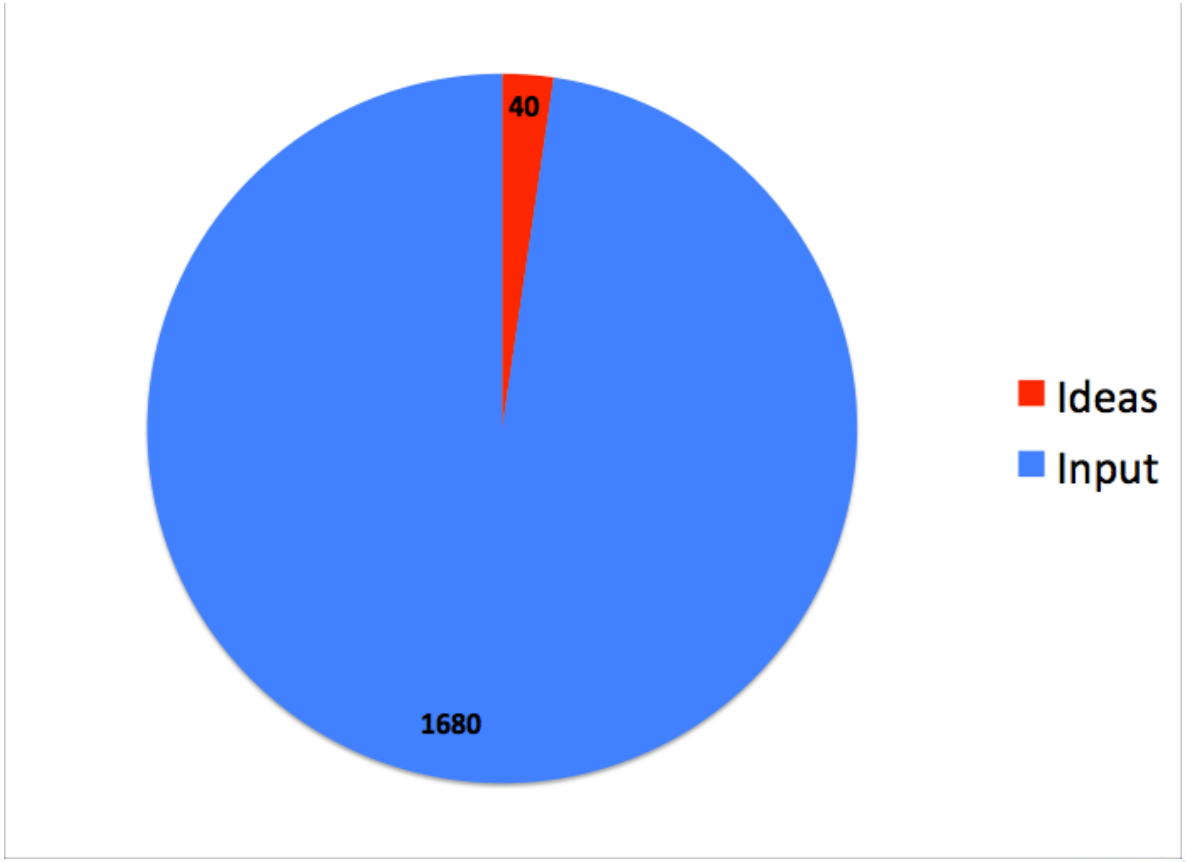
Relationship to Open Town Hall

As of August 22, 2014 only 2% of Open Town Hall topics were idea topics



Asking for input instead of ideas reduces:

1. the frequency of whacky or unrealistic public input
2. the expectation that every comment will be responded to
3. Sid's role (perceived and real) in the decision process

How to ask for ideas without asking for trouble.

1. Ask for input, not ideas
2. Require full registration
3. Post civility guidelines
4. Emulate public meeting protocols
5. Monitor Registrants & posts

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